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Origin of the English Language.

BY DEWITT C. CLINTON.

The accession of William the Conqueror to the throne of England, was the signal for the annihilation of the institutions of the Anglo Saxons and the confiscation of their estates. The curfew tolled the knell of their departed glory and the forced employment of the Norman language in all public acts; the compulsory teaching of the Norman tongue in all the schools; and the introduction of Norman manners and Norman customs into social life, subjected the Anglo-Saxons and their language to ridicule and contempt. Their fortunes were blasted, and they were forced to fly to the mountains, or seek refuge in foreign lands. But though the fabric of Norman power was erected on the ruins of their government, life and vigor yet dwelt in the subjugated race. While the Saxon noblemen in the fastnesses of the country maintained an open and deadly hostility toward the conquerors, the monk, in whose veins flowed the same Saxon blood, in the quiet retreat of the monasteries of Britain and the Western Isles, cherished in silence, a similar hatred, engendered by the disgrace of his beloved countrymen.

From the ruder days of the fifth century, the monasteries of the Anglo-Saxon had been the noblest specimens of architecture that adorned their country; within the silent halls of those stupendous structures, beautified with arches, with carvings and fine tracery work, and reaching with their massive walls and spires to the clouds, the learned sought a safe retreat from the ravages of Norman tyranny and Norman oppression. There the gilded images of angels and the Virgin looked down from the vaulted ceilings. The most sublime paintings, whose subjects were taken from the narratives of the Evangelists, and life-like statues of holy men, adorned the walls of those magnificent temples of God. There sacred tapers burned upon golden altars. There pious monks, habited in black tunics and cowls, offered up in silence their morning prayer. Amid stillness like that of death, gentle clouds of incense rose toward heaven. That awful silence was broken by the solemn sound of the

organ re-echoing along the walls. The holy Abbott proclaimed from the desk the sacred words of inspiration. The light of the sun as it rose in the heavens fell upon those splendid piles, and piercing through their beautifully painted windows, shed its softened rays on the solemn scene. The solitude of the monasteries, hallowed by the presence of God and by every religious association, was eminently fitted to inspire in the breast of the scholar a deeper devotion to letters. Here, remote from the turbulent world, he could cultivate his native language and literature. Here, undisturbed, he could pursue the study of the fine arts, of philosophy and poetry. Here he could direct his thoughts heavenward, and expend his energies of mind upon elevated themes. Those pious monks, while they served their God, and drank deep at the fountain of letters, did not forget their country. Under the monks' gown, those stern Saxon hearts swelled with emotions, and the laboring brain toiled with patriotic fervor under the unmasked cowl. They exhibited in their writings the most ineffable marks of that hatred which possessed the hearts of their countrymen. They burned with ardent aspiration to elevate their nation from its rude and uncultivated condition. They labored to give a national character to their people and stability to Anglo-Saxon institutions. Thus inspired by patriotism, those devoted monks cherished a love for Anglo-Saxon letters. The monasteries became at once both the repositories and seminaries of learning. Literature flourished under their protection, and many valuable works were preserved in their libraries. It was in their quiet halls that Caedman sang of the creation; Alfrice taught the principles of language to his untutored countrymen, and the Venerable Bede composed an ecclesiastical history of his race, which alone claims the confidence and admiration of posterity. It was in the solitude of the cloister that a series of monastic authors recorded, as eye witnesses, upon the pages of the celebrated Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, the history of the times in which they lived. To these institutions are we indebted for the historical chronologies, for the theological treatises, and for the religious and narrative poetry of those times.

These works, by reducing the language to a written form, gave permanence and character to the Anglo-Saxon tongue. By the cultivation of it in the monasteries it became a forcible and expressive language, capable of exhibiting, with beauty and elegance of expression, the most sublime sentiments in poetry and prose.

After a century and a half the Anglo-Saxon came forth from these sacred retreats full of its original spirit, and with far more than its original purity, that, modified, by a contact with the Norman tongue, it might form the English language of a later period. From these sources we follow, with reverent admiration, the advance of that noble language along the course of centuries, till now it contains the most solid treasures of human wisdom, poesy and wit. The poet can now successfully embody in the English language, the loftiest creations of his imagination; the philosopher his gravest thoughts, and the orator his most persuasive appeals. There is no conception of the human intellect which cannot find here its most elegant and vigorous expressions. Other languages may possess in a higher degree some peculiar excellencies, but in all the highest purposes of a language, the palm is borne away by that tongue which was spoken and studied by the monks of Whitby and Wearmouth. Thus those venerable monasteries have performed a noble office for mankind—they have long since gone to decay; their massive walls have crumbled away; their fine carvings have yielded to the touch of time, and their beautifully painted windows and statuary have been broken and mingled in the dust. The deep tones of the organ have ceased to sound along those ornamented walls. Prayer is no longer offered up from golden altars. The light of the sun no longer falls upon structures rising in majesty to the clouds, it falls upon a pile of desolate ruins. Those stern Saxon hearts have long since ceased to beat; they are no longer inflamed with anger toward their haughty oppressors. Those pious monks now sleep in peace, their last sleep; those splendid ruins mark their burial place; their immortal spirits have taken their flight to God, but the language which they fostered in the monasteries, in its higher and nobler forms, is still extant, and is destined to live for many ages as a proud monument to their patriotism and devotion.

MRS. WHARTON.

A peculiar interest is felt in the subject of this sketch, who, it will be remembered, was arrested some months ago on the charge of poisoning General Ketchum, in her own house at Baltimore. A few days ago her trial came to a close and resulted in her triumphant acquittal. In a report of the trial, at Annapolis, on the 11th, reported in the New York Herald, we find the subjoined:

"Mrs. Wharton's life, from her infancy down to the time when scandal with its hundred malicious tongues, dared to asperse her name and poison the well-springs of her joy which had previously marked the even tenor of her existence, was given to the public through the solemn medium of the witness box. From her quiet country home in Montgomery county, Pennsylvania, through the days of her childhood, after the time of her marriage with Captain Wharton, way out upon the confines of civilization at Forts Kearney, Leavenworth, and Gibson, back to the place of her nativity, to Washington, to Cambridge, Maryland, during the trying times of civil strife and finally to Baltimore city, she was traced and her whole life laid bare for the inspection of the jury. And such a life! During all those long years her character exhibited a kindness and amiability, a consideration for suffering humanity, which speaks trumpet-tongued against the accusations which rets upon her. Whether as a girl, surrounded by the soft influences of home life or on the plains administering to the wants, and by her refinement and cultivation, so that the rough edges of frontier existence; in the midst of civil strife, with the din of battle and rule war in its most repulsive form staring her in the face, or in the whirl of fashionable life, surrounded by comforts and luxuries, Mrs. Wharton always displayed the same self-sacrificing disposition which has caused friends to spring to her side in this hour of terrible tribulation. All classes of the community seemed to recognize instinctively the lovely nature of the woman, and the partizan spirit which raged with such fearful violence in portions of Maryland during the late civil strife, was hushed to silence in her presence and stayed by her wonderful influence.

BACHELOR'S HEAVEN.—There is only one territory of any size, and never has been but one, occupied by any considerable population, from which woman is absolutely excluded. Yet such a place exists to-day, and has existed for centuries. As far back as history reaches, to all females it has been forbidden ground. This bachelor arcadia is situated on a bold plateau between the old peninsula of Aete, in the Grecian Archipelago, and the mainland. Here, in the midst of cultivated fields and extensive woodlands, dwell a monastic confederation of Greek Christians, with twenty-five convents, and numbering more than seven thousand souls, and not one of the monasteries dates back from a later time than the twelfth century. A few soldiers guard the borders of this anti-female land, and no woman is allowed to cross the frontier. Nor is this all; the rule is extended to every female creature, and from time immemorial no cow, mare, hen, duck or goose has been permitted to make acquaintance with hill or valley of Mt. Athos territory. A traveler was startled by the abrupt question, "What sort of human creatures are women?" The very idea of woman, whether as mother, wife or sister, is almost lost. To all woman-haters; to bachelors of over forty years' standing; to all men who seek refuge from the wiles and ways of the opposite sex, this region can be safely recommended as a haven of refuge.

A GOOD WORK.—A patron of the Willamette Farmer, writing from West Prairie, Wisconsin and renewing his subscription says: "Your paper has been the cause of sending about twenty families from this town to Oregon, with a capital of about fifty or sixty thousand dollars. So you see that if your paper is not of any great benefit to me, it is doing a great deal of good to the State." Thus it often happens that a well-conducted paper may be doing a great work for a State or neighborhood, and friends at home not realize, or appreciate its benefits.

Engineers have been sent for from Europe to construct the bridge across the Mississippi at St. Louis.

The question of a good wagon road from Portland to the Dalles is being agitated.

GEN. CROOK AND THE COURT-MARTIAL.

The special Correspondent of the *Alta*, writing from Tucson, Arizona, gives the following:

"The army officers stationed in this portion of Arizona are at this time much exercised over the recent 'General Order, No. 33' from Gen. Crook's headquarters, containing a most critical, logical and analytical review of the strange proceedings of the Court-martial which was convened here at Camp Lowell on the 4th of December, 1871, for the trial of First Lieutenant Royal E. Whitman, of the Third Regiment of United States Cavalry, (he has been Quartermaster and Indian Agent at Camp Grant for sometime,) on the charge of 'Drunkenness.' It appears that a majority of the officers composing the Court belonged to the accused's own regiment—such old West Pointers as Capt James Curtis, of the class of 1861. (These officers have since gone to San Francisco with their regiments, en route to Fort McPherson in Nebraska.) Curtis was President of the Court. To the charge and specification the accused, by his counsel, Major Henry B. Mizner, Twelfth Infantry, (commanding Camp Lowell), pleaded in bar of trial, that the accusations against him came, originally, from a civilian of Tucson, and were inspired by malice. The Court sustained this plea without having required the defendant to substantiate it, and thus abruptly terminated their 'labors.'

Gen. Crook, in 'summing up the case,' as the lawyers say, gives each and every member of the Court a terrible 'raking down,' a most denuding flagellation, and does it in that plain, courteous but decided language so characteristic of the man. He calls things by their right names so there is no mistaking his meaning. In short, he pronounces the whole proceeding of the Court as silly, absurd and farcical in the extreme. He remarks that 'the Court should have proceeded to try and determine the guilt or innocence of the accused in the matter before it, according to the evidence, and their failure to do so stands without a shadow of excuse, or a precedent in law, or a custom of the service, and in thus thwarting the object for which they were assembled, they have placed Lieut. R. S. Whitman in a worse light than he before occupied. Whatever object he may have had in avoiding a trial, it was due to the officers of the regiment of which the Court was largely composed, that these charges may be legally investigated, so that, if innocent, his honor might be vindicated, and if guilty, the service be rid of an unworthy officer.' Owing to the movement of troops, consequent upon the transfer of the Third Cavalry from this department to Nebraska, it is impracticable to reassemble the Court. Whitman has been released from arrest and restored to duty."

A SMART GIRL.—The Seymour (Ind.) Times thus describes a young lady who has no difficulty in finding something to do in this world:

"Miss Lulie A. Monroe, the pet daughter of the 'heditor' of this paper, becoming disgusted with the troop of gentlemanly roving and unstable printers who have been employed during the past few months, swapping one for another every few days and weeks, cleared the last one out last week and determined to do all the work herself. Every type in this issue was set up by her nimble fingers, including the new advertisements since our last issue, and she has three columns for next week. And, beside all this, she did a big washing, read about fifty newspapers; and took two days recreation at the Mitchell fair; and this active and spunky little 'printeress' declares her intention to get up the whole paper herself hereafter."

ECLIPSES FOR 1872.—In 1872 there will be four eclipses, two of the sun and two of the moon.

I. May 22, a partial eclipse of the moon, invisible in the United States, and therefore not especially interesting to the majority of our readers.

II. June 5, an annular eclipse of the sun, subject to the same disadvantages as above. An "annular" eclipse is when a part of the sun's disc projects as a brilliant circle around the dark shadow of the moon.

III. November 14 and 15, a partial eclipse of the moon, invisible in the United States. At Boston—it begins at 12:15 (midnight) and ends at 12:55.

IV. November 30, an annular eclipse of the sun, not visible in the United States. Should we be "doubling" Cape Horn at that time, the darkness will be visible to us.

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