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# LECTURES

ON THE

# SCIENCE OF LANGUAGE.

BY

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SIXTH EDITION.

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## DEDICATED

TO

# THE MEMBERS OF THE UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD,

## BOTH RESIDENT AND NON-RESIDENT,

TO WHOM I AM INDEBTED

FOR NUMEROUS PROOFS OF SYMPATHY AND KINDNESS

DURING THE LAST TWELVE YEARS,

IN GRATEFUL ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF THEIR GENEROUS SUPPORT

ON THE

7TH OF DECEMBER 1860.



# PREFACE

#### to

### THE SIXTH EDITION.

IN revising once more the two volumes of my L Lectures on the Science of Language, I have fully availed myself of the help and counsel of my numerous reviewers and correspondents. As my Lectures were reprinted in America, and translated into German, French, Italian, and Russian, the number of reviews, essays, and even independent books which they have elicited has become considerable, and the task of examining them all was not an easy, nor always a grateful one. Yet I have but seldom read a review, whether friendly or unfriendly, without being able to correct a mistake, or without feeling called upon to improve a sentence that had been misunderstood, to soften an expression that had given offence, to insert a new fact, or to allude to a new theory. Although my general views on the Science of Language have remained unchanged, the mere number of pages will show how many additions have been made, while a careful reader will easily discover how much has been changed, and, I hope, improved in my Lectures since they were first delivered at the Royal Institution in 1861 and 1863.

Though I have protested before, I must protest once more against the supposition that the theory on the origin of language which I explained at the end of my first course, and which I distinctly described as that of Professor Heyse of Berlin, was ever held by myself. It is a theory which, if properly understood, contains some truth, but it offers an illustration only, and in no way a real solution of the problem. I have abstained in my Lectures from propounding any theory on the origin of language, first, because I believe that the Science of Language may safely begin with roots as its ultimate facts, leaving what lies beyond to the psychologist and metaphysician; secondly, because I hold that a theory on the origin of language can only be thoroughly treated in close connection with the theory on the origin of thought, i.e. with the fundamental principles of mental philosophy. Although in treating of the history of the Science of Language I found it necessary in my Lectures to examine some of the former theories on the origin of language, and to show their insufficiency in the present state of our science, I carefully abstained from going beyond the limits which I had traced for myself. Much has been written during the last ten years on the origin of language, but the only writer who seems to me to have approached the problem in an independent, and at the same time a

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truly scientific spirit, is Dr. Bleek, in his essay Über den Ursprung der Sprache, published at the Cape in 1867. I am not surprised that his essay should have been received with marked favour by the most eminent physiologists, but I think, nevertheless, that in the minds of philosophical readers it will leave a strong conviction that researches into the origin of language transcend the domain of the physiologist as well as of the philologist, and require for their solution a complete mastery of the problems of psychology. At all events it seems now generally admitted that a mere revival of the mimetic or onomatopœic theory on the origin of words would be an anachronism in the history of our science. That Mr. Darwin in his fascinating work 'On the Descent of Man' should incline towards the mimetic theory is but natural, though it seems to me that even if it were possible to revive the theories of Demokritos and Epikuros, language, articulate and definite language, language derived, as it has been proved to be, not from shrieks, but from roots, i.e. from general ideas, would still remain what I called it in my first course of Lectures, our Rubicon which no brute will dare to cross (vol. i. p. 408).

On other points I think that those who have done me the honour of carefully examining and freely criticising my Lectures will find that none of their remarks has been neglected; and I can honestly say that, where I have retained my own opinions against the arguments of other scholars, it has not been done



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without careful consideration. In some cases my critics will see that I have given up positions which they had proved to be no longer tenable; in others, I have indicated, by a few additional words, that I was prepared for their objections, and able to meet them; in others, again, the fact that I have left what I had written without any change must show that I consider their objections futile. It would have been easy to answer some of my rather over-confident critics, and I confess it was sometimes difficult to resist the temptation, particularly when one finds oneself blamed, as happens not unfrequently, for having followed Copernicus rather than Ptolemæus. 'Oyunabeis quam sint insolentes non ignoras. But controversy, particularly in public, is always barren of good results. I can now look back on five and twenty years of literary work, and whatever disappointment I may feel in seeing how little has been done and how much more remains to be done, and probably never will be done, I have at least this satisfaction, that I have never wasted one hour in personal controversy. I have grappled with opinions, but never with their propounders; and, though I have carefully weighed what has been proved against me, I have never minded mere words, mere assertions; still less, mere abuse.

If I may call attention to a few of the more important passages where the reader of this new edition will find new information, I should point out the following. In the first volume, p. 242 seq., the statements on the relation of Pehlevi to Zend have been re-

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written in accordance with the new results that have been obtained by a more careful study of Pehlevi texts and inscriptions. In the second volume, pp. 15-23, the question of the origin of the participle in -ing has been more fully treated. On p. 33 will be found an interesting letter on ceremonial pronouns in Chinese, by M. Stanislas Julien. The analysis and classification of vowels and consonants, on pp. 123-168, has been carefully revised in accordance with the latest researches on this interesting subject. On pp. 139-141 will be found my reply to Professor Czermak's important essay, Uber den Spiritus asper und lenis. His independent testimony (p. 143, note 79), that the emissions of breath (the sibilants, etc.) are to be subdivided, exactly like the checks of breath (the muta). into soft and hard, will show that my own division of these sounds was not unfounded, while his experiment, described on pp. 159 and 160, explains, and to a certain extent justifies, the names of hard and soft by the side of surd and sonant.1 In the Fifth

<sup>1</sup> As a specimen of the over-confident and unsuspecting criticism described above, I quote some extracts from the North American, in many respects, I believe, one of the best American reviews: 'But specially Professor Max Müller's account of the spiritus asper and the spiritus lenis, and his explanation of the difference between such sounds as z, v, b, on the one hand, and s, f, p, on the other, is to be rejected. We have a right to be astonished that he revives for these two classes of letters the old names 'soft' and 'hard,' which have happily for some time been going out of use, and fully adopts the distinction which they imply, although this distinction has been so many times exploded, and the difference of the two classes shown to consist in the intonation or non-intonation of the breath during their utterance. It is in vain that he appeals to the Hindu grammarians in his support: they are unanimous

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Lecture, On Grimm's Law, I have endeavoured to place my explanation of the causes which underlie that law in a clearer light, and I have answered some important arguments that had been advanced against my theory, particularly that founded on the historical changes in the names of places, such as Strataburgum and Strazpuruc. My derivations of Earl, Graf, and King, which had been challenged, have been defended on pp. 280, 281, and 284, and the question whether the reported initial digamma in the name of Helena renders a comparison between Helena and Saramâ impossible has been fully discussed on pp. 516 seq.

Lastly, I wish to call attention to a letter with which I have been honoured by Mr. Gladstone (vol. ii.

against him-not one of them fails to see and define correctly the difference between "sonant" and "surd" letters.'

I do not blame a writer in the North American Review for not knowing that I myself have run full tilt against the terminology of 'hard' and 'soft' consonants as unscientific (unwissenschaftlich), and that I was one of the first to publish and translate in 1856 the more scientific classification into 'surd' and 'sonant,' consonants as contained in the Rigved apratisak hya. But the Reviewer might surely have read the Lecture which he reviewed, where on page 130 (now page 144), I said: 'The distinction which, with regard to the first breathing or spiritus, is commonly called asper and lenis, is the same which, in other letters, is known by the names of hard and soft, surd and sonant, tenuis and media.'

The same Review says: 'The definition of the *wh* in *when*, as a simple whispered counterpart of *w* in *wen* instead of a *w* with a prefixed aspiration, is, we think, clearly false.' Now on a question concerning the correct pronunciation of English, it might seem impertinence in me were I not at once to bow to the authority of the *North American Review*. Still the writer might have suspected that on such a point a foreigner would not write at random, and if he had consulted the highest authorities on phonetics in England, and, I believe, in America too, he would have found that they agree with my own description of the two sounds of *w* and *wh*. See *Lectures*, vol. ii. p. 148, note 55.

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### PREFACE TO THE SIXTH EDITION.

pp. 440-444), and in which his opinions on the component elements of Greek Mythology, which I had somewhat misapprehended, will be found stated with great precision.

M. M.

OXFORD: April, 1871.



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# THE FIFTH EDITION.

TO

THE fifth edition of my Lectures on the Science of Language has been carefully revised, but the main features of the work have not been altered. I have added some new facts that seemed to me essential for strengthening certain arguments, and I have omitted or altered what was really no longer tenable. But I have not attempted to re-write any portions of my Lectures, or to give to them that form which I should wish to give to them, if now, after the lapse of five years, I had to write them again.

In one or two cases only, where my meaning had been evidently misapprehended even by unprejudiced critics, I have tried to express myself more definitely and clearly. Thus in my last Lecture, where I had to speak of the origin of roots, I had quoted the opinion of the late Professor Heyse of Berlin, but I never meant to convey the impression



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### THE FIRST EDITION.

MY LECTURES on the Science of Language are here printed as I had prepared them in manuscript for the Royal Institution. When I came to deliver them, a considerable portion of what I had written had to be omitted, and, in now placing them before the public in a more complete form, I have gladly complied with a wish expressed by many of my hearers. As they are, they form only a short abstract of several courses delivered from time to time in Oxford, and they do not pretend to be more than an introduction to a science far too comprehensive to be treated successfully in so small a compass.

My object, however, will have been attained, if I should succeed in attracting the attention, not only of the scholar, but of the philosopher, the historian, and the theologian, to a science which concerns them all; and which, though it professes to treat of words

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only, teaches us that there is more in words than is dreamt of in our philosophy. I quote from Bacon: 'Men believe that their reason is lord over their words, but it happens, too, that words exercise a reciprocal and reactionary power over our intellect.' 'Words, as a Tartar's bow, shoot back upon the understanding of the wisest, and mightily entangle and pervert the judgment.'

M. M.

OxFORD: June 11, 1861.

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# LECTURES.

# LECTURE I.

### THE SCIENCE OF LANGUAGE ONE OF THE PHYSICAL SCIENCES.

7HEN I was asked some time ago to deliver a course of lectures on Comparative Philology in this Institution, I at once expressed my readiness to do so. I had lived long enough in England to know that the peculiar difficulties arising from my imperfect knowledge of the language would be more than balanced by the forbearance of an English audience, and I had such perfect faith in my subject that I thought it might be trusted even in the hands of a less skilful expositor. I felt convinced that the researches into the history of languages and into the nature of human speech, which have been carried on during the last fifty years in England, France, and Germany, deserved a larger share of public sympathy than they had hitherto received ; nay, it seemed to me, as far as I could judge, that the discoveries in this newly-opened mine of scientific inquiry were not inferior, whether in novelty or importance, to the most brilliant discoveries of our age.

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It was not till I began to write my lectures that I became aware of the difficulties of the task I had undertaken. The dimensions of the science of language are so vast, that it is impossible in a course of nine lectures to give more than a very general survey of it; and as one of the greatest charms of this science consists in the minuteness of the analysis by which each language, each dialect, each word, each grammatical form is tested, I felt that it was almost impossible to do full justice to my subject, or to place the achievements of those who founded and fostered the science of language in their true light. Another difficulty arises from the dryness of many of the problems which I shall have to discuss. Declensions and conjugations cannot be made amusing, nor can I avail myself of the advantages possessed by most lecturers, who enliven their discussions by experiments and diagrams. If, with all these difficulties and drawbacks, I do not shrink from opening to-day this course of lectures on mere words, on nouns and verbs and particles-if I venture to address an audience accustomed to listen, in this place, to the wonderful tales of the natural historian, the chemist, and geologist, and wont to see the novel results of inductive reasoning invested by native eloquence with all the charms of poetry and romanceit is because, though mistrusting myself, I cannot mistrust my subject. The study of words may be tedious to the school-boy, as breaking of stones is to the wayside labourer, but to the thoughtful eye of the geologist these stones are full of interest-he sees miracles on the high road, and reads chronicles in every ditch. Language, too, has marvels of her

#### INTRODUCTION.

own, which she unveils to the inquiring glance of the patient student. There are chronicles below her surface, there are sermons in every word. Language has been called sacred ground, because it is the deposit of thought. We cannot tell as yet what language is. It may be a production of nature, a work of human art, or a divine gift. But to whatever sphere it belongs, it would seem to stand unsurpassed-nay, unequalled in it-by anything else. If it be a production of nature, it is her last and crowning production, which she reserved for man alone. If it be a work of human art, it would seem to lift the human artist almost to the level of a divine creator. If it be the gift of God, it is God's greatest gift; for through it God spake to man and man speaks to God in worship, prayer, and meditation.

Although the way which is before us may be long and tedious, the point to which it tends will be full of interest; and I believe I may promise that the view opened before our eyes from the summit of our science, will fully repay the patient travellers, and perhaps secure a free pardon to their venturous guide.

The SCIENCE OF LANGUAGE is a science of very modern date. We cannot trace its lineage much beyond the beginning of our century, and it is scarcely received as yet on a footing of equality by the elder branches of learning. Its very name is still unsettled, and the various titles that have been given to it in England, France, and Germany are so vague and varying that they have led to the most confused ideas

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among the public at large as to the real objects of this new science. We hear it spoken of as Comparative Philology, Scientific Etymology, Phonology, and Glossology. In France, it has received the convenient, but somewhat barbarous, name of Linguistique. we must have a Greek title for our science, we might derive it either from mythos, word, or from logos, But the title of Mythology is already occuspeech. pied, and Logology would jar too much on classical ears. We need not waste our time in criticising these names, as none of them has as yet received that universal sanction which belongs to the titles of other modern sciences, such as Geology or Comparative Anatomy; nor will there be much difficulty in christening our young science after we have once ascertained its birth, its parentage, and its character. I myself prefer the simple designation of the Science of Language, though in these days of high-sounding titles, this plain name will hardly meet with general acceptance.

From the name we now turn to the meaning of our science. But before we enter upon a definition of its subject-matter, and determine the method which ought to be followed in our researches, it will be useful to cast a glance at the history of the other sciences, among which the science of language now, for the first time, claims her place; and examine their origin, their gradual progress, and definite settlement. The history of a science is, as it were, its biography; and as we buy experience cheapest in studying the lives of others, we may, perhaps, guard our young science from some of the follies and extravagances inherent in youth by learning a lesson for

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which other branches of human knowledge have had to pay more dearly.

There is a certain uniformity in the history of most sciences. If we read such works as Whewell's History of the Inductive Sciences or Humboldt's Kosmos, we find that the origin, the progress, the causes of failure and success have been the same for almost every branch of human knowledge. There are three marked periods or stages in the history of every one of them, which we may call the Empirical, the Classificatory, and the Theoretical. However humiliating it may sound, every one of our sciences, however grand their present titles, can be traced back to the most humble and homely occupations of halfsavage tribes. It was not the true, the good, and the beautiful which spurred the early philosophers to deep researches and bold discoveries. The foundation-stone of the most glorious structures of human ingenuity in ages to come was supplied by the pressing wants of a patriarchal and semi-barbarous society. The names of some of the most ancient departments of human knowledge tell their own tale. Geometry, which at present declares itself free from all sensuous impressions, and treats of its points and lines and planes as purely ideal conceptions, not to be confounded with the coarse and imperfect representations as they appear on paper to the human eye, geometry, as its very name declares, began with measuring a garden or a field. It is derived from the Greek gë, land, ground, earth, and metron, measure. Botany, the science of plants, was originally the science of botane, which in Greek does not mean a plant in general, but fodder, from boskein, to feed.

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The science of plants would have been called Phytology, from the Greek phyton, a plant.1 The founders of Astronomy were not the poet or the philosopher, but the sailor and the farmer. The early poet may have admired the 'mazy dance of planets,' and the philosopher may have speculated on the heavenly harmonies; but it was to the sailor alone that a knowledge of the glittering guides of heaven became a question of life and death. It was he who calculated their risings and settings with the accuracy of a merchant and the shrewdness of an adventurer; and the names that were given to single stars or constellations clearly show that they were invented by the ploughers of the sea and of the land. The moon, for instance, the golden hand on the dark dial of heaven, was called by them the Measurer-the measurer of time; for time was measured by nights, and moons, and winters, long before it was reckoned by days, and suns, and years.

Moon<sup>2</sup> is a very old word. It was *mona* in Anglo-Saxon, and was used there, not as a feminine, but as a masculine; for the moon was originally a masculine, and the sun a feminine, in all Teutonic languages; and it is only through the influence of classical models that in English moon has been changed into a feminine, and sun into a masculine. It was a most unlucky assertion which Mr. Harris made inhis *Hermes*, that all nations ascribe to the sun a

1 1 See Jessen, Was heisst Botanik? 1861.

<sup>2</sup> Kuhn's Zeitschrift für vergleichende Sprachforschung, b. ix. s. 104. In the Edda the moon is called *årtali*, year-teller; a Bask name for moon is argi-izari, light-measure. See Dissertation critique et apologétique sur la Langue basque, p. 28.

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masculine, and to the moon a feminine gender.<sup>3</sup> In the mythology of the Edda Máni, the moon, is the son, Sol, the sun, the daughter of Mundilföri. In Gothic mena, the moon, is masculine; sunnó, the sun, feminine. In Anglo-Saxon, too, mona, the moon, continues to be used as a masculine; sunne, the sun, as a feminine. In Swedish måne, the moon, is masculine; sol, the sun, feminine. The Lithuanians also give the masculine gender to the moon, menů ; the feminine gender to the sun, saule : and in Sanskrit, though the sun is ordinarily looked upon as a male power, the most current names for the moon, such as Kandra, Soma, Indu, Vidhu, are masculine. The names of the moon are frequently used in the sense of month, and these and other names for month retain the same gender. Thus menoth in Gothic, monadh in Anglo-Saxon are both masculine. In Greek we find men, and the Ionic meis, for month. always used in the masculine gender. In Latin we have the derivative mensis, month, and in Sanskrit we find mâs for moon, and mâsa for month, both masculine.4

Now, this mâs in Sanskrit is clearly derived from a root mâ, to measure, to mete. In Sanskrit, I measure is mâ-mi; thou measurest, mâ-si; he measures, mâ-ti (or mimî-te). An instrument of measuring is called in Sanskrit mâ-tram, the Greek *metron*, our metre. Now, if the moon was originally called by the farmer the measurer, the ruler of days and weeks

\* Horne Tooke, p. 27, note. Pott, Studien zur griechischen Mythotogie, 1859, p. 304. Grimm, Deutsche Grammatik, iii. p. 349. Bleek, Ueber den Ursprung der Sprache, p. viii. (Kapstadt, 1867.)

<sup>4</sup> See Curtius, Grundzüge der griechischen Etymologie, No. 471.

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and seasons, the regulator of the tides, the lord of their festivals, and the herald of their public assemblies, it is but natural that he should have been conceived as a man, and not as the love-sick maiden which our modern sentimental poetry has put in his place.

It was the sailor who, before entrusting his life and goods to the winds and the waves of the ocean, watched for the rising of those stars which he called the Sailing-stars or Pleiades,<sup>5</sup> from plein, to sail. Navigation in the Greek waters was considered safe after the return of the Pleiades; and it closed when they disappeared. The Latin name for the Pleiades is Vergilice, from virga, a sprout or twig. This name was given to them by the Italian husbandmen, because in Italy, where they became visible about May, they marked the return of summer. Another constellation, the seven stars in the head of Taurus, received the name of Hyades or Pluvice in Latin, because at the time when they rose with the sun they were supposed to announce rain. The astronomer retains these and many other names; he still speaks of the pole of heaven, of wandering and fixed stars,6

<sup>5</sup> Ideler, Handbuch der Chronologie, b. i. s. 241, 242. H. F. Perthes. Die Plejaden, p. 14, note. In the Oscan Inscription of Agnone we find a Jupiter Virgarius (djovei verehasioi, dat. sing.), a name which Professor Aufrecht compares with that of Jupiter Viminius, Jupiter who fosters the growth of twigs (Kuhn's Zeitschrift, i. s. 89).—See, however, on Jupiter Viminius and his altars near the Porta Viminalis, Hartung, Religion der Römer, ii. 61. The Zulus call the Pleiades the Isilimela, the digging-stars, because, when they appear, the people begin to dig. See Calaway, The Religious System of the Amazulu, part iii. p. 397.

<sup>6</sup> As early as the times of Anaximenes of the Ionic, and Alkmæon of the Pythagorean, schools, the stars had been divided into travelling ( $lpha \sigma \pi \lambda a \nu \omega \mu \epsilon \nu a$  or  $\pi \lambda a \nu \eta \tau a$ ), and non-travelling stars ( $\alpha \pi \lambda a \nu \omega \mu \epsilon \nu a$  or  $\alpha \nu \eta \tau a$ ). Aristotle first used  $\alpha \sigma \tau \rho a \end{v} \nu \delta \epsilon \delta \epsilon \mu \epsilon \nu a$ , or fixed stars. (See Humboldt, Kosmos, vol. iii. p. 28.) Il  $\alpha \lambda o s$ , the pivot, hinge, or the pole of heaven. yet he is apt to forget that these terms were not the result of scientific observation and classification, but borrowed from the language of those who were themselves wanderers on the sea or in the desert, and to whom the fixed stars were in full reality what their name implies, stars driven in and fixed, by which they might hold fast on the deep, as by heavenly anchors.

But although historically we are justified in saying that the first geometrician was a ploughman, the first botanist a gardener, the first mineralogist a miner, it may reasonably be objected that in this early stage a science is hardly a science yet : that measuring a field is not geometry, that growing cabbages is very far from botany, and that a butcher has no claim to the title of comparative anatomist. This is perfectly true, yet it is but right that each science should be reminded of these its more humble beginnings, and of the practical requirements which it was originally intended to answer. A science, as Bacon says, should be a rich storehouse for the glory of God, and the relief of man's estate. Now, although it may seem as if in the present high state of our society students were enabled to devote their time to the investigation of the facts and laws of nature, or to the contemplation of the mysteries of the world of thought, without any side-glance at the practical results of their labours, no science and no art have long prospered and flourished among us, unless they were in some way subservient to the practical interests of society. It is true that a Lyell collects and arranges, a Faraday weighs and analyses, an Owen dissects and compares, a Herschel observes and calculates, without 10



any thought of the immediate marketable results of their labours. But there is a general interest which supports and enlivens their researches, and that interest depends on the practical advantages which society at large derives from these scientific studies. Let it be known that the successive strata of the geologist are a deception to the miner, that the astronomical tables are useless to the navigator, that chemistry is nothing but an expensive amusement, of no use to the manufacturer and the farmer-and astronomy, chemistry, and geology would soon share the fate of alchemy and astrology. As long as the Egyptian science excited the hopes of the invalid by mysterious prescriptions (I may observe by the way that the hieroglyphic signs of our modern prescriptions have been traced back by Champollion to the real hieroglyphics of Egypt<sup>7</sup>)-and as long as it instigated the avarice of its patrons by the promise of the discovery of gold, it enjoyed a liberal support at the courts of princes, and under the roofs of monasteries. Though alchemy did not lead to the discovery of gold, it prepared the way to discoveries more valuable. The same with astrology. Astrology was not such mere imposition as it is generally supposed to have been. It is counted a science by so sound and sober a scholar as Melancthon, and even Bacon allows it a place among the sciences, though admitting that 'it had better intelligence and confederacy with the imagination of man than with his reason.' In spite of the strong condemnation which Luther pronounced against it, astrology continued to sway the destinies of Europe; and a hundred years after

<sup>7</sup> Bunsen's Egypt, vol. iv. p. 108.

Luther, the astrologer was the counsellor of princes and generals, while the founder of modern astronomy died in poverty and despair. In our time the very rudiments of astrology are lost and forgotten.8 Even real and useful arts, as soon as they cease to be useful, die away, and their secrets are sometimes lost beyond the hope of recovery. When after the Reformation our churches and chapels were divested of their artistic ornaments, in order to restore, in outward appearance also, the simplicity and purity of the Christian church, the colours of the painted windows began to fade away, and have never regained their former depth and harmony. The invention of printing gave the death-blow to the art of ornamental writing and of miniature-painting employed in the illumination of manuscripts; and the best artists of the present day despair of rivalling the minuteness, softness, and brilliancy combined by the humble manufacturer of the mediæval missal.

I speak somewhat feelingly on the necessity that every science should answer some practical purpose, because I am aware that the science of language has but little to offer to the utilitarian spirit of our age. It does not profess to help us in learning languages more expeditiously, nor does it hold out any hope of ever realising the dream of one universal language.

<sup>8</sup> According to a writer in *Notes and Queries* (2nd Series, vol. x. p. 500), astrology is not so entirely extinct as we suppose. 'One of our principal writers,' he states, 'one of our leading barristers, and several members of the various antiquarian societies, are practised astrologers at this hour. But no one cares to let his studies be known, so great is the prejudice that confounds an art requiring the highest education with the jargon of the gipsy fortune-teller.' See also H. Phillips, Jr., *Medicine and Astrology*, a paper read before the Numismatic and Antiquarian Society of Philadelphia, June 7, 1866. It simply professes to teach what language is, and this would hardly seem sufficient to secure for a new science the sympathy and support of the public at large. There are problems, however, which, though apparently of an abstruse and merely speculative character, have exercised a powerful influence for good or evil in the history of mankind. Men before now have fought for an idea, and have laid down their lives for a word; and many of the problems which have agitated the world from the earliest to our own times, belong properly to the science of language.

Mythology, which was the bane of the ancient world, is in truth a disease of language. A mythe means a word, but a word which, from being a name or an attribute, has been allowed to assume a more substantial existence. Most of the Greek, the Roman, the Indian, and other heathen gods are nothing but poetical names, which were gradually allowed to assume a divine personality never contemplated by their original inventors. Eos was a name of the dawn before she became a goddess, the wife of Tithonos, or the dying day. Fatum, or fate, meant originally what had been spoken; and before Fate became a power, even greater than Jupiter, it meant that which had once been spoken by Jupiter, and could never be changed--not even by Jupiter himself. Zeus originally meant the bright heaven, in Sanskrit Dyaus; and many of the stories told of him as the supreme god, had a meaning only as told originally of the bright heaven, whose rays, like golden rain, descend on the lap of the earth, the Danae of old, kept by her father in the dark prison of winter. No

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one doubts that Luna was simply a name of the moon; but so was likewise Lucina, both derived from lucere, to shine. Hekate, too, was an old name of the moon, the feminine of Hekatos and Hekatebolos, the far-darting sun; and Pyrrha, the Eve of the Greeks, was nothing but a name of the red earth, and in particular of Thessaly. This mythological disease, though less virulent in modern languages, is by no means extinct.<sup>9</sup>

During the middle ages the controversy between Nominalism and Realism, which agitated the church for centuries, and finally prepared the way for the Reformation, was again, as its very name shows, a controversy on names, on the nature of language, and on the relation of words to our conceptions on one side, and to the realities of the outer world on the other. Men were called heretics for believing that words such as *justice* or *truth* expressed only conceptions of our mind, not real things walking about in broad daylight.

In modern times the science of language has been called in to settle some of the most perplexing political and social questions. 'Nations and languages against dynasties and treaties,' this is what has remodelled, and will remodel still more, the map of Europe; (and in America comparative philologists have been encouraged to prove the impossibility of a common origin of languages and races, in order to justify, by scientific arguments, the unhallowed theory of slavery) Never do I remember to have seen science more degraded than on the title-page of an American publication in which, among the profiles of the differ-

" See Lectures on the Science of Language, 2nd Series, 12th lecture. Rek also to Ha Indi, "Outline of hord thistory"



ent races of man, the profile of the ape was made to look more human than that of the negro.

Lastly, the problem of the position of man on the threshold between the worlds of matter and spirit has of late assumed a very marked prominence among the problems of the physical and mental sciences. It has absorbed the thoughts of men who, after a long life spent in collecting, observing, and analysing, have brought to its solution qualifications unrivalled in any previous age; and if we may judge from the greater warmth displayed in discussions ordinarily conducted with the calmness of judges and not with the passion of pleaders, it might seem, after all, as if the great problems of our being, of the true nobility of our blood, of our descent from heaven or earth, though unconnected with anything that is commonly called practical, have still retained a charm of their own-a charm that will never lose its power on the mind and on the heart of man. Now, however much the frontiers of the animal kingdom have been pushed forward, so that at one time the line of demarcation between animal and man seemed to depend on a mere fold in the brain, there is one barrier which no one has yet ventured to touch-the barrier of language. Even those philosophers with whom penser c'est sentir, 10 who reduce all thought to feeling, and maintain that

<sup>10</sup> 'Man has two faculties, or two passive powers, the existence of which is generally acknowledged: 1, the faculty of receiving the different impressions caused by external objects, physical sensibility; and 2, the faculty of preserving the impressions caused by these objects, called memory, or weakened sensation. These faculties, the productive causes of thought, we have in common with beasts. . . . . Everything is reducible to feeling.'-Helvetius. we share the faculties which are the productive causes of thought in common with beasts, are bound to confess that as yet no race of animals has produced a language. Lord Monboddo, for instance, admits/ that as yet no animal has been discovered in the possession of language, 'not even the beaver, who of all the animals we know, that are not, like the orang-outangs, of our own species, comes nearest to us in sagacity.'

Locke, who is generally classed together with these materialistic philosophers, and who certainly vindicated a large share of what had been claimed for the intellect as the property of the senses, recognised most fully the barrier which language, as such, placed between man and brutes. 'This I may be positive in,' he writes, 'that the power of abstracting is not at all in brutes, and that the having of general ideas is that which puts a perfect distinction between man and brutes. For it is evident we observe no footsteps in these of making use of general signs for universal ideas; from which we have reason to imagine that they have not the faculty of abstracting or making general ideas, since they have no use of words or any other general signs.'

If, therefore, the science of language gives us an insight into that which, by common consent distinguishes man from all other living beings; if it establishes a frontier between man and the brute, which can never be removed, it would seem to possess at the present moment peculiar claims on the attention of all who, while watching with sincere admiration the progress of comparative physiology, yet consider it their duty to enter their manly protest

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against a revival of the shallow theories of Lord Monboddo.

But to return to our survey of the history of the physical sciences. We had examined the empirical stage through which every science has to pass. We saw that, for instance, in botany, a man who has travelled through distant countries, who has collected a vast number of plants, who knows their names, their peculiarities, and their medicinal qualities, is not yet a botanist, but only a herbalist, a lover of plants, or what the Italians call a dilettante, from dilettare, to delight in a subject. The real science of plants, like every other science, begins with the work of classification. An empirical acquaintance with facts rises to a scientific knowledge of facts as soon as the mind discovers beneath the multiplicity of single productions the unity of an organic system. This discovery is made by means of comparison and classification. We cease to study each flower for its own sake; and by continually enlarging the sphere of our observation, we try to discover what is common to many and offers those essential points on which groups or natural classes may be established. These classes again, in their more general features, are mutually compared; new points of difference, or of similarity of a more general and higher character, spring to view, and enable us to discover classes of classes, or families. And when the whole kingdom of plants has thus been surveyed, and a simple tissue of names been thrown over the garden of nature; when we can lift it up, as it were, and view it in our mind as a whole, as a system well defined and complete, we then speak of the science of plants, or botany. We have entered into altogether a new sphere of knowledge where the individual is subject to the general, fact to law; we discover thought, order, and purpose pervading the whole realm of nature, and we perceive the dark chaos of matter lighted up by the reflection of a divine mind. Such views may be right or wrong. Too hasty comparisons, or too narrow distinctions, may have prevented the eye of the observer from discovering the broad outlines of nature's plan. Yet every system, however insufficient it may prove hereafter, is a step in advance. If the mind of man is once impressed with the conviction that there must be order and law everywhere, it never rests again until all that seems irregular has been eliminated, until the full beauty and harmony of nature has been perceived, and the eye of man has caught the eye of God beaming out from the midst of all His works. The failures of the past prepare the triumphs of the future.

Thus, to recur to our former illustration, the systematic arrangement of plants which bears the name of Linnæus, and which is founded on the number and character of the reproductive organs, failed to bring out the natural order which pervades all that grows and blossoms. Broad lines of demarcation which unite or divide large tribes and families of plants were invisible from his point of view. But in spite of this, his work was not in vain. The fact that plants in every part of the world belonged to one great system was established once for all; and even in later systems most of his classes and divisions have been preserved, because the conformation of the reproductive organs of plants happened to run parallel with other more characteristic marks of true

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affinity. It is the same in the history of astronomy. Although the Ptolemæan system was a wrong one, yet even from its eccentric point of view, laws were discovered determining the true movements of the heavenly bodies. The conviction that there remains something unexplained is sure to lead to the discovery of our error. There can be no error in nature; the error must be with us. This conviction lived in the heart of Aristotle when, in spite of his imperfect knowledge of nature, he declared ' that there is in nature nothing interpolated or without connection, as in a bad tragedy;' and from his time forward every new fact and every new system have confirmed his faith.

The object of classification is clear. We understand things if we can comprehend them; that is to say, if we can grasp and hold together single facts, connect isolated impressions, distinguish between what is essential and what is merely accidental, and thus predicate the general of the individual, and class the individual under the general. This is the secret of all scientific knowledge. Many sciences, while passing through this second or classificatory stage, assume the title of comparative. When the anatomist has finished the dissection of numerous bodies, when he has given names to every organ, and discovered the distinctive functions of each, he is led to perceive similarity where at first he saw dissimilarity only. He discovers in the lower animals rudimentary indications of the more perfect organisation of the higher; and he becomes impressed with the conviction that there is in the animal kingdom the same order and purpose which pervades the endless

variety of plants or any other realm of nature. He learns, if he did not know it before, that things were not created at random or in a lump, but that there is a scale which leads, by imperceptible degrees, from the lowest infusoria to the crowning work of nature —man; that all is the manifestation of one and the same unbroken chain of creative thought, the work of one and the same all-wise Creator.

In this way the second or classificatory leads us naturally to the third or final stage-the theoretical, or metaphysical. If the work of classification is properly carried out, it teaches us that nothing exists in nature by accident; that each individual belongs to a species, each species to a genus; and that there are laws which underlie the apparent freedom and variety of all created things. These laws indicate to us the presence of a purpose in the mind of the Creator; and whereas the material word was looked upon by ancient philosophers as a mere illusion, as an agglomerate of atoms, or as the work of an evil principle, we now read and interpret its pages as the revelation of a divine power, and wisdom, and love. This has given to the study of nature a new character. After the observer has collected his facts, and after the classifier has placed them in order, the student asks what is the origin and what is the meaning of all this? and he tries to soar, by means of induction, or sometimes even of divination, into regions not accessible to the mere collector. In this attempt the mind of man no doubt has frequently met with the fate of Phaeton; but, undismayed by failure, he asks again and again for his father's steeds. It has been said that this so-called philosophy of nature has

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never achieved anything; that it has done nothing but prove that things must be exactly as they had been found to be by the observer and collector. Physical science, however, would never have been what it is without the impulses which it received from the philosopher, nay, even from the poet. 'At the limits of exact knowledge' (I quote the words of Humboldt), 'as from a lofty island-shore, the eye loves to glance towards distant regions. The images which it sees may be illusive; but like the illusive images which people imagined they had seen from the Canaries or the Azores, long before the time of Columbus, they may lead to the discovery of a new world.'

Copernicus, in the dedication of his work to Pope Paul III. (it was commenced in 1517, finished 1530, published 1543), confesses that he was brought to the discovery of the sun's central position, and of the diurnal motion of the earth, not by observation or analysis, but by what he calls the feeling of a want of symmetry in the Ptolemaic system. But who had told him that there must be symmetry in all the movements of the celestial bodies, or that complication was not more sublime than simplicity? Symmetry and simplicity, before they were discovered by the observer, were postulated by the philosopher. The first idea of revolutionising the heavens was suggested to Copernicus, as he tells us himself, by an ancient Greek philosopher, by Philolaos, the Pytha-No doubt with Philolaos the motion of the gorean. earth was only a guess, or, if you like, a happy intuition, not, as it was with Tycho de Brahe and his friend Kepler, the result of wearisome observations of the orbits of the planet Mars. Nevertheless, if we may trust the words of Copernicus, it is quite possible that without that guess we should never have heard of the Copernican system. Truth is not found by addition and multiplication only. When speaking of Kepler, whose method of reasoning has been considered as unsafe and fantastic by his contemporaries as well as by later astronomers, Sir David Brewster remarks very truly, ' that, as an instrument of research, the influence of imagination has been much overlooked by those who have ventured to give laws to philosophy.' The torch of imagination is as necessary to him who looks for truth, as the lamp of study. Kepler held both, and more than that, he had the star of faith to guide him in all things from darkness to light.

In the history of the physical sciences, the three stages which we have just described as the empirical, the classificatory, and the theoretical, appear generally in chronological order. I say, generally, for there have been instances, as in the case just quoted of Philolaos, where the results properly belonging to the third have been anticipated in the first stage. To the quick eye of genius one case may be like a thousand, and one experiment, well chosen, may lead to the discovery of an absolute law. Besides, there are great chasms in the history of science. The tradition of generations is broken by political or ethnic earthquakes, and the work that was nearly finished has frequently had to be done again from the beginning, when a new surface had been formed for the growth of a new civilisation. The succession, however, of these three stages is no doubt the natural one, and it is very properly observed in the study of every science. The student of botany begins as a collector of plants. Taking each plant by itself, he observes its peculiar character, its habitat, its proper season, its popular or unscientific name. He learns to distinguish between the roots, the stem, the leaves, the flower, the calyx, the stamina, and pistils. He learns, so to say, the practical grammar of the plant before he can begin to compare, to arrange, and classify. Again, no one can enter with advantage on the third stage of any physical science without having passed through the second. No one can study the plant, no one can understand the bearing of such a work as, for instance, Professor Schleiden's Life of the Plant," who has not studied the life of plants in the wonderful variety, and in the still more wonderful order, of nature. These last and highest achievements of inductive philosophy are possible only after the way has been cleared by previous classification. The philosopher must command his classes like regiments which obey the order of their general. Thus alone can the battle be fought and truth be conquered.

After this rapid glance at the history of the other physical sciences, we now return to our own, the science of language, in order to see whether it really is a science, and whether it can be brought back to the standard of the inductive sciences. We want to know whether it has passed, or is still passing, through the three phases of physical research; whether its progress has been systematic or desultory, whether its method has been appropriate or

<sup>11</sup> Die Pflanze und ihr Leben, von M. J. Schleiden, Leipzig, 1858.
not. But before we do this, we shall, I think, have to do something else. You may have observed that I always took it for granted that the science of language, which is best known in this country by the name of comparative philology, is one of the physical sciences, and that therefore its method ought to be the same as that which has been followed with so much success in botany, geology, anatomy, and other branches of the study of nature. In the history of the physical sciences, however, we look in vain for a place assigned to comparative philology, and its very name would seem to show that it belongs to quite a different sphere of human knowledge. There are two great divisions of human knowledge, which, according to their subject-matter, may be called physical and historical. Physical science deals with the works of God, historical science with the works of man.<sup>12</sup> Now if we were to judge by its name, comparative philology, like classical philology, would seem to take rank, not as a physical, but as an historical science, and the proper method to be applied to it would be that which is followed in the history of art, of law, of politics, and religion. However, the title of comparative philology must not be allowed to mislead us. It is difficult to say by whom that title was invented; but all that can be said in defence of it is, that the founders of the science of language were chiefly scholars or philologists, and that they based their inquiries into the

<sup>12</sup> 'Thus the science of optics, including all the laws of light and colour, is a physical science, whereas the science of painting, with all its laws of manipulation and colouring, being that of a man-created art, is a purely historical science.'—Intellectual Repository, June 2, 1862, p. 247.



nature and laws of language on a comparison of as many facts as they could collect within their own special spheres of study. Neither in Germany, which may well be called the birthplace of this science, nor in France, where it has been cultivated with brilliant success, has that title been adopted. It will not be difficult to show that, although the science of language owes much to the classical scholar, and though in return it has proved of great use to him, yet comparative philology has really nothing whatever in common with philology, in the usual meaning of the word. Philology, whether classical or oriental, whether treating of ancient or modern, of cultivated or barbarous languages, is an historical science. Language is here treated simply as a means. The classical scholar uses Greek or Latin, the oriental scholar Hebrew or Sanskrit, or any other language, as a key to an understanding of the literary monuments which bygone ages have bequeathed to us, as a spell to raise from the tomb of time the thoughts of great men in different ages and different countries, and as a means ultimately to trace the social, moral, intellectual, and religious progress of the human race. In the same manner, if we study living languages, it is not for their own sake that we study grammars and vocabularies. We do so on account of their practical usefulness. We use them as letters of introduction to the best society or to the best literature of the leading nations of Europe. In comparative philology the case is totally different. In the science of language, languages are not treated as a means; language itself becomes the sole object of scientific inquiry. Dialects which have never produced any literature at all, the jargons of savage tribes, the clicks of the Hottentots, and the vocal modulations of the Indo-Chinese are as important, nay, for the solution of some of our problems, more important, than the poetry of Homer, or the prose of Cicero. We do not want to know languages, we want to know language; what language is, how it can form an instrument or an organ of thought; we want to know its origin, its nature, its laws; and it is only in order to arrive at that knowledge that we collect, arrange, and classify all the facts of language that are within our reach.

And here I must protest, at the very outset of these lectures, against the supposition that the student of language must necessarily be a great linguist. I shall have to speak to you in the course of these lectures of hundreds of languages, some of which, perhaps, you may never have heard mentioned even by name. Do not suppose that I know these languages as you know Greek or Latin, French or German. In that sense I know indeed very few languages, and I never aspired to the fame of a Mithridates or a Mezzofanti. It is impossible for a student of language to acquire a practical knowledge of all the tongues with which he has to deal. He does not wish to speak the Kachikal language, of which a professorship was lately founded in the University of Guatemala,13 or to acquire the elegancies of the idiom of the Tcheremissians; nor is it his ambition to explore the literature of the Samoyedes, or the New-Zealanders. It is the grammar and the the which form the subject of his inquiries. These he

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consults and subjects to a careful analysis, but he does not encumber his memory with paradigms of nouns and verbs, or with long lists of words which have never been used for the purposes of literature. It is true, no doubt, that no language will unveil the whole of its wonderful structure except to the scholar who has studied it thoroughly and critically in a number of literary works representing the various periods of its growth. Nevertheless, short lists of vocables, and imperfect sketches of a grammar, are in many instances all that the student can expect to obtain, or can hope to master and to use for the purposes he has in view. He must learn to make the best of this fragmentary information, like the comparative anatomist, who frequently learns his lessons from the smallest fragments of fossil bones, or the vague pictures of animals brought home by unscientific travellers. If it were necessary for the comparative philologist to acquire a critical or practical acquaintance with all the languages which form the subject of his inquiries, the science of language would simply be an impossibility. But we do not expect the botanist to be an experienced gardener, or the geologist a miner, or the ichthyologist a practical fisherman. Nor would it be reasonable to object in the science of language to the same division of labour which is necessary for the successful cultivation of subjects much less comprehensive. Though much of what we might call the realm of language is lost to us for ever, though whole periods in the history of language are by necessity withdrawn from our observation, yet the mass of human speech that hes before us, whether in the petrified strata of ancient litera-

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ture or in the countless variety of living languages and dialects, offers a field as large, if not larger, than any other branch of physical research. It is impossible to fix the exact number of known languages, but their number can hardly be less than nine hundred.<sup>14</sup> That, before the beginning of our century, this vast field should never have excited the curiosity of the natural philosopher may seem surprising, more surprising even than the indifference with which former generations treated the lessons which the very stones seemed to teach of the life still throbbing in the veins and on the very surface of the earth. The saying that 'familiarity breeds contempt' would seem applicable to the subjects of both these sciences. The gravel of our walks hardly seemed to deserve a scientific treatment, and the language which every ploughboy can speak could not be raised without an effort to the dignity of a scientific problem. Man had studied every part of nature, the mineral treasures in the bowels of the earth, the flowers of each season, the animals of every continent, the laws of storms, and the movements of the heavenly bodies; he had analysed every substance, dissected every organism, he knew every bone and muscle, every nerve and fibre of his own body to the ultimate elements which compose his flesh and blood; he had meditated on the nature of his soul, on the laws of his mind, and tried to penetrate into the last causes of all being-and yet language, without the aid of which not even the first step in this glorious career could have been made, remained unnoticed.

<sup>14</sup> Balbi in his Atlas counts 860. Cf. Pott, Rassen, p. 230; Etymologische Forschungen, ii. 83. (Second Edition.)



Like a veil that hung too close over the eye of the human mind, it was hardly perceived. In an age when the study of antiquity attracted the most energetic minds, when the ashes of Pompeii were sifted for the playthings of Roman life; when parchments were made to disclose, by chemical means, the erased thoughts of Grecian thinkers; when the tombs of Egypt were ransacked for their sacred contents, and the palaces of Babylon and Nineveh forced to surrender the clay diaries of Nebuchadnezzar; when everything, in fact, that seemed to contain a vestige of the early life of man was anxiously searched for and carefully preserved in our libraries and museums -language, which in itself carries us back far beyond the cuneiform literature of Assyria and Babylonia and the hieroglyphic documents of Egypt; which connects ourselves, through an unbroken chain of speech, with the very ancestors of our race, and still draws its life from the first utterances of the human mind-language, the living and speaking witness of the whole history of our race, was never crossexamined by the student of history, was never made to disclose its secrets until questioned, and, so to say, brought back to itself within the last fifty years, by the genius of a Humboldt, Bopp, Grimm, Bunsen, and If you consider that, whatever view we take others. of the origin and dispersion of language, nothing new has ever been added to the substance of language,15 that all its changes have been changes of form, that no new root or radical has ever been invented by later generations, as little as one single element has ever been added to the material world in which we 15 Pott, Etym. Forsch. ii. 230.

live; if you bear in mind that in one sense, and in a very just sense, we may be said to handle the very words which issued from the mouth of the son of God, when he gave names to 'all cattle, and to the fowl of the air, and to every beast of the field,' you will see, I believe, that the science of language has claims on your attention, such as few sciences can rival or excel.

Having thus explained the manner in which I intend to treat the science of language, I hope in my next lecture to examine the objections of those philosophers who see in language nothing but a contrivance devised by human skill for the more expeditious communication of our thoughts, and who would wish to see it treated, not as a production of nature, but simply as a work of human art.



# LECTURE II.

# THE GROWTH OF LANGUAGE IN CONTRADISTINCTION TO THE HISTORY OF LANGUAGE.

IN claiming for the science of language a place among the physical sciences, I was prepared to meet with many objections. The circle of the physical sciences seemed closed, and it was not likely that a new claimant should at once be welcomed among the established branches and scions of the ancient aristocracy of learning.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Dr. Whewell classes the science of language as one of the palaitiological sciences; but he makes a distinction between palaitiological sciences treating of material things, for instance, geology, and others respecting the products which result from man's imaginative and social endowments, for instance, comparative philology. He excludes the latter from the circle of the physical sciences, properly so called, but he adds: 'We began our inquiry with the trust that any sound views which we should be able to obtain respecting the nature of truth in the physical sciences, and the mode of discovering it, must also tend to throw light upon the nature and prospects of knowledge of all other kinds-must be useful to us in moral, political, and philological re-We stated this as a confident anticipation; and the evidence searches. of the justice of our belief already begins to appear. We have seen that biology leads us to psychology, if we choose to follow the path ; and thus the passage from the material to the immaterial has already unfolded itself at one point; and we now perceive that there are several large provinces of speculation which concern subjects belonging to man's immaterial nature, and which are governed by the same laws as sciences altogether physical. It is not our business to dwell on the prospects which our philosophy thus opens to our contemplation; but we may allow ourselves, in this last stage of our pilgrimage among the foundations of the physical sciences, to be cheered and animated by

### LANGUAGE INVENTED BY MAN.

The first objection which was sure to be raised on the part of such sciences as botany, geology, or physiology is this :-- Language is the work of man; it was invented by man as a means of communicating his thoughts, when mere looks and gestures proved inefficient; and it was gradually, by the combined efforts of succeeding generations, brought to that perfection which we admire in the idiom of the Bible, the Vedas, the Koran, and in the poetry of Homer, Virgil, Dante, and Shakespeare. Now it is perfectly true that if language be the work of man, in the same sense in which a statue, or a temple, or a poem, or a law are properly called the works of man, the science of language would have to be classed as an historical science. We should have a history of language as we have a history of art, of poetry, and of jurisprudence, but we could not claim for it a place side by side with the various branches of natural history. It is true, also, that if you consult the works of the most distinguished modern philosophers you will find that whenever they speak of language. they take it for granted that language is a human invention, that words are artificial signs, and that the varieties of human speech arose from different nations agreeing on different sounds as the most appropriate signs of their different ideas. This view of the origin of language was so powerfully advocated by the leading philosophers of the last century, that it has retained

the ray that thus beams upon us, however dimly, from a higher and brighter region.'-Indications of the Creator, p. 146. See also Darwinism tested by the Science of Language, translated from the German of Professor A. Schleicher by Dr. Al. V. W. H. Bikkers (London: Hotten, 1869), and my review of this work in 'Nature,' No. 10, Jan. 6, 1870.

an undisputed currency even among those who, on almost every other point, are strongly opposed to the teaching of that school. A few voices, indeed, have been raised to protest against the theory of language being originally invented by man. But they, in their zeal to vindicate the divine origin of language, seem to have been carried away so far as to run counter to the express statements of the Bible. For in the Bible it is not the Creator who gives names to all things, but Adam. 'Out of the ground,' we read, 'the Lord God formed every beast of the field, and every fowl of the air; and brought them unto Adam to see what he would call them : and whatsoever Adam called every living creature that was the name thereof.' <sup>2</sup> But with the exception of this small class of philosophers, more orthodox even than the Bible,<sup>3</sup> the generally received opinion on the origin of language is that which was held by Locke, which was powerfully advocated by Adam Smith in his Essay on the Origin of Language, appended to his Treatise on Moral Sentiments, and which was adopted with slight modifications by Dugald Stewart. According

Genesis ii. 19.

<sup>3</sup> St. Basil was accused by Eunomius of denying Divine Providence, because he would not admit that God had created the names of all things, but ascribed the invention of language to the faculties which God had implanted in man. St. Gregory, bishop of Nyssa in Cappadocia (331-396), defended St. Basil. 'Though God has given to human nature its faculties,' he writes, 'it does not follow that therefore He produces all the actions which we perform. He has given us the faculty of building a house and doing any other work; but we, surely, are the builders, and not He. In the same manner our faculty of speaking is the work of Him who has so framed our nature; but the invention of words for naming each object is the work of our mind.' See Ladevi-Roche, De l'Origine du Langage, Bordeaux, 1860, p. 14; also Horne Tooke, Diversions of Purley, p. 19.



to them, man must have lived for a time in a state of mutism, his only means of communication consisting in gestures of the body, and in changes of the countenance, till at last, when ideas multiplied that could no longer be pointed at with the fingers, 'they found it necessary to invent artificial signs of which the meaning was fixed by mutual agreement.' We need not dwell on minor differences of opinion as to the exact process by which this artificial language is supposed to have been formed. Adam Smith would wish us to believe that the first artificial words were verbs. Nouns, he thinks, were of less urgent necessity because things could be pointed at or imitated, whereas mere actions, such as are expressed by verbs, could not. He therefore supposes that when people saw a wolf coming, they pointed at him, and simply cried out 'He comes.' Dugald Stewart, on the contrary, thinks that the first artificial words were nouns, and that the verbs were supplied by gesture; that, therefore, when people saw a wolf coming, they did not cry 'He comes,' but 'Wolf, Wolf,' leaving the rest to be imagined.4

But whether the verb or the noun was the first to be invented is of little importance; nor is it possible for us, at the very beginning of our inquiry into the nature of language, to enter upon a minute examination of a theory which represents language as a work of human art, and as established by mutual agreement as a medium of communication. While fully admitting that if this theory were true, the science of language would not come within the pale of the physical sciences, I must content myself for the pre-

<sup>4</sup> D. Stewart, Works, vol. iii. p. 27.

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sent with pointing out that no one has yet explained how, without language, a discussion, however imperfect, on the merits of each word, such as must needs have preceded a mutual agreement, could have been carried on. But as it is the object of these lectures to prove that language is not a work of human art, in the same sense as painting, or building, or writing, or printing, I must ask to be allowed, in this preliminary stage, simply to enter my protest against a theory, which, though still taught in the schools, is nevertheless, I believe, without a single fact to support its truth.

But there are other objections besides this which would seem to bar the admission of the science of language to the circle of the physical sciences. Whatever the origin of language may have been, it has been remarked with a strong appearance of truth, that language has a history of its own, like art, like law, like religion; and that, therefore, the science of language belongs to the circle of the historical, or, as they used to be called, the moral, in contradistinction to the physical sciences. It is a well-known fact, which recent researches have not shaken, that nature is incapable of progress or improvement. The flower which the botanist observes to-day was as perfect from the beginning as it is today. Animals which are endowed with what is called an artistic instinct, have never brought that instinct to a higher degree of perfection. The hexagonal cells of the bee are not more regular in the nineteenth century than at any earlier period, and the gift of song has never, as far as we know, been brought to a higher perfection by our nightingale



than by the Philomele of the Greeks. 'Natural History,' to quote Dr. Whewell's words,5 'when systematically treated, excludes all that is historical, for it classes objects by their permanent and universal properties, and has nothing to do with the narration of particular or casual facts.' Now, if we consider the large number of tongues spoken in different parts of the world with all their dialectic and provincial varieties, if we observe the great changes which each of these tongues has undergone in the course of centuries, how Latin was changed into Italian, Spanish, Portuguese, Provençal, French, Walachian, and Roumansch; how Latin again, together with Greek, the Celtic, the Teutonic, and Slavonic languages, together likewise with the ancient dialects of India and Persia, points back to an earlier language, the mother, if we may so call it, of the whole Indo-European or Aryan family of speech; if we see how Hebrew, Arabic, and Syriac, with several minor dialects, are but different impressions of one and the same common type, and must all have flowed from the same source, the original language of the Semitic race; and if we add to these two, the Aryan and Semitic, at least one more wellestablished class of languages, the Turanian, comprising the dialects of the nomad races scattered over Central and Northern Asia, the Tungusic, Mongolic, Turkic,<sup>6</sup> Samoyedic, and Finnic, all radii from one common centre of speech: if we watch this stream of language rolling on through centuries in

<sup>b</sup> History of Inductive Sciences, vol. iii. p. 531.

<sup>6</sup> Names in *ic* are names of classes as distinct from the names of single languages.

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three mighty arms, which, before they disappear from our sight in the far distance, clearly show a convergence towards one common source: it would seem, indeed, as if there were an historical life inherent in language, and as if both the will of man and the power of time could tell, if not on its substance, at least on its form.

And even if the mere local varieties of speech were not considered sufficient ground for excluding language from the domain of natural science, there would still remain the greater difficulty of reconciling the historical changes affecting every one of these varieties with the recognised principles of physical science. Every part of nature, whether mineral, plant, or animal, is the same in kind from the beginning to the end of its existence, whereas few languages could be recognised as the same after the lapse of but a thousand years. The language of Alfred is so different from the English of the present day that we have to study it in the same manner as we study Greek and Latin. We can read Milton and Bacon, Shakespeare and Hooker; we can make out Wycliffe and Chaucer; but when we come to the English of the thirteenth century, we can but guess its meaning, and we fail even in this with works previous to Orm and Layamon. The historical changes of language may be more or less rapid, but they take place at all times and in all countries. They have reduced the rich and powerful idiom of the poets of the Veda to the meagre and impure jargon of the modern Sepoy. They have transformed the language of the Zend-Avesta and of the mountain records of Behistún into that of Firdusi and the modern Persians; the language of Virgil

into that of Dante, the language of Ulfilas into that of Charlemagne, the language of Charlemagne into that of Goethe. We have reason to believe that the same changes take place with even greater violence and rapidity in the dialects of savage tribes, although, in the absence of a written literature, it is extremely difficult to obtain trustworthy information. But in the few instances where careful observations have been made on this interesting subject, it has been found that among the wild and illiterate tribes of Siberia, Africa, and Siam, two or three generations are sufficient to change the whole aspect of their dialects. The languages of highly civilised nations, on the contrary, become more and more stationary, and sometimes seem almost to lose their power of change. Where there is a classical literafure, and where its language has spread to every town and village, it seems almost impossible that any further changes should take place. Nevertheless, the language of Rome, for so many centuries the queen of the whole civilised world, was deposed by the modern Romance dialects, and the ancient Greek was supplanted in the end by the modern Romaic. And though the art of printing and the wide diffusion of Bibles and Prayer-books and newspapers have acted as still more powerful barriers to arrest the constant flow of human speech, we may see that the language of the authorised version of the Bible, though perfectly intelligible, is no longer the spoken language of England. In Booker's Scripture and Prayer-book Glossary<sup>7</sup> the number of

\* A Scripture and Prayer-book Glossary : being an explanation of obsolete words and phrases in the English Bible, Apocrypha, and Book words or senses of words which have become obsolete since 1611, amount to 388,8 or nearly one fifteenth part of the whole number of words used in the Bible. Smaller changes, changes of accent and meaning, the reception of new, and the dropping of old words, we may watch as taking place under our own eyes. Rogers<sup>9</sup> said that 'contemplate is bad enough, but bálcony makes me sick,' whereas at present no one is startled by contemplate instead of contémplate, and bálcony has become more usual than balcóny. Thus Roome and chaney, layloc and goold, have but lately been driven from the stage by Rome, china, lilac, and gold; and some courteous gentlemen of the old school still continue to be obleeged instead of being obliged.<sup>10</sup> Force,<sup>11</sup> in the sense of a waterfall, and gill, in the sense of a rocky ravine, were not used in classical English before Wordsworth. Handbook,12 though an old Anglo-Saxon word, has but lately taken the place of manual; and a number of words such as cab for cabriolet, buss for omnibus, and even a verb such as to shunt<sup>13</sup> tremble

of Common Prayer, by the Rev. J. Booker: Dublin, 1862. The Bible Word-book, a glossary of Old English Bible words, by J. Eastwood and W. Aldis Wright: Cambridge, 1866.

<sup>8</sup> Lectures on the English Language, by G. P. Marsh: New York, 1860, pp. 263 and 630. These lectures embody the result of much careful research, and are full of valuable observations. They have lately been published in England, with useful omissions and additions by Dr. Smith, under the title of Handbock of the English Language.

<sup>9</sup> Marsh, p. 532, note.

<sup>16</sup> Trench, English Past and Present, p. 210, mentions great, which was pronounced greet in Johnson's time, and tea, which Pope rhymes with obey.

<sup>11</sup> Marsh, p. 589. <sup>12</sup> Sir J. Stoddart, Glossology, p. 60.

<sup>13</sup> In Halliwell's *Dictionary of Archaisms* 'to shunte' is given in the sense of to delay, to put off:-

### CHANGES IN ENGLISH.

still on the boundary line between the vulgar and the literary idioms. Though the grammatical changes that have taken place since the publication of the authorised version are yet fewer in number, still we may point out some. The termination of the third person singular in th is now entirely replaced by s. No one now says he liveth, but only he lives. Several of the irregular imperfects and participles have assumed a new form. No one now uses he spake, and he drave, instead of he spoke, and he drove; holpen is replaced by helped; holden by held; shapen by shaped. The distinction between ye and you, the former being reserved for the nominative, the latter for all the other cases, is given up in modern English; and what is apparently a new grammatical form, the possessive pronoun its, has sprung into life since the beginning of the seventeenth century. It never occurs in the Bible; and though it is used three or four times by Shakespeare, Ben Jonson does not recognise it as yet in his English Grammar.14

'Schape us an ansuere, and schunte yow no lengere.'

Morte Arthure, MS. Lincoln, f. 67.

Also in the sense of to shun, to move from (North):--

'Then I drew me down into a dale, whereas the dumb deer

Did shiver for a shower; but I shunted from a freyke.'

Little John Nobody, c. 1550.

In Sir Gawayne and the Green Knight, ed. R. Morris, Sir Gawayne is said to have shunt, i.e. to have shrunk from a blow (v. 2280; see also 2268, 1902). In the Early English Alliterative Poems, ed. R. Morris, Abraham is said to sit schunt, i.e. a-skant or a-slant (B. 605, p. 56). See Mr. R. Morris' remarks in the Glossary, p. 190; and Herbert Coleridge, Glossary, s.v.

<sup>14</sup> 'Foure Possessives: My, or Myne; Plurall, Our, ours. Thy, thine; Plurall, Your, yours. His, Hers, both in the plurall making, Their, theirs.' See The English Grammar made by Ben Johnson, 1640, chap. xv.

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It is argued, therefore, that as language, differing thereby from all other productions of nature, is liable to historical alterations, it is not fit to be treated in the same manner as the subject-matter of all the other physical sciences.

There is something very plausible in this objection, but if we examine it more carefully, we shall find that it rests entirely on a confusion of terms. We must distinguish between historical change and natural growth. Art, science, philosophy, and religion all have a history; language, or any other production of nature, admits only of growth.

Let us consider, first, that although there is a continuous change in language, it is not in the power of any man either to produce or to prevent it. We might think as well of changing the laws which control the circulation of our blood, or of adding an inch to our height, as of altering the laws of speech, or inventing new words according to our own pleasure. As man is the lord of nature only if he knows her laws and submits to them, the poet and the philosopher become the lords of language only if they know its laws and obey them.

When the Emperor Tiberius had made a mistake and was reproved for it by Marcellus, another grammarian of the name of Capito, who happened to be present, remarked that what the emperor said was good Latin, or, if it were not, it would soon be so. Marcellus, more of a grammarian than a courtier, replied, 'Capito is a liar; for Cæsar, thou canst give the Roman citizenship to men, but not to words.' A similar anecdote is told of the German Emperor Sigismund. When presiding at the Council of Constance, he addressed the assembly in a Latin speech, exhorting them to eradicate the schism of the Huss-'Videte Patres,' he said, 'ut eradicetis schisites. mam Hussitarum.' He was very unceremoniously called to order by a monk, who called out, 'Serenissime Rex, schisma est generis neutri.'15 The emperor, however, without losing his presence of mind, asked the impertinent monk, ' How do you know it?' The old Bohemian schoolmaster replied, 'Alexander Gallus says so.' 'And who is Alexander Gallus?' the emperor rejoined. The monk replied, 'He was a monk.' 'Well,' said the emperor, 'and I am emperor of Rome; and my word, I trust, will be as good as the word of any monk.' No doubt the laughers were with the emperor; but for all that, schisma remained a neuter, and not even an emperor could change its gender or termination.

The idea that language can be changed and improved by man is by no means a new one. We know that Protagoras, an ancient Greek philosopher, after laying down some laws on gender, actually began to find fault with the text of Homer, because it did not agree with his rules. But here, as in every other instance, the attempt proved unavailing. Try to alter the smallest rule of English, and you will find that it is physically impossible. There is apparently a very small difference between *much* and *very*, but you can hardly ever put one in the place of the other.

<sup>15</sup> As several of my reviewers have found fault with the monk for using the genitive *neutri*, instead of *neutrius*, I beg to refer them to Priscianus, lib. vi. cap. i, 220; and cap. vii, 243. The expression generis neutrius, though frequently used by modern editors, has no authority, I believe, in ancient Latin. See Ausonius, Epig. 50.

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You can say 'I am very happy,' but not 'I am much happy,' though you may say 'I am most happy.' On the contrary, you can say 'I am much misunderstood,' but not 'I am very misunderstood.' Thus the western Romance dialects, Spanish and Portuguese, together with Walachian, can only employ the Latin word magis for forming comparatives :- Sp. mas dulce; Port. mais doce; Wal. mai dulce: while French, Provençal, and Italian only allow of plus for the same purpose; Ital. più dolce; Prov. plus dous; Fr. plus doux. It is by no means impossible, however, that this distinction between very, which is now used with adjectives only, and much, which precedes participles, should disappear in time. In fact, 'very pleased' and 'very delighted' are expressions which may be heard in many drawing-rooms. But if that change take place, it will not be by the will of any individual, nor by the mutual agreement of any large number of men, but rather in spite of the exertions of grammarians and academies. And here you perceive the first difference between history and growth. An emperor may change the laws of society, the forms of religion, the rules of art: it is in the power of one generation, or even of one individual, to raise an art to the highest pitch of perfection, while the next may allow it to lapse, till a new genius takes it up again with renewed ardour. In all this we have to deal with the conscious and intentional acts of individuals, and we therefore move on historical ground. If we compare the creations of Michael Angelo or Raphael with the statues and frescoes of ancient Rome, we can speak of a history of art. We can connect two periods separated by thousands of years

### GROWTH OF LANGUAGE.

through the works of those who handed on the traditions of art from century to century; but we shall never meet here with the same continuous and unconscious growth which connects the language of Plautus with that of Dante. The process through which anguage is settled and unsettled combines in one the two opposite elements of necessity and free will. Though the individual seems to be the prime agent in producing new words and new grammatical forms, he is so only after his individuality has been merged in the common action of the family, tribe or nation to which he belongs. He can do nothing by himself, and the first impulse to a new formation in language, though given by an individual, is mostly, if not always, given without premeditation, nay, unconsciously. The individual, as such, is powerless, and the results apparently produced by him depend on laws beyond his control, and on the co-operation of all those who form together with him one class, one body, or one organic whole.

But, though it is easy to show, as we have just done, that language cannot be changed or moulded by the taste, the fancy, or genius of man, it is nevertheless through the instrumentality of man alone that language can be changed. Ever since Horace it has been usual to compare the changes of language with the growth of trees. But comparisons are treacherous things. What do we know of the real causes of the growth of a tree, and what can we gain by comparing things which we do not quite understand with things which we understand even less ? Many people speak, for instance, of the terminations of the verb, as if they sprouted out from the root as

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from their parent-stock.<sup>16</sup> But what ideas can they connect with such expressions? If we must compare language with a tree, there is one point which may be illustrated by this comparison, and this is that neither language nor the tree can exist or grow by itself. Without the soil, without air and light, the tree could not live; it could not even be conceived to live. It is the same with language. Language cannot exist by itself; it requires a soil on which to grow, and that soil is the human soul. What is language without man? To speak of language as a thing by itself, as living a life of its own, as growing to maturity, producing offspring, and dying away, is sheer mythology; and though we cannot help using metaphorical expressions, we should always be on our guard, when engaged in inquiries like the present, against being carried away by the very words which we are using.

Now, what we call the growth of language comprises two processes which should be carefully distinguished, though they may be at work simultaneously. These two processes I call

1. Dialectic Regeneration.

2. Phonetic Decay.

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I begin with the second as the more obvious, though in reality its operations are mostly subsequent to the operations of dialectic regeneration. I must ask you at present to take it for granted that everything in language had originally a meaning.

<sup>16</sup> Horne Tooke, p. 629, *note*, ascribes this opinion to Castelvetro, without, however, giving any proof that the Italian scholar really held this view. In its most extreme form this view was supported by Friedrich Schlegel. As language can have no other object but to express our meaning, it might seem to follow almost by necessity that language should contain neither more nor less than what is required for that purpose. It would also seem to follow that if language contains no more than what is necessary for conveying a certain meaning, it would be impossible to modify any part of it without defeating its very purpose. This is really the case in some languages. In Chinese, for instance, ten is expressed by shi. It would be impossible to change shi in the slightest way without making it unfit to express ten. Tf instead of shi we pronounced t'si, this would mean seven, but not ten. But now, suppose we wished to express double the quantity of ten, twice ten, or twenty. We should in Chinese take eul, which is two, put it before shi, and say eúl-shi, twenty. The same caution which applied to shi, applies again to eúl-shi. As soon as you change it, by adding or dropping a single letter, it is no longer twenty, but either something else or nothing. We find exactly the same in other languages which, like Chinese, are called monosyllabic. In Tibetan, chu is ten, nyi two; nyi-chu, twenty. In Burmese she is ten, nhit two; nhit-she, twenty.

But how is it in English, or in Gothic, or in Greek and Latin, or in Sanskrit? We do not say two-ten in English, nor duo-decem in Latin, nor dvi-dasa in Sanskrit.

We find<sup>17</sup> in

Sanskrit	Greek	Latin	English
vinsati	eikati	viginti	twenty.

<sup>17</sup> Bopp, Comparative Grammar, § 320. Schleicher, Deutsche Sprache, 8, 233.

Now here we see, first, that the Sanskrit, Greek, and Latin are only local modifications of one and the same original word; whereas the English twenty is a new compound, and like the Gothic tvai tigjus (two decads), the Anglo-Saxon tuéntig, framed from Teutonic materials; a product, as we shall see, of dialectic regeneration.

We next observe that the first part of the Latin viginti and of the Sanskrit vinsati contains the same number, which from dvi has been reduced to vi. This is not very extraordinary; for the Latin bis, twice, stands likewise for an original dvis, and that corresponds to the English twice, the Greek dis. This dis appears again as a Latin preposition, meaning a-two; so that, for instance, discussion means, originally, striking a-two, different from percussion, which means striking through and through. Discussion is, in fact, like the cracking of a nut in order to get at its kernel. Well, the same word, dvi or vi, we have in the Latin word for twenty, which is vi-ginti, the Sanskrit vinsati.

It can likewise be proved that the second part of viginti is a corruption of the old word for ten. Ten, in Sanskrit, is dasan; from it is derived dasati, a decad; and this dasati was again reduced to sati; thus giving us with vi for dvi, two, the Sanskrit vinsati, instead of vi + sati, twenty. The Latin viginti, the Greek eikati, owe their origin to the same process.

Now consider the immense difference—I do not mean in sound, but in character—between two such words as the Chinese *eúl-shi*, two-ten, or twenty, and those mere cripples of words which we meet with in

Sanskrit, Greek, and Latin. In Chinese there is neither too much, nor too little. The word speaks for itself, and requires no commentary. In Sanskrit, on the contrary, the most essential parts of the two component elements are gone, and what remains is a kind of metamorphic agglomerate which cannot be understood without a most minute microscopic analysis. Here, then, we have an instance of what is meant by phonetic corruption; and you will perceive how, not only the form, but the whole nature of language is destroyed by it. As soon as phonetic corruption shows itself in a language, that language has lost what we considered to be the most essential character of all human speech, namely, that every part of it should have a meaning. The people who spoke Sanskrit were as little aware that vinsati meant twice ten as a Frenchman is that vingt contains the remains of deux and dix. Language, therefore, has entered into a new stage as soon as it submits to the attacks of phonetic change. The life of language has become benumbed and extinct in those words or portions of words which show the first traces of this phonetic mould. Henceforth those words or portions of words can be kept up only artificially or by tradition ; and, what is important, a distinction is henceforth established between what is substantial or radical, and what is merely formal or grammatical in words.

For let us now take another instance, which will make it clearer how phonetic corruption leads to the first appearance of so-called grammatical forms. We are not in the habit of looking on *twenty* as the plural or dual of *ten*. But how was a plural originally formed?

In Chinese, which from the first has guarded most carefully against the taint of phonetic corruption, the plural is formed in the most sensible manner. Thus, man in Chinese is ğin ; kiai means the whole or totality. This added to ğin gives ğin-kiai, which is the plural of man. There are other words which are used for the same purpose in Chinese; for instance, péi, which means a class. Hence i, a stranger, followed by péi, class, gives i-péi, strangers. We have similar plurals in English, but we do not reckon them as grammatical forms. Thus, man-kind is formed exactly like i-péi, stranger-kind; Christendom is the same as all Christians, and clergy is synonymous with clerici. The same process is followed in other cognate languages. In Tibetan the plural is formed by the addition of such words as kun, all, and t'sogs, multitude.18 Even the numerals, nine and hundred, are used for the same purpose. And here again, as long as these words are fully understood and kept alive, they resist phonetic corruption ; but the moment they lose, so to say, their presence of mind, phonetic corruption sets in, and as soon as phonetic corruption has commenced its ravages, those portions of a word which it affects retain a merely artificial or conventional existence, and dwindle down to grammatical terminations.

I am afraid I should tax your patience too much were I to enter here on an analysis of the grammatical terminations in Sanskrit, Greek, or Latin, in order to show how these terminations arose out of independent words which were slowly reduced to mere dust by the constant wear and tear of speech.

18 Foucaux, Grammairs Tibetaine, p. 27, and Preface, p. x.

But in order to explain how the principle of phonetic decay leads to the formation of grammatical terminations, let us look to languages with which we are more familiar. Let us take the French adverb. We are told by French grammarians<sup>19</sup> that in order to form adverbs we have to add the termination mention Thus from bon, good, we form bonnement ; from vrai, femining. true, vraiment. This termination does not exist in of the Asi Latin. But we meet in Latin<sup>20</sup> with expressions such as bond mente, in good faith. We read in Ovid, 'Insistam forti mente,' I shall insist with a strong mind or will, I shall insist strongly; in French, 'J'insisterai fortement.' Glosses in mediæval MSS. are introduced by aut, vel, seu, id est, hoc est, or by in alid mente, and this comes to mean autrement or otherwise.21 Therefore, what has happened in the growth of Latin, or in the change of Latin into French, is simply this: in phrases such as forti mente, the last word was no longer felt as a distinct word. and it lost at the same time its distinct pronunciation. Mente, the ablative of mens, was changed into ment, and was preserved as a merely formal element, as the termination of adverbs, even in cases where a recollection of the original meaning of mente (with a mind), would have rendered its employment perfectly impossible. If we say in French that a hammer falls lourdement, we little suspect that we ascribe to a piece of iron a heavy mind. In Italian, though

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>19</sup> Fuchs, Romanische Sprachen, s. 355.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>20</sup> Quintilian, v. 10, 52. 'Bonâ mente factum, ideo palam; malâ, ideo ex insidiis.'

<sup>21</sup> Grimm, Rechtsalterthümer, p. 2.



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the adverbial termination mente in chiaramente is no longer felt as a distinct word, it has not as yet been affected by phonetic corruption; and in Spanish it is sometimes used as a distinct word, though even then it cannot be said to have retained its distinct meaning. Thus, instead of saying, 'claramente, concisamente y elegantemente,' it is more elegant to say in Spanish, 'clara, concisa y elegante mente.'

It is difficult to form any conception of the extent to which the whole surface of a language may be altered by what we have just described as phonetic change. Think that in the French vingt you have the same elements as in deux and dix; that the second part of the French douze, twelve, represents the Latin decim in duodecim; that the final te of trente was originally the Latin ginta in triginta, which ginta was again a derivation and abbreviation of the Sanskrit dasa or dasati, ten. Then consider how early this phonetic disease must have broken out. For in the same manner as vingt in French, veinte in Spanish, and venti in Italian presuppose the more primitive viginti which we find in Latin, so this Latin viginti, together with the Greek eikati, and the Sanskrit vinsati presuppose an earlier language from which they are in turn derived, and in which, previous to viginti, there must have been a more primitive form dvi-ginti; and previous to this again, another compound as clear and intelligible as the Chinese eulshi, consisting of the ancient Aryan names for two, dvi, and ten, dasati. Such is the virulence of this phonetic change, that it will sometimes eat away the whole body of a word, and leave nothing behind but decayed fragments. Thus, sister, which in Sanskrit

is syasar,<sup>22</sup> appears in Pehlvi and in Ossetian as cho. Daughter, which in Sanskrit is duhitar, has dwindled down in Bohemian to dci (pronounced tsi).23 Who would believe that tear and larme are derived from the same source; that the French même contains the Latin semetipsissimus; that in aujourd'hui we have the Latin word dies twice; 24 or that to dowal, a verb in ordinary use among the joiners in Yorkshire, is the same as the English to dovetail? Who would recognise the Latin pater in the Armenian hayr? Yet there is no difficulty in identifying père and pater; and as several initial h's in Armenian correspond to an original p (het = pes, pedis; hing = Greek pente, five; hour = Greek pyr, fire), we can easily understand how the Armenian hayr is really a parallel form of the Latin pater.25

We are accustomed to call these changes the growth of language, but it would be more appropriate to call this process of phonetic change decay, and thus to distinguish it from the second, or dialectic process, which we must now examine, and which involves, as you will see, a more real principle of growth.

In order to understand the meaning of *dialectic* regeneration we must first see clearly what we mean by dialect. We saw before that language has no independent substantial existence. Language exists in

<sup>22</sup> Sanskrit s = Persian h; therefore svasar = hvahar. This becomes chohar, chor, and cho. Zend, qanha, acc. qanharem; Persian, khåher. Bopp, Comp. Gram. § 35.

<sup>23</sup> Schleicher, Beiträge, b. ii. s. 392: dci = dŭgte; gen. dcere = dŭgtere. See Poncel, Du Langage, p. 208.

<sup>21</sup> Hui = hodie, Ital. oggi and oggidi ; jour = diurnum, from dies.

<sup>25</sup> See M. M.'s Letter to Chevalier Bunsen, On the Turanian Languages, p. 67.



man, it lives in being spoken, it dies with each word that is pronounced, and is no longer heard. It is a mere accident that language should ever have been reduced to writing, and have been made the vehicle of a written literature. Even now the largest number of languages are unwritten, and have produced no literature. Among the numerous tribes of Central Asia, Africa, America, and Polynesia, language still lives in its natural state, in a state of continual combustion; and it is there that we must go if we wish to gain an insight into the growth of human speech previous to its being arrested by any literary interference. What we are accustomed to call languages, the literary idioms of Greece, and Rome, and India, of Italy, France, and Spain, must be considered as artificial, rather than as natural forms of speech. The real and natural life of language is in its dialects, and in spite of the tyranny exercised by the classical or literary idioms, the day is still very far off which is to see the dialects, even of such classical languages as Italian and French, entirely eradicated. About twenty of the Italian dialects have been reduced to writing, and made known by the press.<sup>26</sup> Champollion-Figeac reckons the most distinguishable dialects of France at fourteen.27 The number of modern Greek dialects<sup>28</sup> is carried by some as high as seventy, and though many of these are hardly more than local varieties, yet some, like the Tzaconic, differ from the literary language as much as Doric differed from Attic. In the island of Lesbos, villages distant from each

<sup>26</sup> See Marsh, p. 678; Sir John Stoddart's Glossology, s. 31.

<sup>27</sup> Glossology, p. 33.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>20</sup> Ibid. p. 29.

other not more than two or three hours have frequently peculiar words of their own, and their own peculiar pronunciation.<sup>29</sup> But let us take a language which, though not without a literature, has been less under the influence of classical writers than Italian or French, and we shall then see at once how abundant the growth of dialects. The Frisian, which is spoken on a small area on the north-western coast of Germany, between the Scheldt and Jutland, and on the islands near the shore, which has been spoken there for at least two thousand years,<sup>30</sup> and which possesses literary documents as old as the twelfth century, is broken up into endless local dialects. I quote from Kohl's Travels. 'The commonest things,' he writes, 'which are named almost alike all over Europe, receive quite different names in the different Frisian Islands. Thus, in Amrum, father is called aati; on the Halligs, baba or babe; in Sylt, foder or vaar; in many districts on the mainland, täte; in the eastern part of Föhr, oti or ohitj. Although these people live within a couple of German miles from each other, these words differ more than the Italian padre and the English father. Even the names of their districts and islands are totally different in different dialects. The island of Sylt is called Söl, Sol, and Sal.' Each of these dialects, though it might be made out by a Frisian scholar, is unintelligible except to the peasants of each narrow district in which it prevails. What is therefore generally called the Frisian language, and described as such in Frisian

<sup>29</sup> Nea Pandora, 1859, Nos. 227, 229; Zeitschrift für vergleichende Sprachforschung, x. s. 190.

<sup>30</sup> Grimm, Geschichte der Deutschen Sprache, s. 668; Marsh, p. 379.

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grammars, is in reality but one out of many dialects, though, no doubt, the most important; and the same holds good with regard to all so-called literary languages.

Klaus Groth writes : 'The island of Frisian speech on the continent of Schleswig, between Husum and Tondern, is a very riddle and miracle in the history of language, which has not been sufficiently noticed and considered. Why should the two extreme ends only of the whole Frisian coast between Belgium and Jutland have retained their mother-speech? For the Ost-Frisians in Oldenburg speak simply Platt-Deutsch like the Westphalians and ourselves. Cirk Hinrich Stüremburg's so called Ost-Frisian dictionary, has no more right to call itself Frisian than the Bremen dictionary. Unless the whole coast has sunk into the sea, who can explain that close behind Husum, in a flat country as monotonous as a Hungarian Pussta, without any natural frontier or division, the traveller on entering the next inn may indeed be understood if he speaks High or Low German, nay, may receive to either an answer in pure German, but hears the host and his servants speak in words that sound quite strange to him? Equally strange is the frontier north of the Wiede-au, where Danish takes the place of Frisian. Who can explain by what process the language has maintained itself so far and no farther, a language with which one cannot travel above eight or ten square miles? Why should not these few thousand people have surrendered long ago this "useless remnant of an unschooled dialect," considering they learn at the same time Low and High German, or Low German and Danish! In the far-stretching straggling villages a Low German house stands sometimes alone among Frisian houses, and vice versd, and that has been going on for generations. In the Saxon families they do not find it necessary to learn Frisian, for all the neighbours can speak Low German; but in the Frisian families one does not hear German spoken except when there are German visitors. Since the seventeenth century German has hardly conquered a single house, certainly not a village.'<sup>31</sup>

It is a mistake to imagine that dialects are everywhere corruptions of the literary language. Even in England,<sup>32</sup> the local patois have many forms which are more primitive than the language of Shakespeare, and the richness of their vocabulary surpasses, on many points, that of the classical writers of any period. Dialects have always been the feeders rather than the channels of a literary language; anyhow, they are parallel streams which existed long before the time when one of them was raised to that temporary eminence which is the result of literary cultivation.

What Grimm says of the origin of dialects in

# <sup>31</sup> Illustrirte Deutsche Monatshefte, 1869, p. 330.

<sup>32</sup> Some people, who may have been taught to consider the Dorset dialect as having originated from corruption of the written English, may not be prepared to hear that it is not only a separate offspring from the Anglo-Saxon tongue, but purer, and in some cases richer, than the dialect which is chosen as the national speech.'—Barnes, *Poems in Dorset Dialect*, Preface, p. xiv.

'En général, l'hébreu a beaucoup plus de rapports avec l'arabe vulgaire qu'avec l'arabe littéral, comme j'aurai peut-être l'occasion de le montrer ailleurs, et il en résulte que ce que nous appellons l'arabe vulgaire est également un dialecte fort ancien.'--Munk, Journal asiatique, 1850, p. 229, note.

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general applies only to such as are produced by phonetic corruption. 'Dialects,' he writes, 33 'develop themselves progressively, and the more we look backward in the history of language the smaller is their number, and the less definite their features. All multiplicity arises gradually from an original unity.' So it seems, indeed, if we build our theories of language exclusively on the materials supplied by literary idioms, such as Sanskrit, Greek, Latin, and Gothic. But what were these very languages before they had been fixed by literary cultivation? Are we to suppose that in India,-a country as large almost as Europe, and divided by mountains, forests, and deserts,—one and the same language was spoken when the poets of the Veda sang their first hymns to celebrate the power of their gods? Does not Greece show us, even in its literature, a variety of local dialects, and does what we call the classical Latin pretend to be anything but one out of the many dialects of Latium, spoken by the patrician families of Rome? Dialects exist previous to the formation of literary languages, for every literary language is but one out of many dialects; nor does it at all follow that, after one of them has thus been raised to the dignity of a literary language, the others should suddenly be silenced or strangled like the brothers and play-fellows of a Turkish Sultan. On the contrary, they live on in full vigour, though in comparative obscurity; and unless the literary and courtly languages invigorate themselves by a constantly renewed intercourse with their former companions, the popular dialects will sooner or later assert their ascendancy. / Literary

33 Geschichte der Deutschen Sprache, s. 833.

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languages, such as Sanskrit, Greek, and Latin, are the royal heads in the history of language. But as political history ought to be more than a chronicle of royal dynasties, so the historian of language ought never to lose sight of those lower and popular strata of speech from which these dynasties originally sprang, and by which alone they are supported.

Here, however, lies the difficulty. How are we to trace the history of dialects? In the ancient history of language, literary dialects alone supply us with materials, whereas the very existence of spoken dialects is hardly noticed by ancient writers.

We are told, indeed, by Pliny,<sup>34</sup> that in Colchis there were more than three hundred tribes speaking different dialects; and that the Romans, in order to carry on any intercourse with the natives had to employ a hundred and thirty interpreters. This is probably an exaggeration; but we have no reason to doubt the statement of Strabo,35 who speaks of seventy tribes living together in that country, which, even now, is called 'the mountain of languages.' In modern times, again, when missionaries have devoted themselves to the study of the languages of savage and illiterate tribes, they have seldom been able to do more than to acquire one out of many dialects; and, where their exertions have been at all successful, that dialect which they had reduced to writing, and made the medium of their civilising influence,

<sup>34</sup> Pliny, vi. 5; Hervas, Catalogo, i. 118.

<sup>85</sup> Pliny depends on Timosthenes, whom Strabo declares untrustworthy (ii. p. 93, ed. Casaub). Strabo himself says of Dioskurias,  $\sigma\nu\nu\epsilon\rho\chi\epsilon\sigma\theta\alpha$  is airhv  $\epsilon\beta\delta\sigma\mu\eta\kappa\sigma\nu\tau\alpha$ , of  $\delta\epsilon\kappa\alpha$   $\tau\rho\alpha\kappa\sigma\sigma\alpha$   $\epsilon\theta\nu\eta$   $\phi\alpha\sigma\nu$   $\sigma\deltas$   $od\delta\epsilon\nu$  $\tau\omega\nu$   $\delta\nu\tau\omega\nu$   $\mu\epsilon\lambda\epsilon\iota$  (x. p. 498). The last words refer probably to Timosthenes.

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has soon assumed a kind of literary supremacy, so as to leave the rest behind as barbarous jargons. Yet, whatever is known of the dialects of savage tribes is chiefly or entirely due to missionaries; and it is much to be desired that their attention should again and again be directed to this interesting problem 'of the dialectic life of language which they alone have the means of elucidating. Gabriel Sagard, who was sent as a missionary to the Hurons in 1626, and published his Grand Voyage du Pays des Hurons, at Paris, in 1631, states that among these North American tribes hardly one village speaks the same language as another'; nay, that two families of the same village do not speak exactly the same language. And he adds what is important, that their language is changing every day, and is already so much changed that the ancient Huron language is almost entirely different from the present. During the last two hundred years, on the contrary, the languages of the Hurons and Iroquois are said not to have changed at all.<sup>36</sup> We read of missionaries<sup>37</sup> in Central America

### 36 Du Ponceau p. 110.

37 S. F. Waldeck, Lettre à M. Jomard des Environs de Palenqué, Amérique centrale. ('Il ne pouvait se servir, en 1833, d'un vocabulaire composé avec beaucoup de soin dix ans auparavant.') 'But such is the tendency of languages, amongst nations in the hunter state, rapidly to diverge from each other, that, apart from those primitive words, a much greater diversity is found in Indian languages, well known to have sprung from a common source, than in kindred European tongues. Thus, although the Minsi were only a tribe of the Delawares, and adjacent to them, even some of their numerals differed.'-Archæologia Americana, vol. ii. p. 160.

'Most men of mark have a style of their own. If the community be large, and there be many who have made language their study, it is only such innovations as have real merit that become permanent. If it be small, a single eminent man, especially where writing is unknown,
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who attempted to write down the language of savage tribes, and who compiled with great care a dictionary of all the words they could lay hold of. Returning to the same tribe after the lapse of only ten years, they found that this dictionary had become antiquated and useless. Old words had sunk to the ground, and new ones had risen to the surface; and to all outward appearance the language was completely changed.

Nothing surprised the Jesuit missionaries so much as the immense number of languages spoken by the natives of America. But this, far from being a proof of a high state of civilisation, rather showed that the various races of America had never submitted, for any length of time, to a powerful political concentration, and that they had never succeeded in founding great national empires. Hervas reduces, indeed, all the dialects of America to eleven families<sup>38</sup>—four

may make great changes. There being no one to challenge the propriety of his innovations, they become first fashionable and then lasting. The old and better vocabulary drops. If, for instance, England had been a small country, and scarce a writer of distinction in it but Carlyle, he without doubt would have much altered the language. As it is, though he has his imitators, it is little probable that he will have a perceptible influence over the common diction. Hence, where writing is unknown, if the community be broken up into small tribes, the language very rapidly changes, and for the worse. An offset from an Indian tribe in a few generations has a language unintelligible to the parent-stock. Hence the vast number of languages among the small hunting tribes of Indians in North and South America, which yet are all evidently of a common origin, for their principles are identical. The larger, therefore, the community, the more permanent the language; the smaller, the less it is permanent, and the greater the degeneracy. The smaller the community, the more confined the range of ideas, consequently the smaller the vocabulary necessary, and the falling into abeyance of many words.'-Dr. Rae, The Polynesian, No. 23, 1862.

88 Catalogo, i. 393.

for the south, and seven for the north; but this could be done only by the same careful and minute comparison which enables us to class the idioms spoken in Iceland and Ceylon as cognate dialects. For practical purposes the dialects of America are distinct dialects, and the people who speak them are mutually unintelligible.

We hear the same observations everywhere where the rank growth of dialects has been watched by intelligent observers. If we turn our eyes to Burmah, we find that the Burmese language has produced a considerable literature, and is the recognised medium of communication not only in Burmah, but likewise in Pegu and Arakan. But the intricate mountain ranges of the peninsula of the Trawaddy 39 afford a safe refuge to many independent tribes, speaking their own independent dialects; and in the neighbourhood of Manipura alone, Captain Gordon collected no less than twelve dialects. 'Some of them,' he says, ' are spoken by no more than thirty or forty families, yet so different from the rest as to be unintelligible to the nearest neighbourhood.' The Rev. N. Brown, the excellent American missionary, who bas spent his whole life in preaching the Gospel in that part of the world, tells us that some tribes who left their native village to settle in another valley became unintelligible to their forefathers in two or three generations.40

In the North of Asia the Ostiakes, as Messerschmidt informs us, though really speaking the same language everywhere, have produced so many words and forms peculiar to each tribe, that even within

<sup>29</sup> Turanian Languages, p. 114.

40 Ibid. p. 233.

the limits of twelve or twenty German miles, communication among them becomes extremely difficult. Castrèn, the heroic explorer of the languages of northern and central Asia,<sup>41</sup> assures us that some of the Mongolian dialects are actually entering into a new phase of grammatical life; and that while the literary language of the Mongolians has no terminations for the persons of the verb, that characteristic feature of Turanian speech had lately broken out in the spoken dialects of the Buriates and in the Tungusic idioms near Njertschinsk in Siberia.

One more observation of the same character from the pen of Robert Moffat, in his Missionary Scenes and Labours in Southern Africa. 'The purity and harmony of language,' he writes, 'is kept up by their pitchos or public meetings, by their festivals and ceremonies, as well as by their songs and their constant intercourse. With the isolated villagers of the desert it is far otherwise; they have no such meetings; they are compelled to traverse the wilds, often to a great distance from their native village. On such occasions fathers and mothers, and all who can bear a burden, often set out for weeks at a time, and leave their children to the care of two or three infirm old people. The infant progeny, some of whom are beginning to lisp, while others can just master a whole sentence, and those still further advanced, romping and playing together, the children of nature, through their live-long day, become habituated to a language of their own. The more voluble condescend to the less precocious; and thus, from this infant Babel, proceeds a dialect of a host of mongrel words

M Turanian Languages, p. 30.



and phrases, joined together without rule, and in the course of one generation the entire character of the language is changed.

Such is the life of language in a state of nature; 42 and, in a similar manner, we have a right to conclude languages grew up which we only know after the bit and bridle of literature were thrown over their necks. It need not be a written or classical literature to give an ascendancy to one out of many dialects, and to impart to its peculiarities an undisputed legitimacy. Speeches at pitchos or public meetings, popular ballads, national laws, religious oracles, exercise, though to a smaller extent, the same influence. They will arrest the natural flow of language in the countless rivulets of its dialects, and give a permanency to certain formations of speech which, without these external influences, could have enjoyed but an ephemeral existence. Though we cannot fully enter, at present, on the problem of the origin of language, yet this we can clearly see, that whatever the origin of language, its first tendency must have been towards an unbounded variety. To this there was, however, a natural check, which prepared from the very beginning the growth of national and literary languages. The language of the father became the language of a family; the language of a family that of a clan.43 In one and the same clan

42 See Schelling, Works, vol. i. p. 114.

<sup>43</sup> Derham mentions the case of a lady who died at the age of 93, and had given birth to 16 children, of whom 11 married. Upon her death she had 114 grandchildren, 228 great-grandchildren, and 900 great-greatgrandchildren. If we take the age of the lady upon her first marriage at 17, then she had within 76 years, 1,258 descendants.'—Lobscheid, *Engl. and Chin. Dictionary*, 1866.

different families would preserve among themselves their own familiar forms and expressions. They would add new words, some so fanciful and quaint as to be hardly intelligible to other members of the same clan. Such expressions would naturally be suppressed, as we suppress provincial peculiarities and pet words of our own, at large assemblies where all clansmen meet and are expected to take part in general discussions. But they would be cherished all the more round the fire of each tent, in proportion as the general dialect of the clan assumed a more formal character. Class dialects, too, would spring up; the dialects of servants, grooms, shepherds, and soldiers. Women would have their own household words; and the rising generation would not be long without a more racy phraseology of their own. Even we, in this literary age, and at a distance of thousands of years from those early fathers of language, do not speak at home as we speak in public. The same circumstances which give rise to the formal language of a clan, as distinguished from the dialects of families, produce, on a larger scale, the languages of a confederation of clans, of nascent colonies, of rising nationalities. Before there is a national language, there have always been hundreds of dialects in districts, towns, villages, clans, and families; and though the progress of civilisation and centralisation tends to reduce their number and to soften their features, it has not as yet annihilated them, even in our own time.

Let us now look again at what is commonly called the history, but what ought to be called, the natural growth, of language, and we shall easily see that it



consists chiefly in the play of the two principles which we have just examined, phonetic decay and dialectic regeneration or growth. Let us take the six Romance languages. It is usual to call these the daughters of Latin. I do not object to the names of parent and daughter as applied to languages; only we must not allow such apparently clear and simple terms to cover obscure and vague conceptions. Now if we call Italian the daughter of Latin, we do not mean to ascribe to Italian a new vital principle. Not a single radical element was newly created for the formation of Italian. Italian is Latin in a new form. Italian is modern Latin, or Latin ancient Italian. The names mother and daughter only mark different periods in the growth of a language substantially the same. To speak of Latin dying in giving birth to her offspring is again pure mythology, and it would be easy to prove that Latin was a living language long after Italian had learnt to run alone. Only let us clearly see what we mean by The classical Latin is one out of many Latin. dialects spoken by the Aryan inhabitants of Italy. It was the dialect of Latium, in Latium the dialect of Rome, at Rome the dialect of the patricians. It was fixed by Livius Andronicus, Ennius, Nævius, Cato, and Lucretius, polished by the Scipios, Hortensius, and Cicero. It was the language of a restricted class, of a political party, of a literary set. Before their time, the language of Rome must have changed and fluctuated considerably. Polybius tells us (iii. 22), that the best-informed Romans could not make out without difficulty the language of the ancient treaties between Rome and Carthage. Horace

admits (Ep. ii. 1, 86), that he could not understand the old Salian poems, and he hints that no one else could. Quintilian (i. 6, 40) says, that the Salian priests themselves could hardly understand their sacred hymns. If the plebeians had obtained the upperhand instead of the patricians, Latin would have been very different from what it is in Cicero, and we know that even Cicero, having been brought up at Arpinum, had to give up some of his provincial peculiarities, such as the dropping of the final s, when he began to mix in fashionable society, and had to write for his new patrician friends.44 After having been established as the language of legislation, religion, literature, and general civilisation, the classical Latin dialect became stationary and stagnant. It could not grow, because it was not allowed to change or to deviate from its classical correctness. It was haunted by its own ghost. Literary dialects, or what are commonly called classical languages, pay for their temporary greatness by inevitable decay. They are like artificial lakes at the side of great rivers. They form reservoirs of what was once living and running speech, but they are no longer carried on by the main current. At times it may seem as if the whole stream of language was absorbed by these lakes, and we can hardly trace the small rivulets which run on in the main bed. But if lower down, that is to say, later in history, we meet again with a new body of stationary language,

<sup>44</sup> Quintilian, ix. 4. 'Nam neque Lucilium putant uti eadem (s) ultima, cum dicit Serenu fuit, et Dignu loco. Quin etiam Cicero in Oratore plures antiquorum tradit sic locutos.' In some phrases the final s was omitted in conversation; e. g. *abin* for abisne, *viden* for videsne, *opu'st* for opus est, *conabere* for conaberis.

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forming or formed, we may be sure that its tributaries were those very rivulets which for a time were almost lost from our sight. Or it may be more accurate to compare a classical literary idiom to the frozen surface of a river, brilliant and smooth, but stiff and cold. It is mostly by political commotions that this surface of the more polite and cultivated speech is broken and carried away by the waters rising underneath. It is during times when the higher classes are either crushed in religious and social struggles, or mix again with the lower classes to repel foreign invasion; when literary occupations are discouraged, palaces burnt, monasteries pillaged, and seats of learning destroyed-it is then that the popular, or, as they are called, the vulgar dialects, which had formed a kind of undercurrent, rise beneath the crystal surface of the literary language, and sweep away, like the waters in spring, the cumbrous formations of a bygone age. In more peaceful times, a new and popular literature springs up in a language which seems to have been formed by conquests or revolutions, but which, in reality, had been growing up long before, and was only brought out, ready made, by historical events. From this point of view we can see that no literary language can ever be said to have been the mother of another language. As soon as a language loses its unbounded capability of change, its carelessness about what it throws away, and its readiness in always supplying instantaneously the wants of mind and heart, its natural life is changed into a merely artificial existence. It may still live on for a long time, but while it seems to be the leading shoot, it is in reality

but a broken and withering branch, slowly falling from the stock from which it sprang. The sources of Italian are not to be found in the classical literature of Rome, but in the popular dialects of Italy. English did not spring from the Anglo-Saxon of Wessex only, but from the dialects spoken in every part of Great Britain, distinguished by local peculiarities and (modified at different times by the influence of Latin, Danish, Norman, French, and other foreign elements. Some of the local dialects of England, as spoken at the present day, are of great importance for a critical study of English; and a French prince, now living in this country, deserves great credit for collecting what can still be saved of these dialects. Hindustani is not the daughter of Sanskrit as we find it in the Vedas, or in the later literature of the Brahmans: it is a branch of the living speech of India, springing from the same stem from which Sanskrit sprang, when it first assumed its literary independence.

While thus endeavouring to place the character of dialects, as the feeders of language, in a clear light, I may appear to some of my hearers to have exaggerated their importance. No doubt, if my object had been different, I might easily have shown that, without literary cultivation, language would never have acquired that settled character which is essential for the communication of thought; that it would never have fulfilled its highest purpose, but have remained the mere jargon of shy troglodytes. But as the importance of literary languages is not likely to be overlooked, whereas the importance of dialects, as far as they sustain the growth of language, had

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never been pointed out, I thought it better to dwell on the advantages which literary languages derive from dialects, rather than on the benefits which dialects owe to literary languages. Besides, our chief object to-day was to explain the growth of language, and for that purpose it is impossible to exaggerate the importance of the constant undergrowth of dialects. (Remove a language from its native soil, tear it away from the dialects which are its feeders, and you arrest at once its natural growth. There will still be the progress of phonetic corruption, but no longer the restoring influence of dialectic regeneration. The language which the Norwegian refugees brought to Iceland has remained almost the same for seven centuries, whereas, on its native soil, and surrounded by local dialects, it has grown into two distinct languages, the Swedish and Danish. In the eleventh century, the languages of Sweden, Denmark, and Iceland are supposed<sup>45</sup> to have been identical; nor can we appeal to foreign conquest, or to the mixture of foreign with native blood, in order to account for the changes which the language underwent in Sweden and Denmark, but not in Iceland.46

We can hardly form an idea of the unbounded resources of dialects. When literary languages have stereotyped one general term, their dialects will supply fifty, though each with its own special shade of meaning. If new combinations of thought are

<sup>45</sup> Marsh, *Lectures*, pp. 133, 368.

<sup>46</sup> 'There are fewer local peculiarities of form and articulation in our vast extent of territory (U.S.), than on the comparatively narrow soil of Great Britain.'—Marsh, *Lectures*, p. 667.

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evolved in the progress of society, dialects will readily supply the required names from the store of their so-called superfluous words. There are not only local and provincial, but also class dialects. There is a dialect of shepherds, of sportsmen, of soldiers, of farmers.<sup>47</sup> I suppose there are few persons here present who could tell the exact meaning of a horse's poll, crest, withers, dock, hamstring, cannon, pastern, coronet, arm, jowl, and muzzle. Where the literary language speaks of the young of all sorts of animals, farmers, shepherds, and sportsmen would be ashamed to use so general a term. 'The idiom of nomads,' as Grimm says, ' contains an abundant wealth of manifold expressions for sword and weapons, and for the different stages in the life of their cattle. In a more highly cultivated language these expressions become burthensome and superfluous. But in a peasant's mouth, the bearing, calving, falling, and killing of almost every animal

47 ' Our fine dictionary words are mere dead sounds to the uneducated, which fail to awaken in their minds any living and breathing reality. So they call up new ones for themselves, mostly of a grotesque order, certainly, but as full of life and spirit as a brigade of shoe-blacks. With them a thing is not "overpowering," but it is a "stunner;" it is not "excellent," but " a regular fizzer ;" and it does not "proceed satisfactorily," but it "goes like one o'clock" (i.e. with as little delay as a workman gets off to dinner when the clock strikes one). With the same love of grotesque imagery, the navvy calls bacon with streaks in it "tiger;" and the Parisian cabman speaks of taking a glass of absinthe, in allusion to its green tinge, as "choking a parrot." To say that this is not poetry, because it is vulgar, is very much like saying that a block of coal isn't carbon, because it is not a diamond. A great deal of the imagery in the Old Norse Sagas is as really slang as anything in the speech of a London street boy or a member of Congress.) To take a single instance, an Icelandic poet speaks of the beginning of battle as the time "when the black legs begin to swing ;" the said black legs being nothing more or less than the handles of the battle-axes.'

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has its own peculiar term, as the sportsman delights in calling the gait and members of game by different names. The eye of these shepherds, who live in the free air, sees further, their ear hears more sharply why should their speech not have gained that living truth and variety?'<sup>48</sup>

Thus Dame Juliana Berners, lady prioress of the nunnery of Sopwell in the fifteenth century, the reputed author of the Book of St. Albans,49 informs us that we must not use names of multitudes promiscuously, but we are to say, 'a congregacyon of people, a hoost of men, a felyshyppynge of yomen, and a bevy of ladyes; we must speak of a herde of hartys, swannys, cranys, or wrennys, a sege of herons or bytourys, a muster of pecockys, a watche of nyghtyngalys, a flyghte of doves, a claterynge of choughes, a pryde of lyons, a slewthe of beerys, a gagle of geys, a skulke of foxes, a sculle of frerys, a pontifycalyte of prelates, a bomynable syght of monkes, a dronkenshyp of coblers,' and so of other human and brute assemblages. In like manner in dividing game for the table, the animals were not carved, but 'a dere was broken, a gose reryd, chekyn frusshed, a cony unlacyd, a crane dysplayed, a curlewe unioyntyd, a quayle wynggyd, a swanne lyfte,

<sup>49</sup> Many instances are given in Pott's *Etym. Forsch.* pp. 128-169. Grimm, *Geschichte der Deutschen Sprache*, p. 25, 'Wir sagen : die stute fohlt, die kuh kalbt, das schaf lammt, die geiss zickelt, die sau frischt (von frisching, frischling), die hündin welft (M. H. D. erwirfet das welf); nicht anders heisst es französisch la chèvre chèvrote, la brebis agnèle, la truie porcèle, la louve louvète, etc.'

<sup>49</sup> 'The Book containing the Treatises of Hawking, Hunting, Coat-Armour, Fishing, and Blasing of Arms, as printed at Westminster by Wynkyn de Worde; the year of the incarnation of our Lord 1486.' (Reprinted by Harding and Wright: London, 1810.)

a lambe sholderyd, a heron dysmembryd, a pecocke dysfygured, a samon chynyd, a hadoke sydyd, a sole loynyd, and a breme splayed.'

What, however, I wanted particularly to point out in this lecture is this, that neither of the causes which produce the growth, or, according to others, constitute the history of language, is under the control of man. The phonetic decay of language is not the result of mere accident; it is governed by definite laws, as we shall see when we come to consider the principles of comparative grammar. But these laws were not made by man; on the contrary, man had to obey them without knowing of their existence.

In the growth of the modern Romance languages out of Latin, we can perceive not only a general tendency to simplification, not only a natural disposition to avoid the exertion which the pronunciation of certain consonants, and still more, of groups of consonants, entails on the speaker : but we can see distinct laws for each of the Romance dialects, which enable us to say, that in French the Latin patrem would naturally grow into the modern père. The final m is always dropped in the Romance dialects, and it was dropped even in Latin.) Thus we get patre instead of patrem. Now, a Latin t between two vowels in such words as pater is invariably suppressed in French. This is a law, and by means of it we can discover at once that catena must become chaine; fata, a later feminine representation of the old neuter fatum, fée; pratum, a meadow, pré. From pratum we derive prataria, which in French becomes prairie ; from fatum, fataria, the English fairy. Thus every Latin participle in atus, like amatus, loved, must end in French

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in é. The same law then changed patre (pronounced patere) into paere, or père; it changed matrem into mère, fratrem into frère. These changes take place gradually but irresistibly; and, what is most important, they are completely beyond the reach or control of the free will of man.

Dialectic growth again is still more beyond the control of individuals. For although a poet may knowingly and intentionally invent a new word, its acceptance depends on circumstances which defy individual interference. There are some changes in the grammar which at first sight might seem to be mainly attributable to the caprice of the speaker. Granted, for instance, that the loss of the Latin terminations was the natural result of a more careless pronunciation; granted that the modern sign of the French genitive du is a natural corruption of the Latin de illo-yet the choice of de, instead of any other word, to express the genitive, the choice of illo, instead of any other pronoun, to express the article, might seem to prove that man acted as a free agent in the formation of language. But it is not so. No single individual could deliberately have set to work in order to abolish the old Latin genitive, and to replace it by the periphrastic compound de illo. It was necessary that the inconvenience of having no distinct or distinguishable sign of the genitive should have been felt by the people who spoke a vulgar Latin dialect. It was necessary that the same people should have used the preposition de in such a manner as to lose sight of its original local meaning altogether (for instance, una de multis, in Horace, i.e. one out of many). It was necessary, again, that the same people

### INFANTINE GRAMMAR.

should have felt the want of an article, and should have used *illo* in numerous expressions, where it seemed to have lost its original pronominal power. It was necessary that all these conditions should be given, before one individual, and after him another, and after him hundreds and thousands and millions, could use *de illo* as the exponent of the genitive; and change it into the Italian *dello*, *del*, and the French *du*.

The attempts of single grammarians and purists to improve language are perfectly bootless; and we shall probably hear no more of schemes to prune languages of their irregularities. It is very likely, however, that the gradual disappearance of irregular declensions and conjugations is due, in literary as well as in illiterate languages, to the dialect of children. The language of children is more regular than our own. I have heard children say badder and baddest, instead of worse and worst. In Urdú the old sign of the possessive was rá, re, rí. Now it is ká, ke, kí, except in hamárá, my, our, tumhárá, your, and a few other words, all pronouns. Dr. Fitz-Edward Hall informs me that he heard children in India use hamká and tumká. Children will say, I gaed, I coomd, I catched ; and it is this sense of grammatical justice, this generous feeling of what ought to be, which in the course of centuries has eliminated many so-called irregular forms. Thus the auxiliary verb in Latin was very irregular. If sumus is we are, and sunt, they are, the second person, you are, ought to have been, at least according to the strict logic of children, sutis. This, no doubt, sounds very barbarous to a classical ear accustomed to estis. And we see how French, for instance, has strictly preserved the Latin forms in nous

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sommes, vous étes, ils sont. But in Spanish we find somos, sois, son ; and this sois stands for sutis. We find similar traces of grammatical levelling in the Italian siamo, siete, sono, formed according to the analogy of regular verbs such as crediamo, credete, credono. The second person sei, instead of es, is likewise infantine grammar.<sup>50</sup> So are the Walachian súntemu, we are, súnteti, you are, which owe their origin to the third person plural súnt, they are. And what shall we say of such monsters as essendo, a gerund derived on principles of strict justice from an infinitive essere, like credendo from credere ! However, we need not be surprised, for we find similar barbarisms in English. In Anglo-Saxon, the third person plural, sind, has by a false analogy been transferred to the first and second persons, and has taken a new termination on, which properly belongs to the plural of the imperfect. In the Old Northumbrian dialect the first person plural has been used in the second and third, with the same termination of the imperfect in on :--

English Nor	thumbrian	<sup>51</sup> Old Norse	Anglo-Saxon		Gothic.
we are	aron	ër-um	sind	(on), beo-ð	sijum <sup>52</sup>
you are	aron	ër-uð	sind	(on), beo-ð	sijuth
they are <sup>53</sup>	aron	ër-u	sind	(on), beo-ð	sind

<sup>50</sup> Similar formations, occurring in the dialects of France, have been collected by le Comte de Jaubert, in his *Glossaire du Centre de la France*, second edition, p. xii.

<sup>51</sup> Grimm, Geschichte der Deutschen Sprache, s. 666.

<sup>52</sup> The Gothic forms *sijum*, *sijuth*, are not organic. They are either derived by false analogy from the third person plural *sind*, or a new base *sij* was derived from the subjunctive *sijau*, Sanskrit syam. See Leo Meyer, *Die Gothische Sprache*, p. 496.

<sup>53</sup> The Scandinavian origin of these English forms has been well explained by Dr. Lottner, Transactions of the Philological Society, 1861, Dialectically we hear *I be*, instead of *I am*; and if Chartism should ever gain the upper hand, we must be prepared for newspapers adopting such forms as *I says*, *I knows*.

The following remarks, copied from an American paper, and signed *Marcel*, describe the changes which English has experienced as spoken by the Negroes on the Southern plantations. They throw much light on the manner in which languages change, particularly languages adopted by a less from a more civilised race :—

<sup>•</sup>Ordinary Negro talk, such as we find in books, has very little resemblance to that of the Negroes of Port Royal, who were so isolated that they seem to have formed a dialect of their own. Indeed, the different plantations have their own peculiarities, and adepts profess to be able to determine, by the speech of a Negro, what part of an island he belongs to, or even, in some cases, his plantation. My observations were confined to a few plantations at the northern end of St. Helena Island.

"With these people the process of "Phonetic Decay" appears to have gone as far, perhaps, as is possible, and with it the extremest simplification of etymology and syntax. The usual softening of th and v into d and b is observed among them; likewise a

p. 63. The third person plural, under the form of aran instead of aron, is found in Kemble's Codex Diplomaticus Ævi Saxonici, vol. i. p. 235 (A.D. 805-831). As the inroads of the Danes begin about 787, aran could hardly have been borrowed from them! Aron does not occur in Layamon. It is found in the Ormulum as arrn; in Chaucer it has been met with twice only, though, soon after, it became the generally recognised form of the plural. See Gesenius, De Ling. Chaucer. p. 72; Monicke, On the 'Ormulum,' p. 35.



frequent interchange of v and w; as veeds and vell for weeds and well; "De wile' sinner may return" (for vilest). This last illustrates also the habit of clipping syllables, which they do constantly: as lee' for little; plant'shun for plantation. The lengthening of short vowels is illustrated in both these words:—a, for instance, never has our short sound, but always the European sound. The following hymn illustrates these points:—

> "Meet, O Lord, on de milk-white horse, An' de nineteen wile [vial] in his han', Drop on, drop on de crown on my head, An' rolly in my Jesus' arm. E'en [in] dat mornin' all day, When Jesus de Chris' bin born."

# 'The same hymn, particularly the second verse,

"Moon went into de poplar tree, An' star went into blood,"

(the figures evidently taken from the book of Revelations,) is a fair specimen of the turn which scriptural ideas and phraseology receive in their untutored minds. It should be observed, by the way, that the songs do not show the full extent of the debasement of the language. Being generally taken, in phrases, from Scripture, or from the hymns which they have heard sung by the whites, they retain words and grammatical forms which one rarely hears in conversation. The common speech, in its strange words and pronunciation, abbreviations, and rhythmical modulation, sounds to a stranger like a foreign language.

'These strange words are, however, less numerous



than one would imagine. There is yedde for hear, as in that sweetest of their songs :—

"O my sin is forgiben and my soul set free, An' I yedde from heaben to-day."

There is sh' um, a corruption of see 'em, applied to all genders and both numbers. There is "huddy" (howdo?), pronounced "how-dy" by the purists among them. It is not irreverence, but affectionate devotion, that is expressed in the simple song :--

"In de mornin' when I rise, Tell my Jesus huddy O, Wash my han' in de mornin' glory," etc.

Studdy (steady) is used to denote any continued or customary action. "He studdy 'buse an' cuss me," complained one of the school-children of another. This word cuss, by the way, is used by them with great latitude, to denote any offensive language. "He cuss me, 'git out,'" was the charge of one adult against another. "Ahvy [Abby: in this case the b had become v] do cuss me," was the serious-sounding but trifling accusation made by one little girl against her seat-mate. Both they seldom use; generally " all two," or emphatically, "all-two boff togedder." One for alone. "Me one an' God," was the answer of an old man in Charleston when I asked him whether he escaped alone from his plantation. "Heaben 'nuff for me one " [i.e. I suppose, "for my part"], says one of their songs. Talk is one of their most common words, where we should use speak or mean. "Talk me, sir ?" asks a boy who is not sure whether you mean him or his comrade. "Talk lick, sir! nuffin but lick," was the answer to the question whether a particular master used to whip his slaves.

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• The letters n and y are often thrown in euphonically. I can only remember at this moment n before a long u as n'Europe, n'United States, no n'use; but I think it is used with other vowels. Of y also I can only recall one instance, which I will give presently. The most curious, however, of all their linguistic peculiarities is, I think, the following: It is well known that the Negroes all through the South speak of their elders as "uncle" and "aunt;" from a feeling of politeness, I do not doubt;---it seemed disrespectful to use the bare name, and from Mr. and Mrs. they were debarred. On the Sea Islands similar feel-. ing has led to the use of cousin towards their equals. Abbreviating this after their fashion, they get co'n or co' (the vowel sound ŭ of cousin) as the common title when they speak of one another. C' Abram, Co' Robin, Co'n Emma, C' Isaac, Co' Bob, are specimens of what one hears every day. I have heard Bro' (brother) used in the same way, but seldom; as in the song,

> "Bro' Bill, you ought to know my name, My name is written in de book ob life."

'I come now to the subject of grammar, upon which I might almost be entitled to repeat a very old joke, and say that there is no grammar; for there probably is no speech that has less inflection than that of these Negroes. There is no distinction of case, number, tense, or voice, hardly of gender. Perhaps I am wrong in saying that there is no number, for this distinction is made in pronouns, and some of the most intelligent will, perhaps, occasionally make it in nouns. But "Sandy hat" would generally mean indifferently Sandy's hat or hats; "dem cow" is plural, "dat cow" singular; "nigger house "means the collection of Negro houses, and is, I suppose, really plural. As to cases, I do not know that I ever heard a regular possessive, but they have begun to develop one of their own, which is a very curious illustration of the way inflectional forms have probably grown up in other languages. If they wish to make the fact of possession at all emphatic or distinct, they use the whole word "own." Thus, they will say "Mosey house;" but if asked whose house that is, the answer is "Mosey own." "Co' Molsy y'own," was the odd reply made by a little girl to the question whose child she was carrying; Co' is title; y euphonic.

'Nearly all the pronouns exist. Perhaps us does not, we being generally in its place. She and her being rare, him is the usual pronoun of the third person singular, for all genders and cases. "Him lick we" was the complaint of some small children against a large girl. Um is still more common, as objective case, for all genders and numbers; as Sh 'um (see 'em).

'It is too much to say that the verbs have no inflections; but it is true that these have nearly disappeared. Ask a boy where he is going, and the answer is "gwine crick for ketch crab,"—"going into the creek to catch crabs" (for being generally used instead of to, to denote purpose); ask another where the missing boy is, and the answer is the same, with gone instead of gwine. Present time is made definite by the auxiliary do or da, as in the refrains "Bell da ring," "Jericho da worry me."<sup>54</sup> Past time is ex-

<sup>54</sup> See J. J. Thomas, Theory and Practice of Creole Grammar, 1869; and the same author's remarks on Trübner's Record, December, 1870.

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pressed by *done*, as in other parts of the South. The passive is rarely, if ever, indicated. "Ole man call John," is the answer when you ask who is such and such a person. "Him mix wid him own fat," was the description given of a paste made of bruised ground-nuts, the oil of the nut furnishing moisture."

These various influences, under which language everywhere grows and changes, are like the waves and winds which carry deposits to the bottom of the sea, where they accumulate and rise, and grow, and at last appear on the surface of the earth as a stratum, perfectly intelligible in all its component parts, not produced by an inward principle of growth, nor regulated by invariable laws of nature; yet, on the other hand, by no means the result of mere accident, or the production of lawless and uncontrolled agencies. We cannot be careful enough in the use of our words. Strictly speaking, neither history nor growth is applicable to the changes of the shifting surface of the earth. History applies to the actions of free agents; growth to the natural unfolding of organic beings. We speak, however, of the growth of the crust of the earth, and we know what we mean by it; and it is in this sense, but not in the sense of growth as applied to a tree, that we have a right to speak of the growth of language. If that modification which takes place in time by continually new combinations of given elements, which withdraws itself from the control of free agents, and can in the end be recognised as the result of natural agencies, may be called growth; and, if so defined, we may apply it to the growth of the crust of the earth; the same word, in



the same sense, will be applicable to language, and will justify us in removing the science of language from the pale of the historical to that of the physical sciences.

There is another objection which we have to consider, and the consideration of which will again help us to understand more clearly the real character of language. The great periods in the growth of the earth which have been established by geological research are brought to their close, or very nearly so, when we discover the first vestiges of human life, and when the history of man, in the widest sense of the word, begins. The periods in the growth of language, on the contrary, begin and run parallel with the history of man. (It has been said, therefore, that although language may not be merely a work of art, it would, nevertheless, be impossible to understand the life and growth of any language without an historical knowledge of the times in which that language grew up.) We ought to know, it is said, whether a language which is to be analysed under the microscope of comparative grammar, has been growing up wild, among wild tribes without a literature, oral or written, in poetry or in prose; or whether it has received the cultivation of poets, priests, and orators, and retained the impress of a classical age. Again, it is only from the annals of political history that we can learn whether one language has come in contact with another, how long this contact has lasted, which of the two nations stood higher in civilisation, which was the conquering and which the conquered, which of the two established the laws, the religion, and the arts of the country, and which

produced the greatest number of national teachers, popular poets, and successful demagogues. All these questions are of a purely historical character, and the science which has to borrow so much from historical sources, might well be considered an anomaly in the sphere of the physical sciences.

Now, in answer to this, it cannot be denied that among the physical sciences none is so intimately connected with the history of man as the science of But a similar connection, though in a language. less degree, can be shown to exist between other branches of physical research and the history of In zoology, for instance, it is of some imman. portance to know at what particular period of history, in what country, and for what purposes certain animals were tamed and domesticated. In ethnology, a science, we may remark in passing, quite distinct from the science of language, it would be difficult to account for the Caucasian stamp impressed on the Mongolian race in Hungary, or on the Tatar race in Turkey, unless we knew from written documents the migrations and settlements of the Mongolic and Tataric tribes in Europe. A botanist, again, comparing several specimens of rye, would find it difficult to account for their respective peculiarities, unless he knew that in some parts of the world this plant has been cultivated for centuries, whereas in other regions, as, for instance, in Mount Caucasus, it is still allowed to grow wild. Plants have their own countries, like races; and the presence of the cucumber in Greece, the orange and cherry in Italy, the potato in England, and the vine at the Cape, can be fully explained by the historian only. The more

## LANGUAGE INDEPENDENT OF HISTORICAL EVENTS. 83

intimate relation, therefore, between the history of language and the history of man is not sufficient to exclude the science of language from the circle of the physical sciences.

Nay, it might be shown that, if strictly defined, the science of language can declare itself completely independent of history. If we speak of the language of England, we ought, no doubt, to know something of the political history of the British Isles, in order to understand the present state of that language. Its history begins with the early Britons, who spoke a Celtic dialect; it carries us on to the Saxon settlements, the Danish invasions, the Norman conquest: and we see how each of these political events contributed to the formation of the character of the language. The language of England may be said to have been in succession Celtic, Saxon, Norman, and -English. But if we speak of the history of the English language, we enter on totally different ground. The English language was never Celtic, the Celtic never grew into Saxon, nor the Saxon into Norman, nor the Norman into English. The history of the Celtic language runs on to the present day. It matters not whether it be spoken by all the inhabitants of the British Isles, or only by a small minority in Wales, Ireland, and Scotland. A language, as long as it is spoken by anybody, lives and has its substantive existence. The last old woman that spoke Cornish, and to whose memory a monument has been raised at Paul, represented by herself alone the ancient language of Cornwall. A Celt may become an Englishman, Celtic and English blood may be mixed : and who could tell at the present



day the exact proportion of Celtic and Saxon blood in the population of England? (But languages are never mixed.) It is indifferent by what name the language spoken in the British Islands be called, whether English or British or Saxon; to the student of language English is Teutonic, and nothing but Teutonic. The physiologist may protest, and point out that in many instances the skull, or the bodily habitat of the English language, is of a Celtic type; the genealogist may protest and prove that the arms of many an English family are of Norman origin; the student of language must follow his own way. Historical information as to an early substratum of Celtic inhabitants in Britain, as to Saxon, Danish, and Norman invasions, may be useful to him. But though every record were burned, and every skull mouldered, the English language, as spoken by any ploughboy, would reveal its own history, if analysed according to the rules of comparative grammar. Without the help of history, we should see that English is Teutonic, that like Dutch and Frisian it belongs to the Low-German branch; that this branch, together with the High-German, Gothic, and Scandinavian branches, constitute the Teutonic class; that this Teutonic class, together with the Celtic, Slavonic, the Hellenic, Italic, Iranic, and Indic classes, constitute the great Indo-European or Aryan family of speech. In the English dictionary the student of the science of language can detect, by his own tests, Celtic, Norman, Greek, and Latin ingredients, but not a single drop of foreign blood has entered into the organic system of English speech. The grammar, the blood and soul of the language, is as

pure and unmixed in English as spoken in the British Isles, as it was when spoken on the shores of the German ocean by the Angles, Saxons, and Juts of the continent.

In thus considering and refuting the objections which have been, or might be, made against the admission of the science of language into the circle of the physical sciences, we have arrived at some results which it may be useful to recapitulate before we proceed further. We saw that whereas philology treats language only as a means, comparative philology chooses language as the object of scientific inquiry. It is not the study of one language, but of many, and in the end of all, which forms the aim of this new science. Nor is the language of Homer of greater interest, in the scientific treatment of human speech, than the dialect of the Hottentots.

We saw, secondly, that after the first practical acquisition and careful analysis of the facts and forms of any language, the next and most important step is the classification of all the varieties of human speech, and that only after this has been accomplished would it be safe to venture on the great questions which underlie all physical research, the questions as to the what, the whence, and the why of language.

We saw, thirdly, that there is a distinction between what is called history and growth. We determined the true meaning of growth, as applied to language, and perceived how it was independent of the caprice of man, and governed by laws that could be discovered by careful observation, and be traced back in the end to higher laws which govern the organs

both of human thought, and of the human voice. Though admitting that the science of language was more intimately connected than any other physical science with what is called the political history of man, we found that, strictly speaking, our science might well dispense with that auxiliary, and that languages can be analysed and classified on their own evidence, particularly on the strength of their grammatical articulation, without any reference to the individuals, families, clans, tribes, nations, or races by whom they are or have been spoken.

In the course of these considerations, we had to lay down two axioms, to which we shall frequently have to appeal in the progress of our investigations. The first declares grammar to be the most essential element, and therefore the ground of classification in all languages which have produced a definite grammatical articulation; the second denies the possibility of a mixed language.

These two axioms are, in reality, but one, as we shall see when we examine them more closely. There is hardly a language which in one sense may not be called a mixed language. No nation or tribe was ever so completely isolated as not to admit the importation of a certain number of foreign words. In some instances these imported words have changed the whole native aspect of the language, and have even acquired a majority over the native element. Thus Turkish is a Turanian dialect; its grammar is purely Tataric or Turanian;—yet at the present moment the Turkish language, as spoken by the higher ranks at Constantinople, is so entirely overgrown with Persian and Arabic words, that a common

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