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## OUR LATIN-ENGLISH LANGUAGE

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This paper presents merely one small phase of a large subject, that of the Latin element in English. It would require a whole course of lectures to cover this fascinating field and another to cover its implications for the teaching of Latin. To be sure, this field is no longer the *terra incognita* it was a dozen years ago, and many may possibly have partaken of its fruits to the point of satiety, which is the dignified Latin way of saying that they are "fed up on it." But I must warn you all that it will do you no good to become tired of this subject, for it will make itself heard *plusque magisque*. As one whose active interest in the field extends back to the time, not so many years ago, when it was in an almost total state of neglect and who has carefully watched its cultivation, I feel that I can predict even greater crops than have yet appeared. The important thing will be to keep out the weeds. With improved methods of cultivation and the intensive agriculture initiated by the Classical Investigation this should not be difficult.

The topic for to-day is a very small one in spite of its broad title. It is, however, a fundamental one and must be presented even at the expense of disappointing those teachers who might prefer to have me speak, as I might, of the practical applications to Latin teaching.

By way of elucidating my title, if it needs elucidation, let me say at once in a puzzling paradox that English is not English, any more than French is French. French gets its name from the Teutonic Franks, though the language is overwhelmingly Latin. English gets its name from the Teutonic Angles, though it is very largely a Latin tongue. The very name English has tended to obscure to some extent the real nature of the language in spite of

that fact that the original English, Anglo-Saxon, is for us a difficult foreign language. While Latin teachers are aware of the fact that there is a large Latin element in English and quote statistics more or less glibly to prove it, I do not believe that they realize the full extent and significance of this element. I believe that it is considerable enough to enable us to assert that our language is Romance as well as Teutonic, and that a proper name for it would be Latin-English, with Latin coming first. Let us examine the facts.

There are several ways of determining the extent of the different elements in our native tongue. The obvious course is to examine all the words in the dictionary. If the reader were forced to hold an autopsy over all the words therein embalmed (for many of them are dead and obsolete), he might shrink from suggesting this procedure. Fortunately, however, plodding scholars have saved him this trouble. The older estimates based on the dictionaries, such as those of Trench, are anything but reliable. He gives 60 per cent as Saxon, 30 per cent as Latin, 5 per cent as Greek, and 5 per cent as miscellaneous. Much more accurate are percentages derived from tabulations of the words in the 1861 edition of Webster's Dictionary, as quoted by F. Max Mueller (*The Science of Language* [1891], p. 84). These practically reverse Trench's figures: 69 per cent Latin and Greek, 27 per cent Teutonic (chiefly Anglo-Saxon), and 4 per cent miscellaneous. More recently the editor of the Standard Dictionary, Frank H. Vizetelly, presented some statistics (*Essentials of English Speech and Literature* [1915], p. 162). He analyzed nearly 20000 words in the Standard Dictionary into numerous subdivisions. Grouping these together one obtains these figures: Latin 48.3 per cent, Greek 13 per cent, Teutonic 29.7 per cent, miscellaneous 9 per cent. The last class includes 3.5 per cent of hybrids, a large number of which no doubt are Latin and Greek. Bearing this in mind, we see that the figures indicate that the classical element, Latin and Greek, is over 100 per cent larger than the Teutonic and that the Latin element alone is over 62 per cent larger than the Teutonic.

A slight confirmation of the above is furnished by an examination of the Terman vocabulary test of 100 words, formed by sampling at random from the dictionary. 51 are Latin and 13 are Greek. We need at the present time an analysis of the words in the new Oxford Dictionary.

But it has been objected that no one knows the whole dictionary and that a better idea of English as actually used may be obtained from an examination of perhaps one hundred running words. On this basis it has been shown that the so-called native element runs from 70 per cent in Gibbon to 94 per cent in the Authorized Version of the Bible, and that the so-called foreign element, including Latin and Greek, runs in the same works from 30 per cent to 6 per cent. But these figures are extremely misleading. Not to dwell on the fact that they are based on the examination of very small amounts, the chief objection is that the same words are counted over and over again and that these words are the simple little syntax words, many of which in an inflected language like Latin have no counterparts or have counterparts which are used much less frequently. My observation seems to show, for example, that the definite article in printed English occurs on the average about ten times out of a hundred running words — as low as six and as high as thirteen. My colleague, Professor Ernest Horn, has found that three words, “the,” “and,” “to,” make up one-tenth of the total number of words in correspondence and in first readers, that ten words, “the,” “and,” “to,” “you,” “of,” “be,” “in,” “we,” “have,” “it,” make up about one fourth, twenty-five words over a third, and fifty to sixty words a half. All of these words are of Teutonic origin, except “very” and “letter,” which naturally occur frequently in correspondence. “Letter” is the only word consisting of as many as six letters. No word has more than two syllables. Most of the words are pronouns, auxiliary verbs, conjunctions, and prepositions. These are to be looked upon not as vocabulary words expressing ideas, but as syntax words expressing relations. Furthermore, some of these words are merely equivalent to prefixes and suffixes. If “put after” is to be counted as two words, then “postpone” (which

comes from two Latin words meaning "put after") should be counted in the same way, and "telescope" (derived from two Greek words meaning "see far") is entitled to as much recognition as "see far."

But there is a fair compromise between the dictionary method of estimating the Latin element and the running-word method just described. This is to study the language as actually used, and yet to count only the different words. There are various ways of doing this and they lead to interesting results.

One way is to take a sufficiently lengthy passage and to base estimates on the number of different words. The passage must be long enough to insure the submergence of the ever recurring syntax words. I have not yet determined the exact number of running words which gives the most accurate results but I believe that it is about ten thousand. An examination of about one thousand running words in an article in *The Outlook* revealed that the different words included 48.5 per cent of Latin origin, 4.6 per cent of Greek, 44.2 per cent of Teutonic, and 2.7 per cent of miscellaneous. The comment of the person who gathered these figures was: "In looking over the Teutonic list, it strikes me that my little five-year old neighbor who hasn't been at school is already using all but possibly 13 (out of 164)." A similar examination of one thousand running words from the note of the United States to Germany regarding the sinking of the Lusitania shows 53.9 per cent Latin, 2.3 per cent Greek, 39.2 per cent Teutonic, 1 per cent miscellaneous. The comment here was: "121 of the 168 words of Latin origin come directly or by an easy and obvious course from Latin words used by Cicero in the Latin ordinarily read in secondary schools, that is, from words found in the vocabulary of a students' edition of that author."

A chapter on vocational education in a book on vocational guidance gave these very interesting results: 52.3 per cent Latin, 4.4 per cent Greek, 42.7 per cent Teutonic, .6 per cent miscellaneous. Somehow this recalls the famous dictum: "Avoid Latin derivatives; use terse, pure, simple Saxon," every word of which is Latin except "Saxon" itself; and the keen observation of a

newspaper paragrapher: "A teacher of dentistry has made an attack upon the study of Latin in 58 words, 27 of which are Latin."

Analysis of other passages of one thousand running words generally showed much the same results, though occasionally the Teutonic element ran slightly higher than the Latin. But the analysis of five thousand running words seems to show a steadier preponderance of the Latin element, and a somewhat greater proportion. Three articles in *The Saturday Evening Post* yielded these results:

Latin	- - -	53.3 per cent,	54.3 per cent,	47.2 per cent
Greek	- - -	5.8 " "	5.2 " "	4.4 " "
Teutonic	- -	38. " "	39.7 " "	46.5 " "
Miscellaneous		2.8 " "	.6 " "	1.7 " "

Many years ago Kellogg and Reed made some similar studies but unfortunately did not state how many running words were taken into account. They took a single chapter, or speech, from each of twenty American and English writers, in addition to the complete works of Rufus Choate. The Latin element varied from 56.5 per cent to 72.5 per cent, and the Latin and Greek together from 63.7 per cent to 75.1 per cent, as against a range from 23.4 per cent to 33.4 per cent for the Teutonic.

Further analysis of all of the words used by various authors is desirable. From figures presented by Vizetelly we may see that even Chaucer's vocabulary as found in Tyrwhitt's glossary, is 51 per cent Teutonic and 49 per cent Latin and French (the latter presumably derived almost entirely from Latin.)

Recently there has been published *The Teacher's Word Book*, by E. L. Thorndike, containing the 10,011 words most frequently found in written and printed English. After eliminating 668 proper names we find that at least 46.8 per cent, and possibly 47.5 per cent, of the words are Latin in origin, 6 per cent Greek, 41 per cent Teutonic and 5.2 per cent miscellaneous. The comparatively low percentage of Latin words is due to the considerable number of words selected from children's literature

and from the Bible. A similar list by Professor Horn, as yet unpublished, contains 8951 words found in ordinary correspondence. Of these 57.6 per cent are Latin and 4.8 per cent are Greek.

From the pedagogical point of view there can be no doubt that methods of determining the extent of the Latin element in English such as those mentioned above, based as they are on the different words actually encountered in books and letters, are sound. The words which the pupil sees and hears and uses are the ones which are of importance to him. A comment quoted above indicated that most of the 164 Teutonic words found in a passage of one thousand running words are probably known to a five-year old child. Obviously these are not of importance pedagogically as they are learned before the child enters school. The simple vocabulary of the small child is largely Teutonic, as indicated by an analysis of some of the vocabularies of children from two to six years old. For example, the Whipple vocabulary of a three-year old boy (*Pedagogical Seminary* XVI [1909], 1) contains 1771 words, 24.4 per cent of which are Latin in origin, 3.6 per cent Greek, 66.3 per cent Teutonic, and 5.5 per cent miscellaneous (omitting proper names). The Heilig vocabulary of a three-year old (*op. cit.*, XX [1913], 1) contains 2153 words, of which 22.4 per cent are Latin, 3.2 per cent Greek, 66.4 per cent Teutonic, 7.8 per cent miscellaneous. The Rowe vocabulary of a four-year old (*op. cit.*, XX [1913], 187) contains 2346 words, of which 20.6 per cent are Latin, 3.8 per cent Greek, 66.1 per cent Teutonic, and 9.4 per cent miscellaneous. The additional words which this same child learned between the ages of four and six numbered 1134. It is significant to note the change in percentage of these additions: 37.7 per cent Latin, 6.7 per cent Greek, 44.7 per cent Teutonic, and 10.7 per cent miscellaneous. We are safe in saying, though it is impossible to quote statistics, that the new words which the pupil meets from the seventh grade on are overwhelmingly of Latin and Greek origin. It is at this time or soon after that the pupil may avail himself of the opportunity to begin Latin, the study of which may be expected to help him with his new English words.

*The Outlook* formerly published in every issue a section called *Vocabulary Building*. In it were listed the important words found in the various articles of the magazine. An analysis of the words found in these sections in Vol. 122 (May—August, 1919) shows that 63.6 per cent are Latin in origin, 17.4 per cent Greek, 12.7 per cent Teutonic, and 6.2 per cent miscellaneous.

An examination of the new words in the supplement of the 1900 Webster is very instructive, though it is to be remembered that even there some obsolete words are found and some that will not last long. An analysis was made of samplings obtained by taking the first word on each of the three columns of every page. The results were as follows: Latin 34.4 per cent, Greek 33.3 per cent, Teutonic 20.1 per cent, miscellaneous 11.9 per cent. The striking feature of course is the importance of Greek.

If one considers the new words, the rare words, the technical words which are constantly coming into general use, one finds a large classical element. Take the World War, for instance, and the words associated with it. A list of such to the extent of about one hundred and fifty reveals a classical element of about 75 per cent. The history of the war could be written about a few such important words of Latin origin as "militarism," "kultur," "mobilization," "atrocitiy," "submarine," "morale," "profiteer," "mandate," "self-determination," "reservation," "bonus."

This brings us to the question of the special vocabularies of various fields. I have a list of educational terms (such as "pupil," "teacher," "grade") numbering nearly two hundred, of which perhaps 90 per cent are classical. Professor Horn has made a list, as yet unpublished, of 2623 words used in 1125 bankers' letters, in which a total number of 67581 running words were used. 59.4 per cent are of Latin origin, 1.8 per cent, Greek. Of the 50 words used most frequently only 15 per cent are of Latin parentage, but the percentage mounts steadily, reaching 50 per cent in the sixth fifty, 66 per cent in the twelfth fifty and 72 per cent in the nineteenth fifty. 28 words are found in this list which do not occur even in the form of related words in eight other published lists based on correspondence. Of these



60.7 per cent are Latin and 3.5 per cent Greek. A list of words taken from letters written by California farmers contains 56 words not found in eight other correspondence lists. Of these 41 per cent are Latin, 20.5 per cent are Greek.

Another colleague of mine, Professor J. H. Scott, has made a study of the special vocabulary of engineering. Of 2060 words 43.9 per cent are Latin in origin, 14.7 per cent Greek, 33.9 per cent Teutonic, and 7.3 per cent miscellaneous and uncertain. I should be grateful for information about other lists of words which have been or might be subjected to analysis.

A list of the "one hundred most inspiring words in the English language," originally printed in *The Brooklyn Eagle* and copied with comments on derivation by *Teaching* (No. 38. p. 47), contains 66 of Latin origin and 8 of Greek.

I recur to the comment which was made on the 168 words of Latin origin found in analyzing a thousand running words, to the effect that 75 per cent of them come directly or by an obvious course from the Latin words found in a school text of Cicero. There are two points involved here: it is interesting and reassuring to note, first, that the origin of so many words is obvious at first glance, and, second, that the Latin originals of so many are met in the Latin ordinarily read in the high schools. Confirmation of this may be found in another set of figures. The total number of words, excluding proper names, in the first four books of Caesar's *Gallic War* is 2626. Of these 87.3 per cent have what may be termed fairly common English derivatives, 5.8 per cent have rare derivatives, a total of 93.1 per cent. The six orations of Cicero commonly read in the schools contain 2396 words, exclusive of proper names.<sup>1</sup> 87.4 per cent have common English derivatives, and 3.1 per cent have rare derivatives, a total of 90.5 per cent. Two thousand Latin words are listed in Lodge's *Vocabulary of High School Latin* as being those most frequently used in the works most commonly read in high school. I find that 91.3 per cent have English de-

<sup>1</sup> Here, as elsewhere in this paper, there may be slight inaccuracies in the totals, but they are too slight to affect the percentages or conclusions.

rivatives. This means then that over 90 per cent of the common vocabulary of Latin has been preserved to us, as against the estimate of 25 per cent of the total vocabulary, made by Greenough and Kittredge on the basis of an examination of the words beginning with the letter *D* in Harper's Dictionary. The truer picture is painted, in my opinion, by the new figures which I have presented. Contrast with this situation the loss of the original Saxon element: it has been estimated that only 25 per cent of the Anglo-Saxon vocabulary has survived in modern English.

If then Latin is a dead language, it may well rise up and say, "O Death, where is thy sting?" English is a great language—we need not hesitate to admit it—and its greatness is due to its double inheritance. In my boyhood the school geographies used to say that the lower Mississippi would be more aptly named the Missouri, as the latter stream contributed more water than the upper Mississippi. But this is a small matter; the vital point is that two such great rivers came together and formed into one. It is this fact that made the Mississippi the Father of Waters. So it is with our language; it gets its name from the English, though the Latin stream of its vocabulary is the mightier. But it is the junction of the two mighty streams that has made our tongue so great that we may call it the Father of Languages.