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ART. I.—*Francis Bacon, of Verulam. Realistic Philosophy, and its Age.* By KUNO FISCHER. Translated from the German, by John Oxenford. London, 1857.

WE know of no better exposition of the merits and defects of the Baconian philosophy than this, and it is translated in a free, luminous, and philosophical style. We have no intention to criticise it, or even to sketch a summary of its contents; those who have a taste for the subject, and have not entirely mastered it, ought to read the book. The merits of the Inductive method are proved by the immense additions it has made to the physical sciences since it has been brought into distinct practice. Its defects, as it was limited by Bacon and understood by his followers, may be seen in its influence on the mental sciences as developed or degraded by Hobbes, Locke, Berkeley, Hume, Bayle, Voltaire, Condillac, Holbach, Helvetius, and others of the materialist school.

The natural order of the acquisition of knowledge is, first, that of the phenomena of physical nature around us, and afterwards that of our mental nature; and Bacon fell so far into this order that he unduly fastened the intellect to the leading-strings of physical nature, and restricted all human knowledge to our external experience, and allowed to the mind no inhe-

have transformed a rude and semi-barbarous people into one of the great powers of Europe and the world.

Alexander I., who died in 1825, was perhaps the best of the Russian emperors. He industriously sought the good of his people, favoured the circulation of the Scriptures among them, and is supposed to have been a truly pious man. His namesake (Alexander II.), the present Emperor, is thought to resemble him in some respects. Like him, he favours the circulation of the Scriptures; and he has commended himself to the consideration of all good men by the emancipation of millions of serfs.

One of the prelates of the Russian church is distinguishing himself, at the present time, by his untiring missionary labours. I refer to the Archbishop of Kamtschatka. Not in cars and steamers, but in rough canoes, and on reindeer sledges, he traverses the long chain of Pagan islands which unite the Asiatic and American continents, and is leading many of the besotted natives to a knowledge of Christian truth. Long may he live to pursue successfully these labours of love, and may many others be raised up to copy his example, and to call him blessed. And may this latest branch of the ancient oriental church, divesting itself of formality and superstition, and bringing forth much fruit unto holiness, yet prove itself to be a living branch of the living vine.

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*By W. W. Dwight*

ART. III.—*Modern Philology. Its Discoveries, History, and Influence; with Maps, Tabular Views, and an Index.* By BENJAMIN W. DWIGHT. First Series, 8vo, pp. 360. Second Series, pp. 554. New York: Charles Scribner, 1864.

NOTHING in the nature of man is more wonderful than the harmony between his physical and spiritual constitution, and the influence exerted by the one upon the other. The soul is shut up in this material casing, excluded from all direct contact with anything external. The bodily organs are its only medium of communication with the world without; and in fact the soul

appears to come first to the consciousness of its own existence through the impressions thus received. It is most interesting to observe how these organs are contrived to accomplish not only the physical ends which they are designed to answer, but in addition, to meet the wants of the soul, promote the development of its latent powers, and give expression to its hidden workings.

The organs of speech and hearing, for example, are purely material instruments, constructed with reference to the laws of sound, as created and propagated in the subtle medium of the atmosphere. The inferior animals have similar organs for the production of sounds or the utterance of cries which accomplish ends suited to the wants of their being. But it would have been impossible to imagine, prior to experience, what extensive and varied uses they could be made to subserve on behalf of man. With a slight modification adapting them to the utterance and ready perception of articulate sound, intelligent and intelligible speech has become possible. Without this, man would have been consigned to perpetual and hopeless imbecility. His intellectual powers and capacities never could have been unfolded. His creation would have been a failure. But, by a signal instance of far-reaching spiritual consequences suspended upon a simple mechanical contrivance, possessed of this, man becomes man. The development of reason, civilization, art, and science, are the sublime sequences.

When in early infancy we began to learn the meanings and use of words, and to make our first rude attempts at their pronunciation, our education was begun, and in the most effective manner. We were learning to think, for speech implies thought. Language is not learned by rote. The process of its acquisition is not the mere retention in the memory of so many arbitrary symbols of thought put together by equally arbitrary rules. It is not as when a horse or a dog is trained by forced association to connect a given sense with particular sounds, or as when a parrot is made mechanically to imitate them. A child is taught to speak by awaking the faculty of language in his soul. The utterance of an idea or of an emotion becomes intelligible to him only as it excites the same within him. The effort to comprehend what is said to him,

exercises and strengthens his mind. Every one who approaches him, though it be but to interest or amuse him for a moment, becomes his teacher. However simple and childish the expressions used for his entertainment, they are yet the offspring of another mind. They contain the forms of thought cast in the mould of maturer powers, and they can only be understood by the exercise of thought. The very notion of language involves classification, comparison, reflection. The power of abstraction is called into exercise. It becomes necessary to refer individuals to the species to which they belong, to distinguish between acts in themselves considered, and the various circumstances of time, mode, and person, to separate qualities from substances, to conceive of the different degrees of the former and the relations of the latter, to perform all those mental operations, which are involved in a correct appreciation of whatever belongs to the derivation, inflection, and collocation of words. The most cursory review of what is implied in the acquisition of a language, and of the processes of thought necessary to accomplish it, will reveal how large a stock of ideas must be amassed, what an insight must be gained into their several relations, and what an amount of mental power and discipline must be acquired.

The use of language further demands besides the ability to understand what is spoken, the ability to speak ourselves. The former renders the mind active, by compelling it to echo and repeat to itself the thoughts of others; the latter requires it to originate and express its own. The impulse to communicate to others what is passing within us, is instinctive and strong, and this not only when required by some necessity, or by the desire to compass some particular end, but without any more definite motive than the pleasure of saying what we think or expressing what we feel. And this impulse is of incalculable advantage in the unfolding of our powers. He who never speaks, will think but little. The fountain must be allowed to flow out, or it will cease to flow altogether. A person must utter his ideas if he would come into the complete mastery and possession of them; he must put them into a form intelligible by others, if he would arrive at a full comprehension of them himself. In intellectual things the law is of rigorous application. He that scattereth

increaseth; and withholding tendeth to poverty. The mind must give off light and heat, or it can never be warmed and illumined itself. We have no clear conception even of our own inward states until we are roused to contemplate them, and put them into a definite and objective form by translating them into words. Notions which we have never sought to express in this precise and tangible manner may float vaguely and indistinctly in the mind; but they will not be relieved of this dim and misty character until they are interpreted in language either by others or ourselves. Language is the vehicle of thought as well as the medium of its expression. It is by it that we communicate with ourselves, as well as with others.

This intimate connection between language and our inward exercises discloses a fresh measure of the influence which it has upon the development of the human mind. It not only, as we have seen, gives its earliest stimulus to the power of thought, by teaching the child both to reproduce the conceptions of others and to express his own, but it supplies the permanent mould in which his thoughts are cast for ever afterwards. We came into being surrounded by those who are in the constant and familiar use of language, to whose consciousness it has not the character of arbitrary symbols, representing something different from themselves, or of formal rules determined by some external standard. It is interwoven with every operation of their minds. It is their souls' natural and spontaneous outgoing. They know no difference between the expression they utter and the thought they entertain. One is not only the precise counterpart of the other; but they are, as far as consciousness can judge, identical. Language is simply outspoken thought, the mind unfolding itself. Now, as we possess the same mental and physical organization with those by whom we are surrounded, disposing us originally to the same inward exercises and the same mode of expressing them, as we learn to think in the first instance by thinking their thoughts, and are thus supplied with a medium by which our thoughts may in turn be made intelligible to them, it is a matter of course that their language becomes ours, not merely adopted as the expression of thoughts independently conceived, but wrought into the whole texture and framework of our souls. It gives law to our mental operations,

determines the form and flow of our thoughts, becomes itself our inner nature, gives a bent to our powers which they ever inflexibly retain. Language is consequently not to be regarded as something wholly external to the soul, which it uses as a convenience. It is not even something foreign, which has been obtruded upon it, and to which it submits from sheer necessity. It is something precisely conformed to its nature, spontaneously adopted as soon as it is proposed and understood, because it offers the legitimate and only possible unfolding of the faculties originally implanted within it. It becomes thus a part of its constitution, a law of its life, a power in the soul, ever present, ever active, guiding all its motions. It is as evident and uniform in its operation upon the human mind as gravitation is upon matter. We are made sensible of one as of the other, not by a direct perception of the forces themselves, but by beholding their effects.

Every living language has its seat in the minds of those who speak it. When it has lost its present hold upon their souls, and is found only in past utterances and in written documents, it is petrified and dead. While it lives, it exercises a constraint which is felt in the fashioning of every sentence, in the choice of every word and inflection. With all the free variety in the sentiments conveyed, and an unlimited range in the mode of conveying them, there is yet a general submission to the control of this inward power. There is a constant uniformity in the phenomena, from the observation of which the grammarian deduces his rules, and the lexicographer the meanings of words. But the law of the language is anterior to all grammars and dictionaries, and independent of them. They who have seen neither, will use words and inflections with unfailing precision, even where delicate shades of difference are involved; and this, though they might be able to give no other reason for employing this word rather than that, or this form in preference to another, than that it is to satisfy an inward feeling. These distinctions are felt to exist, and they spontaneously determine the choice of words and forms, even though the philosophic student of language may find himself sorely puzzled to explain, in a complete and satisfactory manner, the grounds upon which they are based, or even to define exhaustively their

precise limits and character. It is an inward law, not deliberately submitted to, and as the result of reflection, but the impress of the language under which the mind was trained, and its habits of thought formed.

Language may be said to be the body of which thought is the soul, a body from which it can no more emancipate itself, and whose character can no more be changed by a direct volition than the human soul can either free itself from the clay tenement in which it dwells, or alter its nature. There is a limitation in both cases, no doubt, from the material form to which the spirit is bound: its actings are restricted by fixed laws and modes of operation. How far this is an evil and how far a good, it is not for us to determine. Higher orders of spiritual intelligences may not be encumbered by these restrictions, because they do not need the aid which material forms supply. It is enough that they are indispensable to us, constituted as we are; they are a necessity imposed upon us by our very nature. To attempt to rise above these limitations is but to destroy ourselves. Disembodied spirits and thought unfettered by language both undoubtedly exist; but we can form no more distinct conception of one than of the other in our present state of being. These material aids have been our helpers in all that we know of activity; and for us to refuse to use them, because something higher is possible, though beyond our reach, is to cease to act altogether.

It hence results that every language is possessed of organic unity and completeness. It is not an accretion but a growth, the product of a living spirit, the expression of an inner law. It must accordingly have that oneness which belongs to every living body and which consists in its being pervaded by its own distinctive vital force. This reaches to every part, however minute, and is everywhere the same, just as it is one vitality which animates each of our bodies. The same blood circulates through the whole down to its most insignificant portions, and every microscopic molecule of that blood has something about it by which it can be recognized as belonging to a human being. So in language there is one principle, one abiding law, which has impressed itself on every part, and binds in one all its endless ramifications from root to topmost bough. We

have not the means of demonstrating this in detail, in regard to any particular language, because it only becomes subject to our inspection as it reveals itself in the phenomena of actual speech. So viewed it may present a fragmentary appearance; for it has its spring in what is accidental and occasional. What is actually spoken, depends upon the need or the impulse of the moment. And the sum of these occasional utterances, so far as we can gather them and pass them in review, may be chargeable with chasms and seeming incoherencies because the links that unite them are missing. But this cannot be true of the language in its proper sense. For it comprises not only the sum of all that is spoken, but of all that could be thought or spoken by the people of whose intellectual life it is the permanent and necessary law. And as this is a unit and possessed of a specific character, which distinguishes it from the life and spirit of every other people on the globe, so must each language have its governing animating principle, in which its individuality consists; which is indestructible and invariable so long as the language lives and remains the same. The materials of which the body of a language is composed may have been gathered from the most diverse quarters, and when regarded in their original form may have been of the most heterogeneous description. But as they are wrought into this new organism, they are forced to undergo an assimilating and vitalizing process, which reduces them to a harmonious whole, informs them with a common life, and sets each in organic relation with the rest. Thus our common English tongue is based upon the Anglo-Saxon, and has drawn from the Celtic, the Latin, the Greek, the Norman, and other sources, and yet it is an independent language, not a repetition of any of its predecessors, nor a confused and heterogeneous mixture of them. It has as distinct a life of its own, governing every part and impressed upon its varied elements, as if all had been drawn from a single source or had been created expressly for its use. On the other hand, modern Italian is composed of almost the identical elements of the ancient Latin. The great bulk of its words are the very same, or have merely undergone slight phonetic modifications. But so diverse a spirit has been

infused into these elements, that the entire grammatical structure is changed, and the languages are totally distinct.

This view of the languages of the world suggests a basis for estimating their various worth. The ideal type of language is that which shall in the completest manner fulfil its proper end; which shall give to the human faculties, so far as this falls within its province, the development best suited to their nature, opening to them the amplest range, and laying the least constraint upon their free expansion and legitimate working; and which shall at the same time supply the most faithful and adequate representation for every diversity of spiritual states and exercises. It is, in brief, that which shall be best fitted to unfold and to express the soul of man. Approximation to this ideal standard is the test of excellence in languages. They make their approaches to it from various quarters and by every conceivable route; and one of the most curious things in their comparative study is the tracing out of the diversity of methods employed to attain a common result with their respective merits and demerits. Each language has its own stock of elemental sounds, chosen from the entire sum of those which the human organs are capable of uttering, the Oriental bringing in his harsh and difficult gutturals, the Hottentot his peculiar click, and the Chinese converting that scale of tones, which in other languages indicates the varied emotion of the speaker, into a constituent part of the signification of words. The mellow flexibility of the Sanscrit, linking its words of various length by their significant terminations expressive of nice modifications of thought, is unknown to the immovable Chinese, who speaks in rigid, uninflected monosyllables, placing, as it were, his unwrought conceptions side by side without elaboration, and unfitted together. Relations which the classic tongues subordinate and cast into the shade by making of them mere dependent syllables attached to the radical word, are in modern languages brought into greater prominence, and more variously expressed by means of auxiliaries and particles. Clearness and logical order is promoted in some languages, as in English, by a uniform sequence of words in the sentence; the freer collocation admissible in Latin allows of nicer shades of emphasis and more delicate touches of feeling. The modern Armenians

think habitually in an order the reverse of ours. This is so precisely true, that the arrangement of the words adopted in their translation of the Bible, will in many instances be yielded by reading the verses of our common translation backwards. And one of the difficulties in the way of acquiring a fluent use of that tongue is this necessity which it imposes of inverting the accustomed style of thought, by requiring the introduction of all the attendant circumstances first, and holding back the main proposition to the very last words of the sentence. The compound words and complex sentences of Indo-European tongues have no counterpart in the Semitic languages, which are more simple and intuitional, but, at the same time, less energetic and less rigorously exact. And in the necessity imposed upon all languages of adapting a limited stock of roots to the expressive unlimited number of ideas, there is endless room for the play of the imagination or of the logical powers, in suggesting the harmonies and relation of things in the same or separate spheres; so that, as has been truly said, every language embodies a particular conception of the universe.\*

To this diversity in the original and fundamental character of languages may be added that arising from the various grade of their development and the truthfulness with which this has been conducted. Language, as the organ of thought, may be compared to the human body in its influence on the mind. The degree to which the body promotes or retards intellectual activity, and is the faithful exponent of the states of the soul, is dependent not only upon its original physical constitution, but also upon the measure of its growth and its healthful condition. There are capabilities in every language reaching indefinitely beyond the expansion it has actually received. The same unlimited power of progression inheres in it as in those faculties of the soul where it has its seat. It will unfold by its own law, adhering strictly to that course upon which it has set out; but even in its most imperfect state it has its points of contact with the highest forms of thought to which the soul can rise, and it may be made by a legitimate expansion

\* So liegt in jeder Sprache eine eigenthümliche Weltansicht.—*Wilhelm von Humboldt.*

to take them in. The soul lifts itself from thought to thought, not by the sudden admission of ideas unconnected with any entertained before, but by climbing a ladder, so to speak; each fresh idea giving it a new position from which to step to the next. The grandest and most exalted ideas possible to the human mind are so connected by intervening steps with its feeblest and most rudimental conceptions, that it can thus proceed either by its own inherent force, or by the help of teachers from one to the other. And in like manner, if a language can convey the rudest and simplest ideas, it thereby proves itself to possess an expansibility corresponding to that of the mind itself. One of the important functions performed by great thinkers, poets, philosophers, and orators, is this unfolding of their native tongue, bringing forth to the popular consciousness its hidden stores of wealth, revealing elements of power and beauty which were not previously known to have existed in it. By making it the vehicle of thought never so well expressed before, by conducting speculations into realms yet unexplored, by touching the springs of feeling with unprecedented skill, by the gentleness of soft persuasion, the majesty of sublime description, the force of withering invective or of solemn argument, they touch the instrument with master hands and its latent powers are evoked. So the progress of civilization, refinement, and learning enriches language by enlarging the circle of ideas which must in this manner find expression. In all this there is no change of the native characteristics of a language, or of the measure of its inherent adaptedness to be the vehicle of thought, but only a further elaboration or a finer finish of material which already existed.

Besides the various extent to which languages may be unfolded, we must take into account the character of the development itself, if we would estimate aright the nature of their influence. If each of them contains its own conception of the universe, and impresses this upon the minds into which it is received, it becomes a question of great moment whether this conception is coincident with truth. Does it waken right ideas and proper notions in the soul? Is it a pellucid medium through which things are seen clearly and in their true relations, or a murky, foggy atmosphere, by which objects are

dimmed and distorted? Or, worse than this, is it charged with moral miasma, breathing pestilence and deadly disease, instead of healthful invigoration and life? Contact with pollution necessarily breeds defilement. To receive into the mind a language soiled with foul ideas, to grow familiar with vice under palliative and honourable names, and to know only the caricatures of virtue, nicknamed by those who hate her, and would make her an object of offence, is to debase the soul, and to blind or corrupt its moral sense. It is difficult to form an estimate of our indebtedness to the truth which there is in language, and the correct ideas which we have gained from finding them there expressed. We can scarcely image to ourselves the difference in judgment, character, and feeling between two minds, whose ideas and modes of thought were imbibed respectively from a Christian and from a Pagan language. All know the embarrassment under which missionaries have laboured in China, growing out of the lack of any tolerably exact translation for the name of the Supreme Being—any term for God, which would not, to the mind of a native, convey a pantheistic notion of the object of worship, or suggest one of the false deities to which they are accustomed to pay their adoration. There is no such idea in the minds of the people as is suggested to us by the simple utterance of the name GOD; they have no notion of the spirituality, infinity, eternity, holiness, and glorious perfections which we have associated with it. Their language contains no term to express it. So it is with all ideas peculiarly Christian; the languages of the heathen do not contain them, and hence the difficulty of conveying these ideas to their minds. An entirely new class of notions and associations must be waked up within them, different from any they have ever had, and which there are no terms capable of conveying to them. It requires a slow process of elaborate training to eradicate or correct that concatenated system of false notions which is thus far the only thing that has ever entered into their thoughts. The language needs to be christianized as well as the people; the work of transformation in the latter cannot be complete and thorough until the former shall be reached and purified. The fountains of thought are poisoned, and their streams are laden with death. The words

must be purged of these false ideas and degrading associations before the natural flow of thought can be pure and true.

The importance of a proper medium for the spread of great ideas may be illustrated by the conduct of the Most High himself, in his providential preparation of a language to be the bearer of the facts and doctrines of the Christian revelation. The most polished and refined nation of antiquity was first engaged in the service; the master-pieces of literature which they elaborated are still the admiration of the world. The Greek thus wrought out became, in a literary sense, one of the most noble and cultivated of tongues. As the language of a Pagan people, however, it needed a thorough purgation. This was effected by causing it to circulate for centuries in the Jewish mind, until it was charged with ideas, and breathed a life drawn from the Old Testament, and from the divine training to which the people of Israel had been subjected for ages. The new idiom thus created by the transfusion of Jewish thoughts into the tongue of classic Greece, then stamped into uniformity and permanence by a special literature of its own, was finally wrought into its New Testament form by the lips and pens of apostles, trained by Christ himself in the new truths which he came to communicate.

The question may naturally arise here, whether a language shall ever be produced corresponding to its true ideal? The process, thus far, has been one of division and subdivision; each people has laboured at the problem in their own way; each striven to evolve a form of speech adequate to all their wants as a vehicle of thought and a medium of communication, and with the greatest possible variety in the result. Can it have been the design of Providence that this division should exist for the sake of an ultimate re-union?—that the partial elements of good wrought out in a disconnected manner among the various nations of the earth should be brought together, and, from their combination, result a language which may be regarded as elaborated by the entire race of man?—which shall contain within itself every valuable product of the experience of mankind in this particular, an instrument in the highest degree adapted to excite and to convey the legitimate workings of the human mind? Such a scheme would accord

well with the analogy of history. The present civilization of the most enlightened nations is not the result of their own unaided efforts, nor can it be traced back to any single source. Every great historical people has had its special mission—some predominant idea to develop or exemplify. This task it has performed not for itself alone, but for the benefit of the race; its gathered stores being poured into the common treasury of mankind. If it is thus with other intellectual products, why not with language?

This, too, accords with the present lines of progress. The isolations and mutual hostilities which have driven nations asunder, or kept them so, are yielding, and shall continue to yield, to the bonds of amity and reciprocal intercourse. Diversities of language must thus be reduced, as well as other differences; and the rather, as the curse entailed upon the world at Babel is one of the most formidable barriers to intercommunion. It was designed to sever a combination which aimed to arrest Heaven's decree for peopling the earth, but may not be permitted to stand in the way of such a combination as the peopled earth is, in the purpose of God, destined to form. Languages and dialects, of limited extent and minor consequence, are already melting away. Others will do the same. The leading languages of the earth are daily extending their limits, and are, besides, becoming more and more necessary beyond their proper bounds as mediums of intercourse. May it not be possible that the whole earth shall again be "of one language and of one speech"? And is it an unwarrantable stretch of fancy that such a consummation may be shadowed forth by the prophet, when he predicts a day as coming in which there shall be "one Lord, and HIS NAME ONE"?

From considering the influence of language upon man, we now turn to the counter-influence of man upon language. We have thus far contemplated it chiefly as a power resident in the mind; we shall henceforth have to deal with it in its objective form, as uttered whether in writing or in speech. The operation of language and of thought is reciprocal. We have seen how language gives birth to thought and continues ever after its permanent vehicle. It is itself likewise born of thought and perpetuated by it. It is the creation of the mind, its spon-

taneous product, flowing forth from it as naturally and inevitably as rays from the sun, and bearing as indelibly upon it the impression of its source. The clothing of individual conceptions and mental states in particular words and sentences is in a sense voluntary, for the mind frames them agreeably to its own idea of fitness. But the general laws which underlie all these particular utterances are not a matter of reflection or choice; they are determined by the constitution of the soul itself. The languages of men unfold the mind of the race, in even its most latent and unobserved workings; the study of language is therefore a most important aid to the mental philosopher, it puts into his hands a key which will unlock more effectually than any other the inmost recesses of the soul. Its evanescent and shifting states are here wrought into permanent and tangible forms. The phenomena submitted to the student's observation are indefinitely multiplied; and the best opportunities are afforded for examining into their real character.

Since language is thus a mirror of the mind, it follows as a necessary consequence that the speech of no two men can be absolutely identical, neither can the speech of any two be totally unlike. On the one hand, every man's utterances must bear the impress of his own individuality, he will have his own characteristic style of thought and of expression. And on the other hand, the community of nature which belongs to all, must reveal itself in the character of their thoughts and in the mode of their expression. There is a sense, therefore, in which all the languages of the earth are one. Beneath the superficial differences of words and forms, and special grammatical rules, there are certain great facts and principles which belong alike to all, which have their root in that mental organization and those fundamental laws of thought which inhere in all men. There is a limit, accordingly, beyond which the divergencies of language cannot extend; a bond which holds all in unity and harmony, in spite of every appearance of distracted confusion.

Between this limit of possible divergence and the other limit of possible approach, conditioned respectively by the generic unity and the individual diversity of men, there is every various grade of agreement and of difference. There is no more cer-

tain or delicate test than language affords, of the measure of the community which obtains amongst the several portions of the human race. Thus the different degrees of consanguinity between the members of the great human family are here exhibited. Affinities between the languages of different nations betoken the affinities of those nations. The English spoken in this country, the French in Canada and Louisiana, the Portuguese in Brazil, the Spanish in the rest of South America and Mexico, indicate the quarter from which the body of early settlers came. Ancient authors inform us that Carthage was a colony of Tyre; the identity of their languages declares the same. That the builders of the pyramids were ancestors of the Copts can no longer be doubted, since the hieroglyphic inscriptions, which, though a puzzle to the ancients, have yielded to the persevering labours of modern students, resolve themselves into Coptic. The book of Genesis, which would be invaluable had it no other merit than that of being a repository of the early history of our race, records that Nineveh was founded by a colony from Babylon; in strict accordance with this is the testimony of the monuments recently exhumed upon the site of the Assyrian capital. These have brought to light, together with the civilization and manners of that great empire, its language, which had been lost for ages; and now that the mystery of the strange character in which its inscriptions are written has been uncovered, this is found to be kindred to the Babylonish.

We have thus a means of tracing the course of the various currents of population from the beginning, and determining the migrations of tribes and races long before they are mentioned in authentic history. The primitive branches into which mankind were divided, as they spread abroad from their original centre to cover the world, can still be distinguished by the several families of languages which arose amongst them, each having a clearly defined type of its own, which is preserved in all its subsequent divisions and ramifications. And whatever doubt there may be as to the exact limits of these grand divisions as they shade off almost imperceptibly into one another, the leading facts are perfectly apparent and quite unmistakable. The various strata of human population became

thus as easy to be separated and to be recognized as the strata of rocks which compose the crust of the globe. Here we find a broad belt of nations speaking affiliated tongues; these must all have sprung from the same stock gradually overspreading the soil. There is a language, as the Turkish, interjected into a body of others entirely dissimilar, like a mass of granite perforating a bed of limestone; this testifies of ancient convulsions, the irruption of a conquering horde from some distant quarter. Again, small remnants of ancient strata are found, like the Welsh and other fragments of the old Celtic, cropping out through more recent layers, identifying the early tenants of the soil. Or, as in the Caucasus, with its wonderful medley of tongues, heterogeneous fragments may be found dropped without any order or system here and there, like erratic boulders fallen from the avalanches of nations which in various ages have swept past that wild inhospitable region. And even loose sands driven by the winds from clime to clime, such as the gypsies of the old world wandering in scattered bands without a settled habitation, may thus be recognized in spite of their disintegration and the foreign materials which they have accumulated, and assigned to their proper home. And if the vexed question of the origin of the aborigines of this continent is susceptible of a satisfactory solution, it is most probably to be looked for in a careful scrutiny of the native American tongues.

Language may not only teach us the origin of nations and enable us to trace each back to its respective source, but it reveals their several ages. It contains a scale of chronology not absolute indeed and fixing precise epochs, but relative, exhibiting the order in which the events in question occurred. The greater the divergence between branches springing from the same stem, the closer to the root will the point of departure be; and the greater their contiguity, the more recent must their separation have been. Families of languages divide themselves into subordinate groups, the individual members of which are more closely allied to each other than to any member of the affiliated groups. Each of these groups must represent an offshoot of the race to which they belong, which separated first in a body, and afterwards, as they spread further, again

diverged. Now language may be interrogated as to the relative ages of these different groups, in what order they severed themselves from the parent stem, and also in what order the several members of each group attained to a separate existence.

And further still, it may indicate successive eras in the life of the same people, mark the stages of their literature, and assign their intellectual products each to its proper date. Successive steps are plainly distinguishable in the language of England, viz., the Anglo-Saxon of Alfred, the old English of Henry III., the English of Chaucer, and that of modern days. And it is easy to perceive, that if some writing of unknown date were now to be discovered in one of the libraries of that ancient kingdom, an important criterion of its age would be gained by ascertaining which of these periods in the English language it represented. What has just been imagined in relation to our own tongue has actually been done in the case of others. The epochs of Hindoo literature and of the sacred literature of the Zoroastrians rest upon well defined criteria of this very nature; and whatever doubt may overhang the question of the absolute age of these various writings, there can be none as to the order of their production. Attempts have also been made in both these cases to go beyond this, and to establish not only a relative scale of measurement, but a fixed point of time from which to measure. Monuments of known date exist in both India and Persia; in the former, nearly contemporaneous with the expedition of Alexander, in the latter, belonging to the period of the Achæmenides. These fix the character of the two languages at those dates respectively; now if it were only possible to recognize the same stage of each language in its literary remains, their date would be absolutely settled.

If to community of descent be added other bonds of connection, this increased intimacy of relationship will have its counterpart in a closer approximation in point of language. While those sprung from the same race speak tongues which, though distinct, belong to the same family or group, those who together form one people, with a consciousness of their unity, occupying one country, subject to the same government and the same laws, with a common literature and free intercourse among

themselves, but severed geographically, as well as politically and socially, from other states around them, will speak one language peculiarly their own. Hence the boundaries of nations do commonly mark the limits of languages, as Spain and Portugal, France and Denmark. And nations which once existed, but have, like Germany, been broken into fragments, or like Poland, parcelled amongst larger states, may still, in some instances, be traced by the prevalence of their proper language. The petty states of Greece, whilst they maintained their independence, had each a separate dialect; but when Philip of Macedon united them under a common government, their dialects too were fused into one; and when the conquests of his illustrious son extended his empire over Asia, the Greek language everywhere followed. At the foundation of Rome, several distinct though related tongues were spoken by the various tribes which peopled Italy; but as the sway of Rome extended, her language supplanted all its rivals. The assimilating power of the dominant language of a people is shown in a most remarkable degree in our own country. The people, the government, and the literature are English; and the vast numbers who have emigrated from other lands of Europe, or have been brought from Africa, or have even been attracted from Asia, make no more impression than rivers pouring into the briny ocean make upon the constitution of its waters. Settling together in large communities, as the Germans, or brought in by the cessions of extensive territory, as the French in Louisiana, and the Spanish in Mexico, they may maintain, for a while, a sort of separate existence, and hold fast to the relics of their former nationality, like rivers which at their junction sometimes appear to flow side by side for a considerable distance without a complete mingling of their waters. But this isolation cannot long be maintained. The pulses of a people's life must be felt in every artery of its body, and whatever is not its proper expression and outgrowth must gradually yield.

If there be not sufficient vigour in the national heart to effect this result, every addition will be a source of weakness, not of strength. Instead of being compacted with the body as an organ in vital union with the rest, bound together in sympathy,

acting in concert, knowing but one interest, obedient to one impulse and a common will, it becomes a dead weight and an incumbrance; or rather a foreign body, with a unity and life of its own, bound by outward constraint to another with which it has no real fellowship. A schism is thus effected which only waits the occasion to develop it into disorganization and ruin. It was thus with the great Asiatic empires; it was thus with the old Roman empire. This is one of the notorious causes of the peril of Austria at this hour. The distinct languages spoken within its domain prevent its population from being blended into one homogeneous mass. They form so many lines of demarcation and division, which have sundered it in feeling, and will, in all probability, ultimately lead to its political dismemberment. Its Italian provinces are partly lost already, and the rest detest its sway; while Hungary looks hopefully towards that emancipation for which it has thus far vainly struggled. On the other hand Italy, though disunited at present, and split up into different states, feels, nevertheless, the drawings of a common tongue. And the enthusiasm with which Sardinia and her noble ruler are everywhere openly hailed, or secretly regarded, induce the hope that neither despotism nor priestcraft can long avail to crush the popular will, which has made itself heard in such unmistakable tones; the hope, that they who speak the language of Dante and of Petrarch will yet salute one another as brethren and fellow-citizens, and a united Italy be more than a romantic dream.

The political power of language has long been understood by the wily government of Russia. It has been its steady policy, through the medium of the national church, to extend the Russian language and letters, and extirpate all others. This process was going forward in the Danubian principalities prior to the recent Crimean war. And in pressing his ambitious designs upon his feeble neighbour in the south, the Czar counted largely upon the lack of coherence in Turkey in this very respect. The disintegrating power of a multiplicity of tongues lent essential aid in the reduction of the rebellious tribes of the Caucasus. Could the concert of action possible with people of one speech have been effected among those brave and hardy mountaineers, and could their redoubtable

chieftain have had the opportunity which he would then have possessed of infusing into them his own desperate energy and hatred of the invader, he might still be in his native fastnesses, defying all the armies that could be brought against him.

The minor diversities which exist in nations speaking a common tongue, likewise reproduce themselves in language. Hence the provincialisms of a widely extended country, if its several parts be not bound together by the utmost frequency of intercourse; and these, in more secluded localities, and with a population that rarely stirs from home, lead even to distinct *patois* and dialects, as in various counties of England and France. The same thing appears in distinct classes or professions, forming a sort of community of their own, with their peculiar technical expressions and slang phrases. The dialect of college life, with its *chum*, and *fizzle*, and *rowl*, &c., may illustrate this. The sailor has his dialect; so has the prize-ring, and the degraded poor of our cities, each of which would be, in many points, unintelligible to the uninitiated.

These divergent tendencies would exhibit themselves far more than they do were it not for the harmonizing and uniting influence of a widely circulated literature. This acts as a sort of balance-wheel, preserving regularity of motion, and preventing any material deviation. It is a fixed and permanent standard, conformity to which on the part of all secures a close approximation to one another. Hence, among well educated people, the provincialisms and *patois* just spoken of are unknown. Hence, too, the dialects of savages, who have no written literature, are liable to such constant and serious change. An expression figuratively used to-day, becomes the ordinary phrase of to-morrow; descriptive epithets are adopted in place of appellatives previously employed; so that in a very short time their vocabulary may undergo a total change. Accordingly, every inconsiderable tribe of Indians has its own distinct language; and no matter how frequently they might divide and subdivide, the result would be the same. The speech of the separated portions would speedily become mutually unintelligible. It is this which occasions such serious difficulty in defining the limits of groups and families of languages spoken by roving and barbarous tribes. The uniform and

consistent type which characterizes the affiliated tongues of enlightened nations is unknown amongst them. No check remains upon the utmost possible divergence.

It has been seen how the inward relationships created amongst men by lineage and by political association are, in their several shades and varieties, reflected in language. The same is the case, likewise, with the slighter and more casual correspondences produced by contiguity and intercourse. These do not, like the more influential causes already referred to, affect the essential structure of a language, but lead rather to the borrowing of individual words and phrases. And the extent to which this transfer takes place, and the general character of the instances in which it is found, affords an indication of the nature and amount of the influence exerted by one people over another. Commerce and trade, while effecting an exchange of commodities, transport the name as well as the thing; and hence the current names of articles often tell us whence they were originally brought. Thus the words themselves declare that *tea* came from China, *myrrh* from Arabia, *cherries* from Asia Minor, *quinine* from Peru. We have thus a means, independently of any direct statements of ancient authors, of arriving at some knowledge of the trade which was maintained between the several nations of antiquity, the remoteness of the regions to which it extended, and the character of the goods in which they respectively dealt. The native names of Asiatic products found in Greek and Latin authors bear as explicit testimony to the existence of a traffic between the East and West, as do the coins of Greece and Rome found scattered as far even as India. Whatever obscurity may rest upon the tradition of Cadmus and his alphabet, the names of the Greek letters point to Phœnicia as the land of their origin. The figures with which the mathematician performs his calculations, and the merchant keeps his accounts, are, (if the results of the most recent investigations shall prove to be correct,) proved to be a gift from India to the world, by being traced back to forms which, in the language of that country, are the initials of the numerals from one to nine. The multitude of Greek words which found their way into Latin, is a perpetual monument of the literary preëminence of Greece, and the

crowds of Romans who resorted thither for instruction, pleasure, or gain. The scientific terms now in vogue which have their roots in Arabic, remind us that the Arabs were once the teachers of Europe.

The careful accuracy with which language receives the impression of the human mind in all its phases, and especially as affected by the various grades of relationship or intercourse subsisting amongst men, has been cursorily exhibited. It remains to add that it reproduces with equal distinctness and preserves with a like tenacity the great facts of man's inward and of his outward life, the ideas which have prevailed and the events which have occurred.

The language of any people presents in a compact form the limit and range of their ideas. The conceptions which they entertain find expression in their words, and whatever is lacking in the former will be betrayed by a corresponding gap in the latter. We may thus deduce the measure of a people's enlightenment and civilization. Gather their language and you discover what they are. If this could be done fully in the case of any nation of ancient or modern times, it would afford a perfect picture of their condition.

The same thing holds with races as well as with individual nations. If the languages of the same group or family be compared together, whatever is common to the whole must have belonged to the original stock from which all alike have descended. It is thus possible to determine a circle of objects and ideas with which the primitive ancestors of these several tribes and nations must have been familiar. If the process be carried further still, and a comparison be instituted between all the languages of mankind, we shall arrive at those ideas which are common to the entire race, and which must therefore be grounded in our common nature. And we shall thus hear the world, as with one voice, uttering its protest against atheism and a dreamy intangible idealism, and expressing its faith in the great truths of a distinction between right and wrong, moral accountability, and the existence of a world to come.

Ideas and philosophies once prevalent, but which have since passed away, may here be rediscovered. They have here erected to themselves a monument recording to after ages that they

have lived. The words by which they were once expressed no longer suggest to the popular consciousness the meanings which they were originally designed to convey. They are like fossils imbedded in the strata of our current speech, witnesses of a former life, remains of extinct species, the shell or skeleton outlasting the animating principle to which it owed its particular organic form. Or they may be compared to broken columns of an ancient architecture wrought into some modern edifice, which by their peculiarity of style still betray their real origin. Thus our current designation of the days of the week is a standing proof that they who so named them were idolaters; yet no one in speaking of Sunday thinks of it as dedicated to the sun, or in speaking of Monday has any idea of paying homage to the moon. No one is ever charged with giving credit to astrology, and believing that the stars control the destinies of men, because he uses such words as *disaster*, *lunacy*, *mercurial*, *martial*, *saturnine*; and yet the existence of these words is evidence that this belief did once prevail.

Past events and customs no longer observed may, in like manner, leave their record in language. The Saxon names we give to living animals, while the same animals slain for food bear Norman names, are echoes of the Norman conquest and of the exactions for their table levied by the lordly conquerors from the subject peasantry. The word *September* suggests to us that what is now the ninth, was once the seventh month of the year; and *February* tells us of the expiation customary as the year was closing, *Bank* reminds us from what small beginnings our great moneyed institutions have arisen, when fiscal transactions were conducted upon a bench in the street, which bench was broken in cases of failure and its owner declared *bankrupt*. We still speak of *calculation*, though the process so denominated is no longer performed by means of pebbles; of *ballots*, though little balls are not now used; of the *exchequer*, though the table with its checked cover is gone; of *candidates*, though they are not robed in white; of *manumission*, though the forms of Roman law are dispensed with; of the *pound sterling*, in spite of the diminution of its weight; and of the *chancellor*, though the lattice work has been taken away.

We extend a cordial welcome to the interesting and instruc-

tive volumes named at the head of this article, whose contents we have had in mind throughout the train of remark in which we have indulged. The science of language, as at present understood and prosecuted, has sprung up so recently, and has been developed with such amazing rapidity, that those who have not had their attention specially directed to it are scarcely aware of its existence or claims. And yet it has already attained such dimensions, established such relations with other branches of inquiry, and is withal possessed of such intrinsic interest and importance, that no educated man can afford to be ignorant of its methods and results.

We know of no work accessible to English readers in which so satisfactory a view of this subject can be obtained in so brief a compass and in so attractive a form. The general scholar will find it an admirable compend of just the information that he seeks, while they who desire to enter upon the comparative study of language with more thoroughness and in fuller detail, will do well to begin with the careful perusal of these volumes, for the sake not only of their masterly outline view of the whole field and the skilful presentation of first principles, but the copious hints and suggestions which will prove an invaluable guide in the further prosecution of their inquiries. And even those for whom philology in its broader aspects has few charms, if they desire to understand the mechanism of our own language, at least upon its classic side, and possess the results of the latest and best investigations, conducted upon a solid scientific basis, instead of the crudities and random guesses current in most of the accessible authorities, will feel that the article on Comparative English Etymology, with its satisfactory analysis of more than three thousand six hundred words, is worth the cost of the entire work.