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THE PRESIDENT'S ANNUAL ADDRESS FOR 1872

the Society could contribute an account of their own progress and that the President should endeavour to construct an interesting general view of the progress of the world of letters and science

FIRST ANNUAL ADDRESS

OF

THE PRESIDENT

TO THE PHILOLOGICAL SOCIETY,

DELIVERED AT THE ANNIVERSARY MEETING, FRIDAY, 17TH MAY, 1872.

By ALEXANDER J. ELLIS, Esq.

INTRODUCTION.

GENTLEMEN,—It was, as you are aware, the intention of our late lamented President, Professor Goldstücker, to make our Anniversary conform to those of other learned Societies, by delivering an annual address. We have been hitherto accustomed to make our anniversaries in no respect differ from ordinary meetings, except in the passing of accounts and election of officers. In other Societies the retiring President usually delivers an address, referring to the work performed or the losses sustained during the preceding year, thus giving the proceedings on that occasion a distinctive character. Prof. Goldstücker considered that it would greatly contribute to the vitality of our Society, and especially increase the interest which the new members who have joined us take in our proceedings, if the President, on his retiring either altogether or for re-election, were to deliver an address which should contain a report of what had been effected in each part of Philology during the preceding year. He conceived that no President would be able from his own resources to furnish such a report, but that different members

of the Society could contribute an account of their own particular branches, and that from these quota the President should endeavour to construct an interesting general view.

The conception was one worthy of its author, and strikingly shewed his great interest in the continued vitality of this Society. There will always be a time of pressure in Societies, when the original members have died out, or have been removed from active participation by various avocations, often calling them to a distance, or making imperious demands on their time. This plan of inducing numerous members to work for the common good, thus creating a general interest in the objects of the Society, preventing it from becoming too one-sided, and shewing the points to which attention should be directed, was altogether happy, and we awaited its fulfilment with much interest. Unfortunately, as you know, just about the time when he would have commenced his preparations for the first of these addresses, Prof. Goldstücker was removed from the scene of his labours. The Council having requested me to act as President until the anniversary election, it devolved upon me to carry out our late President's intentions as far as possible. But the work which I already had before me did not permit me to attempt anything requiring so much preparation. I have therefore hastily put together some thoughts which have long floated through my mind, in the hope that they may prove a sort of introduction to such a series of reports.

Bespeaking your indulgence, then, for an attempt which I am acutely conscious of not possessing sufficient knowledge or time to carry out in a manner befitting the occasion, I venture to lay before you the best general view which I have hitherto been able to form, of the connection of all those numerous investigations into the nature, origin, and use of language, which are comprised under the common name of Philological Research.

ON THE RELATION OF THOUGHT TO SOUND AS THE PIVOT OF
PHILOLOGICAL RESEARCH.

Professor Blackie began a recent lecture (26th April, 1872) on modern Greek by defining Philology as "cracking about words." He said that every one now-a-days, "ladies and all," understood what it meant, thanks to Archbishop Trench and Prof. Max Müller. Now perhaps Archbishop Trench would not object to having his pleasant gossiping books called "cracks" about language—in the Scotch sense, not of course in a rather common family slang sense, where "cracks" mean "fibs"; though I am afraid that at present no one even with the best will can tell many "cracks" about words without innocently perpetrating many "fibs" by the way. But Prof. Max Müller, though he has cast his remarks in the popular form of lectures, delivered to those singularly and provokingly mixed audiences, which crowd the theatre of the Royal Institution when a "crack" man has to "crack"—whether about words or anything else,—certainly claims a somewhat higher aim, when he styles his subject the Science of Language. For my own part I fear that we have no real science of language at present; that despite the enormous labour already bestowed, it has only resulted in a collection of materials, and that these materials, utterly insufficient notwithstanding their huge proportions, are mostly of the wrong sort, and when not of the wrong sort are mostly of the wrong shape, for a really scientific investigation.

The extent of philological inquiry is something appalling. The second edition of Pott's *Etymological Researches*—still incomplete—extends, excluding prefaces, to 5656 pages, of 45 lines each, or more than a quarter of a million of lines, containing more than two millions of words. And this only represents part of the printed labours of one man. Add the books he quotes, especially in his wonderfully comprehensive "scientific arrangement of the science of language," prefixed to the fourth division of the second part of the work just named,

and dated Christmas, 1869, and these "cracks" about words will sound like the very "crack" of doom! And then venture for a moment to imagine that almost all of the work will have to be done over again when the really scientific method has been discovered! The prospect is not refreshing, and perhaps the Philological Society will not thank me for suggesting such an idea. But why so? If a learned Society exists, it exists essentially as a learning Society, and in this case it is well to know that there is much for it to learn. And I hope to show that there is much for each individual member to do, however amateurish he may feel. The lions are few, but they want troops of jackalls, and the great body of such Societies as the present consists of "lions' providers,"—shewn in the present case more especially by your having supplied the place of a dead lion by a living jackall.

It is quite useless to trace the changes of meaning which the word Philology has undergone, from the mere grammatical range which it once possessed, to the immense sphere which it now arrogates. But it is as well to consider roughly what studies are usually comprised under this loose term, before inquiring what is the pivot round which they all turn,—on which of course will depend the formation of the corresponding science; if it be indeed formable. These seem to be:—

The actual existing vocabulary and grammar of living languages, considered independently.

The same considered historically.

The same considered comparatively.

The same considered at once historically and comparatively, so that the comparisons relate to past as well as present.

The genesis of the words by descent and initially.

The similar genesis and relation of the constructions.

The contrast (or resemblance) of words and constructions for objects and relations apparently similar (or dissimilar).

The relations of whole languages historically, and geographically, including ethnology.

The complete study and comparison of dead literary languages, and their literature.

I exclude *a priori* theoretical relations which have wasted reams of paper, and amused no one but their inventors,—if them.

Now my acquaintance with all these matters is very much like a butterfly's with honeys—he has not made any, but he has tasted many, and perhaps from not being a bee himself, he has no very marked apiarian prejudices. To drop metaphor, though I have had the good or ill fortune to go through one private and two public schools, where of course Latin and Greek were the staple products,—where the usual imperfect methods resulted in the usual imperfect fabric,—yet the greater part of my life has been spent away from words; and when I have recurred to them, as I have over and over again (for they have always had a certain fascination for me), I have rather looked at them as a mathematician or a physicist, than as a so-called scholar. Hence I have never been content with the sound and fury of commentators,—“Sic Smithius, perperam! Absurde correxit Jonesius!” with other amenities,—where downright contradictions are bandied about with the sole effect of rendering it probable that there was no solid foundation for either opinion. Nor have I been content with the etymological explanations which are so confidently and variously given by different writers. I never could see how in the world they found it all out, and had disagreeable suspicions that it might be all guess work—wherein I almost fear I was right. Now it so happened that the particular little part of the study of letters which from an early time attracted my attention was letters literally, or rather that which letters seemed meant to recall, and after floundering about hopelessly after the usual fashion, I saw that speech sounds must be studied in the living speaker, and not in the dead alphabet. And thus by degrees the thought grew up in me, that the whole of language was also a thing to be studied in the living speaker, and not in fossil books. The form which this conception ultimately took was, that the turning-point of all philological research is *the relation of thought to sound*. I should be much surprised if this conception were new. The relation has indeed been already

considered, but mainly, if not solely, in connection with the origin of language, and has then been treated far too perfunctorily, and with far too many *à priori* assumptions, to be very fertile or certain in results. That is not by any means the view I take. To my mind the relation of thought to sound is the scientific matter of philological investigation, connecting all its parts, suggesting the methods to be employed, and indicating the ultimate Utopia of its intention. But when stated thus laconically and baldly, it will probably not be understood as I conceived it. It is therefore necessary to enter into some detail.

In the first place, the formula appears too comprehensive. Should sound in general be understood, or only *speech sounds* in particular? Surely philology does not deal with music, for example, not to mention other descriptions of sounds produced by the organic and inorganic world? But is not singing a species of speech sound, and is there not an intimate connection between alterations of pitch and significations of words? How can vowels, accents, especially Chinese tones, be understood without reference to music? And do not the inorganic and organic sounds so react on thought as to call forth imitative speech sounds? Hence it seems to me that the domain of philology embraces the whole of the domain of sound, not merely those parts which are commonly included in physical text-books, but all those more recondite physiological sections which are considered in Helmholtz's *Lehre von den Tonempfindungen*, together with other extremely difficult and complex researches into the production and discrimination of vocal sounds, by the organs of man and other animals. We are thus led to consider phonology as embracing only a portion of the sounds to be studied or allowed for by the philologist. Certainly a very important part, and divisible into two distinct branches, the production of sound, and the appreciation of sound, but still not the main part, which for philology is, the cerebral effect produced first by the sound itself, and next by the attempt to imitate it. It is needless to say that few even professional philologists are well or even moderately well informed upon these points. In fact,

the amount of acquaintance with phonetics on their part is ordinarily so small that we cannot feel surprised at their generally confusing letters with sounds, which amounts to taking pictures for men. Yet these sounds are the first rude elements of the subject which they profess to treat.

Next, *thought* appears too limited, and certainly is so, if the word is to be confined to the intellect. I use it however here as a convenient abbreviation for the whole result of cerebral action, whether merely perceptive and reflective, or moral, whether due to the senses and intellect, or the emotions and will. In order to understand the relation between thought thus conceived and sound, it would seem necessary to begin by a profound philosophical *à priori* analysis of the human mind and its powers, with their laws. But such a beginning would infallibly end in misfortune. A thinker who makes such an analysis works from his own limited surroundings, and is fettered by his own limited acceptance of his own limited language. Hence he leaves out of consideration innumerable relations which to him may be either incomprehensible or ridiculous, but which rise spontaneously in other minds affected by other circumstances, and find their expression in language. The special analysis of thought required is that of untutored men, uneducated peasants, savage tribes, growing children. It is extremely difficult to conduct, even rudely, owing to the contrast between these minds and the highly cultivated investigator's, and to the absence of any well-understood medium of communication. If it is difficult, or rather impossible, to translate faithfully from one cultivated language into another,—that is to use phrases covering precisely the same ground, neither more nor less,¹—what must

¹ As it would be rash to assume that the new edition of Pott's *Etymologische Forschungen* is in every one's hand, I take the liberty of citing the words in the original (2ten Theiles, 1te Abtheilung, 1861, p. 24): "Was wäre erst von Uebersetzungen zu sagen? d. h. Umgießung eines gedanklichen Stoffes in verschiedene Formen je nach Sprachen (Systemen), deren keins (auch selbst dann nicht immer, wo es sich um

nahverwandte handelt) dem anderen, vollends nach der subjectiven Seite hin, weder im Ganzen, noch, höchstens mit geringen Ausnahmen, in den Einzelheiten, sich streng congruent zeigt. (Als augenfälliges Beispiel diene etwas Kleuker's Uebertragung des *Zendavesta* aus Anquetil's Französischer ins Deutsche, wenn man bedenkt, dass Anquetil seinerseits auch nicht eigentlich das *Zendische* Ori-

it be to transfuse shapeless thoughts into shapely words! But until we can form some conception, however rude, of the germinal thoughts of the untutored, we cannot advance far in understanding the relations with which language deals.

Now having defined the two matters compared—thought and sound—more precisely, we are prepared to deal with their *relations*, which are mutual, thought reacting on sound to the full extent that sound acts on thought.

The *first* relation is physiological and solitary, due to the termination of the auditory and vocal nerves in the brain, whereby these organs are brought into connection with the organs of thought, and influence and reflect it, as the motions of the body and face influence and reflect our feelings and intentions. That this is the fact we know roughly well enough, through ordinary lesions. But it would be desirable not only that philologists should have some notion of physiology, but that physiologists and medical men generally should be more or less acquainted with some of the principles

nal, sondern meist nur durch die vermittelnde Zwischenform des Pehlwi wiedergab!) Nicht genug, dass jeder Sprache ein mehr oder weniger eigenenthümliches und individuelles grammatisches System (noch von Verschiedenheit des lexicalen Stoffes Absehen genommen) zum Grunde liegt, und die Besonderheit ihrer Stilart eine ganz unnachahmliche zu sein pflegt, wie sollten sich zwei Sprachen einander decken, wenn selbst in stammgemeinsamen die Wörter, ja oft einander etymologisch gleiche Wörter, selten auch nur noch lautlich völlig zusammenstimmen, und, begrifflicher Seits, der Einheit ihrer Genesis zum Trotz, in ihrer weiteren Geschichte sie häufig auf äusserst divergenten Entwicklungsbahnen dahin reissen liessen? Vgl. z. B. Lat. *chors* Viehhof (frz. *basse-cour*, Hühnerhof), wie noch in dem Salischen Gesetze *curtis* (der Hofraum bei dem Hause), das militärische *cohors* u. s. w., und dagegen nun der fürstliche Hof, frz. *cour*, mit seinen Sprösslingen *courtuoisie* (aus *curtensis*), wie *bourgeoisie* (aus *burgensis*), *courtis-ane* (mit neuem Suffix: eig. *aulia*), *cortège* (Gefolge) u. s. w. nebst ihren germanischen Gegen-

bildern Mhd. *hovesh*, *hofsch*, Nhd. höflich, höfisch, hübsch. Hieher gehört auch die Frage, ob und in wie weit es in einer Sprache sinngleiche oder gleichbedeutende Wörter geben könne. . . . Geht man von dem unlängbar richtigen Satze aus, dass, was seinem Ursprunge nach grundverschieden, es auch in seinem Wesen sein müsse: dann kann man nicht umhin, Sinnes-Gleichheit etymologisch auseinanderlaufender, ja selbst zwar wurzelgleicher, aber in den Bildungs-Zusätzen ungleicher Wörter schon prinzipiell in Abrede zu stellen. Man wird zwar behaupten dürfen: etymologisch, d. h. ja nun eben schon *a principio* ungleiche Wörter oder Formen können zwar einander (nach dem zu bezeichnenden Objecte hinwärts) gleich-geltend sein oder werden, Gleiches bedeuten, wenn man diesen Ausdruck auf den inneren subjectiven Sinn der Wörter einschränkt, —niemals." (Translating the last remark into Mr. Mill's language, "radically distinct words may come to have the same denotation, but will never have the same connotation.")

and practice of philology. The relation of cerebral condition, of auditory condition, of vocal condition, would then be better studied. The interaction and counteraction of the other senses would also be better understood. Thus the language of the blind must be totally different from that of the deaf. And the effect of different degrees of blindness and deafness must be important.¹ The phenomena of voicelessness, of stammering, stuttering and so forth, have all strict bearings upon philological studies, and require careful record by persons who are at once physiologists and philologists. The effect of disease, especially cerebral disease, upon vocal power as well as mental conceptions, and the expression of conception by speech, ought to be well watched. Some beginnings have been made in this direction, but the records are usually in medical journals which are beyond the range of philologists, and the medical recorders seem often strangely ignorant of the very rudiments of philological knowledge which would make their observations valuable. Thus the remarks on the powers of uttering vowels and consonants in the remarkable cases of a severed epiglottis and a closed glottis which I lately brought before your notice from an American medical journal, as pointed out to me by Prof. Max Müller, were deprived of half their interest and value by the rudimentary ignorance of their recorder. Lately there were some curious observations and plates on the contact of parts of the mouth in producing sounds laid before the Odontological Society (Transactions, Feb. 1872), but I have failed to elicit any valuable result from them, owing to the same rudimentary ignorance in the experimenter. It might be worth while to ransack medical records for years back in this country, America, France, and Germany, for cases bearing on this point. When the index of subjects in the Royal Society's Catalogue is published (it is not yet commenced), we may have some means of grouping and studying these cases, which lie at the root of all philology.

The *second* relation between thought and sound is again solitary or individual, and is partly medical, but principally

¹ All consideration of gesture language of importance as accompanying spoken is here omitted, although it is always language between "sighted" people.

such as can be more or less accurately observed by persons without a medical education. It consists in the influence of sound upon individual thought and feeling, and the expression of feeling or thought by spontaneous exercise of the powers of producing sound, without reference to any listener. Waves of air arising from the same source actually affect different organisms very differently, and those from different sources affect the same organisms in different ways. This is a matter of common observation.¹ But to be of use philologically it should become a matter of scientific observation. It is not enough,—it is often entirely misleading,—to say, “a child I knew did so and so,” “a baby I was told of shewed such and such feelings.” This is mere gossip; possibly founded more on inference than on observation. In fact the great difficulty in making observations is to abstain from inference. I am afraid it is a difficulty which pervades all departments of ordinary observation, and is especially felt in such as are here contemplated. Another difficulty is that of eliminating the habits of the observer himself, so as to record as much as possible the habits of the person observed without alloy. A third difficulty arises from the necessity of putting oneself in the place of another, of feeling with another’s nerves, and of evolving from confused expression the sensation actually experienced. Then comes a fourth difficulty in expressing those sensations or interpreting them to others. This is attempted chiefly by analogies, often misleading. One says a sound grates, another that it beats, another that it is sandy, another that it is scratchy, another splashy,—do these indicate the same sensation from the same source, or different sensations? Observe the difficulty that a patient has in making the doctor understand his sensations, and the generally perfunctory way in which different doctors will arrive at totally different conclusions from the same indications.

Now all these sensations are the elementary ground of most explanations of the formation of language. Take the three principal theories, irreverently termed *Poohpooh! Bow-*

¹ Compare *Merchant of Venice*, act 4, scene 1, speech 8, respecting the effect on some frames of mind of the “bagpipe singing in the nose.”

wow! and Dingdong! The Poohpooh! or interjectional theory, is based on the natural phonetic expression of various sensations, feelings, thoughts; an expression of an involuntary character, and quite irrespective of a listener. But till we have something like a scientific record of what these "natural" expressions are, among persons of different ages, and degrees of culture, especially under different social and geographical conditions, and in the rudest and most primitive states of existence, we have really no proper basis for this theory. It will mean one thing in England, another in China, another in Caffreland, and so on. It is evident that in order to record the cries, we should require an instrument very much more refined than any which we now possess,—although Mr. Melville Bell's *Visible Speech*¹ goes a great way towards supplying it, further indeed than most people, perhaps than ten or a dozen people in the whole world, are at present capable of following him. All records hitherto given must consequently be looked upon with suspicion. They are only makeshifts of the vaguest possible kind. They are similar to the answers one gets to the common question: What is Miss Brown like? "Oh! she's a fair girl, one of those bright complexions you know, not a coarse dairymaid's red, but a splendid colour, and bright eyes, darkish, hair reddish brown and warm, fine figure, and middle height, and magnificently dressed!" I believe that would give a much better idea of Miss Brown, than most representations we have of sighs, and groans, and cries of delight and horror, and other oh! ah! and poohpooh! sounds.

¹ Inaugural Edition, London, 1867, 4to., pp. 126, and 16 plates. As Mr. Bell's symbols are not "cast in type" for ordinary use, it is as well to remember that my own Palæotype allows of their transliteration into the commonest existent types of all sizes, as shewn in my *Early English Pronunciation*, p. 15. Other recent attempts are those of Prof. Ernst Brücke, Ueber eine neue Methode der phonetischen Transcription, Wien, 1863, 8vo., pp. 65, which has been adopted and somewhat modified by Dr. H. B. Rumpelt, in his *Das natürliche System*

der Sprachlaute und sein Verhältnis zu den wichtigsten Cultursprachen, Halle, 1869, 8vo., pp. 227; and that appended by Dr. C. L. Merkel to his *Physiologie der menschlichen Sprache* (physiologische Laetik), Leipzig, 1866, 8vo., pp. 444. But both systems are far inferior to Mr. Bell's in comprehensiveness, arrangement, and form of symbol. Rumpelt and Wilhelm Scherer (*Zur Geschichte der deutschen Sprache*, Berlin, 1868, 8vo., pp. 492) both apply Brücke's phonology philologically.

I should be sorry to propound a theory of femininity upon the above description of Miss Brown. I fear that interjectionalists have been led too far in propounding a theory of speech upon written representations of these cries in different languages, having scarcely any closer connection with the original.

The *Bowwow!* or onomatopoetic or imitational theory is liable to even greater sources of error. The vocal organs of animals vary extremely from those of man; the forms of the resonance cavities especially, on which distinct vocality mainly depends, and of the closing portions, the teeth, lips, tongue, cheeks, are so differently disposed that the vowels and consonants must be physically distinct from anything producible by ordinary man. Some persons with great power of mimicry get out imitations which may be lauded as more natural than nature—as in the well-known fable of the squeaker versus the pig. But this is not usual, and we may safely say that the cries of animals, when not conventionally dished up to children by nurses and grannies, are very differently conceived by different children, especially in different countries. I have myself listened over and over again to one of the most distinctive cries, which we hear repeated so often in England, the cuckoo's note, and have failed to make out the consonant or the first vowel. Again I have listened carefully to sheep and goats, which have an interest to us from the Greek βῆ, and Phrygian βεκός,¹ to try and discover the initial consonant. Seldom or ever could I detect any approach to a labial. In fact the animal generally opens its mouth before commencing the sound, so that the labial glide is impossible. The effect seems to me purely in the glottis, and resembling the Arabic *ain*. Even the celebrated bowwow itself is seldom labialized; though the dog does sometimes make a glide which recalls a sort of lip effect, and ends his cry with a bastard *oo*, which is I believe

¹ Of course I take the word βεκός, said to be Phrygian, but also said to have been uttered by children who had never heard any but goats cry (Her. 2, 2), to be a mere imitation of that

cry in Greek letters βεκ, with a Greek termination added. The βῆ is the sheep's cry in Cratinus, Dionys. 5; μηκάομαι, βληχάομαι, were the verbs for bleating.

to be made without any labial action. The old Greeks have $\beta\alpha\upsilon$ $\beta\alpha\upsilon$, which of course in modern Greek becomes (bhabh) or (bhaph),¹ and this last may be compared with the "waffing cur" of Yorkshire, shewing how slender a foundation the natural cry gives for fixing the diphthongal sound. In passing, I may call attention to the resolution of the diphthong in the verb $\beta\alpha\upsilon\zeta\omega$, which those who can may pronounce, and to the guttural form of the modern Greek $\gamma\alpha\upsilon\gamma\iota\zeta\omega$. I do not dispute that many words are intended to recall the sensations experienced in hearing sounds, but how far they are imitative or not I have no means yet of determining. Here observations on savages are much to be desired, but these should be conducted by people who have at least some inkling of how to exhibit the sounds used by the savages, and have taken some care to compare these with the cries actually made by the animals. It would be also desirable to compare these imitations with the range of speech sounds used by the different imitators in ordinary language, as it is evident that their power of imitation will be materially limited by the sounds at easy command. This will probably give a key in many cases to the different ways in which different nations conceive or represent the cries, believed to be the same, although perhaps even animal cries are geographically differentiable. I pass over the non-animal sounds represented, as their consideration would lead me too far.

The *Dingdong!* theory has, so far as I know, received no other name; let us call it *symphonesis*. It is that advanced by Prof. Max Müller, and christened I believe by Prof. Whitney. "There is," says Prof. Max Müller (Lect. Sci. Lang. 1, 370, first ed.), "a law which runs through nearly the whole of nature, that everything which is struck rings. Each substance has its peculiar ring. . . . It was the same with man, the most highly organized of nature's works." The theory is, we are told in a note, originally Heyse's, and was published by Steinthal. The "ringing" is stated to be used, "of course, as an illustration only, and not as an

¹ Read (a) the short of *a* in *father* and (ph, bh) as *f*, and *v*, sounded without bringing the lower lip against the teeth.

explanation."¹ I am afraid that as an illustration it is very defective, presenting scarcely the vaguest analogy to any one who thinks on the subject physically. Prof. Max Müller's notion is that in obedience to this ringing, "each conception, as it thrilled for the first time through the brain," received "a phonetic expression," but that the instinct by which this was effected has long become extinct.² He considers *roots* to be these phonetic expressions. But I pass them over for the present, as they seem to me to belong more naturally to the relation next considered. Of course if this instinct no longer exists, it cannot be at all investigated. But I am inclined to attach some reality to symphothesis, and to think that it is at least as active now as ever. It is certainly overridden among people who speak a cultivated language, to whom words have long been counters, and in watching the gradual evolution of language in a child the influence of this disturbing environment has to be carefully allowed for.

In attempting to trace symphothesis in adults, association of various kinds also presents a great difficulty, and may exist in numerous cases where not only the observer but the observed (often one and the same person) are unconscious of its influence. Thus the names Lydia, Rhoda, Millicent, Ernestine, Liliast, will "ring" to the last degree romantically in many an ear, partly from romantic associations, but also probably from their "sweet sounds." We can hardly perhaps associate them with earnest, thoughtful, resolute, though thoroughly feminine women, pledged to carry out a principle of justice to their own sex, and fully equal to the task. Of course this is mere absurdity. Names are given long before

¹ See this theory rather severely handled by Prof. William Dwight Whitney, on pp. 268—270, and 282, note, of his "Oriental and Linguistic Studies. The Veda; the Avesta; the Science of Language," New York, 1873, sm. 8vo., pp. 417, a republication of reviews of these subjects, which criticises various other theories of language under the headings of "Bleek and the Simious, Schleicher and the Physical, Steinthal and the Psychological Theory of Language."

² The "thrill" of pleasure, or whatever else it may be called, which passes through the whole nervous system when pleasurable excited by some new thought, feeling, conception, or recognition of the justness of an analogy, of success in any way,—this is certainly not extinct, and its frequent experience probably gave its origin to the whole theory, and has made that theory so readily received. As to the extinction of root-formative power, see below, p. 28.

qualities are developed, and fortunately are not now supposed to have a meaning, although Humpty Dumpty, whom the last wondrous fairy tale, *Through the Looking Glass*, has raised into a great authority on language, declares that a name must mean something, and that Alice, with a name like hers, "might be any shape, almost" (p. 116). Now what shape would you give to the five ladies I have just named? I assure you that I had no romantic notions rung in to me, but on the contrary a most satisfactory impression of the potentiality of womanhood, when I heard the speeches delivered in Parliament against the Women's Disabilities Removal Bill, on the first of this month, criticised this day week by Miss Lydia Becker, Miss Rhoda Garrett, Mrs. Millicent Fawcett, Mrs. Ernestine Rose, and Miss Lilia Ashworth. The "ring" of these names will henceforth be to my ears no "uncertain sound" (1 Cor. 14, 8), but a most enlivening peal of welcome to more than half of the human race. Thus do associations interfere with observation.

But take another instance. A young artist, writing to me from the Pyrenees the other day, pronounced the new-fallen snow to be "scrumptious" (skrəm'shəs). The word is not in the dictionaries. I fling it down before the Society to make what they can of it. No one will fail, I think, to grasp its meaning. I had not the slightest difficulty. Is it interjectional, imitational, or symphonetic? Does it imitate the sensation created by the sight of the new-fallen snow to an artistic eye in the atmosphere of Southern France? The word, which I believe is not uncommon among young men at the present day, is probably some school or college slang revived, but it can scarcely have been thus applied before. Was it a direct application? or associative? or analogical? Was there ever a root to the word? Had it a history, a descent? Was it, when invented, a pure fancy of the moment, with nothing but absurdity and freakdom to generate it? These questions, at any rate, are not absurd or freakish. They are questions which the philologist has to ask himself over and over again, with little chance of success

in answering them, till he has been able to register numerous observations carefully made and corrected for possibilities of error. That we have none such yet to speak of, shews how far we are from a science of philology. That there are so many to make, shews what a wide field lies open to the amateur, whose essential use to science is to collect scattered facts in off-regions for professors to sort and appreciate.

The *third* relation between thought and sound is the most important to philology, and the two preceding are in fact merely introductory. It is the social relation, the most mysterious and least understood, but the most active of all. The pith of it is this, that one sound suggests a single thought in two minds, and that one thought suggests to one mind a sound, which on being uttered excites the same thought in another mind. The fact that this is approximatively true, makes language possible. The fact that this is not exactly true, makes language ambiguous. My own impression, one that has grown upon me with years and experience, is that this is very far from being precisely true. So far from the same sound calling up the same thought in two minds simultaneously, I believe that it frequently calls up irreconcilably different thoughts. So far from one man being able by words to convey his thought to another, I believe that he frequently only succeeds in exciting an irreconcilably different thought. So far from every man understanding every other man who speaks what we are accustomed to call the same language, I believe that no man does precisely understand any other man, and that every man occasionally egregiously misunderstands every other man. I am sorry to say, too, that at present I do not see any direct way out of the difficulty. Heaven protect us from an eruption of philosophical language! Its burning lava would soon settle the business. Thought would have to take lodgings in Herculaneum.

Let me refer again to that great authority whom I have already quoted, Humpty Dumpty, as he discoursed when sitting on a wall, before that stupendous tumble which vainly called in requisition all the king's horses and all the king's

men,—bating two horses wanted in the game, and two messengers, as we subsequently learn (p. 139).

“There’s glory for you!” [cries he, after putting in a clincher, p. 123.]

“I don’t know what you mean by ‘glory,’” Alice said.

Humpty Dumpty smiled contemptuously. “Of course you don’t—till I tell you. I meant ‘there’s a nice knock-down argument for you!’”

“But ‘glory’ doesn’t mean ‘a nice knock-down argument,’” Alice objected.

“When *I* use a word,” Humpty Dumpty said in rather a scornful tone, “it means just what I choose it to mean—neither more nor less.”

“The question is,” said Alice, “whether you *can* make words mean so many different things.”

“The question is,” said Humpty Dumpty, “which is to be master—that’s all.”

Alice was too much puzzled to say anything, so after a minute Humpty Dumpty began again.

“They’ve a temper, some of them, particularly verbs,—they’re the proudest; adjectives you can do anything with, but not verbs; however, *I* can manage the whole lot of them! Impenetrability! That’s what *I* say!”

“Would you tell me, please,” said Alice, “what that means?”

“Now you talk like a reasonable child,” said Humpty Dumpty, looking very much pleased. “I meant by ‘impenetrability’ that we’ve had enough of that subject, and that it would be just as well if you’d mention what you mean to do next, as I suppose you don’t mean to stop here all the rest of your life.”

“That’s a great deal to make one word mean,” Alice said in a thoughtful tone.

“When I make a word do a lot of work like that,” said Humpty Dumpty, “I always pay it extra.”

“Oh!” said Alice. She was too much puzzled to make any other remark.

“Ah, you should see ’em come round me of a Saturday night,” Humpty Dumpty went on, wagging his head gravely from side to side, “for to get their wages, you know.”

(Alice didn’t venture to ask what he paid them with; and so you see I can’t tell you.)

I make no apology for introducing this exquisite fooling into a grave argument. The whole question of language and philology is so charmingly touched that I recommend all interested in them to read the whole dialogue, and especially the subsequent explanation of the nonsense words in the song

of the *Jabberwock*. Humpty Dumpty is a perfect type of your philosophical-language-monger. If he does not make words himself on an individual classification, he gives new meanings to old words till he loses the social character of language entirely, and locks himself into a box as effectually as the poor bride in the "Mistletoe Bough!" leaving future generations to find bare bones and wonder how they got there.

Language teems with life. It is born of two, by the interaction of the instincts of each. The ball of sound and sense is driven like a shuttlecock from one to the other in quick alternation. The individual corners and projections are broken off by the repeated blows. A something, a residuum, rather battered and worn, but still available, remains. And this forms the medium of communication. It recalls in each something of the separate individuality of each. Perhaps each thinks too much of his own crooks and crotchets, and so misunderstandings arise, but the shapeless lump is bigger than all its broken warts, and so it serves—somehow. Rather "a lame and impotent conclusion" truly. But then "suckling fools and chronicling small beer" (*Othello* 2, 1, sp. 59) is the chief end and aim of language; the wise men and the dainty drinks are too rare to be much regarded by the "common drudge twixt man and man" (*Merch. of V.* 3, 2, sp. 12).

These vague metaphors are certainly not scientific, but they may serve to convey to you in some rude way a thought which is not very distinct in myself, and by their very roughness will illustrate the difficulties under which we labour in conveying and receiving conceptions by the highway of speech. But I wish strongly to impress on you the social genesis of language. The usual theories of the origin of language are too individual. The Poohpooh! the Bowwow! and the Dingdong! theories might serve for *Robinson Crusoe*. With *Man Friday* would begin real language—attempted and partially effected interchange of thought by mouth and ear. It is my own belief that no two hearing and speaking persons could be thrown together on a desolate island without inventing a language; whereas no length of time would evolve a language

from the consciousness of a solitary.¹ The very conditions of the vitality of the race, reproduction and maternal care, secure sociability—secure therefore the genesis of language. Every mother and child have probably a language of their own for some time, and occasionally some words of it remain through the overwhelming floods of national speech. But cut off this disturbing element. Let the parents have no great vocabulary of their own, and see how enriched and altered it may become by the additions of the new life. Let these words pass on to other children. Let a little society be formed by the addition of a few strangers. Let the local wants suggest local terms. And a new variety, a new dialect, a new language arises. I am told that along the Italian Riviera, about San Remo and that way, nearly every bay has its own dialect, and these dialects rapidly become mutually unintelligible. I also learn that the Erse of Kerry is not understood in Donegal. In Norway every valley seems to have a peculiar spoken dialect, but all learn a uniform written language, which of course greatly controuls the change. In nomad tribes we hear of language rapidly changing. In large and thinly peopled districts, languages vary with great suddenness. These little speechlets die unchronicled. They are worth nothing for what they convey. But they are worth much for shewing how the great languages of the world were formed. It is often by studying the lowest animals that we gain the key to the highest. The great complexity of cultivated languages, products of various mighty causes, overwhelms us. We run a risk of omitting essentials in artificial abstractions. We must discover the genesis of language, if at all, in the continuous genesis of patois, dialects, jargons, *lingue franche*, camp speech, savage talk. The peasant's

¹ It is possible that he might create a system of signs to recall facts, as an aid to memory. A man at one time remembering himself or conceiving of himself as existing or thinking at some past or future time, is in a certain respect doubled and forms a retrospective or prospective society, so that he notes something *now* for himself to understand *then*, or reads something *now*

written *then*. In this respect memory replaces sociability. But though this may affect sign language, it does not affect speech language in its origin, which is all that is here considered. Practically, however, both memory language and gesture language tend to modify speech language. But for writing and action our speech would be materially different.

words must be carefully noted, and compared with the peasant's habits of thought. The wild man's untutored utterance must be mastered and contrasted with his untutored conceptions. It is hard, very hard. The observations hitherto made are, I am afraid, in many, perhaps in most instances, often little better, and often much worse, than waste paper. The missionary is so anxious to convert that he perverts everything by the way. He begins by translating the Testament (which must be at best a fairy tale of an enchanted region to the mind of a savage), long before he has mastered the rudimentary notions of the mind he addresses, the point of view, the *colour*, under which it sees everything. Even in collecting European patois, a cultivated man converses with the people, and almost necessarily misconceives their thoughts and misrepresents their words. At best he is not familiar with their speech, so as to be able to tell a story in it as the peasant would. And yet stories written by such persons, rarely from oral tradition (and if so, too often doctored), in a conventional orthography which may recall the speech somewhat to him, but has little phonetic meaning to an outsider, are about the best representatives of growing living organic speech that we possess. Here is a vast field for the observer who is faithful and will give us facts and not foist in his own semilearning. It is really lamentable to read the etymologies in our provincial glossaries. They are no part of the glossary maker's business. Let him give the words faithfully as regards sound (in construction as well as isolation), let him illustrate the words extensively by phrases collected from actual hearing (not invented for the occasion by himself), let him endeavour as well as he can to convey the meaning by careful analogies (not by mere synonyms often grossly misleading), and he has done his part. The rest belongs to a man with wider knowledge, having hundreds of such glossaries and other vast resources at his command.

Of course I do not stay to consider the use of all this. I suppose we have to base the science of philology. I try to indicate one of its most important means, the study of freely developed speech, the illiterate organism. We are to study

language as a phenomenon, not as an instrument. But this is a comparatively modern idea. Language was studied only for its applications. Latin contained all the learning in the world, and was the language of its religion. Hence it was acquired, just as French and sometimes German are now acquired by most of us, as a means to an end. If we could get ideas from Latin and convey them by Latin, that was enough. Whether the Latin we learned was the same in form as that which Cicero spoke or wrote was a trifle. We assumed it to be. Then Greek was, as it were, rediscovered. Latin and Greek books went through the crucible of scholarship. Their orthography was improved, their errors amended. Learned men—not shams, really learned men of the time—pruned them, till they resembled the yew-trees of fantastic shape. Hebrew was of course not forgotten, and, thanks to Jewish persistence, never really died. But then religion played mad pranks with language. Adam was assumed to have spoken Biblical Hebrew—just as most English children supposed (I did for one) that he spoke English, and that dog, cat, lion, and so forth, were the names Adam gave. We English children were not more absurd than our fathers, when they made all languages descend from Hebrew. But there was one advantage in this; it turned thoughts from the mere application of language, to the examination of language *per se*. This age has shifted. Almost in our own days came the discovery of Sanscrit, and philology proper began—but, alas! at the wrong end.

Now here I run great danger of being misunderstood. Although for a scientific sifting of the nature of language I presume to think that beginning at Sanscrit was unfortunate, yet I freely admit, that had that language not been brought into Europe,—had not the exigencies of Indian government forced open its locks, and given the precious book within to the philologists of the world,—our knowledge of language would have been in a poor condition indeed, and philology could hardly have hoped to rise above the dilettanteism implied in its name. The effect of the discovery of Sanscrit has been to raise into existence a set of ingenious and labo-

rious men, who have determined to unearth the secret of language, who have toiled night and day with an industry and a disinterestedness beyond anticipation to accomplish their mighty task, and who have actually succeeded in bringing to light a variety of most astounding facts, shewing an historical connection hitherto unsuspected, and an aptitude of language to accommodate itself to circumstances, to new conditions and new influences, under definite laws,—which at once dissipates the ridicule of those who, with Voltaire, would define etymology as a science where the consonants go for next to nothing and the vowels for nothing at all. It would especially ill become one that unworthily occupies a chair just left vacant by a distinguished Sanscritist, whose loss not only our own limited circle but the whole world of letters must deplore, to speak disparagingly of Sanscrit studies. We are under the greatest obligations to those distinguished men who have undertaken to unravel its secrets and to shew its connection with the languages of Europe. Yet I must repeat, that for the pure science of language, to begin with Sanscrit was as much beginning at the wrong end as it would have been to commence zoology with palæontology,—the relations of life with the bones of the dead. And I am afraid that one of the consequences will be an extreme unwillingness to undertake that long and troublesome living examination of living speech wherein alone, as it seems to me, can we hope to find the key to the mystery. Laborious as it may be to pore over manuscripts, to compare letter by letter, to exhume, as it were, bone after bone of long interred skeletons, and place them side by side for comparison, carefully studying every little projection and depression, the labour is as nothing compared to the patient watching of habits, registering of usages, slow acquirement of uncongenial thought, accurate appreciation of living changing sounds, in thousands of thousands of instances, on which we must base our real science of language. The change is like that which converted conchology, the mere classification of the hard shells, into malacology, the study of the living mollusc, by which alone the shell received its

explanation. But it is harder. The conchologist was at least a naturalist, that went forth to the sea-shore to collect, or gathered spoil through sailors in every quarter of the globe. The malacologist had to become the hardy dredger, the careful dissector, the painful microscopist, the patient aquariumist, yet he remained a naturalist. But, in this case, the bookman has to be converted into a natureman; the chair and library have to be forsaken for the horse and hut; literature has to become science. Had we not a kind of intermediate creature called an ethnologist, we might despair of the attempt ever being made. But the intimate connection of ethnology with philology on the one hand, and biology, including sociology, on the other, lets us hope that future generations will rejoice in a light we can only prognosticate.

In the first place, we cannot read Sanscrit. It is almost like the first reason for not firing a salute—having no cannon. But we have the cannon here—it is the powder which fails. I shall be told that I could not bring a more groundless accusation against Sanscrit, which has a model alphabet. But that alphabet is not primitive. The great works existed for ages in the mouths of men alone before they were written down, and the great works were certainly not the first efforts of the language. By the time that these works were written,—in an alphabet which of course surprises Europeans very much, used as they are to a mere bludge (it's the only word with which my mind would "ring" in this connection, and so I present it to you for analysis,¹—I never heard it before),—by that time I can feel no doubt that the pronunciation had materially changed, and that the alphabet

¹ It was suggested that the word must have arisen from a kind of North-American-Indian-incorporation of *bl-ot* and *sm-udge*. I can't recall any such words having passed through my mind at the moment when this suggested itself so forcibly that I could not find any synonym, and felt forced to commit it to paper. No doubt the associations with *bl-ot*, *bl-otch*, *blu-r*, and perhaps *blu-nt*, *blu-ster*, *blu-sh*, together with *po-dgy*, *sl-udge*, *f-udge*, *sm-udge*, worked upon my mind, but I could not point out any two words precisely which

more than any other two worked upon me to make the compound. But has not some such eclecticism always worked after a few words have become current? How else could Murray's and Adolf Wagner's extravagant notion—that nine principal roots and nine after-roots sufficed for all languages—have arisen? (Pott, *Et. F. Theil* 2, Abth. 1, p. 76.) But to refer *bludge* to the "roots" *bla+ag* or *ba+la+ag*, would be a cerebral lesion, absolute brain-splitting, in my own case.

was meant to secure an artificial sacerdotal recital. Again, the pronunciation of that comparatively late alphabet itself is not understood. No one can for a moment agree with (*ee, oo, ri, rii, lri, lrii, tsh, dzh, nj*)—(I employ my palæotypic signs as usual). Two letters are called (*sh*), which cannot be true. The sounds of the letters called (*h*) and (*v*) are disputable. The real distinction between the dental and cerebral *t, d, n*, is not understood here, and seems to be falsely laid down by Bopp and others. The *Anusvâra* and *Visarga* are stumbling-blocks. Moreover, no one in England seems to think it worth while to attempt to pronounce these Sanscrit letters according to any definite theory. Who thoroughly comprehends the system of accentuation and quantity? Who practises the chant in which the long verses were certainly uttered? What ear knows the rhythmic effect of the quantity? Who can tell the difference between the extremely artificial language of the poems and the language of common life which generated the *Prâcrit*, and was the real existing organism from which the Sanscrit was sublimed?

Then for the sister dialects. *Zend* I put aside as a mass of conjectured pronunciation. Greek is a subject of dispute at almost every stage. There is hardly a point on which opinions do not differ. Thus *π, τ, κ*, may have had (as Rapp appears to think) those strange middle sounds heard in Saxony, which are “bats” to the German ear itself; *β, δ, γ*, may have hovered between the modern Greek sounds and the ordinary English *b, d, g*. What pages and pages of dissertation do not *φ, θ, χ*, recall! Who can declare the value of *ζ*? What was *σ* itself? Rapp makes it a sound intermediate between (*s*) and (*sh*). For the vowels, if *a, ι*, are tolerably secure, who can precisely give the distinctions between *ε, η*, and between *ο, ω*? Who knows *υ*? Among the diphthongs, not to mention *ou*, who knows *av, ev, ηv, ωv*? Who can clearly distinguish *αι, ει*? What of *υι*? And as for the diphthongs with *ι* subscript, what is to be said? Then the accents—the terrible accents; so important that the grammarians had to invent them in order to assist foreigners in distress;—what distress have they caused to us poor foreigners!

The Latin pronunciation is a subject of controversy at this moment.¹ And then, remember, all these troubles turn upon a fixed orthography, invented ages after the time for which we want really to know the pronunciation of Greek and Latin,—the time of change. In fact, although we are comparing Sanscrit, Greek, and Latin (I pass over the other languages for brevity), for the very purpose of seeing their growth, we are comparing full-grown skeletons bone by bone, and the foetal system escapes us! Can we hope, out of this, to get at those principles and laws which make a science? Could Darwin have drawn his theory of evolution from geological data? Geologists all exclaim that geology furnishes no transitional forms. Would geologists recognize them as transitional if they found them? I am afraid that the history of the salmon would lead us to think otherwise. Can we then see the transition between these languages? It is easy to invent transitional sounds and forms. This has been done, in a very remarkable way. But what we want is to find real transitional forms between living languages, and then we shall, for the first time, have some ground for the former, which are at present mere “bottomless fancies.”

One merit of the investigations introduced by Sanscrit, is the conception of a *root*. As Pott has shewn, the term *root* is due to Varro;² but the present conception goes far beyond Varro's hint, good as it is. Pott's latest extremely careful and guarded definition is as follows: “Root, whether verbal

¹ An allusion to the new interest excited in the subject by the mooted of a proposition to alter our strange insular pronunciation of Latin in schools, and introduce one more consonant with what we can glean from Cicero and Quintilian.

² Pott, *ibidem*, p. 188, note, says: “*Radices linguae*; Ov. M. 6, 557, bezeichnet, auch bildlich, den Theil der Zunge womit sie fest sitzt, also nicht: Sprachwurzeln. Allein in Varro, L. L. vii. 4, kommt eine recht brave Stelle vor, worin er von der Unmöglichkeit spricht, wegen des hohen Alters der Wörter noch immer durch alle genealogische Verbindungs-Arten hindurch zu ihren letzten Etymen vorzu-

dringen. Darin sagt er nun z. B. auch vergleichsweise: ‘Igitur de originibus verborum qui multa dixerit commode, potius boni consulendum, quam qui aliquid nequiverit, reprehendum; praesertim cum dicat etymologice non omnium verborum dici posse causam. . . . Neque si non norim *radices* arboris, non possem dicere pirum esse ex ramo, ramum ex arbore, eam ex radicibus quas non video: quare qui ostendit *equitatum* esse ab equitibus, *equites* ab equite, *equitem* ab equo, neque *equos* unde sit dicit, tamen hic docet et plura et satisfacit grato. Quem imitari possumusne, ipse liber erit indicio.’ Ganz unser eigenster Fall!”

or pronominal, differs from letter or syllable in being, not merely a phonetic, but also a conceptional *unit*,¹ of words and forms genetically related, which was present in the mind of the *framer* of language as a prototype when he created them; nay, which is more or less clearly *felt*, when not entirely obscured, by *every* speaker with respect to the language he uses (generally his mother tongue). Or, *conversely* if you will, these words and forms, carrying this unit within them, being again divested by the *investigator* of language of all their multifarious, internal or external, *phenomenal forms*, thereby revert in their nakedest simplicity and truth (*ἔτυμον* in Greek signifies the *real* cause, or *base* of words) to the root, as to their respective common origin, to the *intellectually* further indecomposable *atoms* of speech." Translating this from metaphysics into physics, we may say that words can be separated into classes, each characterised by its separate constituents possessing a phonetic portion, either identical in all, or related according to certain known individual or national habits and analogies in the use or substitution of speech sounds; and each characterised also by some fundamental conception to which the individual conceptions of its constituents can be with more or less difficulty referred. The fact is, that the determination of roots is extremely difficult; that different men determine the phonetic original differently, and also differ in its conceptional interpretation. When strictly exhibited, as the kernel of the verbal nut, it is a something which is nothing—a mere philological figment,

¹ The italics correspond to Pott's spaced letters. The following is the original passage: "Wurzel (und das gilt nicht bloss von Verbal-, sondern auch z. B. von Pronominal-Wurzeln) ist, nicht wie Buchstabe oder Sylbe, die bloss lautliche, sondern auch begriffliche Einheit genetisch zusammengehöriger Wörter und Formen, welche dem Sprach-Bildner bei deren Schöpfung in der Seele als Prototyp vorschwebte, ja, wo nicht ganz verdunkelt, mehr oder minder deutlich von jedem Redenden gefühlt wird mit Bezug auf diejenige Sprache (zumeist die Muttersprache) deren er sich bedient.

Oder, umgekehrt wenn man will, diese Wörter und Formen mit einem solchen Einheits-Punkte in ihrem Schoosse, durch den Sprach-Forscher erst wieder entkleidet von aller Mannigfaltigkeit, äussern wie innern, ihrer Erscheinungs-Formen, somit in ihrer nacktesten Einfachkeit und Wahrheit (Etymon im Griech. bezeichnet den wahren Grund, die Base der Wörter) kehren zu der Wurzel gleichwie zu je ihrem gemeinsamen Anfangspunkte, zu den nach rückwärts geistig nicht weiter zerlegbaren Atomen der Sprache zurück." Pott, *ibid*, p. 224.

which no speaker ever knew, and which, even with the best intention, it is difficult to comprehend. The phonetic unit undergoes so many transformations in its various incarnations, that it is often recognizable only by the eye of faith. Wherever the help of Sanscrit fails, and the root has to be divined or collected from other sources, the difficulties increase so rapidly, as Pott himself points out (*ibid.*, pp. 246—252), that perhaps no such root can be regarded as universally accepted by philologists. Nay, even in Sanscrit, such a man as Lepsius has called in question the originally monosyllabic character of the roots.¹ With the conceptional portion, matters are still more unsettled. To suppose that the extremely abstract notions which radicalians (if I may coin the term, to avoid the ambiguous 'radicals') assign to their phonetic quintessences, were really in the minds of rude men beginning to speak, is contrary to all experience as to the formation of abstract notions in the living growing minds of to-day. Recognizing, however, broadly the existence of phonetic units and conceptional units among at least the Aryan languages, is it possible to propound any theory which could be put to the test of observation? I throw out the following for examination.

The word simply, as a sound conceptionally affecting two human beings at one time in practically the same manner, being the first social product of the relation of thought to sound, let us suppose the circle of society to become extended. Both sounds and senses vary in different mouths and brains. Different acts and objects are performed and viewed resembling in some vague manner the acts and objects denoted by the accepted but slightly variable speech sounds. The

¹ Lepsius's words (Paläog. S. 63, 91, 92), as quoted by Pott (Ét. F. Th. 2, Abth. 1, p. 217), with his inserted [?!], are: "Um die Gunirung richtig zu erkennen und die namentlich in der Sanskritconjugation so sonderbaren, anscheinend willkürlichen Einschreibungen von Vocalen und Consonanten auf ihren Begriff zurückzuführen, müssen wir uns zuerst wieder darauf berufen, was wir oben erkannt hatten, dass

die Sprache durchaus auf ursprüngliche Lautabtheilung hinweist, und dass, wenn diese auch später verletzt werden musste, dies doch am wenigsten von den Stämmen anzunehmen ist. Nothwendiger Weise werden daher [?!] alle jetzt anscheinend consonantisch auslautenden Stämme ursprünglich zweilautig oder zweisylbig."

resemblance and the variety, as accepted by at least two persons at once (that is, suggested by one and acknowledged with more or less certainty by the other), are expressed by sounds resembling with a difference. This differentiation of sound and sense is readily carried on, and to an observer ages afterwards furnishes a presentiment, rather than an image, of a phonetic and conceptional unit. If we watch the growth of general conceptions in children at school (which is a real forcing house in this respect) and of our own selves in after-life, we shall not find much difficulty in acknowledging the readiness with which obscure resemblances are seized, and the extreme diversity of the points of connection. The conceptional unit, with its great vagueness, and, to a subsequent philosophical eye, wondrous abstraction, is a phenomenon for which we ought to be prepared. That this conceptional unit should be accompanied by a correspondingly Protean phonetic unit, will occasion no difficulty to any one who hears new words grow up among children or in cliques. But both points are matters for living observation. That the root-creative power is dead, I, for one, cannot believe, although this is affirmed by all radicularians.¹ That it ever lived in the sense which radicularians assign, I, for one, also cannot believe. True, if there are about 1000 original languages, each with about 1000 roots, as Pott estimates,² it may be difficult for

¹ Pott (*ibid.*, p. 230): "Das Zeitalter der eigentlichen Ur-schöpfung, d. h. worin ihr Grundstock an Wurzeln und sonstigen streng-primitiven Elementen (wie meist die Pronominalstämme und Anderes dieser Art) sich zuerst bildete, haben die Sprachen, soweit menschliche Erinnerung reicht, längst im Rücken. Seit aber jene ganz eigentlich schöpferische Urkraft der Sprache erlosch (und wir begegnen ihr, wie gesagt, historisch nirgends mehr oder kaum) von da ab beschränkt sich alles weitere Schaffen in den Sprachen nur auf ein Umbilden, abgegränzt im Verändern jener vorhin erwähnten Grundelemente, theils an sich, theils durch combinatorische Zusammenfügung derselben, unter einander. Ein Schaffen mit und in lediglich altem (ererbten), zum höchsten von fremdher (tralatitisch)

erborgtem Materiale: es wird keinem Werderuf mehr ins leere Nichts hinein durch die That geantwortet. . . . Nach einer Seite hin also ist, wir müssen es unweigerlich bekennen, in den Sprachen ein Stillstand, eine offenbare Ohnmacht, nämlich im Schaffen von unbedingt Neuem, singetretten."

² Pott (*ibid.*, p. 73): "Es mag aber schon an dieser Stelle gesagt sein, dass, wie keine Sprache leicht das Maass von einem halben Hundert buchstablicher Grundelemente (d. h. wenn man nicht im Mitzählen aller feineren Unterschiede, nach Ton, Quantität und sonstigen leisen Färbungen etwas zu frei verfährt), so etwa ein Tausend die Mittelzahl abgeben darf für die Wurzeln, deren sich auf und ab je die eine oder andere Sprache bedient."—And again (*ibid.*, p. 83): "Die Zahl

any sound to be uttered by one man and understood by another, which a thorough radicularian could not assign to some one of these million original roots already established to his own satisfaction. But this would not in the slightest degree impugn the creation of the root among the new speakers. It is indeed only the cultivated whose vocabulary is limited by the immense resources at their command. The uncultivated have constantly to form new words, and in doing so, most probably, as their use of them extends, proceed from this first social product, the word, to the second social product, the root, the connecting phonetic and conceptional core of differentiated words.

There remains a third and extremely important social product, bearing indeed a great resemblance to the second, so great a resemblance in fact, that until Sanscrit radicularianism was current in Europe, it took its place; I mean differentiation according to the mutual relations of the duo (the speaker and the listener), and of each or both of the duo to the non-duo (that is, all which is neither speaker nor listener), considered generally as divisible. Having already drawn too largely on your patience, I must touch very briefly upon a section of my subject, well fitted to absorb my whole time. The first portion of this product relates to what we denote by pronouns

der Wurzeln in den Verschiedenen Sprachen der Erde zu finden ist, wir sahen es, ein Problem, dessen einigermaßen ausreichende Lösung noch die sorgfältigste und unermüdliche Arbeit von Jahrhunderten verlangt. Eben so unsicher steht es aber auch zur Zeit mit der wirklichen Zahl menschlicher Sprachen; und will ich in dieser Betracht auf meine Rassen, S. 230 fgg. verweisen, um die Schwierigkeiten dieser Frage (860, die von Adrian Balbi gegebene Zahl, ist noch die annäherungsweise zutreffendste) nicht hier aufs neue erörtern zu müssen. Wir wollen statt obiger 860 Sprachen als runde Summe 1000 setzen. Auf jede von diesen dann weiter durchschnittlich ebenfalls 1000 Wurzeln gerechnet, ergäbe dies für die Gesamtheit aller Erden Sprachen ungefähr die Summe von Einer Million an Sprachwurzeln.

Eine Million Wurzeln (man verstehe mich wohl: Wurzeln; indem hier die Legionen von Wörtern ausser Acht bleiben, die aus jenen entspringen) welches Gedächtniss (sicherlich nicht derer, 'die wir jetzt leben,' das unsere) vermöchte sie zu tragen? Wie aber? hätte dennoch—wunderbare Weise—das Urvolk, eine solche Last in seinem Hirn nicht nur zu tragen, sondern sogar schöpferisch zu erzeugen, die Fähigkeit besessen? . . . Selbst indess das Vorhandensein einer einzigen Ursprache, die von allen übrigen Idiomen die erste Grundlage ausmachte, eingeräumt, . . . so müßte doch zum mindestens die Auffindbarkeit einer solchen an der grossen Menge von Wurzeln scheitern, welche überdem zum grössten Theile unter einer geradezu unabsehbaren Fülle von Wörtern und Wortformen versteckt liegen."

and prepositions, affixes and inflections, which, however, in different languages assume extremely different forms, and often I believe are originally mere differentiations of sound and sense in the original word, and not at all new words first monosyllabically coordinated or subordinated, next agglutinated, and thirdly fused or chipped into inflexions. Whether this order, which corresponds to Prof. Max Müller's theory of languages, be established by historical documents in any single case, or not, I do not know.¹ But the two former stages do not appear necessary for the evolution of the third. They may all three be perfectly independent formations. The extremely different character of the Aryan and Semitic inflexional systems seems to point to such a diversity of origin. The American incorporative arrangement is also quite distinct in its nature. With these relations I would group the whole of the accident and syntactical construction of language. They are merely developments of the relations of the duo to the non-duo, or the interrelations of parts of the non-duo as viewed by the duo, either with or without distinct reference to themselves. To these syntactical relations belong all the etymological part of grammar, with composition and ordinary formative syllables and letters, the result of a conscious grouping of conceptions consciously expressed.

With this terminates the general view of philology as centering in the relation of thought to sound, where thought expresses all cerebral action and sound all acoustical phenomena. The first relation was physiological and nervous. The second was individual, arising from the thoughts excited or expressed by sounds in human beings taken separately, and led to the interjectional, imitational and symphonetic theories, all more or less imperfect. The third relation was social, characterised by a common thought excited in at least two persons by the same sound; and its first product was the word, the second the root, and the third the inflection and its representatives. Thus the whole of philological research is reduced to one conception, which I propose to term *meropy*,

¹ Humboldt's classification of languages as: isolating, agglutinating, incorporating, and inflecting (Pott. Et. F. Th. 2, Abth. 4), is another matter altogether.

as the nucleus of a real science which has long outgrown any meaning radically or derivationally attachable to either philology or etymology,—the love of words, or the science of the true. The word *meropy* is not in the English vocabulary, nor, in its abstract form, in the Greek, that great well whence we bucket up our abstract terms. But it is Greek and very ancient Greek in its origin, though what old Homer exactly meant by his *μέρορες ἄνθρωποι* is matter of dispute. That the word was distinctive of man, and that it related especially to his power of speech, there is little doubt. The first syllable *mer* is usually connected with *μέρος*, and supposed to refer to articulate utterance—an opinion defended by Pott (*Et. Forsch.*, Theil 2, Abtheil. 3, p. 527). Benfey (*Griech. Wurzellex.* 2, 39) throws out the suggestion that *μαρ-* and *μερ-* in *μάρ-τυρ*, *μέρ-ιμνα*, *μέρ-μερ-ος*, *μέρ-οπες* (the singular is not found), signifies *thought*. If so, *meropy* would express my conception with sufficient nearness. As a new form of an old word there will certainly be no harm in imposing this meaning upon it,—of course, with Humpty Dumpty's permission.

The view that I am seeking to urge upon you is that language is a living thing, the outcome of the social connection of two or more beings capable of hearing and producing sound, and that it must be watched and registered as it now grows; that, in short, our only hope of really catching the laws of its formation is to study it in its present life, and not, as hitherto almost exclusively, in its past death. And in reference to the applications of comparative philology, let me ask: Have we not been too eager to infer social connection, such as emigrations and immigrations, tides of invasion, ethnological conclusions in short, from resemblances of sounds of words, especially names of places, from the more recondite resemblances of root admitting such varieties as are roughly indicated by Rask's or Grimm's law, and from the still more seducing resemblance of grammatical construction? Taken altogether, when pointing the same way, these resemblances are certainly very overwhelming to one who hears them for the first time as propounded by scholars whose very

names have a religion in their sound, by means of picked instances, dexterously manipulated, and sweeping over regions where poor Ignoramus can only wonder that mortal eye ever peered. But has sufficient attention been paid to the infinite diversities which are thus quietly backgrounded? Is not diversity an element, and a most important element, in the comparison? Again, has sufficient attention been paid to the spontaneous evolution of similarities (I exclude identities, as altogether dubious), through the similar constitution of thought and sound influenced by more or less similar conditions of environment? Ought we not rather to reverse the conclusion hitherto drawn, and instead of inferring contact from linguistic similarity, to require some historical proof of contact before admitting that the resemblance in speech may be more than casual, that is, before admitting that we have a *vera causa* for the resemblances? The bearing of this on ethnology is very evident, and, as before said, it is to ethnology that philology must here look for help, rather than conversely.

Now what influence would be exerted on philological research by such a view as mine, if generally adopted? It would I think, in the first place, fix great and marked attention on existing forms of speech, not merely on those possessing a literature,—for all philologists must join in Pott's hearty reprobation of Lachmann's incapacity to see the use of studying any other languages,¹—but especially on those

¹ Pott (Et. F., Theil 2, Abth. 3, p. vii): "Der Kritiker Lachmann gestand blankweg seine Unfähigkeit zu begreifen, wie man sich mit Erforschung einer Sprache abgeben könne, welche keine Literatur besitze. O über euch armen Tröpfe: v. d. Gabelentz, Castrén, Schiefner, Hodgson, Gallatin, Kölle, und wer sonst zu eurem Gelichter gehört, auch W. v. Humboldt nicht zu vergessen. Vernehmt euer Todesurtheil und lasst euch hinrichten. Der grosse Kritiker hats gesprochen; und—was wäre denn auch die Lachmannische Philologie ohne das Sichten von Lesarten, wozu es natürlich der Pergamente bedarf, und die dazu nöthige,

empirische Kenntniss von Sprachgebrauch? Wer nur Kritiker und nichts als Kritiker ist und sein will (oder: kann), wie käme dem leicht eine Ahnung davon, dass es, ausser dem philologischen Sprachstudium oder dem, wie es Schaub nicht unpassend genannt had, schlechtweg instrumentalen, noch eine andere Art Sprachforschung gebe, welche, nicht begnügt mit der Spracherlernung als dienendem Mittel, als Selbstzweck sich zur Aufgabe setzt—wissenschaftliches Begreifen der Sprachen, hoher wie niederer, mit oder ohne Literatur, als eben so vieler Ausschnitte des allgemeinen und volklich-besondern Menschengeistes?" Bravely said!

not possessing a literature, and the peasant dialects of those which do possess one, as the real fermenting mass whence language grows. In the next place it would lead to a greater appreciation of efforts, fortunately already begun, to investigate the descent of literary languages historically. There is not much chance at present of the fossil literary languages being forgotten, but it is only by the living observation, and the historical affiliation, that we can hope to re-compose them, and see them as we now picture to ourselves the wondrous geological re-creations of the scientific palæontologist.

Now the studies requisite for this purpose are, first and most essentially, a general acquaintance with comparative phonology. This is a branch of philology which has lately attracted considerable attention. German philologists are apt to consider that the subject has been exhausted by Johannes Müller, Lepsius, and Brücke,—few seem to know the laborious Merkel, to whom we owe the most thorough physiological examination of the vocal organs yet published. So far from this being the case, these writers have not succeeded in explaining the cultivated sounds of English and French. Frenchmen seem even in a worse condition; but Volney formerly, and Édouard Paris just now, have made a beginning. In England we have worked hard, and Melville Bell has laid a noble foundation. But every one, so far as I can see, labours under nationality. Till this nationality is thrown off by dealing with many nationalities, we shall not make much progress towards the general relations of speech sounds on which meropy, as a science, must be based.

The next step is, with the best phonology we have, to study living speech. The missionaries, as already hinted, are very doubtful assistants. I am afraid their natural eagerness to transplant the savage mind to Judæa, or to give it neo-platonic abstractions, or even their denominational exiciencies, however ecclesiastically praiseworthy, greatly interferes with the purity of the native dialect, and that all Scriptural translations and missionary tracts and hymns must be looked upon ethnologically and philologically with suspicion. And the worst of it is, they not only give a false representation, but

they actually corrupt the native organic action and poison the stream of meropy at its source. Then we have peasant dialects, gathered under great disadvantages and often with faulty tools. Let me, however, note with peculiar pleasure Schmeller's Bavarian labours, and congratulate the Philological Society in having given rise to Mr. Murray's Lowland Scotch and Prof. Haldeman's Pennsylvania German studies.

After this we have the historical investigations, of which Grimm and Diez are our present models. But I must not omit to mention the great impetus which the historical study of our own language has received from the labours of Koch, Stratmann, Mätzner and others in Germany, and the publications of our own Early English Text and Chaucer Societies in England, already bearing fruit in Dr. Morris's *Historical Outlines of English Accidence*. And sometime before the arrival of the Greek Kalends, our own Society may perhaps contribute its long-announced, actually conceived, but unfortunately still embryonic Historical Dictionary of the English Language. But all these studies are necessarily preliminary. Until trustworthy reprints, not doctored, not corrected, not re-spelled according to a system, have been for some years before the world, not merely in English, and Anglo-Saxon (for which we are so much indebted to our Secretary, Mr. Furnivall), or Old Saxon (as in that splendid model Schmeller's *Heliand*), but in all the languages of Europe, and especially in those classical tongues which most of us only know in a mediæval orthography and a scholar's recension,—until that good time has come, we, and our children to the third and fourth generations, will not be able to trace languages historically upwards either in sound or thought. We have hitherto been forced to build on the sand, and all our erections must be looked upon as temporary lodgements, mere shelter for the navvies before whom stands the rock they have to pierce.

Such is my butterfly view of philological honey.