Everyman, I will go with thee, and be thy guide,
In thy most need to go by thy side.

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ESSAYS & BELLES-LETTRES

ON THE STUDY OF WORDS and
ENGLISH PAST AND PRESENT
BY RICHARD CHENEVIX TRENCH
INTRODUCTION BY GEORGE
SAMPSON
ON THE STUDY OF WORDS
ENGLISH PAST AND PRESENT

RICHARD CHENEVIX TRENCH

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INTRODUCTION

As Richard Chenevix Trench was born when British slavery was sentenced to death, published *The Study of Words* as the Great Exhibition rose like an exhalation, and died on the eve of Queen Victoria's Jubilee, it may be surmised that his philology is not of the newest gloss. As he became Dean of Westminster three years before *The Origin of Species* appeared, and mounted the archiepiscopal throne of Dublin when Huxley was affronting the faithful with his *Zoological Evidences as to Man's Place in Nature*, it may be further assumed that his philology relies at times upon an ultimate authority not now accepted in that or any other science.

In short, Trench's two most famous books, like the *Odyssey*, the *Divina Commedia* and *Paradise Lost*, are out of date, and so are the works of Darwin and Huxley. Are they, on that account, no longer readable? Have the obsolete theology and cosmology of the poems and the obsolescent biology, geology and other science of the prose books abolished their importance?

We must distinguish a little. Without attempting a complete retort to jesting Pilate, we can at least assert that there is truth temporary and truth enduring. That man is mortal is one of the eternal verities; the scheduled departure of a train is not. That the boat train left Charing Cross at 2.20 P.M. was truth in 1906. It was an important truth. It was a truth upon which life and death may have depended for many people. It was a verity not to be denied or wried without danger. But it was not a perpetual truth; for in 1926 the afternoon boat train departs neither from that place nor at that time. The truth of 1906 has become not-truth in 1926, and Bradshaw of twenty years ago is now out-of-date and useless—except historically. When we want to catch a train, historic truth is falsity itself. Our time-tables must be up-to-date.

Now that is not the kind of truth we look for in literature. That Dante made the sun go round the earth, and that Milton would not commit himself in the matter, are facts that make
the poems out-of-date, but they are also facts that make
the poems more interesting and actually more vital. Astron­
omical accuracy in a thirteenth-century poem would shock
us rather than please us; we should not believe it, because
it would be true. It would destroy what painters call the
"values"; and the truth of a work of art depends largely
upon truth of values. Whether a work is out-of-date must be
decided by the nature of the truth for which we are seeking.
We do not turn to Bradshaw for the eternal verities, nor to
Wordsworth for the times of the trains to Cumberland.

The philological works of Archbishop Trench fall between
our extreme examples. In many details they are out-of-date,
because they are inaccurate where accuracy is desirable. Thus,
Trench makes "lass" the feminine of "lad" by supposing it
the contraction of "laddess." Now, though we possess both
"abbotess" and "abbess," one is not a contraction of the
other, just as "frail" is not a contraction of "fragile." Trench's
"laddess" is a purely hypothetical and, in fact, non-existent
word; and whatever be the derivation of "lass," it has certainly
no connection with "lad." The actual amount of fanciful
etymology in Trench is, however, much less than might be
expected, even though his book appeared a year before
Jakob Grimm's *Deutsches Worterbuch* laid the foundations
of modern philology. But the archbishop's linguistic acquire­
ments were very considerable, and to his zeal for the study of
words there stands a noble and enduring monument. The
Preface to our great national Dictionary opens with this
passage: "The story of the origin and progress of the New
ENGLISH DICTIONARY has been told at length in various
literary journals and magazines, and is familiar to most
persons interested in the study of the English language. The
scheme originated in a resolution of the Philological Society,
passed in 1857, at the suggestion of the late Archbishop
Trench, when Dean of Westminster. It was proposed that
materials should be collected for a Dictionary which, by the
completeness of its vocabulary, and by the application of the
historical method to the life and use of words, might be worthy
of the English language and of English scholarship." And
first in the list of those who co-operated in the great work
stands the name of Trench himself.

It will not be claimed, of course, that, as a set-off against
occasional inaccuracy of detail, the works of Trench have
the kind or degree of truth to be found in Homer and Shake-
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Nevertheless they embody one great truth of which Trench was the most eloquent among preachers, a truth vital at all times, and specially important in the present days of universal reading and almost universal writing: the truth that words have a genuine life of their own, and that our recognition of that life is a measure of our understanding. As good, almost, kill a good man as kill a good word. When education was restricted to a few, and consisted largely in a cultivation of verbal niceties, those who used words used them well. Etymology was a recreation of English country gentlemen. They enjoyed the life of a word as they enjoyed the death of a fox; and their spiritual descendants still occasionally enliven the columns of our graver newspapers with conjectures that might have been plausible a century ago. But that kind of interest in words, though not extinguished, is now almost swamped by indifference. Purley has other diversions.

What is wrong with current speech and writing is not that they use new words, but that they misuse the old. Slang always horrifies a few sensitive spirits, yet it ends by being respectable. "Mob" was a vulgar contraction in the time of Swift and Addison. A later generation does not even know that it is a contraction, and would not suspect its relation to "mobilise." A healthy language will absorb all the new words it needs, whatever their source; but even the healthiest language will hardly survive mass-attacks on its delicacies of meaning. We live in the days of universal instruction, when children are taught the art of composition by teachers who have never learnt it. Many people seem to suppose that there is nothing to learn, and share the opinion of an earlier educationist, that to write comes by nature. The fact is that, in all kinds of schools, the majority of pupils learn enough to rob them of simplicity and not enough to give them security. They think it babyish to write with plain directness, and fly to distended phrases and bombastic locutions of which they do not know the meaning. Do people who accept invitations with the words "I shall be only too glad to come," instead of "I shall be glad to come," appreciate the difference made by the redundant words? Those who have lost simplicity appear to find comfort in polysyllables. Here is a passage from a printed periodical, the name of which I mercifully suppress: "The issue that vivifies our memories of Nottingham dictated our devotions for less than thirty minutes: no motion provocatively controversial fired delegates to verbal slaughter.

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Conference lacked in consequence elements of Dionysian drama, and insufficient compensation was found in the readings of certain delegates, even though these strangers to London maintained the meticulous regard for punctuation and expression that contributed an unquestioned cachet to 1925 readings."

There are two or three columns in this manner, not intended, apparently, to be humorous. Our daily friend "meticulous" appears to be used correctly; at least we may give it the benefit of the doubt. But it is obviously there because it has a journalistic flavour. Why there should now be a passion for this word is difficult to explain. It is far-fetched, and it is rarely used with any regard to the sense. "Move circumspectly, not meticulously," says Sir Thomas Browne, beautifully and exactly, in his Christian Morals. But Flecker in his Hassan speaks of "jams meticulously jarred," and the phrase is held up to our admiration instead of to our derision.

The less felicitous phrases and flights of our periodicals seem to fascinate the unwary. "More honoured in the breach than in the observance" is probably the most ill-used quotation in our language. "We are afraid that in the case of some motorists the rule of the road is more honoured in the breach than in the observance." The sentence is pure nonsense. The rule of the road is always more honoured in the observance than in the breach. And what is the advantage of "in the case of some motorists" over "by some motorists"? The writer is trying to say that some motorists often break the rule of the road. He has used twice as many words and has said the opposite of what he means.

No speech or article is now complete without "works of supererogation," a sounding phrase that appears to give great satisfaction to those who think it a learned variant of "carrying coals to Newcastle." "To say anything more in praise of Mr. Brown," observes a polite chairman, "would be a work of supererogation." But it would be nothing of the sort. Unnecessary actions are not works of supererogation, as anyone may discover by referring to number fourteen of the Thirty-nine Articles of Religion, an admirable set of compositions, too little read, as well as too little observed.

" Absolutely" is now the office-boy's adverb-of-all-work, and will probably never be restored to its great meaning; but we should do something to save "literally." Our speech, as Trench points out, is full of poetry. Hidden figures lurk in
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every sentence. Indeed, we have so grown to accept this unconscious poetry as part of man's normal utterance that we are compelled to issue a warning whenever we resort to plain statement. That warning is the word "literally." Hearing it, we are meant to understand that, in this instance, the very "letter" of the meaning is to be taken. And yet, having this warning, we wilfully destroy it, as Sir Ralph the Rover cut the bell from the Inchcape Rock; and so we find, for instance, a clergyman (of all people!) announcing that, for him, the words of a certain statesman are "literally vox Dei." No wonder that the laity "literally boil with indignation."

If we use words incorrectly in writing, we understand them incorrectly in reading. Someone told me the other day that he was "continuously" at a certain place that he visits often. What meaning, then, can he attach to lines like these?

Continuous as the stars that shine
And twinkle on the Milky Way.

The request of certain employees for an increase of wages was lately called "a preposterous demand." How do those who use such a phrase understand the lines of Puck?

And those things do best please me
That befal preposterously.

That Titania should love an ass, and that two lovers, professing to love one woman, should suddenly be made to woo another, are indeed preposterous proceedings; but the request for a rise in salary is not an inversion of the natural order. And how can those who use coarsely the words "substantial," "substantially," ever feel the moving antithesis in lines like these?

The glories of our blood and state,
Are shadows, not substantial things.

Politicians are great corrupters of words. Dealing habitually with evasions, and forced to conceal their meaning, or lack of meaning, they retire behind a cloud of vaguely used polysyllables, and their words, broadcast by the newspapers, infect the domestic breakfast-table, and the club luncheon-table, and the evening gatherings of village Hampdens; and out of this muddle of words there comes a muddle of ideas. The sloven in words is a sloven in thought. So rooted is the political preference for polysyllables that a minister of state
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says "definitive" when he means "definite," and is surprised to find that he has precipitated a strike.

Words are mystical things—the most marvellous of man's inventions. They are the embodiment of the invisible. To use them rightly is an obligation, and should be a delight. This is the message that Trench delivered with a fervour and charm that seven decades have not weakened. We are sometimes urged to think Imperially. We are less often urged to speak or write Imperially. Yet great ideas cannot exist where words are base. Men have fought for a word and died for a letter. Is not the study of words worth while? Let us read our Trench, then, with reverence for a great subject and with the gratitude rightly due to the father of the world's best dictionary.

GEORGE SAMPSON.

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INTRODUCTION

ON THE STUDY OF WORDS
PREFACE TO THE FIRST EDITION

These lectures will not, I trust, be found anywhere to have left out of sight seriously, or for long, the peculiar needs of those for whom they were originally intended, and to whom they were primarily addressed. I am conscious indeed, here and there, of a certain departure from my first intention, having been in part seduced to this by a circumstance which I had not in the least contemplated when I obtained permission to deliver them, by finding, namely, that I should have other hearers besides the pupils of the Training School. Some matter adapted for those rather than for these I was thus led to introduce—which afterwards I was unwilling, in preparing for the press, to remove; on the contrary adding to it rather, in the hope of obtaining thus a somewhat wider circle of readers than I could have hoped, had I more rigidly restricted myself in the choice of my materials. Yet I should greatly regret to have admitted so much of this as should deprive these lectures of their fitness for those whose profit in writing and in publishing I had mainly in view, namely, schoolmasters and those preparing to be such.

Had I known any book entering with any fulness, and in a popular manner, into the subject matter of these pages, and making it its exclusive theme, I might still have delivered these lectures, but should scarcely have sought for them a wider audience than their first, gladly leaving the matter in their hands whose studies in language had been fuller and riper than my own. But abundant and ready to hand as are the materials for such a book, I did not; while yet it seems to me that the subject is one to which it is beyond measure desirable that their attention, who are teaching, or shall have hereafter to teach, others should be directed; so that they shall learn to regard language as one of the chiefest organs of their own education and that of others. For I am persuaded that I have used no exaggeration in saying, that for many a young man "his first discovery that words are living powers, has been like the dropping of scales from his eyes, like the acquiring of another sense,
or the introduction into a new world,”—while yet all this may be indefinitely deferred, may, indeed, never find place at all, unless there is some one at hand to help for him and to hasten the process; and he who so does, will ever after be esteemed by him as one of his very foremost benefactors. Whatever may be Horne Tooke’s shortcomings, whether in occasional details of etymology, or in the philosophy of grammar, or in matters more serious still, yet, with all this, what an epoch in many a student’s intellectual life has been his first acquaintance with The Diversions of Purley. And they were not among the least of the obligations which the young men of our time owed to Coleridge, that he so often himself weighed words in the balances, and so earnestly pressed upon all with whom his voice went for anything, the profit which they would find in so doing. Nor, with the certainty that I am anticipating much in my little volume, can I refrain from quoting some words which were not present with me during its composition, although I must have been familiar with them long ago; words which express excellently well why it is that these studies profit so much, and which will also explain the motives which induced me to add my little contribution to their furtherance:

“A language will often be wiser, not merely than the vulgar, but even than the wisest of those who speak it. Being like amber in its efficacy to circulate the electric spirit of truth, it is also like amber in embalming and preserving the relics of ancient wisdom, although one is not seldom puzzled to decipher its contents. Sometimes it locks up truths which were once well known, but which, in the course of ages, have passed out of sight and been forgotten. In other cases it holds the germs of truths, of which, though they were never plainly discerned, the genius of its framers caught a glimpse in a happy moment of divination. A meditative man cannot refrain from wonder, when he digs down to the deep thought lying at the root of many a metaphorical term, employed for the designation of spiritual things, even of those with regard to which professing philosophers have blundered grossly; and often it would seem as though rays of truths, which were still below the intellectual horizon, had dawned upon the imagination as it was looking up to heaven. Hence they who feel an inward call to teach and enlighten their countrymen, should deem it an important part of their duty to draw out the stores of thought which are already latent in their native language, to purify it from the corruptions which Time brings upon all things, and from which language has no exemp-
tion, and to endeavour to give distinctness and precision to whatever in it is confused, or obscure, or dimly seen."

I will only add, that if I have not owned one by one my obligations to each writer who has helped me here—obligations which readers familiar with the subject will recognise at once—this has arisen from no desire to escape the acknowledgment, but only from the popular character of these lectures, in which multiplied references would have been plainly out of place.

ITCHENSTOCKE, October 9, 1851.

1 Guesses at Truth, First Series, p. 295.
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LECTURE I

INTRODUCTORY

There are few who would not readily acknowledge that mainly in worthy books are preserved and hoarded the treasures of wisdom and knowledge which the world has accumulated; and that chiefly by aid of these they are handed down from one generation to another. I shall urge on you in these lectures something different from this; namely, that not in books only, which all acknowledge, nor yet in connected oral discourse, but often also in words contemplated singly, there are boundless stores of moral and historic truth, and no less of passion and imagination, laid up—that from these, lessons of infinite worth may be derived, if only our attention is roused to their existence. I shall urge on you (though with teaching such as you enjoy, the subject will not be new) how well it will repay you to study the words which you are in the habit of using or of meeting, be they such as relate to highest spiritual things, or our common words of the shop and the market, and all the familiar intercourse of life. It will indeed repay you far better than you can easily believe. I am sure, at least, that for many a young man his first discovery of the fact that words are living powers, are the vesture, yea, even the body, which thoughts weave for themselves, has been like the dropping of scales from his eyes, like the acquiring of another sense, or the introduction into a new world; he is never able to cease wondering at the moral marvels that surround him on every side, and ever reveal themselves more and more to his gaze.

We indeed hear it not seldom said that ignorance is the mother of admiration. A falser word was never spoken, and hardly a more mischievous one; for it seems to imply that this healthiest exercise of the mind rests, for the most part, on a deceit and
illusion, and that with better knowledge it would cease; while, in truth, for once that ignorance leads us to admire that which with fuller insight we should perceive to be a common thing, and one demanding therefore no such tribute from us, an hundred, nay, a thousand times, it prevents us from admiring that which is admirable indeed. And this is so, whether we are moving in the region of nature, which is the region of God's wonders, or even in the region of art, which is the region of man's wonders; and nowhere truer than in this sphere and region of language which is about to claim us now. Oftentimes here we move up and down in the midst of intellectual and moral marvels with vacant eye and with careless mind, even as some traveller passes unmoved over fields of fame, or through cities of ancient renown—unmoved, because utterly unconscious of the lofty deeds which there have been wrought, of the great hearts which spent themselves there. We, like him, wanting the knowledge and insight which would have served to kindle admiration in us, are oftentimes deprived of this pure and elevating excitement of the mind, and miss no less that manifold teaching and instruction which ever lie about our path, and nowhere more largely than in our daily words, if only we knew how to put forth our hands and make it our own. "What riches," one exclaims, "lie hidden in the vulgar tongue of our poorest and most ignorant. What flowers of paradise lie under our feet, with their beauties and their parts undistinguished and undiscerned, from having been daily trodden on."

And this subject upon which we are thus entering ought not to be a dull or uninteresting one in the handling, or one to which only by an effort you will yield the attention which I shall claim. If it shall prove so, this I fear must be through the fault of my manner of treating it; for certainly in itself there is no study which may be made at once more instructive and entertaining than the study of the use, origin, and distinction of words, which is exactly that which I now propose to myself and to you. I remember a very learned scholar to whom we owe one of our best Greek lexicons, a book which must have cost him years, speaking in the preface to his great work with a just disdain of some, who complained of the irksome drudgery of such toils as those which had engaged him so long—thus irksome, forsooth, because they only had to do with words; who claimed pity for themselves, as though they had been so many galley-slaves chained to the oar, or martyrs who had offered themselves to the good of the rest of the literary world. He declares that, for
his part, the task of classing, sorting, grouping, comparing, tracing the derivation and usage of words, had been to him no drudgery, but a delight and labour of love.

And if this may be true in regard of a foreign tongue, how much truer ought it to be in regard of our own, of our "mother tongue," as we fondly call it. A great writer not very long departed from us has here borne witness at once to the pleasantness and profit of this study. "In a language," he says, "like ours, where so many words are derived from other languages, there are few modes of instruction more useful or more amusing than that of accustoming young people to seek for the etymology or primary meaning of the words they use. There are cases in which more knowledge of more value may be conveyed by the history of a word than by the history of a campaign."

And, implying the same truth, a popular American author has somewhere characterised language as "fossil poetry." He evidently means that just as in some fossil, curious and beautiful shapes of vegetable or animal life, the graceful fern or the finely vertebraed lizard, such as now, it may be, have been extinct for thousands of years, are permanently bound up with the stone, and rescued from that perishing which would have otherwise been theirs—so in words are beautiful thoughts and images, the imagination and the feeling of past ages, of men long since in their graves, of men whose very names have perished, these, which would so easily have perished too, preserved and made safe for ever. The phrase is a striking one; the only fault which one might be tempted to find with it is, that it is too narrow. Language may be, and indeed is, this "fossil poetry;" but it may be affirmed of it with exactly the same truth that it is fossil ethics, or fossil history. Words quite as often and as effectually embody facts of history, or convictions of the moral common sense, as of the imagination or passion of men; even as, so far as that moral sense may be perverted, they will bear witness and keep a record of that perversion. On all these points I shall enter at full in after lectures; but I may give by anticipation a specimen or two of what I mean, to make from the first my purpose and plan more fully intelligible to all.

Language then is fossil poetry; in other words, we are not to look for the poetry which a people may possess only in its poems, or its poetical customs, traditions, and beliefs. Many a single word also is itself a concentrated poem, having stores of poetical thought and imagery laid up in it. Examine it, and it will be found to rest on some deep analogy of things natural and things
spiritual; bringing those to illustrate and to give an abiding form and body to these. The image may have grown trite and ordinary now; perhaps through the help of this very word may have become so entirely the heritage of all, as to seem little better than a commonplace; yet not the less he who first discerned the relation, and devised the new word which should express it, or gave to an old, never before but literally used, this new and figurative sense, this man was in his degree a poet—a maker, that is, of things which were not before, which would not have existed but for him, or for some other gifted with equal powers.

He who spake first of a “dilapidated” fortune, what an image must have risen up before his mind’s eye of some falling house or palace, stone detaching itself from stone, till all had gradually sunk into desolation and ruin. Or he who to that Greek word which signifies “that which will endure to be held up to and judged by the sunlight,” gave first its ethical signification of “sincere,” “truthful,” or as we sometimes say, “transparent,” can we deny to him the poet’s feeling and eye? Many a man had gazed, we may be sure, at the jagged and indented mountain ridges of Spain, before one called them “sierras” or “saws,” the name by which now they are known, as Sierra Morena, Sierra Nevada; but that man coined his imagination into a word which will endure as long as the everlasting hills which he named.

“Iliads without an Homer,” some one has called, with a little exaggeration, the beautiful but anonymous ballad poetry of Spain. One may be permitted, perhaps, to push the exaggeration a little further in the same direction, and to apply the same language not merely to a ballad but to a word. Let me illustrate that which I have been here saying somewhat more at length by the word “tribulation.” We all know in a general way that this word, which occurs not seldom in Scripture and in the Liturgy, means affliction, sorrow, anguish; but it is quite worth our while to know how it means this, and to question the word a little closer. It is derived from the Latin “tribulum”—which was the threshing instrument or roller, whereby the Roman husbandmen separated the corn from the husks; and “tribulatio” in its primary significance was the act of this separation. But some Latin writer of the Christian Church appropriated the word and image for the setting forth of an higher truth; and sorrow, distress, and adversity being the appointed means for the separating in men of whatever in them was light, trivial and poor from the solid and the true, their chaff from their wheat, therefore he called these sorrows and griefs “tribula-
tions," threshings, that is, of the inner spiritual man, without which there could be no fitting him for the heavenly garner. Now in proof of my assertion that a single word is often a concentrated poem, a little grain of gold capable of being beaten out into a broad extent of gold-leaf, I will quote, in reference to this very word "tribulation," a graceful composition by George Wither, an early English poet, which you will at once perceive is all wrapped up in this word, being from first to last only the expanding of the image and thought which this word has implicitly given:

Till from the straw, the flail the corn doth beat,
Until the chaff be purged from the wheat,
Yea, till the mill the grains in pieces tear,
The richness of the flour will scarce appear.
So, till men's persons great afflictions touch,
If worth be found, their worth is not so much,
Because, like wheat in straw, they have not yet
That value which in threshing they may get.
For till the bruising flails of God's corrections
Have threshed out of us our vain affections;
Till those corruptions which do misbecome us
Are by Thy sacred Spirit winnowed from us;
Until from us the straw of worldly treasures,
Till all the dusty chaff of empty pleasures,
Yea, till His flail upon us He doth lay,
To thresh the husk of this our flesh away;
And leave the soul uncovered; nay, yet more,
Till God shall make our very spirit poor,
We shall not up to highest wealth aspire;
But then we shall; and that is my desire.

This deeper religious use of the word "tribulation" was unknown to classical, that is to heathen, antiquity, and belongs exclusively to the Christian writers; and the fact that the same deepening and elevating of the use of words recurs in a multitude of other, and many of them far more striking, instances, is one well deserving to be followed up. Nothing, I think, would more strongly bring before us what a new power Christianity was in the world than to compare the meaning which so many words possessed before its rise, and the deeper meaning which they obtained so soon as they were assumed by it as the vehicles of its life, the new thought and feeling enlarging, purifying, and ennobling the very words which they employed. This is a subject which I shall have occasion to touch on more than once in these lectures, but is itself well worthy of, as it would afford ample material for, a volume.

But it was said just now that words often contain a witness for great moral truths—God having impressed such a seal of
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truth upon language, that men are continually uttering deeper things than they know, asserting mighty principles, it may be asserting them against themselves, in words that to them may seem nothing more than the current coin of society. Thus to what grand moral purposes Bishop Butler turns the word “pastime;” how solemn the testimony which he compels the world, out of its own use of this word, to render against itself—obliging it to own that its amusements and pleasures do not really satisfy the mind and fill it with the sense of an abiding and satisfying joy; they are only “pastime;” they serve only, as this word confesses, to pass away the time, to prevent it from hanging, an intolerable burden, on men’s hands; all which they can do at the best is to prevent men from discovering and attending to their own internal poverty and dissatisfaction and want. He might have added that there is the same acknowledgment in the word “diversion,” which means no more than that which diverts or turns us aside from ourselves, and in this way helps us to forget ourselves for a little. And thus it would appear that, even according to the world’s own confession, all which it proposes is—not to make us happy, but a little to prevent us from remembering that we are unhappy, to pass away our time, to divert us from ourselves. While on the other hand we declare that the good which will really fill our souls and satisfy them to the uttermost, is not in us, but without us and above us, in the words which we use to set forth any transcending delight. Take three or four of these words—“transport,” “rapture,” “ravishment,” “ecstasy”—“transport,” that which carries us, as “rapture,” or “ravishment,” that which snatches us, out of and above ourselves; and “ecstasy” is very nearly the same, only drawn from the Greek.

And not less, where a perversion of the moral sense has found place, words preserve oftentimes a record of this perversion. We have a signal example of this, even as it is a notable evidence of the manner in which moral contagion, spreading from heart and manners, invades the popular language in the use, or rather misuse, of the word “religion,” during all the ages of Papal domination in Europe. Probably many of you are aware that in those times a “religious person” did not mean any one who felt and allowed the bonds that bound him to God and to his fellow-men, but one who had taken peculiar vows upon him, a member of one of the monkish orders; a “religious” house did not mean, nor does it now mean in the Church of Rome, a Christian house-

1 Sermon xiv. “Upon the Love of God.”
hold, ordered in the fear of God, but an house in which these persons were gathered together according to the rule of some man, Benedict, or Dominic, or some other. A "religion" meant not a service of God, but an order of monantry; and taking the monastic vows was termed going into a "religion." Now what an awful light does this one word so used throw on the entire state of mind and habits of thought in those ages! That then was "religion," and nothing else was deserving of the name! And "religious" was a title which might not be given to parents and children, husbands and wives, men and women fulfilling faithfully and holily in the world the several duties of their stations, but only to those who had devised self-chosen service for themselves.1

In like manner that "lewd," which meant at one time no more than "lay," or unlearned—the "lewd" people, the lay people—should come to signify the sinful, the vicious, is not a little worthy of note. How forcibly we are reminded here of that saying of the Pharisees of old: "This people which knoweth not the law is cursed;" how much of their spirit must have been at work before the word could have acquired this secondary meaning.

But language is fossil history as well. What a record of great social revolutions, revolutions in nations and in the feelings of nations, the one word "frank" contains; which is used, as we all know, to express aught that is generous, straightforward, and free. The Franks, I need not remind you, were a powerful German tribe, or association of tribes, which at the breaking up of the Roman Empire possessed themselves of Gaul, to which they gave their own name. They were the ruling conquering people, honourably distinguished from the Gauls and degenerate Romans among whom they established themselves by their independence, their love of freedom, their scorn of a lie; they had, in short, the virtues which belong to a conquering and dominant race in the midst of an inferior and conquered one. And thus it came to pass that by degrees the name "frank," which may have originally indicated merely a national, came to involve a moral,

1 A reviewer in Fraser's Magazine, December 1851 in the main a favourable, and always a kind one, doubts whether I have not here pushed my assertion too far. So far from this being the case, it was not merely "the popular language," as I have expressed myself, which this corruption had invaded, but a decree of the great Fourth Lateran Council (a.d. 1215), forbidding the further multiplication of monastic Orders, runs thus: "Ne nisius religionum diversitas gravem in Ecclesiâ Dei confusionem inducat, firmiter prohibemus, ne quis de cetero novam religionem inveniat, sed quicunque voluerit ad religionem converti, unam de approbatis assumat."
distinction as well; and a "frank" man was synonymous not merely with a man of the conquering German race, but was an epithet applied to a person possessed of certain high moral qualities, which for the most part appertained to, and were found only in, men of that stock; and thus in men's daily discourse, when they speak of a person as being "frank," or when they use the words "franchise," "enfranchisement," to express civil liberties and immunities, their language here is the outgrowth, the record, and the result of great historic changes, bears testimony to facts of history, whereof it may well happen that the speakers have never heard. Let me suggest to you the word "slave" as one which has undergone a process entirely analogous, although in an opposite direction.  

Having given by anticipation this handful of examples in illustration of what in these lectures I propose, I will, before proceeding further, make a few observations on a subject which, if we would go at all to the root of the matter, we can scarcely leave altogether untouched—I mean the origin of language; in which yet we will not entangle ourselves deeper than we need. There are, or rather there have been, two theories about this. One, and that which rather has been than now is, for few maintain it still, would put language on the same level with the various arts and inventions with which man has gradually adorned and enriched his life. It would make him by degrees to have invented it, just as he might have invented any of these, for himself; and from rude imperfect beginnings, the inarticulate cries by which he expressed his natural wants, the sounds by which he sought to imitate the impression of natural objects upon him, little by little to have arrived at that wondrous organ of thought and feeling, which his language is often to him now.

It might, I think, be sufficient to object to this explanation, that language would then be an accident of human nature; and, this being the case, that we certainly should somewhere encounter tribes sunken so low as not to possess it; even as there is no human art or invention, though it be as simple and obvious as the preparing of food by fire, but there are those who have fallen below its exercise. But with language it is not so. There have never yet been found human beings, not the most degraded horde of South-African bushmen, or Papuan cannibals, who did not employ this means of intercourse with one another. But the

\[\text{1 See Gibbon's } \textit{Decline and Fall}, \text{ chap. iv.}\]
more decisive objection to this view of the matter is, that it hangs together with, and is indeed an essential part of, that theory of society, which is contradicted alike by every page of Genesis, and every notice of our actual experience—the "orang-outang" theory, as it has been so happily termed—that, I mean, according to which the primitive condition of man was the savage one, and the savage himself the seed out of which in due time the civilised man was unfolded; whereas, in fact, so far from being this living seed, he might more justly be considered as a dead withered leaf, torn violently away from the great trunk of humanity, and with no more power to produce anything nobler than himself out of himself, than that dead withered leaf to unfold itself into the oak of the forest. So far from being the child with the latent capacities of manhood, he is himself rather the man prematurely aged, and decrepit, and outworn.

But the truer answer to the inquiry how language arose is this, that God gave man language, just as He gave him reason, and just because He gave him reason (for what is man's word but his reason coming forth, so that it may behold itself?), that He gave it to him because he could not be man, that is, a social being, without it. Yet this must not be taken to affirm that man started at the first furnished with a full-formed vocabulary of words, and as it were with his first dictionary and first grammar ready-made to his hands. He did not thus begin the world with names, but with the power of naming: for man is not a mere speaking machine; God did not teach him words, as one of us teaches a parrot, from without; but gave him a capacity, and then evoked the capacity which He gave. Here, as in everything else that concerns the primitive constitution, the great original institutes of humanity, our best and truest lights are to be gotten from the study of the three first chapters of Genesis; and you will observe that there it is not God who imposed the first names on the creatures, but Adam—Adam, however, at the direct suggestion of his Creator. He brought them all, we are told, to Adam, "to see what he would call them, and whatsoever Adam called every living creature, that was the name thereof" (Gen. ii. 19). Here we have the clearest intimation of the origin, at once divine and human, of speech; while yet neither is so brought forward as to exclude or obscure the other.

And so far we may concede a limited amount of right to those who have held a progressive acquisition, on man's part, of the power of embodying thought in words. I believe that we should conceive the actual case most truly, if we conceived this power
of naming things and expressing their relations, as one laid up in the depths of man's being, one of the divine capacities with which he was created: but one (and in this differing from those which have produced in various people various arts of life) which could not remain dormant in him, for man could be only man through its exercise; which therefore did rapidly bud and blossom out from within him at every solicitation from the world without, or from his fellow-man; as each object to be named appeared before his eyes, each relation of things to one another arose before his mind. It was not the possible only, but the necessary, emanation of the spirit with which he had been endowed. Man makes his own language, but he makes it as the bee makes its cells, as the bird its nest.

How this latent power evolved itself first, how this spontaneous generation of language came to pass, is a mystery, even as every act of creation is of necessity such; and as a mystery all the deepest inquirers into the subject are content to leave it. Yet we may perhaps a little help ourselves to the realising of what the process was, and what it was not, if we liken it to the growth of a tree springing out of, and unfolding itself from, a root, and according to a necessary law—that root being the divine capacity of language with which man was created, that law being the law of highest reason with which he was endowed: if we liken it to this rather than to the rearing of an house, which a man should slowly and painfully fashion for himself with dead timbers combined after his own fancy and caprice; and which little by little improved in shape, material and size, being first but a log-house, answering his barest needs, and only after centuries of toil and pain growing for his sons' sons into a stately palace for pleasure and delight.

Were it otherwise, were the savage the primitive man, we should then find savage tribes furnished, scantily enough, it might be, with the elements of speech, yet at the same time with its fruitful beginnings, its vigorous and healthful germs. But what does their language on close inspection prove? In every case what they are themselves, the remnant and ruin of a better and a nobler past. Fearful indeed is the impress of degradation which is stamped on the language of the savage, more fearful perhaps even than that which is stamped upon his form. When wholly letting go the truth, when long and greatly sinning against light and conscience, a people has thus gone the downward way, has been scattered off by some violent revolution from that portion of the world which is the seat of advance and
progress, and driven to its remote isles and further corners, then as one nobler thought, one spiritual idea after another has perished from it, the words also that expressed these have perished too. As one habit of civilisation has been let go after another, the words also which those habits demanded have dropped, first out of use, and then out of memory, and, thus after awhile have been wholly lost.

Moffat, in his Missionary Labours and Scenes in South Africa, gives us a very remarkable example of the disappearing of one of the most significant words from the language of a tribe sinking ever deeper in savagery; and with the disappearing of the word, of course, the disappearing as well of the great spiritual fact and truth whereof that word was at once the vehicle and the guardian. The Bechuana, a Caffre tribe, employed formerly the word “Morimo” to designate “Him that is above,” or “Him that is in heaven,” and attached to the word the notion of a supreme Divine Being. This word, with the spiritual idea corresponding to it, Moffat found to have vanished from the language of the present generation, although here and there he could meet with an old man, scarcely one or two in a thousand, who remembered in his youth to have heard speak of “Morimo,” and this word, once so deeply significant, only survived now in the spells and charms of the so-called rain-makers and sorcerers, who misused it to designate a fabulous ghost, of whom they told the most contradictory things.

And as there is no such witness to the degradation of the savage as the brutal poverty of his language, so is there nothing that so effectually tends to keep him in the depths to which he has fallen. You cannot impart to any man more than the words which he understands either now contain, or can be made, intelligibly to him, to contain. Language is as truly on one side the limit and restraint of thought, as on the other side that which feeds and unfolds it. Thus it is the ever-repeated complaint of the missionary that the very terms are wholly or nearly wholly wanting in the dialect of the savage whereby to impart to him heavenly truths, or indeed even the nobler emotions of the human heart. Dobrizhoffer, the Jesuit missionary, in his curious History of the Abipones, tells us that neither they nor the Guarimes, two of the principal native tribes of Brazil, possessed any word in the least corresponding to our “thanks.” But what wonder, if the feeling of gratitude was entirely absent from their hearts, that they should not have possessed the corresponding word in their vocabularies? Nay, how should they have had it there?
And that this is the true explanation is plain from a fact which the same writer records, that although inveterate askers, they never showed the slightest sense of obligation or of gratitude when they obtained what they sought; never saying more than, "This will be useful to me," or, "This is what I wanted."

Nor is it only in what they have forfeited and lost, but also in what they have retained or invented, that these languages proclaim their degradation and debasement, and how deeply they and those that speak them have fallen. Thus I have read of a tribe in New Holland which has no word to signify God, but has a word to designate a process by which an unborn child may be destroyed in the bosom of its mother. And I have been informed, on the authority of one excellently capable of knowing, an English scholar long resident in Van Diemen's Land, that in the native language of that island there are four words to express the taking of human life—one to express a father's killing of a son, another a son's killing of a father, with other varieties of murder; and that in no one of these lies the slightest moral reprobation, or sense of the deep-lying distinction between to kill and to murder; while at the same time, of that language so richly and so fearfully provided with expressions for this extreme utterance of hate, he also reports that any word for "love" is wanting in it altogether.

Yet with all this, ever and anon in the midst of this wreck and ruin there is that in the language of the savage, some subtle distinction, some curious allusion to a perished civilisation, now utterly unintelligible to the speaker, or some other note, which proclaims his language to be the remains of a dissipated inheritance, the rags and remnants of a robe which was a royal one once. The fragments of a broken sceptre are in his hand, a sceptre wherewith once he held dominion (he, that is, in his progenitors) over large kingdoms of thought, which now have escaped wholly from his sway.

But while it is thus with him, while this is the downward course of all those that have chosen the downward path, while with every impoverishing and debasing of personal or national life there goes hand in hand a corresponding impoverishment and debasement of language, so on the contrary, where there is advance and progress, where a divine idea is in any measure realising itself in a people, where they are learning more accurately to define and distinguish, more truly to know, where they are ruling, as men ought to rule, over nature, and making her to give up her secrets to them, where new thoughts are
rising up over the horizon of a nation's mind, new feelings are stirring at a nation's heart, new facts coming within the sphere of its knowledge, there will language be growing and advancing too. It cannot lag behind; for man feels that nothing is properly his own, that he has not secured any new thought, or entered upon any new spiritual inheritance, till he has fixed it in language, till he can contemplate it, not as himself, but as his word; he is conscious that he must express truth, if he is to preserve it, and still more if he would propagate it among others. “Names,” as it has been excellently said, “are impressions of sense, and as such take the strongest hold upon the mind, and of all other impressions can be most easily recalled and retained in view. They therefore serve to give a point of attachment to all the more volatile objects of thought and feeling. Impressions that when past might be dissipated for ever, are by their connexion with language always within reach. Thoughts, of themselves, are perpetually slipping out of the field of immediate mental vision; but the name abides with us, and the utterance of it restores them in a moment.” And on the necessity of names for the propagation of the truth it has been well observed: “Hardly any original thoughts on mental or social subjects ever make their way among mankind, or assume their proper importance in the minds even of their inventors, until aptly selected words or phrases have as it were nailed them down and held them fast.”

Nor does what has here been said of the manner in which language enriches itself contradict a prior assertion that man starts with language as God’s perfect gift, which he only impairs and forfeits by sloth and sin, according to the same law which holds good in respect of each other of the gifts of heaven. For it was not meant, as indeed was then observed, that men would possess words to set forth feelings which were not yet stirring in them, combinations which they had not yet made, objects which they had not yet seen, relations of which they were not yet conscious; but that up to his needs (those needs including not merely his animal wants, but all his higher spiritual cravings) he would find utterance freely. The great logical, or grammatical, framework of language (for grammar is the logic of speech, even as logic is the grammar of reason) he would possess, he knew not how; and certainly not as the final result of gradual acquisitions, but as that rather which alone had made those acquisitions possible; as that according to which he unconsciously worked, filling in this framework by degrees with these later acquisitions
of thought, feeling, and experience, as one by one they arrayed themselves in the garment and vesture of words.

Here then is the explanation of the fact that language should be thus instructive for us, that it should yield us so much, when we come to analyse and probe it; and the more, the more deeply and accurately we do so. It is full of instruction, because it is the embodiment, the incarnation, if I may so speak, of the feelings and thoughts and experiences of a nation, yea, often of many nations, and of all which through long centuries they have attained to and won. It stands like the pillars of Hercules, to mark how far the moral and intellectual conquests of mankind have advanced, only not like those pillars, fixed and immovable, but ever itself advancing with the progress of these. The mighty moral instincts which have been working in the popular mind have found therein their unconscious voice; and the single kinglier spirits that have looked deeper into the heart of things have oftentimes gathered up all they have seen into some one word, which they have launched upon the world, and with which they have enriched it for ever—making in that new word a new region of thought to be henceforward in some sort the common heritage of all. Language is the amber in which a thousand precious and subtle thoughts have been safely embedded and preserved. It has arrested ten thousand lightning flashes of genius, which, unless thus fixed and arrested, might have been as bright, but would have also been as quickly passing and perishing, as the lightning. "Words convey the mental treasures of one period to the generations that follow; and laden with this, their precious freight, they sail safely across gulfs of time in which empires have suffered shipwreck, and the languages of common life have sunk into oblivion." And for all these reasons, far more and mightier in every way is a language than any one of the works which may have been composed in it. For that work, great as it may be, is but the embodying of the mind of a single man, this of a nation. The Iliad is great, yet not so great in strength or power or beauty as the Greek language. Paradise Lost is a noble possession for a people to have inherited, but the English tongue is a nobler heritage yet.

Great then will be our gains, if, having these treasures of wisdom and knowledge lying round about us, so far more precious than mines of Californian gold, we determine that we will make what portion of them we can our own, that we will ask the words which we use to give an account of themselves, to say whence they are, and whither they tend. Then shall we
ON THE STUDY OF WORDS

often rub off the dust and rust from what seemed but a common token, which we had taken and given a thousand times, esteeming it no better, but which now we shall perceive to be a precious coin, bearing the "image and superscription" of the great King: then shall we often stand in surprise and in something of shame, while we behold the great spiritual realities which underlie our common speech, the marvellous truths which we have been witnessing for in our words, but, it may be, witnessing against in our lives. And as you will not find, for so I venture to promise, that this study of words will be a dull one when you undertake it yourselves, as little need you fear that it will prove dull and unattractive when you seek to make your own gains herein the gains also of those who may be hereafter committed to your charge. Only try your pupils, and mark the kindling of the eye, the lighting up of the countenance, the revival of the flagging attention, with which the humblest lecture upon words, and on the words especially which they are daily using, which are familiar to them in their play or at their church, will be welcomed by them. There is a sense of reality about children which makes them rejoice to discover that there is also a reality about words, that they are not merely arbitrary signs, but living powers; that, to reverse the words of one of England's "false prophets," they may be the fool's counters, but are the wise man's money; not, like the sands of the sea, innumerable disconnected atoms, but growing out of roots, clustering in families, connecting and intertwining themselves with all that men have been doing and thinking and feeling from the beginning of the world till now.

And it is of course our English tongue, out of which mainly we should seek to draw some of the hid treasures which it contains, from which we should endeavour to remove the veil which custom and familiarity have thrown over it. We cannot employ ourselves better. There is nothing that will more help to form an English heart in ourselves and in others than will this. We could scarcely have a single lesson on the growth of our English tongue, we could scarcely follow up one of its significant words, without having unawares a lesson in English history as well, without not merely falling on some curious fact illustrative of our national life, but learning also how the great heart which is beating at the centre of that life was gradually shaped and moulded. We should thus grow too in our feeling of connexion with the past, of gratitude and reverence to it; we should estimate more truly, and therefore more highly, what it has done for us, all that it has
bequeathed us, all that it has made ready to our hands. It was
something for the children of Israel when they came into Canaan,
to enter upon wells which they digged not, and vineyards which
they had not planted, and houses which they had not built; but
how much greater a boon, how much more glorious a prerogative,
for any one generation to enter upon the inheritance of a lan-
guage which other generations by their truth and toil have
made already a receptacle of choicest treasures, a storehouse
of so much unconscious wisdom, a fit organ for expressing the
subtlest distinctions, the tenderest sentiments, the largest
thoughts, and the loftiest imaginations, which at any time
the heart of men can conceive. And that those who have preceded
us have gone far to accomplish this for us, I shall rejoice if I am
able in any degree to make you feel in the lectures which will
follow the present.
LECTURE II

ON THE MORALITY IN WORDS

Is man of a divine birth and stock? coming from God, and, when he fulfils the law and intention of his creation, returning to Him again? We need no more than his language to prove it. So much is there in that which could never have existed on any other supposition. How else could all those words which testify of his relation to God, and of his consciousness of this relation, and which ground themselves thereon, have found their way into this, the veritable transcript of his innermost life, the genuine utterance of the faith and hope which is in him? On no other theory than this could we explain that great and preponderating weight thrown into the scale of goodness and truth, which, despite of all in the other scale, we must needs acknowledge in every language to be there. How else shall we account for that sympathy with the right, that testimony against the wrong, which, despite of all its aberrations and perversions, is yet its prevailing ground-tone?

But has man fallen, and deeply fallen, from the heights of his original creation? We need no more than his language to prove it. Like everything else about him, it bears at once the stamp of his greatness and of his degradation, of his glory and of his shame. What dark and sombre threads he must have woven into the tissue of his life, before we could trace such dark ones running through the tissue of his language! What facts of wickedness and woe must have existed in the first, ere there could be such words to designate these as are found in the last! There have been always those who have sought to make light of the hurts which man has inflicted on himself, of the sickness with which he is sick; who would fain persuade themselves and others that moralists and divines, if they have not quite invented, have yet enormously exaggerated, these. But are these statements found only in Scripture and in sermons? Are there not mournful corroborations of their truth imprinted deeply upon every region of man's natural and spiritual life, and on
none more deeply than on his language? It needs no more than
to open a dictionary, and to cast our eye thoughtfully down a
few columns, and we shall find abundant confirmation of this
sadder and sterner estimate of man's moral and spiritual con­
dition. How else shall we explain this long catalogue of words,
having all to do with sin, or with sorrow, or with both? How
came they there? We may be quite sure that they were not
invented without being needed, that they have each a correlative
in the world of realities. I open the first letter of the alphabet;
what means this "Ah," this "Alas," these deep and long-drawn
signs of humanity, which at once encounter us there? And then
presently follow words such as these, Affliction, Agony, Anguish,
Assassin, Atheist, Avarice, and twenty more—words, you will
observe, for the most part not laid up in the recesses of the
language, to be drawn forth and used at rare opportunities, but
occupying many of them its foremost ranks. And indeed, as
regards abundance, it is a melancholy thing to observe how
much richer is every vocabulary in words that set forth sins
than in those that set forth graces. When St. Paul (Gal. v. 19–23)
would put these against those, "the works of the flesh" against
"the fruit of the Spirit," those are seventeen, these only nine;
and where do we find in Scripture such lists of graces, as we do
at 2 Tim. iii. 2, Rom. i. 29–31, of their opposites?

Nor can I help taking note, in the oversight and muster from
this point of view of the words which constitute a language, of
the manner in which it has been put to all its resources that so
it may express the infinite varieties, now of human suffering,
now of human sin. Thus what a fearful thing is it that any lan­
guage should have a word expressive of the pleasure which men
feel at the calamities of others; for the existence of the word
bears testimony to the existence of the thing. And yet in more
than one such a word is found.1 Nor are there wanting, I suppose,
in any language, words which are the mournful record of the
strange wickednesses which the genius of man, so fertile in evil,
has invented.

And our dictionaries, while they tell us much, yet will not tell
us all. How shamefully rich is the language of the vulgar every­
where in words which are not allowed to find their way into
books, yet which live as a sinful oral tradition on the lips of men,
to set forth that which is unholy and impure. And of these words,

1 In the Greek, ἐυγνοσεμαθα, in the German, "Schadenfreude."
Cicero so strongly feels that such a word is wanting, that he gives to
"malevolentia" the same significance, "voluptas ex malo alterius," 
though it lies not of necessity in the word.
as no less of those which have to do with the kindred sins of revelling and excess, how many set the evil forth with an evident sympathy and approbation, as taking part with the sin against Him who has forbidden it under pain of his extremest displeasure. How much wit, how much cleverness, yea, how much imagination must have stood in the service of sin, before it could have a nomenclature so rich, so varied, and often so heaven-defying as it has.

How many words men have dragged downward with themselves, and made partakers more or less of their own fall. Having originally an honourable significance, they have yet, with the deterioration and degeneration of those that used them, deteriorated and degenerated too. What a multitude of words originally harmless, have assumed an harmful as their secondary meaning; how many worthy have acquired an unworthy. Thus "knave" meant once no more than lad (nor does it now in German mean more), "villain" than peasant; a "boor" was only a farmer, a "varlet" was but a serving-man, a "churl" but a strong fellow. "Time-server" was used two hundred years ago quite as often for one in an honourable as in a dishonourable sense "serving the time." "Conceits" had once nothing conceited in them; "officious" had reference to offices of kindness and not of busy meddling; "moody" was that which pertained to a man's mood, without any gloom or sullenness implied. "Demure" (which is "des moeurs," of good manners) conveyed no hint, as it does now, of an over-doing of the outward demonstrations of modesty. In "crafty" and "cunning" there was nothing of crooked wisdom implied, but only knowledge and skill; "craft," indeed, still retains very often its more honourable use, a man's "craft" being his skill, and then the trade in which he is well skilled. And think you that the Magdalen could have ever given us "maudlin" in its present contemptuous application, if the tears of penitential weeping had been held in due honour in the world? "Tinsel," from the French "étincelle," meant once anything that sparkles or glistens; thus "cloth of tinsel" would be cloth inwrought with silver and gold; but the sad experience that "all is not gold that glitters," that much which shows fair and specious to the eye is yet worthless in reality, has caused the word imperceptibly to assume the meaning which it now has, and when we speak of "tinsel," either literally or figuratively, we always mean now that which has no reality of sterling worth underlying the glittering and specious

1 See in proof Fuller's Holy State, iii. 19.
shows which it makes. "Tawdry," a word of curious derivation, which I will not pause to go into, has run through exactly the same course: it once conveyed no intimation of mean finery, or shabby splendour, as now it does.

A like deterioration through use may be traced in the word "to resent." It was not very long ago that Barrow could speak of the good man as a faithful "resenter" and requiter of benefits, of the duty of testifying an affectionate "resentment" of our obligations to God. But, alas! the memory of benefits fades and fails from us so much more quickly than that of injuries; that which we afterwards remember and revolve in our minds is so much more predominantly the wrongs, real or imaginary, which men have done us, than the favours they have bestowed on us, that "to resent" in our modern English has come to be confined entirely to that deep reflective displeasure which men entertain against those that have done, or whom they believe to have done, them a wrong. And this leads us to inquire how it comes to pass that we do not speak of the "retaliation" of benefits as often as the "retaliation" of injuries? The word does but signify the again rendering as much as we have received; but this is so much seldomer thought of in regard of benefits than of wrongs, that the word, though not altogether unused in this its worthier sense, has yet a strange and somewhat unusual sound in our ears when so employed. Were we to speak of a man "retaliating" kindnesses, I am not sure that every one would understand us.

Neither is it altogether satisfactory to take note that "animosity," according to its derivation, means no more than "spiritedness;" that in the first use of the word in the later Latin to which it belongs, it was employed in this sense; was applied, for instance, to the spirit and fiery courage of the horse; but that now it is applied to only one kind of vigour and activity, that namely which is displayed in enmity and hate, and expresses a spiritedness in these. Does not this look too much as if these oftenest stirred men to a lively and vigorous activity?

And then what a mournful witness for the hard and unrighteous judgments we habitually form of one another lies in the word "prejudice." The word of itself means plainly no more than "a judgment formed beforehand," without affirming anything as to whether that judgment be favourable or unfavourable to the person about whom it is formed. Yet so predominantly do we form harsh, unfavourable judgments of others before
knowledge and experience, that a "prejudice," or judgment before knowledge and not grounded on evidence, is almost always taken to signify an unfavourable anticipation about one; and "prejudicial" has actually acquired a secondary meaning of anything which is mischievous or injurious. As these words are a testimony to the sin of man, so there is a signal testimony to his infirmity, to the limitation of human faculties and human knowledge, in the word "to retract." To retract means properly, as its derivation declares, no more than to handle over again, to reconsider. And yet, so certain are we to find in a subject which we reconsider or handle a second time, that which was at the first rashly, inaccurately, stated, that which needs therefore to be amended, modified, withdrawn; that "to retract" could not tarry long with its primary meaning of reconsidering; and has come to signify, as we commonly use it, "to withdraw." Thus the greatest Father of the Latin Church, at the close of his life wishing to amend whatever he might now perceive in his various published works to have been incautiously or incorrectly stated, gave to the book in which he carried out this intention (for they had then no such opportunities as second and third editions afford now) this very name of "Retractations," being literally "Rehandlings," but in fact, as any one turning to the work will at once perceive, withdrawals of various statements which he now considered to need thus to be withdrawn. What a seal does this word's acquisition of such a secondary use as this set to the proverb, Humanum est errare.

At the same time urging, as I have thus done, this degeneration of words, I should greatly err, if I failed to bring before you the fact that a parallel process of purifying and ennobling has also been going forward, especially through the influences of a Divine faith working in the world; which, as it has turned men from evil to good, or has lifted them from a lower earthly goodness to an higher heavenly, so has it in like manner elevated, purified, and ennobled a multitude of the words which they employ, until these, which once expressed only an earthly good, express now an heavenly. The Gospel of Christ, as it is the redemption of man, so is it in a multitude of instances the redemption of his word, freeing it from the bondage of corruption, that it should no longer be subject to vanity, nor stand any more in the service of sin or of the world, but in the service of God and of his truth. In the Greek language there is a word for "humility;" but this
humility meant for the Greek—that is, with very rarest exceptions—meanness of spirit. He who brought in the Christian grace of humility, did in so doing rescue also the word which expressed it for nobler uses and to a far higher dignity than hitherto it had attained. There were “angels” before heaven had been opened, but these only earthly messengers; “martyrs” also, or witnesses, but these not unto blood, nor yet for God’s highest truth; “apostles,” but sent of men; “evangels,” but not of the kingdom of heaven; “advocates,” but not “with the Father.” “Paradise” was a word common in slightly different forms to almost all the nations of the East; but they meant by it only some royal park or garden of delights; till for the Jew it was exalted to signify the wondrous abode of our first parents; and higher honours awaited it still, when on the lips of the Lord it signified the blissful waiting-place of faithful departed souls (Luke xxiii. 43); yea, the heavenly blessedness itself (Rev. ii. 7). Nor was the word “regeneration” unknown to the Greeks: they could speak of the earth’s “regeneration” in the spring-time, of memory as the “regeneration” of knowledge; the Jewish historian could describe the return of his countrymen from the Babylonian captivity, and their re-establishment under Cyrus in their own land, as the “regeneration” of the Jewish state. But still the word, on the lips either of Jew or Greek, was removed very far from that honour reserved for it in the Christian dispensation—namely, that it should be the bearer of one of the chiefest and most blessed mysteries of the faith. And many other words in like manner there are, “fetched from the very dregs of paganism,” as Sanderson has said (he instances the Latin “sacrament,” the Greek “mystery”), which words the Holy Spirit has not refused to employ for the setting forth of the great truths of our redemption. Reversing in this the impious deed of Belshazzar, who profaned the sacred vessels of God’s house to sinful and idolatrous uses (Dan. v. 2), that blessed Spirit has often consecrated the very idol-vessels of Babylon to the service of the sanctuary.

Let us now proceed to contemplate some of the attestations for God’s truth, and then some of the playings into the hands of the devil’s falsehood, which lurk in words. And first, the witnesses to God’s truth, the fallings in of our words with His unchangeable Word: for these, as the true uses of the word, while the other are only its abuses, have a prior claim to be considered. Some

modern "false prophets," who would gladly explain away all
such phenomena of the world around us as declare man to be
a sinful being and enduring the consequences of sin, tell us that
pain is only a subordinate kind of pleasure, or, at worst, that it
is a sort of needful hedge and guardian of pleasure. But there is
a deeper feeling in the universal heart of man, bearing witness
to something very different from this shallow explanation of the
existence of pain in the present economy of the world—namely,
that it is the correlative of sin, that it is punishment; and to this
the word "pain," which there can be no reasonable doubt is
derived from "pœna," bears continual witness. Pain is punish-
ment; so does the word itself, no less than the conscience of
every one that is suffering it, declare. Just so, again, there are
those who will not hear of great pestilences being God's scourges
of men's sins; who fain would find out natural causes for them,
and account for them by the help of these. I remember it was
thus with too many during both our fearful visitations from
the cholera. They may do so, or imagine that they do so; yet
every time they use the word "plague," they implicitly own the
fact which they are endeavouring to deny; for "plague" means
properly and according to its derivation, "blow," or "stroke;"
and was a title given to these terrible diseases because the great
universal conscience of men, which is never at fault, believed
and confessed that these were "strokes" or "blows" inflicted
by God on a guilty and rebellious world. With reference to such
words so used we may truly say: *Vox populi, vox Dei*—a proverb
which, shallowly interpreted, may be made to contain a most
mischiefous falsehood; but interpreted in the sense wherein no
doubt it was spoken, holds a deepest truth. We must only
remember that this "people" is not the populace either in high
place or in low; and that this "voice of the people" is not any
momentary outcry, but the consenting testimony of the good
and wise, of those neither brutalised by ignorance, nor corrupted
by a false cultivation, in all places and in all times.

Every one who admits the truth which lies in this saying must,
I think, acknowledge it as a remarkable fact, that men should
have agreed to apply the word "miser," or miserable, to the
man eminently addicted to the vice of covetousness, to him
who loves his money with his whole heart and soul. Here too
the moral instinct lying deep in all hearts has borne testimony
to the tormenting nature of this vice, to the gnawing cares with
which even here it punishes him; that entertains it, to the enmity
which there is between it and all joy; and the man who enslaves
himself to his money is proclaimed in our very language to be a "miser," or a miserable man.¹

How deep an insight into the failings of the human heart lies at the root of many words; and, if only we would attend to them, what valuable warnings many contain against subtle temptations and sins! Thus, all of us have probably more or less felt the temptation of seeking to please others by an unmanly assenting to their view of some matter, even when our own independent convictions would lead us to a different. The existence of such a temptation, and the fact that too many yield to it, are both declared in the Latin word for a flatterer—"assentator," that is, "an assenter," one who has not courage to say No when a Yes is expected from him; and quite independently of the Latin, the German language, in its contemptuous and precisely equivalent use of "Jaherr," a "yea-Lord," warns us in like manner against all such unmanly compliances. I may observe by the way that we also once possessed the word "assentation" in the sense of unworthy flattering lip-assent; the last example of it which Richardson gives is from Bishop Hall: "It is a fearful presage of ruin when the prophets conspire in assentation." The word is quite worthy to be revived.

Again, how well it is to have that spirit of depreciation of others, that eagerness to find spots and stains in the characters of the noblest and the best, who would otherwise oppress and rebuke us with a goodness and a greatness so far surpassing ours—met and checked by a word at once so expressive, and so little pleasant to take home to ourselves, as the French "dénigréur." This word also is now, I believe, out of use; which is a pity, the race it designates not yet being extinct. Full too of instruction and warning is our present employment of the word "libertine." It signified, according to its earliest use in French and in English, a speculative free-thinker in matters of religion and in the theory of morals, or, it might be, of government. But as by a sure process free-thinking does and will end in free-acting, as he who has cast off the one yoke will cast off the other, so a "libertine" came in two or three generations to signify a profligate, especially in relation to women, a licentious and debauched person.

There is much too that we may learn from looking a little

¹We here in fact say in a word what the Roman moralist, when he wrote, "Nulla avaritia sine peñá est, quamvis satis sit ipsa peñarum," took a sentence to say.
closely at the word "passion." We sometimes think of the "passionate" man as a man of strong will, and of real though ungoverned energy. But this word declares to us most plainly the contrary; for it, as a very solemn use of it declares, means properly "suffering;" and a passionate man is not a man doing something, but one suffering something to be done on him. When then a man or child is "in a passion," this is no coming out in him of a strong will, of a real energy, but rather the proof that for the time at least he has no will, no energy; he is suffering, not doing—suffering his anger, or what other evil temper it may be, to lord over him without control. Let no one then think of "passion" as a sign of strength. As reasonably might one assume that it was a proof of a man being a strong man that he was often well beaten; such a fact would be evidence that a strong man was putting forth his strength on him, but of anything rather than that he himself was strong. The same sense of passion and feebleness going together, of the first being born of the second, lies, as I may remark by the way, in the two-fold use of the Latin word "impotens;" which, meaning first weak, means then violent; and then often weak and violent together.

In our use of the word "talents," as when we say, "a man of talents" (not "of talent," for that, as we shall see presently, is nonsense, though "of a talent" would be allowable), there is a clear recognition of the responsibilities which go along with the possession of intellectual gifts and endowments, whatsoever they may be. We derive the word from the parable (Matt. xxv.) in which various talents, more and fewer, are committed to the several servants by their lord, that they may trade with them in his absence, and give account of their employment at his return. Men may choose to forget the ends for which their "talents" were given them; they may turn them to selfish ends; they may glorify themselves in them, instead of glorifying the Giver; they may practically deny that they were given at all; yet in this word, till they can rid their vocabulary of it, abides a continual memento that they were so given, or rather lent, and that each man shall have to render an account of their use.

Let us a little consider the word "kind." We speak of a "kind" person, and we speak of man-"kind," and perhaps, if we think about the matter at all, we seem to ourselves to be using quite different words, or the same word in senses quite unconnected, but they are connected, and that by closest bonds; a "kind" person is a "kinned" person, one of kin; one who acknowledges
and acts upon his kinship with other men, confesses that he owes to them, as of one blood with himself, the debt of love. And so mankind is mankinned. In the word is contained a declaration of the relationship which exists between all the members of the human family; and seeing that this relationship in a race now scattered so widely and divided so far asunder can only be through a common head, we do in fact every time that we use the word "mankind," declare our faith in the one common descent of the whole race of man. And beautiful before, how much more beautiful now do the words "kind" and "kindness" appear, when we apprehend the root out of which they grow; that they are the acknowledgment in loving deeds of our kinship with our brethren; and how profitable to keep in mind that a lively recognition of the bonds of blood, whether of those closer ones which unite us to that whom by best right we term our family, or those wider ones which knit us to the whole human family, that this is the true source out of which all genuine love and affection must spring; for so much is affirmed in our daily, hourly use of the word.

And other words there are, having reference to the family and the relations of family life, which are not less full of teaching, which each may serve to remind of some duty. For example, "husband" is properly "house-band," the band and bond of the house, who shall bind and hold it together. Thus, Old Tusser in his Points of Husbandry:

The name of the husband what is it to say?
Of wife and of household the band and the stay;

so that the very name may put him in mind of his authority, and of that which he ought to be to all the members of the house. And the name "wife" has its lesson too, although not so deep a one as the equivalent word in some other tongues. It belongs to the same family of words as "weave," "woof," "web," and the German "weben." It is a title given to her who is engaged at the web and woof, these having been the most ordinary branches of female industry, of wifely employment, when the language was forming. So that in the word itself is wrapped up a hint of earnest indoor stay-at-home occupations, as being the fittest for her who bears this name.

Thus it is not a mere play upon words, but something much deeper, which Shakespeare puts into Hamlet's mouth, when, speaking of his father's brother who had married his mother, he characterises him as "A little more than kin, and less than kind."
But it was observed just now that there are also words which bear the slime on them of the serpent’s trail; and the uses of words which imply moral perversity—I say not upon their parts who now employ them in the senses which they have acquired, but on theirs from whom little by little they received their deflection, and were warped from their original rectitude. Thus for instance is it with the word “prude,” signifying as now it does a woman with an over-scrupulous affectation of a modesty which she does not really feel, and betraying the absence of the reality by this over-preciseness and niceness about the shadow. This use of the word must needs have been the result of a great corruption of manners in them among whom it grew up; goodness must have gone strangely out of fashion, before things could have come to this. For “prude,” which is a French word, means virtuous or prudent; “prud’homme” being a man of courage and probity. But where morals are greatly and generally relaxed, virtue is often treated as hypocrisy; and thus, in a dissolute age, and one disbelieving the existence of any inward purity, the word “prude” came to designate one who affected a virtue, even as none were esteemed to do anything more; and in this use of it, which, having once acquired, it continues to retain, abides an evidence of the corrupt world’s dislike to and disbelief in the realities of goodness, its willingness to treat them as mere hypocrisies and shows.

Again, why should the word “simple” be used slightingly, and “simpleton” more slightingly still? According to its derivation the “simple” is one “without fold” (sine plica); just what we may imagine Nathanael to have been, and what our Lord attributed as the highest honour to him, the “Israelite without guile;” and, indeed, what higher honour could there be than to have nothing double about us, to be without duplicities or folds? Even the world, that despises “simplicity,” does not profess to approve of “duplicity,” or double-foldedness. But inasmuch as we feel that in a world like ours such a man will make himself a prey, will prove no match for the fraud and falsehood which he will everywhere encounter, and as there is that in most men which, were they obliged to choose between deceiving and being deceived, would make them choose the former, it has come to pass that “simple,” which in a world of righteousness would be a word of highest honour, implies here in this world of ours something of scorn for the person to whom it is applied. And must it not be confessed to be a striking fact that exactly in the same way a person of deficient intellect is called an “innocent,”
"in nocens," one that does not hurt? so that this word assumes that the first and chief use men make of their intellectual powers will be to do hurt, that where they are wise, it will be to do evil. What a witness does human language bear here against human sin!

Nor are these isolated examples of the contemptuous application of words expressive of goodness. They meet us on every side. Thus "silly," written "seely" in our earlier English, is beyond a doubt the German "selig," which means "blessed." We see the word in its transition state in our early poets, with whom "silly" is so often an affectionate epithet applied to sheep, as expressive of their harmlessness and innocency. With a still slighter departure from its original meaning, an early English poet applies the word to the Lord of Glory Himself, while yet an infant of days, styling Him "this harmless silly babe." But here the same process went forward as with the words "simple" and "innocent." And the same moral phenomenon repeats itself continually. For example: at the first promulgation of the Christian faith, and while yet the name of its Divine Founder was somewhat new and strange to the ears of the heathen, they were wont, some perhaps out of ignorance, but more of intention, slightly to mispronounce this name, as though it had not been "Christus," but "Chrestus," —that word signifying in Greek, "benevolent," or "benign." That they who did this of intention meant no honour hereby to the Lord of Life, but the contrary, is certain; and indeed the word, like the "silly," "innocent," "simple," of which we have already spoken, had already contracted a slight tinge of contempt, or else there would have been no inducement to fasten it on the Saviour. What a strange shifting of the moral sense there must have been, before it could have done so, before men could have found in a name implying benignity and goodness a nickname of scorn. The French have their "bonhomme" with the same undertone of contempt, the Greeks also a well-known word. It is to the honour of the Latin, and is very characteristic of the best side of Roman life, that "simplex" and "simplicitas" never acquired this abusive signification.

Again, we all know how prone men are to ascribe to chance or fortune those good gifts and blessings which indeed come directly from God—to build altars to fortune rather than to Him who is the author of every good thing. And this faith of theirs, that their blessings, even their highest, come to them by a blind chance, they have incorporated in a word; for "happy" and "happiness" are of course connected with and
derived from “hap,” which is chance. But how unworthy is this word to express any true felicity, of which the very essence is that it excludes hap or chance, that the world neither gave nor can take it away. It is indeed more objectionable than “lucky” and “fortunate,” objectionable as also are these, inasmuch as by the “happy” man we mean much more than by the “fortunate.” Very nobly has a great English poet protested against the misuse of the latter word, when of one who had lost indeed everything beside, but, as he esteemed, had kept the truth, he exclaims:

Call not the royal Swede unfortunate,
Who never did to fortune bend the knee.

But another way in which the immorality of words mainly displays itself, one too in which perhaps they work their greatest mischief, is that of giving honourable names to dishonourable things, making sin plausible by dressing it out sometimes even in the very colours of goodness, or if not so, yet in such as go far to conceal its own native deformity. “The tongue,” as St. James has declared, “is a world of iniquity” (iii. 6); or as some interpreters affirm the words ought rather to be translated, and they would be then still more to our purpose, “the ornament of iniquity,” that which sets it out in fair and attractive colours: and those who understand the original will at once perceive that such a meaning may possibly lie in the words. On the whole I do not believe that these expositors are right, yet certainly the connexion of the Greek word for “tongue” with our “gloze,” “glossy,” with the German “gleissen,” to smooth over or polish, and with an obsolete Greek word as well, also signifying “to polish,” is not accidental, but real, and may well suggest some searching thoughts as to the uses whereunto we turn this “best,” but, as it may therefore prove also, this “worst,” “member that we have.”

How much wholesomer on all accounts is it that there should be an ugly word for an ugly thing, one involving moral condemnation and disgust, even at the expense of a little coarseness, rather than one which plays fast and loose with the eternal principles of morality, which makes sin plausible, and shifts the divinely reared landmarks of right and wrong, thus bringing the user under the woe of them “that call evil good, and good evil, that put darkness for light, and light for darkness, that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter” (Isai. v. 20)—a text on which South has written four of his grandest sermons, with reference to this very matter, and bearing this striking title, *On the fatal imposture and force of words.* How awful, yea how
fearful, is this force and imposture of theirs, leading men captive at will. There is an atmosphere about them which they are evermore diffusing, an atmosphere of life or of death, which we insensibly inhale at each moral breath we draw.\(^1\) "The winds of the soul," as one called them of old, they fill its sails, and are continually impelling it upon its course, heavenward or to hell. How greatly different the light in which we shall have learned to regard a sin, according as we have been wont to designate and to hear it designated by a word which brings out its loathsomeness and deformity;—or by one which palliates these and conceals; as when in Italy, during the period that poisoning was rifest, nobody was said to be poisoned; it was only that the death of some was "assisted" (aiutata); or worse than this, by one which seeks to turn the edge of the divine threatenings against it by a jest; as when in France a subtle poison, by which impatient heirs delivered themselves from those who stood between them and the inheritance which they coveted, was called "poudre de succession;" while worse than all is one which shall throw a flimsy veil of sentiment over sin. As an example of the last, what a source of mischief in all our country parishes is the one practice of calling a child born out of wedlock, a "love-child," instead of a bastard. It would be hard to estimate how much it has lowered the tone and standard of morality among us; or for how many young women it may have helped to make the downward way more sloping still. How vigorously ought we to oppose ourselves to all such immoralities of language; which opposition will yet never be easy or pleasant; for many that will endure to commit a sin, will resent having that sin called by its right name.\(^2\)

\(^1\) Bacon's words have been often quoted, but they will bear being quoted once more: "Credunt enim homines rationem suam verbis imperare. Sed fit etiam ut verba vim suam super intellectum retorquant et reflectant."

\(^2\) On the general subject of the reaction of a people's language on that people's moral life, I will adduce some words of Milton, who, as he did so much to enlarge, to enrich, to purify our mother tongue, so also in the Latin which he wielded so well has thus declared his mind: "Neque enim qui sermo, purus ne an corruptus, quaeve loquendi proprietas quotidiana populo sit, parvi interesse arbitrandum est, quae res Athenis non semel saluti fuit; immo vero, quod Platonis sententia est, immutato vestiendi more habituque graves in Republics motus mutationesque portendi, equidem potius collabente in vitium atque errorem loquendi usu occasum ejus urbis remque humilem et obscum subseque crediderim; verba enim partim inscita et putida, partim mendosa et perperam prolata, quid si ignaves et oscitantes et ad servile quidvis jam olim paratos incolarum animos haud levi indicio declarant? Contra nullum unquam audivimus imperium, nullam civitatem non mediocriter saltem floruisse, quamdui lingua sua gratia, suusque cultus constitit." Compare an interesting epistle (the 114th) of Seneca.
Coarse as, according to our present usages of language, may be esteemed the word by which our plain-speaking Anglo-Saxon fathers were wont to designate the unhappy women who make a trade of selling their bodies to the lusts of men, yet is there a profound moral sense in that word, bringing prominently out, as it does, the true vileness of their occupation, who for hire are content to profane and lay waste the deepest sanctities of their life. Consider the truth which is witnessed for here, as compared with the falsehood of many other titles by which they have been known—names which may themselves be called "whited sepulchres," so fair are they without, yet hiding so much foul within; as for instance, that in the French language which ascribes joy to a life which more surely than any other dries up all the sources of gladness in the heart, brings anguish, astonishment, blackest melancholy on all who have addicted themselves to it. In the same way, how much more moral words are the English "sharper," and "blackleg," than the French "chevalier d'industrie:" and the same holds good of the English equivalent, coarse as it is, for the Latin "conciliatrix." In this last word we have a notable example of the putting of bitter for sweet, and darkness for light, of the attempt to present a disgraceful occupation on an amiable, almost a sentimental side, rather than in its own true deformity and ugliness.1

If I wanted any further proof of this which I have been urging, namely the moral atmosphere which words diffuse, I would ask you to observe how the first thing which men will do, when engaged in controversy with others, be it in the conflict of the tongue or the pen, or of weapons sharper yet, if sharper there be, will be to assume some honourable name to themselves, which, if possible, begs the whole matter in dispute, and at the same time to affix on their adversaries a name which shall place them in a ridiculous or contemptible, an invidious or odious

1 So conscious have men been of this tendency of theirs to throw the mantle of an honourable word over a dishonourable thing, or vice versa, of the temptation to degrade an honourable thing, when they do not love it, by a dishonourable appellation, that the Greek language has a word significative of this very attempt, ὅσωπετάδα, itself a word with an interesting history; and its great moral teachers frequently occupy themselves in detecting this most frequent, yet perhaps practically most mischievous, among all the impostures of words. Thus, when Thucydides (iii. 82) would paint the fearful moral deterioration of Greece in the progress of its great Civil War, he adduces this alteration of the received value of words, this fitting of false names to everything—names of honour to the base, and of baseness to the honourable—as one of its most striking signs, even as it again set forward the evil, of which it had been first the result.
light. There is a deep instinct in men, deeper perhaps than they
give any account of to themselves, which tells them how far
this will go; that multitudes, utterly unable to weigh the argu-
ments of the case, will yet be receptive of the influences which
these words continually, though almost imperceptibly, diffuse.
By arguments they might hope to gain over the reason of a few,
but by help of these nicknames they enlist what at first are so
much more effectual, the passions and prejudices of many, on
their side. Thus when at the breaking out of our Civil Wars the
Parliamentary party styled themselves "The Godly," and the
Royalists "The Malignants," it is very certain that, wherever
they could procure entrance for these words, the question upon
whose side the right lay was already decided. I do not cite this
example as at all implying that the Royalists did not make
exactly the same employment of question-begging words,
of words steeped quite as deeply in the passion which
animated them, but only as a sufficient illustration of my
meaning.

Seeing then that language contains so faithful a record of the
good and of the evil which in time past have been working in
the minds and hearts of men, we shall not err, regarding it as a
moral barometer, which indicates and permanently marks the
rise or fall of a nation's life. To study a people's language will
be to study them, and to study them at best advantage; there
where they present themselves to us under fewest disguises,
most nearly as they are. Too many have had a hand in it, and
in causing it to arrive at its present shape, it is too entirely the
collective work of the whole nation, the result of the united
contributions of all, it obeys too immutable laws, to allow any
successful tampering with it, any making of it to witness other
than the actual facts of the case.

Thus the frivolity of an age or nation, its mockery of itself,
its inability to comprehend the true dignity and meaning of
life, the feebleness of its moral indignation against evil, all this
will find an utterance in the use of solemn and earnest words in
senses comparatively trivial or even ridiculous, in the squander-
ing of such as ought to have been reserved for the highest
mysteries of the spiritual life on slight and secular objects, in
the employment almost in jest and play, it may be in honour,
of words implying the deepest moral guilt—as the French
"perfide," "malice," "malin;" while, on the contrary, the high
sentiment, the scorn of everything mean or base of another
people or time, will as certainly in one way or another stamp
themselves on the words which they employ; and thus will it be
with whatever good or evil they may own.

Often a people's use of some single word will afford us a
deepen insight into their real condition, their habits of thought
and feeling, than whole volumes written expressly with the
intention of imparting this insight. Thus our word "idiot" is
abundently characteristic, not indeed of English but of Greek
life, from which we have derived it and our use of it. The Ἰδιωτής,
or "idiot," was in its earliest sense the private man, as contra-
distinguished from him who was clothed with some office, and
had a share in the management of public affairs. In this its
primary use it is occasionally employed in English; as by
Jeremy Taylor when he says, "Humility is a duty in great
ones as well as in idiots." It came then to signify a rude, ignorant,
unskilled, intellectually unexercised person, a boor; this derived
or secondary sense bearing witness, as has been most truly said,
to "the Greek notion of the indispensableness of public life,
even to the right development of the intellect," a conviction
which was entirely inwoven in the Greek habit of thought, and
lay at the foundation of all schemes of mental culture. Nor is
it easy to see how it could have uttered itself with greater clear-
ness than it does in this secondary use of the word "idiot."
Our tertiary, according to which the "idiot" is one deficient in
intellect, not merely with its powers unexercised, is but this
secondary pushed a little further.—Again, the innermost distinc-
tions between the Greek mind and the Hebrew reveal themselves
in the several salutations of each, in the "Rejoice" of the first,
as contrasted with the "Peace" of the second. The clear, cheer-
ful, world-enjoying temper of the Greek embodies itself in the
first; he could desire nothing better or higher for himself, nor
wish it for his friend, than to have joy in his life. But the Hebrew
had a deeper longing within him, and one which finds utterance
in his "Peace." It is not hard to perceive why this latter people
should have been chosen as the first bearers of that truth which
indeed enables truly to rejoice, but only through first bringing
peace; nor why from them the word of life should first go forth.
It may be urged, indeed, that these were only forms, and so
in great measure they may have at length become; as in our
"good-by" or "adieu" we can hardly be said now to commit
our friend to the Divine protection; yet still they were not such
at the first, nor would they have held their ground, if ever they
had become such altogether.

1 Hare's Mission of the Comforter, p. 552.
So too the modifications of meaning which a word has undergone, as it had been transplanted from one soil to another, the way in which one nation receiving a word from another, has yet brought into it some new force which was foreign to it in the tongue from whence it was borrowed, has deepened, or ex- tenuated, or otherwise altered its meaning—all this may prove profoundly instructive, and may reveal to us, as perhaps nothing else would, the most fundamental diversities existing between them. Observe, for instance, how different is the word “self-sufficient” as used by us, and by the heathen nations of antiquity. The Greek word exactly corresponding is a word of honour, and applied to men in their praise. And indeed it was the glory of the heathen philosophy to teach man to find his resources in his own bosom, to be thus sufficient for himself; and seeing that a true centre without him and above him, a centre in God, had not been revealed to him, it was no shame for him to seek it there; better this than no centre at all. But the Gospel has taught us another lesson, to find our sufficiency in God: and thus “self-sufficient,” which with the Greek was a word in honourable use, is not so with us. “Self-sufficiency” is not a quality which any man desires now to be attributed to him. We have a feeling about the word which causes it to carry its own condemnation with it; and its different uses, for honour once, for reproach now, do in fact ground themselves on the central differences of heathenism and Christianity.

Once more, we might safely conclude that a nation would not be likely tamely to submit to tyranny and wrong, which had made “quarrel” out of “querela.” The Latin word means properly “complaint,” and we have in “querulous” this its proper meaning coming distinctly out. Not so however in “quarrel;” for Englishmen being wont not merely to complain, but to set vigorously about righting and redressing themselves, their griefs being also grievances, out of this word, which might have given them only “querulous” and “querulousness,” have gotten “quarrel” as well.

On the other hand we cannot wonder that Italy should have filled our Exhibition of 1850 with beautiful specimens of her skill in the arts, with statues and sculptures of rare loveliness, but should only rivet her chains the more closely by the weak and ineffectual efforts which she makes to break them, when she can degrade the word “virtuoso,” or “the virtuous,” to signify one accomplished in painting, music, and sculpture, such things as are the ornamental fringe of a nation’s life, but can never be
made, without loss of all manliness of character, its main texture and woof—not to say that excellence in these fine arts has been in too many cases divorced from all true virtue and worth. And what shall we say concerning the uses to which she turns her "bravo"? The opposite exaggeration of the ancient dwellers in Italy, who often made "virtus" to signify warlike courage alone, as if for them all virtues were included in this one, was at all events more tolerable than this; for there is a sense in which a man's "valour" is his value.—How little, again, the modern Italians live in the spirit of their ancient worthies, or reverence the greatest among them, we may argue from the fact that they have been content to take the name of one among their noblest, and degrade it so far that every glib and loquacious hireling who shows strangers about their picture galleries, palaces and ruins, is termed by them a "Cicerone," or a Cicero! So too the French use of the word "honnêteté," as external civility, marks a tendency to accept the shows and pleasant courtesies of social life in the room of deeper moral qualities.

How much too may be learned by noting the words which nations have been obliged to borrow from other nations, as not having them of home growth—this in most cases, if not in all, testifying that the thing itself was not native, was only an exotic, transplanted, like the word which indicated it, from a foreign soil. Thus it is singularly characteristic of the social and political life of England, as distinguished from that of the other European nations, that to it alone the word "club" belongs; the French and German languages having been alike unable to grow a word of their own as its equivalent, having both been obliged to borrow this from us. And no wonder; for these voluntary associations of men for the furthering of such social or political ends as are near to the hearts of the associates could have only had their rise under such favourable circumstances as ours. In no country where there was not extreme personal freedom could they have sprung up; and as little in any where men did not know how to use this freedom with moderation and self-restraint, could they long have been endured. It was comparatively easy to adopt the word; but the ill success of the "club" itself everywhere save here where it is native, has shown that it was not so easy to transplant the thing. While we have lent this and other words, mostly political, to the French and German, it would not be less instructive, were this a suitable opportunity, to trace our corresponding obligations to them.

But it is time to bring this lecture to an end. These illustra-
tions, to which it would not be hard to add many more, are amply enough to justify what I have asserted of the existence of a moral element in words; they are enough to make us feel about them, that they do not hold themselves neutral in the great conflict between good and evil, light and darkness, which is dividing the world; that they are not contented to be the passive vehicles, now of the truth, and now of falsehood. We see on the contrary that they continually take their side, are some of them children of light, others children of this world, or even of darkness; they beat with the pulses of our life; they stir with our passions; they receive from us the impressions of our good and of our evil, which again they are active further to propagate amongst us. Must we not own then that there is a wondrous and mysterious world, of which we may hitherto have taken too little account, around us and about us? and may there not be a deeper meaning than hitherto we have attached to it, lying in that solemn declaration, “By thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned”? 
LECTURE III
ON THE HISTORY IN WORDS

It might at first sight appear as if language, apart that is from literature and books, and where these did not exist, was the frailest, the most untrustworthy, of all the vehicles of knowledge, and that most likely to betray its charge; yet it is in fact the great, oftentimes the only, connecting link between the present and the remotest past, an ark riding above waterfloods that have swept away every other landmark and memorial of ages and generations. Far beyond all written records in a language, the language itself stretches back and offers itself for our investigation—"the pedigree of nations," as Johnson calls it—itslf a far more ancient monument and document than any writing which it contains. These records, moreover, may have been falsified by carelessness, by vanity, by fraud, by a multitude of causes; but it is never false, never deceives us, if we know how to question it aright.

And this questioning of it will often lead to conclusions of extreme importance. Thus there have been those who have denied on one ground or another the accuracy of the Scripture statement that the whole earth was peopled from a single pair; who have sought to prove that there must have been many beginnings, many centres. In answer to these, the physical unity of the race of mankind has been triumphantly shown by Dr. Prichard and others; but all recent investigations plainly announce that a yet stronger evidence, and a moral argument more convincing still, for the unity of mankind will be found in the proofs which are daily accumulating of the tendency of all languages, however widely they may differ now, to refer themselves to a common stock and single fountain head. Of course we need not these proofs, who believe the fact, because it is written; yet can we only rejoice at each new homage which Science pays to revealed Truth, being sure that at the last she will stand in her service altogether.

Such investigations as these, however, lie plainly out of your sphere. Not so, however, those humbler, yet not less interesting inquiries, which by the aid of any tolerable dictionary you may carry on into the past history of your own land, as borne witness
to by the present language of its people, on which language the
marks and vestiges of great revolutions are visibly and pro-
foundly impressed, never again to be obliterated from it. You
know how the geologist is able from the different strata and
deposits, primary, secondary, or tertiary, succeeding one another,
which he meets, to conclude the successive physical changes
through which a region has passed; is in a condition to preside
at those changes, to measure the forces which were at work to
produce them, and almost to indicate their date. Now with
such a composite language as the English before us, we may
carry on moral and historical researches precisely analogous
to his. Here too are strata and deposits, not of gravel and chalk,
sandstone and limestone, but of Celtic, Latin, Saxon, Danish,
Norman, and then again Latin and French words, with slighter
intrusions from other sources: and any one with skill to analyse
the language might re-create for himself the history of the
people speaking that language, might come to appreciate the
divers elements out of which that people was composed, in
what proportion these were mingled, and in what succession
they followed one upon the other.

Take for example the relation in which the Saxon and Norman
occupants of this land stood to one another. I doubt not that
an account of this, in the main as accurate as it would be cer-
tainly instructive, might be drawn from an intelligent study of
the contributions which they have severally made to the English
language, as bequeathed to us jointly by them both. Supposing
all other records to have perished, we might still work out and
almost reconstitute the history by these aids; even as now,
when so many documents, so many institutions survive, this
must still be accounted the most important, and that of which
the study will introduce us, as no other can, into the innermost
heart and life of great periods of our history.

Nor indeed is it hard to see why the language must contain
such instruction as this, when we a little realise to ourselves the
stages by which it has come down to us in its present shape.
There was a time when the languages which the Saxon and the
Norman severally spoke, existed each by the side of, but un-
mingled with, the other; one, that of the small dominant class,
the other that of the great body of the people. By degrees,
however, with the fusion of the two races, the two languages
also fused into a third. At once there would exist duplicates for
many things. But as in popular speech two words will not long
exist side by side to designate the same thing, it became a
question how the relative claims of the Saxon and Norman word should adjust themselves, which should remain, which should be dropped; or, if not dropped, should be transferred to some other object, or express some other relation. It is not of course meant that this was ever formally proposed, or as something to be settled by agreement; but practically, one was to be taken, one left. Which was it that should maintain its ground? Evidently, where a word was often on the lips of one race, its equivalent seldom on those of the other, where it intimately cohered with the manner of life of one, was only remotely in contact with that of the other, where it laid strong hold on one, but slight on the other, the issue could not be doubtful. In several cases the matter was simpler still: it was not that one word expelled the other, or that rival claims had to be adjusted; but there never had existed more than one word, the thing having been quite strange to the other section of the nation.

Here is the explanation of the assertion just now made—namely, that we might almost reconstruct our history, so far as it turned upon the Norman conquest, by an analysis of our present language, a mustering of its words in groups, and a close observation of the nature and character of those which the two races have severally contributed to it. Thus we should confidently conclude that the Norman was the ruling race, from the noticeable fact that all the words of dignity, state, honour, and pre-eminence, with one remarkable exception (to be adduced presently), descend to us from them—sovereign, sceptre, throne, realm, royalty, homage, prince, duke, count ("earl" indeed is Scandinavian, though we must borrow "countess" from the Norman), chancellor, treasurer, palace, castle, hall, dome, and a multitude more. At the same time the one remarkable exception of "king" would make us, even did we know nothing of the actual facts, suspect that the chieftain of this ruling race came in not upon a new title, not as overthrowing a former dynasty, but claiming to be in the rightful line of its succession; that the true continuity of the nation had not, in fact any more than in word, been entirely broken, but survived, in due time to assert itself anew.

And yet, while the statelier superstructure of the language, almost all articles of luxury, all that has to do with the chase, with chivalry, with personal adornment, is Norman throughout, with the broad basis of the language, and therefore of the life, it is otherwise. The great features of nature, sun, moon, and stars, earth, water, and fire, all the prime social relations, father,
mother, husband, wife, son, daughter, these are Saxon. The palace and the castle may have come to us from the Norman, but to the Saxon we owe far dearer names, the house, the roof, the home, the hearth. His "board" too, and often probably it was no more, has a more hospitable sound than the "table" of his lord. His sturdy arms turn the soil; he is the boor, the hind, the churl; or if his Norman master has a name for him, it is one which on his lips becomes more and more a title of opprobrium and contempt, the villain. The instruments used in cultivating the earth, the flail, the plough, the sickle, the spade, are expressed in his language; so too the main products of the earth, as wheat, rye, oats, bere, i.e. barley; and no less the names of domestic animals. Concerning these last it is not a little characteristic to observe (and it may be remembered that Wamba, the Saxon jester in Ivanhoe, plays the philologer here), that the names of almost all animals so long as they are alive are thus Saxon, but when dressed and prepared for food become Norman—a fact indeed which we might have expected beforehand; for the Saxon hind had the charge and labour of tending and feeding them, but only that they might appear on the table of his Norman lord. Thus ox, steer, cow are Saxon, but beef Norman; calf is Saxon, but veal Norman; sheep is Saxon, but mutton Norman; so it is severally with swine and pork, deer and venison, fowl and pullet. Bacon, the only flesh which perhaps ever came within his reach, is the single exception.

Putting all this together, with much more of the same kind, which might be produced, but has only been indicated here, we should certainly gather, that while there are manifest tokens, as preserved in our language, of the Saxon having been for a season an inferior and even an oppressed race, the stable elements of Anglo-Saxon life, however overlaid for a while, had still made good their claim to be the solid groundwork of the after nation as of the after language; and to the justice of this conclusion all other historic records, and the present social condition of England, consent in bearing testimony.

What I have here supposed might be done in the way of reproducing the past history of England, had all records of her earlier times, and of the great social changes of those times, been entirely swept away, this has been done for the earlier history of Italy, of which the written memorials have thus perished, by a great modern historian of Rome. He draws most important conclusions respecting the races which occupied the Italian soil, and the relations in which they stood to one another, from an
analysis of the words which in the Latin language are derived severally from a Greek and from other sources. "It cannot," he says, "be mere chance that the words for house, field, plough, ploughing, wine, oil, milk, kine, swine, and others relating to tillage and gentler ways of life agree in Latin and in Greek, while all objects appertaining to war or the chase are designated by words utterly ungrecean." From hence he draws the conclusion that this ungrecean population which has bequeathed these latter words stood toward the Grecian very much in the same relation which we have seen the Norman, as declared by the consenting witness of history and language, to have occupied in respect of the Saxon.

Thus far our lesson has been derived from a noting of the relative proportions in which the words of one stock and of another are mingled in a language, with the domains of human activity to which these severally appertain. But this is not all; there are vast harvests of historic lore garnered often in single words; there are continually great facts of history which they at once declare and preserve. Thus, for instance, is it with the word "Church." There can, I think, be no reasonable doubt that "Church" is originally from the Greek, and signifies "that which pertains to the Lord," or "the house which is the Lord's." But here a difficulty meets us. How explain the presence of a Greek word in the vocabulary of our Anglo-Saxon forefathers? for that we derive the word mediately from them, and not immediately from the Greek, is certain. What contact, direct or indirect, was there between the languages to account for this? The explanation is curious. While the Anglo-Saxons and other tribes of the Teutonic stock were almost universally converted through contact with the Latin Church in the western provinces of the Roman Empire, or by its missionaries, yet it came to pass that before this, some of the Goths on the lower Danube had been brought to the knowledge of Christ by Greek missionaries from Constantinople; and this word κυριακή or "Church" did, with certain others, pass over from the Greek to the Gothic tongue; and these Goths, the first converted to the Christian faith, the first therefore that had a Christian vocabulary, lent the word in their turn to the other German tribes, among others to our Anglo-Saxon forefathers; thus it has come round by the Goths from Constantinople to us.1

1 The passage most illustrative of the parentage of the word is from Walafrid Strabo (about A.D. 840), who writes thus: "Ab ipsis autem Græcis Kyroch à Kyrios, et alia multa accepinus. Sic et domus Dei Basilica, i.e.
Or again, examine the words “pagan” and “paganism,” and you will find that there is history in them. Many of us, no doubt, are aware that “pagani,” derived from “pagus,” a village, signifies properly the dwellers in hamlets and villages, as distinguished from the inhabitants of towns and cities; and the word was so used, and without any religious significance, in the earlier periods of the Latin language. “Pagani” did indeed then not unfrequently designate all civilians, as contradistinguished from the military caste; and this fact may not have been without a certain influence, when the idea of the faithful as soldiers of Christ was strongly realised in the minds of men. But how mainly was it that it came first to be employed as equivalent to “heathen,” and applied to those yet alien from the faith of Christ? It was thus. The Christian Church fixed itself first in the seats and centres of intelligence, in the towns and cities of the Roman Empire, and in them its first triumphs were won; while long after these had accepted the truth, heathen superstitions and idolatries languished and lingered on in the obscure hamlets and villages of the country; so that “pagans,” or villagers, came to be applied to all the remaining votaries of the old and decaying superstitions, inasmuch as far the greater number of them were of this class. The first document in which the word appears in this its secondary sense is an edict of the Emperor Valentinian, of date A.D. 368. The word “heathen” acquired its meaning from exactly the same fact, namely, that at the introduction of Christianity into Germany, the wild dwellers on the “heaths” longest resisted the truth. Here then are two instructive notices for us—first, the historic fact that the Church of Christ did thus plant itself first in the haunts of learning and intelligence; and then the more important moral fact, that it shunned not discussion, that it feared not to grapple with the wit and wisdom of this world, or to expose its claims to the searching examination of educated men; but, on the contrary, had its claims first recognised by them, and in the great cities of the world won first a complete triumph over all opposing powers.1

Regia à Rege, sic etiam Kyrica, i.e. Dominica à Domino, nuncupatur. Si autem quaeritur, qua occasione ad nos vestigia haec graecitatis advenerint, dicendum principi à Gothis, qui et Getæ, cum eo tempore, quo ad fidem Christi perduci sunt, in Graecorum provinciis commorantes, nostrum, i.e. theotiscum sermonem habuerint."

1 There is a good note on “pagan” in Gibbon’s Decline and Fall, chap. xxi., at the end; and in Grimm’s Deutsche Mythol., p. 1198; and the history of the changes in the word’s use is traced in another interest in Mill’s Logie, vol. ii. p. 271.
I quoted the words of one in my first lecture, who, magnifying the advantage of following up the history of words, observed that oftentimes more would be learned from this than from the history of a campaign. There are many words, "sophist," "barbarous," "clerk," "romance," for example, on any of which we might prove the truth of this assertion. Let us, however, take the word "sacrament," and see whether its history, while it carries us far, yet will not carry us by ways full of instruction; and this, while we confine ourselves strictly to the word's history, not needlessly mixing ourselves with discussions in regard of the thing, or of its place and importance in the Christian scheme. We shall find ourselves first among the forms of Roman law, where the "sacramentum" first appears as the deposit or pledge, which in certain suits plaintiff and defendant were alike obliged to make, and whereby they engaged themselves to one another, the loser of the suit forfeiting his pledge to sacred temple-uses, from which fact the name "sacramentum," or thing consecrated, was first derived. The next employment of the word would plant us amidst the military affairs of Rome, "sacramentum" being applied to the military oath with which the Roman soldiers mutually engaged themselves at their first enlisting never to desert their standards, or turn their back upon the enemy, or abandon their imperator—this use of the word teaching us the sacredness which the Romans attached to their military engagements, and going far to explain to us their victories. The word was then transferred from this military oath to any solemn oath whatsoever.

This, which has hitherto been traced, we may call the history of the word, anterior to the period when it was assumed into Christian usage at all, and these three stages it had already passed through before the Church claimed it for her own, before indeed she had herself come into existence. Her early writers, out of a sense of the sacredness and solemnity of the oath among all human transactions, first used the word to signify any sacred transaction whatsoever that had some special solemnity or sanctity attached to it, and especially any mystery where more was meant than met the eye or the ear. Thus in the early Church writers the Incarnation is a "sacrament," the lifting up of the brazen serpent is a "sacrament," the giving of the manna, and many things more. This period of the word's history it is very expedient that we be aware of, and acquainted with it; for thus all force is taken away from the passages quoted by Romish controversiasts in proof of their seven sacraments.
It is quite true that the early Church writers did entitle marriage and supreme unction, and the others which they have added, “sacraments;” but then they called “sacraments,” or mysteries, many things more, which even the theologians of Rome themselves do not pretend to include in the “sacraments” properly so called; so that the evidence here is unfortunately too good; proving too much, it proves nothing. But there is another stage in the word’s history, and that stage the one which concerns us the most nearly of all, its limitation to the two “sacraments,” properly so called, of the Christian Church. The remembrance of the use of “sacrament,” a use which had not passed away, to signify the plighted troth of the Roman soldier to his imperator, was that, I think, which specially wrought to the adaptation of the word to Baptism; wherein we also, with more than one allusion to this oath of theirs, pledge ourselves “to fight man­fully under Christ’s banner, and to continue his faithful soldiers and servants to our life’s end;” while the mysterious character of the Holy Eucharist was, I believe, its especial point of fitness for having this name of “sacrament” applied to it.

I have already sought to find history embedded in the word “frank;” but I must bring forward the Franks again, and ask you to consider whether the well-known fact that in the East not Frenchmen alone, but all Europeans, are so called, does nor require to be accounted for? It can be so, and this wide usage of the word is indeed a deep footprint of the past. This appellation dates from the Crusades, and Michaud, the chief French historian of these, with justice finds herein an evidence that his countrymen took a decided lead, as their gallantry well fitted them to do, in these great romantic enterprises of the middle ages; impressing themselves so strongly on the mind and imagination of the East as the crusading nation of Europe, that their name was extended to all the warriors of Christendom. And considering how large a proportion of the noblest Crusaders, as of others most influential in bringing these enterprises about, as Peter the Hermit, Pope Urban the Second, St. Bernard, were French, it must be allowed that the actual facts bear him out in his assertion.

To the Crusades also probably, and to the intense hatred which they roused throughout Christendom against the Mahometan infidels, we owe “miscreant,” in its present sense of one to whom we would attribute the vilest principles and practice. The word meant at the first simply a “misbeliever,” and would have been applied as freely, and with as little sense of injustice, to the
royal-hearted Saladin as to the most infamous wretch that fought in his armies. By degrees, however, those who employed it tinged it more and more with their feeling and passion, more and more lost sight of its primary use, until they would apply it to any whom they regarded with feelings of abhorrence resembling those which they entertained for an infidel; just as "Samaritan" was often employed by the Jews purely as a term of reproach, and with no thought whether the person on whom it was fastened was really sprung from that mongrel people or not; indeed where they were quite sure that he was not. "Assassin" also, the explanation of which we must be content to leave, belongs probably to a romantic chapter in the history of the Crusades.¹

Once more, the words "saunter" and "saunterer" are singular records of the same events. "Saunterer," derived from "la Sainte Terre," is one who visits the Holy Land. At first a deep and earnest enthusiasm drew men thither to visit—in the beautiful words which Shakespeare puts into the mouth of our Fourth Henry, and which explain so well the attractions that at one time made Palestine the magnet of all Christendom—to visit, I say,

\[
\text{those holy fields,}
\]
\[
\text{Over whose acres walked those blessed feet,}
\]
\[
\text{Which fourteen hundred years ago were nailed}
\]
\[
\text{For our advantage on the bitter Cross.}
\]

As, however, the enthusiasm spent itself, the making of this pilgrimage degenerated into a mere worldly fashion, and every idler who liked strolling about better than performing the duties of his calling, assumed the pilgrim's staff, and proclaimed himself bound for the Holy Land; to which very often he never in earnest set out. And thus this word forfeited its earlier and more honourable meaning, and the "saunterer" came to signify one idly and unprofitably wasting his time, loitering here and there, with no fixed purpose or aim.

A curious piece of history is wrapped up in the word "poltroon," supposing it to be indeed derived, as many excellent etymologists have considered, from the Latin "pollice trucus;" one, that is, deprived, or who has deprived himself, of his thumb. We know that in the old times a self-mutilation of this description was not unfrequent on the part of some cowardly shirking fellow, who wished to escape his share in the defence of his country; he would cut off his right thumb, and at once become incapable of drawing the bow, and thus useless for the wars. It was not to

¹ Gibbon's *Decline and Fall*, chap. lxiv.
ON THE STUDY OF WORDS  [LECT.

be wondered at that Englishmen, the men of Crevy and of Agincourt, who with those very bows which he had disabled himself from drawing, had quelled the mailed chivalry of Europe, should have looked with extremest disdain on one who had so basely exempted himself from service, nor that the "pollice truncus," the poltroon, first applied to a coward of this sort, should afterwards become a name of scorn affixed to every base and cowardly evader of the duties and dangers of life. Our use of the word "caitiff," which is identical with "captive," only coming through the Norman French, has, in like manner, its rise out of the sense that he who lets himself be made prisoner in war is a worthless, good-for-nothing person—a feeling so strong in some states of antiquity, that under no circumstances would they consent to ransom those of their citizens who had fallen alive into the hands of the enemy. The captives were accounted "caitiffs," whom they could better do without. The same feeling has given us "craven," a synonym for coward; this is one who has craved or craven his life at the enemies' hands, instead of resisting to the death.

Various explanations of "Cardinal" have been proposed; it has been sought, that is, in various ways to account for the appropriation of this name to the parochial clergy of the city of Rome with the subordinate bishops of that diocese. I believe this application is an outgrowth, and itself a standing testimony, of the measureless assumptions of the Roman See. One of the favourite comparisons by which that See was used to set out its relation of superiority to all other Churches of Christendom was this: it was the "hinge" or "cardo" on which all the rest of the Church, as the door, at once depended and turned. It followed presently upon this that the clergy of Rome were "cardinales," as nearest to, and most closely connected with, him who was thus the "hinge," or "cardo," of all.

1 See The Diversions of Purley, Part II. chap. ii.—In Bonaparte's wars exactly the same thing happened, and young men cut off not now the thumb, but the forefinger, that which should pull the trigger, so to escape being drawn for the conscription; and travellers in Egypt tell us that under the horrible tyranny of Mehemet Ali, a great part of the population in some of the villages had deprived themselves of the sight of the right eye, that in like manner they might be useless for war.

2 See Horace, Carm., iii. 5.

* Thus a letter, professing to be of Pope Anacletus the First in the first century, but really forged in the ninth: "Apostolica Sedes cardo et caput omnium Ecclesiarum à Domino est constituta; et sicut cardine ostium regitur, sic hujus S. Sedis auctoritate omnes Ecclesias reguntur." And we have "cardinal" put in relation with this "cardo" in a genuine letter of Pope Leo the Ninth: "Clerici summar Sedis Cardinales dicuntur, cardini utique illi quo cetera moventur, vicinius adherentes."
There is a little word not in uncommon use among us, an inquiry into the pedigree of which will lay open to us an important page in the intellectual history of Europe. We may all know what a “dunce” is, but we may not be as well acquainted with the quarter from whence the word has been derived. Certain theologians in the middle ages were termed Schoolmen; being so called because they were formed in the cloister and cathedral schools which Charlemagne and his immediate successors had founded—men not to be lightly spoken of, as they often are by those who never read a line of their works, and have not a tithe of their wit; who moreover little guess how many of the most familiar words which they employ, or misemploy, have descended to them from these. “Real,” “virtual,” “entity,” “nonentity,” “equivocation,” all these, with many more unknown to classical Latin, but which now have become almost necessities, were first coined by the Schoolmen; and, passing over from them into the speech of those more or less interested in their speculations, have gradually filtered through the successive strata of society, till now they have reached, some of them, to quite the lowest. At the revival of learning, however, their works fell out of favour: they were not written in classical Latin: the form in which their speculations were thrown was often unattractive; it was mainly in their authority that the Romish Church found support for its perilled dogmas; on all which accounts, it was considered a mark of intellectual progress and advance to have broken with them and altogether thrown off their yoke. Some, however, still clung to these Schoolmen, and to one in particular, Duns Scotus, the great teacher of the Franciscan order; and many times an adherent of the old learning would seek to strengthen his position by an appeal to its great doctor, familiarly called Duns; while the others would contemptuously rejoin, “Oh, you are a Dunsman,” or more briefly, “You are a Duns”—or “This is a piece of dunsery,” and inasmuch as the new learning was ever enlisting more and more of the genius and scholarship of the age on its side, the title became more and more a term of scorn; “Remember ye not,” says Tyndal, “how within this thirty years and far less, the old barking curs, Dunce’s disciples, and like draft called Scotists, the children of darkness, raged in every pulpit against Greek, Latin, and Hebrew?” And thus from that long extinct conflict between the old and the new learning, that strife between the medieval and the modern theology, we inherit the words, “Dunce” and “duncery.” Let us pause here for a moment to
confess that the lot of poor Duns was certainly a hard one, who, whatever may have been his merits as a teacher of Christian truth, was certainly one of the keenest and most subtle-witted of men. He, the "subtle Doctor" by pre-eminence, for so his admirers called him, could hardly have anticipated, and as little as any man deserved, that his name should be turned into a by-word expressive of stupidity and obstinate dulness.

This, however, is only one example of the curious fortune of words. We have another singular example of the same, and of a parallel injustice, in the way in which the word "mammetry," which is a contraction of "Mahometry," is employed by our early English writers. Mahometanism being the most prominent form of false religion with which Englishmen were acquainted, this word was used up to and beyond the Reformation, to designate first any false religion, and then the worship of idols; idolatry being proper to, and a leading feature of, most false religions. Men did not pause to remember that Mahometanism is the great exception, its most characteristic feature and glory being its protest against all idol-worship whatsoever; which being so, the injustice was signal in calling an idol "a mammet" or a Mahomet, and idolatry, "mammetry." To pursue the fortunes of the word a little further, another step caused not religious images only, but dolls, to be called "mammet;" and when in Romeo and Juliet Capulet contemptuously styles his daughter "a whining mammet," the process is strange, yet every step of it may be easily followed, whereby the name of the Arabian false prophet is fastened on the fair maiden of Verona.

Nor is the true derivation of "tariff" unworthy to be traced. We all know what it means, namely, a fixed scale of duties levied upon imports. If you turn to a map of Spain, you will take note at its southern point, and running out into the Straits of Gibraltar, of a promontory, which from its position is admirably adapted for commanding the entrance of the Mediterranean Sea, and watching the exit and entrance of all ships. A fortress stands upon this promontory, called now, as it was also called in the times of the Moorish domination in Spain, "Tarifa;" the name indeed is of Moorish origin. It was the custom of the Moors to watch from this point all merchant ships going into, or coming out of, the Midland Sea; and issuing from this stronghold, to levy duties according to a fixed scale on all merchandise passing in and out of the Straits, and this was called from the place where it was levied, "tarifa" or "tariff;" and in this way we have acquired the word.
"Bigot" is another word widely spread over Europe, of which I am inclined to think that we should look for the derivation where it is not generally sought, and that here too we must turn to Spain. It has much perplexed inquirers, and two explanations of it are current; one of which traces it up to the early Normans, while they yet retained their northern tongue, and to their often adjuration by the name of God, with sometimes a reference to a famous scene in French history in which Rollo, Duke of Normandy, played a conspicuous part; the other puts it in connexion with "Beguines," called often in Latin "Beguttæ," a name by which certain communities of pietist women were known in the middle ages. These last have left us their name in "biggen," a plain cap so called because originally worn by them; yet I cannot persuade myself that we owe "bigot" either to them or to the Normans, but rather to that mighty impression which the Spaniards made upon all Europe in the fifteenth and following century. Now the word "bigote" means in Spanish "moustachio," and as contrasted with the smooth or nearly smooth upper lip of most other people, at that time the Spaniards were the "men of the moustachio." That it was their characteristic feature comes out in Shakespeare's *Love's Labour's Lost*, where Armado, the "fantastical Spaniard," describes the king "his familiar, as sometimes being pleased to lean on his poor shoulder, and dally with his moustachio." That they themselves connected firmness and resolution with the moustachio, that it was esteemed the outward symbol of these, is plain from such phrases as "hombre de bigote," a man of resolution, "tener bigotes," to stand firm. But that in which they eminently displayed their firmness and resolution in those days was their adherence to whatever the Roman See imposed and taught. What then more natural, or more entirely according to the law of the generation of names, than that this striking and distinguishing outward feature of the Spaniard should have been laid hold of to express that character and condition of mind which eminently were his, and then transferred to all others who shared the same? The moustachio is in like manner in France a symbol of military courage; and thus "un vieux moustache" is an old soldier of courage and military bearing. And strengthening this view, the earliest use of the word which Richardson gives, is a passage from Bishop Hall, where "bigot" is used to signify a pervert to Romanism: "he was turned both bigot and physician." In further proof that the Spaniard was in...
those times the standing representative of the bigot and the persecutor, we need but turn to the older editions of Foxe's *Book of Martyrs*, where the pagan persecutors of the early Christians are usually arrayed in the armour of Spanish soldiers, and sometimes graced with tremendous "bigotes."

Having dedicated this lecture to the history which is in words, I can have no fitter opportunity of urging upon you the importance of seeking in every case to acquaint yourselves with the circumstances under which any body of men, that have played an important part in history, especially in the history of your own land, obtained the name by which they were afterwards willing to be known, or which was used for their designation by others. This you may do as a matter of historical inquiry, and keeping entirely aloof in spirit from the scorn, the bitterness, the falsehood, the calumny, out of which very often this name was first imposed. Whatever of this evil may have been at work in them that coined, or gave currency to, the name, the name itself can never be neglected without serious loss by those who would truly understand the moral significance of the thing; there is always something, often very much, to be learned from it. Learn then in regard of each one of these names which you may meet in your studies, whether it was one which men gave to themselves; or one imposed on them by others, and which they never recognised; or one which being first imposed by others, was yet in course of time admitted and accepted by themselves. We have examples in all these kinds. Thus the "Gnostics" called themselves such; the name was of their own devising, and one in which they boasted: in like manner the "Cavaliers" of our Civil War. "Quaker," "Puritan," "Roundhead" were all, on the contrary, names devised by others, and never accepted by those to whom they were attached; while "Whig" and "Tory" were nicknames originally indeed of bitterest scorn and party hate, given by two political bodies in England to one another, which however in course of years lost what was offensive in them, until they came to be accepted and employed by the very parties themselves. The same we may say of "Methodists;" it was certainly not first taken by the followers of Wesley, but imposed on them by others, while yet they have been subsequently willing to accept and to be known by it.

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1 In North's *Examen*, p. 321, is a very lively, though not a very impartial, account of the rise of these names.
Now of these titles, and of many more that might be adduced, some undoubtedly had their rise in mere external accident, and stand in no essential connexion with those that bear them; and these names, although seldom without their instruction, yet plainly are not so instructive as others, in which the innermost heart of a system speaks out and reveals itself, so that, having mastered the name, we have placed ourselves at the central point, from which we shall best master everything besides. Thus for instance is it with "Gnosticism" and "Gnostic;" in the prominence given to gnosis, or knowledge, as opposed to faith, lies the key to the whole system. And I may say generally that almost all the sects and parties, religious and political, which have risen up in times past in England, are known by names that will repay study; by names an entering into which will bring us far to the understanding of their strength and their weakness, their truth and their error, the idea and intention according to which they wrought. "Puritans," "Fifth Monarchy Men," "Seekers," "Independents," "Friends," "Latitudinarians," these titles, with many more, have each its significance; and would you understand what the men themselves meant, you must first understand what they were called. From this must be your point of starting, even as to this you must bring back whatever later information you may gain; and, though I will not say that you must always subordinate it to the name, yet must you ever put it in relation and connexion with that.

You will often be able to glean knowledge from the names of things, if not as important as that I have just been speaking of, yet curious and interesting. What a record of inventions is preserved in the names which so many articles bear, of the place from which they first came, or the person by whom they were first invented. The "bayonet" tells us that it was first made at Bayonne—"cambrics" that they came from Cambrai—"damask" from Damascus—"arras" from Arras—"dinty" from Damietta—"cordwain" or "cordovan" from Cordova—"currants" from Corinth—"indigo" (indicum) from India—the "guinea," that it was originally coined (in 1663) of gold brought from the African coast so called—"camlet," that it was woven, at least in part, of camel's hair. Such has been the manufacturing progress of England that we now send our calicoes and muslins to India and the East; yet the words give standing witness that we once imported them from thence; for "calico" is from Calicut, and "muslin" from Moussul, a city in Asiatic Turkey.
It is true indeed that occasionally a name will embody and give permanence to an error; as when in "America" the honour of discovering the New World, which belonged to Columbus, has been transferred to another eminent discoverer, but one who had no title to this praise, and who, as has been lately abundantly shown, was entirely guiltless of any attempt to usurp it for himself. So too the "turkey" in our farm-yards seems to claim Turkey for its home; and the assumption that it was from thence no doubt caused it to be so called; while indeed it was unknown in Europe until introduced from the New World, where alone it is indigenous. This error the French in another shape repeat, calling it "dinde," originally "poulet d'Inde," or, Indian fowl. In like manner "gypsies" appears to imply that Egypt was the country to which these wanderers originally belonged, and from which they had migrated westward; and certainly it was so believed in many parts of Europe at their first appearance in the beginning of the fifteenth century, and hence this title. It is now however clearly made out, their language leaving no doubt of the fact, that they are an outcast tribe which has wandered hither from a more distant land, from India itself. "Bohemians," the French appellation of gypsies, involves an error similar to ours: they were taken at first by the common people in France to be the expelled Hussites of Bohemia, and hence this name. In the German "Zigeuner" there is no expression of the land from which they were presumed to have come, but if this word be "Zieh-Gauner," roaming thieves, it will indicate the evil repute in which from the very beginning they were held.

And where words have not, as in these cases, embodied an error, it will yet sometimes happen that the sound or spelling of a word will to us possibly suggest a wrong explanation, against which in these studies it will need to be on our guard. I dare say that there has been a stage in most boys' geographical knowledge when they have taken for granted that Jutland was so called, not because it was the land of the Jutes, but on account of its jutting out into the sea in so remarkable a manner. And there have not been wanting those who have ventured to trace in the name "Jove" a heathen reminiscence of the awful name of Jehovah. I will not enter into this here; sufficient to say that, however specious this at first sight may seem, yet on closer examination of the two words, every connexion between them disappears.

Sometimes the assumed derivation has reacted upon and
modified the spelling. Thus the name of the Caledonian tribe whom we call the “Picts” would probably have come down to us in a somewhat different form, but for the assumption which early rose up, that they were so called from their custom of staining or painting their bodies, that in fact “Picts” meant “the painted.” This, as is now acknowledged, is an exceedingly improbable supposition. It would be quite conceivable that the Romans should have given this name to the first barbarous tribe they encountered, who were in the habit of painting themselves thus: such a custom, forcing itself on the eye, and impressing itself on the imagination, is exactly that which gives birth to a name: but after they had been long familiar with the tribes in southern Britain, to whom this painting or tattooing was equally familiar, it is quite inconceivable that they should have applied it to one of the northern tribes in the island, with which they first came in contact at a far later day. The name is much more probably the original Celtic one belonging to the tribe, slightly altered in the mouths of the Romans. It may have been the same with “hurricane;” for many have imagined that this word, being used especially to signify the West Indian tornado, must be derived from the tearing up and hurrying away of the canes in the sugar plantations, just in the same way as the Latin “calamitas” has been drawn, but erroneously, from “calamus,” the stalk of the corn. In both cases the etymology is faulty; “hurricane” is only a transplanting into our tongue of the Spanish “hurracan” or the French “ouragan.”

It is a signal evidence of the conservative powers of language, that we may oftentimes trace in speech the records of customs and states of society which have now past so entirely away as to survive nowhere else but in these words alone. For example, a “stipulation,” or agreement, is so called, as many tell us, from “stipula,” a straw, because it once was usual when one

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1 One or two words more I will mention here, in which a falsely-imagined etymology has certainly gone so far as often, if not always, to influence the spelling. Thus “surname” is spelt by many with an i, as if it were ‘sire”-name, the family name in contradistinction to the personal or Christian, when indeed it is the name over and above (“sur” for “super”), as I shall have occasion to note in a later lecture. “Shamefaced” too was once “shamefast” (the Anglo-Saxon “sceam-fast”), “shamefacedness” was “shamefastness,” like “steadfast” and “steadfastness;” but the ordinary manifestations of shame being by the face, have brought it to its present orthography; it was “shamefastness” at 1 Tim. ii. 9, in the first edition (1611) of the Authorised Version, and certainly ought not to have been altered in the later. In Latin the same has occurred with “orichalcum,” spelt often “aurichalcum,” as though it were a composite metal of mingled gold and brass. It is indeed the mountain brass, ἀργυρόχαλκος.
person passed over landed property to another, that a straw from the land, as a pledge or earnest of the property transferred, should be handed from the seller to the buyer, which afterwards was commonly preserved with, or inserted in, the title deeds. And we all know how important a fact of English history is laid up in “curfew” or “couvre-feu.” Nor need I do more than remind you that in our common phrase of “signing our name,” we preserve a record of a time when the first rudiments of education, such as the power of writing, were the portion of so few, that it was not as now the exception, but the custom for most persons to make their mark or “sign,” great barons and kings themselves not being ashamed to set this sign or cross to the weightiest documents. We more accurately express what now we do, when we speak of “subscribing the name.” Then too, whenever we term arithmetic the science of “calculation,” we in fact allude to that rudimental period of the science of numbers when pebbles (calculi) were used, as now among savages they often are, to facilitate the practice of counting; as, in the Greek πελώρωμα, record of a period was kept when the five fingers were so employed. In “library” we preserve the fact that books were once written on the bark (liber) of trees, as in “paper,” of a somewhat later period, when the Egyptian papyrus, “the paper reeds by the brooks,” furnished the chief material for writing.

Theories too, which long since were utterly renounced, have yet left their traces behind them. Thus the words “good humour,” “bad humour,” “humorous,” and the like, rest altogether on a now exploded, but a very old and widely extended, theory of medicine; according to which there were four principal moistures or “humours” in the natural body, on the due proportion and combination of which the disposition alike of body and of mind depended. And “temper,” as used by us now, has its origin in the same theory; the due admixture, or right “tempering,” of these gave what was called the happy “temper,” which, thus existing inwardly, manifested itself also outwardly. In the same manner “distemper,” which we still employ in the sense of sickness, was that evil frame either of a man’s body or of his mind (for it was used alike of both), which had its rise in an unsuitable mingling of these humours. In these instances, as in many more, the great streams of thought and feeling have changed their course, and now flow in quite other channels from those which once they filled, but have left these words as lasting memorials of the channels in which once they ran.

1 See the Prologue to Ben Jonson’s Every Man out of his Humour.
Other singular examples we have of the way in which the record of old errors, themselves exploded long ago, may yet survive in language—the words that grew into use when those errors found credit maintaining still their currency among us. The mythology, for example, which our ancestors brought with them from the forests of Germany is as much extinct for us as are the Lares, Larvae, and Lemures of heathen Rome; yet the deposit it has permanently left in the language is not inconsiderable. "Lubber," "dwarf," "oaf," "droll," "wight," "hag," "nightmare," "wicked," suggest themselves here, as bequeathed to us by that old Teutonic demonology. No one now believes in astrology, that the planet under which a man may happen to be born will affect his temperament, will make him for life of a disposition grave or gay, lively or severe. Yet we seem to affirm as much in language, for we speak of one as "jovial," or "saturnine," or "mercurial"—"jovial," as being born under the planet Jupiter or Jove, which was the joyfulest star, and of happiest augury of all: a gloomy severe person is said to be "saturnine," as born under the planet Saturn, who was considered to make those that owned his influence, and were born when he was in the ascendancy, grave and stern as himself; another we call "mercurial," or light-hearted, as those born under the planet Mercury were accounted to be. The same faith in the influence of the stars survives in "disastrous," "ill-starred," "ascendant," "ascendancy," and, indeed, in "influence" itself. What curious legends belong to the explanation of the "sardonic," or "Sardinian laugh," to the "topaz," so called, as some said, because men were only able to conjecture (τοπάζιος) the position of the cloud-concealed island from whence it was brought; to the "amethyst," esteemed, as the word implies, a preventive or antidote of drunkenness, and to other words not a few employed by us still.

But here a question presents itself, one which is not, as at first it might seem, merely speculative; for it has before now become a veritable case of conscience with some whether they ought to use words which originally rested on, and so seem to affirm, some superstition or untruth. This question has practically settled itself; they will keep their ground; but they also ought; for it is not of necessity that a word should always be considered to root itself in its etymology, and to draw its life-blood from thence. It may so detach itself from this as to have a right to be regarded independently of it. And thus our weekly newspapers commit no absurdity in calling themselves "journals," we
involve ourselves in no real contradiction, speaking of a “quarantine” of five, ten, or any number of days more or fewer than forty; our “rubrics” are rubrics still, though seldom printed in red ink. I remember once asking a class of school-children, whether an announcement which during one very hard winter appeared in the papers, of a “white blackbird” having been shot, was correctly worded, or self-contradictory and absurd. The less thoughtful members of the class instantly pronounced against it; while after a little consideration, two or three perceived and replied that it was perfectly correct, that while no doubt the bird had originally obtained this name from its blackness, yet was it now the name of a species, and one so cleaving to it as not to be forfeited, even when the blackness had quite disappeared. We do not question the right of the “New Forest” still to be so called, though it has now stood for nigh eight hundred years.

It must then be esteemed a piece of ethical prudery, and an ignorance of the laws which languages obey, when the early Quakers refused to employ the names commonly given to the days of the week, and substituted for these, “first day,” “second day,” and so on. This they did, as is well known, on the ground that it became not Christian men to give so much sanction to idolatry as was involved in the ordinary style—as though every time they spoke of Wednesday they would be doing some honour to Woden, of Thursday to Thor, of Friday to Freya, and thus with the rest. But these names of the days of the week had long left their etymologies behind, and quite disengaged themselves from them. Moreover, had these precisians in speech been consistent, they could not have stopped where they did; every new acquaintance with the derivation or primary use of words would have entangled them in new embarrassment, would have required them still further to purge their vocabulary. “To charm,” “to bewitch,” “to fascinate,” “to enchant,” would have been no longer lawful words for those who had outlived the belief in magic, and in the power of the evil eye; nor “lunacy,” nor “lunatic,” for such as did not consider that the moon had anything to do with mental unsoundness; nor “panic” fear, for those who believed that the great Pan was indeed dead. Nay, they must have found fault with the language of Holy Scripture itself; for in the New Testament there is a word in very honourable use, expressing a function that might be exercised by the faithful, that, namely, of an interpreter, which word is yet directly derived from Hermes, an heathen deity,
and a deity who did not, like Woden, Thor and Freya, pertain to a long extinct mythology, but to one existing at that very moment in its strength. And how was it, we may ask, that Paul did not protest against a Christian woman retaining the name of Phœbe (Rom. xvi. 1), a goddess of the same mythology?

We have abundant right then to speak of an history in words. Now suppose that the pieces of money which in the ordinary intercourse of life are passing through our hands, had each one something of its own which made it more or less worthy of note; if on one was stamped some striking maxim, on another some important fact, on a third a memorable date; if others were works of finest art, graven with rare and beautiful devices, or bearing the head of some ancient sage, or heroic king; while others, again, were the sole surviving monuments of mighty nations that once filled the world with their fame; what a careless indifference to our own improvement would it argue in us, if we were content that these should come and go, should stay by us or pass from us, without our vouchsafing to them so much as one serious regard. Such a currency there is, a currency intellectual and spiritual of no meaner worth, and one with which we have to transact so much of the higher business of our lives. Let us see that we come not here under the condemnation of any such incoerous dulness as that which I have imagined.
LECTURE IV

ON THE RISE OF NEW WORDS

One of the most interesting branches of the study which is occupying us now is the taking note of the periods when great and significant words, or it may be even such as can hardly claim these epithets, have risen up and come into use with the circumstances attending their rise. The different portions of my theme so run into one another, that this is a subject which I have, though unwillingly, already anticipated in part; yet is it one so curious, and which, I believe, may be made so instructive, that I purpose to dedicate a lecture exclusively to it. Indeed, I am persuaded that a volume might be written which would have few to rival it in interest, that should do no more than indicate, or, where advisable, quote the first writer or the first document wherein new words, or old words employed in a new sense—such words, I mean, as have afterwards played an important part in the world’s history—have appeared. For the feeling wherewith we watch the rise above the horizon of these words, some of them to shine for ever as luminaries in the moral and intellectual heaven above us, can oftentimes be only likened to that which the poet so grandly describes, of

some watcher of the skies,
When a new planet swims into his ken.

I would instance of words religious and ecclesiastical such as these—“Christian;” 1 “Trinity;” 2 “Catholic,” as an epithet applied to the Church; 3 “canonical,” as a distinctive characteristic of the received Scriptures; 4 “New Testament,” as describing the complex of the sacred books of the “New Covenant;” 5 “Gospels,” as applied to the four inspired records of

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3 First by Ignatius, Ad Smyr., viii.
4 Origen, Opp., vol. iii. p. 36 (ed. de la Rue).
the life of our Lord; or again, historical and geographical, as the first mention of India; of Europe; the first emerging of the names “Germans” and “Germany”; the earliest notice of Rome in any writer; or when the entire Hesperian peninsula acquired the title of “Italy,” which had been gradually creeping up for centuries from its southern extremity; when Asia on this side Taurus was first called “Asia Minor”; the earliest notice which we have of “Normans” under this title; who first gave to the newly-discovered continent in the West the name of “America,” and when; the period when this island exchanged its earlier name of “Britain” for “Anglia” or “England”; or, again, when it resumed “Great Britain” as its official designation. So too, to go back in the world’s history, and to take one or two examples of a different character—at what moment the words “tyrant” and “tyranny,” marking so distinct an epoch as they do in the political history of Greece, first appeared; when and from whom the fabric of the external

1 Justin Martyr, Apol., i. 66.
2 Eschylus, Suppl., 282.
3 Herodotus, iv. 36.
4 They probably first occur in the Commentaries of Caesar.
5 Probably in Hellanicus, a cotemporary of Herodotus.
6 In the time of Augustus Caesar.
7 Orosius, i. 8; in the fifth century of our era.
8 In the Geographer of Ravenna.

Alexander von Humboldt, who has studied the question profoundly, ascribes its general reception to its having been introduced into a popular and influential work on geography, published in 1507.

10 First in the writings of Archilochus, about 700 B.C. I will just observe that “tyrant” with the Greeks had a much deeper sense than it has in our modern use. The difference between a “king” and a “tyrant” was far more deeply apprehended by them than by us. A tyrant was not a bad king, who abused the advantages of a rightful position to purposes of lust or cruelty or other oppression; but it was of the essence of the tyrant that he attained supreme dominion through a violation of the laws and liberties of the state; and such an one, with whatever moderation he might afterwards exercise his rule, would not the less retain the name. Thus the mild and bounteous Pisistratus was, and was called, “tyrant” of Athens, while a Christian the Second of Denmark, “the Nero of the North,” would not have been esteemed such in their eyes. It was to the honour of the Greeks that they did not allow the course of the word to be arrested or turned aside by any occasional or partial exceptions in the manner of the after exercise of this ill-gotten dominion, but in the hateful secondary sense which the word even with them acquired, and which is felt still more strongly by us, the moral conviction, justified by all experience, spake out, that what was gotten by fraud and violence would only by the same methods be retained; that the “tyrant,” in the earlier Greek sense of the word, dogged as he would be by suspicion, fear, and an evil conscience, must also by a sure law become a “tyrant” in the later, which is that in which alone we employ the word. The present ruler of France, in the manner in which he got his power, and in the manner in which he wields it, casts the broadest light on the whole history of the word.
universe first received the title of “cosmos,” or “beautiful order,” 1 with many more of the same description.

Of these which I have just adduced let us take, by way of sample, two, and try whether there is not much to be gathered from them, and from attending to the epoch and circumstances of their rise. Our first example is a remarkable one, for it shows us the Holy Spirit Himself counting a name, and the rise of a name, of so much importance as to make it matter of special record in the Book of Life. “The disciples were called Christians first in Antioch” (Acts xi. 26). This might seem at first sight a notice curious and interesting, as all must possess interest for us which relates to the early days of the Church, but nothing more. And yet in truth how much of history is enfolded in this name; what light it throws on the early history of Christianity to know when and where it was first imposed on the faithful—“imposed,” I say, for it is clearly a name which they did not give to themselves, but received from their adversaries, however afterwards they may have learned to accept it as a title of honour, and to glory in it. For it is not said that they “called themselves,” but “were called” Christians first at Antioch; nor do we find the name anywhere in Scripture except on the lips of those alien from, or opposed to, the Gospel (Acts xxvi. 28; 1 Pet. iv. 16). And as it was a name imposed by adversaries, so among those adversaries it was plainly the heathen, and not the Jews, that gave it; since the Jews would never have called the followers of Jesus of Nazareth, “Christians,” or “those of Christ,” seeing that the very point of their opposition to Him was, that He was not the Christ, but a false pretender to this name.

Starting then from this point, that “Christians” was a name given to the early disciples by the heathen, let us see what we may learn from it. Now we know that Antioch was the headquarters of the earliest missions to the heathen, even as Jerusalem was to those of the seed of Abraham. It was there and among the faithful there that the sense of the world-wide destination of the Gospel arose; there it was first plainly seen as intended for all kindreds of the earth. Hitherto the faithful in Christ had been called by their enemies, and indeed often were still called, “Galileans,” or “Nazarenes”—both names which indicated the Jewish cradle in which the Gospel had been nursed, and that the world saw in it no more than a Jewish sect. But the

1 The word is ascribed, as is well known, to Pythagoras, born about 570 B.C.
name “Christians,” or “those of Christ,” imposed upon them now, while it indicated that Christ and the confession of his name was felt even by the world to be the sum and centre of their religion, showed also that the heathen had now come to comprehend, I do not say what the Church would be, but what it claimed to be—no mere variety of Judaism, but a society with a world-wide mission; it is clear that, when this name was given, the Church, even in the world's eyes, had chipped its Jewish shell. Nor will the attentive reader fail to observe that the imposing of this name on believers is by closest juxtaposition connected in the sacred narrative, and still more closely in the Greek than in the English, with St. Paul's first arrival at Antioch and preaching there; he being the especial and appointed instrument for bringing the Church into the recognition of this its destination for all men. As so often happens with the rise of a new name, the rise of this one marked a new epoch in the Church's life, its entrance upon a new stage of its development.

It is a merely subordinate matter, but yet I might just observe how strikingly what we know from other quarters confirms the accuracy of this account, which lays the invention of this name to the credit of the Antiochenes. The idle and witty inhabitants of Antioch were famous in all antiquity for the invention of nicknames; in this manufacture they particularly excelled. And thus it was exactly the place, where beforehand we might have expected that such a name, being a nickname or little better in the mouths of those that devised it, should have sprung up.

Our other example shall be “Anglia,” or “England.” When and under what circumstances did this island exchange for this its earlier name of Britain, which it had borne for more than a thousand years? There seems no sufficient reason for calling in question, though some have so done, the statement of the old chronicler that it received this new name of Anglia from Egbert, king of Wessex, who with the sanction of his Parliament or Witanegemot, holden A.D. 800 in this very city of Winchester, determined that the name “Britain” should give place to “England.” It may be that the change was not effected by any such formal act as this, yet the accuracy of the old historian, so far at least as his date is concerned, receives strong confirmation from the circumstance that “Anglia,” which is nowhere to be traced in any documents anterior to this period, does immediately after begin to appear.

What lessons for the student of English history are here, in the knowledge of this one fact, if he will but seek to look at it
all round, and consider it in a thoughtful spirit. I have said that
the rise of a new name marks often a new epoch in history;
certainly it was so in the instance before us. In the first place,
as it is the just law of names, that a people should give a name
to the land which they possess, not receive one from it, as the
Franks make Gaul to be France, do not suffer themselves to
become Gauls, so, as regards our own land, it is plain from the
coming up of this name that there must have been now a sense
in men's minds that its transformation from a land of Britons
to a land of Angles was at length completely accomplished, and
might therefore justly claim to find its recognition in a word.
That the Normans never made a "Norman-land" out of England,
as they had out of Neustria, and as the Angles had made an
"Angle-land" out of Britain—that they never so supplanted
the population or dissolved the social framework of the Angles,
as these had done of the Britons—is evident from the fact that
there went along with their conquest of the land no such sub­
stitution of a new name for the old, no such obliteration of the
old by the new, as on that prior occupation of the soil had found
place.—And then further, how significant a fact, that the invading
German tribes, which had hitherto been content to call them­selves according to the different provinces or districts which
they occupied, should have now felt that they needed, and out
of that need should have given birth to, a name common to and
including the whole land. Was there not here a sign that the
sense of unity, of all making up one corporate body, one nation,
was emerging out of the confusion of the preceding period of
the Heptarchy? We know from other sources that Egbert was
the first who united the different kingdoms of the Heptarchy
under his single sceptre; the first in whom the nation was knit
together into one. How instructive to find a name which should
be the symbol of unity coming to the birth at this very moment.
In respect too of the relations between themselves of the two
most important tribes which had settled in this island, the
Angles and the Saxons (the Jutes were too few to contend for
the honour), it is assuredly a weighty fact that it was the Angles
alone, from whom, though numerically inferior, the new appella­
tion was derived. Doubtless, a moral or political predominance
of this tribe, probably a political founded on a moral, asserted
itself in this fact. We are the less inclined to attribute it to
accident from the circumstance that in the phrase "Anglo­
Saxons" (Angli-Saxones), a term which is no modern invention
of convenience, as is sometimes erroneously asserted, but is
of earlier use even than Anglia, the Angles have again the precedence, and the Saxons only follow.

It will be seen, I think, by these two examples that new words will repay any attention which we may bestow upon them, and upon the conditions under which they emerge. Let us proceed to consider the causes which give them birth, the periods when a language is most fruitful in them, the regions of society from which they usually proceed, with some other interesting phenomena about them.

That cause which more than any other creates the necessity for these additions to the vocabulary of a language, and evokes the words which shall supply this necessity, when it is felt, is beyond a question this—namely, that in the appointments of highest Wisdom there are certain cardinal epochs in the world's history, in which, far more than at other times, new moral and spiritual forces begin to work, and to stir society to its central depths. When it is thus with a people, they make claims upon their language which were never made upon it hitherto. It is required to utter truths, to express ideas, which were strange to it in the time of its first moulding and shaping, and for which therefore the terms sufficient will naturally not be found in it at once—these new thoughts and feelings being larger and deeper than any with which hitherto the speakers of that tongue had been familiar. But when the bed of a river is suddenly required to deliver a far greater volume of waters than till now has been its wont, it is nothing strange if it should surmount its banks, break forth on the right hand and on the left, or even force new channels with something of violence for itself. The most illustrious example of this whereof I speak is, of course, the coming in of Christianity, or, including the anterior dispensation, we may say, of revealed religion into the ancient heathen world, with the consequent necessity under which the great novel truths which were then proclaimed to mankind lay, of clothing themselves in the language of men, and first in the languages of Greece and Rome—languages which in their previous form might have sufficed, and did suffice, for heathenism, sensuous and finite as it was, but not for the spiritual and infinite of the new dispensation. How often had the new thoughts to weave a new garment for themselves, inasmuch as that which they found ready made was too narrow to wrap themselves withal; the new wine to find new vessels for itself, that both might be preserved, the old vessels being neither sufficiently strong nor expansive to hold it.
Thus, not to speak of mere technical matters which would claim their utterance, how could the Greek language have had a word for "idolatry," so long as the sense of the awful contrast between the worship of the living God and of dead things had not risen up in their minds that spoke it? But when those began to employ Greek, and that as the sole utterance of what was in them, men to whom this distinction and contrast was the most earnest and the deepest conviction of their lives, the words "idolatry," "idolater," of necessity appeared. The heathen claimed not for their deities to be "searchers of hearts," disclaimed not for them the being "accepters of persons;" such attributes of power and righteousness entered not into their minds as pertaining to the objects of their worship. The Greek language therefore, so long as they only employed it, had not the words corresponding. It indeed could not have had, as the Jewish Hellenistic Greek could not have been without, them.

These difficulties, which would be felt the most strongly when the thought and feeling which had been at home in the Hebrew, the original language of inspiration, were to be translated into Greek, would also reappear, though naturally not to the same extent, when that which had gradually woven for itself in the Greek an adequate attire, again demanded to find garments in the Latin wherein it might be suitably arrayed. A single example of the difficulty, and the way it was ultimately overcome, will illustrate this better than long disquisitions. There was in the Greek a word for "saviour" which, although it had often been degraded to unworthy uses, having been applied not merely to heathen deities, but bestowed as a title of honour on men, and on such sometimes as were rather "destroyers" than "saviours" of their fellows, was yet in itself sufficient to set forth that central office and dignity of Christ—the word being like some profaned temple which did not need to be rebuilt, but only to be consecrated anew. With the Latin it was otherwise; the language seemed to be without a word of such frequent recurrence, and essential use to Christianity: indeed Cicero, than whom none could know better the capabilities of his own tongue, distinctly declared that it possessed no single word corresponding to the Greek "saviour."1 "Salvator" would have been the natural word; but the classical Latin, though it had "salus" and "salvus," had neither this, nor the verb "salvare;" I say the classical, for some believe that "salvare" had always existed.

1 "Hoc [εἰρήνη] quantum est? ita magnum ut Latinè uno verbo exprimere non possit."
in the common speech. "Servator" was instinctively felt to be insufficient, even as in English "Preserver" would fall very short of uttering all for us which "Saviour" does now; the seeking of the strayed, the recovering of the lost, the healing of the sick, all this would be very feebly and faintly insinuated in "Preserver." God "preserveth man and beast," but He is the "Saviour" of his own, in a far more inward and far tenderer sense. For some time the Latin Christian writers were in considerable perplexity how they should render the Greek word, employing "salutare," "sospitator," and other terms more unsatisfactory still. The strong good sense of Augustine, however, finally disposed of the difficulty. He made no scruple about employing "Salvator;" observing well, and with a true insight into the law of the growth of words, that "Salvator" may not have been, and indeed was not, good Latin before the Saviour came; but when He came, He made it to be such; for as shadows attend substances, so words follow upon things.1

These are, as I said, the most illustrious examples of the coming in of a new world of thoughts and feelings into the bosom of humanity, whereby has been necessitated a corresponding creation in the world of words, their outward representatives. And the same necessity has repeated itself continually since; each new reception of the Word of life by another people must needs bring over again the same effects with more or less striking features. It is true we are not so favourably placed for tracing these effects as in the case of the two classical languages of antiquity: yet our missionaries, to whom the study of language is in many respects so greatly indebted, have incidentally told us much on this subject, and, were their attention particularly directed to it, might doubtless tell us much more.

But it is not only when new truth directly from God has thus to fit itself to the lips of men, that such enlargements of speech follow: but in each further unfolding of those seminal truths implanted in man's heart at the first, in each new enlargement of his sphere of knowledge, outward or inward, lie the same necessities involved. The beginnings and progressive advances of moral philosophy in Greece, the transplanting of the same

to Rome, the rise of the scholastic, and then of the mystic, theology in the middle ages, the discoveries of modern science and natural philosophy, all these have been accompanied with corresponding extensions in the limits of language. Of the words to which each of these has in turn given birth, many, it is true, have never passed beyond their own peculiar sphere, having remained technical, scientific, or purely theological to the last; but many also have passed over from the laboratory, the school, and the pulpit, into daily life, and have, with the ideas which they incorporate, become the common heritage of all. For however hard and repulsive a front any study or science may seem to present to the great body of those who are as laymen to it, there is yet inevitably such a detrition as this going forward in the case of each, and it would not be a little interesting for one who was furnished with the knowledge sufficient, to trace it in all.

Where the movement is a great popular one, stirring the heart and mind of a people to its very depths, such as the first reception of the Christian faith, there these new words will be for the most part born out of their bosom, a free spontaneous birth, seldom or never capable of being referred to one man more than another, because they belong to all. Where, on the contrary, the movement is not so, is more strictly theological, or finds place in those regions of science and philosophy where, as first pioneers and discoverers, only a few can bear their parts, there the additions and extensions will lack something of the freedom, the unconscious boldness, which marked the others. Their character will be more artificial, less spontaneous, although here also the creative genius of the single man, as there of the nation, will oftentimes set its mark; and many a single word will come forth which shall be the result of profound meditation, or of intuitive genius, or of both in happiest combination—many a word which shall as a torch illuminate vast regions comparatively obscure before, and, it may be, cast its rays far into the yet unexplored darkness beyond; or which, summing up into itself all the acquisitions, in a particular direction, of the past, shall be as a mighty vantage ground from which to advance to new conquests in the realms of mind or of nature, not as yet subdued to the intellect of man.

As occupying something of a middle place between those more deliberate word-makers and the people whose words rather grow than are made, we must not omit him who is a maker by the very right of his name—I mean, the poet. That creative energy with
which he is endowed, "the highflying liberty of conceit proper to the poet," will in all probability manifest itself in this region as in others. Extending the domain of thought and feeling, he will scarcely fail to extend that also of language, which does not willingly lag behind. And the loftier his moods, the more of this maker he will be. The passion of such times, the all-fusing imagination, will at once suggest and justify audacities in speech, upon which in calmer moods he would not venture, or, if he ventured, would fail to carry others with him: for only the fluent metal runs easily into novel shapes and moulds. It is not merely that the old and the familiar will often become new in his hands; that he will give the stamp of allowance, as to him it will be free to do, to words, should he count them worthy, which hitherto have lived only on the lips of the multitude, or been confined to some single dialect and province; but he will enrich his native tongue with words unknown and non-existent before—non-existent, that is, save in their elements; for in the historic period of a language it is not permitted to any man to bring new roots into it, but only to work on already given materials; to evolve what is latent therein, to combine what is apart, to recall what has fallen out of sight.

But to return to the more deliberate coining of words. This will often find place for the supplying of discovered deficiencies in a language. The manner in which men most often become aware of such deficiencies is through the comparison of their own language with another and a richer, a comparison which is forced upon them, so that they cannot put it by, when it becomes necessary for them to express in their own tongue that which has already found utterance in another, and so has, at any rate, shown that it is utterable in human speech. Without such a comparison, the existence of the want would probably have seldom dawned even on the most thoughtful. For language is to so great an extent the condition and limit of thought, men are so little accustomed, indeed so little able, to meditate on things, except through the intervention, and by the machinery, of words, that nothing short of this would bring them to a sense of the actual existence of any such wants. And it is, I may observe, one of the advantages of acquaintance with another language besides our own, and of the institution which will follow, if we have learned that other to any purpose, of these comparisons, that we thus come to be aware that names are not, and least of all the names which any single language possesses, co-extensive with things (and by "things" I mean subjects as
well as objects of thought, whatever one can think about), that a multitude of things exist which, though capable of being resumed in a word, are yet without one, unnamed and unregistered; so that, vast as is the world of names, the world of realities is even vaster still. Such discoveries the Romans made when they attempted to transplant the moral philosophy of Greece to an Italian soil; they found that many of its words had no equivalents in their own tongue, which equivalents therefore they proceeded with more or less success to devise for themselves, appealing, with this view, to the latent capacities of their own tongue. For example, the Greek schools had a word, and one playing no unimportant part in some of their systems, to express “apathy,” or the absence of all passion and pain. As it was absolutely necessary to possess a corresponding word, Cicero invented “indolentia,” as the “if I may so speak” with which he paves the way to his first introduction of it, manifestly declares.

Sometimes indeed such a skilful mintmaster of words, such a subtle watch and weigher of their forces as he was, will note, even without this comparison with other languages, an omission in his own, which thereupon he will endeavour to supply. Thus was it with him in regard of “invidentia.” While there existed in the Latin two adjectives which, though sometimes confusedly used, had yet each its peculiar meaning, “invidus,” one who is envious, “invidiosus,” one who excites envy in others, there was only one substantive, “invidia,” the correlative of them both; with the disadvantage therefore of being employed now in an active, now in a passive sense, now for the envy which men feel, and now for that which they excite. The word he saw was made to do double duty, and that under a seeming unity there lurked a real dualism, from which manifold confusions might follow. He therefore devised “invidentia,” to express the active envy, or the envying, no doubt desiring that “invidia” should be restrained to the passive, the being envied. To all appearance the word came to supply a real want, yet he did not succeed in giving it currency; indeed does not seem himself to have much cared to employ it again.

We see by this example that it is not every word, which even

1 Fin., ii. 4; and for “qualitas” see Acad., i. 6.
2 “Ille verborum vigilantissimus appensor ac mensor,” as Augustine happily terms him.
3 Tusc., iii. 9; iv. 8. Cf. Döderlein’s Synon., vol. 3, p. 68.
a great master of language proposes, that finds acceptance.\footnote{Quintillian’s advice to those who come after is excellent here (I. vi. 42): “Etiamsi potest nihil peccare, qui utitur is verbis que summui auctores tradiderunt, multum tamen refert non solum quid disserint, sed etiam quid persuaserint.”}
Provided some live, he must be contented that others should fall to the ground. Nor is this the only one which Cicero unsuccessfully proposed. His “indolentia,” which I mentioned just now, hardly passed beyond himself; his “vitositas,” his “indigentia,” and “mulierositas” not at all. “Beatitas” too and “beatitudo,” both of his coining, but which he owns to have something strange and uncouth about them, can hardly be said to have found more than the faintest echo in the classical literature of Rome: “beatitudo” indeed obtained a home, as it deserved to do, in the Christian Church, but the other made no way whatsoever. I do not suppose that Coleridge’s “esemplastic,” with which he was himself so much pleased, will find any considerable favour; while the words of Jeremy Taylor, of such Latinists as Sir Thomas Browne, and of others, that were born only to die, are multitudinous as the leaves of autumn. Still even the word which fails is often, though not always, an honourable testimony to the scholarship, the accuracy of thought, the imagination of its proposer; and Ben Jonson is over-hard on “neologists,” if I may bring this term back to its earlier meaning, when he says: “A man coins not a new word without some peril, and less fruit; for if it happen to be received, the praise is but moderate; if refused, the scorn is assured.”

I alluded just now to comprehensive words, which should singly be effectual to say that which hitherto it had taken many words to say, in which an higher term has been reached than before had been found. It is difficult to estimate too highly the value of such words for the facilitating of mental processes, and indeed for the making possible of many which would have been nearly or quite impracticable without them; and those who have invented, or have succeeded in putting into circulation such, may be esteemed as benefactors of a high order to knowledge. In the ordinary traffic of life, unless our dealings were on the smallest scale, we should willingly have about us our money in the shape rather of silver than of copper; and if our transactions were at all extensive, rather in gold than in silver; while, if we were setting forth upon a long and arduous journey, we should be best pleased to turn even our gold coin itself into bills of exchange or circular notes; in fact, into the highest

\footnote{Tusc., v. 15.} \footnote{Tusc., iv 11.} \footnote{Nat. Deor., i. 34.}
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[LECT.

denomination of money which it was capable of assuming. How many words with which we are now perfectly familiar are for us what bills of exchange or circular notes are for the traveller and the merchant. As in one of these last, innumerable pence, a multitude of shillings, not a few pounds are gathered up and represented, so have we in some single word the quintessence and final result of an infinite number of anterior mental processes, ascending one above the other, and all of which have been at length summed up for us in that one. Or we may compare that word to some great river, which does not bring its flood of waters to the sea, till many rills have been swallowed up in brooks, and brooks in streams, and streams in tributary rivers, each of these affluents having lost its individual name and existence in that which at last at once represents and is continent of them all.

Let us only consider all which must have gone before, ere the word “circle,” with its corresponding idea, could have come into existence; and then imagine how it would be, if as often as in some long and difficult mathematical problem we had to refer to the figure so named, we were obliged to introduce the entire definition of it, because no single word stood for it—and not this only, but the definition of each term employed in the definition—how impossible or nearly impossible it would prove to carry the whole process in the mind, or to take oversight of its steps. Imagine a few more words struck out of the vocabulary of the mathematician, and if all mental activity in his direction was not quite put a stop to, yet would it be as effectually restricted as commerce and exchange would be, if all transactions had to be carried on with iron or copper as the sole medium of mercantile intercourse. It is not indeed to be supposed that words of such primary, almost vital, necessity for the science whereto they pertain as that I have just referred to, still wait to be coined; but yet, wherever knowledge is progressive, words are keeping pace with it, which with more or less felicity resume in themselves very much of the labours of the past, at once assist and abridge the labours of the future; being as tools which, themselves the result of the finest mechanical skill, do at the same time render other and further triumphs of art possible, which would have been quite unattainable without them.

But it is not merely the widening of men’s intellectual horizon which, as it brings new thoughts within the range of their vision, constrains the origination of corresponding words; but when regions of this outward world hitherto closed are laid open to
them, the various novel objects of interest which these contain will demand to find their names, and not merely to be catalogued in the nomenclature of science, but in so far as they present themselves to the popular eye, will require a popular name. As however nothing is rarer in this world than the invention of aught which is entirely new, men will most often content themselves with applying to this new a name drawn from that old wherewith they are familiar, which resembles it the most. Yet this may be done with modifications and combinations, which shall vindicate for it an original character. Thus when the Romans became acquainted with the stately giraffe, long concealed from them in the inner wilds of Africa (which we learn from Pliny they first did in the shows exhibited by Julius Cæsar), it was happily imagined to designate a creature combining, though with infinitely more grace, yet something of the height and even the proportions of the camel with the spotted skin of the leopard, by a name which should incorporate both these its most prominent features, calling it the "camelopard." Nor can we, I think, hesitate to accept that account as the true one, which describes the word as no artificial creation of the scientific naturalist, but as bursting extemporaneous from the lips of the populace at the first moment when the novel creature was presented to their gaze. "Cerf-volant," a name which the French have so happily given to the horned scarabeus, the same which we somewhat less poetically call the "stag-beetle," is another example of what may be effected with the old materials, by merely bringing them into new combinations.

Let us take another example, and one which will present us with another proof of that which we have been called already to notice, namely, the popular birth of a multitude of words, and those the most genuine which rise up in a language; an example also of the manner in which at some periods of its growth everything turns to good, so that mistakes and errors, misshaping, and it would seem marring a word at its first formation, yet do not hinder it from forming a worthy portion of the after tongue. When the alligator, this ugly crocodile of the New World, was first seen by the Spanish discoverers, they called it, with a true insight into its species, "el lagarto," or "the lizard," as being the largest of that species to which it belonged. In Sir W. Raleigh's Discovery of Guiana, the word still retains its Spanish form. Sailing up the Orinoco, "We saw

\[1\] Varro: "Quod erat figura ut camelus, maculis ut panthera;" and Horace (Ep., II. I. 195): "Diversum confusa genus panthera camelus."
in it,” he says, “divers sorts of strange fishes of marvellous
bigness, but for lagartos it exceeded; for there were thousands
of these ugly serpents, and the people call it, for the abundance
of them, the river of lagartos, in their [the Spanish] language.”
We can perfectly explain the shape which afterwards the word
assumed, by supposing that English sailors who brought home
the word, and had continually heard, but may probably have
never seen it written, blended, as has not unfrequently happened,
the Spanish article “el” with the name, and thus from this
absorption of the article it acquired the shape in which we
possess it now. In Ben Jonson, who writes “aligarta,” we see
the word in the process of its transformation.1

One of the most legitimate methods by which a language
may increase in wealth, especially in the times when its gener­
avive energy is in great part spent, as after a certain period is
the case with all, is through the reviving of old words, not,
that is, without discrimination, but of such as are worthy to
be revived; which yet through carelessness, or ill-placed fastidi­
ousness, or a growing unacquaintance on the part of a later
generation with the elder worthies of the language, or some
other cause, have been suffered to drop. These words, obsolete
or obsolescent, it will sometimes happen that some writer in­
structed in the early literature of his native language is not
willing to let die, and himself using or suggesting to the use of
others, is successful in again putting into circulation.2 And to
the poet more than any other it will be thus free to recall and
recover the forgotten treasures of his native language. Yet if
success is to attend his attempt, or that of any other, the words

1 I cannot remember any other examples of this curious absorption of
the article in English, though probably there are such; but two in French
present themselves to me. “Lierre,” which is “ivy,” was written in early
French, as by Ronsard, “l’hiere,” which is no doubt correct, being from
the Latin “hederam” but “loutre,” the otter, which Ampère supposes to
have been originally “l’our,” is manifestly the Latin “lutra.” “La
Pouille,” a name given to the southern extremity of Italy, and in which
we recognise “Apulia,” is another variety of error, but moving in the
same sphere.

2 A modern French writer of some eminence, Charles Nodier, has com­
posed a treatise on the subject of words in his own language which have
become obsolete, and ought to be revived. We have a curious proof of the
unobserved manner in which this sometimes is accomplished in the fact
that “vaillant,” which certainly now is not felt to have anything archaic
about it, was seriously found fault with, as out of date, when employed
in the epitaph of Turenne. Horace too, a great observer of the fortunes of
words, who has said more and wiser things about them in a few lines of
his De Arte Poetica (46-72) than ever have been said in at all the same
compass elsewhere, gives this as his conviction: “Multa renascentur,
que jam cecidere:” and see Ep., II. ii. 115.
to which it is thus sought to impart a second life must scarcely belong to the hoar antiquities of the language, with the dust of many centuries upon them, being not merely out of use, but out of all memory as well. A word which has not been employed since Chaucer is in a very different position from one that has only dropped out of active service since Spenser or Shakespeare, and which, being found in their writings or in those of their great compeers, has preserved for the circle of educated readers a certain vitality. Thus, if I might dissent from a great living master of English, I should question the employment of such “Chaucerisms,” to use Ben Jonson’s phrase on this very subject, as “to burgeon,” and this because they have no point of contact with our present English; as I should quite despair even of his effecting that, which of course he must look forward to in using them, namely, the giving to them currency again. But the case is altogether different with words only recently lost, or in some sense not lost at all—such, for example, as “leer,” “lese,” “debonair,” “deft,” “malapert,” “moil,” “phantast,” which I instance as every one of them to my mind worthy to have continued. The case is different, because of these some have never dropped out of use among our humbler classes, so often the conservators of precious words and genuine idioms: thus you all probably know very well that “leer” is with our rustic population in the south a commoner word than “empty;” “to lese,” very much more in use with them than “to glean;” indeed this last is scarcely known. Others, as “deft,” “debonair,” “malapert,” reach down, at least in literary use, to the middle of the eighteenth century; with, in the case of the last, the further inconvenience entailed by its loss, that we have been obliged to make “pert,” which remains, do double duty, that of “malapert” and its own. For as some word is plainly wanting, not so strong as “insolent,” we have been led to employ “pert” exclusively in an unfavourable sense, while yet it was free of old to use it also in a good, even as among our southern poor it still retains the meaning of “sprightly” or “lively;” a child recovering from illness, a cage-bird after moulting are said to look quite “pert” again—an employment of the word justified by Shakespeare’s

Awake the pert and nimble spirit of youth.

Other and less honourable causes than many of those which I have sought hitherto to trace, give birth to new words; and it will sometimes happen that the character and moral condition
of an epoch are only too plainly revealed by the new words which have risen up in that period, upon which sometimes they reflect back a very fearful light. Thus a great Latin historian tells us of the Roman emperor Tiberius, one of those "inventors of evil things" to whom St. Paul alludes (Rom. i. 30), that he caused words, unknown before, to emerge in the Latin tongue, for the setting out of wickednesses, happily also previously unknown, which he had invented.

The atrocious attempt of Louis the Fourteenth to convert to Romanism the Protestants in his dominions by quartering dragoons upon them, with all licence to misuse to the uttermost those who would not apostatise from their faith, this "booted mission" (mission bottée), as it was facetiously called at the time, has bequeathed "dragonnade" to the French language. I believe "refugee" had at the same time its rise, and in the same event, being first applied to those who escaped the tender mercies of these missionaries.

And "roué," a word almost naturalised among us, throws light upon a curious though a shameful page of history. It is a term applied, as we may be aware, to a man of profligate character and conduct; but properly and primarily means one "wheeled," or broken on the wheel. Now the first person who gave it its secondary meaning was the profligate Duke of Orleans, Regent of France in the interval between the reigns of Louis the Fourteenth and Fifteenth. It was his miserable pride to collect around him companions as worthless and wicked as himself, and he called them his "roués," inasmuch as there was not one of them that did not deserve, as he was wont to boast, to be broken on the wheel—that being then in France the punishment for the worst malefactors.1 When we have learned the pedigree of the word, the man and the age which gave it birth rise up before us, glorying in their shame, and no longer caring to pay to virtue even that outward hypocritical homage which vice not seldom yields.

The great French Revolution has made also its contributions to the French language; and these contributions characteristic enough. We know much of what it was, when we know that among other words it gave birth to these, "sansculotte," "incivisme," "terrorisme," "noyade," "guillotine." And still later, the French conquests in North Africa, and the pitiless

1 The "roués" themselves declared that the word expressed rather their readiness to give any proof of their affection, even to being broken upon the wheel, to their protector and friend.
methods by which every attempt at resistance on the part of the free tribes of the interior has been put down and punished, all this has left its mark upon the language; for it has added to it the word "razzia," to express the sweeping and sudden destruction of a tribe, its herds, its crops, and all that belongs to it—a word bearing on its front that it is not originally of French formation, having rather an Italian physiognomy, but being, I believe, the popular corruption of an Arabic word—one of which the language therefore may be as little proud, as the people of the thing which is indicated by it.

But it would ill become us to look only abroad for examples of that whereof perhaps at least an equal abundance may be found much nearer home, and it must at once be acknowledged that there are words also among ourselves which preserve a record of passages in our history in which we have little reason to glory. "Plunder" was a word first heard of in England in the period immediately preceding our civil wars, between 1630 and 1640. Richardson, whose Dictionary has in most cases the passage in English literature which best serves to mark the exact epoch of a word's appearing, as well as the circumstances which attended its rise, has passed over two instructive passages in Fuller in regard of this. He observes with truth that it began to be in common use at the commencement of the Great Rebellion. The word is German, for this Fuller means when he calls it "Dutch," and he ascribes its first bringing in to the soldiers who returned from the campaigns of Gustavus Adolphus. "Sure I am," he says, "we first heard thereof in the Swedish wars; and if the name and thing be sent back from whence it came, few English eyes would weep thereat." 1 The "thing" was not exactly what it is now; it was not the spoiling by an open violence, but the ransacking and robbing which under legal pretence as of searching for papers found place, of the effects of the so-called "Malignants;" so that "plunderings and sequestrations" are named continually together.

"Mob" too and "sham" had their birth in one of the most shameful periods of English history, that between the Restoration and Revolution. The first of these words originated in a certain club in London in the latter end of the reign of Charles the Second. "I may note," says a writer of the time, "that the rabble first changed their title, and were called the 'mob' in the assemblies of this [The Green Ribbon] Club. It was their

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beast of burden, and called first "mobile vulgus," but {el} naturally into the contraction of one syllable, and ever since is become proper English."¹ Yet we find considerably later a writer in The Spectator speaking of "mob" as still only struggling into existence. "I dare not answer," he says, "that mob, rap, pos, incog., and the like will not in time be looked at as part of our tongue." In regard of "mob," for the "mobile" vulgar, the multitude swayed hither and thither by each gust of passion or caprice, this, which The Spectator hardly expected, while he confessed it possible, has actually taken place. "It is one of the many words formerly slang, which are now used by our best writers, and received, like pardoned outlaws, into the body of respectable citizens."

And though the murdering of poor helpless lodgers, afterwards to sell their bodies for dissection, cannot be regarded as a crime in which the nation had a share, or anything but the monstrous wickedness of one or two, yet the word "to burke," drawn from the name of a wretch who long pursued this hideous traffic, a word which has won its place in the language, will be a lasting memorial in all after times, unless indeed its origin should be forgotten, to how strange a crime this age of a boasted civilisation could give birth.

Such are some of the sources of increase in the wealth of a language, or, it may be, in that which has no just title to be termed by this name. There have been, from time to time, those who have so little understood what a language and the laws of a language are, that they have sought by decrees of theirs to arrest its growth, pronouncing it to have attained to the limits of its growth and development, so that no one should henceforward presume to make further additions to it. But a language has a life, just as really as a man or as a tree; as a man, it must grow to its full stature, being also submitted to his conditions of decay; as a forest tree, will defy any feeble bands which should attempt to control its expansion, so long as the principle of growth is in it; as a tree too will continually, while it casts off some leaves, be putting forth others. The attempt therefore has utterly failed, even when made under the most favourable conditions for success. For instance, the French Academy, containing the great body of the distinguished literary men of France, once sought to exercise such a domination over their own language, and if any could have succeeded,

¹ North's Examen, p. 574. If we may trust the origin of "sham" which he gives, p. 231, it is not less disgraceful than the word itself.
might have hoped to do so. But the language recked of their decrees as little as the advancing ocean did of those of Canute. They were obliged to give way, and in each successive edition of their Dictionary to throw open its doors to words which had established themselves in the language, and would hold their ground, comparatively indifferent whether they received the Academy's seal of allowance or no.

Certainly those who make attempts of this kind strangely forget that all the words in a language, with the exception of its primitive roots, were at one time or another novelties. We have so taken for granted that those with which we have been always familiar, whose right to form a part of it no one dreams of challenging or disputing, being perfectly naturalised now, have always formed part of it, that we should, I believe, be somewhat startled to discover of how very late introduction not a few of them actually are; what an amount of remonstrance, and even resistance, some of them encountered at the first. To take two or three Latin examples — Cicero, in employing "favor," a word in a little while after used by everybody, does it with an apology, seems to feel that he is introducing a questionable novelty: "urbanus," too, in our sense of "urbane," had in his time only just come up: "obsequium" he believes Terence to have been the first to employ.1 "Soliloquium" seems to us so natural, indeed so necessary, a word, this "soliloquy," or talking of a man with himself alone, something which would so inevitably seek out its adequate expression, that it is hard to persuade oneself that no one spoke of a soliloquy before Augustine, that the word should have been invented, as he distinctly informs us that it was, by himself.2

And to take some English examples — Sir Thomas Elyot (1534) speaks of the now familiar words "frugality," "temperance," "sobriety," "magnanimity," as being not in his day in general use; "magnanimity" however is in Chaucer. The translators of the Authorised Version of the Bible, in a preface not now often reprinted, but prefixed to the original edition (1611), find fault, and others had done the same before them, with the Greek and Latin words—"inkhorn terms," Fulke calls them—wherewith the Rhemish translators so plentifully sprinkled their translation; with the intention, as these last affirmed, of preserving for it an ecclesiastical character; but as others, and we can scarcely say uncharitably, charged them, that so, if they must

1 On the new words in classical Latin see Quintilian, Inst., VIII. iii. 30–37
2 Solil. ii. 7.
give the Scriptures in the vulgar tongue, they might yet keep them, as far as might be, “dark and unprofitable to the ignorant readers.” In many cases the accusation was quite borne out by the facts, and the Greek and Latin, not to speak of Hebrew, terms they employed, “azymes,” “cornessations,” “pasche,” and the like, could never have made themselves at home in English; but this certainly is not so in all. Thus “rational,” “tunic,” “scandal,” “neophyte,” were severally either words which had not been invented by the Rhemish translators, having existed long before; or the sequel has gone far to justify the coinage, the words having been freely absorbed into the language, as useful additions to it. “To evangelise” was another word which they were blamed for introducing. It was quite worthy to have been introduced, supposing it had not previously been in being; but it already found place in Wiclif’s version (as at Luke i. 19; xvi. 16), which the Rhemish merely follows; so that Fulke is every way unjust in urging against the authors of this last: “When you say ‘evangelised,’ you do not translate, but feign a new word, which is not understood of mere English ears.”

Considering how old a thing is selfishness in the world, we should hardly have expected to find “selfish” to be a word of such late devising as it proves. From a passage in Hacket’s Life of Archbishop Williams, we certainly conclude that it had only newly come up in his time, having been freshly issued from the Puritan mint.1 “Mob” is of still later date, belonging, as we saw just now, to the latter half of the seventeenth century. “Coffee” and “tea” were not naturalised words in Locke’s time, at least not in 1684. He writes “coffe,” “the.” “Tour” is printed “tour” so late as 1712. Burke, in the House of Commons, is said to have been the first who used “inimical.” “Pretentious,” the adjective of “pretence,” which is a word at the present moment forcing its way into the language, is now displeasing enough to delicate ears; yet no doubt it will keep its ground, for it supplies a real need, and has the analogy of the French “pretentieux” to help it; in a very little while multitudes will use it, quite unconscious that it is not nearly so old as they are themselves.

When a word has proved an unquestionable gain to the language, it is very interesting to preside, so to speak, at its birth,

1 “When they [the Presbyterians] saw that he was not selfish (it is a word of their own new mint), etc.”—Part II. p. 144.

Locke’s Diary, in his Life by Lord King, p. 42.
to watch it as it first comes forth, timid, and it may be as yet doubtful of the reception it will meet with; and the interest is very much enhanced, if it thus come forth on some memorable occasion, or from some memorable man. Both these interests meet in the word "essay." If any one were asked what is the most remarkable volume of essays which the world has seen, few, having sufficient oversight of the field of literature to be capable of replying, would fail to answer, Lord Bacon's. But they were also the first which bore that name; for we certainly gather from the following passage in the (intended) dedication of the volume to Prince Henry, that the word "essay" was altogether a very recent one in the English language, and in the use to which he put it, perfectly novel: he says—"To write just treatises requireth leisure in the writer, and leisure in the reader;... which is the cause which hath made me choose to write certain brief notes set down rather significantly than curiously, which I have called Essays. The word is late, but the thing is ancient." From these words, and others which I have omitted in the quotation, we further gather that, little as "essays" at the present day can be considered a word of modesty, deprecating too large expectations on the part of the reader, it had, as "sketches" perhaps would have now, as "commentary" had in the Latin, such an ethical significance in this its earliest use. In this last respect it resembled the "philosopher" of Pythagoras. Before his time the founders of systems of philosophy had styled themselves, or been willing to be styled by others, "wise men." This appellation, "lover of wisdom," so modest and so beautiful, was of his devising.

Let us remark, at the same time, that while thus some words surprise us that they are so new, others again that they are so old. Few, I should imagine, are aware that the word "rationalist," and this in a theological, and not merely a philosophical, sense, is of such early date as it is; or that we have not imported quite in these later times both the name and the thing from Germany. This, however, is very far from being in either respect the case. There was a sect of "rationalists" in the time of the Commonwealth, who called themselves such exactly on the same grounds as those who in later times have challenged the name. Thus, one writing the news from London, among other things mentions: \(^1\) "There is a new sect sprung up among them [the Presbyterians and Independents], and these are the Ration-

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lists, and what their reason dictates them in Church or State stands for good, until they be convinced with better;” with more to the same effect. The word “christology” a recent reviewer has characterised as a monstrous importation from Germany. I should quite agree with him that English theology does not need, and can do excellently well without it; yet it is not this absolute novelty; for in the Preface to the works of that great divine of the seventeenth century, Thomas Jackson, written by a friend and scholar, the following passage occurs: “The reader will find in this author an eminent excellence in that part of divinity which I make bold to call Christology, in displaying the great mystery of godliness, God the Son manifested in human flesh.”

In their power of taking up foreign or otherwise new words into healthy circulation and making them truly their own, languages are very different as compared with one another, and the same language is very different from itself at different periods of its life. There are languages of which the appetite and digestive power, the assimilative energy, is at some periods almost unlimited. Nothing is too hard for them; they will shape and mould to their own uses and habits almost whatsoever is offered to them. This however is in their youth; as age advances, this assimilative power diminishes. Words are still adopted; for this process of adoption can never wholly cease: but a chemical amalgamation of the new with the old does not any longer find place, or only in some instances, and very partially in them. They lie often on the surface of the language; their sharp corners are not worn and rounded off; they remain foreign still in their aspect and outline, and, having missed their opportunity of becoming otherwise, will remain so to the end. Those who adopt, as with an inward misgiving about their own gift and power of stamping them afresh, seem to make a conscience of keeping them in exactly the same form in which they have received them; instead of conforming them to the laws of that new community into which they are now received. Nothing will illustrate this so well as a comparison of different words of the same family, which have at different periods been introduced into our language. We shall find that those of an earlier introduction have become English through and through, while the later introduced, belonging to the same group, have been very far from undergoing the same transforming process. Thus “bishop,” a word as old as the introduction of Christianity into England, though

1 Preface to Dr. Jackson’s Works, vol. i. p. xxvii.
not hiding its descent from "episcopus," is thoroughly English; while "episcopal," which has supplanted "bishoply," is only a Latin word in an English dress. "Alms," too, is genuine English, and English which has descended to us from far; the very shape in which we have the word, one syllable for "eleemosyna" of six, sufficiently testifying this; "letters," as Horne Tooke observes, "like soldiers, being apt to desert and drop off in a long march." I need not say that the long and awkward "eleemosynary" is of a very much more recent date. Or sometimes this comparison is still more striking, when it is not merely words of the same family, but the very same word which has been twice adopted, at an earlier period and a later—the earlier form will be truly English, as "palsy;" the later will be only a Greek or Latin word spelt with English letters as "paralysis." "Dropsy," "quinsy," "megrim," "surgeon," "tansy," "dittany," "daffodil," and many more words that one might name, have nothing of strangers or foreigners about them, have made themselves quite at home in English. So entirely is their physiognomy native, that it would be difficult even to suspect them to be of Greek descent, as they all are. Nor has "kickshaws" anything about it now which would compel us at once to recognise in it the French "quelques choses"—"French kickshose," as with allusion to the quarter from which it came, and while the memory of that was yet fresh in men's minds, it was often called by our early writers.

An eminent German grammarian has called attention to a very curious process which he traces many German words to have undergone in the act of their adoption from foreign tongues, whereby not only their outward form and shape are fitted and moulded to their new home, but a new soul, a new principle of life put within them. What he means will best be understood by a single illustration. The Germans, knowing nothing of carbuncles, had naturally no word of their own for them, and when they first found it necessary to name them, as naturally borrowed the Latin "carbunculus," which originally had meant "a little live coal," to designate these precious stones of a fiery red. But "carbunculus," though a real word, full of poetry and life, for a Latin, would have been only an arbitrary sign for others, ignorant of that language. What then did they, or what, rather, did the working genius of the language, do? It adopted, but in adopting, modified slightly the word, changing it into "Karfunkel," thus retaining the outlines of the original, yet at the same time, inasmuch as "funkeln" signifies "to sparkle,"
reproducing now in an entirely novel manner the image of the bright sparkling of the stone, for every knower of the German tongue.

I have no doubt that our own language would supply instances of a like kind, though I have not any such at the present to adduce to you; and not having, must be content with one which the French offers. “Rossignol,” a nightingale, is undoubtedly the Latin “luscinola,” the diminutive of “luscinia,” with the alteration which so frequently finds place in the Romance languages, of the commencing l into r. Whatever may be the etymology of “luscinia,” whether it be “in lucis cano,” the singer in the groves, or “lugens cano,” the melancholy singer, or “in lucem cano,” the singer until dawn, or, as is most probable, “luscus cano,” the singer in the twilight, with which our “nightingale” would most closely correspond, it is plain that for Frenchmen in general the word would no longer be suggestive of any of these meanings, hardly even for French scholars, after the serious transformations which it had undergone; while yet, at the same time, in the exquisitely musical “rossignol,” and still more, perhaps, in the Italian “usignuolo,” there is an evident intention and endeavour to express something of the music of the bird’s song in the liquid melody of the imitative name which it bears; and thus to put a new soul into the word, in lieu of that one which it has lost.

One of the most striking facts about new words, and a very signal testimony of their birth from the bosom of the people, that is, where they are not plainly from the schools, is the difficulty which is so often found in tracing their pedigree. When the causes vocum are sought, which they justly are, and out of much more than mere curiosity, for the causes rerum are very often contained in them, they continually elude research; and this, not merely where attention has only been called to the words, and interest about their etymology excited, long after they had been in popular use, and when thus they had left their origin, whatever it may have been, very far behind them—for that the words of a remote antiquity should often puzzle and perplex us, should give scope to idle guesses, or altogether defy conjecture, this is nothing strange—but even when it has been sought to investigate their origin almost as soon as they have come into existence. Their rise is mysterious; like so many other acts of becoming, it is veiled in deepest obscurity. They appear,

[1 Did Milton intend this etymology when he wrote, “the wakeful bird Sings darkling”?]

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they are in everybody's mouth; but yet, when it is inquired from whence they are, nobody can tell. They are but of yesterday, and yet with a marvellous rapidity they have already forgotten the circumstances of their origin. Thus Baxter tells us in his most instructive Narrative of his Life and Times, that there already existed two explanations of "Roundhead,"¹ a word not nearly so old as himself. "Cannibal," as a designation of man-eating savages, came first into use with the great discoveries in the western world of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. No certain explanation of it has yet been offered.² So too, the origin of "Hugonots," as applied to the French Protestants, was already a matter of doubt and discussion in the lifetime of those who first bore it.³ One might anticipate that a name like "Canada," given, and within fresh historic times, to a vast territory, would be accounted for, but it is not; or that the Anglo-Americans would be able to explain how they got their word "caucus," which plays so prominent a part in their elections, but they cannot.⁴

These are but a handful of examples of the way in which words forget the circumstances of their birth. Now if we could believe in any merely arbitrary words, such, that is, as stood in connexion with nothing but the mere lawless caprice of some inventor, the impossibility of tracing their derivations would be nothing strange. Indeed it would be lost labour to seek for the parentage of all words, when many perhaps had none. But there is no such thing; there is no word which is not, as the Spanish gentleman loves to call himself, an "hidalgo," the son of somebody. All are the embodiment, more or less successful, of a sensation, a thought, or a fact; or if of more fortuitous birth, still they attach themselves somewhere to the already subsisting

¹"The original of which name is not certainly known. Some say it was because the Puritans then commonly wore short hair, and the king's party long hair: some say, it was because the queen at Strafford's trial asked who that roundheaded man was, meaning Mr. Pym, because he spake so strongly" (p. 34).
²Humboldt has certainly made it probable that "canibal" (for it is spelled, and this is not unimportant, with a single n in Hakluyt's Voyages and in all our early English) is a Latin corruption of "Caribales," a form under which Columbus designates the Caribs ("propter rabiem caninam anthropophagorum genis"); as in French, "appétit de chien."
³It can hardly be other than a corruption of "Eidgenossen," low German for "Eidgenossen," confederates; but this was not the explanation of some who must have been grown men at the time of its first emerging.
⁴The word is most probably a corruption of "caulkers," being derived from an association of these at Boston, who were especially active in preparing resistance to England in the period immediately preceding the War of Independence. The thing corresponds now very nearly to the Latin "sodalitium."
world of words and things, and have their point of contact with it and departure from it, not always discoverable, as we see, but yet always existing. And thus, when a word entirely refuses to give up the secret of its origin, it can be regarded in no other light but as a riddle which no one has succeeded in solving, a lock of which no one has found the key—but still a riddle which has a solution, a lock for which there is a key, though now, it may be, irrecoverably lost. And this difficulty, this impossibility, oftentimes, of tracing the genealogy even of words of a very recent formation, is, as I observed, an evidence of the birth at least of these out of the heart and from the lips of the people. Had they had their rise first in books, then it would be easily traced; had it been from the schools of the learned, these would not have failed to have left a recognisable stamp and mark upon them.

But we must conclude. I may have seemed in this present lecture a little to have outrun your needs, and to have sometimes moved in a sphere too remote from that in which your future work will lie. Perhaps it may have been so; yet is it in truth very difficult to say of any words, that they do not touch us, that they do not reach us in their influence, or in some way bear upon our studies, and upon that which we shall hereafter have to teach or shall desire to learn. It were rash to affirm that there are any conquests which language makes that concern only a few, and may be regarded indifferently by all others. For it is here as with many inventions in the arts and luxuries of life, which being in the beginning the exclusive privilege and possession of the wealthy, the cultivated, the refined, do yet gradually descend into lower strata of society, until at length what were once the luxuries and elegancies of a few, have become the decencies, well nigh the necessities, of all. Exactly in the same manner there are words, once only on the lips of philosophers or divines, of the deeper thinkers of their time, or of those interested in their speculations, which yet step by step have come down, not debasing themselves in this act of becoming popular, but training and elevating more and more to understand and embrace their meaning, till at length they have become truly a part of the nation's common stock, household words used naturally and easily by all.

And I know not how I can better conclude this lecture than by quoting some words which express with a rare eloquence all which I have been labouring to utter; for this truth, which many indeed have noticed, none that I am aware of have set forth with
at all the same fullness of illustration, or with at all the same sense of its importance, as the author of *The Philosophy of the Inductive Sciences*, whose words now quoted are but one out of many passages on the same theme—"Language is often called an instrument of thought, but it is also the nutriment of thought; or rather, it is the atmosphere in which thought lives; a medium essential to the activity of our speculative powers, although invisible and imperceptible in its operation; and an element modifying, by its qualities and changes, the growth and complexion of the faculties which it feeds. In this way the influence of preceding discoveries upon subsequent ones, of the past upon the present, is most penetrating and universal, although most subtle and difficult to trace. The most familiar words and phrases are connected by imperceptible ties with the reasonings and discoveries of former men and distant times. Their knowledge is an inseparable part of ours; the present generation inherits and uses the scientific wealth of all the past. And this is the fortune, not only of the great and rich in the intellectual world, of those who have the key to the ancient storehouses, and who have accumulated treasures of their own, but the humblest inquirer, while he puts his reasonings into words, benefits by the labours of the greatest. When he counts his little wealth he finds he has in his hands coins which bear the image and superscription of ancient and modern intellectual dynasties, and that in virtue of this possession acquisitions are in his power, solid knowledge within his reach, which none could ever have attained to, if it were not that the gold of truth once dug out of the mine circulates more and more widely among mankind."
LECTURE V
ON THE DISTINCTION OF WORDS

It is to the subject of synonyms and their distinction, with the advantages which may be derived from the study of these, that I propose to devote the present lecture. But what, it may be asked, do we mean, when, comparing certain words with one another, we affirm of them that they are synonyms? It is meant that they are words which, with great and essential resemblances of meaning, have at the same time small, subordinate, and partial differences—these differences being such as either originally, and on the ground of their etymology, inhered in them; or differences which they have by usage acquired in the eyes of all; or such as, though nearly latent now, they are capable of receiving at the hands of wise and discreet masters of the tongue. Synonyms are words of like significance in the main, but with a certain unlikeness as well.

So soon as the term is defined thus, it will be at once perceived by any acquainted with the derivation, that strictly speaking, it is a misnomer, and is given to these words with a certain inaccuracy and impropriety; since in strictness the terms "synonyms," or "synonymous," applied to words, would affirm of them that they covered not merely almost the same extent of meaning, but altogether and exactly the same, that they were in their signification perfectly identical and coincident. The terms, however, are not ordinarily so used, and plainly are not so, when it is undertaken to trace out the distinction between synonyms; for, without denying that there are such absolutely coincident words, such perfect synonyms, yet these could not be the object of any such discrimination; since, where there was no real distinction, it would be lost labour and the exercise of a perverse ingenuity to attempt to draw one. Synonyms then, as the word is generally understood, and as I shall use it here, are words with slighter differences already existing between them, or with the capabilities of such: neither on the one side absolutely identical; but neither, we may add, on the
other only very remotely related to one another; for the differences between these last will be self-evident, will so lie on the surface and proclaim themselves to all, that it would be impossible to make them clearer than they already are, and it would be like holding a candle to the sun to attempt it. They must be words which are more or less liable to confusion, but which yet ought not to be confounded; words, as one has said, "quæ conjungi, non confundi, debent;" words in which there originally inhered a difference, or between which, though once absolutely identical, such has gradually grown up, and so established itself in the use of the best writers, and in the instinct of the best speakers of the tongue, that it claims to be recognised and openly admitted by all.

But here an interesting question presents itself to us, which is this: How do languages come to possess synonyms of this latter class, which are differenced not by etymology or other deep-lying and necessary distinction, but only by usage? Now if they had been made by agreement, of course no such words could exist; for when one word had been found which was the adequate representative of a feeling or an object, no further one would have been sought. But languages are the result of processes very different from, and far less formal and regular than, this. Various tribes, each with its own dialect, kindred indeed, but in many respects distinct, coalesce into one people, and cast their contributions of language into a common stock. Thus the French possesses many synonyms from the langue d'oc and langue d'oil, each having contributed its word for one and the same thing, as "âtre" and "foyer," both for "hearth." Sometimes two have the same word, but in forms sufficiently different to cause that both remain, but as different words; thus in Latin, "serpo" and "repo" are merely two slightly different appropriations of the same Greek word, and of "puteo" and "fceteo" the same may be said; just as in German, "Odem" and "Athen" were originally but dialectic differences of the same word. Or again, a conquering people have fixed themselves in the midst of a conquered; they impose their dominion, but do not succeed in imposing their language; nay, being few in number, they find themselves at last compelled to adopt the language of the conquered; or after a while, that which may be called a transaction, a compromise between the two languages, finds place. Thus was it in England; our modern English being in the main such a compromise between the Anglo-Saxon and the Norman-French.
These are causes of the existence of synonyms which reach far back into the history of a nation and a language; but other causes at a later period are also at work. When a written literature springs up, authors familiar with various foreign tongues import from one and another words which are not absolutely required, which are oftentimes rather luxuries than necessities. Sometimes having a very good word of their own, they must needs go and look for a finer one, as they esteem it, from abroad; as, for instance, the Latin having its own good and expressive "succinum" (from "succus"), for "amber," some must import from the Greek the ambiguous "electrum." But of these which are thus proposed as candidates for admission, some fail to obtain the rights of citizenship, and after longer or shorter probation are rejected; it may be, never advance beyond their first proposer. Enough, however, receive the stamp of popular allowance to create embarrassment for a while, until, that is, their relations with the already existing words are adjusted. As a single illustration of the various quarters from which the English has thus been augmented, and in the end enriched, I would instance the words "trick," "device," "finesse," "artifice," and "stratagem," and enumerate the various sources from which we have gotten these words. Here "trick" is Saxon, "devisa" is Italian, "finesse" is French, "artificium" is Latin, and "stratagema" Greek.

By and bye, however, as a language becomes itself an object of greater attention, at the same time that society, advancing from a simpler to a more complex state, has more things to designate, thoughts to utter, and distinctions to draw, it is felt to be a waste of resources to have two or more words for the signifying of one and the same object. Men feel, and rightly, that with a boundless world lying around them and demanding to be named, and which they only make their own in the measure and to the extent that they do name it, with infinite shades and varieties of thought and feeling subsisting in their own minds, and claiming to find utterance in words, it is a mere and wanton extravagance to expend two or more signs on that which could adequately be set forth by one—an extravagance in one part of their expenditure, which will be almost sure to issue in, and to be punished by, a too great scantness and straitness in another. Some thought or feeling will want its adequate sign, because another has two. Hereupon that which has been well called the process of "desynonymising" begins—that is, of gradually coming to discriminate in use between words which have hitherto
been accounted perfectly equivalent, and, as such, indifferently employed. It is a positive enriching of a language when this process is felt to be accomplished, when two or more words which were once promiscuously used, are felt to have had each its own peculiar domain assigned to it, which it shall not itself overstep, upon which the others shall not encroach. This may seem at first sight but as the better regulation of old territory; for all practical purposes it is the acquisition of new.

It is not to be supposed that this desynonymising process is effected according to any pre-arranged purpose or plan. The working genius of the language accomplishes its own objects, causes these synonymous words insensibly to fall off from one another, and to acquire separate and peculiar meanings. The most that any single writer can do, save indeed in the terminology of science, is, as has been observed, to assist an already existing inclination to bring to the consciousness of all that which may already have been implicitly felt by many, and thus to hasten the process of this disengagement, or, as it has been excellently expressed, "to regulate and ordinate the evident nisus and tendency of the popular usage into a severe definition;" and establish on a firm basis the distinction, so that it shall not be lost sight of or brought into question again. This, for instance, Wordsworth did in respect of the words "imagination" and "fancy." Before he wrote, it was, I suppose, obscurely felt by most that in "imagination" there was more of the earnest, in "fancy" of the play, of the spirit, that the first was a loftier faculty and gift than the second; yet for all this the words were continually, and not without loss, confounded. He first, in the Preface to his Lyrical Ballads, rendered it impossible that any one, who had read and mastered what he had written on the two words, should remain unconscious any longer of the essential difference existing between them.¹

¹ I had read a great many years ago in De Quincey's Letters to a Young Man whose Education has been Neglected, a passage which I had still clearly in my mind while writing this paragraph. I have now recovered this passage, which, though it only says over again what is said above, yet does this so much more forcibly and fully, that I shall not hesitate to quote it, and the more readily that these letters, in many respects so valuable, have never been reprinted, but lie buried in the old numbers of a magazine (The London Magazine, 1823), like so many other of the "disjecta membra" of this illustrious master of English prose: "All languages," he says, "tend to clear themselves of synonymous, as intellectual culture advances; the superfluous words being taken up and appropriated by new shades and combinations of thought evolved in the progress of society. And long before this appropriation is fixed and petrified, as it were, into the acknowledged vocabulary of the language, an insensibleclinamen (to borrow a Lucretian word) prepares the way for it. Thus, for
Let me remark by the way how many other words in English are still waiting for such a discrimination. Thus how great an ethical gain would it be, how much clearness would it bring into men's thoughts and feelings, if the distinction which exists in Latin between "vindicta" and "ultio," that the first is a moral act, the just punishment of the sinner by his God, of the criminal by the judge, the other an act in which the self-gratification of one who counts himself injured or offended is sought, could in like manner be fully established, it does vaguely exist between our "vengeance" and "revenge," so that only "vengeance" (with the verb "avenge") should be ascribed to God, and to men acting as the executors of his righteous doom; while all in which their evil and sinful passions are the impulsive motive should be exclusively termed "revenge." As it now is, the moral disapprobation which cleaves, and cleaves justly, to "revenge," is oftentimes transferred almost unconsciously to "vengeance;" while yet without vengeance it is impossible to conceive in an evil world any assertion of righteousness, any moral government whatsoever. These distinctions which still wait to be made we may fitly regard "as so much reversionary wealth in our mother tongue."

The two causes which I mentioned above, the fact that English is in the main a compromise between the languages spoken by the Anglo-Saxon and the Norman, and the further circumstance that it has received, welcomed, and found place for many later additions, these have together effected that we possess in English a great many duplicates, not to speak of triplicates, or even such a quintuplicate as that which I adduced just now, where the Saxon, French, Italian, Latin, and Greek had each given us a instance, before Mr. Wordsworth had unveiled the great philosophic distinction between the powers of fancy and imagination, the two words had begun to diverge from each other, the first being used to express a faculty somewhat capricious and exempted from law, the other to express a faculty more self-determined. When, therefore, it was at length perceived, that under an apparent unity of meaning there lurked a real dualism, and for philosophic purposes it was necessary that this distinction should have its appropriate expression, this necessity was met half way by the clinamen which had already affected the popular usage of the words. Compare with this what Coleridge had before said, Biogr. i. p. 90. It is to Coleridge we owe the word "desynonymise," against which indeed purists will object that it is of hybrid formation, the prefix Latin, the body of the word Greek; and his own contributions direct and indirect in this province are both more in number and more important than those of any other English writer; as for instance the disentanglement of "fanaticism" and "enthusiasm" which we mainly owe to him (it. Rem., vol. ii. p. 365); of "keenness" and "subtlety" (Table Talk, p. 140), "poetry" and "poesy" (lit. Rem., vol. i. p. 219); and that on which he himself laid so great a stress, "reason" and "understanding."
word. Let me mention a few duplicate substantives, Anglo-Saxon and Latin; thus we have “shepherd” and “pastor;” “feeling” and “sentiment;” “handbook” and “manual;” “shire” and “county;” “ship” and “nave;” “anger” and “ire;” “grief” and “dolour;” “love” and “charity;” “feather” and “plume;” “forerunner” and “precursor;” “freedom” and “liberty;” “murder” and “homicide;” “moons” and “lunes” —a word which has not been met with in the singular. Sometimes, in theology and science especially, we have gone both to the Latin and to the Greek, and drawn the same word from them both; thus “deist” and “theist;” “numeration” and “arithmetic;” “Revelation” and “Apocalypse;” “temporal” and “chronical;” “compassion” and “sympathy;” “supposition” and “hypothesis.” But to return to the Anglo-Saxon and Latin, the main factors of our tongue, besides duplicate substantives, we have duplicate verbs, such as “to heal” and “to cure;” “to whiten” and “to blanch;” “to soften” and “to mollify;” “to cloke” and “to palliate;” with many more. Duplicate adjectives also are numerous, as “shady” and “umbraeous;” “unreadable” and “illegible;” “almighty” and “omnipotent.” Occasionally where only one substantive, an Anglo-Saxon, exists, yet the adjectives are duplicate, and the English, which has not adopted the Latin substantive, has yet admitted the adjective; thus “burden” has not merely “burdensome” but also “onerous,” while yet “onus” has found no place with us; “priest” has “priestly” and “sacerdotal;” “king” has “kingly,” “regal,” which is purely Latin, and “royal,” which is Latin distilled through the Norman. “Bodily” and “corporal,” “boyish” and “puerile,” “bloody” and “sanguine,” “fearful” and “timid,” “manly” and “virile,” “womanly” and “feminine,” “starry” and “stellar,” “yearly” and “annual,” may all be placed in the same list. Nor are these more than a handful of words out of the number which might be adduced, and I think you would find both pleasure and profit in seeking to add to these lists, and as far as you are able, to make them gradually complete.

I will observe by the way, that I have only adduced instances in which both the words have continued to maintain their ground in our spoken and written language to the present day. Other cases are not few in which these duplicates once existed, but in which the one word has in the end proved fatal to and has extinguished the other. Thus “resurrection” and “againrising” no doubt existed cotemporaneously; Wiclif uses them indif-
ferently; we may say the same of “judge” and “doomsman,” “adultery” and “spouse-breach,” and of many words more. In each of these cases, however, instead of dividing the intellectual domain between them, which perhaps would not always have been easy, the one word has definitively put the other out of use; the Latin word, as you will observe, has triumphed over the Anglo-Saxon. I am not of those who consider these triumphs of the Latin element of our speech to be in every case a matter of regret; though I would not willingly have seen “pavone,” which Spenser would have introduced, for our much older “peacock;” or “terremote,” which Gower employs, for “earthquake,” or other such Latinisms as these.

But to return; if we look closely at those other words which have succeeded in maintaining side by side their ground, we shall not fail to observe that in almost every instance they have asserted for themselves separate spheres of meaning, that although not in etymology, they have still in use become more or less distinct. Thus we use “shepherd” almost always in its primary meaning, keeper of sheep; while “pastor” is exclusively used in the tropical sense, one that feeds the flock of God; at the same time the language having only the one adjective, “pastoral,” that is of necessity common to both. “Love” and “charity” are used in our Authorised Version of Scripture promiscuously, and out of the sense of their equivalence are made to represent one and the same Greek word; but in modern use “charity” has come almost exclusively to signify one particular manifestation of love, the supply of the bodily needs of others, “love” continuing to express the affection of the soul. “Ship” remains in its literal meaning, while “nave” has become a symbolic term used in sacred architecture alone. So with “illegible” and “unreadable,” the first is applied to the handwriting, the second to the subject-matter written; thus, a man writes an “illegible” hand; he has published an “unreadable” book. So too it well becomes boys to be “boyish,” but not men to be “puerile.” Or take “to blanch” and “to whiten;” we have grown to use the first in the sense of to withdraw colouring matter: thus we “blanch” almonds or linen; the cheek is “blanched” with fear, that is, by the withdrawing of the blood; but we “whiten” a wall, not by the withdrawing of some other colour, but by the superinducing of white; thus “whited sepulchres.” “To palliate” is not now used, though it once was, in the sense of wholly cloaking or covering over, as it might be, our sins, but in that of extenuating; “to palliate” our faults
is not to hide them altogether, but to seek to diminish their guilt in part.

It might be urged that there was a certain preparedness in these words to separate off in their meaning from one another, inasmuch as they originally belonged to different stocks; nor would I deny that this may have assisted; but we find the same process at work where original difference of stock can have supplied no such assistance. "Astronomy" and "astrology" are both drawn from the Greek, nor is there any reason beforehand why the second should not be in as honourable use as the first; for it signifies the reason, as "astronomy" the law, of the stars. But seeing there is a true and a false science of the stars, both needing words to utter them, it has come to pass that in our later use, "astrology" designates always that pretended science of imposture, which affecting to submit the moral freedom of men to the influences of the heavenly bodies, prognosticates future events from the position of these, as contrasted with "astronomy," that true science which investigates the laws of the heavenly bodies in their relations to one another and to the planet upon which we dwell.

As these are both from the Greek, so "despair" and "dissidence" are both, though the second more directly than the first, from the Latin. At a period not very long past the difference between them was hardly appreciable; it certainly could not be affirmed of one that it was very much stronger than the other. If in one the absence of all hope, in the other that of all faith, was implied. In proof I would only refer you to a book with which I am sure every English schoolmaster will wish to be familiar, I mean The Pilgrim's Progress, where Mistress "Dissidence" is Giant "Despair's" wife, and not a whit behind him in deadly enmity to the pilgrims; even as Jeremy Taylor speaks of the impenitent sinner's "dissidence in the hour of death," meaning, as the context plainly shows, his despair. But to what end two words for one and the same thing? And thus "dissidence" did not retain that force of meaning which it had at the first, but little by little assumed a more mitigated sense (Hobbes speaks of "men's dissidence," that is, distrust, "of one another"), till it has come in our present English to signify a becoming distrust of ourselves, an humble estimate of our own powers, with only a slight intimation in the word that perhaps this distrust is carried too far.

Again, "interference" and "interposition" are both from the Latin; and here too it lies not by any anterior necessity in the
several derivations of the words, that they should have the
different shades of meaning which yet they have obtained
among us—the Latin verbs which form their latter halves being
about as strong one as the other. And yet in our practical use,
"interference" is something offensive; it is the pushing in of
himself between two parties on the part of a third, who was not
asked, and is not thanked for his pains, and who, as the feeling
of the word implies, had no business there; while "interposition"
is employed to express the friendly peacemaking mediation of
one whom the act well became, and who, even if he was not
specially invited thereunto, is still thanked for what he has done.
How real an increase is it in the wealth and capabilities of a
language thus to have discriminated such words as these; and
to be able to express acts outwardly the same by different words,
as we would praise or blame them.

But these which I have named are not the only desynonymi­
sing processes which are going forward in a language; for we may
observe in almost all languages, and not the least in our own, a
tendency to the formation of new words out of what were at the
first no more than different pronunciations, or even slightly
different spellings, of one and the same word; which yet in the
end detach themselves from one another, not again to reunite;
just as accidental varieties in fruits or flowers, produced at
hazard, have yet permanently separated off and settled into
different kinds. Sometimes as the accent is placed on one syllable
of a word or another, it comes to have different significations,
and those so distinctly marked, that it may be considered out
of one word to have grown into two. Examples of this are the
following: "divers" and "diverse;" "côñure" and "conjûre;" "àn­
tic" and "antique;" "hûman" and "hûmëne;" "gëntle" and
"gentëël;" "cûstom" and "costûme;" "éssay" and
"assay;" "prôperty" and "propriety."
1 Or again, a word is pro­
nounced with a full sound of its syllables, or somewhat more
shortly; thus "spirit" and "spright;" "blossom" and "bloom;"

1 It must at the same time be acknowledged, that if in the course of time
distinctions are thus created, and if this is the tendency of language, yet
they are also sometimes, though far less often, obliterated. Thus the fine
distinction between "yea" and "yes," "nay" and "no," that once existed
in English has quite disappeared. "Yea" and "Nay" in Wiclif's time,
and a good deal later, were the answers to questions framed in the affirma­
tive. "Will he come?" To this it would have been replied, "Yea" or
"Nay," as the case might be. But "Will he not come?"—to this the answer
would have been, "Yes," or "No." Sir Thomas More finds fault with
Tyndale, that in his translation of the Bible he had not observed this
distinction, which was evidently therefore going out even then, that is in
the reign of Henry VIII.; and shortly after it was quite forgotten.
"piety" and "pity;" "courtesy" and "curtesy;" "personality" and "personalty;" "fantasy" and "fancy;" "triumph" and "trump" (the winning card); "happily" and "haply;" "eremite" and "hermit;" "poesy" and "posy;" "fragile" and "frail"—or with the dropping of the first syllable: "history" and "story;" "etiquette" and "ticket;" "estate" and "state"—or without losing a syllable, with more or less stress laid on the close: "regiment" and "regimen;" "corpse" and "corps;" "bite" and "bit;" "sire" and "sir;" "stripe" and "strip;" "borne" and "born;" "clothes" and "cloths." Or there has grown up some other slight distinction, as between "ghostly" and "ghastly;" "puisne" and "puny;" "utter" and "outer;" "mettle" and "metal;" "parson" and "person;" "sad" and "set;" "quell" and "kill;" "dyke" and "ditch;" "canker" and "cancer;" "dies" and "dice" (both plurals of "die"); "ingenious" and "ingenous;" "grune" and "preen;" "mister" and "master;" "villain" and "villein;" "cleft" and "clift," now written "cliff;" "cure" and "care;" "travel" and "travail;" "pennon" and "pinion;" "arc" and "arch;" "stark" and "starch;" "inch" and "ounce;" "bow" and "bough;" "pipe" and "fife;" "channel" and "kennel;" "wise" and "guise;" "can" and "ken;" "oaf" and "elf;" "gambol" and "gamble;" "truth" and "troth;" "quay" and "key;" "lose" and "loose;" "cant" and "chant;" "price" and "prize;" "errant" and "arrant;" "benefit" and "benefice;" 1 I do not know whether we ought to add to these, "news" and "noise," which some tell us to be the same word; at any rate the identifying of them is

If there were any doubt about this matter, which indeed there is not, a reference to Latimer's famous Sermon on Cards would abundantly remove it, where "triumph" and "trump" are interchangeably used.

Were there need of proving that these both lie in "beneficium," which there is not, for in Wiclif's translation of the Bible the distinction is still latent (1 Tim. vi. 2), one might adduce a singularly characteristic little trait of Papal policy, which once turned upon the double use of this word. Pope Adrian the Fourth, writing to the Emperor Frederic the First to complain of certain conduct of his, reminded the emperor that he had placed the imperial crown upon his head, and would willingly have conferred even greater "beneficia" upon him than this. Had the word been allowed to pass, it would no doubt have been afterwards appealed to as an admission on the part of the great emperor that he held the empire as a feud or fief (for "beneficium" was then the technical word for this, though the meaning has much narrowed since) from the Pope—the very point in dispute between them. The word was indignantly repelled by the emperor and the whole German nation, whereupon the Pope appealed to the etymology, that "beneficium" was but "bonum factum," and had the meanness to protest that he meant no more than to remind the emperor of the "benefits" which he had done him, and which he would have willingly multiplied still more.
instructive, for how much news is but noise, and passes away like a noise before long. Or, it may be, the difference which constitutes the two forms of the word into two words is in the spelling only, and so slight even there as to be appreciable only by the eye, escaping altogether the ear: thus is it with “draft” and “draught;” “plain” and “plane;” “coign” and “coin;” “flower” and “flour;” “check” and “cheque.”

Now if you will follow up these instances, you will find, I believe, in every case that there has attached itself to the different forms of the words a modification of meaning more or less sensible; that each has won for itself an independent sphere of meaning, in which it, and it only, moves. For take a few instances in proof. “Divers” implies difference only, but “diverse” difference with opposition; thus the several Evangelists narrate the same events in “divers” manners, but not in “diverse.” “Antique” is ancient, but “antic” is now the ancient regarded as overlived, out of date, and so in our days grotesque, ridiculous; and then, with a dropping of the reference to age, the grotesque, the ridiculous alone. “Human” is what every man is, “humane” is what every man ought to be; for Johnson’s suggestion that “humane” is from the French feminine, “humaine,” and “human” from the masculine, cannot for an instant be admitted. “Ingenious” expresses a mental, “ingenuous” a moral, excellence. A gardener “prunes” or trims his trees, properly indeed his vīnes alone (provigner), birds “preen” or trim their feathers. “Bloom” is a finer and more delicate efflorescence even than “blossom;” thus the “bloom,” but not the “blossom,” of the cheek. A “curtsey” is one, and that merely an external manifestation of “courtesy.” “Gambling” may be, as with a fearful irony it is called, play, but it is nearly as distant from “gambolling” as hell is from heaven. Nor would it be hard, in each other of the words which I have instanced, nor in others of like kind which no doubt might be added to them, to trace a distinction which has made itself more or less strongly felt.1

1 The same happens in other languages. Thus in Greek, “ἀναθημα” and “ἀναθημα” both signify that which is devoted, though in very different senses, to the gods; as “θάρσω,” boldness, and “θράσω,” temerity, are only different spellings of one and the same word. So too in Latin, “penna” and “pinna” differ only in form, and signify alike a “wing;” while yet in practice “penna” has come to be used for the wing of a bird, “pinna” (the diminutive of which, “pinnaculum,” has given us “pinnacle”) for that of a building. So is it with “Threx,” a gladiator, and “Thrax,” a Thracian; with “codex” and “caudex;” “prudens” and “providens;” “infacetus” and “infecetus;” in German with “rechtlich” and “redlich;” in French with “harnois,” the armour, or “harness,” of a soldier, “harnais” of a horse.
Let us now take some words which are not thus desynonymised by usage only, but which have an inherent etymological distinction—one, however, which it might be easy to overlook, which, so long as we dwell on the surface of the word, we shall overlook; and let us see whether we shall not be gainers by bringing out the distinction into clear consciousness. Here are the words “arrogant,” “presumptuous,” and “insolent”: we often use them promiscuously; yet let us examine them a little more closely, and ask ourselves, as soon as we have succeeded in tracing the lines of demarcation between them, whether we are not now in possession of three distinct thoughts, instead of a single confused one. Thus, he is “arrogant” who claims the observance and homage of others as his due (ad rogo), does not wait for them to offer, but himself demands it; or, who, having right to one sort of observance, claims another to which he has no right. Thus, it was “arrogance” in Nebuchadnezzar when he required that all men should fall down before the image which he had reared. He, a man, was claiming for man’s work the homage which belonged only to God. But one is “presumptuous” who takes things to himself before he has acquired any right and title to them (praesumo), the young man who already takes the place of the old, the learner who speaks as with the authority of the teacher. By and bye all this may very justly be his, but it is “presumption” to anticipate it now. “Insolent” means properly no more than unusual; to act “insolently” is to act unusually. The offensive sense which the word has acquired rests upon the feeling, that there is a certain well-understood rule of society, a recognised standard of moral behaviour, to which each of its members should conform. The “insolent” man is one who violates this rule, who breaks through this order, acting in an unaccustomed manner. The same sense of the orderly being also the moral, speaks out in the word “irregular;” a man of “irregular,” is for us a man of immoral, life; and yet more strongly in the Latin language, which has but one word (mores) for customs and morals.

Or consider the following words: “to hate,” “to loathe,” “to detest,” and “to abhor.” Each of them rests on an image entirely distinct from the others; two, the first and second, being Anglo-Saxon, and the others Latin. “To hate” is properly to be inflamed with passionate dislike, the word being connected with “heat,” “hot;” just as we speak, using the same figure, of persons being “incensed” with anger, or of their anger “kindling;” “ira” and “uro” being perhaps related. “To loathe”
is properly to feel nausea, the turning of the stomach at that which excites first natural, and then by a transfer, moral disgust. "To detest" is to bear witness against, not to be able to keep silence in regard of something, to feel ourselves obliged to lift up our voice and testimony against it. "To abhor" is to shrink shuddering back, as one would from an object of fear, an hissing serpent rising in one's path. Thus our blessed Lord "hated" to see his Father's house profaned, when, the zeal of that house consuming Him, He drove forth in anger the profaners from it; He "loathed" the lukewarmness of the Laodiceans, when He threatened to spue them out of his mouth; He "detested" the hypocrisy of the Pharisees and Scribes, when He proclaimed their sin, and uttered those eight woes against them (Matt. xxiii.); He "abhorred" the evil suggestions of Satan, when He bade the Tempter to get behind Him, seeking to put a distance between Himself and him.

You will observe that in most of the words which I have adduced, I have sought to refer their usage to their etymologies, to follow the guidance of these, and by the same aid to trace the lines of demarcation which divide them. For I cannot but think it an omission in a very instructive volume upon synonyms which has lately been edited by Archbishop Whately, and a partial diminution of its usefulness, that in the valuation of words reference is so seldom made to these, the writer relying almost entirely on present usage, and the tact and instinct of a cultivated mind for the appreciation of them aright. The accomplished author (or authoress) of this book indeed justifies this omission on the ground that a book of synonyms has to do with the present relative value of words, not with their roots and derivations; and further, that a reference to these brings in often what is only a disturbing force in the process, tending to confuse rather than to clear. But while it is quite true that

1 Among the words of which the etymology, if we were to suffer ourselves to be led by it, would place us altogether on a wrong track as to its present meaning, the writer adduces "allegiance," which by usage signifies "the fidelity of the subject to his prince," while the etymology would rather suggest "conformity to law." But surely this derivation of it, as though it were "ad legem," is an erroneous one. It is rather derived from "alligo," as "liege" from "ligo;" and thus is perfectly true to its etymology, signifying as it does the obligation wherewith one is bound to his superior. Algernon Sidney, in his Discourse concerning Government, chap. iii. sect. 36, falls into the same mistake; for, replying to some who maintained that submission was due to kings, even though they should act in direct contradiction to the fundamental laws of the kingdom, he observes that the very word "allegiance," of which they made so much, refuted them; for this was plainly "such an obedience as the law requires." He would have
words may often ride very slackly at anchor on their etymologies, may be borne hither and thither by the shifting tides and currents of usage, yet are they for the most part still holden by them. Very few have broken away and drifted from their moorings altogether. A “novelist” or writer of new tales in the present day is very different from a “novelist” or upholder of new theories in politics and religion of two hundred years ago; yet the idea of newness is common to them both. A “naturalist” was then a denier of revealed truth, of any but natural religion; he is now an investigator, and often a pious one, of nature and of her laws; yet the word has remained true to its etymology all the while. A “methodist” was once a follower of a certain “method” of philosophical induction, now of a “method” in the fulfilment of religious duties; but in either case “method,” or orderly progression, is the soul of the word. Take other words which have changed or modified their meaning—“plantations,” for instance, which were once colonies of men (and indeed we still “plant” a colony), but are now nurseries of young trees, and you will find the same to hold good. “Ecstasy” was madness, it is delight, but in neither case has it departed from its fundamental meaning, since it is the nature alike of this and that to set men out of and beside themselves.

And even when the fact is not so obvious as in these cases, the etymology of a word exercises an unconscious influence upon its uses, oftentimes makes itself felt when least expected, so that a word, after seeming quite to have forgotten, will after longest wanderings, return to it again. And one of the arts of a great poet or prose writer, who wishes to add emphasis to his style, to bring out all the latent forces of his native tongue, will very often be to reconnect a word by his use of it with its original derivation, and not suffer it to forget itself and its father’s house, though it would. How often Milton does this. And even if all this were not so, yet the past history of a word, which history must needs start from its derivation, how soon soever done better appealing, as indeed on one occasion he does, to the word “loyalty,” which, being derived from “loi,” expresses properly that fidelity which one owes according to law, and does not necessarily include that attachment to the royal person which happily we in England have been able further to throw into the word.

Yet the best example which I have at hand is one from the French of Bossuet, who in his panegyric of the great Condé expresses himself thus: “On le vit tonner de ses regards éclatants ceux qui échappaient à ses coups.” Take tonner in its usual secondary sense, and how feeble and pointless the whole; but doubtless the sacred orator brought it back to the “attonitus” from which it and our “astonish” alike proceed, and then, how grand its employment!
that may be left behind, is surely a necessary element in its present valuation. A man may be wholly different now from what once he was, yet not the less to know his antecedents is needful, before we can ever perfectly understand his present self; and the same holds good with a word.

There is often a moral value in the possession of synonyms, enabling us, as they do, to say exactly what we intend, without exaggeration or the putting of more into our words than we feel in our hearts, allowing us, as one has said, to be at once courteous and precise. Such moral advantage there is, for example, in the choice which we have between the words "to felicitate" and "to congratulate," for the expressing of our sentiments and wishes in regard of the good fortune that happens to others. "To felicitate" another is to wish him happiness, without affirming that his happiness is also ours. Thus out of that general goodwill with which we ought to regard all, we might "felicitate" one almost a stranger to us; nay more, I can honestly felicitate one on his appointment to a post, or attainment of an honour, even though I may not consider him the fittest to have obtained it, though I should have been glad if another had done so; I can desire and hope, that is, that it may bring all joy and happiness to him. But I could not, without a violation of truth, "congratulate" him, or that stranger whose prosperity awoke no lively delight in my heart; for when I "congratulate" a person (con gratulor), I declare that I am sharer in his joy, that what has rejoiced him has rejoiced also me. We have all, I dare say, felt, even without having made any such analysis of the distinction between the words, that "congratulate" is a far heartier word than "felicitate," and one with which it much better becomes us to welcome the good fortune of a friend; and the analysis, as you perceive, perfectly justifies the feeling. "Felicitations" are little better than compliments; "congratulations" are the expression of a genuine sympathy and joy.

Let me illustrate the importance of synonymous distinctions by another example, by the words, "to invent" and "to discover;" "invention" and "discovery." How slight may seem to us the distinction between them, even if we see any at all. Yet try them a little closer, try them, which is the true proof, by aid of examples, and you will perceive that by no means can they be indifferently used—that on the contrary a great principle lies at the root of their distinction. Thus we speak of the "invention" of printing, the "discovery" of America. Shift these
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words, and speak, for instance, of the “invention” of America; you feel at once how unsuitable the language is. And why? Because Columbus did not make that to be, which before him had not been. America was there before he revealed it to European eyes; but that which before was, he showed to be; he withdrew the veil which hitherto had concealed it; he “discovered” it. So too we speak of Newton “discovering” the law of gravitation; he drew aside the veil whereby men’s eyes were hindered from perceiving it, but the law had existed from the beginning of the world, and would have existed whether he or any other man had traced it or no; neither was it in any way affected by the discovery of it which he had made. But Gutenberg, or whoever else it may have been to whom the honour belongs, “invented” printing; he made something to be, which hitherto was not. In like manner Harvey “discovered” the circulation of the blood; but Watt “invented” the steam engine; and we speak, with a true distinction, of the “discoveries” of Science. In the very highest matters of all, it is deeply important that we be aware of and observe the distinction. In religion there have been many “discoveries,” but (in true religion I mean) no “inventions.” Many discoveries—but God in each case is the discoverer; He draws away the veil, one veil after another, that have hidden Him from men; the discovery or revelation is from Himself, for no man by searching has found out God; and therefore, wherever anything offers itself as an “invention” in matters of religion, it proclaims itself a lie—all self-devised worships, all religions which man projects from his own heart. Just that is known of God which He is pleased to make known, and no more; and men’s recognising or refusing to recognise in no ways affects it. They may deny or own Him, but He continues the same.

As involving in like manner a distinction which cannot safely be lost sight of, how important is it to keep in mind the difference, of which the existence is asserted by the fact that we possess the two words, “to apprehend” and “to comprehend,” with their substantives, “apprehension” and “comprehension.” For indeed we “apprehend” many truths which we do not “comprehend.” The great mysteries of our faith, the doctrine for instance of the Holy Trinity—we lay hold upon it (ad prehendo), we hang on it, our souls live by it; but we do not “comprehend” it, that is, we do not take it all in; for it is a necessary attribute of God that He is incomprehensible; if He were not so, either He would not be God, or the being that comprehended Him would be
God also. But it also belongs to the idea of God that He may be “apprehended,” though not “comprehended,” by his reasonable creatures; He has made them to know Him, though not to know Him all, to “apprehend,” though not to “comprehend,” Him. We may transfer with profit the same distinction to matters not quite so solemn. I read Goldsmith’s Traveller, or one of Gay’s Fables, and I feel that I “comprehend” it. I do not believe, that is, that there was anything in the poet’s mind or intention which I have not in the reading reproduced in my own. But I read Hamlet, or King Lear: here I “apprehend” much; I have wondrous glimpses of the poet’s intention and aim; but I do not for an instant suppose that I have “comprehended,” taken in, that is, all that was in his mind in the writing; or that his purpose does not stretch in manifold directions far beyond the range of my vision; and I am sure there are few who would not shrink from affirming, at least if they at all realised the force of the words they were using, that they “comprehended” Shakespeare; however much they may “apprehend” in him.

How often “opposite” and “contrary” are used as if there was no difference between them, and yet there is a most essential one, one which perhaps we may best express by saying that “opposites” complete, while “contraries” exclude one another. Thus the most “opposite” moral or mental characteristics may meet in one and the same person, while to say that the most “contrary” did so, would be manifestly absurd; for example, a soldier may be at once prudent and bold, for these are opposites; he could not be at once prudent and rash, for these are contraries. We may love and fear at the same time and the same person; we pray in the Litany that we may love and fear God, the two being opposites and thus the complements of one another; but to pray that we might love and hate would be as illogical as it would be impious, for these are contraries, and could no more co-exist together than white and black, hot and cold, at the same time in the same subject. Or to take another illustration, sweet and sour are “opposites,” sweet and bitter are “contraries.”1 It will be seen then that there is always a certain relation between “opposites;” they unfold themselves, though in different directions from the same root, as the positive and negative forces of electricity, and in their very opposition uphold and sustain one another; while “contraries” encounter one another from quarters quite diverse, and one only subsists in the exact degree

1 See Coleridge’s Church and State, p. 18.
that it puts out of working the other. Surely this distinction cannot be an unimportant one either in the region of ethics or elsewhere.

It will happen continually that rightly to distinguish between two words will throw great light upon some controversy in which those words play a principal part, nay, may virtually put an end to that controversy altogether. Thus when Hobbes, with a true instinct, would have laid deep the foundations of atheism and despotism together, resolving all right into might, and not merely robbing men, if he could, of the power, but denying to them the duty, of obeying God rather than man, his moral sophisms could stand only so long as it was not perceived that "compulsion" and "obligation," with which he juggled, conveyed two ideas perfectly distinct, indeed disparate, in kind. They collapsed at once, so soon as it was perceived that what pertained to one had been transferred to the other by a mere confusion of terms and cunning sleight of hand, the one being a physical, the other a moral necessity. There is indeed no such fruitful source of confusion and mischief as this—two words are tacitly assumed as equivalent, and therefore exchangeable, and then that which may be assumed, and with truth, of one, is assumed also of the other, of which it is not true. Thus, for instance, it often is with "instruction" and "education." Cannot we "instruct" a child, it is asked, cannot we teach it geography, or arithmetic, or grammar, quite independently of the Catechism, or even of the Scriptures? No doubt you may; but can you "educate," without bringing moral and spiritual forces to bear upon the mind and affections of the child? And you must not be permitted to transfer the admissions which we freely make in regard of "instruction," as though they also held good in respect of "education." For what is "education"? Is it a furnishing of a man from without with knowledge and facts and information? or is it a drawing forth from within and a training of the spirit, of the true humanity which is latent within him? Is the process of education the filling of the child's mind, as a cistern is filled with waters brought in buckets from some other source, or the opening up of its own fountains? Now if we give any heed to the word "education," and to the voice which speaks in the word, we shall not long be in doubt. Education must educe, being from "educare," which is but another form of "educere;" and that is "to draw out," and not "to put in." "To draw out" what is in the child, the immortal spirit which is there, this is the end of education; and so much the
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word declares. The putting in is indeed most needful, that is, the child must be instructed as well as educated, and the word “instruction” just means furnishing; but not instructed instead of educated. He must first have powers awakened in him, measures of spiritual value given him; and then he will know how to deal with the facts of this outward world; then instruction in these will profit him; but not without the higher training, still less as a substitute for it.

It has occasionally happened that the question of which out of two apparent synonyms should be adopted in some important state document has been debated with no little earnestness and vigour. Thus was it, for example, at the great English Revolution of 1688, when the two Houses of Parliament were for a considerable time at issue whether it should be declared of James the Second, that he had “abdicated,” or “deserted,” the throne. This might seem at first sight a mere strife about words, and yet, in reality, serious constitutional questions were involved in the selection of the one word or the other. The Commons insisted on the word “abdicated,” not as wishing to imply that in any act of the late king there had been an official renunciation of the crown, which would have been manifestly untrue; but because “abdicated” to their minds alone expressed the fact that James had so borne himself as virtually to have entirely renounced, disowned, and relinquished the crown, to have irrevocably forfeited and separated himself from it, and from any right to it for ever; while “deserted” would have seemed to leave room and an opening for a return, which they were determined to declare for ever excluded; as, were it said of a husband that he had “deserted” his wife, or of a soldier that he had “deserted” his colours, this language would imply not only that he might, but that he ought and was bound to return. Lord Somers’ speech on the occasion is a masterly specimen of synonymous discrimination, and an evidence of the uses in highest matters of state to which it may be turned.

Let me press upon you in conclusion some few of the many advantages to be derived from the habit of distinguishing synonyms. These advantages we might presume to be many, even though we could not ourselves perceive them; for how often do the great masters of style in every tongue, perhaps none so often as Cicero, the greatest of all,1 pause to discriminate

1 Thus he distinguishes between voluntas and cupiditas; cautio and metus (Tusc., iv. 6); gaudium, lastitia, voluptas (Tusc., iv. 6; Fin., ii. 4); prudentia and sapientia (Off. i. 43); caritas and amor (De Part. Or. xxv.); optio and ebirius, iracundus and iratus, anxietas and angor (Tusc.,
between the words they are using; how much care and labour, how much subtlety of thought, they have counted well bestowed on the operation; how much importance do they avowedly attach to it; not to say that their works, even where they do not intend it, will be a continual lesson in this respect: a great writer merely in the accuracy with which he employs words will always be exercising us in synonymous discrimination. But the advantages of attending to them need not be taken on trust; they are evident. How great a part of true wisdom it is to be able to distinguish between things that differ, things seemingly, but not really, alike, this is remarkably attested by our words "discernment" and "discretion;" which are now used as equivalent, the first to "insight," the second to "prudence;" while yet in their earlier usage, and according to their etymology, being both from "discerno," they signify the power of so seeing things that in the seeing we distinguish and separate them one from another. Such were originally "discernment" and "discretion," and such in great measure they are still. And in words is a material ever at hand on which to train the spirit to a skilfulness in this; on which to exercise its sagacity through the habit of distinguishing there where it would be so easy to confound. Nor is this habit of discrimination only valuable as a part of our intellectual training; but what a positive increase is it of mental wealth when we have learned to discern between things, which really differ, but have been hitherto confused in our minds; and have made these distinctions permanently our own in the only way by which they can be made secure, that is, by assigning to each its appropriate word and peculiar sign.

What an help moreover will it prove to the writing of a good English style, if instead of having many words before us, and choosing almost at random and at haphazard from among them, we at once know which, and which only, we ought in the case before us to employ, which will be the exact vesture of our thoughts. It is the first characteristic of a well-dressed man that his clothes fit him; they are not too small and shrunken here, too large and loose there. Now it is precisely such a prime
characteristic of a good style that the words fit close to the thoughts: they will not be too big here, hanging like a giant's robe on the limbs of a dwarf; nor too small there, as a boy's garments into which the man has with difficulty and ridiculously thrust himself. You do not feel in one place that the writer means more than he has succeeded in saying; in another that he has said more than he means; or in a third something beside what his intention was: and all this from a lack of dexterity in employing the instrument of language, of precision in knowing what words would be the exactest correspondents and fittest exponents of his thought.

And let us not suppose this power of exactly saying what we mean, and neither more nor less than we mean, to be merely an elegant mental accomplishment. It is indeed this, and perhaps there is no power so surely indicative of a high and accurate training of the intellectual faculties. But it is also much more than this: it has a moral meaning as well. It is nearly allied to morality, inasmuch as it is nearly connected with truthfulness. Every man who has himself in any degree cared for the truth, and occupied himself in seeking it, is more or less aware how much of the falsehood in the world passes current under the concealment of words, how many strifes and controversies, which feed the simple, and offend the wise, find all or nearly all their fuel and their nourishment in words carelessly or dishonestly employed. And when a man has had any actual experience of this fact, and has at all perceived how far this mischief reaches, he is sometimes almost tempted to say with Shakespeare's clown, "Words are grown so false, I am loath to prove reason with them." He cannot, however, forego their employment; not to say that he will presently perceive that this falseness of theirs whereof he accuses them, this cheating power of words, is not of their proper use, but their abuse; he will see that, however they may have been enlisted in the service of lies, they are yet of themselves most true, and that where the bane is, there the antidote should be sought as well. Ask then words what they mean, that you may deliver yourselves, that you may help to deliver others, from the tyranny of words, and from the strife of "word-warriors." Learn to distinguish between them, for you have the authority of Hooker, that "the mixture of those things by speech, which by nature are divided, is the mother of all error." And although I cannot promise you that the study of synonyms, or the
acquaintance with derivations, or any other knowledge but the very highest knowledge of all, will deliver you from the temptation to misuse this or any other gift of God—a temptation which always lies so near us—yet I am sure that these studies rightly pursued will do much in leading us to stand in awe of this divine gift of words, and to tremble at the thought of turning it to any other than those worthy ends for which God has endowed us with it.
LECTURE VI

THE SCHOOLMASTER'S USE OF WORDS

I shall now attempt to apply, and to suggest some ways in which you may apply, what has been hitherto spoken to practical ends, and make this study of words, which I have been pressing upon you, to tell upon your own teaching hereafter; for assuredly we ought never to disconnect what we ourselves may learn, from the hope and expectation of being able by its aid to teach others more effectually; our studies, when we do so, become instantly a selfish thing. There is a noble line in Chaucer, where, characterising a true scholar, he says of him:

And gladly would he learn, and gladly teach,

and in the spirit of this line I trust that we shall each one of us work and live.

But to address ourselves to the matter more directly in hand. You all here are made acquainted with a good deal more than the first rudiments of the Latin tongue. Every one who can at all appreciate what your future task will be, must rejoice that it is so. Indeed, it is hard to understand how you could be otherwise fitted and accomplished for the work which you have before you. For our language is not like the Greek and the German, which, for all practical purposes, may be considered rounded and complete in themselves, which contain all the resources for discovering the origin and meaning of their words in their own bosom, or so nearly so, that the few exceptions need not be taken into account. In these languages, it is conceivable that a thorough knowledge of his own tongue might be attained by one who should remain ignorant of any other, and that himself possessing, he might be able to impart this same knowledge to others. In fact, the Greek, who certainly understood his own language thoroughly, never did extend his knowledge beyond it. But it is different with English. Would we follow up its words, not to their remotest sources, but only a step or two, it carries us at once beyond itself and to a foreign soil, and mainly to the
Latin. This being the case, he who has not some acquaintance with Latin can only explain a vast number of words loosely and at hazard; he has some general sense or impression of what they intend, of the ideas which they represent, but nothing certain. He feels about for their central meaning; he does not grasp it with confidence and precision.

And having these convictions in regard of the advantage of following up words to their sources, of "deriving" them, that is, of tracing each little rill to the river from which it was first drawn, let me here observe, as something not remote from our subject, but, on the contrary, directly bearing upon it, that I can conceive no method of so effectually defacing and barbarising our English tongue, no scheme that would go so far to empty it, practically at least and for us, of all the hoarded wit, wisdom, imagination, and history which it contains, to cut the vital nerve which connects its present with the past, as the introduction of the scheme of "phonetic spelling," which some have lately been zealously advocating among us; the principle of which is that all words should be spelt according as they are sounded, that the writing should be, in every case, subordinated to the speaking.1

The tacit assumption that it ought so to be is the pervading error running through the whole system. But there is no necessity that it should; every word on the contrary has two existences, as a spoken word and a written; and you have no right to sacrifice one of these, or even to subordinate it wholly, to the other. A word exists as truly for the eye as for the ear, and in an highly advanced state of society, where reading is almost as universal as speaking, as much perhaps for the first as for the last. That in the written word moreover is the permanence and continuity of language and of learning, and that the connexion is most intimate of a true orthography with all this, is affirmed in our words "letters," "literature," "unlettered," even as in other languages by words entirely corresponding to these.2

The gains consequent on the introduction of such a change as is proposed would be insignificantly small, while the losses would be enormously great. The gains would be the saving of a certain amount of labour in the learning to spell; an amount of labour,

1 I do not know whether the advocates of phonetic spelling have urged the authority and practice of Augustus as being in their favour. Suetonius, among other amusing gossip about this emperor, records of him: "Videtur corum sequi opinionem, qui perinde scribendum ac loquamur, existiment" (Octavius, c. lxxxviii.).

2 As γράμματα, ἀγράμματος, littera, belles lettres.
however, absurdly exaggerated by the promoters of the scheme, this labour, whatever it is, would be in great part saved, as the pronunciation would at once put in possession of the spelling; so far as spelling or orthography could then be said to exist. But even this insignificant gain would not long remain, seeing that pronunciation is itself continually altering; custom is lord here for better and for worse; and a multitude of words are now pronounced in a different manner from that of an hundred years ago, so that, ere very long, there would again be a chasm between the spelling and pronunciation of words—unless indeed the former were to vary, as I do not see well how it could consistently refuse to do, with each variation of the latter, reproducing each one of its capricious or barbarous alterations; which thus, it must be remembered, would be changes not in the pronunciation only, but in the word itself, for the word would only exist as a pronounced word, the written being a mere shadow of this. When these had multiplied a little, and they would indeed multiply exceedingly, so soon as the barrier against them which now exists was removed, what the language would ere long become it is not easy to guess.

This fact, however, though alone sufficient to show how little the scheme of phonetic spelling would remove even those inconveniences which it proposes to remedy, is only the smallest objection to it. The far deeper and more serious one is, that in innumerable instances it would obliterate altogether those clear marks of birth and parentage, which, if not all, yet so many of our words bear now upon their very fronts, or are ready, upon a very slight interrogation, to declare to us. Words have now an ancestry; and the ancestry of words, as of men, is often a very noble part of them, making them capable of great things, because those from whom they are descended have done great things before them; but this would deface their scutcheon, and bring them all to the same ignoble level. Words are now a nation, grouped into tribes and families, some smaller, some larger; this change would go far to reduce them to a promiscuous and barbarous horde. Now they are often translucent with their idea, as an alabaster vase is lighted up by a lamp placed within it; in how many cases would this inner light be then quenched. They have now a body and a soul, and the soul looking through the body; oftentimes then nothing but the body, not seldom nothing but the carcase, of the word would remain. Both these objections were urged long ago by Bacon, who characterises this so-called reformation, "that writing should be consonant to
speaking," as "a branch of unprofitable subtlety;" and especially urges that thereby "the derivations of words, especially from foreign languages, are utterly defaced and extinguished."

From the results of various approximations to phonetic spelling, which at different times have been made, and the losses which have thereon ensued, we may guess what the loss would be were the system fully carried out. Of those sufficiently acquainted with Latin, it would be curious to know how many have seen "silva" in "savage," since it has been so written, and not "salvage," as of old? or have been reminded of the hindrances to a civilised state of existence which the indomitable forest, more perhaps than any other obstacle, presents. When "fancy" was spelt "phant'sy," as by Sylvester in his translation of Du Bartas, and by the other scholar-like writers of that time, no one could then doubt of its connexion, or rather its original identity, with "phantasy," as no Greek scholar could miss its relation with φαντασία. Spell "analyse" as I have sometimes seen it, and as phonetically it ought to be, "analize," and the tap-root of the word is cut. What number of readers will recognise in it then the image of dissolving and resolving aught into its elements, and use it with a more or less conscious reference to this? It may be urged that few do so even now among those who employ the word. The more need they should not be fewer; for these few do in fact retain the word in its place, prevent it from gradually drifting out of that place; they preserve its vitality, and the propriety of its use, not merely for themselves, but also for the others that have not this knowledge. In phonetic spelling is, in brief, the proposal that the educated should of free choice place themselves in the conditions and under the disadvantages of the ignorant and uneducated, instead of seeking to elevate these last to theirs.1

1 The same attempt to introduce phonetic spelling, or "phonography" as it is there called, has been several times made, once in the sixteenth century, and again some twenty years ago, in France. Let us see by one or two examples what would be the results there. Here is the word "temps;" from which the phonographers eject the p as superfluous. What is the consequence? at once its visible connexion with the Latin "tempus," with the Spanish "tiempo," with the Italian "tempo," with its own "temporel" and "temporaire," is broken, and for many effaced. Or again, here are "poids" a weight, "poix" pitch, "pois" peas. I do not suppose the Frenchman who spoke his own language the best, could mark in pronunciation the distinction between these; and thus to the ear there may be confusion between them; but to the eye there is none; not to say that the d in "poids" puts it for us at once in relation with "pondus," the s in "poix" with "pis," the s in "pois" with the low Latin "pisium." In each case the letter which these reformers of orthography would dismiss as useless and worse than useless, contains the secret of the word.
Even now the relationships of words, so important for our right understanding of them, are continually overlooked; a very little matter serving to conceal them from us. Thus how many of our nouns substantive and adjective are, in fact, unsuspected participles, or are otherwise most closely connected with verbs, with which, notwithstanding, until some one points out the fact to us, we probably never think of putting them in any relation. And yet with how lively an interest shall we discover words to be of closest kin, which we had never considered till now but as entire strangers to one another; what a real increase will it be in our acquaintance with, and mastery of, English to become aware of such relationship. Thus "heaven" is only the perfect of "to heave;" and is so called because it is "heaved" or "heaven" up, being properly the sky as it is raised aloft; the "smith" has his name from the sturdy blows that he "smites" upon the anvil; "wrong" is the perfect participle of "to wring," that which one has "wring" or wrested from the right; just as in French "tort," from "torqueo," is that which is twisted; "guilt" of "to guile" or "beguile;" to find "guilt" in a man is to find that he has been "beguiled," that is, by the devil, "instigante diabolo," as it is inserted in all indictments for murder, the forms of which come down to us from a time when men were not ashamed of tracing evil to his inspiration. The "brunt" of the battle is the "heat" of the battle, where it "burns" the most fiercely. "Haft," as of a knife, is properly only the participle perfect of "to have," that whereby you "have" or hold it. Or take two or three nouns adjective; "strong" is the participle past of "to string;" a "strong" man means no more than one whose sinews are firmly "strung." The "left" hand, as distinguished from the right, is the hand which we "leave;" inasmuch as for twenty times we use the right hand, we do not once employ it; and it obtains its name from being "left" unused so often. "Odd," I believe, properly "owed;" an "odd" glove or an "odd" shoe is one that is "owed" to another, or to which another is "owed," for the making of a pair—just as we speak of a man being "singular," wanting, that is, his match. "Wild" is the participle past of "to will;" a "wild" horse is a "willed" or self-willed horse, one that has been never tamed or taught to submit its will to the will of another; and so with a man.

This exercise of putting words in their true relation and connexion with one another might be carried much further. We might take whole groups of words, which seem to us at first
sight to acknowledge hardly any kinship, if indeed any, with one another, and yet with no great difficulty show that they had a common parentage and descent. For instance, here are "shire," "shore," "share," "shears;" "shred," "sherd;" they all are derived from one Anglo-Saxon word, which signifies to separate or divide, and still exists with us in the shape of "to shear," which made once the three perfects "shore," "share," "shered." "Shire" is a district in England, as it is separated from the rest; a "share" is a portion of anything thus divided off; "shears" are instruments effecting this process of separation; the "shore" is the place where the continuity of the land is interrupted or separated by the sea; a "shred" is that which is "sheared" or shorn from the main piece; a "sherd," as a "pot-sherd" (also pot-"share," Spenser), that which is broken off and thus divided from the vessel; and these which I have adduced by no means exhaust this group or family of words, though it would take more time than I can spare to put some other words in relation with it.

But this analysing of groups of words for the detecting of the bond of relationship between them and the one root out of which they all grow, is a process which may require more etymological knowledge than you possess, and more helps from books than you can always expect to command. There is another process, and one which may prove no less useful to yourselves and to others, which will lie more certainly within your reach. It will often happen that you will meet in books, sometimes in the same book, and perhaps in the same page of this book, a word used in senses so far apart from one another, that it will seem to you at first sight almost absurd to assume as possible that there can be any bond of connexion between them. Now when you do thus fall in with a word employed in these two or more senses seemingly far removed from one another, accustom yourselves to seek out the bond which there certainly is between these its several uses. This tracing of that which is common to and connects all its meanings can of course only be done by getting to its heart, to the seminal meaning, from which, as from a fruitful seed, all the others unfold themselves; to the first link in the chain, from which every later one, in a direct line or a lateral, depends. And we may proceed in this investigation. certain that we shall find such, or at least that such there is to be found. For this we may start with, as being lifted above all doubt (and the non-recognition of it is the great fault in Johnson's Dictionary), that a word has originally but one meaning, and
ON THE STUDY OF WORDS

that all the others, however widely they may diverge from one another and seem to recede from this one, may yet be affiliated upon it, may be brought back to the one central meaning which grasps and knits them all together; just as the races of men, black, white, and red, despite of all their present diversity and dispersion, have a central point of unity in their first parents.

Let me illustrate what I mean by two or three familiar examples. Here is the word "post;" how various are the senses in which it is employed; "post"-office; "post"-haste; a "post" standing in the ground; a military "post;" an official "post;" "to post" a ledger. Might one not at first presume it impossible to bring all these uses of "post" to a common centre? Yet indeed when once on the right track, nothing is easier; "post" is the Latin "positus," that which is placed; the piece of timber is "placed" in the ground, and so a "post;" a military station is a "post," for a man is "placed" in it, and must not quit it without orders; to travel "post" is to have certain relays of horses "placed" at intervals, that so no delay on the road may occur; the "post"-office is that which avails itself of this mode of communication; to "post" a ledger is to "place" or register its several items.

Or take the word "stock;" in what an almost infinite number of senses it is employed; we have live "stock," "stock" in trade, the village "stocks," the "stock" of a gun, the "stock"-dove, the "stocks" on which ships are built, the "stock" which goes round the neck, the family "stock," the "stocks," or public funds, in which money is invested, and other "stocks" very likely besides these. What point in common can we find between them all? This, that they are all derived from, and were originally the past participle of "to stick," which as it now makes "stuck," made formerly "stock;" and they cohere in the idea of fixedness, which is common to every one. Thus, the "stock" of a gun is that in which the barrel is fixed; the village "stocks" are those in which the feet are fastened; the "stock" in trade is the fixed capital; and so too the "stock" on the farm, although the fixed capital has there taken the shape of horses and cattle; in the "stocks," or public funds, money sticks fast, inasmuch as those who place it there cannot withdraw or demand the capital, but receive only the interest; the "stock" of a tree is fast set in the ground; and from this use of the word it is transferred to a family; the "stock" or stirps is that from which it grows, and out of which it unfolds itself. And here we may bring in the "stock"-dove, as being the "stock" or stirps of the domestic
kinds. I might group with these, "stake" in both its spellings; a "stake" in the hedge is stuck and fixed there; the "stakes" which men wager against the issue of a race are paid down, and thus fixed or deposited to answer the event; a beef "steak" is a piece of meat so small that it can be stuck on the point of a fork; with much more of the same kind.

How often does the word "quick" in the Creed perplex children; and even after they have learned that "the quick and the dead" mean the living and the dead, they know it only on trust; for they fail to put this "quick" in any connexion with the "quick" of their own vocabulary, the "quick" with which one bids another to throw up the ball, or the "quick"-set hedge which runs round their father's garden, or the "quick" parts for which some unwise person has praised one of them at school; yet that all these are one and the same "quick" it is of course very easy to show. Life is the fundamental idea of the word, and in this its primary sense it is used in the Creed, "the quick and the dead;" so too the "quick"-set hedge is properly the living fence, as contrasted with that made of dead timbers. But motion, as it is at once of the essence, so it is also one of the most obvious signs, of life; and thus "quick" in a secondary sense was applied to all which was rapid or prompt in its motions, whether bodily or mental; thus a "quick" runner, a boy of "quick" parts; and so too "quick"-silver, and "quick," or fast-shifting, sands. The same sense of the connexion between life and motion has given us our secondary use of "animated" and "lively."

Sometimes a slightly different spelling comes in aid of an enormous divergence of meaning, to disguise the fact of two words having originally rested on one and the same etymology, and really being so closely related to one another, that we may say, in fact, they are one and the same word. I would instance as a notable example of this, "canon" with a single n, as the "canon" of Scripture, and "cannon," or heavy artillery. Can there, it may well be asked, be any point in common between them? can they be resolved ultimately into the same word? I believe they can. The word "canon" with the single n, which is a Greek word, means properly "rule;" first, the measuring rule or line of the carpenter; and then figuratively any measure or rule by which we try other things; and in its crowning use, the Holy Scriptures, as being regulative of life and doctrine in the Church. But the carpenter's rule was commonly a reed (canna), that being selected on account of its straightness; you
may remember in Scripture mention once or twice being made of the measuring "reed" (Rev. xxi. 15, 16); and from this reed or "canna," the rule or line (the "canon") had its name, or at any rate the words are most closely allied. A reed however, as we all know, besides being straight is also hollow, and thus it came to pass when the hollow engines of war, our modern artillery, were invented, and were feeling about for their appropriate name, none was nearer at hand than this which the reed supplied, and they were called "cannon" too.1

When it is thus said that we can always reduce the different meanings in which a word is employed to some one point from which they all immediately or mediately proceed, that no word has primarily more than one meaning, it must be remembered that it is quite possible there may be two words pronounced and even spelt exactly alike, which yet are wholly different in their derivation and primary usage; and that of course between these no bond of union on the score of this identity is to be sought; neither does this fact in the least invalidate the assertion. We have in such cases, as Cobbett has expressed it well, the same combination of letters, but not the same word. Thus we have "page," one side of a leaf, from "pagina," and "page," a youthful attendant, from quite another word; "league," a treaty, from "ligare," to bind, and "league," a measure of distance, thought to be a word of Gallic origin; we have "host," an army, from "hostis," and "host," in the Roman Catholic sacrifice of the mass, from "hostia;" so too "riddle," a sieve, which is the Latin "reticulum," a small network, and "riddle," an enigma, from a German source; the "Mosaic" law, derived from the name of the inspired lawgiver of Israel, "mosaic," as "mosaic work," which is "opus musivum," work graceful, as connected with the Muses. In other words, such as "date," "mint," "ounce," "dole," "bull," "plain," the identity is merely on the surface, and in sound, and it would of course be lost labour to seek for a point of contact between meanings which have not any closer connexion really, than they have apparently, with one another.

Let me suggest some further exercises in this region of words, which I will venture to promise that you will find profitable as ministering to the activity of your own minds, as helping to call

1 In confirmation of this view of the derivation of "cannon," and in proof that it lay very near to the imagination of men to liken them to reeds, we have the application of "Rohr" in German, which, at first signifying a cane or reed, has in like manner been applied to the barrel of a gun.
out a like activity in those of others. Do not, I would say then once more, suffer words to pass you by, which at once provoke and promise to reward inquiry, by the readiness with which they will evidently yield up the secret of their birth or of their use, if duly interrogated by us. Many we must all be content to leave, which will defy all efforts to dissipate the mystery which hangs over them, but many also announce that their explanations cannot be very far to seek. I would instance such a word as “candidate.” At a contested election how familiar are the ears of all with this word, nor is it strange to us at other times. Now does it not argue an incurious spirit to be content that this word should thus be given and received by us an hundred times, and we never to ask ourselves, What does it mean? why is one seeking to be elected to a seat in Parliament, or otherwise offering himself to the choice of his fellows, called a “candidate”? If the word lay evidently beyond our horizon, we might acquiesce in our ignorance here, as in such infinite other matters; but resting, as on its face it does, upon the Latin “candidus,” it challenges inquiry, and a very little of this would at once put us in possession of the Roman custom out of which the word grew, and to which it alludes—namely, that such as intended to offer themselves to the suffrages of the people for any of the great offices of the State, presented themselves beforehand to them in a white toga, being called therefore “candidati,” with other interesting particulars. And as it so happens that in the act of seeking information on one subject we obtain it upon another, so will it probably be here; for in making yourselves fully aware of what this custom was, you will hardly fail to learn the original meaning of “ambition,” and from whence we have obtained the word.

Or again, any one who knows so much as that “verbum” means “a word,” might well be struck by the fact (and if he followed it up would be led far into the relation of the parts of speech to one another) that grammarians do not employ it, as one might have expected, to signify any word whatsoever, but restrict it to the verb alone; “verbum” is the verb. Surely here is matter for thought. Why does the verb monopolise the dignity of being the “word”? what is there in it which gives it the right so to do? Is it because the verb is the animating power, the vital principle of every sentence, and that without which, understood or uttered, no sentence can exist? or is there any other cause? I leave this to your own consideration.

Again, here is “conscience,” a solemn word, if there be such
in the world. There is not one of us whose Latin will not bring
him so far as to tell him that this is from "con" and "scio."
But what does that "con" intend? "Conscience" is not merely
that which I know, but that which I know with some other; for
this prefix cannot, as I think, be esteemed superfluous, or taken
to imply merely that which I know with or to myself. That other
knower whom the word implies is God, his law making itself
known and felt in the heart; and the work of "conscience" is
the bringing of each of our acts and thoughts as a lesser, to be
tried and measured by this as a greater, the word growing out
of and declaring that awful duplicity of our moral being which
arises from the presence of God in the soul—our thoughts by the
standard which that presence supplies, and as the result of a
comparison with it, "accusing or excusing one another." 1

Once more, you call certain books "classics." You have indeed
a double use of the word, for you speak of Greek and Latin as the
"classical" languages, and the great writers in these as "the
classics," while at other times you hear of a "classical" English
style, or of English "classics." Now "classic" is connected
plainly, as we all perceive, with "classis." What then does it
mean in itself, and how has it arrived at this double use? "The
term is drawn from the political economy of Rome. Such a
man was rated as to his income in the third class, such another
in the fourth, and so on; but he who was in the highest was
emphatically said to be of the class, 'classicus'—a class man
without adding the number, as in that case superfluous; while
all others were infra classem. Hence, by an obvious analogy,
the best authors were rated as 'classici,' or men of the highest
class; just as in English we say 'men of rank,' absolutely for
men who are in the highest ranks of the state." The mental
process by which this title, which would apply rightly to the
best authors in all languages, came to be often confined to those
only in two, and those two to be claimed, to the seeming ex-

1 Many ethical writers, as is well known, pass by the "con" in their
explanation of "conscience," finding merely the expression of the certainty
of the inner moral conviction in the word; for which view they may plead
the German "Gewissen;" yet I cannot think but that herein they err:
"conscience," in the words of South, "according to the very notation of
it, importing a double or joint knowledge; to wit, one of a divine law or
rule, and the other of a man's own action; and so is properly the applica-
tion of a general law to a particular instance of practice." And Vossius
(De Thol. Gent., iii. 42): "Est enim conscientia syllogismus, cujus major
est principium practicum à conscientia suggestum; minor est bona malave
actio nostra; conclusio autem actionem ad normam istius principii col-
latam, aut probat, aut improbat; ex quo, pro conclusionis diversitate,
vell tranquillitas animi sequitur, vel intranquillitas."
elusion of all others, as the classical languages, is one of the most constantly recurring, and most widely extended, making itself felt in all times and in all regions of human life, and one to which I would in passing just direct your attention, though I cannot now do more.

But seek, I would further urge you, to attain a consciousness of the multitude of words which there are, that now used only in a figurative sense, did yet originally rest on some fact of the outward world, vividly presenting itself to the imagination; a fact which the word has incorporated for ever, having become, as all words originally were, the indestructible vesture of a thought. If I may judge from my own experience, I think there are few intelligent boys in your schools who would not feel that they had gotten something, when you had shown them that to "insult" means properly to leap as on the prostrate body of a foe; "to affront," to strike him on the face; that "to succour" means to run and place oneself under one that is falling, and thus support and sustain him; "to relent" (connected with "lentus," not "lenis"), to slacken the swiftness of one's pursuit; "to reprehend," to lay hold of one with the intention of forcibly pulling him back from the way of his error; that "to be examined" means to be weighed. They would be pleased to learn that a man is called "supercilious," because haughtiness with contempt of others expresses itself by the raising of the eyebrow or "supercilium;" that "subtle" (subtilis for subtexilis) is literally "fine-spun;" that "imbecile," which we use for weak, and now always for weak in intellect, means strictly (unless indeed we must renounce this etymology), leaning upon a staff (in bacillo), as one aged or infirm might do; that "chaste" is properly white, "castus" being a participle of "candeo," as is now generally allowed; that "sincere" may be, I will not say that it is, without wax (sine cera), as the best and finest honey should be; that a "companion" is one with whom we share our bread, a messmate; that a "sarcasm" is properly such a lash inflicted by "the scourge of the tongue" as brings away the flesh after it, that "desultory," which perhaps they have been warned they should not be in their studies, but have never attached any very definite meaning to the warning, means properly leaping as a rider in the circus does from the back of one running horse to that of another, this rider being technically called a "desultor;" and the word being transferred from him to those who suddenly and abruptly change their courses of study.
“Trivial,” again, is a word borrowed from the life. Mark three or four persons standing idly at the point where one street bisects at right angles another, and discussing there the worthless gossip, the idle nothings of the day; there you have the living explanation of “trivial,” “trivialities,” such as no explanation which did not thus root itself in the etymology would ever give you, or enable you to give to others. For you have there the “tres viæ,” the “trivium;” and “trivialities” properly mean such talk as is holden by those idle loiterers that gather at these meetings of three roads. And “rivals” by curious steps has attained its present signification. “Rivals,” in the primary sense of the word, are those who dwell on the banks of the same river. But since, as all experience shows, there is no such fruitful source of contention as a water-right, it would continually happen that these occupants of the opposite banks would be at strife with one another in regard of the periods during which they severally had a right to the use of the stream, turning it off into their own fields before the time, or leaving open the sluices beyond the time, or in other ways interfering, or being counted to interfere, with the rights of their opposite neighbours. And, thus “rivals,” which at first applied only to those dwellers on opposite banks of a river, came afterwards to be used of any who were on any grounds in more or less unfriendly competition with one another.

Or if your future pupils shall be your companions in your walks (as it always speaks well for a teacher’s influence that he is sought, not shunned, by his pupils in play hours), how much will there be which you may profitably impart to them, suggested by the names of common things which will meet you there; how much which you, if you know, will love to tell, and they, I am sure, will be well pleased to hear. Who would not care, for instance, to learn something about the names of our English birds; that the “kingfisher,” which attracted all eyes as it darted swiftly by the river’s edge, was so called from the royal beauty, the kingly splendour of its plumage; that the “ospray,” one of our eagles, is the “ossifrage,” or bone-breaker, having its name from its strength; that the “hawk,” if it be not the same word with “havoc” (and it was called “hafoc” in Anglo-Saxon), has at least a common origin; its very name announcing the “havoc” and destruction which it makes among the smaller birds, just as in the “raven’s” name is expressed its greedy, or as we say “ravenous,” disposition? Or when they are listening of an evening to the harsh shriekings of the “owl,” that the name of this dissonant night-bird is in fact the past
participle of "to yell" (as in Latin, "ulula," the screech owl, is from "ululare"), and differs from "howl" in nothing but its spelling, so that the diminutive "howlet" is as often spelt with an h as without it. Even the little "dabchick" which so haunts our waters here, diving and dipping when any one approaches, it may be as well to know why it has this name, that the first syllable would more correctly be spelt with a p than a b, this "dap" being the old perfect of "to dip," so that the name is no idle unmeaning thing, but brings out the most salient characteristic of the bird which bears it, its swift diving and "dipping" under the water at every apprehension of danger: just as in Latin a certain water-fowl is called "mergus," from "mergo."

Or taking them into the corn-fields, you may point out how the "cockle" which springs up only too luxuriantly in some of our Hampshire furrows, acquires its name from that which often it effectually does, namely from its "choking" or strangling the good seed. And the word "field" itself is worth taking note of, for it throws us back upon a period when England was covered, as is a great part of America now, with forests; "field" meaning properly a clearing where the trees have been "felled," or cut down, as in all our early English writers it is spelt without the i, "feld," and not "field," even as you will find in them that "wood" and "feld" are continually set over, and contrasted with, one another.

In such ways you may often improve, and without turning play-time into lesson-time, the hours of relaxation and amusement. But I must not here let escape me these words, "relaxation" and "amusement," on which I have lighted as by chance. "Amusement," or as with another striking image we call it, "recreation," what is it, and what does it affirm of itself? Why plainly this, that it must be first earned; for let us only question the word a little closer, and see what it involves. It is plainly "à musis," that is, a temporary suspension of, and turning away from, severer studies, which severer studies are represented here by the Muses, who, I may just remind you, were the patronesses in old time not of poetry alone, but of history, geometry, and all other studies as well. What shall we then say of them, who would fain have their lives to be all "amusement," or who claim it otherwise than as this temporary withdrawal "à musis"? The very word condemns them; even as that other word "relaxation" does the same. How can the bow be relaxed or slackened, for this of course is the image, which has not ever been bent, whose string has never been
drawn tight? Let us draw it tight by earnest toil, and then we may look to have it from time to time relaxed. Having been attentive and assiduous, then, but not otherwise, we may claim relaxation and amusement. But “attentive” and “assiduous” are themselves words whose meaning it is worth our while to realise. He then is “assiduous” who sits close to his work; he is “attentive,” who stretches out his neck that so he may bring the organ of hearing nearer to the speaker, and lose none of his words. And then what a lesson the word “diligence” contains. How profitable is it for every one of us to be reminded, as we are reminded when we make ourselves aware of its derivation from “diligo,” to love, that the only secret of true industry in our work is love of that work. And as there is a great truth wrapped up in “diligence,” what a lie on the other hand lurks at the root of our present use of the word “indolence.” This is from “in” and “doleo,” not to grieve; and “indolence” is thus a state in which we have no grief or pain; so that the word, employed as we now employ it, seems to affirm that indulgence in sloth and ease is that which would constitute for us the absence of all pain. Now it may be quite true that “pain” and “pains” are often nearly allied; no one would wish to deny this; but yet these pains hand us over to true pleasures; while indolence is so far from yielding what it is so forward to promise, and we with our slothful self-indulgent hearts are so ready to expect, that Cowper spoke only truth when, perhaps purposing expressly to witness against the falsehood of this word, he spoke of

Lives spent in indolence, and therefore sad,

not “therefore glad,” as the word would promise.

Let me mention another method in which these studies which I have been urging upon you may be turned to account in your future work. Doubtless you will ever seek to cherish in your scholars, to keep lively in yourselves, that spirit and temper which attach a special value and interest to all having to do with the land of our birth, that land which the providence of God has assigned as the sphere of our life’s work and of theirs. Our schools are called “national,” and if we would have them such more than in name we must neglect nothing that will assist us in fostering a national spirit in them. I know not whether this is sufficiently considered among us, yet certainly we cannot have Church schools worthy the name, and least of all in England, unless they are truly national as well. It is the anti-national
character of the Romish system, though I do not in the least separate this from its anti-scriptural, but rather regard the two as most intimately cohering with one another, which mainly revolts Englishmen; as we have lately very plainly seen; and if their sense of this should ever grow weak, their protest against that system would soon lose nearly all of its energy and strength. Now here, as everywhere else, knowledge must be the food of love. Your pupils must know something about England, if they are to love it; they must see some connexion of its past with its present, of what it has been with what it now is, if they are to feel that past as anything to them.

And as no impresses of the past upon the present are so abiding, so none, when once attention has been awakened to them, are so self-evident as those which names preserve; although, without this calling of the attention to them, the most broad and obvious of these footprints of time may very probably continue to escape our observation to the end of our lives. Leibnitz tells us, and one can quite understand, the delight with which a great German emperor, Maximilian the First, discovered that "Habsburg," the ancestral name of his house, really had a meaning, one moreover full of vigour and poetry. This he did when he heard it by accident on the lips of a Swiss peasant, no longer cut short and thus disguised, but in its original fulness, "Habichtsburg," or "Hawk's Tower," being no doubt the name of the castle which was the cradle of his race. Of all the thousands of Englishmen who are aware that the Angles and Saxons established themselves in this island, and that we are in the main descended from them, it would be curious to know how many have realised to themselves that this "England" means "Angle-land," or that in the names "Essex," "Sussex," and "Middlesex," we preserve a record to this day of East Saxons, South Saxons, and Middle Saxons, who occupied those several portions of the land; or that "Norfolk" and "Suffolk" are two broad divisions of "northern" and "southern folk," into which the East Anglian kingdom was divided. I cannot but believe that these Angles and Saxons, about whom our pupils may be reading, will be to them more like actual men of flesh and blood, who indeed trod this same soil which we are treading now, when we can thus point to the traces of them surviving to the present day, which they have left behind them, and which England, as long as it is England, will retain.

And then as regards the Danes—all of us who are at all
acquainted with the early history of our land will be aware how much Danish blood there is in the veins of Englishmen; what large colonies from Scandinavia (for probably as many came from Norway as from modern Denmark) settled in some parts of this island. It will be interesting to show that the limits of this Danish settlement and occupation may even now be confidently traced by the frequent occurrence in all such districts of the names of towns and villages ending in “bye,” which word signified in their language, “town,” as Netherby, Appleby, Derby. Thus if you examine closely a map of Lincolnshire, one of the chief seats, as is well known, of Danish immigration, you will find that well-nigh a fourth part of the towns and villages have this ending; the whole coast is indeed studded with them; while here in Hampshire it is utterly unknown.

Who that has seen London from one of its bridges, with that magnificent forest of masts stretching down the river, or that has only heard of its commerce, but would learn with interest that “London,” according to the most probable etymology, is a name formed out of two Celtic words, and means, “City of ships”? Such a prophecy of the future greatness of the great commercial capital of England and of the world lay from the very first in the name which it bore; not to say that this name indicates that from earliest times, before a Roman had set his foot upon the soil, the wonderfully advantageous position of London for commerce had been discovered and improved.

You are yourselves learning, or hereafter you may be teaching others, the names and number of the English counties or shires. What a dull routine task for them and for you this may be, tasking the memory, but supplying no food for the intellect, no points of attachment for any of its higher powers to take hold of. And yet in these two little words “shire” and “county,” if you would make them render up even a small part of their treasure, what lessons of English history are contained. One who knows the origin of these names, and how we come to possess such a double nomenclature, looks far into the social condition of England in that period when the rudimental germs of all that has since made it glorious and great were being laid, and by these words may excellently show how the present links itself on with the remotest past; how of a land, as of a person, it may be truly said, “the child is father of the man.” “Shire,” as I observed just now, is connected with “shear,” “share,” and is properly a portion “sheared” or “shorn” off. When a Saxon king would create an earl, it did not lie in men’s thoughts,
accustomed as then they were to deal with realities, that such could be, as now it may, a merely titular creation, or could exist without territorial jurisdiction; and a "share" or "shire" was assigned him to govern, which also gave him his title. But at the Conquest this Saxon officer was displaced by a Norman, the "earl" by the "count"—this title of "count," borrowed from the later Roman Empire, meaning originally "companion," (comes), one who had the honour of being closest companion to his leader; and the "shire" was now the "county" (comitatus) as governed by this "comes." In that singular and inexplicable fortune of words, which causes some to disappear and die out under the circumstances most favourable for life, others to hold their ground when all seemed against them, "count" has disappeared from the titles of English nobility, while "earl" has recovered its place; although, in evidence of the essential identity of the two titles, or offices rather, the wife of the earl is entitled a "countess;" and in further memorial of these great changes that so long ago came over our land, the two names "shire" and "county" equally survive as household and in the main interchangeable words in our mouths.

Let us a little consider, in conclusion, how we may usefully bring our etymologies and our other notices of words to bear on the religious teaching which we would impart in our schools. To do this with much profit we must often deal with words as the queen does with the gold and silver coin of the realm. When this has been current long, and by much use and often passing from man to man, with perhaps occasional clipping in dishonest hands, has quite lost the clear brightness, the well-defined sharpness of outline, and a good part of the weight and intrinsic value which it had when first issued from the royal mint, it is the sovereign's prerogative to recall it, and issue it anew, with her image stamped on it afresh, bright and sharp, weighty and full as at first. Now to a process such as this the true mint-masters of language will often submit the words which they use; and something of this kind we all of us may do. Where use and custom have worn away the significance of words, we too may recall and issue them afresh. And this has been the case with how many; for example, with a word which will be often in your mouths—the "lessons" of the day. What is "lessons" here for most of us but a lazy synonym for the morning and evening chapters appointed to be read in church? But realise the word "lessons," and what the Church intended in calling these chapters by this name; namely,
that they are to be the daily instruction of her children. Listen
to them as such; address yourselves to their explanation in the
spirit of this word; make your pupils regard them in this light;
show them that, using this name in regard of them, they affirm
them to be such, to be not in word only but in truth, daily
“lessons” for every one.

The “Bible” itself—with no irreverent use of the word, it
may yet be no more to us than the sign by which we designate
the written word of God. But if we ask ourselves what the word
means, and know that it means simply “The Book,” so that
there was a time when “bible” in English would be applied
to any book (in Chaucer it is so), then how much matter of
thought and reflection is here, and in this our present restriction
of the word to one book, to the exclusion of all others. So pre­
vailing, that is, has been the sense of Holy Scripture being the
Book, the worthiest and best, that one which explained all other
books, standing up in their midst—like Joseph’s kingly sheaf,
to which all the other sheaves did obeisance—that this name
of “Bible” or “Book ” has come to be restricted to it alone; just
as “Scripture” means no more than “Writing;” but this inspired
Writing has been felt to be so far above all other writings, that
this name also it has challenged as exclusively its own.

You will present, I think, to your pupils the Collects which
they learn from Sunday to Sunday under a more interesting
aspect, when you have taught them that they probably are so
called because they “collect,” as into a focus, the teaching of
the Epistle and Gospel, gathering them up into a single petition;
and from this you may profitably exercise them in tracing the
bond of relation which thus will be found ever to exist between
the Collect, and the Epistle and Gospel which follow it. And I
am sure there is much to be learned from knowing that the
“surname,” as distinguished from the Christian name, is the
name over and above, not the “sire”-name, or name received
from the father, but “sur”-name (super nomen)—that, while
there never was a time when every baptised man had not a
Christian name, inasmuch as his personality before God was
recognised, yet the surname, the name expressing a man’s
relation, not to the kingdom of God, but to the worldly society
in which he lives, is only of a much later growth, an addition to
the other, as the word itself declares. And what a lesson at once
in the upgrowth of human society, and in the contrast between
it and the heavenly society, might be appended to this explana-
tion. There was a period when only a few had surnames, only a
few, that is, had any significance or importance in the order of things temporal; while the Christian name from the first was common to every man. Surely this may be brought usefully to bear on your exposition of the first words in the Catechism.

And then further, in regard of the long Latin words, which with all our desire to use all plainness of speech, we yet cannot do without, nor find their adequate substitutes in the other parts of our language, but which must remain the vehicles of so much of the truth by which we live—in explaining these, make it, I would say, your rule always to start, where you can, from the derivation, and to return to that as often as you can. Thus you have before you the word “revelation.” How great a matter, if you can attach some distinct image to the word, and one to which your scholars, as often as they hear the word, may mentally recur. Nor is this impossible. God’s revelation of Himself is the drawing back of the veil or curtain which concealed Him from men; not man finding out God, but God declaring or discovering Himself to man; all which lies plainly in the word. Or you have the word “absolution;” many will know that it has something to do with the pardon of sins; but in how much more lively a way, to say the least, will they know this, when they know that “to absolve” means “to loosen from;” God’s “absolution” of men is his releasing of them from the bands of sin with which they were tied and bound. Here every one will connect a distinct image with the word, one that will always come to his help when he would realise what its actual meaning is. That which was done for Lazarus naturally, the Lord saying in regard of him, “Loose him, and let him go,” the same is done spiritually for us when we receive the “absolution” of our sins.

Many words more suggest themselves; 1 but only one more I

1 Several of the following I had marked down, while sketching out these lectures, with the intention of using them therein; but from lack of space, or from one cause or another, have not employed them. They contain, I believe, every one of them, in their derivation or their use, or in both, something that will make it worth your pains to acquaint yourselves with them; either some fact of history, some custom of past times, some truth of the moral or spiritual world, some lively and impressive image, or other noticeable circumstance about them. In most cases Richardson’s Dictionary, the only one from which I can promise you effectual help, for it is the only English one in which etymology assumes the dignity of a science, will put you in the right position for judging why the word has been suggested to you. The words, to which many others might easily be added, are these: affable, anthem, bachelor, barbarous, belief, caricature, casuistry, civility, civilisation, clerk, constable, convivial, courtesy, cynical, danger, delirium, devotion, dispute, dissipation, enthusiasm, epicure, fanatic, feudal, fortnight, frugality, gazette, generous,
will bring forward; and that one, because we shall find in it a
lesson more for ourselves than for others, and it is with such an
one I would fain bring these lectures to a close. How important,
I would observe then, is the truth which we express in the
naming of our work in this world our “vocation,” or, which
is the same finding utterance in homelier Anglo-Saxon, our
“calling.” What a calming, elevating, solemnising view of the
tasks which we find ourselves set in this world to do, this word
would give us, if we did but realise it to the full. We did not
come to our work by accident; we did not choose it for ourselves;
but, under much which may wear the appearance of accident
and self-choosing, came to it by God’s leading and appointment.
What a help is this thought to enable us to appreciate justly
the dignity of our work, though it were far humbler work, even
in eyes of men, than that of any one of us present! What an
assistance in calming unsettled thoughts and desires, such as
would make us wish to be something else than that which we
are! What a source of confidence, when we are tempted to lose
heart, and to doubt whether we shall be able to carry through
our work with any blessing or profit to ourselves or to others!
It is our “vocation,” our “calling;” and He who “called” us
to it, will fit us for it, and strengthen us in it.

genius, gentleman, gossip, habit, heresy, history, homage, husbandry,
hypocrite, iniquity, integrity, intoxication, knight, legend, livery, maxims,
mercy, misunderstanding, mountebank, naughtiness, novel, obligation,
peers, physician, plaguary, polite, politics, precarious, prerogative, pre
varicate, prodigy, profane, prose, rebellion, recreant, refinement, reflection,
religion, reprobate, reputation, right, salary, sedition, speculation, stationer,
stoic, superstition, sycophant, thraldom, tragedy, transgression, university,
urbane, verse, villainy, wassail, worship.
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**SYNONYMS—**
- Abdicate, desert
- Abhor, detest, hate
- Antic, antique
- Apprehend, comprehend
- Arrogant, insolent, presumptuous
- Astrology, astronomy
- Benefice, benefit
- Bloom, blossom
- Charity, love
- Cloke, palliate
- Compulsion, obligation
- Congratulate, felicitate
- Contrary, opposite
- Courtesy, courtesy
- Despair, diffidence
- Divers, diverse
- Discover, invent
- Education, instruction
- Enthusiasm, fanaticism
- Fancy, imagination
- Gamble, gambol
- Human, humane
- Illegible, unreadable
- Ingenious, ingenuous
- Interference, interposition
- Nave, ship
- Nay, no
- News, noise
- Penna, pinna
- Revenge, vengeance
- Thrax, Threx
- Vindicta, ultio
- Yea, yes
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ENGLISH
PAST AND PRESENT
PREFACE TO THE FIRST EDITION

A series of four lectures which I delivered last spring to the pupils of King's College School, London, supplied the foundation to this present volume. These lectures, which I was obliged to prepare in haste, on a brief invitation, and under the pressure of other engagements, being subsequently enlarged and recast, were delivered in the autumn somewhat more nearly in their present shape to the pupils of the Training School, Winchester; with only those alterations, omissions and additions, which the difference in my hearers suggested as necessary or desirable. I have found it convenient to keep the lectures, as regards the persons presumed to be addressed, in that earlier form which I had sketched out at the first; and, inasmuch as it helps much to keep lectures vivid and real that one should have some well-defined audience, if not actually before one, yet before the mind's eye, to suppose myself throughout addressing my first hearers. I have supposed myself, that is, addressing a body of young Englishmen, all with a fair amount of classical knowledge (in my explanations I have sometimes had others with less than theirs in my eye), not wholly unacquainted with modern languages; but not yet with any special designation as to their future work; having only as yet marked out to them the duty in general of living lives worthy of those who have England for their native country, and English for their native tongue. To lead such through a more intimate knowledge of this into a greater love of that, has been a principal aim which I have set before myself throughout.

In a few places I have been obliged again to go over ground which I had before gone over in a little book, On the Study of Words; but I believe that I have never merely repeated myself, nor given to the readers of my former work and now of this any right to complain that I am compelling them to travel a second time by the same paths. At least it has been my endeavour, whenever I have found myself at points where the two books come necessarily into contact, that what was treated with any fulness before, should be here touched on more lightly; and only what there was slightly handled, should here be entered on at large.

Itchenstoke, February 7, 1855.
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"A very slight acquaintance with the history of our own language will teach us that the speech of Chaucer's age is not the speech of Skelton's, that there is a great difference between the language under Elizabeth and that under Charles the First, between that under Charles the First and Charles the Second, between that under Charles the Second and Queen Anne; that considerable changes had taken place between the beginning and the middle of the last century, and that Johnson and Fielding did not write altogether as we do now. For in the course of a nation's progress new ideas are evermore mounting above the horizon, while others are lost sight of and sink below it; others again change their form and aspect; others which seemed united, split into parts. And as it is with ideas, so it is with their symbols, words. New ones are perpetually coined to meet the demand of an advanced understanding, of new feelings that have sprung out of the decay of old ones, of ideas that have shot forth from the summit of the tree of our knowledge; old words meanwhile fall into disuse and become obsolete; others have their meaning narrowed and defined; synonyms diverge from each other, and their property is parted between them; nay, whole classes of words will now and then be thrown overboard, as new feelings or perceptions of analogy gain ground. A history of the language in which all these vicissitudes should be pointed out, in which the introduction of every new word should be noted, so far as it is possible—and much may be done in this way by laborious and diligent and judicious research—in which such words as have become obsolete should be followed down to their final extinction, in which all the most
remarkable words should be traced through their successive phases of meaning, and in which moreover the causes and occasions of these changes should be explained, such a work would not only abound in entertainment, but would throw more light on the development of the human mind than all the brainspun systems of metaphysics that ever were written."

These words, which thus far are not my own, but the words of a greatly honoured friend and teacher, who, though we behold him now no more, still teaches, and will teach, by the wisdom of his writings, and the nobleness of his life (they are words of Archdeacon Hare's), I have put in the forefront of my lectures; seeing that they anticipate in the way of masterly sketch all which I shall attempt to accomplish, and indeed draw out the lines of much more, to which I shall not venture so much as to put my hand. They are the more welcome to me, because they encourage me to believe that if, in choosing the English language, its past and its present, as the subject of that brief course of lectures which I am to deliver in this place, I have chosen a subject which in many ways transcends my powers, and lies beyond the range of my knowledge, it is yet one in itself of deepest interest, and of fully recognised value. Nor can I refrain from hoping that even with my imperfect handling, it is an argument which will find an answer and an echo in the hearts of all who hear me; which would have found this at any time; which will do so especially at the present. For these are times which naturally rouse into liveliest activity all our latent affections for the land of our birth. It is one of the compensations, indeed the greatest of all, for the wastefulness, the woe, the cruel losses of war, that it causes and indeed compels a people to know itself a people; leading each one to esteem and prize most that which he has in common with his fellow-countrymen, and not now any longer those things which separate and divide him from them.

And the love of our own language, what is it in fact but the love of our country expressing itself in one particular direction? If the great acts of that nation to which we belong are precious to us, if we feel ourselves made greater by their greatness, summoned to a nobler life by the nobleness of Englishmen who have already lived and died, and have bequeathed to us a name which must not by us be made less, what exploits of theirs can well be nobler, what can more clearly point out their native land

1 These lectures were first delivered during the Crimean War.
and ours as having fulfilled a glorious past, as being destined for a glorious future, than that they should have acquired for themselves and for those who come after them a clear, a strong, an harmonious, a noble language? For all this bears witness to corresponding merits in those that speak it, to clearness of mental vision, to strength, to harmony, to nobleness in them that have gradually formed and shaped it to be the utterance of their inmost life and being.

To know of this language, the stages which it has gone through, the sources from which its riches have been derived, the gains which it is now making, the perils which have threatened or are threatening it, the losses which it has sustained, the capacities which may be yet latent in it, waiting to be evoked, the points in which it transcends other tongues, in which it comes short of them, all this may well be the object of worthy ambition to every one of us. So may we hope to be ourselves guardians of its purity, and not corrupters of it; to introduce, it may be, others into an intelligent knowledge of that with which we shall have ourselves more than a merely superficial acquaintance; to bequeath it to those who come after us not worse than we received it ourselves. "Spartam nactus es; hanc exorna,"—this should be our motto in respect at once of our country, and of our country’s tongue.

Nor shall we, I trust, any of us feel this subject to be alien or remote from the purposes which have brought us to study within these walls. It is true that we are mainly occupied here in studying other tongues than our own. The time we bestow upon it is small as compared with that bestowed on those others. And yet one of our main purposes in learning them is that we may better understand this. Nor ought any other to dispute with it the first and foremost place in our reverence, our gratitude, and our love. It has been well and worthily said by an illustrious German scholar: "The care of the national language I consider as at all times a sacred trust and a most important privilege of the higher orders of society. Every man of education should make it the object of his unceasing concern, to preserve his language pure and entire, to speak it, so far as is in his power, in all its beauty and perfection . . . A nation whose language becomes rude and barbarous, must be on the brink of barbarism in regard to everything else. A nation which allows her language to go to ruin, is parting with the last half of her intellectual independence, and testifies her willingness to cease to exist." ¹

¹ F. Schlegel, History of Literature, Lecture 10.
But this knowledge, like all other knowledge which is worth attaining, is only to be attained at the price of labour and pains. The language which at this day we speak is the result of processes which have been going forward for hundreds and for thousands of years. Nay more, it is not too much to affirm that processes modifying the English which at the present day we write and speak, have been at work from the first day that man, being gifted with discourse of reason, projected his thought from out himself, and embodied and contemplated it in his word. Which things being so, if we would understand this language as it now is, we must know something of it as it has been; we must be able to measure, however roughly, the forces which have been at work upon it, moulding and shaping it into the forms which it now wears.

At the same time various prudential considerations must determine for us how far up we will endeavour to trace the course of its history. There are those who may seek to trace our language to the forests of Germany and Scandinavia, to investigate its relation to all the kindred tongues that were there spoken; again, to follow it up, till it and they are seen descending from an elder stock; nor once to pause till they have assigned to it its place not merely in respect of that small group of languages which are immediately round it, but in respect of all the tongues and languages of the earth. I can imagine few studies of a more surpassing interest than this. Others, however, must be content with seeking such insight into their native language as may be within the reach of all who, unable to make this the subject of especial research, possessing neither that vast compass of knowledge, nor that immense apparatus of books, not being at liberty to dedicate to it that devotion almost of a life which, followed out to the full, it would require, have yet an intelligent interest in their mother tongue, and desire to learn as much of its growth and history and construction as may be reasonably deemed within their reach. To such as these I shall suppose myself to be speaking. It would be a piece of great presumption in me to undertake to speak to any other, or to assume any other ground than this for myself.

I know there are some who, when they are invited to enter at all upon the past history of the language, are inclined to make answer—"To what end such studies to us? Why cannot we leave them to a few antiquaries and grammarians? Sufficient to us to know the laws of our present English, to obtain an accurate acquaintance with the language as we now find it,
A COMPOSITE LANGUAGE

without concerning ourselves with the phases through which it has previously past.” This may sound plausible enough; and I can quite understand a real lover of his native tongue, who has not bestowed much thought upon the subject, arguing in this manner. And yet indeed such argument proceeds altogether on a mistake. One sufficient reason why we should occupy ourselves with the past of our language is, because the present is only intelligible in the light of the past, often of a very remote past indeed. There are anomalies out of number now existing in our language, which the pure logic of grammar is quite incapable of explaining; which nothing but a knowledge of its historic evolutions, and of the disturbing forces which have made themselves felt therein, will ever enable us to understand. Even as, again, unless we possess some knowledge of the past, it is impossible that we can ourselves advance a single step in the unfolding of the latent capabilities of the language, without the danger of committing some barbarous violation of its very primary laws.

The plan which I have laid down for myself, and to which I shall adhere, in this lecture and in those which will succeed it, is as follows. In this my first lecture I will ask you to consider the language as now it is, to decompose with me some specimens of it, to prove by these means of what elements it is compact, and what functions in it these elements or component parts severally fulfil; nor shall I leave this subject without asking you to admire the happy marriage in our tongue of the languages of the north and south, an advantage which it alone among all the languages of Europe enjoys. Having thus presented to ourselves the body which we wish to submit to scrutiny, and having become acquainted, however slightly, with its composition, I shall invite you to go back with me, and trace some of the leading changes to which in time past it has been submitted, and through which it has arrived at what it now is; and these changes I shall contemplate under four aspects, dedicating a lecture to each—changes which have resulted from the birth of new, or the reception of foreign, words—changes consequent on the rejection or extinction of words or powers once possessed by the language—changes through the altered meaning of words—and lastly, as not unworthy of our attention, but often growing out of very deep roots, changes in the orthography of words.

I shall everywhere seek to bring the subject down to our present time, and not merely call your attention to the changes
which have been, but to those also which are now being, effected. I shall not account the fact that some are going on, so to speak, before our own eyes, a sufficient ground to excuse me from noticing them, but rather an additional reason for doing this. For indeed changes which are actually proceeding in our own time, and which we are ourselves helping to bring about, are the very ones which we are most likely to fail in observing. There is so much to hide the nature of them, and indeed their very existence, that, except it may be by a very few, they will often pass wholly unobserved. Loud and sudden revolutions attract and compel notice; but silent and gradual, although with issues far vaster in store, run their course, and it is only when their cycle is completed, or nearly so, that men perceive what mighty transforming forces have been at work unnoticed in the very midst of themselves.

Thus, to apply what I have just affirmed to this matter of language—how few aged persons, let them retain the fullest possession of their faculties, are conscious of any difference between the spoken language of their early youth, and that of their old age; that words and ways of using words are obsolete now, which were usual then; that many words are current now, which had no existence at that time. And yet it is certain that so it must be. A man may fairly be supposed to remember clearly and well for sixty years back; and it needs less than five of these sixties to bring us to the period of Spenser, and not more than eight to set us in the time of Chaucer and Wiclif. How great a change, what vast modifications in our language, within eight memories. No one, contemplating this whole term, will deny the immensity of the change. For all this, we may be tolerably sure that, had it been possible to interrogate a series of eight persons, such as together had filled up this time, intelligent men, but men whose attention had not been especially roused to this subject, each in his turn would have denied that there had been any change worth speaking of, perhaps any change at all, during his lifetime. And yet, having regard to the multitude of words which have fallen into disuse during these four or five hundred years, we are sure that there must have been some lives in this chain which saw those words in use at their commencement, and out of use before their close. And so too, of the multitude of words which have sprung up in this period, some, nay, a vast number, must have come into being within the limits of each of these lives. It cannot then be superfluous to direct attention to that which is actually going forward in our language.
It is indeed that which of all is most likely to be unobserved by us.

With these preliminary remarks I proceed at once to the special subject of my lecture of to-day. And first, starting from the recognised fact that the English is not a simple but a composite language, made up of several elements, as are the people who speak it, I would suggest to you the profit and instruction which we might derive from seeking to resolve it into its component parts—from taking, that is, any passage of an English author, distributing the words of which it is made up according to the languages from which they are drawn; estimating the relative numbers and proportions which these languages have severally lent us; as well as the character of the words which they have thrown into the common stock of our tongue.

Thus, suppose the English language to be divided into a hundred parts; of these, to make a rough distribution, sixty would be Saxon; thirty would be Latin (including of course the Latin which has come to us through the French); five would be Greek. We should thus have assigned ninety-five parts, leaving the other five, perhaps too large a residue, to be divided among all the other languages from which we have adopted isolated words. And yet these are not few; from our wide-extended colonial empire we come in contact with half the world; we have picked up words in every quarter, and, the English language possessing a singular power of incorporating foreign elements into itself, have not scrupled to make many of these our own.

Thus we have a certain number of Hebrew words, mostly, if not entirely, belonging to religious matters, as “amen,” “cabala,” “cherub,” “ephod,” “gehenna,” “hallelujah,” “hosanna,” “jubilee,” “leviathan,” “manna,” “Messiah,” “sabbath,” “Satan,” “seraph,” “shibboleth,” “talmud.” The Arabic words in our language are more numerous; we have several arithmetical and astronomical terms, as “algebra,” “almanach,” “azimuth,” “cypher,” “nadir,” “talisman,” “zenith,” “zero;” and chemical, for the Arabs were the chemists, no less than the astronomers and arithmeticians of the middle ages, as “alcohol,” “alembic,” “alkali,” “elixir.” Add to these the names of animals, plants, fruits, or articles of merchandise first introduced by them to the notice of Western Europe; as “amber,” “artichoke,” “barragan,” “camphor,” “coffee,” “cotton,” “crimson,” “gazelle,” “giraffe,” “jar,” “jasmin,”

* Yet see J. Grimm, *Deutsche Mythologie*, p. 985.

The New World has given us a certain number of words, Indian and other—"cacique" ("cassiqui" in Raleigh’s Guiana), "canoo," "chocolate," "cocoa," "condor," "hamoc" ("hamaca" in Raleigh), "jalap," "lama," "maize" (Haytian), "pampas," "pemmican," "potato" ("batata" in our earlier voyagers), "raccoon," "sachem," "squaw," "tobacco," "tomahawk," "tomata" (Mexican), "wigwam." If "hurricane" is a word which Europe originally obtained from the Caribbean islanders, it should of course be included in this list. A certain number of words also we have received, one by one, from various languages, which sometimes have not bestowed on us more than this single one. Thus "hussar" is Hungarian, "caloyer," Romaic; "mammoth," of some Siberian language; "tattoo," Polynesian; "steppe," Tartarian; "sago," "bamboo," "rattan," "orang-"
outang," are all, I believe, Malay words; "assegai," "zebra," "chimpanzee," "fetisch," belong to different African dialects; the last, however, having reached Europe through the channel of the Portuguese.


2 Not in our dictionaries; but a kind of coasting vessel well known to seafaring men, the Spanish "urca"; thus in Oldys' Life of Raleigh: "Their galleons, galleasses, galleys, urcas, and zabras were miserably shattered."
"platina," "poncho," "punctilio" (for a long time spelt "punti­lio" in English books), "quinine," "reformado," "savannah," "serenade," "sherry," "stampede," "stoccado," "strappado," "tornado," "vanilla," "verandah." "Buffalo" also is Spanish; "buff" or "buffle" being the proper English word; "caprice" too we probably obtained rather from Spain than Italy, as we find it written "capricho" by those who used it first. Other Spanish words, once familiar, are now extinct. "Punctilio" lives on, but not "punto," which occurs in Bacon. "Privado," signi­fying a prince's favourite, one admitted to his privacy (no uncommon word in Jeremy Taylor and Fuller), has quite dis­appeared; so too has "quirpo" (cuerpo), the name given to a jacket fitting close to the body; "quello" (cuello), a ruff or neck­ collar; and "matachin," the title of a sword-dance; these are all frequent in our early dramatists; and "flota" was the constant name of the treasure-­feet from the Indies. "Intermess" is em­ployed by Evelyn, and is the Spanish "entremes," though not recognised as such in our dictionaries. "Mandarin" and "mar­malade" are our only Portuguese words I can call to mind. A good many of our sea-terms are Dutch, as "sloop," "schooner," "yacht," "boom," "skipper," "tafferel," "to smuggle;" "to wear," in the sense of veer, as when we say "to wear a ship;" "skates," too, and "stiver" are Dutch. Celtic things are for the most part designated among us by Celtic words; such as "bard," "kilt," "clan," "pibroch," "plaid," "reel." Nor only such as these, which are all of them comparatively of modern introduc­tion, but a considerable number, how large a number is yet a very unsettled question, of words which at a much earlier date found admission into our tongue, are derived from this quarter.

Now, of course, I have no right to presume that any among us are equipped with that knowledge of other tongues which shall enable us to detect of ourselves and at once the nationality of all or most of the words which we may meet—some of them greatly disguised, and having undergone manifold transforma­tions in the process of their adoption among us; but only that we have such helps at command in the shape of dictionaries and the like, and so much diligence in their use, as will enable us to discover the quarter from which the words we may encounter have reached us; and I will confidently say that few studies of the kind will be more fruitful, will suggest more various matter of reflection, will more lead you into the secrets of the English tongue, than an analysis of a certain number of passages drawn from different authors, such as I have just now proposed. For
this analysis you will take some passage of English verse or prose—say the first ten lines of *Paradise Lost*—or the Lord’s Prayer—or the 23rd Psalm; you will distribute the whole body of words contained in that passage, of course not omitting the smallest, according to their nationalities—writing, it may be, A over every Anglo-Saxon word, L over every Latin, and so on with the others, if any other should occur in the portion which you have submitted to this examination. When this is done, you will count up the number of those which each language contributes; again, you will note the character of the words derived from each quarter.

Yet here, before I pass further, I would observe in respect of those which come from the Latin, that it will be desirable further to mark whether they are directly from it, and such might be marked L₁, or only mediateley from it, and to us directly from the French, which would be L₂, or L at second-hand—our English word being only in the second generation descended from the Latin, not the child, but the child’s child. There is a rule that holds pretty constantly good, by which you may determine this point. It is this—that if a word be directly from the Latin, it will not have undergone any alteration or modification in its form and shape, save only in the termination—“innocentia” will have become “innocency,” “natio” will have become “nation,” “firmamentum” “firmament,” but nothing more. On the other hand, if it comes through the French, it will generally be considerably altered in its passage. It will have undergone a process of lubrication; its sharply defined Latin outline will in good part have departed from it; thus “crown” is from “corona,” but through “couronne,” and itself a disyllable, “coroune,” in our earlier English; “treasure” is from “thesaurus,” but through “trésor;” “emperor” is the Latin “imperator,” but it was first “empereur.” It will often happen that the substantive has past through this process, having reached us through the intervention of the French; while we have only felt at a later period our want of the adjective also, which we have proceeded to borrow direct from the Latin. Thus “people” is indeed “populus,” but it was “peuple” first, while “popular” is a direct transfer of a Latin vocable into our English glossary. So too “enemy” is “inimicus,” but it was first softened in the French, and had its Latin physiognomy to a great degree obliterated, while “inimical” is Latin throughout; “parish” is “paroisse,” but “parochial” is “parochialis;” “chapter” is “chapitre,” but “capitular” is “capitularis.”
Sometimes you will find in English what I may call the double adoption of a Latin word; which now makes part of our vocabulary in two shapes; "doppelgängers" the Germans would call such words. There is first the elder word, which the French has given us; but which, before it gave, it had fashioned and moulded, cutting it short, it may be, by a syllable or more, for the French devours letters and syllables; and there is the later word which we borrowed immediately from the Latin. I will mention a few examples: "secure" and "sure," both from "securus," but one directly, the other through the French; "fidelity" and "fealty," both from "fidelitas," but one directly, the other at second-hand; "species" and "spice," both from "species," spices being properly only kinds of aromatic drugs; "blaspheme" and "blame," both from "blasphemare," 1 but "blame" immediately from "blâmer." Add to these "granary" and "garner;" "captain" (capitaneus) and "chieftain;" "tradition" and "trenson;" "abyss" and "abysm;" "regal" and "royal;" "legal" and "loyal;" "cadence" and "chance;" "balsam" and "balm;" "hospital" and "hotel;" "digit" and "doit;" "pagan" and "paynim;" "captive" and "caitiff;" "persecute" and "pursue;" "superficies" and "surface;" "faction" and "fashion;" "particle" and "parcel;" "redemption" and "ransom;" "probe" and "prove;" "abbreviate" and "abridge;" "dormitory" and "dortoir" or "dorter" (this last now obsolete, but not uncommon in Jeremy Taylor); "desiderate" and "desire;" "fact" and "feat;" "major" and "mayor;" "radius" and "ray;" "pauper" and "poor;" "potion" and "poison;" "ration" and "reason;" "oration" and "orison." 2 I have, in the instancing of these, named always the Latin form before the French; but the reverse I suppose in every instance is the order in which the words were adopted

1 This particular instance of double adoption, of "dimorphism" as Latham calls it, "dittology" as Heyse, recurs in Italian, "bestemmiare" and "biasimare;" and in Spanish, "blasfemar" and "lastimar."

2 Somewhat different from this, yet also itself curious, is the passing of an Anglo-Saxon word in two different forms into English, and continuing in both; thus "desk" and "dish," both the Anglo-Saxon "disc," the German "tisch;" "beech" and "book," both the Anglo-Saxon "boc," our first books being beechen tablets (see Grimm, Wörterbuch, s. vv. "Buch," "Buche"); "girdle" and "kirtle," both of them corresponding to the German "giirtel," already in Anglo-Saxon a double spelling, "gyrdel," "cyrtel," had prepared for the double words; so too "haunch" and "hinge;" "lady" and "lofty;" "shirt" and "skirt;" "black" and "bleak;" "pond" and "pound;" "deck" and "thatch;" "deal" and "dole;" "weald" and "wood;" "dew" and "thaw;" "wayward" and "awkward;" "dune" and "down;" "hood" and "hat;" "ghost" and "gust;" "evil" and "ill;" "mouth" and "moth;" "hedge" and "hay."
by us; we had “pursue” before “persecute,” “spice” before “species,” “royalty” before “regality,” and so with the others.¹

The explanation of this greater change which the earlier form of the word has undergone, is not far to seek. Words which have been introduced into a language at an early period, when as yet writing is rare, and books are few or none, when therefore orthography is unfixed, or being purely phonetic, cannot properly be said to exist at all, such words for a long while live orally on the lips of men, before they are set down in writing; and out of this fact it is that we shall for the most part find them reshaped and remoulded by the people who have adopted them, entirely assimilated to their language in form and termination, so as in a little while to be almost or quite indistinguishable from natives. On the other hand a most effectual check to this process, a process sometimes barbarising and defacing, however it may be the only one which will make the newly brought in entirely homogeneous with the old and already existing, is imposed by the existence of a much written language and a full formed literature. The foreign word, being once adopted into these, can no longer undergo a thorough transformation. For the most part the utmost which use and familiarity can do with it now, is to cause the gradual dropping of the foreign termination. Yet this too is not unimportant; it often goes far to making a home for a word, and hindering it from wearing the appearance of a foreigner and stranger.²

¹ We have in the same way double adoptions from the Greek, one direct, at least as regards the forms; one modified by its passage through some other language; thus, “adamant” and “diamond;” “monastery” and “minister;” “scandal” and “slander;” “theria” and “treacle;” “asphodel” and “daffodil;” “presbytery” and “priest.”

² The French itself has also a double adoption, or as perhaps we should more accurately call it there, a double formation, from the Latin, and such as quite bears out what has been said above; one going far back in the history of the language, the other belonging to a later and more literary period; on which subject there are some admirable remarks by Génin, Recreations Philologiques, vol. i. pp. 162-166; and see Fuchs, Die Roman Spracken, p. 125. Thus from “seperare” is derived “sevrer,” to separate the child from its mother’s breast, to wean, but also “separer,” without this special sense; from “pastor,” “pâtre,” a shepherd in the literal, and “pasteur” the same in a tropical, sense; from “catena,” “chaîne” and “cadène;” from “fragilis,” “frêle” and “fragile;” from “pensa,” “penser” and “pensier;” from “gêne,” “gêne” and “gêhenne;” from “captivus,” “châtif” and “captif;” from “nativus,” “nâl” and “natif;” from “designare,” “dessiner” and “désigner;” from “decimare,” “dîner” and “décimer;” from “consumere,” “consommer” and “consumer;” from “simulare,” “sembler” and “simuler;” from the low Latin “dissejumare,” “dîner” and “déjeuner;” from “acceptare,” “acheter” and “accepter;” from “homo,” “on” and “homme;” from “paganus,” “payen” and “paysan;” from “obedientia,” “obéissance” and “obédi-
But to return from this digression—I said just now that you would learn very much from observing and calculating the proportions in which the words of one descent and those of another occur in any passage which you analyse. Thus examine the Lord’s Prayer. It consists of exactly seventy words. You will find that only the following six claim the rights of Latin citizenship—“trespasses,” “trespass,” “temptation,” “deliver,” “power,” “glory.” Nor would it be very difficult to substitute for any one of these a Saxon word. Thus for “trespasses” might be substituted “sins;” for “deliver” “free;” for “power” “might;” for “glory” “brightness;” which would only leave “temptation” about which there could be the slightest difficulty, and “trials,” though we now ascribe to the word a somewhat different sense, would in fact exactly correspond to it. This is but a small percentage, six words in seventy, or less than ten in the hundred; and we often light upon a still smaller proportion. Thus take the first three verses of the 23rd Psalm—“The Lord is my Shepherd; therefore can I lack nothing; He shall feed me in a green pasture, and lead me forth beside the waters of comfort; He shall convert my soul, and bring me forth in the paths of righteousness for His Name’s sake.” Here are forty-five words, and only the three in italics are Latin; and for every one of these too it would be easy to substitute a word of Saxon origin; little more, that is, than the proportion of seven in the hundred; while, still stronger than this, in five verses out of Genesis, containing one hundred and thirty words, there are only five not Saxon, less, that is, than four in the hundred.

Shall we therefore conclude that these are the proportions in which the Anglo-Saxon and Latin elements of the language stand to one another? If they are so, then my former proposal to express their relations by sixty and thirty was greatly at fault; and seventy and twenty, or even eighty and ten, would fall short of adequately representing the real predominance of the Saxon over the Latin element of the language. But it is not so; the Anglo-Saxon words by no means outnumber the Latin in the degree which the analysis of those passages would seem to indicate;” from “strictus,” “étroit” and “strict;” from “sacramentum,” “serment” and “sacrament;” from “ministerium,” “mètiers” and “minis-tère;” from “parabola,” “parole” and “parabole;” from “peregrinus,” “pelerin” and “périgrin;” from “factio,” “façon” and “faction,” and it has now adopted “factio” in a third shape, that is, in our English “fashion;” from “pietas,” “piété” and “pieté;” from “capitulum,” “chapitre” and “capitule,” a botanical term. So, too, in Italian, “manco,” maimed, and “monco,” maimed of a hand; “rifiutáre,” to refuse, and “rifutáre,” to refuse; “dama” and “donna,” both forms of “domina.”
to imply. It is not that there are so many more Anglo-Saxon words, but that the words which there are, being words of more primary necessity, do therefore so much more frequently recur. The proportions which the analysis of the dictionary, that is, of the language at rest, would furnish, are very different from these which I have just instanced, and which the analysis of sentences, or of the language in motion, gives. Thus if we examine the total vocabulary of the English Bible, not more than sixty per cent. of the words are native; such are the results which the Concordance gives; but in the actual translation the native words are from ninety in some passages to ninety-six in others per cent.¹

The notice of this fact will lead us to some very important conclusions as to the character of the words which the Saxon and the Latin severally furnish; and principally to this—that while the English language is thus compact in the main of these two elements, we must not for all this regard these two as making, one and the other, exactly the same kind of contributions to it. On the contrary their contributions are of very different character. The Anglo-Saxon is not so much, as I have just called it, one element of the English language, as the foundation of it, the basis. All its joints, its whole articulation, its sinews and its ligaments, the great body of articles, pronouns, conjunctions, prepositions, numerals, auxiliary verbs, all smaller words which serve to knit together and bind the larger into sentences, these, not to speak of the grammatical structure of the language, are exclusively Saxon. The Latin may contribute its tale of bricks, yea, of goodly and polished hewn stones, to the spiritual building; but the mortar, with all that holds and binds the different parts of it together, and constitutes them into a house, is Saxon throughout. I remember Selden in his Table Talk using another comparison, but to the same effect: “If you look upon the language spoken in the Saxon time, and the language spoken now, you will find the difference to be just as if a man had a cloak which he wore plain in Queen Elizabeth's days, and since, here has put in a piece of red, and there a piece of blue, and here a piece of green, and there a piece of orange-tawny. We borrow words from the French, Italian, Latin, as every pedantic man pleases.”

I believe this to be the law which holds good in respect of all composite languages. However composite they may be, yet they are only so in regard of their words. There may be a medley in

respect of these, some coming from one quarter, some from another; but there is never a mixture of grammatical forms and inflections. One or other language entirely predominates here, and everything has to conform and subordinate itself to the laws of this ruling and ascendant language. The Anglo-Saxon is the ruling language in our present English. Thus while it has thought good to drop its genders, even so the French substantives which come among us, must also leave theirs behind them; as in like manner the French verbs must renounce their own conjugations, and adapt themselves to ours. I believe that a remarkable parallel to this might be found in the language of Persia, since the conquest of that country by the Arabs. The ancient Persian religion fell with the government, but the language remained totally unaffected by the revolution, in its grammatical structure and character. Arabic vocables, the only exotic words found in Persian, are found in numbers varying with the object and quality, style and taste of the writers, but pages of pure idiomatic Persian may be written without employing a single word from the Arabic.

At the same time the secondary or superinduced language, even while it is quite unable to force any of its forms on the language which receives its words, may yet compel that to renounce a portion of its own forms, by the impossibility which is practically found to exist of making them fit the new-comers; and thus it may exert, although not a positive, yet a negative, influence on the grammar of the other tongue. It has been so, as is generally admitted, in the instance of our own. "When the English language was inundated by a vast influx of French words, few, if any, French forms were received into its grammar; but the Saxon forms soon dropped away, because they did not suit the new roots; and the genius of the language, from having to deal with the newly imported words in a rude state, was induced to neglect the inflections of the native ones. This for instance led to the introduction of the as the universal termination of all plural nouns, which agreed with the usage of the French language, and was not alien from that of the Saxon, but was merely an extension of the termination of the ancient masculine to other classes of nouns." 2

If you wish to convince yourselves by actual experience of the fact which I just now asserted, namely, that the radical

1 W. Schlegel (Indische Bibliothek, vol. i. p. 284): "Coempt quemquam pae­latim in novum corpus peregrina vocabula, sed grammatica linguerum, unde petitae sunt, ratio petit."

constitution of the language is Saxon, I would say, Try to compose a sentence, let it be only of ten or a dozen words, and the subject entirely of your choice, employing therein only words which are of a Latin derivation. I venture to say you will find it impossible, or next to impossible, to do it; whichever way you turn, some obstacle will meet you in the face. And while it is thus with the Latin, whole pages might be written, I do not say in philosophy or theology or upon any abstruser subject, but on familiar matters of common everyday life, in which every word should be of Saxon extraction, not one of Latin; and these, pages in which, with the exercise of a little patience and ingenuity, all appearance of awkwardness and constraint should be avoided, so that it should never occur to the reader, unless otherwise informed, that the writer had submitted himself to this restraint and limitation in the words which he employed, and was only drawing them from one section of the English language. Sir Thomas Browne has given several long paragraphs so constructed. Take for instance the following, which is only a little fragment of one of them: "The first and foremost step to all good works is the dread and fear of the Lord of heaven and earth, which through the Holy Ghost enlighteneth the blindness of our sinful hearts to tread the ways of wisdom, and lead our feet into the land of blessing." ¹ This is not stiffer than the ordinary English of his time. I would suggest to you at your leisure to make these two experiments; you will find it, I think, exactly as I have here affirmed.

While thus I bring before you the fact that it would be quite possible to write English, foregoing altogether the use of the Latin portion of the language, I would not have you therefore to conclude that this portion of the language is of little value, or that we could draw from the resources of our Teutonic tongue efficient substitutes for all the words which it has contributed to our glossary. I am persuaded that we could not; and, if we could, that it would not be desirable. I mention this because there is sometimes a regret expressed that we have not kept our language more free from the admixture of Latin, a suggestion made that we should even now endeavour to keep under the Latin element of it, and as little as possible avail ourselves of it. I remember Lord Brougham urging upon the students at Glasgow as a help to writing good English, that they should do their best to rid their diction of long-tailed words in "osity" and "ation." He plainly intended to indicate by this phrase all learned Latin

This exhortation is by no means superfluous; for doubtless there were writers of a former age, Samuel Johnson in the last century, Henry More and Sir Thomas Browne in the century preceding, who gave undue preponderance to the learned, or Latin, portion in our language; and very much of its charm, of its homely strength and beauty, of its most popular and truest idioms, would have perished from it, had they succeeded in persuading others to write as they had written.

But for all this we could almost as ill spare this side of the language as the other. It represents and supplies needs not less real than the other does. Philosophy and science and the arts of a high civilisation find their utterance in the Latin words of our language, or, if not in the Latin, in the Greek, which for present purposes may be grouped with them. How should they have found utterance in the speech of rude tribes, which, never having cultivated the things, must needs have been without the words which should express those things. Granting too that, ceteris paribus, when a Latin and a Saxon word offer themselves to our choice, we shall generally do best to employ the Saxon, to speak of “happiness” rather than “felicity,” “almighty” rather than “omnipotent,” a “forerunner” rather than a “precursor,” still these latter must be regarded as much denizens in the language as the former, no alien interlopers, but possessing the rights of citizenship as fully as the most Saxon word of them all. One part of the language is not to be favoured at the expense of the other; the Saxon at the cost of the Latin, as little as the Latin at the cost of the Saxon. “Both are indispensable; and speaking generally without stopping to distinguish as to subject, both are equally indispensable. Pathos, in situations which are homely, or at all connected with domestic affections, naturally moves by Saxon words. Lyrical emotion of every kind, which (to merit the name of lyrical) must be in the state of flux and reflux, or, generally, of agitation, also requires the Saxon element of our language. And why? Because the Saxon is the aboriginal element; the basis and not the superstructure: consequently it comprehends all the ideas which are natural to the heart of man and to the elementary situations of life. And although the Latin often furnishes us with duplicates of these ideas, yet the Saxon, or monosyllabic part, has the advantage of precedence in our use and knowledge; for it is the language of the nursery whether for rich or poor, in which great philological academy no toleration is given to words in ‘osity’ or ‘ation.’ There is therefore a great
advantage, as regards the consecration to our feelings, settled by usage and custom upon the Saxon strands in the mixed yarn of our native tongue. And universally, this may be remarked—that wherever the passion of a poem is of that sort which uses, presumes, or postulates the ideas, without seeking to extend them, Saxon will be the 'cocoon' (to speak by the language applied to silk-worms) which the poem spins for itself. But on the other hand, where the motion of the feeling is by and through the ideas, where (as in religious or meditative poetry—Young's, for instance, or Cowper's) the pathos creeps and kindles underneath the very tissues of the thinking, there the Latin will predominate; and so much so that, whilst the flesh, the blood, and the muscle, will be often almost exclusively Latin, the articulations only, or hinges of connection, will be Anglo-Saxon."

These words which I have just quoted are De Quincey's—whom I must needs esteem the greatest living master of our English tongue. And on the same matter Sir Francis Palgrave has expressed himself thus: "Upon the languages of Teutonic origin the Latin has exercised great influence, but most energetically on our own. The very early admixture of the Langue d'Oïl, the never interrupted employment of the French as the language of education, and the nomenclature created by the scientific and literary cultivation of advancing and civilised society, have Romanised our speech; the warp may be Anglo-Saxon, but the woof is Roman as well as the embroidery, and these foreign materials have so entered into the texture, that were they plucked out, the web would be torn to rags, unravelled and destroyed."  

I do not know where we could find a happier example of the preservation of the golden mean in this matter than in our Authorised Version of the Bible. One of the chief among the minor and secondary blessings which that Version has conferred on the nation or nations drawing spiritual life from it—a blessing not small in itself, but only small by comparison with the infinitely higher blessings whereof it is the vehicle to them,—is the happy wisdom, the instinctive tact, with which its authors have steered between any futile mischievous attempt to ignore the full rights of the Latin part of the language on the one side, and on the other any burdening of their Version with such a multitude of learned Latin terms as should cause it to forfeit its homely character, and shut up large portions of it from the understanding of plain and unlearned men. There is a

1 History of Normandy and England, vol. i. p. 78.
remarkable confession to this effect, to the wisdom, in fact, which
guided them from above, to the providence that overruled their
work, an honourable acknowledgment of the immense superiority
in this respect of our English Version over the Romish, made by
one now, unhappily, familiar with the latter, as once he was
with our own. Among those who have recently abandoned the
communion of the English Church one has express himself
in deeply touching tones of lamentation over all, which in
renouncing our translation, he feels himself to have foregone
and lost. These are his words: "Who will not say that the un­
common beauty and marvellous English of the Protestant Bible
is not one of the great strongholds of heresy in this country? It
lives on the ear, like a music that can never be forgotten, like
the sound of church bells, which the convert hardly knows how
he can forego. Its felicities often seem to be almost things rather
than mere words. It is part of the national mind, and the anchor
of national seriousness. . . . The memory of the dead passes
into it. The potent traditions of childhood are stereotyped in
its verses. The power of all the griefs and trials of a man is
hidden beneath its words. It is the representative of his best
moments, and all that there has been about him of soft and gentle
and pure and penitent and good speaks to him for ever out of
his English Bible. . . . It is his sacred thing, which doubt has
never dimmed, and controversy never soiled. In the length and
breadth of the land there is not a Protestant with one spark of
religiousness about him, whose spiritual biography is not in his
Saxon Bible."¹

Such are his touching words; and certainly one has only to
compare this version of ours with the Rhemish, and the tran­
scendent excellence of our own reveals itself at once. I am not
extolling now its superior scholarship; its greater freedom from
by-ends; as little would I urge the fact that one translation is
from the original Greek, the other from the Latin Vulgate, and
thus the translation of a translation, often reproducing the
mistakes of that translation; but, putting aside all considerations
such as these, I speak only here of the superiority of the diction
in which the meaning, be it correct or incorrect, is conveyed to
English readers. Thus I open the Rhemish version at Galatians v.
19, where the long list of the "works of the flesh," and of the
"fruit of the Spirit," is given. But what could a mere English
reader make of words such as these—"impudicity," "ebrieties,"
"comissions," "longanimity," all which occur in that pas-

¹Newman: Dublin Review, June 1853.
sage? while our Version for “ebrieties” has “drunkenness,” for “comissions” has “revellings,” and so also for “longan­imity” “longsuffering.” Or set over against one another such phrases as these—in the Rhemish, “the exemplars of the celestials” (Heb. ix. 23), but in ours, “the patterns of things in the heavens.” Or suppose if, instead of the words which we read at Heb. xiii. 16, namely, “To do good and to communicate forget not; for with such sacrifices God is well pleased,” we read as follows, which are the words of the Rhemish, “Beneficence and communication do not forget; for with such hosts God is promerited”—Who does not feel that if our Version had been composed in such Latin-English as this, had abounded in words like “odible,” “suasible,” “exinanite,” “contristate,” “postulations,” “coinquinations,” “agnition,” “zealatour,” all, with many more of the same mint, in the Rhemish Version, our loss would have been great and enduring, one which would have searched into the whole religious life of our people, and been felt in the very depths of the national mind? ¹

There was indeed something still deeper, than love of sound and genuine English at work in our translators, whether they were conscious of it or not, which hindered them from presenting the Scriptures to their fellow-countrymen dressed out in such a semi-Latin garb as this. The Reformation, which they were in this translation so mightily strengthening and confirming, was just a throwing off, on the part of the Teutonic nations, of that everlasting pupilage in which Rome would have held them; an assertion at length that they were come to full age, and that not through her, but directly through Christ, they would address themselves unto God. The use of the Latin language as the language of worship, as the language in which the Scriptures might alone be read, had been the great badge of servitude, even as the Latin habits of thought and feeling which it promoted had been the great helps to the continuance of this servitude, through long ages. It lay deep then in the very nature of their cause that the Reformers should develop the Saxon, or essentially national, element in the language; while it was just as natural that the Roman Catholic translators, if they must translate the Scriptures into English at all, should yet translate them into such English as should bear the nearest possible resemblance to the Latin Vulgate, which Rome with a very deep wisdom of this world would gladly have seen as the only one in the hands of the faithful.

¹ There is more on this matter in my book On the Authorised Version of the New Testament, pp. 33-35.
Let me again, however, recur to the fact that what our Reformers did in this matter, they did without exaggeration; even as they had shown the same wise moderation in still higher matters. They gave to the Latin side of the language its rights, though they would not suffer it to encroach upon and usurp those of the Teutonic part of the language. It would be difficult not to believe, even if many outward signs said not the same, that great things are in store for the one language of Europe which thus serves as connecting link between the North and the South, between the languages spoken by the Teutonic nations of the North and by the Romance nations of the South; which holds on to and partakes of both; which is as a middle term between them. There are who venture to hope that the English Church, being in like manner double-fronted, looking on the one side toward Rome, being herself truly Catholic, looking on the other toward the Protestant communions, being herself also protesting and reforming, may yet in the providence of God have an important part to play for the reconciling of a divided Christendom. And if this ever should be so, if, notwithstanding our sins and unworthiness, so blessed a task should be in store for her, it will not be a small help and assistance thereunto, that the language in which her mediation will be effected is one wherein both parties may claim their own, in which neither will feel that it is receiving the adjudication of a stranger, of one who must be an alien from its deeper thoughts and habits, because an alien from its words, but a language in which both must recognise very much of that which is deepest and most precious of their own.

Nor is this prerogative which I have just claimed for our English the mere dream and fancy of patriotic vanity. The scholar who in our days is most profoundly acquainted with the great group of the Gothic languages in Europe, and a devoted lover, if ever there was such, of his native German, I mean Jacob Grimm, has expressed himself very nearly to the same effect, and given the palm over all to our English in words which you will not grudge to hear quoted, and with which I shall bring this lecture to a close. After ascribing to our language "a veritable power of expression, such as perhaps never stood at the command of any other language of men," he goes on to say, "Its highly spiritual genius, and wonderfully happy development

and condition, have been the result of a surprisingly intimate union of the two noblest languages in modern Europe, the Teutonic and the Romance.—It is well known in what relation these two stand to one another in the English tongue; the former supplying in far larger proportion the material groundwork, the latter the spiritual conceptions. In truth the English language, which by no mere accident has produced and upheld the greatest and most predominant poet of modern times, as distinguished from the ancient classical poetry (I can, of course, only mean Shakespeare), may with all right be called a world-language; and, like the English people, appears destined hereafter to prevail with a sway more extensive even than its present over all the portions of the globe.¹ For in wealth, good sense, and closeness of structure no other of the languages at this day spoken deserves to be compared with it—not even our German, which is torn, even as we are torn, and must first rid itself of many defects, before it can enter boldly into the lists as a competitor with the English.”²

¹A little more than two centuries ago a poet, himself abundantly deserving the title of “well-languaged,” which a cotemporary or near successor gave him, ventured in some remarkable lines timidly to anticipate this. Speaking of his native tongue, which he himself wrote with such vigour and purity, though wanting in the fiery impulses which go to the making of a first-rate poet, Daniel exclaims:

“And who, in time, knows whither we may vent
The treasure of our tongue, to what strange shores
This gain of our best glory shall be sent,
To enrich unknowing nations with our stores?
What worlds in the yet unformed Occident
May come refined with the accents that are ours?
Or who can tell for what great work in hand
The greatness of our style is now ordained?
What powers it shall bring in, what spirits command,
What thoughts let out, what humours keep restrained,
What mischief it may powerfully withstand,
And what fair ends may thereby be attained?”

²Ueber den Ursprung der Sprache, Berlin, 1832, p. 50.
LECTURE II

GAINS OF THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE

It is not for nothing that we speak of some languages as living, of others as dead. All spoken languages may be ranged in the first class; for as men will never consent to use a language without more or less modifying it in their use, will never so far forego their own activity as to leave it exactly where they found it, it will therefore, so long as it is thus the utterance of human thought and feeling, inevitably show itself alive by many infallible proofs, by motion, growth, acquisition, loss, progress, and decay. A living language therefore is one which abundantly deserves this name; for it is one in which, spoken as it is by living men, a vital formative energy is still at work. It is one which is in course of actual evolution, which, if the life that animates it be a healthy one, is appropriating and assimilating to itself what it anywhere finds congenial to its own life, multiplying its resources, increasing its wealth; while at the same time it is casting off useless and cumbersome forms, dismissing from its vocabulary words of which it finds no use, rejecting from itself by a reactive energy the foreign and heterogeneous which may for a while have been forced upon it. I would not assert that in the process of all this it does not make mistakes; in the desire to simplify it may let go distinctions which were not useless, and which it would have been better to retain; the acquisitions which it makes are very far from being all gains; it sometimes rejects words as worthless, or suffers words to die out, which were most worthy to have lived. So far as it does this its life is not perfectly healthy; there are here signs, however remote, of disorganisation, decay, and ultimate death; but still it lives, and even these misgrowths and malformations, the rejection of this good, the taking up into itself of that ill, all these errors are themselves the utterances and evidences of life. A dead language is the contrary of all this. It is dead, because books, and not now any generation of living men, are the guardians of it, and what they guard, they guard without
change. Its course has been completely run, and it is now equally incapable of gaining and of losing. We may come to know it better; but in itself it is not, and never can be, other than it was when it ceased from the lips of men.

Our own is, of course, a living language still. It is therefore gaining and losing. It is a tree in which the vital sap is circulating yet, ascending from the roots into the branches; and as this works, new leaves are continually being put forth by it, old are dying and dropping away. I propose for the subject of my present lecture to consider some of the evidences of this life at work in it still. As I took for the subject of my first lecture the actual proportions in which the several elements of our composite English are now found in it, and the service which they were severally called on to perform, so I shall consider in this the sources from which the English language has enriched its vocabulary, the periods at which it has made the chief additions to this, the character of the additions which at different periods it has made, and the motives which induced it to seek them.

I had occasion to mention in that lecture, and indeed I dwelt with some emphasis on the fact, that the core, the radical constitution of our language, is Anglo-Saxon; so that, composite or mingled as it must freely be allowed to be, it is only such in respect to words, not in respect of construction, inflexions, or generally its grammatical forms. These are all of one piece; and whatever of new has come in has been compelled to conform itself to these. The framework is English; only a part of the filling in is otherwise; and of this filling in, of these its comparatively more recent accessions, I now propose to speak.

The first great augmentation by foreign words of our Saxon vocabulary, setting aside those which the Danes brought us, was a consequence, although not an immediate one, of the battle of Hastings, and of the Norman domination which Duke William's victory established in our land. And here let me say in respect of that victory, in contradiction to the sentimental regrets of Thierry and others, and with the fullest acknowledgment of the immediate miseries which it entailed on the Saxon race, that it was really the making of England; a judgment, it is true, but a judgment and mercy in one. God never showed more plainly that He had great things in store for the people which should occupy this English soil, than when He brought hither that aspiring Norman race. At the same time the actual interpenetration of our Anglo-Saxon with any large amount of
French words did not find place till very considerably later than this event, however it was a consequence of it. Some French words we find very soon after; but in the main the two streams of language continued for a long while separate and apart, even as the two nations remained aloof, a conquering and a conquered, and neither forgetting the fact.

Time however softened the mutual antipathies. The Norman, after a while shut out from France, began more and more to feel that England was his home and sphere. The Saxon, recovering little by little from the extreme depression which had ensued on his defeat, became every day a more important element of the new English nation which was gradually forming from the coalition of the two races. His language partook of his elevation. It was no longer the badge of inferiority. French was no longer the only language in which a gentleman could speak, or a poet sing. At the same time the Saxon, now passing into the English language, required a vast addition to its vocabulary, if it were to serve all the needs of those who were willing to employ it now. How much was there of high culture, how many of the arts of life, of its refined pleasures, which had been strange to Saxon men, and had therefore found no utterance in Saxon words. All this it was sought to supply from the French.

We shall not err, I think, if we assume the great period of the incoming of French words into the English language to have been when the Norman nobility were exchanging their own language for the English; and I should be disposed with Tyrwhitt to believe that there is much exaggeration in attributing the large influx of these into English to one man’s influence, namely to Chaucer’s.1 Doubtless he did much; he fell in with and furthered a tendency which already prevailed. But to suppose that the majority of French vocables which he employed in his poems had never been employed before, had been hitherto unfamilier to English ears, is to suppose that his poems must have presented to his contemporaries an absurd patchwork of two languages, and leaves it impossible to explain how he should at once have become the popular poet of our nation.

1 Thus Alexander Gil, headmaster of St. Paul’s School, in his book, Logonomia Anglica, 1621, Preface: “Huc usque peregrinas voces in lingua Anglicâ inauditâ. Tandem circa annum 1400 Galfridus Chaucerus, infausto omine, vocabulis Gallicis et Latinis poësin suam famosam reddidit.” The whole passage, which is too long to quote, as indeed the whole book, is curious. Gil was an earnest advocate of phonetic spelling, and has adopted it in all his English quotations in this book.
That Chaucer largely developed the language in this direction is indeed plain. We have only to compare his English with that of another great master of the tongue, his contemporary Wiclif, to perceive how much more his diction is saturated with French words than is that of the Reformer. We may note too that many which he and others employed, and as it were proposed for admission, were not finally allowed and received; so that no doubt they went beyond the needs of the language, and were here in excess. At the same time this can be regarded as no condemnation of their attempt. It was only by actual experience that it could be proved whether the language wanted those words or not, whether it could absorb them into itself, and assimilate them with all that it already was and had; or did not require, and would therefore in due time reject and put them away. And what happened then will happen in every attempt to transplant on a large scale the words of one language into another. Some will take root; others will not, but after a longer or briefer period will wither and die. Thus I observe in Chaucer such French words as these, “misericorde,” “malure” (malheur), “penible,” “ayel” (aieul), “tas,” “gipon,” “pierrie” (precious stones); none of which, and Wiclif’s “creansur” (2 Kings iv. 1) as little, have permanently won a place in our tongue. For a long time “mel,” used often by Sylvester, struggled hard for a place in the language side by side with honey; “roy” side by side with king; this last quite obtained one in Scotch. It is curious to mark some of these French adoptions keeping their ground to a comparatively late day, and yet finally extruded: seeming to have taken firm root, they have yet withered away in the end. Thus has it been, for example, with “egal” (Puttenham); with “ouvert,” “mot,” “ecurie,” “baston,” “gite” (Holland); with “rivage,” “jouissance,” “noblesse,” “tort” (= wrong), “accoil” (accueillir), “sell” (= saddle), all occurring in Spenser; with “to serr” (serrer), “vive,” “reglement,” used all by Bacon; and so with “esperance,” “orgillous” (orgueil-leux), “rondeur,” “scrimer” (= fencer), all in Shakespeare;

1 We may observe exactly the same in Plautus; a multitude of Greek words are used by him which the Latin language did not want, and therefore refused to take up; thus “clepta,” “zamia” (ζυμία), “danista,” “harpagare,” “apolaictizare,” “naucerus,” “strategus,” “morologus,” “phylaca,” “malacus,” “sycophantia,” “euschene” (εὐσχήμον), “dulice” (δολίκωα) [so “scymnus” by Lucretius], none of which, I believe, are employed except by him; “mastiagias” and “techna” appear also in Terence. Yet only experience could show that they were superfluous; and at the epoch of Latin literature in which Plautus lived, it was well done to put them on trial.
with “amort” (this also in Shakespeare), and “avie” (Holland), “Maugre,” “congie,” “devoir,” “dimes,” “sans,” and “bruit,” used often in our Bible, were English once; when we employ them now, it is with the sense that we are using foreign words. The same is true of “dulce,” “aigredoulce” (= sour sweet), of “mur” for wall, of “baine” for bath, of the verb “to cass” (all in Holland), of “volupty” (Sir Thomas Elyot), “volunty” (Evelyn), “medisance” (Montague), “petit” (South), “aveugle,” “colline” (both in State Papers), and “eloign” (Hacket).

We have seen when the great influx of French words took place—that is, from the time of the Conquest, although scantily and feebly at the first, to that of Chaucer. But with him our literature and language had made a burst, which they were not able to maintain. He has by Warton been well compared to some warm bright day in the very early spring, which seems to say that the winter is over and gone; but its promise is deceitful; the full bursting and blossoming of the springtime are yet far off. That struggle with France which began so gloriously, but ended so disastrously, even with the loss of our whole ill-won dominion there, the savagery of our wars of the Roses, wars which were a legacy bequeathed to us by that unrighteous conquest, leave a huge gap in our literary history, nearly a century during which very little was done for the cultivation of our native tongue, during which it could have made few important accessions to its wealth.

The period however is notable as being that during which for the first time we received a large accession of Latin words. There was indeed already a small settlement of these, for the most part ecclesiastical, which had long since found their home in the bosom of the Anglo-Saxon itself, and had been entirely incorporated into it. The fact that we had received our Christianity from Rome, and that Latin was the constant language of the Church, sufficiently explains the incoming of these. Such were “monk,” “bishop” (I put them in their present shapes, and do not concern myself whether they were originally Greek or no; they reached us as Latin), “provost,” “minster,” “cloister,” “candle,” “psalter,” “mass,” and the names of certain foreign animals, as “camel,” or plants or other productions, as “pepper.”

1 Let me here observe once for all that in adding the name of an author, which I shall often do, to a word, I do not mean to affirm the word in any way peculiar to him; although in some cases it may be so; but only to give one authority for its use.
"fig;" which are all become, with slightly different orthography, Anglo-Saxon words. These, however, were entirely exceptional, and stood to the main body of the language not as the Romance element of it does now to the Gothic, one power over against another, but as the Spanish or Italian or Arabic words in it now stand to the whole present body of the language—and could not be affirmed to affect it more.

So soon however as French words were imported largely, as I have just observed, into the language, and were found to coalesce kindly with the native growths, this very speedily suggested, as indeed it alone rendered possible, the going straight to the Latin, and drawing directly from it; and thus in the hundred years which followed Chaucer a large amount of Latin found its way, if not into our speech, yet at all events into our books—words which were not brought through the French, for they are not, and have not at any time been, French, but yet words which would never have been introduced into English, if their way had not been prepared, if the French already domesticated among us had not bridged over, as it were, the gulf, that would have otherwise been too wide between them and the Saxon vocables of our tongue.

In this period, a period of great depression of the national spirit, we may trace the attempt at a pedantic latinisation of English quite as clearly at work as at later periods, subsequent to the revival of learning. It was now that a crop of such words as "facundious," "tenebrous," "solacious," "pulcritude," "consuetude" (all these occur in Hawes), with many more, long since rejected by the language, sprung up; while other words, good in themselves, and which have been since allowed, were yet employed in numbers quite out of proportion with the Saxon vocables with which they were mingled, and which they altogether overtopped and overshadowed. Chaucer's hearty English feeling, his thorough sympathy with the people, the fact that, scholar as he was, he was yet the poet not of books but of life, and drew his best inspiration from life, all this had kept him, in the main, clear of this fault. But in others it is very manifest. Thus I must esteem the diction of Lydgate, Hawes, and the other versifiers who filled up the period between Chaucer and Surrey, immensely inferior to Chaucer's; being all stuck over with long and often ill-selected Latin words. The worst offenders in this line, as Campbell himself admits, were the Scotch poets of the fifteenth century. "The prevailing fault," he says, "of English diction, in the fifteenth century,
is redundant ornament, and an affectation of anglicising Latin words. In this pedantry and use of 'aureate terms' the Scottish versifiers went even beyond their brethren of the south. . . . When they meant to be eloquent, they tore up words from the Latin, which never took root in the language, like children making a mock garden with flowers and branches stuck in the ground, which speedily wither." 1

To few indeed is the wisdom and discretion given, certainly it was given to none of those, to bear themselves in this hazardous enterprise according to the rules laid down by Dryden; who in the following admirable passage declares the motives that induced him to seek for foreign words, and the considerations that guided him in their selection: "If sounding words are not of our growth and manufacture, who shall hinder me to import them from a foreign country? I carry not out the treasure of the nation which is never to return, but what I bring from Italy I spend in England. Here it remains and here it circulates, for, if the coin be good, it will pass from one hand to another. I trade both with the living and the dead, for the enrichment of our native language. We have enough in England to supply our necessity, but if we will have things of magnificence and splendour, we must get them by commerce. Poetry requires adornment, and that is not to be had from our old Teuton monosyllables; therefore if I find any elegant word in a classic author, I propose it to be naturalised by using it myself; and if the public approves of it, the bill passes. But every man cannot distinguish betwixt pedantry and poetry: every man therefore is not fit to innovate. Upon the whole matter a poet must first be certain that the word he would introduce is beautiful in the Latin; and is to consider in the next place whether it will agree with the English idiom: after this, he ought to take the opinion of judicious friends, such as are learned in both languages; and lastly, since no man is infallible, let him use this licence very sparingly; for if too many foreign words are poured in upon us, it looks as if they were designed not to assist the natives, but to conquer them." 2

But this tendency to latinise our speech was likely to receive, and actually did receive, a new impulse from the revival of learning, and the familiar re-acquaintance with the great masterpieces of ancient literature which went along with this revival. Happily another movement accompanied, or at least followed

1 Essay on English Poetry, p. 93.
2 Dedication of the translation of the Aeneid.
hard on this; a movement in England essentially national; and which stirred our people at far deeper depths of their moral and spiritual life than any mere revival of learning could have ever done; I refer, of course, to the Reformation. It was only among the Germanic nations of Europe, as has often been remarked, that the Reformation struck lasting roots; it found its strength therefore in the Teutonic element of the national character, which also it in its turn further strengthened, purified, and called out. And thus, though Latin came in upon us now faster than ever, and in a certain measure also Greek, yet this was not without its redress and counterpoise, in the cotemporaneous unfolding of the more fundamentally popular side of the language. Popular preaching and discussion, the necessity of dealing with truths the most transcendent in a way to be understood not by scholars only, but by "idiots" as well, all this served to evoke the native resources of our tongue; and thus the relative proportion between the one part of the language and the other was not dangerously disturbed, the balance was not destroyed; as it might well have been, if only the Humanists had been at work, and not the Reformers as well.

The revival of learning, which made itself first felt in Italy, extended to England, and was operative here, during the reigns of Henry the Eighth and his immediate successors. Having thus slightly anticipated in time, it afterwards ran exactly parallel with, the period during which our Reformation was working itself out. The epoch was in all respects one of immense mental and moral activity, and such never leave the language of a nation where they found it. Much is changed in it; much probably added; for the old garment of speech, which once served all needs, has grown too narrow, and serves them now no more. "Change in language is not, as in many natural products, continuous; it is not equable, but eminently by fits and starts;" and when the foundations of the national mind are heaving under the power of some new truth, greater and more important changes will find place in fifty years than in two centuries of calmer or more stagnant existence. Thus the activities and energies which the Reformation awakened among us here, and I need not tell you that these reached far beyond the domain of our directly religious life, caused mighty alterations in the English tongue.¹

¹ We have notable evidence in some lines of Waller of the sense which in his time scholars had of the rapidity with which the language was changing under their hands. Looking back at what the last hundred years had wrought of alteration in it, and very naturally assuming that the next
For example, the Reformation had its scholarly, we might say its scholastic, as well as its popular, aspect. Add this fact to the fact of the revived interest in classical learning, and you will not wonder that a stream of Latin, now larger than ever, began to flow into our language. Thus Puttenham, writing in Queen Elizabeth's reign,\(^1\) gives a long list of words which, as he declares, had been quite recently introduced into the language. Some of them are Greek, a few French and Italian, but very far the most are Latin. I will not give you his whole catalogue, but some specimens from it; it is difficult to understand concerning some of these, how the language should have managed to do without them so long: "method," "methodical," "function," "numerous," "penetrate," "penetrable," "indignity," "savage," "scientific," "delineation," "dimension"—all which he notes to have recently come up; so too "idiom," "significative," "compendious," "prolix," "figurative," "impression," "inveigle," "metrical." All these he adduces with praise; others upon which he bestows equal commendation have not held their ground, as "placation," "numerosity," "harmonical." Of those neologies which he disallowed, he only anticipated in some cases, as in "facundity," "implete," "attemptat" ("attentat"), the decision of a later day; other words which he condemned no less, as "audacious," "compatible," "egregious," have maintained their ground. These too have done the same: "despicable," "destruction," "homicide," "obsequious," "ponderous," "portentous," "prodigious," all of them by another hundred would effect as much, be checked with misgivings such as these his own hope of immortality:

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"Who can hope his lines should long
Last in a daily changing tongue?
While they are new, envy prevails,
And as that dies, our language fails.
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Poets that lasting marble seek,
Must carve in Latin or in Greek:
We write in sand; our language grows,
And like the tide our work o'erflows."

Such were his misgivings as to the future, assuming that the rate of change would continue what it had been. How little they have been fulfilled, every one knows. In actual fact two centuries which have elapsed since he wrote, have hardly antiquated a word or a phrase in his poems. If we care very little for them now, this is to be explained by quite other causes—by the absence of all moral earnestness from them.

It is curious to observe the "words of art," as he calls them, which Philemon Holland, a voluminous translator at the end of the sixteenth and beginning of the seventeenth century, counts it needful to explain in a sort of glossary which he appends to his translation of Pliny's Natural History. One can hardly at the present day understand how any person who would care to consult the book at all would find any difficulty with words like the following: "acrimony," "austere," "bulb," "consolidate," "debility," "dose," "ingredient," "opiate," "propitious," "symptom," all which, however, as novelties he carefully explains. Some of the words in his glossary, it is true, are harder and more technical than these; but a vast proportion of them present no greater difficulty than those which I have adduced.

1 London, 1601. Besides this work Holland translated the whole of Plutarch's Moralia, the Cyropædia of Xenophon, Livy, Suetonius, Ammianus Marcellinus, and Camden's Britannia. His works make a part of the "library of dullness" in Pope's Dunciad:

"De Lyra there a dreadful front extends,
And here the groaning shelves Philemon bends"—

very unjustly; the authors whom he has translated are all more or less important, and his versions of them a mine of genuine idiomatic English, neglected by most of our lexicographers, wrought to a considerable extent and with eminent advantage by Richardson; yet capable, as it seems to me, of yielding much more than they hitherto have yielded.

2 And so too in French it is surprising to find of how late introduction are many words, which it seems as if the language could never have done without. "Désintéressement," "exactitude," "sagacité," "bravoure," were not introduced till late in the seventeenth century. "Renaissance," "emportement," "savoir-faire," "indélébile," "désagrément," were all recent in 1675 (Bouhours); "inévéot," "intolérance," "impassable," "irréligieux," were struggling into allowance at the end of the seventeenth century, and were not established till the beginning of the eighteenth. "Insidieux" was invented by Malherbe; "frivolité" does not appear in the earlier editions of the Dictionary of the Academy; the Abbé de St. Pierre was the first to employ "bienfaissance," the elder Balzac "féliciter," Sarrasin "burlesque." Mad. de Sévigné exclaims against her daughter for employing "effervescence" in a letter ("comment dites-vous cela, ma fille? Voilà un mot dont je n'avais jamais oui parler"); "Demagogue" was first hazarded by Bossuet, and was counted so bold a novelty that it was long before any ventured to follow him in its use. Somewhat earlier Montaigne had introduced "diversion" and "enfantillage," though not without being rebuked by contemporaries on the score of the last. Desfontaines was the first who employed "suicide;" Caron gave to the language "avant-propos," Rousard "avidité," Joachim Dubelbay "patrie," Denis Sauvage "jurisconsulte," Ménage "gracieux" (at least so Voltaire affirms) and "proxateur," Desportes "pudeur," Chapelin "urbanité," and Etienne first brought in, apologising at the same time for the boldness of it, "analogie" ("si les oreilles françaises peuvent porter ce mot"). "Préliber" (préalibare) is a word of our own day; and it was Charles Nodier who, if he did not coin, yet revived the obsolete "simplesse."—See Genin, Variations du Langage Francais, pp. 308-319.
The period during which this naturalisation of Latin words in the English language was going actively forward, may be said to have continued till about the Restoration of Charles the Second. It first received a check from the coming up of French tastes, fashions, and habits of thought consequent on that event. The writers already formed before that period, such as Cudworth and Barrow, still continued to write their stately sentences, Latin in structure, and Latin in diction, but not so those of a younger generation. We may say of this influx of Latin that it left the language vastly more copious, with greatly enlarged capabilities, but perhaps somewhat burdened, and not always able to move gracefully under the weight of its new acquisitions; for as Dryden has somewhere truly said, it is easy enough to acquire foreign words, but to know what to do with them after you have acquired, is the difficulty.

It might have received indeed most serious injury, if all the words which the great writers of this second Latin period of our language employed, and so proposed as candidates for admission into it, had received the stamp of popular allowance. But happily it was not so; it was here, as it had been before with the French importations, and with the earlier Latin of Lydgate and Occleve. The reactive powers of the language, enabling it to throw off that which was foreign to it, did not fail to display themselves now, as they had done on former occasions. The number of unsuccessful candidates for admission into, and permanent naturalisation in, the language during this period, is enormous; and one may say that in almost all instances where the Alien Act has been enforced, the sentence of exclusion was a just one; it was such as the circumstances of the case abundantly bore out. Either the word was not idiomatic, or was not intelligible, or was not needed, or looked ill, or sounded ill, or some other valid reason existed against it. A lover of his native tongue will tremble to think what that tongue would have become, if all the vocables from the Latin and the Greek which were then introduced or endorsed by illustrious names, had been admitted on the strength of their recommendation; if "torve" and "tetric" (Fuller), "cecity" (Hooker), "fastide" and "trutinate" (State Papers), "immamnity" (Shakespeare), "insulse" and "insulsthy" (Milton, prose), "scelestick" (Feltham), "splendidious" (Drayton), "pervicacy" (Baxter), "stramineous," "ardelion" (Burton), "lepid" and "sufflaminste" (Barrow), "facinorous" (Donne), "immorgerous," "clancular," "ferity," "ustulation," "stultiloquy," "lipothy-
my” (λευθεριά), “hyperaspist” (all in Jeremy Taylor); if
“mulierosity,” “subsannation,” “coaxation,” “ludibundness,”
“delimitation,” “septemfluous,” “medioxumous,” “mirificent,”
“palmierous” (all in Henry More), “pauciloquy” and “multilo-
quy” (Beaumont, Psyche); if “dyscolous” (Foxe), “ataraxy”
(Allestree), “noliminously” (Cudworth), “luciferously” (Sir
Thomas Browne), “immarcescible” (Bishop Hall), “exility,”
“spinosity,” “incolumity,” “solertiousness,” “lucripetous,”
“nipious,” “euctate,” “eximius” (all in Hacket), “arride”
(ridiculed by Ben Jonson), with the hundreds of other words
like these, and even more monstrous than are some of these,
not to speak of such Italian as “leggiadrous” (a favourite word
in Beaumont’s Psyche), “amorevolous” (Hacket), had not been
rejected and disallowed by the true instinct of the national mind.

A great many too were allowed and adopted, but not exactly
in the shape in which they first were introduced among us; they
were made to drop their foreign termination, or otherwise their
foreign appearance, to conform themselves to English ways, and
only so were finally incorporated into the great family of English
words. Thus of Greek words we have the following: “pyramis”
and “pyramides,” forms often employed by Shakespeare, became
“pyramid” and “pyramids;” “dosis” (Bacon) “dose;” “dis-
tichon” (Holland) “distich;” “hemistichion” (North) “hemi-
stich;” “apogeion” (Fairfax) and “apogaeum” (Browne)
apogee;” “sumphonia” (Lodge) “symphony;” “prototypon”
(Jackson) “prototype;” “synonymon” (Jeremy Taylor) or
“synonymum” (Hacket), and “synonyma” (Milton, prose),
became severally “synonym” and “synonyms;” “syntaxis”
(Fuller) became “syntax;” “extasis” (Burton) “ecstasy;”
“parallelogrammon” (Holland) “parallelogram;” “programma”
(Warton) “program;” “epitheton” (Cowell) “epithet;”
epocha” (South) “epoch;” “biographia” (Dryden) “bio-
graphy;” “apostata” (Massinger) “apostate;” “despota” (Fox)
despot;” “misanthropos” (Shakespeare) if “misanthropi”
(Bacon) “misanthrope;” “psalterion” (North) “psalterye;”
“chasma” (Henry More) “chasm;” “idioma” and “prosodia”
(both in Daniel, prose) “idiom” and “prosody;” “energia”
“energy,” and “Sibylla” “Sibyl” (both in Sidney); “zoophy-
ton” (Henry More) “zoophyte;” “entousiasmos” (Sylvester)

1 J. Grimm (Wörterbuch, p. 26): “Fällt von ungefähr ein fremdes Wort
in den Brunnen einer Sprache, so wird es so lange darin umgetrieben, bis es
ihre Farbe annimmt, und seiner fremden Art zum trotze wie ein heimisches
aussieht.”
"enthusiasm;" "phantasma" (Donne) "phantasm;" "magnes" (Gabriel Harvey) "magnet;" "cynosura" (Donne) "cynosure;" "galaxias" (Fox) "galaxy;" "heros" (Henry More) "hero;" "epitaphy" (Hawes) "epitaph.

The same process has gone on in a multitude of Latin words, which testify by their terminations that they were, and were felt to be, Latin at their first employment; though now they are such no longer. Thus Bacon uses generally, I know not whether always, "insecta" for "insects;" and "chylus" for "chyle;" Bishop Andrews "nardus" for "nard;" Spenser "zephyrus," and not "zephyr;" so "interstitium" (Fuller) preceded "interstice;" "philtrum" (Culverwell) "philtre;" "expansum" (Jeremy Taylor) "expanse;" "preludium" (Beaumont, Psyche) "prelude;" "precipitium" (Coryat) "precipice;" "aconitum" (Shakespeare) "aconite;" "balsamum" (Webster) "balsam;" "heliotropium" (Holland) "heliotrope;" "helleborum" (North) "hellebore;" "vehiculum" (Howe) "vehicle;" "trochæus" and "spondeus" (Holland) "trochee" and "spondee;" and "machina" (Henry More) "machine." We have "intervalla," not "intervals," in Chillingworth; "postulata," not "postulates," in Swift; "archiva," not "archives," in Baxter; "demagogi," not "demagogues," in Hacket; "vestigium," not "vestige," in Culverwell; "pantomimus" in Lord Bacon for "pantomime;" "mystagogus" for "mystagogue," in Jackson; "atomi" in Lord Brooke for "atoms;" "ædilis" (North) went before "ædile;" "effigies" and "statua" (both in Shakespeare) before "effigy" and "statue;" "abyssus" (Jackson) before "abyss;" "vestibulum" (Howe) before "vestibule;" "symbolum" (Hammond) before "symbol;" "spectrum" (Burton) before "spectre;" while only after a while "quaere" gave place to "query;" "audite" (Hacket) to "audit;" "plaudite" (Henry More) to "plaudit;" and the low Latin "mummia" (Webster) became "mummy." The widely extended change of such words as "innocency," "indolency," "temperancy," and the large family of words with the same termination, into "innocence," "indolence," "temperance," and the like, can only be regarded as part of the same process of entire naturalisation.

The plural very often tells the secret of a word, and of the light in which it is regarded by those who employ it, when the singular, being less capable of modification, would have failed to do so; thus when Holland writes "phalanges," "bisontes," "ideae," it is clear that "phalanx," "bison," "idea," were still Greek words for him; as "dogma" was for Hammond, when he
made its plural not “dogmas,” but “dogmata;”¹ and when
Spenser uses “heroës” as a trisyllable, it plainly is not yet
thoroughly English for him.² “Cento” is not English, but a
Latin word used in English, so long as it makes its plural not
“centos,” but “centones,” as in the old anonymous translation
of Augustine’s *City of God*; and “specimen,” while it makes its
plural “specimina” (Howe). Pope making, as he does, “satel­
lites” a quadrisyllable in the line

> Why Jove’s *satellites* are less than Jove,

must have felt that he was still dealing with it as Latin; just
as “terminus,” a word which the necessities of railways have
introduced among us, will not be truly naturalised till we use
“terminuses” and not “termini” for its plural; nor “phenome­
non,” till we have renounced “phenomena.” Sometimes it has
been found convenient to retain both plurals, that formed ac­
cording to the laws of the classical language, and that formed
according to the laws of our own, only employing them in
different senses; thus is it with “indices” and “indexes,”
“genii” and “geniuses.”

The same process has gone on with words from other lan­
guages, as from the Italian and the Spanish; thus “bandetto”
(Shakespeare), “bandito” (Jeremy Taylor), becomes “bandit;”
“ruffiano” (Coryat) “ruffian;” “concerto” “concert;” “busto”
(Lord Chesterfield) “bust;” “caricatura” (Sir Thomas Browne)
“caricature;” “princesa” (Hacket) “princess;” “scaramucha”
(Dryden) “scaramouch;” “pedanteria” (Sidney) “pedantry;”
“impresa” “impress;” “caprichio” (Shakespeare) becomes first
“caprich” (Butler), then “caprice;” “duello” (Shakespeare)
“duel;” “alligarta” (Ben Jonson) “alligator;” “parroquito”
(Webster) “parroquet;” “escalada” (Heylin) or “escalado” (Hol­
lan) “escalade;” “granada” (Hacket) “grenade;” “parada”
(J. Taylor) “parade;” “emboscado” (Holland), “stoc­cardo,”
barricado,” “renegado,” “hurricane” (all in Shakespeare).
“brocado” (Hakluyt), “palissado” (Howell), drop their foreign
terminations, and severely become “ambuscade,” “stockade,”
“barricade,” “renegade,” “hurricane,” “brocade,” “palisade;”
croisado” in like manner (Bacon) becomes first “croisade.”

¹ Have we here an explanation of the “battalia” of Jeremy Taylor and
others? Did they, without reflecting on the matter, regard “battalion”
as a word with a Greek neuter termination? It is difficult to think they
should have done so; yet more difficult to suggest any other explanation.

² “And old heroës, which their world did daunt.”

*Sonnet on Scanderbeg.*
(Jortin), and then “crusade;” “quinaquina” or “quinquina,” “quinine.” Other slight modifications of spelling, not in the termination, but in the body of a word, will indicate in like manner its more entire incorporation into the English language. Thus “shash,” a Turkish word, becomes “sash;” “colone” (Burton) “clown;” “restoration” was at first spelt “restoration;” and so long as “vicinage” was spelt “voisinage” 1 (Sanderson), “mirror” “miroir” (Fuller), “recoil” “recule,” or “career,” “carrier” (both by Holland), they could scarcely be considered those purely English words which now they are. 2

Here and there even at this comparatively late period of the language awkward foreign words will be recast in a more thoroughly English mould; “chirurgeon” will become “surgeon;” “hemorrhoid” “emerod;” “squinarney” will become first “squinzey” (Jeremy Taylor), and then “quinsey;” “pork-pisc” (Spenser), that is sea-hog, or more accurately hogfish, will be “porpese,” and then “porpoise,” as it is now. In other words the attempt will be made, but it will be now too late to be attended with success. “Physiognomy” will not give place to “visnomy,” however Spenser and Shakespeare employ this briefer form; nor “hippopotamus” to “hippodame,” even at Spenser’s bidding. In like manner the attempt to naturalise “avant-courier” in the shape of “vancurrier” has failed. Other words also we meet which have finally refused to take a more popular form, although such was once more or less current; or, if this is too much to say of all, yet hazarded by good authors. Thus Holland wrote “cirque,” but we “circus;” “cense,” but we “census;” “interreign,” but we “interregnum;” Sylvester “cest,” but we “cestus;” “quirry,” but we “equerry;” “colosse,” but we still “colossus;” Golding “ure,” but we “urus;” “metropole,” but we “metropolis;” Dampier “volcan,” but this has not superseded “volcano;” nor “pagod” (Pope) “pagoda;” nor “skelet” (Holland) “skeleton;” nor “stimule” (Stubbs) “stimulus.” Bolingbroke wrote “exode,” but we hold fast to “exodus;” Burton “funge,” but we “fungus;” Henry More “enigm,” but we “enigma;” “analyse,” but we “analysis.” “Superfice” (Dryden) has not put “superficies,” nor “sacrament” (Hacket) “sacramentum,” nor “limbeck” “alembic,” out of use.

1 Skinner (Etymologicon, 1671) protests against the word altogether, as purely French, and having no right to be considered English at all.

2 It is curious how effectually the nationality of a word may by these slight alterations in spelling be disguised. I have met an excellent French and English scholar to whom it was quite a surprise to learn that “redingote” was “riding-coat.”
Chaucer’s “potecary” has given way to a more Greek formation, “apothecary.” Yet these and the like must be regarded quite as exceptions; the tendency of things is altogether the other way.

Looking at this process of the reception of foreign words, with their after-assimilation in feature to our own, we may trace, as was to be expected, a certain conformity between the genius of our institutions and that of our language. It is the very character of our institutions to repel none, but rather to afford a shelter and a refuge to all, from whatever quarter they come; and after a longer or shorter while all the strangers and incomers have been incorporated into the English nation, within one or two generations have forgotten that they were ever aught else than members of it, have retained no other reminiscence of their foreign extraction than some slight difference of name, and that often disappearing or having disappeared. Exactly so has it been with the English language. No language has shown itself less exclusive; none has stood less upon niceties; none has thrown open its arms wider, with a fuller confidence, a confidence justified by experience, that it could make truly its own, assimilate and subdue to itself, whatever it received into its bosom; and in none has this experiment in a larger number of instances been successfully carried out.

Such are the two great enlargements from without of our vocabulary. All other are minor and subordinate. Thus the introduction of French tastes by Charles the Second and his courtiers returning from exile, to which I have just adverted, though it rather modified the structure of our sentences than the materials of our vocabulary, gave us some new words. In one of Dryden’s plays, Marriage a la Mode, a lady full of affectation is introduced, who is always employing French idioms in preference to English, French words rather than native. It is not a little curious that of these, thus put into her mouth to render her ridiculous, not a few are excellent English now, and have nothing far-sought or affected about them; for so it frequently proves that what is laughed at in the beginning, is by all admitted and allowed at the last. For example, to speak of a person being in the “good graces” of another has nothing in it ridiculous now; the words “repartee,” “embarrass,” “chagrin,” “grimace,” do not sound novel and affected now as they all must plainly have done at the time when Dryden wrote. “Fougue” and “fraisheur,” which he himself employed—being, it is true, no
frequent offender in this way—have not been justified by the same success.

Nor indeed can it be said that this adoption and naturalisation of foreign words ever ceases in a language. There are periods, as we have seen, when this goes forward much more largely than at others; when a language throws open, as it were, its doors, and welcomes strangers with an especial freedom; but there is never a time when one by one these foreigners and strangers are not slipping into it. We do not for the most part observe the fact, at least not while it is actually doing. Time, the greatest of all innovators, manages his innovations so dexterously, spreads them over such vast periods, and therefore brings them about so gradually, that often, while effecting the mightiest changes, we have no suspicion that he is effecting any at all. Thus how imperceptible are the steps by which a foreign word is admitted into the full rights of an English one; the process of its incoming often eluding our notice altogether. There are numerous Greek words, for example, which, quite unchanged in form, have in one way or another ended in finding a home and acceptance among us. We may in almost every instance trace step by step the naturalisation of one of these; and the manner of this singularly confirms what has just been said. We can note it spelt for a while in Greek letters, and avowedly employed as a Greek and not an English vocable; then after it had thus obtained a certain allowance among us, and become not altogether unfamiliar, we note it exchanging its Greek for English letters, and finally obtaining recognition as a word which, however drawn from a foreign source, is yet itself English. Thus “acme,” “apotheosis,” “criterion,” “chrysalis,” “encyclopedia,” “metropolis,” “ophthalmia,” “pathos,” “phenomena,” are all now English words, while yet South with many others always wrote ἀκμή, Jeremy Taylor ἀποθέωσις καὶ κριτήριον, Henry More χρυσιλίσ, Ben Jonson speaks of “the knowledge of the liberal arts, which the Greeks call ἐγκυκλοπαιδεία,”* Culverwell wrote ὕπτρόπολις ὀφθαλμία, Preston, φανόμενα—Sylvester ascribes to Baxter, not “pathos,” but πάθος.  

1 He is not indeed perfectly accurate in this statement, for the Greeks spoke of ἐν κύκλῳ παιδεία and ἐγκυκλιος παιδεία, but had no such composite word as ἐγκυκλοπαιδεία. We gather however from these expressions, as from Lord Bacon’s using the term “circle-learning” (= “orbis doctrinae,” Quintilian), that “encyclopedia” did not exist in their time.

2 See the passages quoted in my paper, On some Deficiencies in our English Dictionaries, p. 38.
from Greek characters to English, and certainly before long will be acknowledged as an English word. The only cause which has hindered this for some time past is the misgiving whether it will not be read "éthos," and not "éthos," and thus not be the word intended.

Let us trace a like process in some French word which is at this moment becoming English. I know no better example than the French "prestige" will afford, "Prestige" has manifestly no equivalent in our own language; it expresses something which no single word in English, which only a long circumlocution, could express; namely, that magic influence on others which past successes, as the pledge and promise of future ones, breed. The word has thus naturally come to be of very frequent use by good English writers; for they do not feel that in employing it they are passing by as good or better a word of their own. At first all used it avowedly as French, writing it in italics to indicate this. At the present moment some write it so still, some do not; some, that is, regard it still as foreign, others consider that it has now become English, and obtained a settlement among us. Little by little the number of those who write it in italics will become fewer and fewer, till they cease altogether. It will then only need that the accent should be shifted, in obedience to the tendencies of the English language, as far back in the word as it will go, that instead of "prestige," it should be pronounced "préstige," even as within these few years instead of "dépot" we have learned to say "dépot," and its naturalisation will be complete. I have little doubt that in twenty years it will be so pronounced by the majority of well-educated Englishmen—some pronounce it so already—and our present pronunciation will pass away in the same manner as "oblege," once universal, has past away, and everywhere given place to "oblige." 2

Let me here observe in passing, that the process of throwing the accent of a word back, by way of completing its naturalisation, is one which we may note constantly going forward in our

1 We may see the same progress in Greek words which were being incorporated in the Latin. Thus Cicero writes ἀριστωτής (Acad., ii. 39, 123); but Seneca (Ep., 122), "antipodes"; that is, the word for Cicero was still Greek, while in the period that elapsed between him and Seneca it had become Latin; so too Cicero wrote εἰδωλος, the Younger Pliny "idolon," and Tertullian "idolum."

2 See in Coleridge's Table Talk, p. 3, the amusing story of John Kemble's stately correction of the Prince of Wales for adhering to the earlier pronunciation, "oblege"—"It will become your royal mouth better to say oblige."
language. Thus, while Chaucer accentuates sometimes "natûre," he also accentuates elsewhere "nâtûre," while sometimes "vir­tûe," at other times "virtue." "Prostrate," "adverse," "aspect," "process," "insult," "impulse," "pretext," "contrite," "up­roar," "contest," had all their accent on the last syllable in Milton; they have it now on the first; "charâcter" was "charâcter" with Spenser; "théâtre" was "théâtre" with Sylvester; while "académy" was accented "académy" by Cowley and Butler.1 "Essay" was "essây" with Dryden and with Pope; the first closes an heroic line with the word; Pope does the same with "barrier"2 and "effort," therefore pronounced "barrier," "effôrt," by him.

There are not a few other French words which like "prestige" are at this moment hovering on the verge of English, hardly knowing whether they shall become such, or no. Such are "ennuî," "exploitation," "verve," "persiflage," "badinage," "chicane," "finesse," and others; all of them often employed by us—and it is out of such frequent employment that adoption proceeds—because expressing shades of meaning not expressed by any words of our own. Some of these, we may confidently anticipate, will complete their naturalisation; others will after a time retreat again, and become for us avowedly French. "Solidarity," a word which we owe to the French Communists, and which signifies a fellowship in gain and loss, in honour and dishonour, in victory and defeat, a being, so to speak, all in the same bottom, is so convenient that, unattractive as confessedly it is, it will be in vain to struggle against its reception. The newspapers already have it, and books will not long exclude it; not to say that it has established itself in German, and probably in other European languages as well.

Greek and Latin words also we still continue to adopt, although now no longer in troops and companies, but only one by one. With the lively interest which always has been felt in classical studies among us, and which will continue to be felt, so long as any greatness and nobleness survive in our land, it must needs be that accessions from these quarters would never cease altogether. I do not refer here to purely scientific terms; these, so long as they continue such, and do not pass beyond the threshold of the science or sciences for the use of which they were invented, being never heard on the lips, or employed in the writings, of

1 "In this great académy of mankind."
2 "Twixt that and reason what a nice barrier."
any but the cultivators of these sciences, have no right to be properly called words at all. They are a kind of shorthand of the science, or algebraic notation; and will not find place in a dictionary of the language, constructed upon true principles, but rather in a technical dictionary apart by themselves. Of these, compelled by the advances of physical science, we have coined multitudes out of number in these later times, fashioning them mainly from the Greek, no other language within our reach yielding itself at all so easily to our needs.

Of non-scientific words, both Greek and Latin, some have made their way among us quite in these latter times. Burke in the House of Commons is said to have been the first who employed the word “inimical.” He also launched the verb “to spheterise” in the sense of to appropriate or make one’s own; but this without success. Others have been more fortunate; “esthetic” we have got indeed through the Germans, but from the Greeks. Tennyson has given allowance to “æon,” and “myth” is a deposit which wide and far-reaching controversies have left in the popular language. “Photography” is an example of what I was just now speaking of—namely, a scientific word which has travelled beyond the limits of the science which it designates, and which gave it birth. “Stereotype” is another word of the same character. It was invented—not the thing, but the word—by Didot not very long since; but it is now absorbed into healthy general circulation, being current in a secondary and figurative sense. Ruskin has given to “ornamentation” the sanction and authority of his name. “Normal” and “abnormal,” not quite so new, are yet of recent introduction into the language.

When we consider the near affinity between the English and German languages, which, if not sisters, may at least be regarded as first cousins, it is somewhat remarkable that almost since the day when they parted company, each to fulfil its own destiny, there has been little further commerce between them in the matter of giving or taking. At any rate adoptions on our part from the German have been till within this period extremely rare. “Crikesman” (Kriegsmann) and “brandschat” (Brandschatz), with some other German words common enough in the State Papers of the sixteenth century, found no permanent place in the language. The explanation lies in the fact that the literary activity of Germany did not begin till very late, nor our interest in it till later still, not indeed till the beginning of the present century. Yet “plunder,” as I have mentioned elsewhere,
was brought back from Germany about the beginning of our Civil Wars, by the soldiers who had served under Gustavus Adolphus and his captains. And "trigger," written "tricker" in Hudibras, is manifestly the German "drücker," though none of our dictionaries have marked it as such; a word first appearing at the same period, it may have reached us through the same channel. "Iceberg" (eisberg) also we must have taken whole from the German, as, had we constructed the word for ourselves, we should have made it not "ice-berg," but "ice-mountain." I have not found it in our earlier voyagers, often as they speak of the "icefield," which yet is not exactly the same thing. An English "swindler" is not exactly a German "schwindler," yet the notion of the "nebulo," though more latent in the German, is common to both; and we must have drawn the word from Germany (it is not an old one in our tongue) during the course of the last century. If "life-guard" was originally, as Richardson suggests, "leib-garde," or "bodyguard," and from that transformed, by the determination of Englishmen to make it significant in English, into "life-guard," or guard defending the life of the sovereign, this will be another word from the same quarter. Yet I have my doubts; "leibgarde" would scarcely have found its way hither before the accession of the House of Hanover, or at any rate before the arrival of Dutch William with his memorable guards; while "lifeguard," in its present shape, is certainly an older word in the language; we hear often of the "lifeguards" in our Civil Wars; as witness too Fuller's words: "The Cherethites were a kind of lifeguard to king David." 1

Of late our German importations have been somewhat more numerous. With several German compound words we have been in recent times so well pleased, that we must needs adopt them into English, or imitate them in it. We have not always been very happy in those which we have selected for imitation or adoption. Thus we might have been satisfied with "manual," and not called back from its nine hundred years of oblivion that ugly and unnecessary word "handbook." And now we are threatened with "word-building," as I see a book announced under the title of "Latin word-building," and, much worse than this, with "stand-point." "Einseitig" (itself a modern word, if I mistake not, or at any rate modern in its secondary application) has not, indeed, been adopted, but is evidently the pattern on which we have formed "onesided"—a word to which a few

1 Pisgah Sight of Palestine, 1650, p. 217.
years ago something of affectation was attached; so that any one who employed it at once gave evidence that he was more or less a dealer in German wares; it has however its manifest conveniences, and will hold its ground. "Fatherland" (Vaterland) on the contrary will scarcely establish itself among us, the note of affectation will continue to cleave to it, and we shall go on contented with "native country" to the end. The most successful of these compounded words, borrowed recently from the German, is "folk-lore," and the substitution of this for popular superstitions must be esteemed, I think, an unquestionable gain.

To speak now of other sources from which the new words of a language are derived. Of course the period when absolutely new roots are generated will have past away long before men begin by a reflective act to take any notice of processes going forward in the language which they speak. This pure productive energy, creative we might call it, belongs only to the earlier stages of a nation’s existence—to times quite out of the ken of history. It is only from materials already existing either in its own bosom, or in the bosom of other languages, that it can enrich itself in the later, or historical stages of its life.

And first, it can bring its own words into new combinations; it can join two, and sometimes even more than two, of the words which it already has, and form out of them a new one. Much more is wanted here than merely to attach two or more words to one another by a hyphen; this is not to make a new word: they must really coalesce and grow together. Different languages, and even the same language at different stages of its existence, will possess this power of forming new words by the combination of old in very different degrees. The eminent felicity of the Greek in this respect has been always acknowledged. "The joints of her compounded words," says Fuller, "are so naturally oiled, that they run nimbly on the tongue, which makes them though long, never tedious, because significant." 1 Sir Philip Sidney

1 *Holy State*, book ii. chap. vi. There was a time when the Latin promised to display, if not an equal, yet not a very inferior, freedom in this forming of new words by the happy marriage of old. But in this, as in so many respects, it seemed possessed at the period of its highest culture with a timidity which caused it voluntarily to abdicate many of its own powers. Where do we find in the Augustan period of the language so grand a pair of epithets as these, occurring as they do in a single line of Catullus: "Ubi cerva silvicultrix, ubi aper nemorivagus"? or again, as his "fluentisonus"? Virgil’s "vitisator" (*Æn.*, vii. 179) is not his own, but derived from one of the earlier poets. Nay, the language did not even retain those compound...
boasts of the capability of our English language in this respect—that “it is particularly happy in the composition of two or three words together, near equal to the Greek.” No one has done more than Milton to justify this praise, or to make manifest what may be effected by this marriage of words. Many of his compound epithets, as “golden-tressed,” “tinsel-slippered,” “coral-paven,” “flowry-kirtled,” “violet-embroidered,” “vermeil-tinctured,” are themselves poems in miniature. Not unworthy to be set beside these are Sylvester’s “opal-coloured morn,” Drayton’s “silver-sanded shore,” and perhaps Marlowe’s “golden-fingered Ind.”

Our modern inventions in the same kind are for the most part very inferior: they could hardly fail to be so, seeing that the formative, plastic powers of a language are always waning and diminishing more and more. It may be, and indeed is, gaining in other respects, but in this it is losing; and thus it is not strange if its later births in this kind are less successful than its earlier. Among the poets of our own time Shelley has done more than any other to assert for the language that it has not quite renounced this power; while among writers of prose in these later days Jeremy Bentham has been at once one of the boldest, but at the same time one of the most unfortunate, of those who have issued this money from their mint. Still we ought not to forget, while we divert ourselves with the strange and formless progeny of his brain, that we owe “international” to him—a word at once so convenient and supplying so real a need, that it was, and with manifest advantage, at once adopted by all.

Another way in which languages increase their stock of vocables is by the forming of new words according to the analogy of formations, which in seemingly parallel cases have been already allowed. Thus long since upon certain substantives such as “congregation,” “convention,” were formed their adjec-

epithets which it once had formed, but was content to let numbers of them drop: “parcipromus,” “turpilucricipidus,” and many more, do not extend beyond Plautus. On this matter Quintilian observes (I. v. 70): “Res tota magis Graecos deeat, nobis minus succedit; nec id seri natura puto, sed alienis favemus; ideoque cum kuptaixevn mirati sumus, incurvicercum vix a risu defendimus.” Elsewhere he complains, though not with reference to compound epithets, of the little generative power which existed in the Latin language, that its continual losses were compensated by no equivalent gains (VIII. vi. 32): “Deinde, tanquam consummata sint omnia, nihil generare audemus ipsi, quum multa quotidie ab antiquis faci moriantur.” Notwithstanding this complaint, it must be owned that the silver age of the language, which sought to recover, and did recover to some extent the abdicated energies of its earlier times, reasserted among other powers that of combining words, with a certain measure of success.
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"Congregational," "conventional;" yet these also at a comparatively modern period; "congregational" first rising up in the Assembly of Divines, or during the time of the Commonwealth. These having found admission into the language, it is attempted to repeat the process in the case of other words with the same ending. I confess the effect is often exceedingly disagreeable. We are now pretty well used to "educational," and the word is sometimes serviceable enough; but I can perfectly remember when some twenty years ago an "Educational Magazine" was started, the first impression on one's mind was, that a work having to do with education should not thus bear upon its front an offensive, or to say the best, a very dubious novelty in the English language. These adjectives are now multiplying fast. We have "inflexional," "seasonal," "denominational," and, not content with this, in dissenting magazines at least, the monstrous birth, "denominationalism;" "emotional" is creeping into books, "sensational," and others as well; so that it is hard to say where this influx will stop, or whether all our words with this termination will not finally generate an adjective. Convenient as you may sometimes find these, I would yet certainly counsel you to abstain from all but the perfectly well recognised formations of this kind. There may be cases of exception; but for the most part Pope's advice is good, as certainly it is safe, that we be not among the last to use a word which is going out, nor among the first to employ one that is coming in.

"Starvation" is another word of comparatively recent introduction, formed in like manner on the model of preceding formations of an apparently similar character—its first formers, indeed, not observing that they were putting a Latin termination to a Saxon word. Some have supposed it to have reached us from America. It has not however travelled from so great a distance, being a stranger indeed, yet not from beyond the Atlantic, but only from beyond the Tweed. It is an old Scottish word, but unknown in England, till used by Mr. Dundas, the first Viscount Melville, in an American debate in 1775. That it then jarred strangely on English ears is evident from the nickname, "Starvation Dundas," which in consequence he obtained.

Again, languages enrich themselves, our own has done so, by recovering treasures which for a while had been lost by them or

2. See *Letters of Horace Walpole and Mann*, vol. ii. p. 396, quoted in *Notes and Queries*, No. 225; and another proof of the novelty of the word in Pegge's *Anecdotes of the English Language*, 1814, p. 38.
foregone. I do not mean that all which drops out of use is loss; there are words which it is gain to be rid of; which it would be folly to wish to revive; of which Dryden, setting himself against an extravagant zeal in this direction, says in an ungracious comparison—they do “not deserve this redemption, any more than the crowds of men who daily die, or are slain for sixpence in a battle, merit to be restored to life, if a wish could revive them.”

There are others, however, which it is a real gain to draw back again from the temporary oblivion which had overtaken them; and this process of their setting and rising again, or of what, to use another image, we might call their suspended animation, is not so unfrequent as at first might be supposed.

You may perhaps remember that Horace, tracing in a few memorable lines the history of words, while he notes that many once current have now dropped out of use, does not therefore count that of necessity their race is for ever run; on the contrary he confidently anticipates a *palingenesy* for many among them; and I am convinced that there has been such in the case of our English words to a far greater extent than we are generally aware. Words slip almost or quite as imperceptibly back into use as they once slipped out of it. Let me produce a few facts in evidence of this. In the cotemporary gloss which an anonymous friend of Spenser’s furnished to his *Shepherd’s Calendar*, first published in 1579, “for the exposition of old words,” as he declares, he thinks it expedient to include in his list the following: “dapper,” “scathe,” “askance,” “sere,” “embellish,” “bevy,” “forestall,” “fain,” with not a few others quite as familiar as these. In Speght’s *Chaucer* (1667) there is a long list of “old and obscure words in Chaucer explained”; these “old and obscure words” including “anthem,” “blithe,” “bland,” “chaplet,” “carol,” “deluge,” “franchise,” “illusion,” “problem,” “recreant,” “sphere,” “tissue,” “transcend,” with very many easier than these. In Skinner’s *Etymologicon* (1671) there is another such list of obsolete words, and among these he includes “to dovetail,” “to interlace,” “elvish,” “encombred,” “phantom” (fantome), “gawd,” “glare,” “masquerade” (mascarade), “oriental,” “plumage,” “pummel” (pomell), and “stew,” that is, for fish. Who will say of the verb “to hallow”
that it is now even obsolescent? and yet Wallis two hundred years ago observed—"it has almost gone out of use" (fere desuevit). It would be difficult to find an example of the verb "to advocate" between Milton and Burke. Franklin, a close observer in such matters, as he was himself an admirable master of English style, considered the word to have sprung up during his own residence in Europe. In this indeed he was mistaken; it had only during this period revived. Johnson says of "jeopardy" that it is a "word not now in use;" which certainly is not any longer true.¹

I am persuaded that in facility of being understood, Chaucer is not merely as near, but much nearer, to us than Dryden and his contemporaries felt him to be to them. He and the writers of his time make exactly the same sort of complaints, only in still stronger language, about his archaic phraseology and the obscurities which it involves, that are made at the present day. Thus in the Preface to his Tales from Chaucer, having quoted some not very difficult lines from the earlier poet whom he was modernising, he proceeds: "You have here a specimen of Chaucer's language, which is so obsolete that his sense is scarce to be understood." Nor was it merely thus with respect of Chaucer. These wits and poets of the Court of Charles the Second were conscious of a greater gulf between themselves and the Elizabethan æra, separated from them by little more than fifty years, than any of which we are aware, separated from it by nearly two centuries more. I do not mean merely that they felt themselves more removed from its tone and spirit; their altered circumstances might explain this; but I am convinced that they found a greater difficulty and strangeness in the language of Spenser and Shakespeare than we find now; that it sounded in many ways more uncouth, more old-fashioned, more abounding in obsolete terms than it does in our ears at the present. Only in this way can I explain the tone in which they are accustomed to speak of these worthies of the near past. I must again cite Dryden, the truest representative of literary England in its good and in its evil during the last half of the seventeenth century. Of Spenser, whose death was separated

¹ In like manner La Bruyère, in his Caractères, chap. xiv., laments the extinction of a large number of French words which he names. At least half of these have now free course in the language, as "valeureux," "haineux," "peineux," "fructueux," "mensonger," "coutumier," "vendant," "courtois," "jovial," "fétoyer," "larmoyer," "verdoyer." Two or three of these may be rarely used, but every one would be found in a dictionary of the living language.
from his own birth by little more than thirty years, he speaks as of one belonging to quite a different epoch, counting it much to say, "notwithstanding his obsolete language, he is still intelligible." Nay, hear what his judgment is of Shakespeare himself, so far as language is concerned: "It must be allowed to the present age that the tongue in general is so much refined since Shakespeare's time, that many of his words and more of his phrases are scarce intelligible. And of those which we understand, some are ungrammatical, others coarse; and his whole style is so pestered with figurative expressions, that it is as affected as it is obscure."  

Sometimes a word will emerge anew from the undercurrent of society, not indeed new, but yet to most seeming as new, its very existence having been altogether forgotten by the larger number of those speaking the language; although it must have somewhere lived on upon the lips of men. Thus, for instance, since the Californian and Australian discoveries of gold we hear often of a "nugget" of gold; being a lump of the pure metal; and there has been some discussion whether the word has been born for the present necessity, or whether it be a recent malformation of "ingot." I am inclined to think that it is neither one nor the other. I would not indeed affirm that it may not be a popular recasting of "ingot;" but only that it is not a recent one; for "nugget" very nearly in its present form occurs in our elder writers, being spelt "niggot" by them. There can be little doubt of the identity of "niggot" and "nugget;" all the consonants, the stamina of a word, being the same; while this early form "niggot" makes more plausible their suggestion that "nugget" is only "ingot" disguised, seeing that there wants nothing but the very common transposition of the first two letters to bring that out of this.

New words are often formed from the names of persons, actual or mythical. Some one has observed how interesting would be a complete collection, or a collection approaching to complete-

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1 Preface to *Juvenal.*
2 Preface to *Troilus and Cressida.* In justice to Dryden, and lest it should be said that he had spoken poetic blasphemy, it ought not to be forgotten that "pestered" had not in his time at all so offensive a sense as it would have now. It meant no more than inconveniently crowded; thus Milton: "Confined and pestered in this pinfold here."
3 Thus in North's *Plutarch,* p. 499: "After the fire was quenched, they found in niggots of gold and silver mingled together, about a thousand talents;" and again, p. 323: "There was brought a marvellous great mass of treasure in niggots of gold." The word has not found its way into our dictionaries or glossaries.
ness, in any language of the names of persons which have afterwards become names of things, from “nomina appellativa” have become “nomina realia.” Let me without confining myself to those of more recent introduction endeavour to enumerate as many as I can remember of the words which have by this method been introduced into our language. To begin with mythical antiquity—the Chimæra has given us “chimerical,” Hermes “hermetic,” Tantalus “to tantalise,” Hercules “herculean,” Proteus “protean,” Vulcan “volcano” and “volcanic,” and Dædalus “dedal,” if this word may on Spenser’s and Shelley’s authority be allowed. Gordius, the Phrygian king who tied that famous “gordian” knot which Alexander cut, will supply a natural transition from mythical to historical. Here Mausolus, a king of Caria, has left us “mausoleum,” Academus “academy,” Epicurus “epicure,” Philip of Macedon a “philippic,” being such a discourse as Demosthenes once launched against the enemy of Greece, and Cicero “cicerone.” Mithridates, who had made himself poison-proof, gave us the now forgotten word “mithridate,” for antidote; as from Hippocrates we derived “hipocras,” or “ypocras,” a word often occurring in our early poets, being a wine supposed to be mingled after his receipt. Gentius, a king of Illyria, gave his name to the plant “gentian,” having been, it is said, the first to discover its virtues. A grammar used to be called a “donat” or “donet” (Chaucer), from Donatus, a famous grammarian. Lazarus, perhaps an actual person, has given us “lazar” and “lazaretto;” St. Veronica and the legend connected with her name, a “vernicle,” being a napkin with the Saviour’s face portrayed on it; Simon Magus “simony;” Mahomet a “mammet” or “maumet,” meaning an idol; and “mammetry” or idolatry; “dunce” is from Duns Scotus; while there is a legend that the “knot” or sandpiper is named from Canute or Knute, with whom this bird was a special favourite. To come to more modern times, and not pausing at Ben Jonson’s “chaucerisms,” Bishop Hall’s “scoganisms,” from Scogan, Edward the Fourth’s jester, or his “aretinisms,” from an infamous writer, “a poisonous Italian ribald,” as Gabriel Harvey calls him, named Arethiæ; these being probably not intended even by their authors to endure; a Roman cobbler named Pasquin has given us the “pasquil” or “pasquinade;” “patch” in the sense of fool, and often so used by Shakespeare, was originally the proper name of a favourite fool of Cardinal Wolsey’s; Colonel Negus in Queen Anne’s time first mixed the beverage which goes by his name; Lord Orrery was the first
for whom an "orrery" was constructed; and Lord Spencer first wore, or at least first brought into fashion, a "spencer." Dahl, a Swede, introduced the cultivation of the "dahlia," and M. Tabinet, a French Protestant refugee, the making of the stuff called "tabinet" in Dublin; in "tram-road," the second syllable of the name of Oulram, the inventor, survives. The "tontine" was conceived by an Italian named Tonti; and another Italian, Galvani, first noted the phenomena of animal electricity or "galvanism;" while a third Italian, Volta, gave a name to the "voltaic" battery. "Martinet," "mackintosh," "doyly," "brougham," "to macadamise," "to burke," are all names of persons or formed from persons, and then transferred to things, on the score of some connexion existing between the one and other.1

Again, the names of popular characters in literature, such as have taken strong hold on the national mind, give birth to a number of new words. Thus from Homer we have "mentor" for a monitor; "stentorian" for loud-voiced; and inasmuch as with all of Hector's nobleness there is a certain amount of big talking about him, he has given us "to hector;" 2 while the medieval romances about the siege of Troy ascribe to Pandarus that shameful ministry out of which his name has past into the words "to pandar" and "pandarism." "Rodomontade" is from Rodomont, a blustering and boasting hero of Boiardo, adopted by Ariosto; "thrasonical," from Thraso, the braggart of the Roman comedy. Cervantes has given us "quixotic;" Swift "illiputian;" to Molière the French language owes "tartuffe" and "tartufferie." "Reynard" too, which with us is a duplicate for fox, while in the French "renard" has quite excluded the

1 Several of these we have in common with the French. Of their own they have "sardanapalisme," any piece of profuse luxury, from Sardanapalus; while for "lambiner," to dally or loiter over a task, they are indebted to Denis Lambin, a worthy Greek scholar of the sixteenth century, whom his adversaries accused of sluggish movement and wearisome diffuse-ness in style. Every reader of Pascal's Provincial Letters will remember Escobar, the great casuist among the Jesuits, whose convenient subter-fuges for the relaxation of the moral law have there been made famous. To the notoriety which he thus acquired, he owes his introduction into the French language; where "escobarder" is used in the sense of to equivocate, and "escobarderie" of subterfuge or equivocation. The name of an unpopular minister of finance, M. de Silhouette, unpopular because he sought to cut down unnecessary expenses in the state, was applied to whatever was cheap, and, as was implied, unduly economical; it has survived in the black outline portrait which is now called a "silhouette" (Simondi, Histoire des Français, tom. xix. pp. 94, 95). In the "mansarde" roof we have the name of Mansart, the architect who introduced it. I need hardly add "guillotine."

older "volpils," was originally not the name of a kind, but the proper name of the fox-hero, the vulpine Ulysses, in that famous beast-epic of the middle ages, Reineke Fuchs; the immense popularity of which we gather from many evidences, from none more clearly than from this. "Chanticlear" is in like manner the proper name of the cock, and "Bruin" of the bear in the same poem. These have not made fortune to the same extent of actually putting out in any language the names which before existed, but still have become quite familiar to us all.

We must not count as new words properly so called, although they may delay us for a minute, those comic words, most often comic combinations formed at will, and sometimes of enormous length, in which, as plays and displays of power, great writers ancient and modern have delighted. These for the most part are meant to do service for the moment, and then to pass away. The inventors of them had themselves no intention of fastening them permanently on the language. Thus among the Greeks Aristophanes coined μελλονυκτιδα, to loiter like Nicias, with allusion to the delays with which this prudent commander sought to put off the disastrous Sicilian expedition, with not a few other familiar to every scholar. The humour of them sometimes consists in their enormous length, as in the ἀρφαςπολεμοπηθροστρατος of Eupolis; the στερμαγοραικιδοσαλασανωλύς of Aristophanes; sometimes in their mingled observance and transgression of the laws of the language, as in the "oculissimus" of Plautus, a comic superlative of "oculus," "occisissimus" of "occisus," as in the "dosones," "dabones," which in Greek and in medieval Latin were names given to those who were ever promising, ever saying "I will give," but never performing their promise. Plautus with his exuberant wit, and exulting in his mastery and command of the Latin language, will compose four or five lines consisting entirely of comic combinations thrown off for the occasion. Of the same character is Butler's "cynarctomachy," or battle of a dog and bear. Nor do I suppose that Fuller, when he used "to avunculise," to imitate or follow in the steps of one's uncle, or Cowper, when he suggested "extraforaneous" for out of doors, in the least intended them as lasting additions to the language.

1 See Génin, Des Variations du Langage Français, p. 12.
2 Persa. IV. vi., 10-23. At the same time these words may be earnest enough; such was the ἄλλαξτάτερος of St. Paul (Ephes. iii. 8); just as in the middle ages some did not account it sufficient to call themselves "fratres minores, minimi, postremi," but coined "postremissimi" to express the depth of their "voluntary humility."
Sometimes a word springs up in a very curious way; here is one, not having, I suppose, any great currency except among schoolboys; yet being no invention of theirs, but a genuine English word, though of somewhat late birth in the language, I mean "to chouse." It has a singular origin. The word is, as I have mentioned already, a Turkish one, and signifies "interpreter." Such an interpreter or "chiaous" (written "chaus" in Hakluyt, "chiaus" in Massinger), being attached to the Turkish embassy in England, committed in the year 1609 an enormous fraud on the Turkish and Persian merchants resident in London. He succeeded in cheating them of a sum amounting to £4000—a sum very much greater at that day than at the present. From the vast dimensions of the fraud, and the notoriety which attended it, any one who cheated or defrauded was said "to chiaous," "chause," or "chouse;" to do, that is, as this "chiaous" had done.¹

There is another very fruitful source of new words in a language, or perhaps rather another way in which it increases its vocabulary, for a question might arise whether the words thus produced ought to be called new. I mean through the splitting of single words into two or even more. The impulse and suggestion to this is in general first given by varieties in pronunciation, which are presently represented by varieties in spelling; but the result very often is that what at first were only precarious and arbitrary differences in this, come in the end to be regarded as entirely different words; they detach themselves from one another, not again to reunite; just as accidental varieties in fruits or flowers, produced at hazard, have yet permanently separated off, and settled into different kinds. They have each its own distinct domain of meaning, as by general agreement assigned to it; dividing the inheritance between them which hitherto they held in common. No one who has not had his attention called to this matter, who has not watched and catalogued these words as they have come under his notice, would at all believe how numerous they are.

Sometimes as the accent is placed on one syllable of a word or another, it comes to have different significations, and those so distinctly marked, that the separation may be regarded as

¹It is curious that a correspondent of Skinner (Etymologicon, 1671), although quite ignorant of this story, and indeed wholly astray in his application, had suggested that "chouse" might be thus connected with the Turkish "chiaus." I believe Gifford, in his edition of Ben Jonson, was the first to clear up the matter. A passage in The Alchemist (Act I. Sc. i.) will have put him on the right track.
complete. Examples of this are the following: "divers," and "divérsé;" "conjure" and "conjure;" "ántic" and "antique;" "hómán" and "humáne;" "úrbán" and "urbáne;" "géntré" and "gentél;" "cústom" and "costümé;" "éssay" and "assày;" "próperty" and "propriety." Or again, a word is pronounced with a full sound of its syllables, or somewhat more shortly: thus "spirit" and "sprite;" "blossom" and "bloom;" "courtesy" and "curtsey;" "nourish" and "nurse;" "personality" and "personalty;" "fantasy" and "fancy;" "triumph" and "trump" (the winning card); "happily" and "haply;" "waggon" and "wain;" "ordinance" and "ordnance;" "shallop" and "sloop;" "brabble" and "brawl;" "syrup" and "shrub;" "balsam" and "balm;" "erenite" and "hermit;" "nighest" and "next;" "poesy" and "posy;" "fragile" and "frail;" "achievement" and "hatchment;" "manceuvre" and "manure;"—or with the dropping of the first syllable: "history" and "story;" "etiquette" and "ticket;" "escheat" and "cheat;" "estate" and "state;" and, older probably than any of these, "other" and "or;"—or with a dropping of the last syllable, as "Britany" and "Britain;" "crony" and "crone;"—or without losing a syllable, with more or less stress laid on the close: "regiment" and "regimen;" "corps" and "corps;" "bite" and "bit;" "sire" and "sir;" "land" or "laund" and "lawn;" "suite" and "suit;" "swinge" and "swing;" "gulph" and "gulp;" "launch" and "lance;" "wealth" and "weal;" "strip" and "strip;" "borne" and "born;" "clothes" and "cloths;"—or a slight internal vowel change finds place, as between "dint" and "dint;" "rant" and "rent" (a ranting actor tears or rends a passion to tatters); "creak" and "croak;" "float" and "flee;" "sleek" and "slick;" "sheen" and "shine;" "shrike" and "shrike;" "pick" and "peck;" "peak;" "pike" and "pique;" "weald" and "wold;" "drip" and "drop;" "wreath" and "wreith;" "spear" and "spire" ("the least spire of grass," South); "trist;" "trust;" "band," "bend," and "bond;" "cope," "cape," and "cap;" "tip" and "top;" "slent" (now obsolete) and "slant;" "sweep" and "swoop;" "wrest" and "wrist;" "gad" (now surviving only in gadfly) and "goad;" "compliment;" "fitch" and "vetch;" "spike" and "spoke;" "tamper" and "temper;" "ragged" and "rugged;" "gargle;"
and "gurgle;" "snake" and "sneak" (both crawl); "deal" and "dole;" "giggle" and "gaggle" (this last is now commonly spelt "cackle"); "sip," "sop," "soup" and "sup;" "clack," "click" and "clock;" "tetchy" and "touchy;" "neat" and "nett;" "stud" and "steep;" "then;" and "than;" "grits" and "grouts;" "spirt" and "sprout;" "cure;" and "care;" "prune" and "preen;" "mister" and "master;" "allay" and "alloy;" "ghostly" and "ghastly;" "person" and "parson;" "cleft" and "clift," now written "cliff;" "travel" and "travail;" "truth" and "troth;" "pennon" and "pinion;" "quail" and "quell;" "quell" and "kill;" "metal" and "mettle;" "chargrin" and "shagreen;" "can" and "ken;" "Francis" and "Frances;" 2 "chivalry" and "cavalry;" "oil" and "elf;" "lose" and "loose;" "taint" and "tint." Sometimes the difference is mainly or entirely in the initial consonants, as between "phial" and "vial;" "pother" and "bother;" "bursar" and "purser;" "thrice" and "trice;" "shatter" and "cant;" "zealous" and "jealous;" "channel" and "kennel;" "wise" and "guise;" "quay" and "key;" "thrill," "trill" and "drill;" —or in the consonants in the middle of the word, as between "cancer" and "canker;" "nipple" and "nibble;" "tittle" and "title;" "price" and "prize;" "consort" and "concert;" —or there is a change in both, as between "pipe" and "fife."

Or a word is spelt now with a final k and now with a final ch; out of this variation two different words have been formed; with, it may be, other slight differences superadded; thus is it with "pokel" and "poach;" "dyke" and "ditch;" "stink;" and "stench;" "prick;" and "pritch" (now obsolete); "break" and "breach;' to which may be added "broach;" "lace" and "latch;" "stick;" and "stitch;" "lurk" and "lurch;" "bank;" and "bench;" "stark;" and "starch;" "wake;" and "watch."

So too t and d are easily exchanged; as in "clod" and "clot;" "vend" and "vent;" "brood" and "brat;" "halt" and "hold;" "sad;" and "set;" "card;" and "chart;" "medley;" and "motley." Or there has grown up, besides the rigorous and accurate pronunciation of a word, a popular as well; and this in the end

1 On these words see a learned discussion in English Retraced, Cambridge, 1862.

2 The appropriating of "Frances" to women and "Francis" to men is quite of modern introduction; it was formerly nearly as often Sir Francis Drake as Sir Francis, while Fuller (Holy State, book iv. chap. xiv.) speaks of Francis Brandon, eldest daughter of Charles Brandon, Duke of Suffolk; and see Ben Jonson's New Inn, Act II. Sc. i.
has formed itself into another word; thus is it with "housewife" and "hussey;" "hanaper" and "hamper;" "puisne" and "puny;" "patron" and "pattern;" "spital" (hospital) and "spittle" (house of correction); "accompt" and "account;" "donjon" and "dungeon;" "nestle" and "nuzzle" (now obsolete); "Egyptian" and "gypsy;" "Bethlehem" and "Bedlam;" "exemplar" and "sampler;" "dolphin" and "dauphin;" "iota" and "jot."

Other changes cannot perhaps be reduced exactly under any of these heads; as between "ounce" and "inch;" "errant" and "arrant;" "slack" and "slake;" "slow" and "slough;" "bow" and "bough;" "hew" and "hough;" "dies" and "dice" (both plurals of "die"); "plunge" and "flounce;" "staff" and "stave;" "scull" and "shoal;" "benefit" and "benefice."

Or, it may be, the difference which constitutes the two forms of the word into two words is in the spelling only, and of a character to be appreciable only by the eye, escaping altogether the ear: thus is it with "draft" and "draught;" "plain" and "plane;" "coign" and "coin;" "flower" and "flour;" "check" and "cheque;" "straight" and "strait;" "ton" and "tun;" "road" and "rode;" "throw" and "throe;" "wrack" and "rack;" "gait" and "gate;" "hoard" and "horde;" "knoll" and "noll;" "chord" and "cord;" "drachm" and "dram;" "sergeant" and "serjeant;" "mask" and "masque;" "villain" and "villein."

Now, if you will put the matter to proof, you will find, I believe, in every case that there has attached itself to the different forms of a word a modification of meaning more or less sensible, that each has won for itself an independent sphere of meaning, in which it, and it only, moves. For example, "divers"

1 Were there need of proving that these both lie in "beneficium," which there is not, for in Wiclif's translation of the Bible the distinction is still latent (1 Tim. vi. 2), one might adduce a singularly characteristic little trait of Papal policy, which once turned upon the double use of this word. Pope Adrian the Fourth writing to the Emperor Frederic the First to complain of certain conduct of his, reminded the emperor that he had placed the imperial crown upon his head, and would willingly have conferred even greater "beneficia" upon him than this. Had the word been allowed to pass, it would no doubt have been afterwards appealed to as an admission on the emperor's part that he held the empire as a feud or fief (for "beneficium" was then the technical word for this, though the meaning has much narrowed since) from the Pope—the very point in dispute between them. The word was indignantly repelled by the emperor and the whole German nation, whereupon the Pope appealed to the etymology, that "beneficium" was but "bonum factum," and protested that he meant no more than to remind the emperor of the "benefits" which he had done him, and which he would have willingly multiplied still more.
implies difference only, but "diverse" difference with opposition; thus the several Evangelists narrate the same event in "diverse" manner, but not in "diverse." "Antique" is ancient, but "antic" is now the ancient regarded as overlived, out of date, and so in our days grotesque, ridiculous; and then, with a dropping of the reference to age, the grotesque, the ridiculous alone. "Human" is what every man is, "humane" is what every man ought to be; for Johnson's suggestion that "humane" is from the French feminine, "humaine," and "human" from the masculine, cannot for an instant be admitted. "Ingenious" expresses a mental, "ingenuous" a moral, excellence. A gardener "prunes" or trims his trees, properly indeed his "vines" alone (prosigner), birds "green" or trim their feathers. We "allay" wine with water; we "alloy" gold with platina. "Bloom" is a finer and more delicate efflorescence even than "blossom;" thus the "bloom," but not the "blossom," of the cheek. It is now always "clots" of blood and "clods" of earth; a "float" of timber, and a "fleet" of ships; men "vend" wares, and "vent" complaints. A "curtsy" is one, and that merely an external manifestation of "courtesy." "Gambling" may be, as with a fearful irony it is called, play, but it is nearly as distant from "gambolling" as hell is from heaven. Nor would it be hard, in almost every pair or larger group of words which I have adduced, as in others which no doubt might be added to complete the list, to trace a difference of meaning which has obtained a more or less distinct recognition.1

But my subject is inexhaustible; it has no limits except those,

1 The same happens in other languages. Thus in Greek "
\[\text{\textalpha\upsilon\dot{\textdelta}\nu\tau\omicron\varepsilon\mu\alpha\nu}\]
and "
\[\text{\textalpha\upsilon\dot{\textdelta}\nu\tau\omicron\varepsilon\pi\omicron\nu}\]
both signify that which is devoted, though in very different senses, to the gods; "
\[\text{\theta\acute{\i}\acute{o}\nu}\]
boldness, and "
\[\text{\theta\acute{\i}\acute{o}\pi\omicron}\]
temper, were no more at first than different spellings of the same word; not otherwise is it with γρίφωσ and γρίφως, έλωσ, δεσ, βρικώ and βρισκώ: while ὁδερας and ὁδερας, αυρας and αυρας, are probably the same words. So too in Latin "
\[\text{penna}\]
and "
\[\text{pinnas}\]
differ only in form, and signify alike a "wing;" while yet "
\[\text{penna}\]
have come to be used for the wing of a bird, "
\[\text{pinnas}\]
(its diminutive "pinnaculum" has given us "pinnacle") for that of a building. So it is with "
\[\text{Thrax}\]
" a Thracian, and "
\[\text{Threx}\]
" a gladiator; with "
\[\text{codex}\]
and "
\[\text{caudex}\]
" forceps" and "
\[\text{forceps}\]
" antiquus and "
\[\text{antiquus}\]
" curleber and "
\[\text{creber}\]
" infacetus and "
\[\text{infacetus}\]
" providentia, "
\[\text{prudentia}\]
" and "
\[\text{provincia}\]
" columna and "
\[\text{culmen}\]
" colutus and "
\[\text{cetus}\]
" agrimonier and "
\[\text{harmo}\]
" "
\[\text{Lucina}\]
" and "
\[\text{Luna}\]
" "
\[\text{navita}\]
" and "
\[\text{nauta}\]
" in German with "
\[\text{rechtlich}\]
" and "
\[\text{redlich}\]
" schlecht" and "
\[\text{schlicht}\]
" ahaden and "
\[\text{ahnen}\]
" biegsam" and "
\[\text{beugsam}\]
" forsehung" and "
\[\text{vorsehung}\]
" deich and "
\[\text{teich}\]
" trotz" and "
\[\text{trutz}\]
" born and "
\[\text{brunn}\]
" athen" and "
\[\text{odem}\]
" in French with "
\[\text{harnois}\]
" the armour, or "
\[\text{harness}\]
" of a soldier, "
\[\text{harnais}\]
" of a horse; with "
\[\text{Zephir}\]
" and "
\[\text{Zephir}\]
" and with many more.
which indeed may be often narrow enough, imposed by my own ignorance on the one side; and on the other, by the necessity of consulting your patience, and of only choosing such matter as will admit a popular setting forth. These necessities, however, bid me to pause, and suggest that I should not look round for other quarters from whence accessions of new words are derived. Doubtless I should not be long without finding many such. I must satisfy myself for the rest with a very brief consideration of the motives which, as they have been, are still at work among us, inducing us to seek for these augmentations of our vocabulary.

And first, the desire of greater clearness is a frequent motive and inducement to this. It has been well and truly said: “Every new term, expressing a fact or a difference not precisely or adequately expressed by any other word in the same language, is a new organ of thought for the mind that has learned it.”1 The limits of their vocabulary are in fact for most men the limits of their knowledge; and in a great degree for us all. Of course I do not affirm that it is absolutely impossible to have our mental conceptions clearer and more distinct than our words; but it is very hard to have, and still harder to keep, them so. And therefore it is that men, conscious of this, so soon as ever they have learned to distinguish in their minds, are urged by an almost irresistible impulse to distinguish also in their words. They feel that nothing is made sure till this is done.

The sense that a word covers too large a space of meaning, is the frequent occasion of the introduction of another, which shall relieve it of a portion of this. Thus, there was a time when “witch” was applied equally to male and female dealers in unlawful magical arts. Simon Magus, for example, and Elymas are both “witches,” in Wyclif’s New Testament (Acts viii. 9; xiii. 8), and Posthumus in Cymbeline: but when the medieval Latin “sortiarius” (not “sortitor” as in Richardson) supplied another word, the French “sorcier,” and thus our English “sorcerer” (originally the “caster of lots”), then “witch” gradually was confined to the hag, or female practiser of these arts, while “sorcerer” was applied to the male.

New necessities, new evolutions of society into more complex conditions, evoke new words; which come forth, because they are required now; but did not formerly exist, because they were not required in the period preceding. For example, in Greece, so long as the poet sang his own verses, “singer” (ἀρσικός)

1 Coleridge, Church and State, p. 200.
sufficiently expressed the double function; such a "singer" was Homer, and such Homer describes Demodocus, the bard of the Phaeacians; that double function, in fact, not being in his time contemplated as double, but each part of it so naturally completing the other, that no second word was required. When, however, in the division of labour one made the verses which another chanted, then "poet" or "maker," a word unknown in the Homeric age, arose. In like manner, when "physicians" were the only natural philosophers, the word covered this meaning as well as that other which it still retains; but when the investigation of nature and natural causes detached itself from the art of healing, became an independent study of itself, the name "physician" remained to that which was as the stock and stem of the art, while the new offshoot sought out a new name for itself.

Another motive to the invention of new words, is the desire thereby to cut short lengthy explanations, tedious circuits of language. Science is often an immense gainer by words which say singly what it would have taken whole sentences otherwise to have said. Thus "isothermal" is quite of modern invention; but what a long story it would be to tell the meaning of "isotherm al lines," all which is summed up in and saved by the word. We have long had the word "assimilation" in our dictionaries; "dissimilation" has not yet found its way into them, but it speedily will. It will appear first, if it has not already appeared, in our books on language. I express myself with this confidence, because the advance of philological inquiry has rendered it almost a matter of necessity that we should possess a word to designate a certain process, and no other word would designate it at all so well. There is a process of "assimilation" going on very extensively in language; it occurs where the organs of speech find themselves helped by changing a letter for another which has just occurred, or will just occur in a word; thus we say not "adfi ance" but "affiance," not "renown," as our ancestors did when the word "renommée" was first naturalised, but "renown." At the same time there is another opposite process, where some letter would recur too often for euphony or comfort in speaking, if the strict form of the word were too closely held fast, and where consequently this letter is exchanged for some other, generally for some nearly allied; thus it is at least a reasonable suggestion, that "coeruleum" was once "coeluleum," from coelum: so too the Italians prefer "veleno" to "veneno;" and we "cinnamon" to "cinnamom" (the earlier form); in
"turtle" and "purple" we have shrunk from the double "r" of "turtur" and "purpura;" and this process of making unlike, requiring a term to express it, will create, or indeed has created, the word "dissimilation," which probably will in due time establish itself among us in far wider than its primary use.

"Watershed" has only recently begun to appear in books of geography; and yet how convenient it must be admitted to be; how much more so than "line of water parting," which it has succeeded; meaning, as I need hardly tell you it does, not merely that which sheds the waters, but that which divides them ("wasserscheide"); and being applied to that exact ridge and highest line in a mountain region, where the waters of that region separate off and divide, some to one side, and some to the other; as in the Rocky Mountains of North America there are streams rising within very few miles of one another, which flow severally east and west, and, if not in unbroken course, yet as affluents to larger rivers, fall at last severally into the Pacific and Atlantic oceans. It must be allowed, I think, that not merely geographical terminology, but geography itself, had a benefactor in him who first endowed it with so expressive and comprehensive a word, bringing before us a fact which we should scarcely have been aware of without it.

There is another word which I have just employed, "affluent," in the sense of a stream which does not flow into the sea, but joins a larger stream, as for instance, the Isis is an "affluent" of the Thames, the Moselle of the Rhine. It is itself an example in the same kind of that whereof I have been speaking, having been only recently constituted a substantive, and employed in this sense, while yet its utility is obvious. "Confluents" would perhaps be a fitter name, where the rivers, like the Missouri and the Mississippi, were of equal or nearly equal importance up to the time of their meeting.

Again, new words are coined out of the necessity which men feel of filling up gaps in the language. Thoughtful men, comparing their own language with that of other nations, become conscious of deficiencies, of important matters unexpressed in their own, and with more or less success proceed to supply the deficiency. For example, that sin of sins, the undue love of self, with the postponing of the interests of all others to our own, had for a long time no word to express it in English. Help was sought from the Greek, and from the Latin. "Philauty" (φιλαυτία) had been more than once attempted by our scholars; but found no popular acceptance. This failing, men turned to the Latin;
one writer trying to supply the want by calling the man a "suist," as one seeking his own things ("sua"), and the sin itself, "suicism." The gap, however, was not really filled up till some of the Puritan writers, drawing on our Saxon, devised "selfish" and "selfishness," words which to us seem obvious enough, but which yet are little more than two hundred years old.¹

¹ A passage from Hacket's Life of Archbishop Williams, Part II. p. 144, marks the first rise of this word, and the quarter from whence it arose: "When they [the Presbyterians] saw that he was not selfish (it is a word of their own new mint), etc." In Whitlock's Zootomia (1654) there is another indication of it as a novelty, p. 364: "If constancy may be tainted with this selfishness (to use our new wordings of old and general acting)."

—It is he who in his striking essay, The Grand Schismatic, or Suist Anatomised, puts forward his own words, "suist," and "suicism," in lieu of those which have ultimately been adopted. "Suicism," let me observe, had not in his time the obvious objection of resembling another word too nearly, and being liable to be confused with it; for "suicide" did not then exist in the language, nor indeed till some twenty years later. The coming up of "suicide" is marked by this passage in Phillips' New World of Words, 1671, 3rd ed.: "Nor less to be exploded is the word 'suicide,' which may as well seem to participate of sus a sow, as of the pronoun sui." In the Index to Jackson's Works, published two years later, it is still "suicidium"—"the horrid suicidium of the Jews at York." "Suicide" is apparently of much later introduction into French. Génin (Récitations Philol., vol. i. p. 194) places it about the year 1738, and makes the Abbé Desfontaines its first sponsor. He is wrong, as the words just quoted show, in supposing that we borrowed it from the French, or that the word did not exist in English till the middle of last century. The French sometimes complain that the fashion of suicide was borrowed from England. It would seem at all events probable that the word was so borrowed.

Let me urge here the advantage of a complete collection, or one as nearly complete as the industry of the collectors would allow, of all the notices in our literature which mark, and would serve as dates for, the first incoming of new words into the language. These notices are of the most various kinds. Sometimes they are protests against a new word's introduction; sometimes they are gratulations at the same; while many hold themselves neuter as to approval or disapproval, and merely state, or allow us to gather, the fact of a word's recent appearance. There are not a few of these notices in Richardson's Dictionary: thus one from Lord Bacon under "essay;" from Swift under "banter;" from Sir Thomas Elyot under "mansuetude;" from Lord Chesterfield under "flirtation;" from Davies and Marlowe's Epigrams under "gull;" from Roger North under "sham" (Appendix); the third quotation from Dryden under "mob;" one from the same under "philanthropy," and again under "witticism," in which he claims the authorship of the word; that from Evelyn under "miss;" and from Milton under "demagogue." There are also notices of the same kind in Todd's Johnson. The work, however, is one which no single scholar could hope to accomplish, which could only be accomplished by many lovers of their native tongue throwing into a common stock the results of their several studies. The sources from which these illustrative passages might be gathered cannot beforehand be enumerated, inasmuch as it is difficult to say in what unexpected quarter they would not sometimes be found, although some of these sources are obvious enough. As a very slight sample of what might be done in this way by the joint contributions of many, let me
Before quitting this part of the subject, let me say a few words in conclusion on this deliberate introduction of words to supply felt omissions in a language, and the limits within which this or any other conscious interference with the development of a language is desirable or possible. By the time that a people begin to meditate upon their language, to be aware by a conscious reflective act either of its merits or deficiencies, by throw together references to a few passages of the kind which I do not think have found their way into any of our dictionaries. Thus add to that which Richardson has quoted on “banter,” another from the Taller, No. 230. On “plunder” there are two instructive passages in Fuller’s Church History, book xi. sect. iv. 33; and book ix. sect. iv.; and one in Heylin’s Animadversions thereupon, p. 196. On “admiration” see a note in Harrington’s Aristote, book xix.; on “maturity” Sir Thomas Elyot’s Governor, book i. chap. xxii.; and on “industry” the same, book i. chap. xxiii.; on “neophyte” a notice in Pulke’s Defence of the English Bible, Parker Society’s edition, p. 356; and on “panorama,” and marking its recent introduction (it is not in Johnson), a passage in Pegge’s Anecdotes of the English language, first published in 1803, but my reference is to the edition of 1814, p. 306; on “accommodate,” and supplying a date for its first coming into popular use, see Shakespeare’s 2 Henry IV., Act III. Sc. ii.; on “shrub” Junius’ Etymologicon, s. v. “syrup;” on “sentiment” and “cajole” Skinner, s. vv., in his Etymologicon (“vox nuper civitate donata”); and on “opera” Evelyn’s Memoirs and Diary, 1827, vol. i. pp. 189, 190. In such a collection should be included those passages of our literature which supply implicit evidence for the non-existence of a word up to a certain moment. It may be urged that it is difficult, nay impossible, to prove a negative; and yet a passage like this from Bolingbroke makes certain that when it was written the word “isolated” did not exist in our language: “The events we are witnesses of in the course of the longest life, appear to us very often original, unprepared, signal and unrelated: if I may use such a word for want of a better in English. In French I would say isolé” (Notes and Queries, No. 226). Compare Lord Chesterfield in a letter to Bishop Chenevix, of date 12 March, 1767: “I have survived almost all my contemporaries, and as I am too old to make new acquaintances, I find myself isolé.” So, too, it is pretty certain that “amphibious” was not yet English, when one writes (in 1618): “We are like those creatures called αμφίβια, who live in water or on land.” Ζωολογία, the title of a book published in 1649, makes it clear that “zoology” was not yet in our vocabulary, as ζωόφυτον (Jackson) proves the same for “zoophyte,” and πελαθεμός (Gell) for “polytheism.” One precaution, let me observe, would be necessary in the collecting, or rather in the adopting of any statements about the newness of a word—for the passages themselves, even when erroneous, ought not the less to be noted—namely, that, where there is the least motive for suspicion, no one’s affirmation ought to be accepted simply and at once as to the novelty of a word; for all here are liable to error. Thus more than one which Sir Thomas Elyot indicates as new in his time, “magnanimity” for example (The Governor, ii. 14), are to be met in Chaucer. When Skinner affirmed of “sentiment” that it had only recently obtained the rights of English citizenship from the translators of French books, he was altogether mistaken, this word being also one of continual recurrence in Chaucer. An intelligent correspondent gives in Notes and Queries, No. 225, a useful catalogue of recent neologies in our speech, which yet would require to be used with caution, for there are at least half a dozen in the list which have not the smallest right to be so considered.
far the greater and more important part of its work is done; it is fixed in respect of its structure in immutable forms; the region in which any alteration or modification, addition to it or subtraction from it, deliberately devised and carried out, may be possible, is very limited indeed. Its great laws are too firmly established to admit of this; so that almost nothing can be taken from it, which it has got; almost nothing added to it, which it has not got. It will travel indeed in certain courses of change; but it would be as easy almost to alter the career of a planet as for man to alter these. This is sometimes a subject of regret with those who see what they believe manifest defects or blemishes in their language, and such as appear to them capable of remedy. And yet in fact this is well; since for once that these redressers of real or fancied wrongs, these suppliers of things lacking, would have mended, we may be tolerably confident that ten times, yea, a hundred times, they would have marred; letting go that which would have been well retained; retaining that which by a necessary law the language now dismisses and lets go; and in manifold ways interfering with those processes of a natural logic which are here evermore at work. The genius of a language, unconsciously presiding over all its transformations, and conducting them to a definite issue, will have been a far truer, far safer guide than the artificial wit, however subtle, of any single man, or of any association of men. For the genius of a language is the sense and inner conviction of all who speak it, as to what it ought to be, and the means by which it will best attain its objects; and granting that a pair of eyes, or two or three pair of eyes may see much, yet millions of eyes will certainly see more.

It is only with the words, and not with the forms and laws of a language, that any interference such as I have just supposed is possible. Something, indeed much, may here be done by wise masters, in the way of rejecting that which would deform, allowing and adopting that which will strengthen and enrich. Those who would purify or enrich a language, so long as they have kept within this their proper sphere, have often effected much more than at first could have seemed possible. The history of the German language affords so much better illustration of this than our own would do, that I shall make no scruple in seeking my examples there. When the patriotic Germans began to wake up to a consciousness of the enormous encroachments which foreign languages, the Latin and French above all, had made on their native tongue, the lodgements which they had therein
effected, and the danger which threatened it, namely, that it should cease to be German at all, but only a mingle-mangle, a variegated patchwork of many languages, without any unity or inner coherence at all, various societies were instituted among them, at the beginning and during the course of the seventeenth century, for the recovering of what was lost of their own, for the expelling of that which had intruded from abroad; and these with excellent effect.

But more effectual than these societies were the efforts of single men, who in this merited well of their country. In respect of words which are now entirely received by the whole nation, it is often possible to designate the writers who first substituted them for some affected Gallicism or unnecessary Latinism. Thus to Lessing his fellow-countrymen owe the substitution of “zartgefühl” for “delicatesse,” of “empfindsamkeit” for “sentimentalität,” of “wesenheit” for “essence.” It was Voss (1786) who first employed “alterthümlich” for “antik.” Wieland too was the author or reviver of a multitude of excellent words, for which often he had to do earnest battle at the first; such were “seligkeit,” “anmuth,” “entzückung,” “festlich,” “entwirren,” with many more. For “maskerade,” Campe would have fain substituted “larventanz.” It was a novelty when Büsching called his great work on geography “erdbeschreibung” instead of “geographie;” while “schnellpost” instead of “diligence,” “zerrbild” for “carricatur” are also of recent introduction. In regard of “wörterbuch” itself, J. Grimm tells us he can find no example of its use dating earlier than 1719.

Yet at the same time it must be acknowledged that some of these reformers proceeded with more zeal than knowledge, while others did whatever in them lay to make the whole movement absurd—even as there ever hang on the skirts of a noble movement, be it in literature or politics or higher things yet, those who contribute their little all to bring ridicule and contempt upon it. Thus in the reaction against foreign interlopers which ensued, and in the zeal to purify the language from them, some went to such extravagant excesses as to desire to get rid of “testament,” “apostel,” which last Campe would have replaced by “lehrbote,” with other words like these, consecrated by longest use, and to find native substitutes in their room; or they understood so little what words deserved to be called

1 There is an admirable Essay by Leibnitz with this view (Opera, vol. vi. part ii. pp. 6-51) in French and German, with this title, Considérations sur la Culture et la Perfection de la Langue Allemande.
foreign, or how to draw the line between them and native, that they would fain have gotten rid of "vater," "mutter," "wein," "fenster," "meister," "kelch;" the first three of which belong to the German language by just as good a right as they do to the Latin and the Greek; while the other three have been naturalised so long that to propose to expel them now was as if, having passed an alien act for the banishment of all foreigners, we should proceed to include under that name, and as such drive forth from the kingdom, the descendants of the French Protestants who found refuge here at the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes, or even of the Flemings who settled among us in the time of our Edwards. One notable enthusiast in this line proposed to create an entirely new nomenclature for all the mythological personages of the Greek and the Roman pantheon, who, one would think, might have been allowed, if any, to retain their Greek and Latin names. So far however from this, they were to exchange these for equivalent German titles; Cupid was to be "Lustkind," Flora "Bluminne," Aurora "Röthin;" instead of Apollo schoolboys were to speak of "Singhold;" instead of Pan, of "Schaflieb;" instead of Jupiter, of "Hellevater," with much else of the same kind. Let us beware (and the warning extends much further than to the matter in hand) of making a good cause ridiculous by our manner of supporting it, of assuming that exaggerations on one side can only be redressed by exaggerations as great upon the other.

LECTURE III

DIMINUTIONS OF THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE

I took occasion to observe at the commencement of my last lecture that it is the essential character of a living language to be in flux and flow, to be gaining and losing; the words which constitute it as little continuing exactly the same, or in the same relations to one another, as do the atoms which at any one moment make up our bodies remain for ever without subtraction or addition. As I then undertook for my especial subject to trace some of the acquisitions which our own language had made, I shall consider in the present some of the losses, or at any rate diminutions, which during the same period it has endured. But it will be well here, by one or two remarks going before, to avert any possible misapprehensions of my meaning.

It is certain that all languages must, or at least all languages do in the end, perish. They run their course; not all at the same rate, for the tendency to change is different in different languages, both from internal causes (mechanism and the like), and also from causes external to the language, laid in the varying velocities of social progress and social decline; but so it is, that whether of shorter or longer life, they have their youth, their manhood, their old age, their decrepitude, their final dissolution. Not indeed that, even when this last hour has arrived, they disappear, leaving no traces behind them. On the contrary, out of their death a new life comes forth; they pass into new forms, the materials of which they were composed more or less survive, but these now organised in new shapes and according to other laws of life. Thus, for example, the Latin perishes as a living language, but a chief part of the words that composed it live on in the four daughter languages, French, Italian, Spanish, Portuguese; or the six, if we count the Provençal and Wallachian; not a few in our own. Still in their own proper being languages perish and pass away; there are dead records of what they were in books; not living men who speak them any more. Seeing then that they thus die, they must have had the germs of a possible decay and death in them from the beginning.

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Nor is this all; but in such mighty strong-built fabrics as these, the causes which thus bring about their final dissolution must have been actually at work very long before the results began to be visible. Indeed, very often it is with them as with states, which, while in some respects they are knitting and strengthen­ing, in others are already unfolding the seeds of their future and, it may be, still remote overthrow. Equally in these and those, in states and in languages, it would be a serious mistake to assume that all up to a certain point and period is growth and gain, while all after is decay and loss. On the contrary, there are long periods during which growth in some directions is going hand in hand with decay in others; losses in one kind are being compensated, or more than compensated, by gains in another; during which a language changes, but only as the bud changes into the flower, and the flower into the fruit. A time indeed arrives when the growth and gains, becoming ever fewer, cease to constitute any longer a compensation for the losses and the decay, which are ever becoming more; when the forces of disorganisation and death at work are stronger than those of life and order. It is from this moment the decline of a language may properly be dated. But until that crisis and turning-point has arrived, we may be quite justified in speaking of the losses of a language, and may esteem them most real, without in the least thereby implying that the period of its commencing degeneracy has begun. This may yet be far distant: and therefore when I dwell on certain losses and diminutions which our own has undergone, or is undergoing, you will not conclude that I am seeking to present it to you as now travelling the downward course to dissolution and death. This is very far from my intention. If in some respects it is losing, in others it is gaining. Nor is everything which it lets go, a loss; for this too, the parting with a word in which there is no true help, the dropping of a cumbrous or superfluous form, may itself be sometimes a most real gain. English is undoubtedly becoming different from what it has been; but only different in that it is passing into another stage of its development; only different, as the fruit is different from the flower, and the flower from the bud; having changed its merits, but not having renounced them; possessing, it may be, less of beauty, but more of use­fulness; not, perhaps, serving the poet so well, but serving the historian and philosopher and theologian better than before.

One observation more let me make, before entering on the
special details of my subject. It is this. The losses and diminu-
tions of a language differ in one respect from its gains and acquisitions—namely, that they are of two kinds, while its gains are only of one. Its gains are only in words; it never puts forth in the course of its later evolution a new power; it never makes for itself a new case, or a new tense, or a new comparative. But its losses are both in words and in powers—in words of course, but in powers also: it leaves behind it, as it travels onward, cases which it once possessed; renounces the employment of tenses which it once used; forgets its dual; is content with one termination both for masculine and feminine, and so on. Nor is this a peculiar feature of one language, but the universal law of all. “In all languages,” as has been well said, “there is a constant tendency to relieve themselves of that precision which chooses a fresh symbol for every shade of meaning, to lessen the amount of nice distinction, and detect as it were a royal road to the interchange of opinion.” For example, a vast number of languages had at an early period of their development, besides the singular and plural, a dual number, some even a trinal, which they have let go at a later. But what I mean by a language renouncing its powers will, I trust, be more clear to you before my lecture is concluded. This much I have here said on the matter, to explain and justify a division which I shall make, considering first the losses of the English language in words, and then in powers.

And first, there is going forward a continual extinction of the words in our language—as indeed in every other. When I speak of this the dying out of words, I do not refer to mere tentative, experimental words, not a few of which I adduced in my last lecture, words offered to the language, but not accepted by it; I refer rather to such as either belonged to the primitive stock of the language, or if not so, which had been domiciled in it so long, that they might have been supposed to have found in it a lasting home. Thus not a few pure Anglo-Saxon words which lived on into the times of our early English, have subsequently dropped out of our vocabulary, sometimes leaving a gap which has never since been filled, but their places oftener taken by others which have come up in their room. Not to mention those of Chaucer and Wiclif, which are very numerous, many held their ground to far later periods, and yet have finally given way. That beautiful word “wanhope” for despair, hope which has so waned that now there is an entire want of it, was in use down to the reign of Elizabeth; it occurs so late as in the poems of
Gascoigne. “Skinker” for cupbearer (an ungraceful word, no doubt) is used by Shakespeare, and lasted to Dryden’s times and beyond. Spenser uses often “to welk” (welken) in the sense of to fade, “to sty” for to mount, “to hery” as to glorify or praise, “to halse” as to embrace, “teene” as vexation or grief: Shakespeare “to tarre” as to provoke, “to sperr” as to enclose or bar in; “to sag” for to droop, or hang the head downward. Holland employs “geir” for vulture (“vultures or geirs”), “specht” for woodpecker, “reise” for journey, “frimm” for lusty or strong. “To schimmer” occurs in Bishop Hall; “to tind,” that is, to kindle, and surviving in “tinder,” is used by Bishop Sanderson; “to nimim,” or take, as late as by Fuller. A rogue is a “skellum” in Sir Thomas Urquhart. “Nesh” in the sense of soft through moisture, “leer” in that of empty, “came” in that of uncle, mother’s brother (the German “oheim”), good Saxon-English once, still live on in some of our provincial dialects; so does “fitter-mouse” or “flutter-mouse” (mus volitans), where we should use bat. Indeed of those above named several do the same; it is so with “frimm,” with “to sag,” “to nimim,” “Heft,” employed by Shakespeare in the sense of weight, is still employed in the same sense by our peasants in Hampshire.

A number of vigorous compounds we have dropped and let go. “Earsports” for entertainments of song or music (ακοοδύαρα) is a constantly recurring word in Holland’s Plutarch. Were it not for Shakespeare, we should have quite forgotten that young men of hasty fiery valour were called “hotspurs”; and even now we regard the word rather as the proper name of one than that which would have been once alike the designation of all. Fuller warns men that they should not “witwanton” with God. Severe austere old men, such as, in Falstaff’s words, would “hate us youth,” were “grimsirs” or “grimsires” once (Masinger). “Realmrape” (=usurpation), occurring in The Mirror...
for Magistrates, is a vigorous word. “Rootfast” and “rootfastness” were ill lost, being worthy to have lived; so too was Lord Brooke’s “bookhunger,” and Baxter’s “word-warriors,” with which term he noted those whose strife was only about words. “Malingering” is familiar enough to military men, but I do not find it in our dictionaries; being the soldier who, out of evil will (malin gre) to his work, shams and shirks, and is not found in the ranks.

Those who would gladly have seen the Anglo-Saxon to have predominated over the Latin element in our language, even more than it actually has done, must note with regret that in many instances a word of the former stock has been dropped, and a Latin coined to supply its place; or where the two once existed side by side, the Saxon has died, and the Latin lived on. Thus Wick employed “soothsaw,” where we now use proverb; “sourdough,” where we employ leaven; “wellwillingness” for benevolence; “againbuying” for redemption; “againrising” for resurrection; “undeadliness” for immortality; “uncunningness” for ignorance; “aftercomer” for descendant; “greatdoingly” for magnificently; “to afterthink” (still in use in Lancashire) for to repent; “medeful,” which has given way to meritorious; “untellable” for ineffable; “dearworth” for precious; Chaucer has “forward” for promise; Sir John Cheke “freshman” for proselyte; “mooned” for lunatic; “foreshower” for prophet; “hundreder” for centurion; Jewel “foretalk,” where we now employ preface; Holland “sunstead” where we use solstice; “leechcraft” instead of medicine; and another, “wordcraft” for logic; “starconner” (Gascoigne) did service once, if not instead of astrologer, yet side by side with it; “halfgod” (Golding) had the advantage over “demigod,” that it was all of one piece; “to eyebite” (Holland) told its story at least as well as to fascinate; “shriftfather” as confessor; “earshrift” (Cartwright) is only two syllables, while auricular confession is eight; “waterfright” is a better word than our awkward Greek hydropobia. The lamprey (lambens petram) was called once the “suckstone” or the “lickstone;” and the anemone the “windflower.” “Umstroke,” if it had lived on (it appears as late as Fuller, though our dictionaries know nothing of it), might have made “circumference” and “periphery” unnecessary. “Wanhope,” as we saw just now, has given place to despair, “middler” to mediator; and it would be easy to increase this list.

I had occasion just now to notice the fact that many words

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survive in our provincial dialects long after they have died out from the main body of the speech. The fact is one connected with so much of deep interest in the history of language that I cannot pass it thus slightly over. It is one which, rightly regarded, may assist to put us in a just point of view for estimating the character of the local and provincial in speech, and rescuing it from that unmerited contempt and neglect with which it is often regarded.

I must here go somewhat further back than I could wish; but only so, only by looking at the matter in connexion with other phenomena of speech, can I hope to explain to you the worth and significance which local and provincial words and usages must oftentimes possess.

Let us then first suppose a portion of those speaking a language to have been separated off from the main body of its speakers, either through their forsaking for one cause or other of their native seats, or by the intrusion of a hostile people, like a wedge, between them and the others, forcibly keeping them asunder, and cutting off their communications one with the other, as the Saxons intruded between the Britons of Cornwall and of Wales. In such a case it will inevitably happen that before very long differences of speech will begin to reveal themselves between those to whom even dialectic distinctions may have been once unknown. The divergences will be of various kinds. Idioms will come up in the separated body, which, not being recognised and allowed by those who remain the arbiters of the language, will be esteemed by them, should they come under their notice, violations of its law, or at any rate departures from its purity. Again, where a colony has gone forth into new seats, and exists under new conditions, it is probable that the necessities, physical and moral, rising out of these new conditions, will give birth to words which there will be nothing to call out among those who continue in the old haunts of the nation. Intercourse with new tribes and people will bring in new words, as, for instance, contact with the Indian tribes of North America has given to American English a certain number of words hardly or not at all allowed or known by us; or as the presence of a large Dutch population at the Cape has given to the English spoken there many words, as “inspan,” “outspan,” “spoor,” of which our home English knows nothing.

There is another cause, however, which will probably be more effectual than all these, namely, that words will in process of time be dropped by those who constitute the original stock of the nation, which will not be dropped by the offshoot; idioms
which those have overlived, and have stored up in the unhonoured lumber-room of the past, will still be in use and currency among the smaller and separated section which has gone forth; and thus it will come to pass that what seems and in fact is the newer swarm, will have many older words, and very often an archaic air and old-world fashion both about the words they use, their way of pronouncing, their order and manner of combining them. Thus after the Conquest we know that our insular French gradually diverged from the French of the Continent. The Prioress in Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales* could speak her French "full faire and fetishly," but it was French, as the poet slyly adds,

> After the scol of Stratford atte bow,
> For French of Paris was to hire unknowe.

One of our old chroniclers, writing in the reign of Elizabeth, informs us that by the English colonists within the Pale in Ireland numerous words were preserved in common use, "the dregs of the old ancient Chaucer English" as he contemptuously calls it, which had become quite obsolete and forgotten in England itself. For example, they still called a spider an "atter-cop"—a word, by the way, still in popular use in the North—a physician a "leech," as in poetry he still is called; a dunghill was still for them a "mixen" (the word is still common all over England in this sense); a quadrangle or base court was a "bawn;" ¹ they employed "uncouth" in the earlier sense of unknown. Nay more, their general manner of speech was so different, though continuing English still, that Englishmen at their first coming over often found it hard or impossible to comprehend. We have another example of the same in what took place after the revocation of the Edict of Nantes, and the consequent formation of colonies of Protestant French emigrants in various places, especially in Amsterdam and other chief cities of Holland. There gradually grew up among these what came to be called "refugee French," which within a generation or two diverged in several particulars from the classical language of France; its divergence being mainly occasioned by this, that it remained stationary, while the classical language was in motion; it retained usages and words which the latter had dismissed.²

¹ The only two writers of whom I am aware as subsequently using this word are, both writing in Ireland and of Irish matters, Spenser and Swift. The passages are both quoted in Richardson's *Dictionary.*

² There is an excellent account of this "refugee French" in Weiss' *History of the Protestant Refugees of France.*
Nor is it otherwise in respect of our English provincialisms. It is true that our country people, who in the main employ them, have not been separated by distance of space, nor yet by insurmountable obstacles intervening, from the main body of their fellow-countrymen; but they have been quite as effectually divided by deficient education. They have been, if not locally, yet intellectually, kept at a distance from the onward march of the nation's mind; and of them also it is true that many of their words, idioms, turns of speech, which we are ready to set down as vulgarisms, solecisms of speech, violations of the primary rules of grammar, do merely attest that those who employ them have not kept abreast with the advance of the language and nation, but have been left behind by it. The usages are only local in the fact that, having once been employed by the whole body of the English people, they have now receded from the lips of all except those in some certain country districts, who have been more faithful than others to the traditions of the past.

It is thus in respect of a multitude of isolated words, which were excellent Anglo-Saxon, which were excellent early English, and which only are not excellent present English, because use, which is the supreme arbiter in these matters, has decided against their further employment. Several of these I enumerated just now. It is thus also with several grammatical forms and flexions. For instance, where we decline the plural of "I sing," "we sing," "ye sing," "they sing," there are parts of England in which they would decline, "we singen," "ye singen," "they singen." This is not indeed the original form of the plural, but it is that form of it which, coming up about Chaucer's time, was just going out in Spenser's; he, though we must ever keep in mind that he does not fairly represent the language of his time, or indeed of any time, affecting a certain artificial archaism both in words and forms, continually uses it.1 After him it becomes

1 With all its severity, there is some truth in Ben Jonson's observation: "Spenser, in affecting the ancients, writ no language." In this matter, however, Ben Jonson was at one with him; for he does not hesitate to express his strong regret that this form has not been retained. "The persons plural," he says (English Grammar, chap. xvii.), "keep the termination of the first person singular. In former times, till about the reign of King Henry VIII., they were wont to be formed by adding en; thus, loven, sayen, complainen. But now (whatsoever is the cause) it hath quite grown out of use, and that other so generally prevailed, that I dare not presume to set this afoot again; albeit (to tell you my opinion) I am persuaded that the lack hereof, well considered, will be found a great blemish to our tongue. For seeing time and person be as it were the right and left hand of a verb, what can the maiming bring else, but a lameness to the whole body?"
ever rarer, the last of whom I am aware as occasionally using it being Fuller, until it quite disappears.

Of such as may now employ forms like these we must say, not that they violate the laws of the language, but only that they have taken their permanent stand at a point which was only a point of transition, and which it has now left behind, and overived. Thus, to take examples which you may hear at the present day in almost any part of England—a countryman will say, “He made me afeard;” or “The price of corn ris last market day;” or “I will axe him his name;” or “I tell ye.” You would probably set these phrases down for barbarous English. They are not so at all; in one sense they are quite as good English as “He made me afraid;” or “The price of corn rose last market day;” or “I will ask him his name.” “Afeard,” used by Spenser, is the regular participle of the old verb “to affect,” still existing as a law term, as “afraid” is of to “affray,” and just as good English; “ris” or “risse” is an old preterite of “to rise;” “to axe” is not a mispronunciation of “to ask,” but a genuine English form of the word, the form which in the earlier English it constantly assumed; in Wiclif’s Bible almost without exception; and indeed “axe” occurs continually, I know not whether invariably, in Tyndale’s translation of the Scriptures; there was a time when “ye” was an accusative, and to have used it as a nominative or vocative, the only permitted uses at present, would have been incorrect. Even such phrases as “Put them things away,” or “The man what owns the horse,” are not bad, but only antiquated, English.\(^1\) Saying this, I would not in the least imply that these forms are open to you to employ, or that they would be good English for you. They would not; inasmuch as they are contrary to present use and custom, and these must be our standards in what we speak, and in what we write; just as in our buying and selling we are bound to employ the current coin of the realm, must not attempt to pass that which long since has been called in, whatever merits or intrinsic value it may possess. All which I affirm is that the phrases just brought forward represent past stages of the language, and are not barbarous violations of it.

The same may be asserted of certain ways of pronouncing words, which are now in use among the lower classes, but not

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\(^1\) Gémin (Études Philologiques, vol. i. p. 71) says to the same effect: “Il n’y a guèrèes de faute de Français, je dis faute générale, accrédité, qui n’ait sa raison d’être, et ne pût au besoin produire ses lettres de noblesse; et souvent mieux en règle que celles des locutions qui ont usurpé leur place au soleil.”
among the higher; as for example, "contrary," "mischievous," "blasphemous," instead of "contrary," "mischievous," "blasphemous." It would be abundantly easy to show by a multitude of quotations from our poets, and those reaching very far down, that these are merely the retention of the earlier pronunciation by the people, after the higher classes have abandoned it. And on the strength of what has just been spoken, let me here suggest to you how well worth your while it will prove to be on the watch for provincial words and inflexions, local idioms and modes of pronunciation, and to take note of these. Count nothing in this kind beneath your notice. Do not at once ascribe anything which you hear to the ignorance or stupidity of the speaker. Thus if you hear "nuncheon," do not at once set it down for a malformation of "luncheon," nor "yeel" of "eel." Lists and collections of provincial usage, such as I have suggested, always have their value. If you are not able to turn them to any profit yourselves, and they may not stand in close enough connexion

1 A single proof may in each case suffice:

"Our wills and fates do so contrary run."—Shakespeare.

"Ne let mischievous witches with their charms."—Spenser.

"O argument blasphemous, false and proud."—Milton.

I cannot doubt that this form which our country people in Hampshire, as in many other parts, always employ, either retains the original pronunciation, our received one being a modern corruption; or else, as is more probable, that we have made a confusion between two originally different words, from which they have kept clear. Thus in Howell's Vocabulary, 1659, and in Cotgrave's French and English Dictionary, both words occur: "nuncion or nuncheon, the afternoon's repast" (cf. Hudibras, I. i. 346: "They took their breakfasts or their nuncheons"), and "lunchion, a big piece," i.e. of bread; for both give the old French "caribot," which has this meaning, as the equivalent of "luncheon." It is clear that in this sense of lump or "big piece" Gay uses "luncheon":

"When hungry thou stood'st staring like an oaf,
I sliced the luncheon from the barley loaf;"

and Miss Baker in her Northamptonshire Glossary explains "lunch" as "a large lump of bread, or other edible; 'He helped himself to a good lunch of cake.'" We may note further that this "nunciation" may possibly put us on the right track for arriving at the etymology of the word. Richardson has called attention to the fact that it is spelt "noon-shun" in Browne's Pastorals, which must at least suggest as possible and plausible that the "nunciation" was originally applied to the labourer's slight meal, to which he withdrew for the shunning of the heat of the middle noon: especially when in Lancashire we find a word of similar formation, "noon-scape," and in Norfolk "noon-miss," for the time when labourers rest after dinner. It is at any rate certain that the dignity to which "lunch" or "luncheon" has now arrived, as when we read in the newspapers of a "magnificent luncheon," is altogether modern; the word belonged a century ago to rustic life, and in literature had not travelled beyond the "bobnailed pastorals" which professed to describe that life.

2 See it so written, Holland's Pliny, vol. ii. p. 428, and often.
with your own studies for this, yet there always are those who
will thank you for them, and to whom the humblest of these
collections, carefully and intelligently made, will be in one way
or other of real assistance. And there is the more need to urge
this at the present, because, notwithstanding the tenacity with
which our country folk cling to their old forms and usages, still
these forms and usages must now be rapidly growing fewer;
and there are forces, moral and material, at work in England,
which will probably cause that of those which now survive the
greater part will within the next fifty years have disappeared.

Before quitting this subject, let me instance one example more
of that which is commonly accounted ungrammatical usage,
but which is really the retention of old grammar by some, where
others have substituted new; I mean the constant application
by our rustic population in the south, and I dare say through
all parts of England, of "his" to inanimate objects, and to these
not personified, no less than to persons, where "its" would be
employed by others. This was once the manner of speech among
all; for "its" is a word of very recent introduction, many would
be surprised to learn of how recent introduction, into the lan-
guage. You will look for it in vain through the whole of our
Authorised Version of the Bible; the office which it now fulfils
being there accomplished, as our rustics accomplish it at the
present, by "his" (Gen. i. 11; Exod. xxxvii. 17; Matt. v. 15) or
"her" (Jon. i. 15; Rev. xxii. 2) applied as freely to inanimate
things as to persons, or else by "thereof" (Ps. Ivv. 10) or "of it"
(Dan. vii. 5). Nor may Lev. xxv. 5 be urged as invalidating this
assertion; for reference to the exemplar edition of 1611, or indeed
to any earlier editions of King James' Bible, will show that in
them the passage stood, "of its own accord." Nor "its" occurs
very rarely in Shakespeare, in many of his plays it will not once
be found. Milton also for the most part avoids it, and this
though in his time others freely allowed it. How soon all this
As a proof of the excellent service which an accurate acquaintance
with provincial usages may render in the investigation of the innumerable
perplexing phenomena of the English language, I would refer to the
admirable article "On English Pronouns Personal" in Transactions of the

This last very curious usage, which served as a kind of stepping-stone
to "its," and of which another example occurs in the Geneva Version
(Acts xii. 10), and three or four in Shakespeare, has been abundantly
illustrated by those who have lately written on the early history of the
word "its;" thus see Craik, On the English of Shakespeare, p. 91; Marsh,
Manual of the English Language (Eng. edit.), p. 278; Transactions of the
Philological Society, vol. i. p. 280; and my book On the Authorised Version
was forgotten we have striking evidence in the fact that when Dryden, in one of his fault-finding moods with the great men of the preceding generation, is taking Ben Jonson to task for general inaccuracy in his English diction, among other counts of his indictment, he quotes this line from Catiline:

Though heaven should speak with all his wrath at once,
and proceeds, "heaven is ill syntax with his;" while in fact up to within forty or fifty years of the time when Dryden began to write, no other syntax was known; and to a much later date was exceedingly rare. Curious also is it to note that in the earnest controversy which followed on Chatterton’s publication of the poems ascribed by him to a monk Rowlie, who should have lived in the fifteenth century, no one appealed to such lines as the following,

Life and all its goods I scorn,
as at once deciding that the poems were not of the age which they pretended. Warton, who denied, though with some hesitation, the antiquity of the poems, giving many and sufficient reasons for this denial, failed to take note of this little word; while yet there needed no more than to point it out, for the disposing of the whole question; the forgery at once was betrayed.

What has been here affirmed concerning our provincial English, namely that it is often old English rather than bad English, may be affirmed with equal right of many so-called Americanisms. There are parts of America where “het” is used, or was used a few years since, as the perfect of “to heat;” “holt” as the perfect of “to help;” “stricken” as the participle of “to strike.” Again, there are words which have become obsolete here during the last two hundred years, which have not become obsolete there, although many of them probably retain only a provincial existence. Thus “slick,” which indeed is only another form of “sleek,” was employed by our good writers of the seventeenth century. Other words again, which have remained current on both sides of the Atlantic, have yet on our side receded from their original use, while they have remained true to it on the other. “Flunder” is a word in point.

In the contemplation of facts like these it has been sometimes asked, whether a day will ever arrive when the language spoken

1 Thus Fuller (Pisgah Sight of Palestine, vol. ii. p. 190): “Sure I am this city [the New Jerusalem], as presented by the prophet, was fairer, finer, slicker, smoother, more exact, than any fabric the earth afforded.”
on this side of the Atlantic and on the other will divide into two languages, an old English and a new. We may confidently answer, No. Doubtless, if those who went out from us to people and subdue a new continent had left our shores two or three centuries earlier than they did, when the language was very much farther removed from that ideal after which it was unconsciously striving, and in which, once reached, it has in great measure acquiesced; if they had not carried with them to their distant homes their English Bible, and what else of worth had been already uttered in the English tongue; if, having once left us, the intercourse between Old and New England had been entirely broken off, or only rare and partial; there would then have unfolded themselves differences between the language spoken here and there, which in tract of time accumulating and multiplying, might in the end have justified the regarding of the languages as no longer one and the same. It could not have failed but that such differences should have displayed themselves; for while there is a law of necessity in the evolution of languages, while they pursue certain courses and in certain directions, from which they can be no more turned aside by the will of men than one of the heavenly bodies could be pushed from its orbit by any engines of ours, there is a law of liberty no less; and this liberty must inevitably have made itself in many ways felt. In the political and social condition of America, so far removed from our own, in the many natural objects which are not the same with those which surround us here, in efforts independently carried out to rid the language of imperfections or to unfold its latent powers, even in the different effects of soil and climate on the organs of speech, there would have been causes enough to have provoked in the course of time not immaterial divergences of language.

As it is, however, the joint operation of those three causes referred to already, namely, that the separation did not take place in the infancy or youth of the language, but only in its ripe manhood, that England and America owned a body of literature, to which they alike looked up and appealed as containing the authoritative standards of the language, that the intercourse between the one people and the other has been large and frequent, hereafter probably to be larger and more frequent still, has effectually wrought. It has been strong enough so to traverse, repress, and check all those causes which tended to divergence, that the written language of educated men on both sides of the water remains precisely
the same, their *spoken* manifesting a few trivial differences of idiom; while even among those classes which do not consciously acknowledge any ideal standard of language, there are scarcely greater differences, in some respects far smaller, than exist between inhabitants of different provinces in this one island of Britain; and in the future we may reasonably anticipate that these differences, so far from multiplying, will rather diminish and disappear.

But I must return from this long digression. It seems often as if an almost unaccountable caprice presided over the fortunes of words, and determined which should live and which die. Thus in instances out of number a word lives on as a verb, but has ceased to be employed as a noun; we say “to embarrass,” but no longer an “embarrass;” “to revile,” but not, with Chapman and Milton, a “revile;” “to dispose,” but not a “dispose;” “to retire” but not a “retire;” “to wed,” but not a “wed;” we say “to infest,” but use no longer the adjective “infest.” Or with a reversed fortune a word lives on as a noun, but has perished as a verb—thus as a noun substantive, a “slug,” but no longer “to slug” or render slothful; a “child,” but no longer “to child” (“*childing* autumn,” Shakespeare); a “rape,” but not “to rape” (South); a “rogue,” but not “to rogue;” “malice,” but not “to malice;” “a path,” but not “to path;” or as a noun adjective, “serene,” but not “to serene,” a beautiful word, which we have let go, as the French have “sereiner;” 1 “meek,” but not “to meek” (Wiclif); “fond,” but not “to fond” (Dryden); “dead,” but not “to dead;” “intricate,” but “to intricate” (Jeremy Taylor) no longer.

Or again, the affirmative remains, but the negative is gone; thus “wisdom,” “bold,” “sad,” but not any more “unwisdom,” “unbold,” “unsad” (all in Wiclif); “cunning,” but not “uncunning;” “manhood,” “wit,” “mighty,” “tall,” but not “unmanhood,” “unwit,” “unmighty,” “untall” (all in Chaucer); “buxom,” but not “unbuxom” (Dryden); “hasty,” but not “unhasty” (Spenser); “blithe,” but not “unblithe;” “ease,” but not “unease” (Hacket); “repentance,” but not “unrepent-

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1 How many words modern French has lost which are most vigorous and admirable, the absence of which can only now be supplied by a circumlocution or by some less excellent word—“Oseur,” “affranchisseur” (Amyot), “mepreux,” “murmureur,” “blandisseur” (Bossuet), “abuseur” (Rabelais), “desabusement,” “vanteur,” are all obsolete at the present. So “desaime” to cease to love (“disama” in Italian), “guirlandier,” “steriliser,” “blandissant,” “ordonnement” (Montaigne), with innumerable others.
ance;” “remission,” but not “irremission” (Donne); “science,” but not “nescience” (Glanvill); “to know,” but not “to un-
know” (Wiclif); “to give,” but not “to ungive.” Or once more, with a curious variation from this; the negative survives, while the affirmative is gone; thus “wieldy” (Chaucer) survives only in “unwieldy;” “couth” and “couthly” (both in Spenser) only in “uncouth” and “uncouthly;” “ruly” (Foxe) only in “un-
ruly;” “gainly” (Henry More) in “ungainly;” these last two were both of them serviceable words, and have been ill lost; “gainly” is indeed still common in the West Riding of Yorkshire; “exorable” (Holland) and “evitable” only in “inexorable” and “inevitable;” “faultless” remains, but hardly “faultful” (Shake-
peare). In like manner “semble” (Foxe) has, except as a technical law term, disappeared; while “dissemble” continues. So also of other pairs one has been taken and one left; “height,” or “hight,” as Milton better spelt it, remains, but “lowth” (Becon) is gone; “righteousness,” or “rightwiseness,” as it would once more accurately have been written, for “righteous” is a corruption of “rightwise,” remains, but its correspondent “wrongwise-
ness” has been taken; “inroad” continues, but “outroad” (Holland) has disappeared; “levant” lives, but “ponent” (Holland) has died; “to extricate” continues, but, as we saw just now, “to intricate” does not; “parricide,” but not “filicide” (Holland). Again, of whole groups of words formed on some particular scheme it may be only a single specimen will survive. Thus “gainsay,” that is, againsay, survives; but “gainstrive” (Foxe), “gainstand,” “gaincope” (Golding), and other similarly formed words exist no longer. It is the same with “foolhardy,” which is but one, though now indeed the only one remaining, of at least five adjectives formed on the same principle; thus “foollarge,” quite as expressive a word as prodigal, occurs in Chaucer, and “foolhasty,” found also in him, lived on to the time of Holland; while “foolhappy” is in Spenser, and “foolbold” in Bale. “Steadfast” remains, but “shamefast,” “rootfast,” “bedfast” (= bedridden), “home-
fast,” “housefast,” “masterfast” (Skelton), with others, are all gone. “Exhort” remains, but “dishort,” a word whose place neither “dissuade” nor any other exactly supplies, has escaped us. We have “twilight,” but “twibill” = bipennis (Chapman) is extinct.

Let me mention another real loss, where in like manner there remains in the present language something to remind us of that which is gone. The comparative “rather” stands alone, having
dropped on one side its positive “rathe,” and on the other its superlative “rathest.” “Rathe,” having the sense of early, though a graceful word, and not fallen quite out of popular remembrance, inasmuch as it is embalmed in the Lycidas of Milton:

And the rathe primrose, which forsaken dies,

might still be suffered without remark to share the common lot of so many words which have perished, though worthy to have lived; but the disuse of “rathest” has left a real gap in the language, and the more so, seeing that “liefest” is gone too. “Rather” expresses the Latin “potius;” but “rathest” being out of use, we have no word, unless “soonest” may be accepted as such, to express “potissimum,” or the preference not of one way over another or over certain others, but of one over all; which we therefore effect by aid of various circumlocutions. Nor has “rathest” been so long out of use, that it would be playing the antic to attempt to revive it. It occurs in the Sermons of Bishop Sanderson, who in the opening of that beautiful sermon from the text, “When my father and my mother forsake me, the Lord taketh me up,” puts the consideration, “why these,” that is, father and mother, “are named the rathest, and the rest to be included in them.” 1

It is sometimes easy enough, but indeed oftener hard, and not seldom quite impossible, to trace the causes which have been at work to bring about that certain words, little by little, drop out of the language of men, come to be heard more and more rarely, and finally are not heard any more at all—to trace the motives which have induced a whole people thus to arrive at a tacit consent not to employ them any longer; for without this tacit consent they could never have thus become obsolete. That it is not accident, that there is a law here at work, however hidden it may be from us, is plain from the fact that certain families of words, words formed on certain patterns, have a tendency thus to fall into desuetude.

Thus, I think, we may trace a tendency in words ending in “some,” the Anglo-Saxon and early English “sum,” the German “sam” (“friedsam,” “seltsam”), to fall out of use. It is true that a vast number of these survive, as “gladsome,” “handsome,” “weirsome,” “buxom” (this last spelt better “bucksome”) by our earlier writers, for its present spelling altogether disguises its true character, and the family to which it belongs; being the

1 For other passages in which “rathest” occurs, see the State Papers, vol. ii. pp. 92, 170.
same word as the German “beugsam” or “biegsam,” bendable, compliant); but a larger number of these words than can be ascribed to accident, many more than the due proportion of them, are either quite or nearly extinct. Thus in Wiclif’s Bible alone you might note the following: “lovesum,” “hatesum,” “lustsum,” “gilsum” (guilesome), “wealsum,” “heavysum,” “lightsum,” “delightsum;” of these “lightsome” long survived, and indeed still survives in provincial dialects; but of the others all save “delightsome” are gone; and that, although used in our Authorised Version (Mal. iii. 12), is now only employed in poetry. So too “mightsome” (see Coleridge’s Glossary), “brightsome” (Marlowe), “wieldsome” and “unwieldsome” (Golding), “unlightsome” (Milton), “healthsome” (Homilies), “ugsome” and “ugglesome” (both in Foxe), “laboursome” (Shakespeare), “friendsome,” “longsome” (Bacon), “quietsome,” “mirksome” (both in Spenser), “toothsome” (Beaumont and Fletcher), “gleesome,” “joysome” (both in Browne’s Pastoralis), “gaysome” (Mirror for Magistrates), “roomsome,” “bigsome,” “awsome,” “timersome,” “winsome,” “viewsome,” “dosome” (= prosperous), “flaysome” (= fearful), “auntersome” (= adventurous), “clamorsome” (all these still surviving in the north), “playsome” (employed by the historian Hume), “lissome,” have nearly or quite disappeared from our English speech. They seem to have held their ground in Scotland in considerably larger numbers than in the south of the island.¹

Neither can I esteem it a mere accident that of a group of depreciatory and contemptuous words ending in “ard,” at least one half should have dropped out of use; I refer to that group of which “dotard,” “laggard,” “braggard,” now spelt “braggart,” “sluggard,” “buzzard,” “bastard,” “wizard,” may be taken as surviving specimens; “blinkard” (Homilies), “dizzard” (Burton), “dullard” (Udal), “musard” (Chaucer), “trichard” (Political Songs), “shreward” (Robert of Gloucester), “ballard” (a bald-headed man, Wiclif), “puggard,” “stinkard” (Ben Jonson), “haggard,” a worthless hawk, as extinct.

Thus too there is a very curious province of our language, in which we were once so rich, that extensive losses here have failed to make us poor; so many of its words still surviving, even after as many or more have disappeared. I refer to those double words which either contain within themselves a strong

¹ Jamieson’s Dictionary gives a large number of words with this termination which I should suppose were always peculiar to Scotland, as “bangsome,” i.e. quarrelsome, “freaksome,” “drysome,” “grousome” (the German “grausam”).
rhyming modulation, such for example as “willy-nilly,” “hocus-pocus,” “helter-skelter,” “tag-rag,” “nameby-pamby,” “pell-mell,” “hodge-podge;” or with a slight difference from this, though belonging to the same group, those of which the characteristic feature is not this internal likeness with initial unlikeness, but initial likeness with internal unlikeness; not rhyming, but strongly alliterative, and in every case with a change of the interior vowel from a weak into a strong, generally from \( i \) into \( a \) or \( o \); as “shilly-shally,” “mingle-mangle,” “tittle-tattle,” “prittle-prattle,” “riff-raff,” “see-saw,” “slip-slop.” No one who is not quite out of love with the homelier yet more vigorous portions of the language, but will acknowledge the life and strength which there is often in these and in others still current among us. But of the same sort what vast numbers have fallen out of use, some so fallen out of all remembrance that it may be difficult almost to find credence for them. Thus take of rhyming the following: “hugger-mugger,” “hurly-burly,” “kicksy-wicksy” (all in Shakespeare), “hibber-gibber,” “rusty-dusty,” “horrel-lorrel,” “slaump-paump” (all in Gabriel Harvey), “royster-doyster” (Old Play), “boddy-doddy” (Ben Jonson); while of alliterative might be instanced these: “skimble-skamble,” “bibble-babble” (both in Shakespeare), “twittle-twattle,” “kim-kam” (both in Holland), “hab-nab” (Lilly), “trim-tram,” “trish-trash,” “swish-swash” (all in Gabriel Harvey), “whim-wham” (Beaumont and Fletcher), “mizz-mazz” (Locke), “snip-snap” (Pope), “flim-flam” (Swift), “tric-trac,” and others.

Again, there was once a whole family of words, whereof the greater number are now under ban; which seemed at one time to have been formed almost at pleasure, the only condition being that the combination should be a happy one—I mean all those singularly expressive words formed by a combination of verb and substantive, the former governing the latter; as “telltale,” “scapegrace,” “turncoat,” “turntail,” “skinflint,” “spendthrift,” “spitfire,” “lickspittle,” “daredevil” (= wage-hals), “makebate” (= störenfried), “marplot,” “killjoy.” These with a certain number of others, have held their ground, and may be said to be still more or less in use; but what a number more are forgotten; and yet, though not always elegant, they constituted a very vigorous portion of our language, and preserve some of its most genuine idioms.¹ It could not well be otherwise;

¹ Many languages have groups of words formed upon the same scheme, although, singularly enough, they are altogether absent from the Anglo-
they are almost all words of abuse, and the abusive words of a language are always among the most picturesque and vigorous and imaginative which it possesses. The whole man speaks out in them, and often the man under the influence of passion and excitement, which always lend force and fire to his speech. Let me remind you of a few of them; "smellfeast," if not a better, is yet a more graphic, word than our foreign parasite; as graphic indeed for us as τρεχόντες to Greek ears; "clawback" (Hacket) is a stronger, if not a more graceful, word than flatterer or sycophant; "tosspot" (Fuller), or less frequently "reelpot" (Middleton), tells its own tale as well as drunkard; and "pinchpenny" (Holland), or "nipfarthing" (Drant), as well as or better than miser. And then what a multitude more there are in like kind; "spintext," "lacklatin," "mumblematins," all applied to ignorant clerics; "bitesheep" (a favourite word with Foxe) to such of these as were rather wolves tearing, than shepherds feeding, the flock; "slipstring" = pendard (Beaumont and Fletcher), "slipgibbet," "scapegallows," all names given to those who, however they might have escaped, were justly owed to the gallows, and might still "go upstairs to bed."

How many of these words occur in Shakespeare. The following list makes no pretence to completeness: "martext," "carrytale," "pleaseman," "sneakcup," "mumblenews," "wantwit," "lackbrain," "lackbeard," "lacklove," "ticklebrain," "outpurse," "cutthroat," "crackhemp," "breedbarte," "swinge buckler," "pickpurse," "pickthank," "picklock," "scapecrow," "breakwov.," "breakpromise," "makepeace"—this last and "telltruth" (Fuller) being the only ones in the whole collection wherein reprobation or contempt is not implied. Nor is the list exhausted yet; there are further: "dingthrift" = prodigal (Herrick), "wastegood" (Cotgrave), "stroygood" (Golding), "wastethrift" (Beaumont and Fletcher), "scapethrift," "swashbuckler" (both in Holinshed), "shakebuckler," "rinsepitcher" (both in Bacon), "crackrope" (Howell), "waghalter," "wagfeather" (both in Cotgrave), "blab tale" (Hacket), "getnothing" (Adams), "findfault" (Florio), "tearthroat" (Gayton), "marprelate," "spit venom," "nipcheese," "nipscreed," "killman" (Chapman), Saxon (J. Grimm, Deutsche Gramm., vol. ii. p. 976). The Spaniards have a great many very expressive words of this formation. Thus with allusion to the great struggle in which Christian Spain was engaged for so many centuries, a vaunting braggart is a "matamoros," a "slaymoor;" he is a "matasiete," a "slayseven;" a "perdonavidas," a "sparelives." Others may be added to these, as "azotacalles," "picapleytos," "saltaparedes," "rompeesquinas," "ganapan," "cascatreguas."
“lackland,” “pickquarrel,” “pickfaults,” “pickpenny” (Henry More), “makefray” (Bishop Hall), “makedebate” (Richardson’s Letters), “kindlecoal” (attise feu), “kindlefire” (both in Gurnall), “turntippet” (Cranmer), “swillbowl” (Stubbs), “smellsmock,” “cumberwold” (Drayton), “curryfavor,” “pinchfist,” “suck-fist,” “hatepeace” (Sylvester), “hategood” (Bunyan), “clutch-fist,” “sharkgull” (both in Middleton), “makesport” (Fuller), “hangdog” (“Herod’s hangdogs in the tapestry,” Pope), “catch-poll,” “makeshift” (used not impersonally, as now), “pickgoose” (“‘the bookworm was never but a pickgoose’”), “killcow” (these three last in Gabriel Harvey), “rakeshame” (Milton, prose), with others which it will be convenient to omit. “Rakehell,” which used to be spelt “rakel” or “rakle” (Chaucer), a good English word, would be only through an error included in this list, although Cowper, when he wrote “rakehell” (“rake-hell baronet”), evidently regarded it as belonging to this group.1

Perhaps one of the most frequent causes which leads to the disuse of words is this: in some inexplicable way there comes to be attached something of ludicrous, or coarse, or vulgar to them, out of a feeling of which they are no longer used in earnest serious writing, and at the same time fall out of the discourse of those who desire to speak elegantly. Not indeed that this degradation which overtakes words is in all cases inexplicable. The unheroic character of most men’s minds, with their consequent intolerance of that heroic which they cannot understand, is constantly at work, too often with success, in taking down words of nobleness from their high pitch; and, as the most effectual way of doing this, in casting an air of mock-heroic about them. Thus “to dub,” a word resting on one of the noblest usages of chivalry, has now something of ludicrous about it; so too has “doughty;” they belong to that serio-comic, mock-heroic diction, the multiplication of which, as of all parodies on greatness, and the favour with which it is received, is always a sign of evil augury for a nation, is at present a sign of evil augury for our own.

“Pate” in the sense of head is now comic or ignoble; it was not so once; as is plain from its occurrence in the Prayer Book Version of the Psalms (Ps. vii. 17); as little was “noddle,” which occurs in one of the few poetical passages in Hawes. The same

1 The mistake is far earlier; long before Cowper wrote the sound suggested first this sense, and then this spelling. Thus Stanhurst, Description of Ireland, p. 28: “They are taken for no better than rakehels, or the devil’s black guard;” and often elsewhere.
may be said of "sconce," in this sense at least; of "nowl" or "noll," which Wiclif uses; of "slops" for trousers (Marlowe's Lucre); of "cocksure" (Rogers), of "smug," which once meant no more than adorned ("the smug bridegroom," Shakespeare). "To nap" is now a word without dignity; while yet in Wiclif's Bible it is said, "Lo he schall not nappe, nether slepe that kepeth Israel" (Ps. cxxi. 4). "To punch," "to thump," both which, and in serious writing, occur in Spenser, could not now obtain the same use, nor yet "to wag," or "to buss." Neither would any one now say that at Lystra Barnabas and Paul "rent their clothes and skipped out among the people" (Acts xvi. 14), which is the language that Wiclif employs; nor yet that "the Lord trounced Sisera and all his host" as it stands in the Bible of 1551. "A sight of angels," for which phrase see Cranmer's Bible (Heb. xii. 22), would be felt as a vulgarism now. We should scarcely call now a delusion of Satan a "flam of the devil" (Henry More). It is not otherwise in regard of phrases. "Through thick and thin," occurring in Spenser, "cheek by jowl" in Dubartas, do not now belong to serious poetry. In the glorious ballad of Chevy Chase, a noble warrior whose legs are hewn off is described as being "in doleful dumps;" just as, in Holland's Livy, the Romans are set forth as being "in the dumps" as a consequence of their disastrous defeat at Cannae. In Golding's Ovid, one fears that he will "go to pot." In one of the beautiful letters of John Careless, preserved in Foxe's Martyrs, a persecutor, who expects a recantation from him, is described as "in the wrong box." "And in the sermons of Barrow, who certainly intended to write an elevated style, and did not seek familiar, still less vulgar, expressions, we constantly meet such terms as "to rate," "to snub," "to gull," "to pudder," "dumpish," and the like; which we may confidently affirm were not vulgar when he used them.

Then too the advance of refinement causes words to be foregone, which are felt to speak too plainly. It is not here merely that one age has more delicate ears than another; and that matters are freely spoken of at one time which at another are withdrawn from conversation. This is something; but besides this, and even if this delicacy were at a standstill, there would still be a continual process going on, by which the words, which for a certain while have been employed to designate coarse or disagreeable facts or things, would be disallowed, or at all events relinquished to the lower classes of society, and others adopted in their place. The former by long use being felt to have come into too direct and close relation with that which they designate,
to summon it up too distinctly before the mind's eye, they are thereupon exchanged for others, which, at first at least, indicate more lightly and allusively the offensive thing, rather hint and suggest than paint and describe it: although by and bye these new will also in their turn be discarded, and for exactly the same reasons which brought about the dismissal of those which they themselves superseded. It lies in the necessity of things that I must leave this part of my subject, very curious as it is, without illustration.\(^1\) But no one, even moderately acquainted with the early literature of the Reformation, can be ignorant of words freely used in it, which now are not merely coarse and as such under ban, but which no one would employ who did not mean to speak impurely and vilely.

Thus much in respect of the words, and the character of the words, which we have lost or let go. Of these, indeed, if a language, as it travels onwards, loses some, it also acquires others, and probably many more than it loses; they are leaves on the tree of language, of which if some fall away, a new succession takes their place. But it is not so, as I already observed, with the \textit{forms} or \textit{powers} of a language, that is, with the various inflexions, moods, duplicate or triplicate formation of tenses; which the speakers of a language come gradually to perceive that they can do without, and therefore cease to employ; seeking to suppress grammatical intricacies, and to obtain grammatical simplicity and so far as possible a pervading uniformity, sometimes even at the hazard of letting go what had real worth, and contributed to the more lively, if not to the clearer, setting forth of the inner thought or feeling of the mind. Here there is only loss, with no compensating gain; or, at all events, diminution only, and never addition. In regard of these inner forces and potencies of a language, there is no creative energy at work in its later periods, in any, indeed, but quite the earliest. They are not as the leaves, but may be likened to the stem and leading branches of a tree, whose shape, mould and direction are determined at a very early stage of its growth; and which age, or accident, or violence may diminish, but which can never be

\(^{1}\) As not, however, turning on a \textit{very} coarse matter, and illustrating the subject with infinite wit and humour, I might refer the Spanish scholar to the discussion between Don Quixote and his squire on the dismissal of "regoldar" from the language of good society, and the substitution of "erutar" in its room \textit{(Don Quixote, IV. vii. 43)}. In a letter of Cicero to Paetus \textit{(Fam., ix. 22)} there is a subtle and interesting disquisition on forbidden words, and their philosophy.
multiplied. I have already slightly referred to a notable example of this, namely, to the dropping of the dual number in the Greek language. Thus in all the New Testament it does not once occur, having quite fallen out of the common dialect in which that is composed. Elsewhere too it has been felt that the dual was not worth preserving, or at any rate, that no serious inconvenience would follow on its loss. There is no such number in the modern German, Danish or Swedish; in the old German and Norse there was.

How many niceties, delicacies, subtleties of language, we, speakers of the English tongue, in the course of centuries have got rid of; how bare (whether too bare is another question) we have stripped ourselves; what simplicity for better or for worse reigns in the present English, as compared with the old Anglo-Saxon. That had six declensions, our present English but one; that had three genders, English, if we except one or two words, has none; that formed the genitive in a variety of ways, we only in one; and the same fact meets us wherever we compare the grammars of the two languages. At the same time, it can scarcely be repeated too often, that in the estimate of the gain or loss thereupon ensuing, we must by no means put certainly to loss everything which the language has dismissed, any more than everything to gain which it has acquired. It is no real wealth in a language to have needless and superfluous forms. They are often an embarrassment and an encumbrance to it rather than a help. The Finnish language has fourteen cases. Without pretending to know exactly what it is able to effect, I yet feel confident that it cannot effect more, nor indeed so much, with its fourteen as the Greek is able to do with its five. It therefore seems to me that some words of Otfried Müller, in many ways admirable, do yet exaggerate the losses consequent on the reduction of the forms of a language. "It may be observed," he says, "that in the lapse of ages, from the time that the progress of language can be observed, grammatical forms, such as the signs of cases, moods and tenses, have never been increased in number, but have been constantly diminishing. The history of the Romance, as well as of the Germanic, languages shows in the clearest manner how a grammar, once powerful and copious, has been gradually weakened and impoverished, until at last it preserves only a few fragments of its ancient inflexions. Now there is no doubt that this luxuriance of grammatical forms is not an essential part of a language, considered merely as a vehicle of thought. It is well known that the Chinese language,
which is merely a collection of radical words destitute of grammatical forms, can express even philosophical ideas with tolerable precision; and the English, which, from the mode of its formation by a mixture of different tongues, has been stripped of its grammatical inflexions more completely than any other European language, seems, nevertheless, even to a foreigner, to be distinguished by its energetic eloquence. All this must be admitted by every unprejudiced inquirer; but yet it cannot be overlooked, that this copiousness of grammatical forms, and the fine shades of meaning which they express, evince a nicety of observation, and a faculty of distinguishing, which unquestionably prove that the race of mankind among whom these languages arose was characterised by a remarkable correctness and subtlety of thought. Nor can any modern European, who forms in his mind a lively image of the classical languages in their ancient grammatical luxuriance, and compares them with his mother tongue, conceal from himself that in the ancient languages the words, with their inflexions, clothed as it were with muscles and sinews, come forward like living bodies, full of expression and character, while in the modern tongues the words seem shrunk up into mere skeletons." 1

Whether languages are as much impoverished by this process as is here assumed, may, I think, be a question. I will endeavour to give you some materials which shall assist you in forming your own judgment in the matter. And here I am sure that I shall do best in considering not forms which the language has relinquished long ago, but mainly such as it is relinquishing now; which, touching us more nearly, will have a far more lively interest for us all. For example, the female termination which we employ in certain words, such as from "heir" "heiress," from "prophet" "prophetess," from "sorcerer" "sorceress," was once far more widely extended than at present; the words which retain it are daily becoming fewer. It has already fallen away in so many, and is evidently becoming of less frequent use in so many others, that, if we may augur of the future from the analogy of the past, it will one day altogether vanish from our tongue. Thus all these occur in Wiclif's Bible: "techeress" as the female teacher (2 Chron. xxxv. 25); "friendess" (Prov. vii. 4); "servantess" (Gen. xvi. 2); "leperess" (= saltatrix, Ecclus. ix. 4); "daunceress" (Ecclus. ix. 4); "neighbouress" (Exod. iii. 22); "sinneress" (Luke vii. 37); "purpuress" (Acts xvi. 14); "cousiness" (Luke i. 36); "slayeress" (Tob. iii. 9); "devouress";

1 Literature of Greece, p. 5.
III. DIMINUTIONS OF THE LANGUAGE

(Ezek. xxxvi. 13); “spousess” (Prov. v. 19); “thrallless” (Jer. xxxiv. 16); “dwellers” (Jer. xxii. 13); “waileress” (Jer. ix. 17); “cheseress” (= electrix, Wisd. viii. 4); “singeress,” “breakress,” “waitress”; this last indeed having recently come up again. Add to these “childress,” the female chider, “herdess,” “constabless,” “moveress,” “jangleress,” “soudaness” (= sultana), “guideress,” “charmeress” (all in Chaucer); and others, which however we may have now let them fall, reached to far later periods of the language; thus “vankress” (Fabyan); “poisoneress” (Greneway); “knightess” (Udal); “pedleress,” “championess” “vassaless,” “avengeress,” “warrioress,” “victress,” “crestress” (all in Spenser); “fornicatress,” “cloistress,” “jointress” (all in Shakespeare); “vowess” (Holinshed); “ministress,” “flatteress” (both in Holland); “captainess” (Sidney); “saintess” (Sir T. Urquhart); “heroess,” “dragoness,” “butleress,” “contendress,” “waggoness,” “rectress” (all in Chapman); “shootress” (Fairfax); “archeress” (Fanshawe); “clientess,” “pandress” (both in Middleton); “papess,” “Jesuitess” (Bishop Hall); “incitress” (Gayton); “soldiress,” “guardianess,” “votaress” (all in Beaumont and Fletcher); “comfortress,” “fosteress” (Ben Jonson); “soveraintess” (Sylvester); “preserveress” (Daniel); “solicitress,” “impostress,” “buildress,” “intrudress” (all in Fuller); “favouress” (Hakewell); “commandress” (Burton); “monarchess,” “discipless” (Speed); “auditress,” “cateress,” “chantress,” “tyranness” (all in Milton); “citess,” “divineress” (both in Dryden); “deanness” (Sterne); “detractress” (Addison); “hucksteress” (Howell); “tutoress” (Shaftesbury); “farmeress” (Lord Peterborough, Letter to Pope); “laddess,” which however still survives in the contracted form of “lass,” with more which, I doubt not, it would not be very hard to bring together.  

Exactly the same thing has happened with another feminine affix. I refer to “ster,” taking the place of “er” where a feminine doer is intended. “Spinner” and “spinster” are the only pair of such words which still survive. There were formerly many such; thus “baker” had “bakester,” being the female who baked; “brewer” “brewster,” “sewer” “sewster”; “reader” “readster;” “seamer” “seamster,” “fruiterer,” “fruisteress,” “tumbler” “tumblester,” “hopper” “hoppester” (these last three in Chaucer; “the shippes hoppester,” about which so

1 In Cotgrave’s Dictionary I find “praiseress,” “commendress,” “fluteress,” “possessoress,” “loveress,” but have never met them in use.

much difficulty has been made, are the ships *dancing*, i.e. on the waves), "knitter" "knitster" (a word, I am told, still alive in Devon). Add to these "whitster" (female bleacher, Shakespeare), "kempster" (pectrix), "dryster" (siccatrix), "brawdster" (I suppose embroideress), and "salster" (salinaria). It is a singular example of the richness of a language in forms at the earlier stages of its existence, that not a few of the words which had, as we have just seen, a feminine termination in "ess," had also a second in "ster." Thus "daunser," beside "daunseress," had also "daunster" (Ecclus. ix. 4); "wailler," beside "wailleress," had "waistler" (Jer. ix. 17); "dweller" "dwestler" (Jer. xxii. 13); and "singer" "singster" (2 Kin. xix. 35); so too, "chider" had "chidester" (Chaucer), as well as "chideress;" "slayer" "slayster" (Tob. iii. 9), as well as "slayeress;" "chooser" "chesister" (Wisd. viii. 4), as well as "cheseress," with others that might be named.

It is difficult to understand how Marsh, with these examples before him, should affirm, "I find no positive evidence to show that the termination 'ster' was ever regarded as a feminine termination in English." It may be, and indeed has been, urged that the existence of such words as "seamstress," "songstress," is decisive proof that the ending "ster" of itself was not counted sufficient to designate persons as female; for if, it has been said, "seamster" and "songster" had been felt to be already feminine, no one would have ever thought of doubling on this, and adding a second female termination: "seamstress," "songstress." But all which can justly be concluded from hence is, that when this final "ess" was added to these already feminine forms, and examples of it will not, I think, be found till a comparatively late period of the language, the true principle and law of the words had been lost sight of and forgotten. The same may be affirmed of such other of these feminine forms as are now applied to men, such as "gamester," "youngster," "oldster," "drugster" (South), "huckster," "hackster" (= swordsman, Milton, prose),

1 I am indebted for these last four to a *Nominate* in the *National Antiquities*, vol. i. p. 216.

2 The earliest example which Richardson gives of "seamstress" is from Gay, of "songstress," from Thomson. I find however "sempstress" in the translation of Olearius' *Voyages and Travels*, 1669, p. 43. It is quite certain that as late as Ben Jonson, "seamster" and "songster" expressed the female seamer and singer; a single passage from his *Masque of Christmas* is evidence to this. One of the children of Christmas there is "Wassel, like a neat sempster and songster; her page bearing a brown bowl." Compare a passage from Holland's *Leaguer*, 1632: "A tyre-woman of phantastical ornaments, a sempster for ruffles, cuffs, smocks and waistcoats."
"teamster," "throwster," "rhymester," "punster" (Spectator), "tapster," "whipster" (Shakespeare), "trickster." Either like "teamster," and "punster," the words first came into being, when the true significance of this form was altogether lost;¹ or like "tapster," which was female in Chaucer ("the gay tapstere"), as it is still in Dutch and Frisian, and distinguished from "tapper," the man who keeps the inn, or has charge of the tap, or as "bakester," at this day used in Scotland for "baker," as "dyester" for "dyer," the word did originally belong of right and exclusively to women; but with the gradual transfer of the occupation to men, and an increasing forgetfulness of what this termination implied, there went also a transfer of the name,² just as in other words, and out of the same causes, the exact converse has found place; and "baker" or "brewer," not "bakester" or "brewster," would be now in England applied to the woman baking or brewing. So entirely has this power of the language died out, that it survives more apparently than really even in "spinner" and "spinster;" seeing that "spinster" has obtained now quite another meaning than that of a woman spinning, whom, as well as the man, we should call not a "spinner," but a "spinster."³ It would indeed be hard to believe, if we had not constant experience of the fact, how soon and how easily the true law and significance of some form, which has never ceased to be in everybody's mouth, may yet be lost sight of by all. No more curious chapter in the history of language could be written than one which should trace the violations of analogy, the transgressions of the most primary laws of a language, which follow hereupon; the plurals like "welkin" "This was about the time of Henry VIII. In proof of the confusion which reigned on the subject in Shakespeare's time, see his use of "spinster" as = "spinner," the man spinning, Henry VIII., Act I. Sc. ii.; and I have no doubt that it is the same in Othello, Act I. Sc. i. And a little later, in Howell's Vocabulary, 1659, "spinner" and "spinster" are both referred to the male sex, and the barbarous "spinstress" invented for the female.¹ I have included "huckster," as will be observed, in this list. I certainly cannot produce any passage in which it is employed as the female pedler. We have only, however, to keep in mind the existence of the verb "to huck," in the sense of to peddle (it is used by Bishop Andrews), and at the same time not to let the present spelling of "hawker" mislead us, and we shall confidently recognise "hucker" (the German "höker" or "höcker") in hawker, that is, the man who "hucks," "hawks," or peddles, as in "huckster" the female who does the same. When therefore Howell and others employ "hucksteress," they fall into the same barbarous excess of expression, whereof we are all guilty when we use "seamstress" and "songstress."—The note stood thus in the third edition. Since that was published, I have met in the Nominale referred to p. 98, the following, "hoc auxiatrix, a hukster."⁴ Notes and Queries, No. 157.
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("=wolken, the clouds), "chicken," which are dealt with as singulars, the singulars, like "riches" (richesse), "pease" (pisum, pois), "alms," "eaves," which are assumed to be plurals.

There is one example of this familiar to us all; probably so familiar that it would not be worth while adverting to it, if it did not illustrate, as no other word could, this forgetfulness which may overtake a whole people, of the true meaning of a grammatical form which they have never ceased to employ. I refer to the mistaken assumption that the "s" of the genitive, as "the king's countenance," was merely a more rapid way of pronouncing "the king his countenance," and that the final "s" in "king's" was in fact an elided "his." This explanation for a long time prevailed almost universally; I believe there are many who accept it still. It was in vain that here and there a deeper knower of our tongue protested against this "monstrous syntax," as Ben Jonson in his Grammar justly calls it. It was in vain that Wallis, another English scholar of the seventeenth century, pointed out in his Grammar that the slightest examination of the facts revealed the untenable character of this explanation, seeing that we do not merely say "the king's countenance," but "the queen's countenance;" and in this case the final "s" cannot stand for "his," for "the queen his countenance" cannot be intended; we do not say merely "the child's bread," but "the children's bread," where it is no less impossible to resolve the phrase into "the children his bread." Despite

1 When Wallis wrote, it was only beginning to be forgotten that "chick" was the singular, and "chicken" the plural: "Sunt qui dicunt in singulari 'chicken,' et in plurali 'chickens;'" and even now the words are in many country parts correctly employed. In Sussex, a correspondent writes, they would as soon think of saying "oxens" as "chickens."

2 See Chaucer's Romant of the Rose, 1032, where Richesse, "an high lady of great noblesse," is one of the persons of the allegory; and compare Rev. xviii. 17, Authorized Version. This has so entirely escaped the knowledge of Ben Jonson, English scholar as he was, that in his Grammar he cites "riches" as an example of an English word wanting a singular.

3 "Set shallow brooks to surging seas,
And orient pearl to a white pease."

PUTTENHAM.

4 It is curious that, despite of this protest, one of his plays has for its name Sejanus his Fall.

5 Even this does not startle Addison, or cause him any misgiving; on the contrary he boldly asserts (Spectator, No. 133), "The same single letter 's' on many occasions does the office of a whole word, and represents the 'his' or 'her' of our forefathers."

6 Nothing can be better than the way in which Wallis disposes of this scheme, although less successful in showing what "s" does mean than in showing what it cannot mean (Gramm. ing. Anglic, chap. v.): "Qui autem arbitrantur illud s, loco his adjunctum esse (priori scilicet parte per aphaeresim abscessa), ideoque apostrophi notam semper vel pingendum
of these protests the error held its ground. This much indeed of a plea it could make for itself, that such an actual employment of “his” had found its way into the language as early as the fourteenth century, and had been in occasional, though rare use, from that time downward. Yet this, which has only been elicited by the researches of recent scholars, does not in the least justify those who assumed that in the habitual “s” of the genitive were to be found the remains of “his”—an error from which the books of scholars in the seventeenth, and in the early decades of the eighteenth, century are not a whit clearer than those of others. Spenser, Donne, Fuller, Jeremy Taylor, all fall into it; I cannot say confidently whether Milton does. Dryden more than once helps out his verse with an additional syllable gained by its aid. It has even forced its way into our Prayer Book itself, where in the “Prayer for all sorts and conditions of men,” added by Bishop Sanderson at the last revision of the Liturgy in 1661, we are bidden to say, “and this we beg for Jesus Christ his sake.” I need hardly tell you that this “s” is in fact the one remnant of flexion surviving in the singular number of our English noun substantives; it is in all the Indo-Germanic languages the original sign of the genitive, or at any rate the earliest of which we can take cognisance; and just as in Latin “lapis” makes “lapidis” in the genitive, so “king,” “queen,” “child,” make severally “kings,” “queens,” “childs,” the comma, an apparent note of elision, being a mere modern expedient,” “a late refinement,” as Ash calls it, to distinguish the genitive singular from the plural cases.

esse, vel saltem subintelligendam, omnino errant. Quamvis enim non negem quin apostrophi nota commodo nonnullun quam affigis possis, ut ipsius litterae vagus distinctius, ubi opus est, percipiatur; tamen semper fieri debere, aut etiam suo loco habere non potest: atque etiam in possessivis uest, yours, theirs, hers, ubi vocem hic innuas, omnino nego. Adjungitur enim et femininarum nominibus propriis, et substantivis pluralibus, ubi vox hic sine sollecismo locum habere non potest: atque etiam in possessivis uesto, yours, theirs, hers, ubi vocem hic innuas, omnino nego.

1 See the proofs in Marsh’s Manual of English Language, English Edition, pp. 280, 293.

I cannot think that it would exceed the authority of our University Presses, if this were removed from the Prayer Books which they put forth, as certainly it is suppressed by many of the clergy in the reading. Such a liberty they have already assumed with the Bible. In all earlier editions of the Authorised Version it stood at 1 Kings xv. 24: “Nevertheless Asa his heart was perfect with the Lord;” it is “Asa’s heart” now. In the same way “Mordecai his matters” (Esth. iii. 4) has been silently changed into “Mordecai’s matters”; and in some modern editions, but not in all, “Holofernes his head” (Judith xiii. 9) into “Holofernes’ head.”

2 In a good note on the matter, p. 6, in the “Comprehensive Grammar” prefixed to his Dictionary, London, 1775.

Notice another example of this willingness to dispense with inflection, of this endeavour on the part of the speakers of a language to reduce its forms to the fewest possible, consistent with the accurate communication of thought. Of our adjectives in "en," formed on substantives, and expressing the material or substance of a thing, some have gone, others are going, out of use; while we content ourselves with the bare juxtaposition of the substantive itself, as sufficiently expressing our meaning. Thus instead of "golden pin" we say "gold pin;" instead of "earthen works" we say "earth works." "Golden" and "earthen," it is true, still belong to our living speech, though mainly as part of our poetic diction, or of the solemn and thus stereotyped language of Scripture; but a whole company of such words have nearly or quite disappeared; some lately, some long ago. "Steelen" and "flowren" belong only to the earliest period of the language; "rosen" also went early. Chaucer is my latest authority for it ("rosen chapelet"). "Hairen" is in Wiclif and in Chaucer; "stenen" in the former (John iii. 6).1 "Silvern" stood originally in Wiclif's Bible ("silverne housis to Diane," Acts xix. 24); but already in the second recension of this was exchanged for "silver;" "hornen," still in provincial use, he also employs, and "clayen" (Job iv. 19) no less. "Tinnen" occurs in Sylvester's Du Bartas; where also we meet with "Jove's milken alley," as a name for the Via Lactea, in Bacon also not "the Milky," but "the Milken Way." In the coarse polemics of the Reformation the phrase, "breadsen god," provoked by the Romish doctrine of transubstantiation, was of frequent employment, and occurs as late as in Oldham. "Mothen parchments" is in Fulke; "twiggen bottle" in Shakespeare; "yeven," or, according to earlier spelling, "eughen bow," in Spenser; "cedarm alley" and "asurn sheen" are both in Milton; "bosen leaves" in Dryden; "a treen cup" in Jeremy Taylor; "eldern popguns" in Sir Thomas Overbury; "a glassen breast" in Whitlock; "a reeden hat" in Coryat; "yaren" occurs in Turberville; "furzen" in Holland; "threaden" in Shakespeare; and "bricken," "papern" appear in our provincial glossaries as still in use.

It is true that many of these adjectives still hold their ground; but it is curious to note how the roots which sustain even these

1 The existence of "stony" = "lapidosus," "steining," does not make "stonen" = "lapideus," "steinern," superfluous any more than "earthy" makes "earthen." That part of the field in which the good seed withered so quickly (Matt. xiii. 5) was "tony." The vessels which held the water that Christ turned into wine (John iii. 6) were "stonen."
are being gradually cut away from beneath them. Thus "brazen" might at first sight seem as strongly established in the language as ever; it is far from so being; its supports are being cut from beneath it. Even now it only lives in a tropical and secondary sense, as "a brazen face;" or if in a literal, in poetic diction or in the consecrated language of Scripture, as "the brazen serpent;" otherwise we say "a brass farthing," "a brass candlestick." It is the same with "oaten," "oaken," "birchen," "beechen," "strawen," and many more, whereof some are obsolescent, some obsolete, the language manifestly tending now, as it has tended for a long time past, to the getting quit of these, and to the satisfying of itself with an adjectival apposition of the substantive in their stead.

Let me illustrate by another example the way in which a language, as it travels onward, simplifies itself, approaches more and more to a grammatical and logical uniformity, seeks to do the same thing always in the same manner; where it has two or three ways of conducting a single operation, lets all of them go but one; and thus becomes, no doubt, easier to be mastered, more handy, more manageable; for its very riches were to many an embarrassment and a perplexity; but at the same time imposes limits and restraints on its own freedom of action, and is in danger of forfeiting elements of strength, variety and beauty which it once possessed. I refer to the tendency of our verbs to let go their strong præterites, and to substitute weak ones in their room; or, where they have two or three præterites, to retain only one of them, and that invariably the weak one. Though many of us no doubt are familiar with the terms "strong" and "weak" præterites, which in all our better grammars have put out of use the wholly misleading terms "irregular" and "regular," I may perhaps as well remind you of the exact meaning of the terms. A strong præterite is one formed by an internal vowel change; for instance the verb "to drive" forms the præterite "drove" by an internal change of the vowel "i" into "o." But why, it may be asked, called "strong"? In respect of the vigour and indwelling energy in the word, enabling it to form its past tense from its own resources, and with no calling in of help from without. On the other hand "lift" forms its præterite "lifted," not by any internal change, but by the addition of "ed;" "grieve" in like manner has "grieved." Here are weak tenses; as strength was ascribed to the other verbs, so weakness to these, which can only form their præterites by external aid and addition. You will see at once
that these strong præterites, while they witness to a vital energy in the words which are able to put them forth, do also, as must be allowed by all, contribute much to the variety and charm of a language.¹

The point, however, which I am urging now is this—that these are becoming fewer every day; multitudes of them having disappeared, while others are in the act of disappearing. Nor is the balance redressed and compensation found in any new creations of the kind. The power of forming strong præterites is long ago extinct; probably no verb which has come into the language since the Conquest has asserted this power, while a whole legion have let it go. For example, "shape" has now a weak præterite, "shaped," it had once a strong one, "shope;" "bake" has now a weak præterite, "baked," it had once a strong one, "boke;" the præterite of "glide" is now "glided," it was once "glode" or "glid;" "help" makes now "helped," it made once "halp" and "holp." "Creep" made "crepe," still current in the north of England; "weep" "wope;" "yell" "yoll" (both in Chaucer); "seethe" "soth" or "sod" (Gen. xxv. 29); "sheer" in like manner once made "shore;" as "leap" made "lope," "wash" "wishe" (Chaucer); "snow" "snew," "cow" "lew," "delve" "dalf" and "dolve;" "sweat" "swat," "yield" "yold" (both in Spenser); "mete" "mat" (Wiclif); "stretch" "strauh;" "melt" "molt;" "wax" "wex" and "wox;" "laugh" "leugh;" with others more than can be enumerated here.²

Observe further that where verbs have not actually renounced their strong præterites, and contented themselves with weak in their room, yet, once possessing two, or, it might be three of

¹ J. Grimm (Deutsche Gramm., vol. i. p. 1040): "Dass die starke Form die ältere, kräftigere, innere; die schwache die spätere, gehemmtere und mehr äussereisch sei, leuchtet ein." Elsewhere, speaking generally of inflexions by internal vowel change, he characterises them as a "chief beauty" (Hauptschönheit) of the Teutonic languages. Marsh (Manual of the English Language, p. 233, English edition) protests, though, as it seems to me, on no sufficient grounds, against these terms "strong" and "weak," as themselves fanciful and inappropriate.

² The entire ignorance as to the past historic evolution of the language, with which some have undertaken to write about it, is curious. Thus the author of Observations upon the English Language, without date, but published about 1730, treats all these strong præterites as of recent introduction, counting "knew" to have lately expelled "knowed," "rose" to have acted the same part toward "risd," and of course esteeming them as so many barbarous violations of the laws of the language; and concluding with the warning that "great care must be taken to prevent their increase"!—p. 24. Cobbett does not fall into this absurdity, yet proposes in his English Grammar that they should all be abolished as inconvenient.
these strong, they now retain only one. The others, on the principle of dismissing whatever can be dismissed, they have let go. Thus "chide" had once "chid" and "chose," but though "chose" is in our Bible (Gen. xxxi. 36), it has not maintained itself in our speech; "sling" had "slung" and "sling" (1 Sam. xvii. 49); only "sling" remains; "fling" had once "flung" and "flung;" "strive" had "strove" and "strave;" "stick" had "stuck" and "stack;" "hang" had "hung" and "hing" (Gold-ing); "tread" had "trod" and "trad;" "choose" had "chose" and "chase;" "give" had "gave" and "gave;" "led" had "led" and "lode;" "write" had "wrote," "writ" and "wrote." In all these cases, and more might easily be cited, only the praeterites which I have named the first remain in use.

Observe too that in every instance where a conflict is now going on between weak and strong forms, which shall continue, the battle is not to the strong; on the contrary the weak is carrying the day, is getting the better of its stronger competitor. Thus "climbed" is gaining the upper hand of "clomb," "swelled" of "swoll," "hanged" of "hung." It is not too much to anticipate that a time will come, although it may be still far off, when all English verbs will form their präterites weakly; not without serious damage to the fulness and force which in this respect the language even now displays, and once far more eminently displayed.¹

Take another proof of this tendency in our own language to drop its forms and renounce its own inherent powers; though here also the renunciation, threatening one day to be complete, is only partial at the present. I refer to the formation of our comparatives and superlatives; and I will ask you again to observe here that curious law of language, namely, that wherever there are two or more ways of attaining the same result, there is always a disposition to drop and dismiss all of these but one, so that the alternative or choice of ways once existing shall not exist any more. If only it can attain a greater simplicity, it seems to grudge no self-impoverishment by which this result may be brought about. We have two ways of forming our comparatives and superlatives, one dwelling in the word itself, which we have inherited from our old Gothic stock, as "bright," "brighter," "brightest," the other supplementary to this, by prefixing the auxiliaries "more" and "most." The first, organic

¹ J. Grimm (Deutsche Gramm., vol. i. p. 839): "Die starke Flexion stufenweise versinkt und ausstirbt, die schwache aber um sich greift." Cf. i. 994, 1040; ii. 5; iv. 509.
we might call it, the indwelling power of the word to mark its
own degrees, must needs be esteemed the more excellent way;
which yet, already disallowed in almost all adjectives of more
than two syllables in length, is daily becoming of narrower and
more restrained application. Compare in this matter our present
with our past. Wiclif for example forms such comparatives as
“grievouser,” “gloriusuer,” “patienter,” “profitabler,” such
superlatives as “grievousest,” “famousest;” this last occurring
also in Bacon. We meet in Tyndale, “excellenter,” “miser­
ablest;” in Shakespeare, “violentest;” in Gabriel Harvey,
“vendiblest,” “substantialiest,” “insolentest;” in Rogers, “in­
sufficienter,” “goldener;” in Beaumont and Fletcher, “valiant­
est.” Milton uses “virtuousest,” and in prose “vitiousest,”
“elegantest,” “artificialest,” “servilest,” “sheepishest,” “resolu­
test,” “sensualiest;” Fuller has “fertilest;” Baxter “tediousest;”
Butler “preciousest,” “intolerablest;” Burnet “copiousest;”
Gray “impudentest.” Of these forms, and it would be easy to
adduce almost any number, we should hardly employ any now.
In participles and adverbs in “ly,” these organic compara­
tives and superlatives hardly survive at all. We do not say
“willinger” or “lovinger,” and still less “flourishingest,” or
“shiningest,” or “surmountingest,” all which Gabriel Harvey,
a foremost master of the English of his time, employs; “plente­
ouslyer,” “fulliest” (Wiclif), “easiliest” (Fuller), “plainliest”
(Dryden), would be all inadmissible at present.

In the manifest tendency of English at the present moment
to reduce the number of words in which this more vigorous
scheme of expressing degrees is allowed, we must recognise an
evidence that the energy which the language had in its youth
is in some measure abating, and the stiffness of age overtaking
it. Still it is with us here only as it is with all languages, in which
at a certain time of their life auxiliary words, leaving the main
word unaltered, are preferred to inflexions of this last. Such
preference makes itself ever more strongly felt; and, judging
from analogy, I cannot doubt that a day, however distant now,
will arrive, when the only way of forming comparatives and
superlatives in the English language will be by prefixing
“more” and “most;” or, if the other survive, it will be in
poetry alone.

It will fare not otherwise, as I am bold to predict, with the
flexional genitive, formed in “s” or “es” (see ante). This too
will finally disappear altogether from the language, or will
survive only in poetry, and as much an archaic form there as
the "pictai" of Virgil. A time will come when it will not any longer be free to say, as now, either "the king's sons," or "the sons of the king," but when the latter will be the only admissible form. Tokens of this are already evident. The region in which the alternative forms are equally good is daily narrowing. We should not now any more write, "when man's son shall come" (Wiclif), but "when the Son of man shall come," nor yet, "the hypocrite's hope shall perish" (Job viii. 13, Authorised Version), but, "the hope of the hypocrite shall perish;" not with Barrow. "No man can be ignorant of human life's brevity and uncertainty," but "No man can be ignorant of the brevity and uncertainty of human life." The consummation which I anticipate may be centuries off, but will assuredly arrive.

Then too diminutives are fast disappearing from the language. If we desire to express smallness, we prefer to do it by an auxiliary word; thus a little fist, and not a "fistock" (Golding), a little lad, and not a "ladkin," a little worm, rather than a "wormling" (Sylvester). It is true that of diminutives very many still survive, in all our four terminations of such, as "hillock," "streamlet," "lambkin," "gosling;" but those which have perished are many more. Where now is "kingling" (Holland), "whimling" (Beaumont and Fletcher), "godling," "leveling," "dwarfling," "sherpelting" (all in Sylvester), "chasteling" (Becon), "niceling" (Stubbs), "fosterling" (Ben Jonson), and "masterling"? Where now "porelet" (= paupercula, Isai. x. 30, Vulg.), "bundelet" (both in Wiclif); "cushionet" (Henry More), "havenet," or little "haven," "pistol," "bulkin" (Holland), and a hundred more? Even of those which remain many are putting off, or have long since put off, their diminutive sense; a "pocket" being no longer a small poke, nor a "latchet" a small lace, nor a "trumpet" a small trump, as once they were.

Once more—in the entire dropping among the higher classes of "thou," except in poetry or in addresses to the Deity, and as a necessary consequence, the dropping also of the second singular of the verb with its strongly marked flexion, as "lovest," "lovedst," we have another example of a force once existing in the language, which has been, or is being, allowed to expire. In the seventeenth century "thou" in English, as at the present "du" in German, "tu" in French, was the sign of familiarity, whether that familiarity was of love, or of contempt and scorn.¹ It was not

¹ Thus Wallis (Gramm. Ling. Anglica, 1654): "Singulare numero aliquum compelle, vel deligantibus illud esse solet, vel familiariter blandientis."
unfrequently the latter. Thus at Sir Walter Raleigh’s trial (1603), Coke, when argument and evidence failed him, insulted the defendant by applying to him the term “thou”:—“All that Lord Cobham did was at thy instigation, thou viper! for I thou thee, thou traitor.” And when Sir Toby Belch in Twelfth Night is urging Sir Andrew Aguecheek to send a sufficiently provocative challenge to Viola, he suggests to him that he “taunt him with the licence of ink; if thou thou’st him some thrice, it shall not be amiss.” To keep this in mind will throw much light on one peculiarity of the Quakers, and give a certain dignity to it, as once maintained, which at present it is very far from possessing. However needless and unwise their determination to “thee” and “thou” the whole world was, yet this had a significance. It was not, as now to us it seems, and, through the silent changes which language has undergone, as now it indeed is, a gratuitous departure from the ordinary usage of society. Right or wrong, it meant something, and had an ethical motive: being indeed a testimony upon their parts, however misplaced, that they would not have high or great or rich men’s persons in admiration; nor give the observance to some which they withheld from others. It was a testimony too which cost them something; at present we can very little understand the amount of courage which this “thou-ing” and “thee-ing” of all men must have demanded on their parts, nor yet the amount of indignation and offence which it stirred up in them who were not aware of, or would not allow for, the scruples which obliged them to it.¹ It is, however, in its other aspect that we must chiefly regret the dying out of the use of “thou”—that is, as the pledge of peculiar intimacy and special affection, as between husband and wife, parents and children, and such others as might be knit together by bands of more than common affection.

I have preferred during this lecture to find my theme in changes which are now going forward in English, but I cannot finish it without drawing one illustration from its remoter periods, and bidding you to note a force not now waning and failing from it, but extinct long ago. I cannot well pass it by; being as it is by far the boldest step which in this direction of

¹ What the actual position of the compellation “thou” was at that time, we may perhaps best learn from this passage in Fuller’s Church History, Dedication of Book VII.: “In opposition whereunto (i.e. to the Quaker usage) we maintain that thou from superiors to inferiors is proper, as a sign of command; from equals to equals is passable, as a note of familiarity; but from inferiors to superiors, if proceeding from ignorance, hath a smack of clownishness; if from affectation, a tone of contempt.”
that speak the language is to analyse, to distinguish between these two, and not only to distinguish but to divide, to have one word for the thing itself, and another for the quality of the thing; and this, as it would appear, is true not of some languages only but of all.
LECTURE IV

CHANGES IN THE MEANING OF ENGLISH WORDS

I propose, according to the plan sketched out in my first lecture, to take for my subject in the present those changes which in the course of time have found place, or now are finding place, in the meaning of many among our English words; so that, whether we are aware of it or not, we employ them at this day in senses very different from those in which our forefathers employed them of old. You will observe that it is not obsolete words, words quite fallen out of present use, which I propose to consider; but such, rather, as are still on the lips of men, but with meanings more or less removed from those which once they possessed. My subject is far more practical, has far more to do with your actual life, than if I had taken obsolete words and considered them. These last have an interest indeed, but it is an interest of an antiquarian character. They constituted a part of the intellectual money with which our ancestors carried on the business of their life; but now they are rather medals for the cabinets and collections of the curious than current money for the needs and pleasures of all. Their wings are clipped, so that they are "winged words" no more; the spark of thought or feeling, kindling from mind to mind, no longer runs along them, as along the electric wires of the soul.

And then, besides this, there is little or no danger that any should be misled by them. A reader lights for the first time on one of these obsolete English words, as "frampold," or "garboil," or "brangle;" he is at once conscious of his ignorance; he has recourse to a glossary, or if he guesses from the context at the word's signification, still his guess is as a guess to him, and no more. But words that have changed their meaning have often a deceivableness about them; a reader not once doubts but that he knows their intention, has no misgiving but that they possess for him the same force which they possessed for their writer, and conveyed to his contemporaries, when indeed it is quite
into new life and beauty and fulness of allusion, when this is present with us; even Milton's

store of ladies, whose bright eyes
Rain in influence,
as spectators of the tournament, gain something, when we regard them—and using this language, he intended we should—as the luminaries of this lower sphere, shedding by their propitious presence strength and valour into the hearts of their knights.

The word even in its present acceptation may yield, as here, a convenient and even a correct sense; we may fall into no positive misapprehension about it; and still, through ignorance of its past history and of the force which it once possessed, we may miss a great part of its significance. We are not beside the meaning of our author, but we are short of it. Thus in Beaumont and Fletcher's *King and no King* (Act III. Sc. ii.), a cowardly braggart of a soldier describes the treatment he experienced, when like Parolles he was at length found out, and stripped of his lion's skin—"They hung me up by the heels and beat me with hazel sticks, ... that the whole kingdom took notice of me for a baffled whipped fellow." The word to which I wish here to call your attention is "baffled." Were you reading this passage, there would probably be nothing here to cause you to pause; you would attach to "baffled" a sense which sorts very well with the context—"hung up by the heels and beaten, all his schemes of being thought much of were baffled and defeated." But "baffled" implies far more than this; it contains allusion to a custom in the days of chivalry, according to which a perjured or recreant knight was either in person, or more commonly in effigy, hung up by the heels, his scutcheon blotted, his spear broken, and he himself or his effigy made the mark and subject of all kinds of indignities; such a one being said to be "baffled." 1

Twice in Spenser recreant knights are so dealt with. I can only quote a portion of the shorter passage, in which this infamous punishment is described:

\[
\text{And after all, for greater infamy} \\
\text{He by the heels him hung upon a tree,} \\
\text{And baffled so, that all which passed by} \\
\text{The picture of his punishment might see.}^3
\]

Probably when Beaumont and Fletcher wrote, men were not so remote from the days of chivalry, or at any rate from the

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2 *Fairy Queen*, VI. vii. 27; cf. V. iii. 37.
literature of chivalry, but that this custom was still fresh in their minds. How much more to them than to us, so long as we are ignorant of the same, would those words I just quoted have conveyed?

There are several places in the Authorised Version of Scripture where those who are not aware of the changes which have taken place during the last two hundred and fifty years in our language, can hardly fail of being to a certain extent misled as to the intention of our translators; or, if they are better acquainted with Greek than with early English, will be tempted to ascribe to them, though unjustly, an inexact rendering of the original. Thus the altered meaning of a word involves a serious misunderstanding in that well-known statement of St. James, “Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, to visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction.” “There,” exclaims one who wishes to set up St. James against St. Paul, that so he may escape the necessity of obeying either, “listen to what St. James says; there is nothing mystical in what he requires; instead of harping on faith as a condition necessary to salvation, he makes all religion to consist in practical deeds of kindness from one to another.” But let us pause for a moment. Did “religion,” when our translation was made, mean godliness? did it mean the sum total of our duties towards God? for, of course, no one would deny that deeds of charity are a necessary part of our Christian duty, an evidence of the faith which is in us. There is abundant evidence to show that “religion” did not mean this; that, like the Greek ἡγοροσεία, for which it here stands, like the Latin “religio,” it meant the outward forms and embodiments in which the inward principle of piety arrayed itself, the external service of God: and St. James is urging upon those to whom he is writing something of this kind: “Instead of the ceremonial services of the Jews, which consisted in divers washings and in other elements of this world, let our service, our ἡγοροσεία, take a nobler shape, let it consist in deeds of pity and of love”—and it was this which our translators intended when they used “religion” here and “religious” in the verse preceding. How little “religion” once meant godliness, how predominantly it was used for the outward service of God, is plain from many passages in our Homilies, and from other contemporary literature.

Again, there are words in our Liturgy which I have no doubt are commonly misunderstood. The mistake involves no serious error; yet still in our own language, and in words which we have constantly in our mouths, and at most solemn times, it is
certainly better to be right than wrong. In the Litany we pray God that it would please Him "to give and preserve to our use the kindly fruits of the earth." What meaning do we attach to this epithet, "the kindly fruits of the earth"? Probably we understand by it those fruits in which the kindness of God or of nature towards us finds its expression. This is no unworthy explanation, but still it is not the right one. The "kindly fruits" are the "natural fruits," those which the earth according to its kind should naturally bring forth, which it is appointed to produce. To show you how little "kindly" meant once benignant, as it means now, I will instance an employment of it from Sir Thomas More's Life of Richard the Third. He tells us that Richard calculated by murdering his two nephews in the Tower to make himself accounted "a kindly king"—not certainly a "kindly" one in our present usage of the word; but, having put them out of the way, that he should then be lineal heir of the Crown, and should thus be reckoned as king by kind or natural descent; and such was of old the constant use of the word.

A phrase in one of our occasional Services, "with my body I thee worship," has sometimes offended those who are unacquainted with the early uses of English words, and thus with the intention of the actual framers of that Service. Clearly in our modern sense of "worship," this language would be unjustifiable. But "worship" or "worthship" meant "honour" in our early English, and "to worship" to honour, this meaning of "worship" still very harmlessly surviving in the title of "your worship," addressed to the magistrate on the bench. So little was it restrained of old to the honour which man is bound to pay to God, that it was employed by Wiclif to express the honour which God will render to his faithful servants and friends. Thus our Lord's declaration, "If any man serve Me, him will my Father worship," in Wiclif's translation reads thus, "If any man serve Me, my Father shall worship him." I do not say that there is not sufficient reason to change the words, "with my body I thee worship," if only there were any means of changing anything which is now antiquated and out of date in our services or arrangements. I think it would be very well if they were changed, liable as they are to misunderstanding and misconstruction now; but still they did not mean at the first, and therefore do not now really mean, any more than, "with my body I thee honour," and so you may reply to any fault-finder here.

Take another example of a very easy misapprehension, although not now from Scripture or the Prayer Book. Fuller,
our Church historian, having occasion to speak of some famous
divine that was lately dead, exclaims, “Oh the painfulness of
his preaching!” If we did not know the former uses of “pain-
fulness,” we might take this for an exclamation wrung out at
the recollection of the tediousness which he inflicted on his
hearers. Far from it; the words are a record not of the pain
which he caused to others, but of the pains which he bestowed
himself: and I am persuaded, if we had more “painful” preachers
in the old sense of the word, that is, who took pains themselves,
we should have fewer “painful” ones in the modern sense, who
cause pain to their hearers. So too Bishop Grossethead is recorded
as “the painful writer of two hundred books”—not meaning
hereby that these books were painful in the reading, but that
he was laborious and painful in their composing.

Here is another easy misapprehension. Swift wrote a pamphlet,
or, as he called it, a Letter to the Lord Treasurer, with this title,
“A proposal for correcting, improving, and ascertaining the
English Tongue.” Who that brought a knowledge of present
English, and no more, to this passage, would doubt that “ascer-
taining the English tongue” meant arriving at a certain
knowledge of what it was? Swift, however, means something
quite different from this. “To ascertain the English tongue” is
not with him to arrive at a subjective certainty in our own minds
of what that tongue is, but to give an objective certainty to
that tongue itself, so that henceforth it shall not alter nor
change. For even Swift himself, with all his masculine sense,
entertained a dream of this kind, as is more fully declared in
the work itself.¹

In other places unacquaintance with the changes in a word’s
usage will not so much mislead, as leave you nearly or altogether
at a loss in respect of the intention of an author whom you may
be reading. It is evident that he has a meaning, but what it is
you are unable to divine, even though all the words he employs
are words in familiar employment to the present day. For
example, the poet Waller is congratulating Charles the Second
on his return from exile, and is describing the way in which
all men, even those formerly most hostile to him, were now seek-
ing his favour, and he writes:

Offenders now, the chiefest, do begin
To strive for grace, and expiate their sin:
All winds blow fair that did the world embroil,
Your vipers treacle yield, and scorpions oil.

Many a reader before now has felt, as I cannot doubt, a moment's perplexity at the now courtly poet's assertion that "vipers treacle yield"—who yet has been too indolent, or who has not had the opportunity, to search out what his meaning might be. There is in fact allusion here to a curious piece of legendary lore. "Trece," or "triacle," as Chaucer wrote it, was originally a Greek word, and wrapped up in itself the once popular belief (an anticipation, by the way, of homoeopathy), that a confection of the viper's flesh was the most potent antidote against the viper's bite.¹ Waller goes back to this the word's old meaning, familiar enough in his time, for Milton speaks of "the sovran treacle of sound doctrine,"² while "Venice treacle," or "viper wine," as it sometimes was called, was a common name for a supposed antidote against all poisons; and he would imply that regicides themselves began to be loyal, vipers not now yielding hurt any more, but rather healing for the old hurts which they themselves had inflicted. To trace the word down to its present use, it may be observed that, designating first this antidote, it then came to designate any antidote, then any medicinal confection or sweet syrup; and lastly that particular syrup, namely the sweet syrup of molasses, to which alone it is now restricted.

I will draw on the writings of Fuller for one more example. In his Holy War, having enumerated the rabble rout of fugitive debtors, runaway slaves, thieves, adulterers, murderers, of men laden for one cause or another with heaviest censures of the Church, who swelled the ranks, and helped to make up the army, of the Crusaders, he exclaims, "A lamentable case, that the devil's black guard should be God's soldiers!" What does he mean, we may ask, by "the devil's black guard?" Nor is this a solitary mention of the "black guard." On the contrary, the phrase is of very frequent recurrence in the early dramatists and others down to the time of Dryden, who gives as one of his stage directions in Don Sebastian, "Enter the captain of the rabble, with the Black guard." What is this "black

¹ ἄποιξις, from ἀπόξιος, a designation given to the viper, see Acts xxviii. 4. "Theriac" is only the more rigid form of the same word, the scholarly, as distinguished from the popular, adoption of it. Augustine (Con. duos Epp. Pelag., iii. 7): "Sicut fieri consuevit antidotum etiam de serpentibus contra venena serpentum."

² And Chaucer, more solemnly still:

"Christ, which that is to every harm triacle."

The antidotal character of treacle comes out yet more in these lines of Lydgate:

"There is no venom so parlous in sharpnes,
As when it hath of treacle a likenes."
guard”? Has it any connexion with a word of our homeliest vernacular? We feel that probably it has so; yet at first sight the connexion is not very apparent, nor indeed the exact force of the phrase. Let me trace its history. In old times, the palaces of our kings and seats of our nobles were not so well and completely furnished as at the present day: and thus it was customary, when a royal progress was made, or when the great nobility exchanged one residence for another, that at such a removal all kitchen utensils, pots and pans, and even coals, should be also carried with them where they went. Those who accompanied and escorted these, the lowest, meanest, and dirtiest of the retainers, were called “the black guard;” then any troop or company of ragamuffins; and lastly, when the origin of the word was lost sight of, and it was forgotten that it properly implied a company, a rabble rout, and not a single person, one would compliment another, not as belonging to, but as himself being, the “blackguard.”

The examples which I have adduced are, I am persuaded, sufficient to prove that it is not a useless and unprofitable study, nor yet one altogether without entertainment, to which I invite you; that on the contrary any one who desires to read with accuracy, and thus with advantage and pleasure, our earlier classics, who would avoid continual misapprehension in their perusal, and would not often fall short of, and often go astray from, their meaning, must needs bestow some attention on the altered significance of English words. And if this is so, we could not more usefully employ what remains of this present lecture than in seeking to indicate those changes which words most frequently undergo; and to trace as far as we can the causes, mental and moral, at work in the minds of men to bring these changes about, with the good and evil out of which they have sprung, and to which they bear witness.

For indeed these changes to which words in the progress of time are submitted are not changes at random, but for the most part are obedient to certain laws, are capable of being distributed into certain classes, being the outward transcripts and witnesses of mental and moral processes inwardly going forward in those who bring them about. Many, it is true, will escape any classification of ours, the changes which have taken place in their meaning being, or at least seeming to us, the result of mere caprice; and

1"A slave that within these twenty years rode with the black guard in the Duke's carriage, 'mongst spits and dripping pans."—WEBSTER'S White Devil.
not explicable by any principle which we can appeal to as habitually at work in the mind. But, admitting all this, a majority will still remain which are reducible to some law or other, and with these we will occupy ourselves now.

And first, the meaning of a word oftentimes is gradually narrowed. It was once as a generic name, embracing many as yet unnamed species within itself, which all went by its common designation. By and bye it is found convenient that each of these should have its own more special sign allotted to it. It is here just as in some newly enclosed country, where a single household will at first loosely occupy a whole district; while, as cultivation proceeds, this district is gradually parcelled out among a dozen or twenty, and under more accurate culture employs and sustains them all. Thus, for example, all food was once called "meat;" it is so in our Bible, and "horse-meat" for fodder is still no unusual phrase; yet "meat" is now a name given only to flesh. Any little book or writing was a "libel" once; now only such a one as is scurrilous and injurious. Any leader was a "duke" (dux); thus "duke Hannibal" (Sir Thomas Elyot), "duke Brennus" (Holland), "duke Theseus" (Shakespeare), "duke Amalek," with other "dukes" (Gen. xxxvi.). Any journey, by land as much as by sea, was a "voyage." "Fairy" was not a name restricted, as now, to the Gothic mythology; thus "the fairy Egeria" (Sir J. Harrington). A "corpse" might be quite as well living as dead. "Weeds" were whatever covered the earth or the person; while now as respects the earth, those only are "weeds" which are noxious, or at least self-sown; as regards the person, we speak of no other "weeds" but the widow's. In each of these cases, the same contraction of meaning, the separating off and assigning to other words of large portions of this, has found place. "To starve" (the German "sterben," and generally spelt "sterve" up to the middle of the seventeenth century) meant once to die any manner of death; thus Chaucer says, Christ "sterved upon the cross for our redemption;" it now is restricted to the dying by cold or by hunger. Words not a few were once applied to both sexes alike, which are now restricted to the female. It is so even with "girl," which was once a young person of either sex; while other words in this list,

1 Génin (L'Exique de la Langue de Molière, p. 367) says well: "En augmentant le nombre des mots, il a fallu restreindre leur signification, et faire aux nouveaux un apanage aux dépens des anciens."

2 And no less so in French with "dame," by which form only, but "dominat" was represented. Thus in early French poetry, "Dame Dieu" for "Dominit Deus" continually occurs. We have here
such for instance as "hoyden" (Milton, prose), "shrew" (Chaucer), "coquet" (Phillips, *New World of Words*), "witch" (Wiclif), "termagant" (Bale), "scold," "jade," "slut" (Gower), must be regarded in their present exclusive appropriation to the female sex as evidences of men's rudeness, and not of women's deserts.

The necessities of an advancing civilisation demand a greater precision and accuracy in the use of words having to do with weight, measure, number, size. Almost all such words as "acre," "furlong," "yard," "gallon," "peck," were once of a vague and unsettled use, and only at a later day, and in obedience to the requirements of commerce and social life, exact measures and designations. Thus every field was once an "acre;" and this remains so still with the German "acker," and in our "God's acre," as a name for a churchyard; it was not till about the reign of Edward the First that "acre" was commonly restricted to a determined measure and portion of land. Here and there even now a glebeland will be called "the acre;" and this even while it contains not one but many of our measured acres. A "furlong" was a "furrowlong," or length of a furrow. Any pole was a "yard," and this vaguer use survives in "sailyard," "halyard," and in other sea-terms. Every pitcher was a "galon" (Mark xiv. 13, Wiclif), while a "peck" was no more than a "poke" or bag. And the same has no doubt taken place in all other languages. I will only remind you how the Greek "drachm" was at first a handful (δραχμή = "manipulus," from δράκω, to grasp); its later word for "ten thousand" (μύριοι) implied in Homer's time any great multitude; and with the accent on a different syllable always retained this meaning.

Opposite to this is a counter-process by which words of narrower intention gradually enlarge the domain of their meaning, becoming capable of much wider application than any which once they admitted. Instances in this kind are fewer than in that which we have just been considering. The main stream and course of human thoughts and human discourse tends the other way, to discerning, distinguishing, dividing; and then to the permanent fixing of the distinctions gained, by the aid of designations which shall keep apart for ever in the key to the French exclamation, or oath, as we now perceive it to be, "Dame!" of which the dictionaries give no account. See Genin's *Variations du Langage Francais*, p. 347.

1 "A furlong, quasi furrowlong, being so much as a team in England plougheth going forward, before they return back again."—FULLER, *Pisgah Sight of Palestine*, p. 42.
word that which has been once severed and sundered in thought. Nor is it hard to perceive why this process should be the more frequent. Men are first struck with the likenesses between those things which are presented to them, with their points of resemblance; on the strength of which they bracket them under a common term. Further acquaintance reveals their points of unlikeness, the real dissimilarities which lurk under superficial resemblances, the need therefore of a different notation for objects which are essentially different. It is comparatively much rarer to discover real likeness under what at first appeared as unlikeness; and usually when a word moves forward, and from a specialty indicates now a generality, it is not in obedience to any such discovery of the true inner likeness of things—the steps of successful generalisations being marked and secured in other ways. But this widening of a word's meaning is too often a result of those elements of disorganisation and decay which are at work in a language. Men forget a word's history and etymology; its distinctive features are obliterated for them, with all which attached it to some thought or fact which by right was its own. Appropriated and restricted once to some striking specialty which it vigorously set out, it can now be used in a wider, vaguer, more unsettled way. It can be employed twenty times for once when it would have been possible formerly to employ it. Yet this is not gain, but pure loss. It has lost its place in the disciplined army of words, and become one of a loose and disorderly mob.

Let me instance the word "preposterous." It is now no longer of any practical service at all in the language, being merely an ungraceful and slipshod synonym for absurd. But restore and confine it to its old use; let it designate that one peculiar branch of absurdity which it designated once, namely the reversing of the true order of things, the putting of the last first, and, by consequence, of the first last, and of what excellent service the word would be capable. Thus it is "preposterous," in the most accurate use of the word, to put the cart before the horse, to expect wages before the work is done, to hang a man first and try him afterwards; and in this strict and accurate sense the word was always used by our elder writers.

In like manner "to prevaricate" was never employed by good writers of the seventeenth century without nearer or more remote allusion to the uses of the word in the Roman law courts, where a "prævaricatorem" (properly a straddler with distorted legs) did not mean generally and loosely, as now with us, one
who shuffles, quibbles, and evades; but one who plays false in a particular manner; who, undertaking, or being by his office bound, to prosecute a charge, is in secret collusion with the opposite party; and, betraying the cause which he affects to support, so manages the accusation as to obtain not the condemnation, but the acquittal, of the accused; a "feint pleader," as, I think, in our old law language he would have been termed. How much force would the keeping of this in mind add to many passages in our elder divines.

Or take "equivocal," "equivocate," "equivocation." These words, which belonged at first to logic, have slipped down into common use, and in so doing have lost all the precision of their first employment. "Equivocation" is now almost any such dealing in ambiguous words with the intention of deceiving, as falls short of an actual lie; but according to its etymology and in its primary use "equivocation," this fruitful mother of so much error, is the calling by the same name of things essentially diverse, hiding intentionally or otherwise a real difference under a verbal resemblance. Nor let it be urged in defence of its present looser use, that only so could it have served the needs of our ordinary conversation; on the contrary, had it retained its first use, how serviceable an implement of thought would it have been in detecting our own fallacies, or those of others; all which it can now be no longer.

What now is "idea" for us? How infinite the fall of this word since the time when Milton sang of the Creator contemplating his newly created world,

how it showed,

Answering his great idea,

to its present use when this person "has an idea that the train has started," and the other "had no idea that the dinner would be so bad." But this word "idea" is perhaps the worst case in the English language. Matters have not mended here since the times of Dr. Johnson; of whom Boswell tells us: "He was particularly indignant against the almost universal use of the word idea in the sense of notion or opinion, when it is clear that idea can only signify something of which an image can be formed in the mind." There is perhaps no word in the whole compass of English so seldom used with any tolerable correctness; in none is the distance so immense between the frequent sublimity of

1 Thus Barrow: "Which [courage and constancy] he that wanteth is no other than equivocally a gentleman, as an image or a carcass is a man."
the word in its proper use, and the triviality of it in its slovenly
and its popular.

This tendency in words to lose the sharp, rigidly defined outline
of meaning which they once possessed, to become of wide, vague,
loose application instead of fixed, definite, and precise, to mean
almost anything, and so really to mean nothing, is among the
most fatally effectual which are at work for the final ruin of a
language, and, I do not fear to add, for the demoralisation of
those that speak it. It is one against which we shall all do well
to watch; for there is none of us who cannot do something in
keeping words close to their own proper meaning, and in resisting
their encroachment on the domain of others.

The causes which bring this mischief about are not hard to
trace. We all know that when a piece of our silver money has
long fulfilled its part, as "pale and common drudge 'tween man
and man," whatever it had at first of sharper outline and livelier
impress is in the end wholly obliterated from it. So it is with
words, above all with words of science and theology. These
getting into general use, and passing often from mouth to mouth,
lose the "image and superscription" which they had before
they descended from the school to the market-place, from the
pulpit to the street. Being now caught up by those who under­
stand imperfectly and thus incorrectly their true value, who
will not be at the pains of understanding that, or who are
incapable of doing so, they are obliged to accommodate them­
selves to the lower sphere in which they circulate, by laying
aside much of the precision and accuracy and depth which
once they had; they become weaker, shallower, more indefinite;
till in the end, as exponents of thought and feeling, they cease
to be of any service at all.

Sometimes a word does not merely narrow or extend its
meaning, but altogether changes it; and this it does in more ways
than one. Thus a secondary figurative sense will quite put out
of use and extinguish the literal, until in the entire predominance
of that it is altogether forgotten that it ever possessed any other.
I may instance "bombast" as a word about which this forgetful­
ness is nearly complete. What "bombast" now means is familiar
to us all, namely inflated words, "full of sound and fury," but
"signifying nothing." This, at present its sole meaning, was once
only the secondary and superinduced; "bombast" being properly
the cotton plant, and then the cotton wadding with which gar­
ments were stuffed out and lined. You remember perhaps how
Prince Hal addresses Falstaff, "How now, my sweet creature of bombast;" using the word in its literal sense; and another early poet has this line:

Thy body's bolstered out with bombast and with bags.

"Bombast" was then transferred in a vigorous image to the big words without strength or solidity wherewith the discourses of some were stuffed out, and has now quite foregone any other meaning. So too "to garble" was once "to cleanse from dross and dirt, as grocers do their spices, to pick or cull out." It is never used now in this its primary sense, and has indeed undergone this further change, that while once "to garble" was to sift for the purpose of selecting the best, it is now to sift with a view of picking out the worst. "Polite" is another word in which the figurative sense has quite extinguished the literal. We still speak of "polished" surfaces; but not any more, with Cudworth, of "polite bodies, as looking glasses." Neither do we now "exonerate" a ship (Burton); nor "stigmatise," at least otherwise than figuratively, a "malefactor" (the same); nor "corroborate" our health (Sir Thomas Elyot).

Again, a word will travel on by slow and regularly progressive courses of change, itself a faithful index of changes going on in society and in the minds of men, till at length everything is changed about it. The process of this it is often very curious to observe; capable as not seldom it is of being watched step by step in its advances to the final consummation. There may be said to be three leading phases which the word successively presents, three steps in its history. At first it grows naturally out of its own root, is filled with its own natural meaning. Presently the word allows another meaning, one superinduced on the former, and foreign to its etymology, to share with the other in the possession of it, on the ground that where the former exists, the latter commonly co-exists with it. At the third step, the newly introduced meaning, not satisfied with its moiety, with dividing the possession of the word, has thrust out the original and rightful possessor altogether, and remains in sole and exclusive possession. The three successive stages may be represented by a, ab, b; in which series b, which was wanting altogether at the first stage, and was only admitted as secondary

1 Phillips, *New World of Words*, 1706.
2 "But his [Gideon's] army must be garbled, as too great for God to give victory thereby; all the fearful return home by proclamation."—Fuller, *Pisgah Sight of Palestine*, Book II. chap. viii.
at the second, does at the third become primary and indeed alone.

We are not to suppose that in actual fact the transitions from one signification to another are so strongly and distinctly marked as I have found it convenient to mark them here. Indeed it is hard to imagine anything more gradual, more subtle and imperceptible, than the process of change. The manner in which the new meaning first insinuates itself into the old, and then drives out the old, can only be compared to the process of petrifaction, as rightly understood—the water not gradually turning what is put into it to stone, as we generally take the operation to be; but successively displacing each several particle of that which is brought within its power, and depositing a stony particle in its stead, till, in the end, while all appears to continue the same, all has in fact been thoroughly changed. It is precisely thus, by such slow, gradual, and subtle advances, that the new meaning filters through and pervades the word, little by little displacing entirely that which it before possessed.

No word would illustrate this process better than that old example, familiar probably to us all, of “villain.” The “villain” is, first, the serf or peasant, “villanus,” because attached to the “villa” or farm. He is, secondly, the peasant who, it is further taken for granted, will be churlish, selfish, dishonest, and generally of evil moral conditions, these having come to be assumed as always belonging to him, and to be permanently associated with his name, by those higher classes of society who in the main commanded the springs of language. At the third step, nothing of the meaning which the etymology suggests, nothing of “villa,” survives any longer; the peasant is wholly dismissed, and the evil moral conditions of him who is called by this name alone remain; so that the name would now in this its final stage be applied as freely to peer, if he deserved it, as to peasant. “Boor” has had exactly the same history; being first the cultivator of the soil; then secondly, the cultivator of the soil who, it is assumed, will be coarse, rude, and unmannerly; and then thirdly, any one who is coarse, rude, and unmannerly. So too “pagan;” which is first villager, then heathen villager, and lastly heathen. You may trace the same progress in “churl,” “clown,” “antic,” and in numerous other words. The intrusive meaning might be likened in all these cases to the egg which the cuckoo lays in the sparrow’s nest; the young cuckoo first sharing the nest with its rightful occupants, but not resting till it has dislodged and ousted them altogether.
I will illustrate by the aid of one word more this part of my subject. I called your attention in my last lecture to the true character of several words and forms in use among our country people, and claimed for them to be in many instances genuine English, although English now more or less antiquated and overlived. "Gossip" is a word in point. I have myself heard this name given by our Hampshire peasantry to the sponsors in baptism, the godfathers and godmothers. I do not say that it is a usual word; but it is occasionally employed, and well understood. This is a perfectly correct employment of "gossip," in fact its proper and original one, and involves moreover a very curious record of past beliefs. "Gossip," or "gossib," as Chaucer spelt it, is a compound word, made up of the name of "God," and of an old Anglo-Saxon word, "sib," still alive in Scotland, as all readers of Walter Scott will remember, and in some parts of England, and which means, akin; they were said to be "sib" who are related to one another. But why, you may ask, was the name given to sponsors? Out of this reason—in the middle ages it was the prevailing belief (and the Romish Church still affirms it), that those who stood as sponsors to the same child, besides contracting spiritual obligations on behalf of that child, also contracted spiritual affinity one with another; they became sib, or akin, in God; and thus "gossips;" hence "gossiped," an old word, exactly analogous to "kindred." Out of this faith the Roman Catholic Church will not allow (unless indeed by dispensations procured for money) those who have stood as sponsors to the same child, afterwards to contract marriage with one another, affirming them too nearly related for this to be lawful.

Take "gossip" however in its ordinary present use, as one addicted to idle tittle-tattle, and it seems to bear no relation whatever to its etymology and first meaning. The same three steps, however, which we have traced before will bring us to its present use. "Gossips" are, first, the sponsors, brought by the act of a common sponsorship into affinity and near familiarity with one another; secondly, these sponsors, who being thus brought together, allow themselves one with the other in familiar, and then in trivial and idle, talk; thirdly, any who allow themselves in this trivial and idle talk—called in French "commérage," from the fact that "commère" has run through exactly the same stages as its English equivalent.

It is plain that words which designate not things and persons only, but these as they are contemplated more or less in an
ethical light, words which tinge with a moral sentiment what they designate, are peculiarly exposed to change; are constantly liable to take a new colouring, or to lose an old. The gauge and measure of praise or blame, honour or dishonour, admiration or abhorrence, which they convey, is so purely a mental and subjective one, that it is most difficult to take accurate note of its rise or of its fall, while yet there are causes continually at work leading it to the one or the other. There are words not a few, but ethical words above all, which have so imperceptibly drifted away from their former moorings, that although their position is now very different from that which they once occupied, scarcely one in a hundred of casual readers, whose attention has not been specially called to the subject, will have observed that they have moved at all. Here too we observe some words conveying less of praise or blame than once, and some more; while some have wholly shifted from the one to the other. Some were at one time words of slight, almost of offence, which have altogether ceased to be so now. Still these are rare by comparison with those which once were harmless, but now are harmless no more; which once, it may be, were terms of honour, but which now imply a slight or even a scorn. It is only too easy to perceive why these should exceed those in number.

Let us take an example or two. If any were to speak now of royal children as "royal imps," it would sound, and with our present use of the word would be, impertinent and unbecoming enough; and yet "imp" was once a name of dignity and honour, and not of slight or of undue familiarity. Thus Spenser addresses the Muses in this language:

Ye sacred imps that on Parnasso dwell;

and "imp" was especially used of the scions of royal or illustrious houses. More than one epitaph, still existing, of our ancient nobility might be quoted, beginning in such language as this, "Here lies that noble imp." Or what should we say of a poet who commenced a solemn poem in this fashion:

Oh Israel, oh household of the Lord,
Oh Abraham's brats, oh brood of blessed seed?

Could we conclude anything else but that he meant, by using low words on lofty occasions, to turn sacred things into ridicule? Yet this was very far from the intention of Gascoigne, the poet whose lines I have just quoted. "Abraham's brats" was used by him in perfect good faith, and without the slightest feeling that anything ludicrous or contemptuous adhered to the word
"brat," as indeed in his time there did not, any more than adheres to "brood," which is another form of the same word now. Call a person "pragmatical," and you now imply not merely that he is busy, but over-busy, officious, self-important, and pompous to boot. But it once meant nothing of the kind, and "pragmatical" (like πραγματικός) was one engaged in affairs, being an honourable title, given to a man simply and industriously accomplishing the business which properly concerned him. So too to say that a person "meddles" or is a "meddler" implies now that he interferes unduly in other men's matters, without a call mixing himself up with them. This was not insinuated in the earlier uses of the word. On the contrary three of our earlier translations of the Bible have, "Meddle with your own business" (1 Thess. iv. 11); and Barrow in one of his sermons draws at some length the distinction between "meddling" and "being meddlesome," and only condemns the latter. Or take again the words, "to prose" or a "proser." It cannot indeed be affirmed that they convey any moral condemnation, yet they certainly convey no compliment now; and are almost among the last which any one would desire should with justice be applied either to his talking or his writing. For "to prose," as we all now know too well, is to talk or write heavily and tediously, without spirit and without animation; but once it was simply the antithesis of to versify, and a "proser" the antithesis of a versifier or a poet. It will follow that the most rapid and liveliest writer who ever wrote, if he did not write in verse would have "prosed" and been a "proser," in the language of our ancestors. Thus Drayton writes of his contemporary Nashe:

And surely Nashe, though he a proser were,  
A branch of laurel yet deserves to bear;

that is, the ornament not of a "proser," but of a poet. The tacit assumption that vigour, animation, rapid movement, with all the precipitation of the spirit, belong to verse rather than to prose, and are the exclusive possession of it, is that which must explain the changed uses of the word.

Still it is according to a word's present signification that we must apply it now. It would be no excuse, having applied an insulting epithet to any, if we should afterwards plead that, tried by its etymology and primary usage, it had nothing

1 "We cannot always be contemplative or pragmatical abroad: but have need of some delightful intermissions, wherein the enlarged soul may leave off awhile her severe schooling."—Milton, Tetrachordon.
offensive or insulting about it; although indeed Swift assures us that in his time such a plea was made and was allowed. “I remember,” he says, “at a trial in Kent, where Sir George Rooke was indicted for calling a gentleman ‘knave’ and ‘villain,’ the lawyer for the defendant brought off his client by alleging that the words were not injurious; for ‘knave’ in the old and true signification imported only a servant; and ‘villain’ in Latin is vilicus, which is no more than a man employed in country labour, or rather a baily.” The lawyer may have deserved his success for his ingenuity and his boldness; though, if Swift reports him aright, not certainly on the ground of the strict accuracy either of his Anglo-Saxon or his Latin.

The moral sense and conviction of men is often at work upon their words, giving them new turns in obedience to these convictions, of which their changed use will then remain a permanent record. Let me illustrate this by the history of our word “sycophant.” You probably are acquainted with the story which the Greek scholiasts invented by way of explaining a word of which they knew nothing, namely that the “sycophant” was a “manifesteer of figs,” one who detected others in the act of exporting figs from Attica, an act forbidden, they asserted, by the Athenian law; and accused them to the people. Be this explanation worth what it may, the word obtained in Greek a more general sense; any accuser, and then any false accuser, was a “sycophant;” and when the word was first adopted into the English language, it was in this meaning: thus an old English poet speaks of “the railing route of sycophants;” and Holland, “The poor man that hath nought to lose, is not afraid of the sycophant.” But it has not kept this meaning; a “sycophant” is now a fawning flatterer; not one who speaks ill of you behind your back; rather one who speaks good of you before your face, but good which he does not in his heart believe. Yet how true a moral instinct has presided over the changed signification of the word. The calumniator and the flatterer, although they seem so opposed to one another, how closely united they really are. They grow out of the same root. The same baseness of spirit which shall lead one to speak evil of you behind your back, will lead him to fawn on you and flatter you before your face; there is a profound sense in that Italian proverb, “Who flatters me before, spatters me behind.”

But it is not the moral sense only of men which is thus at work, modifying their words; but the immoral as well. If the good which men have and feel, penetrates into their speech,
and leaves its deposit there, so does also the evil. Thus we may trace a constant tendency—in too many cases it has been a successful one—to empty words employed in the condemnation of evil, of the depth and earnestness of the moral reprobation which they once conveyed. Men's too easy toleration of sin, the feebleness of their moral indignation against it, brings about that the blame which words expressed once, has in some of them become much weaker now than once, has from others vanished altogether. "To do a shrewd turn," was once to do a wicked turn; and Chaucer, using "shrewdness" by which to translate the Latin "improbitas," shows that it meant wickedness for him; nay, two murderers he calls two "shrews"—for there were, as already noticed, male shrews once as well as female. But "a shrewd turn" now, while it implies a certain amount of sharp dealing, yet implies nothing more; and "shrewdness" is applied to men rather in their praise than in their dispraise. And not "shrewd" and "shrewdness" only, but a multitude of other words—I will only instance "prank," "flirt," "luxury," "luxurious," "peevish," "wayward," "loiterer," "uncivil,"—conveyed once a much more earnest moral disapproval than now they do.

But I must bring this lecture to a close. I have but opened to you paths which you, if you are so minded, can follow up for yourselves. We have learned lately to speak of men's "antecedents;" the phrase is newly come up; and it is common to say that if we would know what a man really now is, we must know his "antecedents," that is, what he has been in time past. This is quite as true about words. If we would know what they now are, we must know what they have been; we must know, if possible, the date and place of their birth, the successive stages of their subsequent history, the company which they have kept, all the road which they have travelled, and what has brought them to the point at which now we find them; we must know, in short, their antecedents.

And let me say, without attempting to bring back school into these lectures which are out of school, that, seeking to do this, we might add an interest to our researches in the lexicon and the dictionary which otherwise they could never have; that taking such words, for example, as ἐκκλησία, or παλιγγενεσία, or εὐπραπσδία, or σωφρότης, or σχολαστικός, in Greek; as "religio," or "sacramentum," or "urbanitas," or "superstitio," in Latin; as "libertine," or "casuistry," or "humanity," or

1 See Whewell's History of Moral Philosophy in England, pp. xxvii–xxxii.
“humorous,” or “danger,” or “romance,” in English, and endeavouring to trace the manner in which one meaning grew out of and superseded another, and how they arrived at that use in which they have finally rested (if indeed before our English words there is not a future still), we shall derive, I believe, amusement, I am sure, instruction; we shall feel that we are really getting something, increasing the moral and intellectual stores of our minds; furnishing ourselves with that which may hereafter be of service to ourselves, may be of service to others—than which there can be no feeling more pleasurable, none more delightful. I shall be glad and thankful, if you can feel as much in regard of that lecture which I now bring to its end.¹

¹ For a fuller treatment of the subject of this lecture, see my Select Glossary of English Words used formerly in senses different from their present, second edition, London, 1859.
LECTURE V

CHANGES IN THE SPELLING OF ENGLISH WORDS

When I announce to you that the subject of my lecture to-day will be English orthography, or the spelling of words in our native language, with the alterations which this has undergone, you may perhaps think with yourselves that a weightier, or, if not a weightier, at all events a more interesting, subject might have occupied this our concluding lecture. I cannot admit it to be wanting either in importance or in interest. Unimportant it certainly is not, but might well engage, as it often has engaged, the attention of those with far higher acquirements than any which I possess. Uninteresting it may be, by faults in the manner of treating it; but I am sure it ought as little to be this; and would never prove so in competent hands.¹ Let us then address ourselves to this matter, not without good hope that it may yield us both profit and pleasure.

I know not who it was that said, “The invention of printing was very well; but, as compared to the invention of writing, it was no such great matter after all.” Whoever it was who made this observation, it is clear that for him use and familiarity had not obliterated the wonder which there is in that, whereat we probably have long ceased to wonder at all—the power, namely, of representing sounds by written signs, of reproducing for the eye that which existed at first only for the ear: nor was the estimate which he formed of the relative value of these two inventions other than a just one. Writing indeed stands more nearly on a level with speaking, and deserves rather to be compared with it, than with printing; which, with all its utility, is yet of altogether another and inferior type of greatness: or, if this is too much to claim for writing, it may at any rate be affirmed to stand midway between the other two, and to be as much superior to the one as it is inferior to the other.

The intention of the written word, that which presides at its

¹ In proof that it need not be so, I would only refer to a paper, “On Orthographical Expedients,” by Edwin Guest, Esq., in the Transactions of the Philological Society, vol. iii. p. 1.
first formation, the end whereunto it is a mean, is by aid of symbols agreed on beforehand, to represent to the eye with as much accuracy as possible the spoken word.

It never fulfils this intention completely, and by degrees more and more imperfectly. Short as man's spoken word often falls of his thought, his written word falls often as short of his spoken. Several causes contribute to this. In the first place, the marks of imperfection and infirmity cleave to writing, as to every other invention of man. All alphabets have been left incomplete. They have superfluous letters, letters, that is, which they do not want, because other letters already represent the sound which they represent; they have dubious letters, that is, which say nothing certain about the sounds they stand for, because more than one sound is represented by them—our "c" for instance, which sometimes has the sound of "s," as in "city," sometimes of "k," as in "cat;" they are deficient in letters, that is, the language has elementary sounds which have no corresponding letters appropriated to them, and can only be represented by combinations of letters. All alphabets, I believe, have some of these faults, not a few of them have all, and more. This then is one reason of the imperfect reproduction of the spoken word by the written. But another is, that the human voice is so wonderfully fine and flexible an organ, is able to mark such subtle and delicate distinctions of sound, so infinitely to modify and vary these sounds, that were an alphabet complete as human art could make it, did it possess eight and forty instead of four and twenty letters, there would still remain a multitude of sounds which it could only approximately give back.

But there is a further cause for the divergence which comes gradually to find place between men's spoken and their written words. What men do often, they will seek to do with the least possible trouble. There is nothing which they do oftener than repeat words; they will seek here then to save themselves pains; they will contract two or more syllables into one ("toto opere" will become "topper;" "vuestra merced," "usted;" and "topside the other way;" "topsy-turvy") they will slur over, and thus after a while cease to pronounce, certain letters; for hard letters they will substitute soft; for those which require a certain effort to pronounce, they will substitute those which require little or none. Under the operation of these causes a gulf between the

1 I have not observed this noticed in our dictionaries as the original form of the phrase. There is no doubt however of the fact; see Stakhurst's Ireland, p. 33, in Holinshed's Chronicles.
written and spoken word will not merely exist; but it will have
the tendency to grow ever wider and wider. This tendency
indeed will be partially counterworked by approximations which
from time to time will by silent consent be made of the written
word to the spoken; here and there a letter dropped in speech
will be dropped also in writing, as the "s" in so many French
words, where its absence is marked by a circumflex; a new shape,
contracted or briefer, which a word has taken on the lips of men,
will find its representation in their writing; as "chirurgeon" will
not merely be pronounced, but also spelt, "surgeon," and
"synodsmn" "sidesman." Still for all this, and despite of
these partial readjustments of the relations between the two,
the anomalies will be infinite; there will be a multitude of written
letters which have ceased to be sounded letters; a multitude of
words will exist in one shape upon our lips, and in quite another
in our books.

It is inevitable that the question should arise—Shall these
anomalies be meddled with? shall it be attempted to remove
them, and bring writing and speech into harmony and consent
—a harmony and consent which never indeed in actual fact at
any period of the language existed, but which yet may be
regarded as the object of written speech, as the idea which,
however imperfectly realised, has, in the reduction of spoken
sounds to written, floated before the minds of men? If the
attempt is to be made, it is clear that it can only be made in
one way. The alternative is not open, whether Mahomet shall go
to the mountain, or the mountain to Mahomet. The spoken word
is the mountain; it will not stir; it will resist all interference.
It feels its own superior rights, that it existed the first, that it is,
so to say, the elder brother; and it will never be induced to change
itself for the purpose of conforming and complying with the
written word. Men will not be persuaded to pronounce "would"
and "debt," because they write "would" and "debt" severally
with an "l" and with a "b:" but what if they could be induced
to write "woud" and "det," because they pronounce so; and
to deal in like manner with all other words in which there exists
at present a discrepancy between the word as it is spoken, and
the word as it is written?

Here we have the explanation of that which in the history
of almost all literatures has repeated itself more than once,
namely, the endeavour to introduce phonetic writing. It has
certain plausibilities to rest on; it has its appeal to the unques-
tionable fact that the written word was intended to picture to
the eye what the spoken word sounded in the ear. At the same time I believe that it would be impossible to introduce it; and, even if it were possible, that it would be most undesirable, and this for two reasons; the first being that the losses consequent upon its introduction would far outweigh the gains, even supposing those gains as great as the advocates of the scheme promise; the second, that these promised gains would themselves be only very partially realised, or not at all.

In the first place, I believe it to be impossible. It is clear that such a scheme must begin with the reconstruction of the alphabet. The first thing that the phonographers have perceived is the necessity for the creation of a vast number of new signs, the poverty of all existing alphabets, at any rate of our own, not yielding a several sign for all the several sounds in the language. Our English phonographers have therefore had to invent ten of these new signs or letters, which are henceforth to take their place with our *a, b, c*, and to enjoy equal rights with them. Rejecting two (*q, x*), and adding ten, they have raised their alphabet from twenty-six letters to thirty-four. But to procure the reception of such a reconstructed alphabet is simply an impossibility, as much an impossibility as would be the reconstitution of the structure of the language in any points where it was manifestly deficient or illogical. Sciolists or scholars may sit down in their studies, and devise these new letters, and prove that we need them, and that the introduction of them would be a great gain, and a manifest improvement; and this may be all very true: but if they think they can induce a people to adopt them, they know little of the ways in which its alphabet is entwined with the whole innermost life of a people. One may freely own that all present alphabets are redundant here, are deficient there; our English perhaps is as greatly at fault as any, and with that we have chiefly to do. Unquestionably it has more letters than one to express one and the same sound; it has only one letter to express two or three sounds; it has sounds which are only capable of being expressed at all by awkward and roundabout expedients. Yet at the same time we must accept the fact, as we accept any other which it is out of our power to change—with regret, indeed, but with a perfect acquiescence: as one accepts the fact that Ireland is not some thirty or forty miles nearer to England—that it is so difficult to get round Cape Horn—that the climate of Africa is so fatal to European life. A people will no more quit their alphabet than they will quit their language; they will no more consent to modify the one
CHANGES IN SPELLING

ab extra than the other. Caesar avowed that with all his power he could not introduce a new word, and certainly Claudius could not introduce a new letter. Centuries may sanction the bringing in of a new one, or the dropping of an old. But to imagine that it is possible suddenly to introduce a group of ten new letters, as these reformers propose—they might just as feasibly propose that the English language should form its comparatives and superlatives on some entirely new scheme, say in Greek fashion, by the terminations “oteros” and “otatos;” or that we should agree to set up a dual; or that our substantives should return to our Anglo-Saxon declensions. Any one of these or like proposals would not betray a whit more ignorance of the eternal laws which regulate human language, and of the limits within which deliberate action upon it is possible, than does this of increasing our alphabet by ten entirely novel signs.

But grant it possible, grant our six and twenty letters to have so little sacredness in them that Englishmen would endure a crowd of upstart interlopers to mix themselves on an equal footing with them, still this could only be from a sense of the greatness of the advantage to be derived from this introduction. Now the vast advantage claimed by the advocates of the system is, that it would facilitate the learning to read, and wholly save the labour of learning to spell, which “on the present plan occupies,” as they assure us, “at the very lowest calculation from three to five years.” Spelling, it is said, would no longer need to be learned at all; since whoever knew the sound would necessarily know also the spelling, this being in all cases in perfect conformity with that. The anticipation of this gain rests upon two assumptions which are tacitly taken for granted, but both of them erroneous.

The first of these assumptions is, that all men pronounce all words alike, so that whenever they come to spell a word, they will exactly agree as to what the outline of its sound is. Now we are sure men will not do this from the fact that, before there was any fixed and settled orthography in our language, when therefore everybody was more or less a phonographer, seeking to write down the word as it sounded to him (for he had no other law to guide him), the variations of spelling were infinite. Take for instance the word “sudden,” which does not seem to promise any great scope for variety. I have myself met with this word spelt in the following fifteen ways among our early writers: “sodain,” “sodaine,” “sodan,” “sodayne,” “sodden,” “sodein,”
“sodeine,” “soden,” “sodeyn,” “suddain,” “suddaine,” “sudden,” “sudeyn.” Again, in how many ways was Raleigh’s name spelt, or Shakespeare’s? The same is evident from the spelling of uneducated persons in our own day. They have no other rule but the sound to guide them. How is it that they do not all spell alike; erroneously, it may be, as having only the sound for their guide, but still falling all into exactly the same errors? What is the actual fact? They not merely spell wrong, which might be laid to the charge of our perverse system of spelling, but with an inexhaustible diversity of error, and that too in the case of simplest words. Thus the little town of Woburn would seem to give small room for caprice in spelling, while yet the postmaster there has made, from the superscription of letters that have passed through his hands, a collection of two hundred and forty-four varieties of ways in which the place has been spelt. It may be replied that these were all or nearly all from the letters of the ignorant and uneducated. Exactly so—but it is for their sakes, and to place them on a level with the educated, or rather to accelerate their education by the omission of a useless yet troublesome discipline, that the change is proposed. I wish to show you that after the change they would be just as much, or almost as much, at a loss in their spelling as now.

And another reason which would make it quite as necessary then to learn orthography as now, is the following. Pronunciation, as I have already noticed, is far too fine and subtle a thing to be more than approximated to, and indicated in the written letter. In a multitude of cases the difficulties which pronunciation presented would be sought to be overcome in different ways, and thus different spellings would arise; or if not so, one would have to be arbitrarily selected, and would have need to be learned, just as much as the spelling of a word now has need to be learned. I will only ask you, in proof of this which I affirm, to turn to any Pronouncing Dictionary. That greatest of all absurdities, a Pronouncing Dictionary, may be of some service to you in this matter; it will certainly be of none in any other. When you mark the elaborate and yet ineffectual artifices by which it toils after the finer distinctions of articulation, seeks to reproduce in letters what exists, and can only exist, as the spoken tradition of pronunciation, acquired from lip to lip by the organ of the ear, capable of being learned, but incapable of being taught; or when you compare two of these Dictionaries with

1 Notes and Queries, No. 147.
one another, and mark the entirely different schemes and combinations of letters which they employ for representing the same sound to the eye; you will then perceive how idle the attempt to make the written in language commensurate with the sounded; you will own that not merely out of human caprice, ignorance, or indolence, the former falls short of and differs from the latter; but that this lies in the necessity of things, in the fact that man’s voice can effect so much more than ever his letter can.¹ You will then perceive that there would be as much, or nearly as much, of the arbitrary in spelling which calls itself phonetic as in our present, that spelling would have to be learned just as really then as now. We should be unable to dismiss the spelling card even after the arrival of that great day, when, for example, those lines of Pope which hitherto we have thus spelt and read:

But ersen not nature from this gracious end,

From burning suns when livid deaths descend,

When earthquakes swallow, or when tempests sweep

Towns to one grave, whole nations to the deep?

when, I say, instead of this they should present themselves to our eyes in the following attractive form:

"But ersen not nature from dis gracious end,

from burnit sunz when livid debe disend,

when erkbweks swole, or when tempests swap
touzn tu wun grev. hol necons tu do dip."

The scheme would not then fulfil its promises. Its vaunted gains, when we come to look closely at them, disappear. And now for its losses. There are in every language a vast number of words which the ear does not distinguish from one another, but which are at once distinguishable to the eye by the spelling. I will only instance a few which are the same parts of speech; thus “sun” and “son;” “virge” (“virga,” now obsolete) and “verge,” “reign,” “rain,” and “rein,” “hair” and “hare;” “plate” and “plait;” “moat” and “mote;” “pear” and “pair;” “pain” and “pane;” “raise” and “raze;” “air” and “heir,” “ark” and “arc;” “mite” and “might;” “pour” and “pore;” “veil” and “vale;” “knight” and “night;” “knave” and “nave;” “pier” and “peer;” “rite” and “right;” “site” and “sight;” “aisle” and “isle;” “concent” and “consent;” “signet” and “cygnet.” Now, of course, it is a real disadvantage, and may be the cause of serious confusion, that there should be words in spoken language of entirely different origin and meaning, which

¹ See Boswell’s Life of Johnson, Croker’s edition, 1848, p. 233.
yet cannot in sound be differenced from one another. The phonographers simply propose to extend this disadvantage already cleaving to our spoken language, to the written language as well. It is fault enough in the French language, that "mère" a mother, "mer" the sea, "maire" a mayor of a town, should have no perceptible difference between them in the spoken tongue; or again that in some there should be nothing to distinguish "sans," "sang," "sent," "sens," "s'en," "cent;" nor yet between "ver," "vert," "verre" and "vere." Surely it is not very wise to propose gratuitously to extend the same fault to the written language as well.

This loss in so many instances of the power to discriminate between words, which, however liable to confusion now in our spoken language, are liable to none in our written, would be serious enough; but far more serious than this would be the loss which would constantly ensue, of all which visibly connects a word with the past, which tells its history, and indicates the quarter from which it has been derived. In how many English words a letter silent to the ear is yet most eloquent to the eye—the g for instance in "deign," "feign," "reign," "impugn," telling as it does of "dignor," "fingo," "regno," "impugno;" even as the b in "debt," "doubt," is not idle, but tells of "debitum" and "dubium."

At present it is the written word which is in all languages their conservative element. In it is the abiding witness against the mutilations or other capricious changes in their shape which affectation, folly, ignorance, and half-knowledge would introduce. It is not indeed always able to hinder the final adoption of these corrupter forms, but does not fail to oppose to them a constant, and very often a successful, resistance. With the adoption of phonetic spelling, this witness would exist no longer; whatever was spoken would have also to be written, let it be never so barbarous, never so great a departure from the true form of the word. Nor is it merely probable that such a barbarising process, such an adopting and sanctioning of a vulgarism, might take place, but among phonographers it already has taken place. We all probably are aware that there is a vulgar pronunciation of the word "Europe," as though it were "Eurup." Now it is quite possible that numerically more persons in England may pronounce the word in this manner than in the right; and therefore the phonographers are only true to their principles when they spell it in the fashion which they do, "Eurup," or indeed omitting the E at the beginning,
"Urup,"¹ with thus the life of the first syllable assailed no less than that of the second. What are the consequences? First, its relations with the old mythology are at once and entirely broken off; secondly, its most probable etymology from two Greek words, signifying "broad" and "face," Europe being so called from the broad line or face of coast which our continent presented to the Asiatic Greek, is totally obscured. But so far from the spelling servilely following the pronunciation, I should be bold to affirm that if ninety-nine out of every hundred persons in England chose to call Europe "Urup," this would be a vulgarism still, against which the written word ought to maintain its protest, not sinking down to their level, but rather seeking to elevate them to its own.²

And if there is much in orthography which is unsettled now, how much more would be unsettled then. Inasmuch as the pronunciation of words is continually altering, their spelling would of course have continually to alter too. For the fact that pronunciation is undergoing constant changes, although changes for the most part unmarked, or marked only by a few, would be abundantly easy to prove. Take a Pronouncing Dictionary of fifty or a hundred years ago; turn to almost any page, and you will observe schemes of pronunciation there recommended which are now merely vulgarisms, or which have been dropped altogether. We gather from a discussion in Boswell's Life of Johnson,³ that in his time "great" was by some of the best speakers of the language pronounced "greet," not "grate;" Pope usually rhymes it with "cheat," "complete," and the like; thus in the Dunciad:

Here swells the shelf with Ogilby the great,
There, stamped with arms, Newcastle shines complete.

¹ A chief phonographer writes to me to deny that this is the present spelling (1856) of "Europe." It was so when this paragraph was written.
² Quintilian has expressed himself with the true dignity of a scholar on this matter (Inst., I. vi. 45): "Consuetudinem sermonis vocabo consensum eruditorum; sicut vivendi concensum bonorum."—How different from innovations like this the changes in the spelling of German which J. Grimm, so far as his own example may reach, has introduced; and the still bolder and more extensive ones which in the Preface to his Deutsches Wörterbuch, pp. liv-lxii, he avows his desire to see introduced—as the employment of f, not merely where it is at present used, but also wherever v is now employed; the substituting of the v, which would be thus disengaged, for w, and the entire dismissal of w. They may be advisable, or they may not; it is not for strangers to offer an opinion; but at any rate they are not a seizing of the fluctuating, superficial accidents of the present, and a seeking to give permanent authority to these, but they all rest on a deep historic study of the language, and of the true genius of the language.
Spenser's constant use of the word a century and a half earlier leaves no doubt that such was the invariable pronunciation of his time. Again, Pope rhymes "oblige" with "besiege;" and it has only ceased to be "obliged" almost in our own time. Who now drinks a cup of "tay"? yet there is abundant evidence that this was the fashionable pronunciation in the first half of the last century; the word, that is, was still regarded as French: Locke writes it "the;" and in Pope's time though no longer written, it was still pronounced so. Take this couplet of his in proof:

Here thou, great Anna, whom three realms obey,
Dost sometimes counsel take, and sometimes tea.

So too a pronunciation which still survives, though scarcely among well-educated persons, I mean "Room" for "Rome," must have been in Shakespeare's time the predominant one, else there would have been no point in that play on words where in *Julius Caesar* Cassius, complaining that in all Rome there was not room for a single man, exclaims:

Now is it Rome indeed, and room enough.

Samuel Rogers too assures us that in his youth "everybody said 'Lonnon' not 'London;' that Fox said 'Lonnon' to the last."

The following quotation from Swift will prove to you that I have been only employing here an argument which he employed long ago against the phonographers of his time. He exposes thus the futility of their scheme:1 "Another cause which has contributed not a little to the maiming of our language, is a foolish opinion advanced of late years that we ought to spell exactly as we speak: which, besides the obvious inconvenience of utterly destroying our etymology, would be a thing we should never see an end of. Not only the several towns and counties of England have a different way of pronouncing, but even here in London they clip their words after one manner about the court, another in the city, and a third in the suburbs; and in a few years, it is probable, will all differ from themselves, as fancy or fashion shall direct; all which, reduced to writing, would entirely confound orthography."

This much I have thought good to say in respect of that entire revolution in English orthography, which some rash innovators have proposed. Let me, dismissing them and their innovations,

call your attention now to those changes in spelling which are constantly going forward, at some periods more rapidly than at others, but which never wholly cease out of a language; while at the same time I endeavour to trace, where this is possible, the motives and inducements which bring them about. It is a subject which none can neglect, who desire to obtain even a tolerably accurate acquaintance with their native tongue. Some principles have been laid down in the course of what has been said already, that may help us to judge whether the changes which have found place in our own have been for better or for worse. We shall find, if I am not mistaken, of both kinds.

There are alterations in spelling which are for the worse. Thus an altered spelling will sometimes obscure the origin of a word, concealing it from those who, but for this, would at once have known whence and what it was, and would have found both pleasure and profit in this knowledge. I need not say that in all those cases where the earlier spelling revealed the secret of the word, told its history, which the latter defaces or conceals, the change has been injurious, and is to be regretted; while, at the same time, where it has thoroughly established itself, there is nothing to do but to acquiesce in it: the attempt to undo it would be absurd. Thus, when “grocer” was spelt “grosier,” it was comparatively easy to see that he first had his name because he sold his wares not by retail, but in the gross. “Coxcomb” tells us nothing now; but it did when spelt, as it used to be, “cocks-comb,” the comb of a cock being then an ensign or token which the fool was accustomed to wear. In “grograw” we are entirely to seek for the derivation; but in “grograw” or “grograiw,” as earlier it was spelt, one could scarcely miss “grosgrain,” the stuff of a coarse grain or woof. How many now understand “woodbine”? but who could have helped understanding “woodbind” (Ben Jonson)? What a mischievous alteration in spelling is “divest” instead of “devest.” This change is so recent that I am tempted to ask whether it would not here be possible to return to the only intelligible spelling of this word?

“Pigmy” used formerly to be spelt “pygmy,” and so long as it was so, no Greek scholar could see the word, but at once he knew that by it were indicated manikins whose measure in height was no greater than that of a man’s arm from the elbow to the closed fist. Now he may know this in other ways; but the word itself, so long as he assumes it to be rightly spelt, tells him nothing. Or again, the old spelling, “diamant,” was prefer-
able to the modern "diamond." It was preferable, because it told more of the quarter from whence the word had reached us. "Diamant" and "adamant" are in fact only two different adoptions on the part of the English tongue, of one and the same Greek, which afterwards became a Latin, word. The primary meaning of "adamant" is, as you know, the indomitable, and it was a name given at first to steel as the hardest of metals; but afterwards transferred\(^1\) to the most precious among all the precious stones, as that which in power of resistance surpassed everything besides.

Neither are new spellings to be commended, which obliterate or obscure the relationship of a word with others to which it is really allied; separating from one another, for those not thoroughly acquainted with the subject, words of the same family. Thus when "jaw" was spelt "chaw," no one could miss its connexion with the verb "to chew." Now probably ninety-nine out of a hundred who use both words, are entirely unaware of any relationship between them. It is the same with "cousin" (consanguineus), and "to cozen" or to deceive. I do not propose to determine which of these words should conform itself to the spelling of the other. There was great irregularity in the spelling of both from the first; yet for all this, it was then better than now, when a permanent distinction has established itself between them, keeping out of sight that "to cozen" is in all likelihood to deceive under show of kindred and affinity; which if it be so, Shakespeare's words,

\[\text{Cousins indeed, and by their uncle cozened}\]

will be found to contain not a pun, but an etymology. The real relation between "bliss" and "to bless" is in like manner at present obscured.

The omission of a letter, or the addition of a letter, may each effectually do its work in keeping out of sight the true character and origin of a word. Thus the omission of a letter. When the first syllable of "bran-new" was spelt "brand" with a final "\(d\)," "brand-new," how vigorous an image did the word contain.

\[^1\] First so used by Theophrastus in Greek, and by Pliny in Latin.—The real identity of the two words explains Milton's use of "diamond" in Paradise Lost, book vii.; and also in that sublime passage in his Apology for Smectymnuus: "Then zeal, whose substance is ethereal, arming in complete diamond,"—Dicz (Wörterbuch d. Roman. Sprachen, p. 123) supposes, not very probably, that it was under a certain influence of "dialano," the translucent, that "adamante" was in the Italian, from whence we have derived the word, changed into "diamante.”

\[^1\] Richard III., Act IV. Sc. iv.
The “brand” is the fire, and “brand-new,” equivalent to “fire-new” (Shakespeare), is that which is fresh and bright, as being newly come from the forge and fire. As now spelt, “bran-new” conveys to us no image at all.

Again, you have the word “scrip”—as a “scrip” of paper, government “scrip.” Is this the same word with the Saxon “scrip,” a wallet, having in some strange manner obtained these meanings so different and so remote? Have we here only two different applications of one and the same word, or two homonyms, wholly different words, though spelt alike? We have only to note the way in which the first of these “scrips” used to be written, namely with a final “t,” not “scrip” but “script,” and we are at once able to answer the question. This “scrip” is a Latin, as the other is an Anglo-Saxon, word, and meant at first simply a written (scripta) piece of paper—a circumstance which since the omission of the final “t” may easily escape our knowledge. “Afraid” was spelt much better in old times with the double “ff,” than with the single “f” as now. It was then clear that it was not another form of “afeared,” but wholly separate from it, the participle of the verb “to affray,” “affrayer,” or, as it is now written, “effrayer.”

In the cases hitherto adduced, it has been the omission of a letter which has clouded and concealed the etymology. The intrusion of a letter sometimes does the same. Thus in the early editions of Paradise Lost, and in all writers of that time, you will find “scent,” an odour, spelt “sent.” It was better so; there is no other noun substantive “sent” with which it is in danger of being confounded; while its relation with “sentio,” with “resent,” “dissent,” and the like, is put out of sight by its novel spelling; the intrusive “c” serves only to mislead. The same thing was attempted with “site,” “sctuate,” “sctuation,” spelt for a time by many, “scite,” “sctuate,” “sctuation;” but it did not continue with these. Again, “whole,” in Wiclif’s Bible, and indeed much later, occasionally as far down as Spenser, is spelt “hole,” without the “w” at the beginning. The present orthography may have the advantage of at once distinguishing the word to the eye from any other; but at the same time the initial “w,” now prefixed, hides its relation to

1 How close this relationship was once, not merely in respect of etymology but also of significance, a passage like this will prove: “Perchance, as vultures are said to smell the earthiness of a dying corpse, so this bird of prey [the evil spirit which personated Samuel, 1 Sam. xxi. 14] resenteth a worse than earthly savor in the soul of Saul, as evidence of his death at hand.”—FULLER, The Profane State, book v. chap. iv.
the verb "to heal," with which it is closely allied. The "whole" man is he whose hurt is "healed" or covered (we say of the convalescent that he "recovers"); "whole" being closely allied to "hale" (integer), from which also by its modern spelling it is divided. "Wholesome" has naturally followed the fortunes of "whole;" it was spelt "holsome" once.

Of "island" too our present spelling is inferior to the old, inasmuch as it suggests a hybrid formation, as though the word were made up of the Latin "insula" and the Saxon "land." It is quite true that "isle" is in relation with, and descent from, "insula," "isola," "ile;" and hence probably the misspelling of "island." This last however has nothing to do with "insula," being identical with the German "eiland," the Anglo-Saxon "ealand," and signifying the sea-land, or land girt round with the sea. And it is worthy of note that this "s" in the first syllable of "island" is quite of modern introduction. In all the earlier versions of the Scriptures, and in the Authorised Version as at first set forth, it is "iland;" while in proof that this is not accidental, it may be observed that, while "iland" has not the "s," "isle" has it (see Rev. i. 9). "Iland" indeed is the spelling which we meet with far down into the seventeenth century.

What has just been said of "island" leads me as by a natural transition to observe that one of the most frequent causes of alteration in the spelling of a word is a wrongly assumed derivation. It is then sought to bring the word into harmony with, and to make it by its spelling suggest, this derivation which has been erroneously thrust upon it. Here is a subject which, followed out as it deserves, would form an interesting and instructive chapter in the history of language. Let me offer one or two small contributions to it; noting first by the way how remarkable an evidence we have in this fact, of the manner in which not the learned only, but all persons learned and unlearned alike, crave to have a meaning in the words which they employ, crave to have these words not body only, but body and soul. What an attestation, I say, of this lies in the fact that where a word in its proper derivation is unintelligible to them, they will shape and mould it into some other form, not enduring that it should be a mere inert sound without sense in their ears; and if they do not know its right origin, will rather put into it a wrong one, than that it should have for them no meaning, and suggest no derivation at all.¹

¹ Diez looks with much favour on this process, and calls it, "ein sinnreiches Mittel fremdlinge ganz heimisch zu machen."
There is probably no language in which such a process has not been going forward; in which it is not the explanation, in a vast number of instances, of changes in spelling and even in form, which words have undergone. I will offer a few examples of it from foreign tongues, before adducing any from our own. "Pyramid" is a word the spelling of which was affected in the Greek by an erroneous assumption of its derivation; the consequences of this error surviving in our own word to the present day. It is spelt by us with a "y" in the first syllable, as it was spelt with the v corresponding in the Greek. But why was this? It was because the Greeks assumed that the pyramids were so named from their having the appearance of flame going up into a point,1 and so they spelt "pyramid," that they might find πυρ or "pyre" in it; while in fact "pyramid" has nothing to do with flame or fire at all; being, as those best qualified to speak on the matter declare to us, an Egyptian word of quite a different signification, and the Coptic letters being much better represented by the diphthong "ei" than by the letter "y," as no doubt, but for this mistaken notion of what the word was intended to mean, they would have been.

Once more—the form "Hierosolyma," wherein the Greeks reproduced the Hebrew "Jerusalem," was intended in all probability to express that the city so called was the sacred city of the Solymi.2 At all events the intention not merely of reproducing the Hebrew word, but also of making it significant in Greek, of finding ιερόν in it, is plainly discernible. For indeed the Greeks were exceedingly intolerant of foreign words, till they had laid aside their foreign appearance—of all words which they could not thus quicken with a Greek soul; and, with a very characteristic vanity, an ignoring of all other tongues but their own, assumed with no apparent misgivings that all words, from whatever quarter derived, were to be explained by Greek etymologies.3

1 Ammianus Marcellinus, xxii. 15, 28. 2 Tacitus, Hist., v. 2.
3 Let me illustrate this by further instances in a note. Thus βαταρδος, from which, through the Latin, our "butter" has descended to us, is borrowed (Pliny, H-N. xxviii. 9) from a Scythian word, now to us unknown: yet it is sufficiently plain that the Greeks so shaped and spelt it as to contain apparent allusion to cow and cheese; there is in βαταρδος an evident feeling after βος and τροός. Bozra, meaning citadel in Hebrew and Phoenician, and the name, no doubt, which the citadel of Carthage bore, becomes Βόρα on Greek lips; and then the well-known legend of the ox-hide was invented upon the name; not having suggested it, but being itself suggested by it. Herodian (v. 6) reproduces the name of the Syrian goddess Astarte in a shape that is significant also for Greek ears—Ἀσταρτή, The Star-ruler, or Star-queen. When the apostate and hellenising Jews
“Tartar” is another word, of which it is at least possible that a wrongly assumed derivation has modified the spelling, and indeed not the spelling only, but the very shape in which we now possess it. To many among us it may be known that the people designated by this appellation are not properly “Tartars,” but “Tatars”; and you sometimes perhaps have noted the omission of the “r” on the part of those who are curious in their spelling. How then, it may be asked, did the form “Tartar” arise? When the terrible hordes of middle Asia burst in upon civilised Europe in the thirteenth century, many beheld in the ravages of their innumerable cavalry a fulfilment of that prophetic word in the Revelation (chap. ix.) concerning the opening of the bottomless pit; and from this belief ensued the change of their name from “Tatars” to “Tartars,” which was thus put into closer relation with “Tartarus” or hell, out of which their multitudes were supposed to have proceeded.1

Another good example in the same kind is the German word “sündflut,” the Deluge, which is now so spelt as to signify a “sinful flood,” the plague or flood of waters brought on the world by the sins of mankind; and probably some of us have before this admired the pregnant significance of the word. Yet the old high German word had originally no such intention; it was spelt “sinfuoit,” that is, the great flood; and as late as Luther, indeed in Luther’s own translation of the Bible, is so spelt as to make plain that the notion of a “sin-flood” had not yet found its way into, even as it had not affected the spelling of, the word.2

But to look now nearer home for our examples. The little assumed Greek names, “Eliakim” or “Whom God has set,” became “Alcimus” (Ἀλκίμος), or The Strong (1 Macc. vii. 5). Latin examples in like kind are “comissatio,” spelt continually “comissatio” and “mission” by those who sought to naturalise it in England, as though it were connected with “cômedo,” to eat, being indeed the substantive from the verb “cômisseri” (κομίσσει), to revel; as Plutarch, whose Latin is in general not very accurate, long ago correctly observed, and “orichalcum,” spelt often “awrichalcum,” as though it were a composite metal of mingled gold and brass; being indeed the mountain brass (ὀρίχαλκος). The miracle play, which is “mystère” in French, whence our English “mystery,” was originally written “mistere,” being properly derived from “ministère,” and having its name because the clergy, the ministri Ecclesiae, conducted it. This was forgotten, and it then took its present form of “mystery,” as though so called because the mysteries of the faith were in it set out.

1 We have here, in this bringing of the words by their supposed etymology together, the explanation of the fact that Spenser (Fairy Queen, I. vii. 44), Middleton (Works, vol. v. pp. 524, 528, 538), and others employ “Tartary” as equivalent to “Tartarus” or hell.

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raisins brought from Greece, which play so important a part in one of the national dishes of England, the Christmas plum-pudding, used to be called “corinths;” and so you would find them in mercantile lists of a hundred years ago: either that for the most part they were shipped from Corinth, the principal commercial city in Greece, or because they grew in large abundance in the immediate district round about it. Their likeness in shape and size and general appearance to our own currants, working together with the ignorance of the great majority of English people about any such place as Corinth, soon brought the name “corinths” into “currants,” which now with a certain unfitness they bear; being not currants at all, but dried grapes, though grapes of diminutive size.

“Court-cards,” that is, the king, queen, and knave in each suit, were once “coat-cards;”¹ having their name from the long splendid “coat” (vestis talaris) with which they were arrayed. Probably “coat” after a while did not perfectly convey its original meaning and intention; being no more in common use for the long garment reaching down to the heels; and then “coat” was easily exchanged for “court,” as the word is now both spelt and pronounced, seeing that nowhere so fitly as in a Court should such splendidly arrayed personages be found. A public-house in the neighbourhood of London having a few years since for its sign “The George Canning” is already “The George and Cannon,”—so rapidly do these transformations proceed, so soon is that forgotten which we suppose would never be forgotten. “Welsh rarebit” becomes “Welsh rabbit;” and “farced” or stuffed “meat” becomes “forced meat.” Even the mere determination to make a word look English, to put it into an English shape, without thereby so much as seeming to attain any result in the way of etymology, this is very often sufficient to bring about a change in its spelling, and even in its form.² It is thus that “sipahi” has become “sepoy;” and only so could “weissager” have taken its present form of “wiseacre.”³

¹ Ben Jonson, The New Inn, Act I. Sc. i.
² “Leghorn” is sometimes quoted as an example of this; but erroneously; for, as Admiral Smyth has shown (The Mediterranean, p. 409), “Livorno” is itself rather the modern corruption, and “Ligorno” the name found on the earlier charts.
³ Exactly the same happens in other languages; thus, “armbrust,” a crossbow, looks German enough, and yet has nothing to do with “arm” or “brust,” being a contraction of “arcubalsita,” but a contraction under these influences. As little has “abenteuer” anything to do with “abend,” or “theuer,” however it may seem to be connected with them, being indeed the Provencal “adventura.” And “weissagen” in its earlier forms had nothing in common with “sagen.”
It is not very uncommon for a word, while it is derived from one word, to receive a certain impulse and modification from another. This extends sometimes beyond the spelling, and in cases where it does so, would hardly belong to our present theme. Still I may notice an instance or two. Thus our "obsequies" is the Latin "exequiae," but formed under a certain impulse of "obsequium," and seeking to express and include the observant honour of that word. "To refuse" is "recusare," while yet it has derived the "f" of its second syllable from "refutare;" it is a medley of the two. The French "rame," an oar, is "remus," but that modified by an unconscious recollection of "ramus." "Orange" is no doubt a Persian word, which has reached us through the Arabic, and which the Spanish "naranja" more nearly represents than any form of it existing in the other languages of Europe. But what so natural as to think of the orange as the golden fruit, especially when the "aurea mala" of the Hesperides were familiar to all antiquity? There cannot be a doubt that "aurum," "oro," "or," made themselves felt in the shapes which the word assumed in the languages of the West, and that here we have the explanation of the change in the first syllable, as in the low Latin "aurantium," "orangia," and in the French "orange," which has given us our own.

It is foreign words, or words adopted from foreign languages, as might beforehand be expected, which are especially subjected to such transformations as these. The soul which the word once had in its own language, having, for as many as do not know that language, departed from it, or at least not being now any more to be recognised by such as employ the word, these are not satisfied till they have put another soul into it, and it has thus become alive to them again. Thus—to take first one or two very familiar instances, but which serve as well as any other to illustrate my position—the Bellerophon becomes for our sailors the "Billy Ruffian," for what can they know of the Greek mythology, or of the slayer of Chimaera? an iron steamer, the Hirondelle, now or lately plying on the Tyne, is the "Iron Devil." "Contre danse," or dance in which the parties stand face to face with one another, and which ought to have appeared in English as "counter dance," does become "country dance,"¹

¹ It is upon this word that De Quincey (Life and Manners, p. 70, American edition) says excellently well: "It is in fact by such corruptions, by offsets upon an old stock, arising through ignorance or mispronunciation originally, that every language is frequently enriched; and new modifications of thought, unfolding themselves in the progress of society, generate for themselves concurrently appropriate expressions. . . . It must not be
as though it were the dance of the country folk and rural districts
as distinguished from the quadrille and waltz and more artificial
dances of the town. A well-known rose, the "rose des quatre
saisons," or of the four seasons, becomes on the lips of some of our
gardeners, the "rose of the quarter sessions," though here it is
probable that the eye has misled, rather than the ear. "Dent
de lion" (it is spelt "dentdeleyon" in our early writers) becomes
"dandylion," "chaude mêlée," or an affray in hot blood, "chance-
medley," "causey" (chaussée) becomes "causeway," "rachitis"
"rickets," and in French "mandragora," "main de gloire."

"Necromancy" is another word which, if not now, yet for a
long period was erroneously spelt, and indeed assumed a different
shape, under the influence of an erroneous derivation; which,
curiously enough, even now that it has been dismissed, has left
behind it the marks of its presence in our common phrase,
"the Black Art." I need hardly remind you that "necromancy"
is a Greek word, which signifies, according to its proper meaning,
a prophesying by aid of the dead, or that it rests on the presumed
power of raising up by potent spells the dead, and compelling
them to give answers about things to come. We all know that
it was supposed possible to exercise such power; we have a very
awful example of it in the story of the witch of Endor, and a
very horrid one in Lucan. But the Latin medieval writers, whose
Greek was either little or none, spelt the word, "nigromantia,"
as if its first syllables had been Latin: at the same time, not
wholly forgetting the original meaning, but in fact getting round
to it though by a wrong process, they understood the dead by
these "nigri," or blacks, whom they had brought into the
word. Down to a rather late period we find the forms, "negro-
mancer" and "negromancy" frequent in English.

"Pleurisy" used often to be spelt (I do not think it is so now)
without an "e" in the first syllable, evidently on the tacit
assumption that it was from plus pluris. When Shakespeare
falls into an error, he "makes the offence gracious;" yet, I
think, he would scarcely have written:

\[
\text{For goodness growing to a plurisy}
\text{Dies of his own too much,}
\]

allowed to weigh against a word once fairly naturalised by all, that
originally it crept in upon an abuse or a corruption. Prescription is as
strong a ground of legitimation in a case of this nature, as it is in law. And
the old axiom is applicable—Fieri non debuit, factum valet. Were it other­
wise, languages would be robbed of much of their wealth."

1 Phars., vi. 720-830.
2 Thus in a Vocabulary, 1475: "Nigromansia dicitur divinatio facta
per negros."
but that he too derived "plurisy" from *pluris*. This, even with
the "small Latin and less Greek," which Ben Jonson allows him,
he scarcely would have done, had the word presented itself in
that form which by right of its descent from *πλυρά* (being a
pain, stitch, or sickness *in the side*) it ought to have possessed.
Those who for "crucible" wrote "chrysoble" (Jeremy Taylor
does so) must evidently have done this under the assumption
that the Greek for *gold*, and not the Latin for *cross*, lay at the
foundation of this word. "Anthyin" instead of "anthem"
(Barrow so spells the word) rests plainly on a wrong etymology,
even as this spelling clearly betrays what that wrong etymology
is. "Rhyme" with a "y" is a modern misspelling; and would
never have been but for the undue influence which the Greek
"rhythm" has exercised upon it. Spenser and his cotemporaries
spell it "rime." "Abominable" was by some etymologists of
the seventeenth century spelt "abominable," as though it were
that which departed from the human (ab homine) into the
bestial or devilish.

In all these words which I have adduced last, the correct
spelling has in the end resumed its sway. It is not so with
"frontispiece," which ought to be spelt "frontispi'ce," (it was
so by Milton and others), being the low Latin "frontispicium,"
from "frons" and "aspicio," the forefront of the building, that
part which presents itself to the view. It was only the entirely
ungrounded notion that the word "piece" constitutes the last
syllable, which has given rise to our present orthography.

As "orthography" itself means properly "right spelling," it might be
a curious question whether it is permissible to speak of an *incorrect ortho-
graphy*, that is, of a *wrong right*-spelling. The question which would be
thus started is one of not unfrequent recurrence, and it is very worthy of
observation how often, so soon as we take note of etymologies, this con-
tradiction in *adjecto* is found to occur. I will here adduce a few examples
from the Greek, the Latin, the German, and from our own tongue. Thus
the Greeks having no convenient word to express a rider, apart from a
rider *on a horse*, did not scruple to speak of the Norseman (*l-rireis*)
on an *elephant*. They often allowed themselves in a like inaccuracy where
surely there was no necessity; as in using *d.vdpiis* of the statue of a
woman; where it would have been quite as easy to have used *ɛλευς* or
*δευλες*. So too their "table" (*τράπεζα = τετράπεζα*) involved probably
the *four* feet which commonly support one; yet they did not shrink
from speaking of a *three*-footed table (*τρίπεζα*), in other words,
"three-footed four-footed;" much as though we should speak of a "three-
footed quadruped." Homer writes of a "hecatomb" not of a *hundred,
but of twelve, oxen; and elsewhere of Hebe he says, in words not re-
producible in English, ἐκείνα ἐπιστέφων, "Tetrarchs" were often rulers
of quite other than *fourth* parts of a land. Ἀπαραστος had so come to stand for
wine, without any thought more of its signifying originally the *unmingled,*
that St. John speaks of Ἀπαραστος *εκεκαπαμινος* (Rev. xiv. 10), or the unmingled
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You may, perhaps, wonder that I have dwelt so long on these details of spelling; that I have bestowed on them so much of my own attention, that I have claimed for them so much of yours; yet in truth I cannot regard them as unworthy of our very closest heed. For indeed of how much beyond itself is accurate or inaccurate spelling the certain indication. Thus when we meet "syren" for "siren," as so strangely often we do, almost always in newspapers, and often where we should hardly have expected (I met it lately in the Quarterly Review, and again in Gifford's Massinger), how difficult it is not to be "judges of evil thoughts," and to take this slovenly misspelling as the specimen and evidence of an inaccuracy and ignorance which reaches very far wider than the single word which is before us. But why is it that so much significance is ascribed to a wrong spelling? Because ignorance of a word's spelling at once argues ignorance of its origin and derivation. I do not mean that one who spells rightly may not be ignorant of it too, but he who spells wrongly is certainly so. Thus, to recur to the example I have just adduced, he who for "siren" writes "syren," certainly knows nothing of the magic cords (crapeal) of song, by which those fair enchantresses were supposed to draw those that heard them to their ruin.

Correct or incorrect orthography being, then, this note of accurate or inaccurate knowledge, we may confidently conclude where two spellings of a word exist, and are both employed by persons who generally write with precision and scholarship, that there must be something to account for this. It will generally be worth your while to inquire into the causes which enable both spellings to hold their ground and to find their supporters, not ascribing either one or the other to mere carelessness or error. It will in these cases often be found that two spellings exist, mingled. Boxes in which precious ointments were contained were so commonly of alabaster, that the name came to be applied to them whether they were so or not; and Theocritus celebrates "golden alabasters." Cicero having to mention a water-clock is obliged to call it a water sundial (solarium ex aqua), Columella speaks of a "vintage of honey" (vindemia mellis), and Horace invites his friend to impede, not his foot, but his head, with myrtle (caput impeditre myrto). Thus too a German writer who desired to tell of the golden shoes with which the folly of Caligula adorned his horse could scarcely avoid speaking of golden boot-irons. The same inner contradiction is involved in such language as our own, a "false verdict," a "steel cuirass" ("coriacea" from corium, leather), "antics new" (Harrington's Ariosto), an "erroneous etymology," a "corn candle-maker," "rather late," "rather" being the comparative of "rathe," early, and thus "rather late" being indeed "more early late"-and in others.
because two views of the word's origin exist, and each of those spellings is the correct expression of one of these. The question therefore which way of spelling should continue, and wholly supersede the other, and which, while the alternative remains, we should ourselves employ, can only be settled by settling which of these etymologies deserves the preference. So is it, for example, with "chymist" and "chemist," neither of which has obtained in our common use the complete mastery over the other. It is not here, as in some other cases, that one is certainly right, the other as certainly wrong: but they severally represent two different etymologies of the word, and each is correct according to its own. If we are to spell "chymist" and "chymistry," it is because these words are considered to be derived from the Greek word, χυμός, sap; and the chymic art will then have occupied itself first with distilling the juice and sap of plants, and will from this have derived its name. I have little doubt, however, that the other spelling, "chemist," not "chymist," is the correct one. It was not with the distillation of herbs, but with the amalgamation of metals, that chemistry occupied itself at its rise, and the word embodies a reference to Egypt, the land of Ham or "Cham," in which this art was first practised with success.

Of how much confusion the spelling which used to be so common, "satyr" for "satire," is at once the consequence, the expression, and again the cause; not indeed that this confusion first began with us; for the same already found place in the Latin, where "satyricus" was continually written for "satiricus" out of a false assumption of the identity between the Roman satire and the Greek satyric drama. The Roman "satira"—I speak of things familiar to many of my hearers—is properly a full dish (lanx being understood)—a dish heaped up with various ingredients, a "farce" (according to the original signification of that word), or hodge-podge; and the word was transferred from this to a form of poetry which at first admitted the utmost

[1] Ξύδα, the name of Egypt; see Plutarch, De Is. et Os., c. xxii.
[2] We have a notable evidence how deeply rooted this error was, how long this confusion endured, of the way in which it was shared by the learned as well as the unlearned, in Milton's Apology for Smectymnuus, sect. vii., which everywhere presumes the identity of the "satyr" and the "satirist." It was Isaac Casaubon who first effectually dissipated it even for the learned world. The results of his investigations were made popular for the unlearned reader by Dryden, in the very instructive Discourse on Satirical Poetry, prefixed to his translations of Juvenal; but the confusion still survives, and "satrys" and "satires," the Greek "satyric" drama, the Latin "satirical" poetry, are still assumed by most to have something to do with one another.
variety in the materials of which it was composed, and the shapes into which these materials were wrought up; being the only form of poetry which the Romans did not borrow from the Greeks. Wholly different from this, having no one point of contact with it in its form, its history, or its intention, is the "satyric" drama of Greece, so called because Silenus and the "Satyrs" supplied the chorus; and in their naive selfishness, and mere animal instincts, held up before men a mirror of what they would be, if only the divine, which is also the truly human, element of humanity were withdrawn; what man, all that properly made him man being withdrawn, would prove.

And then what light, as we have already seen, does the older spelling of a word often cast upon its etymology; how often does it clear up the mystery, which would otherwise have hung about it, or which had hung about it till some one had noticed and turned to profit this its earlier spelling. Thus "dirge" is always spelt "dirige" in early English. This "dirige" may be the first word in a Latin psalm or prayer once used at funerals; there is a reasonable probability that the explanation of the word is here; at any rate, if it is not here, it is nowhere. The derivation of "midwife" is uncertain, and has been the subject of discussion; but when we find it spelt "medewife" and "meadwife" in Wiclif's Bible, this leaves hardly a doubt that it is the wife or woman who acts for a mead or reward. In cases too where there was no mystery hanging about a word, how often does the early spelling make clear to all that which was before only known to those who had made the language their study. For example, if an early edition of Spenser should come into your hands, or a modern one in which the early spelling is retained, what continual lessons in English might you derive from it. Thus "nostril" is always spelt by him and his cotemporaries "nosethrill;" a little earlier it was "nosethirle." Now "to thrill" is the same as to drill or pierce; it is plain then here at once that the word signifies the orifice or opening with which the nose is thrilled, drilled, or pierced. We might have read the word for ever in our modern spelling without being taught this. "Ell" tells us nothing about itself; but in "eln," used in Holland's translation of Camden, we recognise "ulna" at once.

Again, the "morris" or "morrice-dance," which is alluded to so often by our early poets, as it is now spelt informs us nothing about itself; but read "moriske dance," as it is generally spelt by Holland and his cotemporaries, and you will scarcely fail to perceive that of which indeed there is no manner of doubt;
namely, that it was so called either because it was really, or was
supposed to be, a dance in use among the moriscoes of Spain,
and from thence introduced into England.1

Again, philologers tell us, and no doubt rightly, that our
"cray-fish," or "craw-fish," is the French "écrevisse." This
is true, but certainly it is not self-evident. Trace however
the word through these successive spellings, "krevys" (Lydgate),
"crevish" (Gascoigne), "craifish" (Holland), and the chasm
between "cray-fish" or "craw-fish" and "écrevisse" is by aid
of these three intermediate spellings bridged over at once; and
in the fact of our Gothic "fish" finding its way into this French
word we see only another example of a law which has been
already abundantly illustrated in this lecture.*

In other ways also an accurate taking note of the spelling of
words, and of the successive changes which it has undergone,

1 I have seen him
Caper upright, like a wild Mórisco,
Shaking the bloody darts, as he his bells.

Shakespeare, 2 Henry VI., Act III. Sc. i.

*In the reprinting of old books it is often very difficult to determine
how far the old shape in which words present themselves should be retained,
how far they should be conformed to present usage. It is comparatively
easy to lay down as a rule that in books intended for popular use, wherever
the form of the word is not affected by the modernising of the spelling,
as where this modernising consists merely in the dropping of superfluous
letters, there it shall take place; as who would wish our Bibles to be now
printed letter for letter after the edition of 1611, or Shakespeare with the
orthography of the first folio; but wherever more than the spelling, the
actual shape, outline, and character of the word has been affected by the
changes which it has undergone, that in all such cases the earlier form shall
be held fast. The rule is a judicious one; but when it is attempted to carry
it out, it is not always easy to draw the line, and to determine what affects
the form and essence of a word, and what does not. About some words
there can be no doubt; and therefore when a modern editor of Fuller's
Church History complacently announces that he has allowed himself in
such changes as "dirige" into "dirge," "barreter" into "barrister,"
"synonymas" into "synonymous" (!), "extempory" into "extemporary,"
"scited" into "situated," "vancurrier" into "avant-courier," he at the
same time informs us that for all purposes of the study of the English
language (and few writers are for this more important than Fuller), he
has made his edition utterly worthless. Or again, when modern editors of
Shakespeare print, and that without giving any intimation of the fact,

"Like quills upon the fretful porcupine,"

he having written, and in his first folio and quarto the words standing,

"Like quills upon the fretful porpentine,"

this being the earlier, and in Shakespeare's time the more common form
of the word, they must be considered as taking a very unwarrantable
liberty with his text; and no less, when they substitute "Kenilworth"
for "Killingworth," which he wrote, and which was his, Marlowe's, and
generally the earlier form of the name.
will often throw light upon them. Thus we may know, others having assured us of the fact, that “ant” and “emmet” were originally only two different spellings of one and the same word; but we may be perplexed to understand how two forms of a word now so different could ever have diverged from a single root. When however we find the different spellings, “emmet,” “emet,” “amet,” “amt,” “ant,” the gulf which appeared to separate “emmet” from “ant” is bridged over at once, and we not merely know on the assurance of others that these two are in fact identical, their differences being only superficial, but we perceive clearly in what manner they are so.

Even before any close examination of the matter, it is hard not to suspect that “runagate” is in fact another form of “renegade,” slightly transformed, as so many words, to put an English signification into its first syllable; and then the meaning gradually modified in obedience to the new derivation which was assumed to be its original and true one. Our suspicion of this is very greatly strengthened (for we see how very closely the words approach one another) by the fact that “renegade” is constantly spelt “renega/e” in our old authors, while at the same time the denial of faith, which is now a necessary element in “renegade,” and one differencing it inwardly from “runagate,” is altogether wanting in early use—the denial of country and of the duties thereto owing being all that is implied in it. Thus it is constantly employed in Holland’s Livy as a rendering of “perfuga,” while in the one passage where “runagate” occurs in the Prayer Book Version of the Psalms (Ps. lxviii. 6), a reference to the original will show that the translators could only have employed it there on the ground that it also expressed rebel, revoler, and not runaway merely.

I might easily occupy your attention much longer, so little barren or unfruitful does this subject of spelling appear likely to prove; but all things must have an end; and as I concluded my first lecture with a remarkable testimony borne by an illustrious German scholar to the merits of our English tongue, I will conclude my last with the words of another, not indeed a German, but still of the great Germanic stock; words resuming in themselves much of which we have been speaking upon this and upon former occasions: “As our bodies,” he says, “have hidden resources and expediants, to remove the obstacles which the very art of the physician puts in its way, so language, ruled

1 “The Carthaginians shall restore and deliver back all the renegates [perfugas] and fugitives that have fled to their side from us.”—p. 751.
by an indomitable inward principle, triumphs in some degree over the folly of grammarians. Look at the English, polluted by Danish and Norman conquests, distorted in its genuine and noble features by old and recent endeavours to mould it after the French fashion, invaded by a hostile entrance of Greek and Latin words, threatening by increasing hosts to overwhelm the indigenous terms. In these long contests against the combined power of so many forcible enemies, the language, it is true, has lost some of its power of inversion in the structure of sentences, the means of denoting the difference of gender, and the nice distinctions by inflection and termination—almost every word is attacked by the spasm of the accent and the drawing of consonants to wrong positions; yet the old English principle is not overpowered. Trampled down by the ignoble feet of strangers, its springs still retain force enough to restore itself. It lives and plays through all the veins of the language; it impregnates the innumerable strangers entering its dominions with its temper, and stains them with its colour, not unlike the Greek which in taking up oriental words, stripped them of their foreign costume, and bid them to appear as native Greeks.”

1 Halbertsma, quoted by Bosworth, Origin of the English and Germanic Languages, p. 39.
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31 MAR 1999
TRENCH, Richard Chenevix, Abp. of Dublin, 1807-1886.

On the study of words.