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ADDRESS

BEFORE THE

Kent County Teachers' Institute,

BY

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INTRODUCTORY.

The great attention which has been given to the cause of popular education in many countries has developed a system embracing three general divisions or gradations of Primary, Secondary and Superior schools—so connected with one another as to furnish a complete education from the rudiments up to the highest professional proficiency.

By whatever names the schools of the first kind are called in our country (from Elementary up to High schools) their object is or ought to be—if they form part of a general system—to prepare their pupils for the Secondary schools or colleges; and these in their turn, should prepare their students for the specialties of a university course; such specialties being preliminary to the professions in law, theology, medicine, surgery, engineering, and other definite spheres of activity. This is the theory of a complete educational system suitable to our advanced civilization.

In addition to the absolutely essential, moral and intellectual acquirements which education secures to a people living under a form of self-government we should bear in mind that a similarity of training and instruction in all the schools and colleges of a country produces a homogeneity of no little importance to national concord and unity. A State, indeed, is derelict to its best interests if it neglect so powerful a means of fraternity, unity and prosperity among its citizens; a means whose efficacy may be observed, on a smaller scale, in the efforts of churches to gather the young into Sunday schools in order, among other good purposes, to hold together and unify the elements of congregational perpetuity and advancement.

It is difficult, perhaps impossible, in a free government like ours, where the various churches intervening for the benefit of their own organizations, have advanced far in inaugurating educational institutions for themselves, and where the separate political divisions of the country are jealous of any central power—to establish a uniform system of education throughout all the States. Each portion of the Union acts for itself. Nor can the same standard of studies, beyond a merely introductory course, be made acceptable everywhere even in a single State. Until the heterogeneous elements of our population, ever agitated and in rapid progression, shall have settled down into a permanent and, as it were, solidified condition of society, we must expect each section of the country to develop for itself schools and colleges best adapted to its own peculiar circumstances and we must look to some future period for such a University establishment as will be truly supplementary to the collegiate course.—In this State very commendable efforts are now making to improve, elevate and render uniform its public school system; and as a part of the system, or rather as an adjunct thereto, appear such Associations of teachers as I have the honor to address to-day. Active co-operation and an interchange of views, and a comparison of methods of instruction and of discipline, cannot but result in great good to yourselves and to the schools under your control.

The standard up to which your pupils ought to be taught,—or such of them as are designed to pursue a higher course,—should be made to conform, as soon as practicable, to the requirements for entrance into our colleges Wherever this fails to be done, private schools must spring up to supply your deficiency in the preparatory work necessary for the second course in the educational system. And these will draw off many of your best pupils and perhaps keep your schools at a lower grade. But there is no good reason why the public schools, at least in every town and village, should not be able to extend their instruction for such as desire it as high as Cæsar and Xenophon in the classics, and in mathematics through Algebra and a part of Geometry. Then the college which I represent could take the material you furnish and we would be so set forward in our curriculum as to accomplish in a four years' course as much as would thoroughly prepare the student for the specialties of professional training. Another effect would be to leave to you a precise course of studies without distracting your attention, as frequently happens, to such branches of education as properly belong to a secondary course.

We depend now in great measure upon you. Your schools are or should be the reservoirs from which we may draw the material for our classes—not for the Preparatory, but for our college classes. How much interest, therefore, must I feel in your success? If all the county schools could be in harmonious connection with our non-sectarian college, meant for all and built near to you all,—its prosperity would be materially enhanced, and its means of usefulness augmented, and it would furnish, in return, as from a normal school, capable teachers to assist in your labors.

It can scarcely be expected from me almost a stranger to you, to discuss with any minuteness the system of public education established in the State, and committed to your hands for its practical development. I doubt not but that time will show that this important interest has been committed to faithful and earnest workers, and that many a future citizen will honor and bless you for his moral and intellectual growth under your fostering care.

In consenting to address you, I thought it best to select a subject which all of us who are teachers will cordially unite upon—namely, the importance of a critical study of the English language. Taking up this subject, let us first trace the development of our language—then show the vast influence it is destined to exert on the future civilization of the world;—and then, if your patience will bear with me, we shall endeavor to exhibit the importance of its critical study by some remarks on the auxiliaries by which we conjugate our verbs; and the changes at present taking place in the use of some of them.

The Anglo-Saxon Language, and its Change to English.

The most ancient language or group of languages with which we are acquainted, or with the influences of which we have been brought in contact, is the Semitic, extending back into pre-historic times and embracing the Hebrew, Syriac and dialects in South Western Asia. The only living language of this group is the Arabic. The old Testament Scriptures, translated from the Hebrew, are in our hands every day, and our religious faith gives an undying interest to these records of divine inspiration. We are joint inheritors of the spiritual treasures transmitted from these Semitic sources to all the nations of the world; and our Literature has always been largely affected by their influence.

But though our Literature is affected by this, the earliest of all sources,—our *language* is not connected with this group (except in a small number of adopted words,) but with another more extensive group of languages, the Indo-European, embracing the old Celtic, the Sanscrit, Greek, Latin, German, &c., extending from the Ganges, through Asia to Europe up to Scandinavia, and westward to the Atlantic. What were the original links of connection between the Semitic group and the Indo-European group of languages, philologists have not yet been able satisfactorily to determine.

In the migrations and conquests, the rise and decay of nations, many changes of dialects occurred; some disappearing entirely; others commingling in the formation of new languages. Where the art of writing was unknown, dialects of course, left no trace of their character and disappeared as do marks upon a sandy beach which each succeeding wave changes or obliterates. And the very first page of History presents to us the nations of the earth—not as a brotherhood recognizing their common relationship as descendants of the same stock—but as distinct peoples, strangers, or enemies to one another and ignorant of each others speech.

Without further comment on these ancient times, let us fix at once our attention upon England. When the Romans invaded Britain, (54 B. C.,) the people they found there were of Celtic origin. The remnant of their language still exists among the Welsh. Their progenitors, coming it is likely from Asia, had separsted at a very early period from the Indo-European stock. Of similar origin were also the Celts of Scotland and Ireland, whose language we call the Gaelic.

The Anglo-Saxons originated from the same Indo-European stock, but belonged to a race who had migrated from it at a later period than the Celts. They were of the Teutonic branch to which the Goths belonged—that numerous and powerful people who from 125 A. D. ruled Northern Europe for five centuries and received tribute both from Rome and Constantinople; but whose language, like those that then resounded in the streets of Rome and Constantinople, is no longer spoken on the earth. We here see our own lineage; we are of English, i. e. of Saxon, Teutonic or, as it is often termed, Germanic origin.

After the Romans, torn by dissensions at home, had abandoned their far-off province in Britain, it was harassed by the more northern tribes in the island and, as you know from history, its enfeebled inhabitants invited assistance from Jutland in 449, A. D.; and the subsequent influx, particularly of those whom we call Anglo-Saxons, was so great that in the next century eight petty kingdoms were established in the Island by these immigrants, and the old Celtic Britons were supersded or driven into Wales.—The predominance of these Angli gave to the island its name. They are the true founders of the English people, and with them begins the first period of our own development in language and literature.

The Anglo-Saxon language,—which like the Gothic and old Norse, is no longer spoken—is closely allied with one that is still spoken, the Low-German; and its connection with Frisian and other dialects on the continent is exhibited by Dr. Latham, and traced up to the Teutonic branch of the Indo-European stock. (Eng. Lang. 2d. Edn. p. 56.)

In the eleven centuries, from 450 to 1550, the Anglo-Saxon became changed to Modern English. In the transition to Modern English we notice that the standard Anglo-Saxon (as exhibited in the writings of King Alfred, about 900 A. D.) has changed somewhat towards our English about 1150, and such writings as the latter part of the Saxon chronicle, the History of King Leir and his daughters, the poem of Layamon, and the Ormulum are denominated *Semi-Saxon*. Next followed what is called *Old English*, beginning with the reign of Henry III. (1216,) and ending with that of Edward III. (1327,)—and exemplified in such writings as the Romance of Havelock the Dane, the Gestes of Alisaundre, Robert of Goucester's Chronicle. &c. Next, in the time of Edward III. appeared the *Middle English*, in the writings of Chaucer (1328–1400,) Wycliffe, and Mandville. And lastly *Modern* English beginning with the poems of Spenser and the reign of Queen Elizabeth (1558–1603.) Sometimes, with less particularity, all these periods are included in three, namely, Anglo-Saxon or old English (to about 1150) Middle English (to about 1500) and Modern English.

We need not here give specimens of these stages of transition (they may be found in books on English literature such as Angus or Shaw)—nor of the changes in the forms or inflections of the parts of speech (—they are explained in Latham, p. 77 et seq.); but we shall present in few words the important causes which produced these changes in the language.

I would say that the *external* causes or those from without the language itself, were three in number: the introduction of Latin, of Christianity, with its hymns and litanies and of Norman French. The first two operated more or less together.

Although the Roman possession of the island had left very little Latin in the Celtic speech—a speech, moreover, soon overlaid or superseded by the Saxon—still this Roman possession placed the island in communication with continental nations who were in contact with Roman literature, and whose speech had become more or less latinized. And when, two centuries after the arrival of the Saxons, Christianity was introduced, there came along with it the same Latin (a grammatically developed and polished language) for use in worship and all ecclesiatical ministrations. Ireland, too,—close by,—was fortunate in becoming a place of refuge from the tumults and bloodshed that followed the wreck and disintegration of the Western Roman Empire. It was for a time the home of learned men. And after this we find distinguished scholars on the continent who were natives of England, Scotland or Ireland; while at home appeared others skilled in Latin and the learning of the day. Such results as these indicate that for a considerable time attention must have been paid in England to improvement in letters, at least by a small number of men. Of these king Alfred clung to his vernacular Anglo-Saxon and strove to improve it. And it must be remarked—and it is remarkable—that whatever Latin, Danish or other language had come into England, the native Anglo-Saxon did not give place to it nor change, in any great measure, its own character, but showed itself on the one hand ready for improvement, and on the other sufficiently copious in itself for the rendition or translation of the literature of other countries. One writer or Anglo-Saxon grammar (Vernon,) goes so far as to say that the Anglon-Saxon language "may, in copiousness of words, strength of expression and grammatical precision, vie with Modern German." These two causes, therefore, the Latin and a new worship chiefly in Latin, with the consequent use of religious Latin books, furnished model--(in the necessary vernacular translations of the same)—for improvement of Anglo-Saxon both in poetry and prose. We know that the influence from these sources on the subject-matter of literary effort was so great that it is characteristic of early Anglo-Saxon literary remains that they are not, like the early literature of other nations, made up entirely of war-songs, romantic poems, and fabulous legends of their ancestors—but comprise and almost entirely consist of versions of the sacred scriptures and of religious books. We can judge, therefore, that some influence was exerted also upon the structure and phrascology of the language itself.

The other external cause operating upon the language was the introduction of Norman-French by the conquest of 1066. The effect which this produced has been variously estimated. The truth seems to be that although the Norman-French was the language of the Court, of the bishoprics and monasteries, of the foreign nobles in their new castle-homes, and of all adherents of the new dynasty—yet the native Anglo-Saxon population were embittered in spirit and rebellious against the control of the Normans, and sturdily maintained their own language. To use the Norman French would have been to acknowledge their own vassalage. The popular language therefore survived, not having been immediately, to any great extent, influenced by the language of the conquerors. As the Danish families in the time of Canute had been few in number, so also the Norman families after the conquest were few in number compared with the whole body of the native people. As these, the vast majority, held to their own dialect it finally predominated and became with some intermixture, the sole language of the country.

But it was in the course of time, to some extent affected. To show this we must use a little minuteness. Shortly after the conquest, we find the article, adjective and noun not regularly declined, the plural ending of verbs is not regularly given, plural nouns end in *s* rather than *en*, *of* is used with the genitive, *to* with the infinitive, and words are spelt with *w* instead of *uw*. In consequence of the throwing off of inflections, the structure of sentenses was changed; the loss of declensions or terminational endings in words was supplied by the use of prepositions, and verbs were conjugated by the use of auxiliary verbs. These changes must have been accelerated by the introduction of Norman French, with its captivating literature, permanently and right in the midst of Anglo-Saxon—giving it, if not additional grammatical material, at least an increased activity in its own development. It is, in truth, a law of every spoken language to throw off or disuse inflections and to substitute prepositions and auxiliaries. But may not the operation of this law have been hastened by the contact of Anglo-Saxon with literary languages stimulating it to a literature of its own? Its vocabulary was also augmented. In the 13th century (for example) the Anglo-Saxon vocabulary, computed from what remains of its literature, consisted of about eight thousand words Of these nearly one thousand are of Latin or French origin.

Turning now from these exterior influences upon the speech of our ancestors, we notice that for a considerable time before the conquest, the cultivation of the native language had been neglected. And after that event, the Court, as we said, spoke French—the church spoke Latin—and the native people were humbled, dispirited, and neglectful of literary culture. The language, though still clung to, was suffering alterations and admitting innovations. It was in its greatest danger of deterioration and decadence. But at length it recuperated and sprang up afresh to live forever with the modifications already noticed. The generation that had beheld the face of William of Normandy, had been laid in their graves—and, after a further lapse of time and many political changes, England in her turn invaded France. In the reign of Edward III. the people became harmoniously blended into one. Then followed a new awakening of national life and of mental activity. Foreign words were no longer an indication of vassalage. Saxons and Normans were no longer Saxons and Normans, but Englishmen. The Anglo-Saxon being still predominant as the popular language, absorbed more willingly Latin and Norman terms. Its own anomalies were corrected; and in its new English dress appeared "our first great poem" the Satirical "Vision of Piers Ploughman"; our first great English prose book, Mandeville's travels; our greatest English poet for centuries, Chaucer; and above all, those English "translations of Scripture, which, more than anything else, were to carry the new language into the homes and hearts of the people." (Angus, p. 48.) Having survived many dangers of deterioration and of extinction it henceforth began its permanently triumphant career—emblematic of the sterling conservatism and indomitable energy of the English people.

Thus far we have traced the development of Anglo-Saxon into English. Let us now go back to the old Anglo-Saxon language and consider a few points connected with it. Whence did it receive its alphabet? When did it first become a written language? What are its prominent characteristics compared with modern English?

The Saxons, on their first coming into Britain, appear to have had no knowledge of letters. Of the Gothic language, to which Anglo-Saxon is related, the sole remaining documents are some fragments of a calendar and the translation of the Bible by Vulfila who lived about 370 A. D. He introduced an alphabet founded on the Greek. Of the old Saxons it is believed that the only literary monument is the Heliand, a life of the Saviour derived from the Gospels. (Farrar's "Families of Speech," p. 100.) Their letters of the alphabet "were formed immediately from the Latin." (Bosworth's Gr. p. 12.) With regard to the Anglo-Saxon proper, we learn that the earliest specimens of it are in manuscript not as old as the time of Alfred, and that these are copies of earlier manuscripts. At what precise time, therefore, Anglo-Saxon became a written language, it is hard to determine. From all that has been collected upon this point by Dr. Bosworth we can only say that it became a written language in the 7th century A. D., and with the adoption of the Latin alphabet.

The general character of the Anglo-Saxon compared with English is: its aptitude for compounds, in which we are deficient; e.g. boc-craeft (learning), eorthtylth (agriculture), scip-craeft (the art of navigation), and many others. It had, moreover, 4 cases, Nominative, Genitive, Dative and Accusative; and three declensions; and the gender of nouns depended mostly on their terminations. Adjectives were also declined and agreed in gender with their substantives. So also the definite article and pronouns. In verbs, the first, second and third persons singular were distinguished by their terminations; and some classes of verbs governed respectively the Genitive or Dative case. All these characteristics disappeared when the language became modern English. It is on account of these changes, which again necessitated a different structure of sentences; and on account of the extension of the vocabulary, that English resembles a new language; otherwise it is in substance but improved Anglo-Saxon. It is not so much an offspring of it as it is a continuation of it, modified by the causes before mentioned and enlarged to suit the demands of a philosophical literature, and of the arts and sciences, and of its position in a higher and wider civilization; but still retaining in its vocabulary a vast majority of Anglo-Saxon words. In a passage written by King Alfred, and containing one hundred and twenty words, only six words are now obsolete. (See Angus, p. 41.) In the vocabulary of Layamon's poem "The Brut," composed 300 years later, containing 32,000 lines, not 50 words are French or of new Latin origin. (Spalding's Eng. Lit. p. 116.) In the Lord's prayer, containing fifty-eight words, only three are not Anglo-Saxon words. Of a modern English Dictionary of 38,000 words, including derivatives and compounds, 27,000 are Anglo-Saxon words. And it is computed that our English Bible has only one twenty-ninth of its words other than Anglo-Saxon; Swift has less than one-ninth, Cowley less than one-seventh, Shakspeare less than one-sixth, Milton one-sixth, Spenser, Addison and Thompson less than one-fifth that are not Anglo-Saxon. In our ordinary colloquial speech, it is thought that eight out of every ten words we use are Anglo-Saxon words. (Spalding p. 155.) Take the following passage: St. John, xi. 32-36: "Then when Mary was come where Jesus was, and saw him, she fell down at his feet, saying unto him, Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died. When Jesus, therefore, saw her weeping, and the Jews also weeping which came with her, he groaned in the *spirit* and was *troubled*. And said, where have ye laid him? They said unto him, Lord, come and see. Jesus wept. Then said the Jews, Behold, how he loved him." Leaving out the proper names, there are only two words spirit (spiritus) and trouble (turbare) that are not Anglo-Saxon.

We must therefore, consider Anglo-Saxon our true mother tongue. We owe not only the great bulk of our words to it, but those classes or kinds of words which give strength to the language; as, the article and demonstratives, the forms of comparison, prepositions, and conjunctions, and auxiliary verbs; and those words or portions of words indicating the relations or nature of terms, as, *manhood, wisdom, fellowship, darling, goodness, kingly, wrathful*, &c.; the specific names of things perceived by the senses; terms of feeling and affection; of business; invective, humor, satire, colloquial pleasantry; and a large class of idioms and of irregular verbs and nouns that give terseness, strength, and expressiveness to our speech. (See Edin. Rev. 1839, on Bosworth's A. S. Dictionary.)

There have been many eulogiums on the English language—a language which (it is calculated) is now spoken by ninety-five millions and may be spoken by the close of this century by one hundred and fifty millions of people. This is not surprising when we bear in mind, that our own population (forty millions) added to that of England (31,000,845) and her colonial possessions (234,762,593) amounts to nearly two hundred and seventy-five millions. Indeed the probable total of the English speaking race a century hence is estimated at many hundreds of millions. (See Smithsonian Report 1874, p. 242.) Mr. Guest (Eng. Rhythms vol. 2 p. 429, 1838)) says "Of the five great temperate regions, *three*—North America, South Africa and Australia—are fast peopling with our race, and some now living will see them overspread with a population, claiming in our language the same interest as ourselves. That language, too, is rapidly becoming the great medium of civilization; the language of law and literature to the Hindoo, of commerce to the African, of religion to the scattered islanders of the Pacific. The range of its influence, even at the present day, is greater than ever was that of the Greek, the Latin or the Arabic; and the circle widens yearly. Though it were not our mother tongue, it would still, of all living languages, be the one most worthy of our study and our cultivation, as bearing most directly on the happiness of mankind."

The following brief eulogium by Rev. Mr. Farrar in a lecture delivered in England, 1869, is very beautiful, and we grudge not that the German language is united in the praise. (P. 101.) "English, a language which has produced a literature equalled by few and surpassed by none" is the main glory of one branch of the Teutonic stock and German of another; these "bright consummate flowers" "may challenge comparison with the noblest and most fruitful scions of the noblest and most fruitful stock. India may bring her Vedas and her Mahabharata, and Persia her Zend Avesta and Shah Nameh, and Greece her Homeric poems—and Rome may more than supplement the whole mass of her narrow, haughty, and unoriginal literature by claiming the glory of the Divina Commedia, and the Lusiad, and the Poem of the Cid,—but can any or all of them vaunt any superiority over the Teuton, who developed among his various descendants languages so lovely and noble, so strong and flexible, so subtle and wise, so intense and musical—languages so rich with all treasures of Poetry, Science, Philosophy, Eloquence, and History, as the languages of the Eddas and the Niebelungen, and of our early ballads—the languages of Kant and Goethe and Schiller, of Shakspeare, of Milton and of Wordsworth—the languages carried by commercial enterprise from Zembla to Tierra del Fuego—the languages which the thought of Germany, and the majesty of England, and the ebullient energy of America have elevated into the ruling languages of the political and intellectual world?"

I promised in conclusion to exemplify what I meant by a critical study of our language, by some remarks on the auxiliary verbs.

DERIVATION AND PRIMARY MEANING OF THE AUXILIARIES, AND REMARKS ON THEIR USE.

From the Anglo-Saxon Mayan—*to be able*, are derived May and Might.

From Cunnan—*to know how*, are derived Can and (cuthe) Could. [This gets the *l* thro' attraction with would and should.]

Can, signifying ability derived from knowing how, has come to mean, in general, ability residing in one's self; while May, in general, means ability derived from an external source, i. e. from permission or the absence of any hindrance.

Scealan—*to owe*, gives us Shall and Should (sceold). The original meaning, *to owe*, was retained, it is said, as late as Chaucer's time. "The faith I shall to God," i. e. owe to God. From the Bible we have, (Luke 16: 5-7.) "Hu mycel scealt thu?"—How much owest thou? [Grant's Eng. Gr. quoted in Mulligan.] From meaning *to owe*, Shall has come to imply obligation, duty.

Wyllan—*to will*, gives us Will and Would.

We can control the actions of others, but not their will; but we control our own will. Hence in the 1st persons, *I will go, we will go*, we express a determination or promise. But to express our control of the actions of others we must say, *Thou shalt go, he, ye or they shall go*. When, apart from promise or determination, we express simply what will occur, we use the reverse of these forms and say (without emphasis on the auxiliary, which emphasis would slightly alter the meaning)—I shall go, thou wilt go, &c. This distinction has existed in our language from a very early period.

The same distinction exists between Would and Should when used with past tenses. *Should*, when used without connection with past tenses is like an Indefinite Present or a Future, and expresses *duty* and also *supposition;* and is often employed to express an opinion doubtfully or modestly.

Without dwelling on the intricate uses of these auxiliaries in Interrogative sentences, and again when used in subjunctive or conditional expressions--(which you will find treated of in Fowler's Eng. Gr. p. 262)—let me present to you the following explanation given by Mr. Hare, as quoted in Latham's Treatise on the English Language:

"There is an awful, irrepressible and almost instinctive consciousness of the uncertainty of the future, and of our own powerlessness over it, which in all cultivated languages has silently and imperceptibly modified the modes of expression with regard to it." Besides this feeling, good breeding prompts us to veil the manifestations of our will, and to speak with becoming modesty. "When speaking in the 1st person, we speak submissively; when speaking to another, we speak courteously." In this way it is thought we may explain our mixed and intricate use of Shall and Will. I leave it to your consideration to determine whether or not the explanation is a sufficient one.

In an English Grammar recently published, the author boldly strikes out our Potential Mood with its may, can, must, might, could, would and should,—and regards all the auxiliaries as principal verbs. Will, have, do and be, are sometimes principal as well as auxiliary verbs—but it would be a wearisome task, I judge, to seek for examples of the others as principal verbs in modern English. There are two great laws of language, viz: 1. "The earlier the stage of a given language, the greater the amount of its inflectional forms; and the later the stage of a given language, the smaller the amount. 2. As languages become modern, they substitute prepositions and auxiliary verbs for cases and tenses:—"The reverse never takes place." (Latham, p. 69). In these particulars we cannot retrograde. We need all the auxiliaries we can have, including *ought, about*, &c., and *going to*—for the accurate expression of our thoughts, and we need more Moods and Tenses rather than a fewer number. And since by a law of language we cannot go back to terminational inflections, and since we have denuded our verb stem till only *s, ed*, and *ing* constitute its usual variations we must guard against any further impoverishment of the language in this most important element, and against any deterioration with regard to perspicuity in our present group of auxiliaries.

As we advance in literature and civilization the scope of our language increases and shades of meaning become attached to words which they did not bear before.

In this way, some of the auxiliaries are unfortunately deviating from their former definite signification. The original past tenses *could, should* and *might*, are now often past in form only—being used as Indefinite Present tenses, and sometimes as Future tenses. To exhibit this fact we need only adduce examples:

"I think your father *would* be pleased to see you." "I wish I *could* approve his conduct." "*Should* it rain however, I shall not come." "He says you *should* not go." "I believe you *might* prepare your lessons better," &c. So much is this the case that we are beginning to substitute "*You could if you would*" for "*You can if you will*." We may regret, but can hardly prevent, the confusion (to foreigners) which this change is producing.

Several explanations for this change have been offered. In the expression *I will gladly accompany you if I can*, we mean that it is possible that I may be able to do so: the condition is contingent and may be realized. But when the condition is hypothetical, i. e. does not exist and is not expected to exist—then it is the same as a thing gone by; and we are led to use the past tense in regard to it. As we say *I was young*, to imply that I am no longer so, so we say *I would go if I were able*, to imply that I am not able, or no longer able, and do not expect to be able? (This explanation has been offered by Mr. Mulligan, p. 149.)

Another explanation is that of the "usus ethicus" suggested by Mr. J. C. Hare, editor of the Philological Museum, in some remarks on the Greek Tenses—(a few of which I have already quoted). In accordance with this use, Dr. Latham (pp. 499–502) says, "The assertion of *duty* or *obligation* is one of those assertions which men like to soften in the expression." Hence in such assertions they say *should* and *ought*. "So in the expression of *power* as denoted by *may* and *can*;" they prefer to say *might* and *could*. Politeness also modifies our expressions; instead of the blunt expression *I will not accompany you*, we say *I would rather not* accompany you. So modesty modifies the positive expression *I desire always to do what is right*, into *I would desire* always to do what is right.

I would suggest that some of these expressions may be explained by Ellipsis: e. g. by supplying the omitted member of the conditional sentence, we read, "If the choice were granted me, I would rather not accompany you."

But however we may explain it, the fact is that custom, which regulates language, has reduced the past tenses of the auxiliaries perhaps irrevocably to indefinite present tenses.

With this brief exemplification, (in one little point), of the critical study of the English language, I leave this vast and all-important subject in its various bearings to yourselves who, as teachers, are peculiarly the custodians and promoters of the purity, clearness, power and increasing copiousness of the grand old language we have inherited from our Teutonic Anglian forefathers.

POSTSCRIPT.—I had prepared (for those teachers who have classes in Latin) some remarks, to be added to this lecture, on an improvement which might be introduced in manuals for teaching Latin Composition; I mean the placing of marks on the English auxiliaries to indicate to the pupil the sense in which the auxiliaries are intended to be used. After showing how May, Might, Can, Could, Should and Would are rendered respectively into Latin, first by principal verbs, and secondly otherwise, in notions of power, possibility, permission, wish, prayer, duty, obligation and necessity the subject was then reversed for translation with the following marks: the usual notation of a short syllable for the auxiliary slightly sounded or unemphasised, and the circumflex for emphasis or prolongation of sound.

As I left other points to the consideration of the teachers whom I had the honor to address, so (that I may not encroach too much on the columns of the Transcript) I must also leave to them this enquiry into *Emphasis on the auxiliaries as modifying the signification of sentences.*

☞ The *Baltimorean* says a woman is more economical than a man because her "waist" is smaller.

Of corset is.—*Boston Post.*

We always thought lace expensive.—*Detroit Free Press.*

Stay that!—*St. Louis Republican.*

Come, now, don't play on those strings any more.—*Exchange.*

☞ A gentleman questioning a little boy, said:

"When your father and mother forsake you, Johnny, do you know who will take you up?"

"Yes, sir," said he.

"And who?" the friend.

"The police," was Johnny's reply.

☞ A Memphis prisoner, who hated to see two lawyers disgrace the court-room by fighting, walked out, and was unfortunate enough to get lost. He has not been heard of since.

☞ P. T. Barnum has resolved to be a traveling showman no longer, but when it was announced that New Haven had a two-legged horse, his wife had to hide it.

☞ "Going through the rye," is suggested as a song for the female temperance crusaders.

☞ 'Old-Man-Afraid-of-his-Wives,' what the Indians call Brigham Young.

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