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ART. I.—*Collections of the New Jersey Historical Society*, Vol. IV. (The papers of Lewis Morris, Governor of the Province of New Jersey, from 1738 to 1746.) George P. Putnam, New York, 1852, pp. 336.

WE announce with pleasure the appearance of another volume of the Collections of the New Jersey Historical Society. We welcome it, not only as a valuable contribution to the history of the State, but as an earnest of the diligence and success with which the Society is pursuing its useful labours. But before we proceed to notice the contents of the volume, we desire to say a few words in reference to the Society itself, and to what it has already accomplished.

In the month of February, 1845, a few gentlemen from different parts of the State, met together in the city of Trenton, and formed an association under the name of "The New Jersey Historical Society." Its objects were declared to be, "to discover, procure, and preserve, whatever relates to any department of the history of New Jersey, natural, civil, literary and ecclesiastical." It commenced operations without funds, without patronage of any kind; relying for support, solely, upon the annual dues of its members, and the voluntary contributions of those who felt an interest in the cause. The

Ueber die Kawi-Sprache.

- ART. IV.—1. *Ueber die Kawi-Sprache auf der Insel Java, nebst einer Einleitung ueber die Verschiedenheit des menschlichen Sprachbaues und ihren Einfluss auf die geistige Entwicklung des menschengeschlechts.* Von Wilhelm von Humboldt. Berlin, Gedruckt in der Druckerei der Königlichen Akademie der Wissenschaften. 1836, 4to. 3 vols.
2. *Der Ursprung der Sprache, im Zusammenhange mit den letzten Fragen alles Wissens.* Von H. Steinthal, Dr., Privatdocenten für Sprachwissenschaft an der Universität zu Berlin. Berlin, 1851.

ONE of the strangest phenomena in the sphere of modern science, is the fact that more and more converging as are the lines of the philological argument towards confirming the truth that all languages have a common centre, so the speculations in regard to which was this centre are becoming less; but at the same time the interest in the inquiries concerning the *Origin of Language* is increasing at a rapid ratio. Connected as this question is with philology and psychology, and even with the very foundation of the whole subject of metaphysics, it must have a claim upon the attention of every observer of the progress of science, not easily equalled. Is language of divine, or of human origin? If of human origin, is it a product of man's physical or animal, or of his intellectual nature? Is it a discovery, or is it an invention? Or is it necessitated by instinct? If of divine origin, was it given to man, a perfect gift, or was he taught it as children are now taught to speak? Such are some of the questions propounded by those who have agitated this subject. Divines of the last century would limit the modes by which man could obtain language to one of three: *Invention, Instinct, Instruction*. Now, if by instinct is meant something belonging to the nature of man as such, the mere loss of hearing, then, would not account for the loss of speech in deaf-mutes; on the other hand, Casper Hauser had no language, though he was possessed of every "instinct" of a human being. But moreover, in what man does, he cannot be said to be actuated by instinct, as the spider when she draws her concentric polygons, or the bee when she constructs her artificial cells. Man is free; the spider and the bee *cannot* act

otherwise, but it would not be so correct to say of man, that he is forced to speak by his very nature. Dr. Lieber, speaking of the unmodified and frequently inarticulate utterances of Laura Bridgman, the blind deaf-mute, says:* “While I am writing these words, a tuneful mocking-bird is pouring out its melodious song before my window. Rich and strong, and mellow, as is the ever varying music of this sprightliest of all songsters of the forest, compared to the feeble and untuned sounds which Laura utters in her isolated state, yet her sounds are symbols of far greater import. She, even without hearing her own sounds, and with the crudest organs of utterance, yet has arisen to the great idea of the word, she wills to designate by sound. In her a mind is struggling to manifest itself and to commune with mind, revealing a part of those elements which our Maker has ordained as the means to insure the development of humanity.”

As to invention, we need only quote the words of the same able writer: “Had God left it to the invention of man, before he could know to what amount of utility, enjoyment, refinement, affection, elevation, thought, and devotion, his phonetic communion, and its representative in writing, would lead, man could never have attained to the prizes of language and literature.” Besides, if the speculations of W. von Humboldt and others, which we shall presently glance at, are at all based on truth, then invention and reason presuppose language, and can as little be conceived separate from it, as arithmetic from numbers.

Then there remains instruction. Should this have been such as man might have received from the sounds in nature, or those produced by animals? The onomatopées prove that he was certainly guided to some extent in the choice of his sounds by those produced in natural objects. But these sounds are not yet *words*, or else we might converse with a parrot. It must therefore have been *divine* instruction which imparted language to man. And this, it should seem, ought to be the most prevalent opinion, and there is but little doubt that as far as revelation is acknowledged, this has been the most general belief. The only objection made (if it can be called such), is, that it appears to

* On the Vocal Sounds of Laura Bridgman, a paper which is full of the most valuable suggestions on this subject.

be much less derogatory to the dignity of God (and man also, we might add, for this is certainly an ingredient in the train of thought of those objectors) to suppose that, if man was to have speech, God created him capable of making, forming, inventing it for himself, than to think that man is only a creature like other creatures, but endowed by God with both reason and speech.

The question then, closely analyzed, is reduced to this form : Is language of human, or of divine origin? The affirmative to either of these two seems to be the only answer possible, unless we admit that it may be *a union of the human and divine*.

But a hasty glance at the history of this inquiry may bring the subject clearer before our minds.

If we are not at liberty to seek for an express declaration in regard to this in sacred writ, then it would appear that the notion of the divine origin of language is at least as old as the version of Onkelos, who renders the words, Gen. ii. 7, "and man became a living soul" by "and man became a speaking spirit;" whilst we might perhaps, with a great degree of verisimilitude, say that the opposite opinion is as old as paganism. In fact, we have but few data to determine the matter; we know, however, that since Pythagoras, every philosophical system among the Greeks, those originators of almost every question in metaphysics, tried itself at the solution of this question. It might be expected *a priori* that among them with whom language was but the instrument used in the art of the sophist and dialectician, it could go for no more than the invention of man, and the dispute with them was only whether it was *conventional* (δέσει) or *natural* (φύσει). The advocates of the former would maintain that there was no force or power belonging to words as such, that they had no value, except such as was agreed upon they should have, some arbitrary value, like paper-money, or the letters in algebra; that they might mean one thing, or the very opposite, just as men fixed it; or, as Diodorus has it, "that men at first lived like beasts in woods and caves, forming only strange and uncouth noises, until their fears caused them to associate together; and that upon growing acquainted with each other, they came to correspond about things, first by *signs*,

then to make *names* for them, and in time, to frame and perfect a *language*.”

Quum prorepererunt primis animalia terris,
Mutum et turpe pecus, glandem atque cubilia propter
Unguibus et pugnis, dein fustibus, atque ita porro
Pugnabant armis, quae post fabricaverat usus,
Donec verba, quibus voces sensusque notarent,
Nominaque invenere.*

The other party maintained that there was an internal truth in words and language; that they were produced in accordance with some image of the object designated that was conceived in the mind; that the outward sound or sign bore a natural, unalterable relation to the thought; that language was, least of all, an intimation of something heard, but rather a representation of something seen by the eye of the mind.† Of course, these opinions would receive different tinges and hues from the peculiar systems of philosophy, that would advocate the one or the other. But the opinion of a divine origin of language does not appear to have found acceptance among the Greeks, unless we except Plato; and we will briefly state why he should be excepted. In his *Cratylus*, we are supposed to possess his views on language. The two conflicting opinions are introduced as the interlocutors Hermogenes and Cratylus. The former reasons from the analogy presented by proper names being applied to certain persons, although the meaning of such names would not always be applicable to such persons respectively, that all the words of a language are merely names arbitrarily applied to certain objects, (§. 1.) The opposite doctrine is stated to be that sounds and letters have a certain significancy in themselves, and that this determines the choice of them for the designation of certain ideas (§§. 92, 93.) And what does Socrates say? This question is, perhaps, not easily answered. The common opinion is: “*Socrates in Cratyli sententiam magis inclinare videtur.*” But why *magis*? why *videtur*? This apparent uncertainty is owing to that etymological part of this *Cratylus*. Schleiermacher styles it “the cross of the translator;” it is more, it is the cross of the reader, and, most of all, the cross of the eulogizer of Plato.

* Hor. Sat. I. 3.

† Compare Schleiermacher's Introduction to *Plato's Cratylus*.

How in the world could he commit such puerilities? Can he really have considered these derivations and compositions as being based on truth? Could it never have occurred to him that he was writing the most egregious nonsense? A long series of the most miserable puns that can ever be concocted, from the mouth of the same grave poet-philosopher, who was ever insisting upon the necessity of knowing how little we knew. Such a violence as these poor innocent words are treated with, root and inflexion, vowel and consonant, all is hashed up, and perishes in the general melee. And then he says, he has been amazed all the while at his own wisdom. This has always been a sore point with commentators, and various, of course, have been the modes by which they endeavoured to save the honour of their favourite writer. The most plausible, certainly, is to assume that it is a burlesque on the school of Heraclitus, and especially on the writings of one Antisthenes, who appears to have treated of the use of words.* Now, amid all this concealed irony, there is one passage where he becomes openly sarcastic. Socrates, in opposing the notion of Hermogenes, himself acknowledges the ridiculousness of establishing his own, or rather Cratylus' view of the internal truth of the primitive words, by showing the significancy of sounds and letters in the manner which he is about to adopt. But, says he, there is no other method of doing it, unless we imitate the dramatists, whom their *deus ex machina* must aid when they find it impossible to bring the plot to a rational *denouement*, and say that *language is of divine origin*. (§ 90.) If then, the view of the polemic design of this dialogue be correct, this sudden flash of a smile over the solemn countenance of such quiet and subdued sarcasm, should cause us to suspect that, at this moment, we saw the author's true face.† Besides, if such an idea, so foreign to the Grecian mode of thinking, once entered the mind of Plato, "with all the lofty grandeur of his sublime spirit," with his archetypal ideas and his *anamnesis*, it is not at all likely that he should have dismissed it again, without further consideration. On the contrary, we may presume that the Cratylus was designed to show

* Schleiermacher, l. c.

† Comp. Knickerbocker's New York, p. 69, *et passim*.

the untenable nature of both the φύσει and the θεσει theories, so as to leave no other refuge but that hinted at by him, if, indeed, he did not think the whole subject beyond human ken.

In the whole period, from the commencement of the Christian era to the second half of the last century, this subject appears to have been so little a matter of discussion, that some modern writers *assume* the prevailing opinion to have been the divine origin, and that *Suessmilch* only endeavoured to explain the fact philosophically,* with the same facility as others *assume* that the human origin was the general belief, and that it was not till then that the divine origin was advocated.†

In the great writers during this long time, we find this subject either wholly passed over, or barely touched upon, and that for the most part incidentally. Bacon thought that speech was an *art* which “must come by hearing and learning.”‡ Locke believed that man needed language not as man, but as a sociable creature, and that he was endowed, not only with the faculty of speech, but with language itself.§ Brian Walton, in his *Biblicus Apparatus*, which forms the first volume of his *Polyglott*, published in 1658, has a somewhat lengthy discussion on the subject, which, however, does not touch the root of the matter. He advocates the divine origin of language, and yet he says: *Cur ex hominum instituto tacito vel expresso, lingua aliqua integra oriri non possit, plane non perspicio.* So that he appears to have maintained that the first language was of divine origin, and the others human inventions.

The modern discussion on the subject did not commence until *John Peter Suessmilch*, a theologian and member of the Royal Academy of Sciences at Berlin, published his *Endeavour to Prove that the First Language originated not with Man, but with the Creator alone.*|| He argues that God must be the immediate author of language—from its order, beauty, and perfect adaptation to the wants of man; to invent or construct an instrument of such excellency presupposed a highly

* *Eichhorn's Geschichte der Litteratur*, Vol. V.

† *Steinthal*, p. 2.

‡ *Works*, vol. III., p. 53.

§ *Essay concerning the Human Understanding*. B. III., c. 1., sect. i.

|| *Versuch eines Beweises, dass die erste Sprache ihren Ursprung nicht von Menschen, sondern allein vom Schöpfer erhalten.* Berlin, 1766—8.

cultivated and thoroughly furnished mind. But as the latter is inconceivable in man, except as obtained and perfected by means of language, he could not be the inventor of language, but it must be a gift of the Deity.* This treatise led the van of a host of books and essays, great and small, on the subject, from that time until our days, in Germany, France, and England. It would be no easy, and certainly a tedious task, even to attempt to enumerate them. We shall, therefore, content ourselves with barely pointing out two or three of the most prominent.

One of the most remarkable works of the last century is *Count de Gebelin's Primitive World, Analyzed and Compared with the Modern World, by means of a Survey of the Natural History of the Word, or the Origin of Language and of Writing* (*Le Monde primitif analysé et comparé avec le Monde moderne, considéré dans l'histoire naturelle de la parole, ou origine du langage et de l'écriture. Paris, 1773*) in nine quartos. In five of these he treats of Allegory and its use in Antiquity, of the principles of Universal Grammar, and of the origin of language. The remaining four contain etymological dictionaries of the French, the Latin, and the Greek. The author was certainly a man of great genius, an original mind, and immense reading, and his treatise on Universal Grammar contained in the second volume, deserves the greatest attention even at this day, and in fact, cannot be overlooked by him who would furnish the world with that great desideratum, a Universal Grammar. But the remaining volumes have fallen under the head of history by this time; they can no longer claim a place on the shelf of science. Time has advanced too rapidly for the mythological speculations (so rife in the last century) contained in this work. His view of language is the same as that of Cratylus in the dialogue above referred to, and is set forth with great clearness, and with what many must think, far too great minuteness, though sometimes with a vivacity that approaches to eloquence. The origin of language, (vol. iii.) he thinks is divine; none but God could have devised this gentle bond of society and means of union between spirits, the instrument by which man rises to ever new discoveries in the domain

* *Eichhorn, l. c.*

of knowledge; and although the immediate sources of language are natural and physical, yet there is a mysterious union between the inward thought and the outward expression. Still with him language is no more than a means of communication; nevertheless, he maintains that to speak is just as simple a faculty of man, just as natural an exercise, as great a necessity, as seeing, hearing, or walking, and that it is born with man.

Passing over *de Brosse*s, we merely mention the Essay of *J. J. Rousseau*, on the Causes of Inequality among Men, and the Origin of Society,* as it seems to have greatly influenced the author of *The Origin and Progress of Language*, James Burnet, Lord Monboddo. Rousseau, however, though broaching many of the opinions, afterwards so learnedly advocated by his English successor, appears still to have left it problematical, whether language was more necessary for the institution of society, or society for the invention of language. But Monboddo went further. He was certainly a man of a very extensive knowledge of nature, history, science, and literature, both ancient and modern; he must have gathered his information from every available source; he must have read whole libraries:

“however, many books,
Wise men have said are wearisome; who reads
Incessantly, and to his reading brings not
A spirit and judgment equal or superior,
(And what he brings, what needs he elsewhere seek?)
Uncertain and unsettled still remains,
Deep versed in books, and shallow in himself,
Crude or intoxicate, collecting toys
And trifles for choice matters, worth a sponge:
As children gathering pebbles on the shore.”

He maintains that the faculty of speech is not given to man, but, like many others, is acquired by him; that not only there must have been society before language was invented, but that it must have subsisted a considerable time, and other arts have been invented, before this most difficult one was found out; that articulation is altogether the work of art, and that we are truly by nature the *mutum pecus* that Horace makes us to be. Thinking, and walking on two legs, (perhaps even eating) are arts acquired. Originally, he says, the language of man con-

* Sur les causes de l'inégalité parmi les hommes, et sur l'origine des sociétés.

sisted in nothing but natural cries, produced by the feelings (just as in animals), or by imitation, afterwards gradually changed and transformed by articulation. Of course, there were no parts of speech at first, no inflection, no connection, no syntax. All is art. "The greatest work of art is man himself, as we see him; for we have made ourselves—both a *rational* and *political* animal."* Society was necessary for the acquisition of all these arts; but even social life is not natural to man; it arose from certain necessities, and it arose not only without language, but might have continued to exist without it. There is no reason therefore to believe language was invented by a single tribe alone, and that all languages are descended from that one. He proves this not only from the dumbness of the so-called wild men that were caught in a few instances in different parts of Europe, but also from the fact that "a whole nation (!) have been found without the use of speech. This is the case of the Orang Outangs that are found in the kingdom of Angola, in Africa, and in several parts of Asia. They are exactly of the human form; walking erect, not upon all four; they use sticks for weapons; they live in society; they make huts of branches of trees, etc." They are certainly of our species, "and though they have made some progress in the arts of life, they have not advanced so far as to invent a language."† He collects all the "old wives' fables" from Diodorus Siculus down to his own day, and brings them forward as truth to corroborate his theories; he blames Strabo for rejecting, as fabulous, the stories concerning the *στειγνόφθαλμοι* and the *μονοσκελεῖς*;‡ in short he was one of those philosophers who maintained, as Butler says,

"men have four legs by nature,
And 'tis custom makes them go
Erroneously upon but two;
As 'twas in Germany made good
By a boy that lost himself in a wood,
And growing down to a man, was wont
With wolves upon all four to hunt."

His species of the *homo caudatus*, moreover, is too well known to require any further mention. Nor would he have that prominence in the history of opinions on this subject but for the fact that his learning really dazzled his contemporaries, and

* Vol. II. p. 3.

† Vol. I. p. 188.

‡ Vol. I. p. 268.

that he found so much favour, perhaps less in England than among the materialistic French philosophers of the day, and among the imitative Germans. The work was translated into German and introduced to the German public by a preface from a man who was no mean author himself, and who in this matter might with truth be regarded as beginning a new period, viz. Herder.

Herder was a man of genius and talent. As a theologian, as a preacher, as a philosopher as a lecturer, as a critic, as an educator, as an historian, and as a poet, his name was revered and is still honoured in Germany. A new period in the history of opinions concerning the origin of language may be said to begin with him, because the subject gains a new aspect. Before him even the loftiest conception of the nature of language* rose no higher than that of its being a means of communication, or at best, the instrument by which thought was manifested, or an aid to the memory, or an instrument of knowledge (as Plato conceived it;) but he recognizes the unity of cognition and language; to speak is to know.†

But we must note at the same time, a vacillation in him, which we are utterly unable to explain and which we shall state just as it presents itself. In 1771 he read his *Dissertation on the Origin of Language* ‡ before the Royal Academy of Sciences in Berlin and received the prize. In it he showed from the nature of man and the nature of language, from the structure of the primeval languages and the history of their gradual development, that language was a human invention and that man was able and obliged to invent it. This essay “with corrections and additions” he read again before the same Academy in 1789. But in the meantime he had published three works in which he had advocated and professed as his belief the opposite opinion, viz. the divine origin. For in 1774 he published his work: *The Oldest Record of the Human Race,*||

* On a close inspection it will be found that the inquiry concerning the origin of language can hardly be separated from, and in fact is dependent on, that concerning its nature, that is, we cannot tell whence it is, without inquiring at the same time or before, what it is.

† Steinthal, p. 27.

‡ *Abhandlung ueber den Ursprung der Sprache. Auf Befehl der Academie herausgegeben. Berlin, 1772. Pp. 222.*

|| *Aelteste Urkünde des Menschengeschlechts.*

in which he says that in spite of all the labour of philosophers to represent human language as a spontaneous production of human nature, of his powers and need, the endeavour must always remain futile. The only way in which language can arise is by hearing; every child learns to speak by hearing. The first man heard God speak, and so learnt himself to speak. Without the voice of God the mouth of man would have remained for ever closed, or if he should have attempted to imitate the sounds around him, his language would have been the inarticulate utterance of a beast of the field, (p. 643 sq.)* All that philosophers can prove, is that man *could* invent language. But how long was it before man had language? Language is the faculty which makes man the creature he is designed to be: it is therefore the immediate gift of his Creator. In 1782 he published his *Spirit of Hebrew Poesy* † in which he calls language the “invisible child of man’s breath, the sister of angels,” and represents it altogether as the gift of God (p. 408.) In 1784 he published his *Ideas towards a History of Mankind*, ‡ in which he shows that the organic difference between man and beast is his *erect walk*; on this principally (he says) depends his organization as a rational, and therefore also as a speech-endowed creature. But at the same time it is only “*the divine gift of language*” that forms the spring which gives determination and motion to all the distinguishing organic parts of the erect creature—his brain, his senses, and his hand. Language awakens slumbering reason. Man does not merely imitate all the sounds which he hears animals produce, and is a sort of mocking-bird among the mammalia, as Monboddo says, but God has taught him to impress idea on his sounds, to designate visible objects by audible tones, and to rule the earth by the word of his mouth. With language his reason and culture commence (p. 744 sq.) Book ix. chap. ii. treats of language especially. The special means for the culture of man is language, says he. Man is an imitative animal, but his imitation is not a consequence of reason and reflection, but the immediate product of a certain organic

* Our references are to the one volume edition of Herder’s select Works, Stuttgart und Tuebingen, 1844.

† Vom Geist der Ebräischen Poesie.

‡ Ideen zur Geschichte der Menschheit.

sympathy. As chord sounds with chord, and as the more homogeneous bodies are, in the arrangement of their fibres, the more their capacity to vibrate increases, so the organization of man, which is the most delicate of all, is best adapted to echo and feel the sound of all other things. In children this is most visible. Features, gestures, actions, and even passions are in a mysterious manner transmitted to them, so that they have already in them the inclination to such things which they cannot yet practise, and follow unconsciously, a certain law which bears some resemblance to assimilation in the body. Still this imitation could just as little have produced reason in him; by language alone it is that he obtains that distinguishing feature. Next to the genesis of living beings themselves, this *divine institution* is perhaps the greatest wonder of the creation of our world.

If the problem should be proposed to us, to represent the images on the retina, and the various impressions of which our other senses are capable, by sounds, and, at the same time, to impart to these sounds an inherent power to express and excite thought, doubtless such a problem would be thought the whim of a maniac, who, confounding things most unlike, would make colour sound, and sound thought, and thought painting sound. But God has solved this problem by an act. The breath of our mouth becomes the picture of the world, the impression of our thoughts and feelings on the mind of our fellow. On the motion of a breath of air, depends everything human that men ever thought, desired, did, or will do. What makes the solution of this problem still stranger to us, is that even thus, although in the constant employment of speech, we do not comprehend the connection subsisting between the instruments used in it. Hearing and speaking are evidently connected; but how, who can tell? That all our emotions, grievous and joyous, should become sounds, that what our ear hears should move the tongue, that all this should become language, not only significant in itself, but endowed with power to excite thought in others, is a wonder equally as great as the connection between soul and body.

To be deaf and dumb, to see and not to understand, (for to this such a state would amount,) were poverty indeed. A

nation is incapable of an idea for which their language has no word; the most vivid conception remains an obscure feeling, until the soul finds its characteristic mark, and impresses it on the memory, by means of the word. "Pure reason, without language, were a Utopia on earth."—(p. 808.) Language alone has made man human. Neither was it the lyre of Amphion that has founded cities, nor the sorcerer's wand that has changed deserts into Edens: "Language has done it, *the founder of society.*" By it the thinking soul of every man is connected with that of the first, and perhaps of the last thinking man.

And yet in the very same year, this man who can be so rhapsodical, and at times, unquestionably convincing in his praise of language as a gift from the Deity, who cannot conceive of society but as founded by means of language, who will prove his positions theologically, historically, metaphysically, psychologically, and physiologically, "willingly yields the palm to the convincing arguments of Lord Monboddo," the grossest and most degrading materialism, and introduces a German translation of the Scotchman's work by a highly commendatory preface. But for this and another fact, we should not have hesitated to adopt the explanation of Steinthal, who quotes from a letter of Herder to Hamann, (an eminent man of his day, who had opposed Herder's view as propounded in the prize-essay,) in which he says that he had not written his dissertation as a competitor for the prize, and that it was originally intended to be published as the "production of a *Witz-tölpel*;"* he repudiates utterly the mode of thinking and reasoning which it displays, and says that he is about to prove the very opposite opinion in a work on the *Oldest Record of the Human Race*, (above mentioned.) This, of course, does not explain how he could commend Monboddo, nor how he could afterwards repeat before the Academy the view held in the prize-essay. This production was then, and is now considered one of superior merit, and as it is said that Grimm, who last year read a paper on the same subject in the same place,

* We are utterly at a loss how to render this oxymoron; "witty blockhead," "thick-skulled wit," "a wit among the blockheads," "a blockhead among the wits," or, perhaps, "one who makes an awkward use of ingenuity"—none of these seems to convey the precise idea.

inclines towards Herder's first view, it will, perhaps, not be amiss to give some brief account of its contents.

Herder endeavours to show in the first part the possibility of man's inventing language, and in the second, the manner in which this possibility became a reality. He begins by saying that even as to his animal nature, man is endowed with language; his painful emotions, his strong passions seek and find utterance first in cries, wild inarticulate sounds, though there may be no other creature to hear or help, as if the mere vent given to the feeling appeased its violence.

In all languages there are to be found remains of this language of nature, though the old languages and those of savages contain most. It would be a great mistake to suppose that the language spoken by a nation contains no more sounds than its written language letters, and he brings many instances accordingly. Not only savage nations, Hurons and Peruvians, Esthoni-ans, and Laplanders use half articulate and indescribable sounds, but even the Russians and Poles pronounce so that it cannot be represented by letters. "How do the English torture themselves to write their sounds, and how little is he able to speak English who can understand the written language!"—Should God have given language which was so rude when it is supposed to have come from his hand?—It is true therefore, that language is not of man, but neither is it of God, therefore it belongs to the animal, it is "the natural law of a feeling machine."

But he acknowledges that language as it now is does distinguish man from beast. He examines therefore "the sphere of the animals," and finds that the greater the art is which any animal naturally possesses, the more contracted is its sphere of action, and *vice versa*; therefore the instinctive capacity and ability of an animal increases in intensity in inverse proportion to the extent of "its sphere." Man's sphere is the world; he has therefore no instinct, and consequently no instinctive language, no language that could be called his by nature. Being, then, worse supplied by nature than the animals, this defect is made up by his freedom; he has more light; he is no longer a machine, he is self-acting. He is superior to animals not in degree, but actually in kind. By *freedom* he understands the

almost illimitable nature of all the intellectual and moral powers of man as a totality. This totality he calls *reflection* (*Besonnenheit*;) this reflection, then, belongs to man as such. When, therefore, the infant is said to reflect, this does not mean that it thinks with a fully developed reason; it merely means that it makes use of its innate powers which are the germ of all its future capacities. This reflection in its free action invented language, for in fact, they are identical. From the multitude of qualities in any object, the mind of man separates one which appears to him the chief characteristic, and this characteristic sundered from the rest by reflection is a word, and this forms the invention of human language, for language is a collection of such words.

The first teacher of language is the ear; the sheep bleats, the dog barks, the dove coos, the leaves of the tree rustle, the brook murmurs, the zephyr lisps; these sounds form so many characteristics of the different objects. Now man with all his senses free and active, sees the myriads of objects in nature pass before him, each gives him its characteristic as a tribute, that he may remember it by that name—may call it so, and use it. “Can then this truth that the same reason whereby man rules over nature, was the father of a living language which he abstracted from the tones of sounding objects as marks of distinction—can this dry fact be expressed after oriental fashion more nobly or more beautifully than by saying: God brought the animals to him, to see what he would call them, and as he would call them, that should be their name?”

He proceeds then to give a development of the parts of speech, beginning with the verb. Then he shows how intimately connected the impression made upon one sense is with all the rest, in order to deduce from this fact the possibility of naming objects which could not furnish a characteristic by their sound. The ear, however, remains the mediator between the soul and the external world; it is better adapted for this than any other sense, because the sense of hearing holds the middle in respect to the others, as to the impressions which it receives; for the touch must come in immediate contact with the object perceived, the eye goes far off, the hearing stands between them. In plainness and clearness, touch is obscure, because so many qualities of an object present themselves to it at once and run into each

other; the eye is too clear and sees too many not to make the choice difficult; the ear perceives only the sound, etc.

As to the core of the latter part of this argument, we would deny in the first place that language is "a collection of words;" but it is unnecessary to point out its defects, as we know Herder's own opinion on it, and as he has really refuted it himself in the works above mentioned. At the time of its publication it called forth many replies; one of these* demonstrated with Herder's mode of reasoning that animals might invent language. This explanation (if such it can be called) of Gen. ii. 19, however, contains some truth, although his view of the import of names among orientals, and especially in Scripture, seems inadequate. In our day when language has passed through so many changes, when the original power of the roots is to a great extent lost to the cursory view, the relation of the name to the thing appears to us unnatural, even if we are able to perceive its signification; and if in some instances the name does (perhaps accidentally) suit the object, we find it strange and frequently ludicrous. But among the ancients, and especially among the Hebrews, *to be called*, and *to be*, are frequently almost equivalent expressions. Therefore the writers of the sacred history appear to pay particular attention to names and the change of names, and these themselves form, as it were, the framework of large parts of that history.† When Moses asks for the name of the Supreme Being, God, the Immutable, whose name always remains the expression of his being, tells Moses the nature of his being. "With Adam to see and to call were one; the development of his self-knowledge by the extension of his knowledge of creation, as it was designed by God, took the form of giving names. And, since the names were not arbitrary signs, but natural productions, they were also permanent. As often as Adam saw a living creature, its name would rise afresh in his mind."‡ But let us glance at the second part of the Essay.

* Zobel's Gedanken ueber die verschiedenen Meinungen vom Ursprunge der Sprachen.

† A recent commentary on Genesis (Sørensen's, a worthless production) is nothing but a dissertation on the names occurring in that book.

‡ Hengstenberg on the Pentateuch, vol. i. p. 282. Ryland's trans.—Compare Olshausen on Matt. xviii. 19., Baumgarten on Gen. ii. 19.

From man's having the *ability* to invent language, as nature bestows no gift to no purpose, he concludes further, that man *must* have invented language. If it was the word that gave reality to the *first* state of reflection in man, then a series of reflections will be a chain of words, that is, "the development of language is as natural to man as his nature itself." For man to be dumb as a beast, is the greatest contradiction. But as the race could not possibly remain a single herd, so they could not all retain the same language. Properly, that is in the metaphysical sense, one and the same language is not even possible in man and wife, father and son, child and old man.* Peculiarities of race, family, individuals; of climate, food, custom, manners—all influence language and its structure. Now the home of man is the world. "He winters in Greenland under the ice, and braves the perpendicular rays of Guinea's sun; he is in his sphere when he glides with the reindeer over the snow in Lapland, or when he trots through the Arabian desert with the thirsty camel. The cave of the Troglodytes, and the peaks of the Cabyls, the smoky huts of the Ostiaks, and the golden palace of the Mogul—all contain men;" hence the Protean nature of language.

Herder's treatise is well worth a perusal; it is not easy to find any point discussed in the innumerable productions of later writers on the subject, which he has not touched upon; the difficulties which he does not remove, the problems which he does not solve, are at least faced manfully and treated ingeni-

* This would appear to favour greatly the recent theory of a noted New England divine. We find the same view brought forward by *W. von Humboldt*. It is only in the individual, he reasons, that language becomes ultimately definite. No one understands a word in precisely the same sense as another one, and this difference, however small, continues undulating throughout the whole language, like a circle in water. All understanding, therefore, is at the same time a not-understanding, all congruence in thought and feelings at the same time a disagreement. (We may, at the same time, subjoin his deduction from this fact; for, although it is not immediately connected with the matter in the text, yet, as we intend to look at this author's view of the *origin* of language, we may anticipate it by a glance at his conception of the nature of language, which is certainly highly peculiar.) He had shown before, that language had a *power* entirely its own, that this power was its very spirit. He now says that in opposition to this power, there is shown a power which man has over it, in the manner in which language is modified in each individual; so that the power of language over man may be considered a physiological agency, that of man over language a purely dynamic one. It is the *law* of language and its forms which exerts its influence upon him; it is a principle of *liberty* which reciprocates that influence. (pp. lxxx. lxxxi.)

ously, and, what must remain his great merit, he opened a wide and interesting field for subsequent cultivation. Nor have the labourers been wanting. The various systems of philosophy which since his day have succeeded each other so rapidly in Germany, the immense progress that philology and linguistics* have made within the last years, the ever increasing intensity of speculation in theoretical fields, manifested in proportion as the outward political pressure becomes greater, have made the number of publications on this subject, in periodicals and in a more permanent form, in *brochures* and in volumes, separate and as forming a part of comprehensive systems, amount to legions. Every new colour and shade of metaphysical inquiry would contribute its mite or its (supposed) bullion towards the settlement of this question, and it would be a Herculean task (in more than one respect) to pass them in review before us. From the principal names in Speculative Philosophy, we shall therefore select but one for a rapid glance, and then we shall cast an eye upon one or two professed philologists before we examine briefly Humboldt's view.

In Kant, who hardly belongs to this period, we shall probably in vain look for anything explicit in regard to this matter; we proceed therefore at once to Fichte, who, in his popular writings, is comparatively free from the jargon of the German schools, which fortunately makes their doctrines so unpalatable—"caviare to the general!" In the fourth of his celebrated "Addresses to the German Nation,"† he is speaking of the principal difference between nations that have retained their original language, and such as have adopted a foreign one. To say that men, he remarks, are moulded by their language, is far more correct than that language is formed by men. For language, and especially the designation of objects by means of the organ of speech depends nowise on voluntary resolutions or on convention, but on a certain and fundamental law. It is

* *Humboldt* would distinguish between these two branches of the science of language so that *philology* should properly denote that department whose object is the study of a language as a whole, including therefore the treatment and criticism of its literary monuments; whilst *linguistics* purposes the anatomical dissection of a language, and the tracing of its connection with other tongues. (p. ccxviii.)

† There is also an essay of his on the very subject in hand, in the *Philos. Journal* of 1795, which is, however, less adapted for our purpose.

not man who speaks, but human nature in him, which makes itself known both to him and his fellows. Hence, language is one, and of necessity. (So far the theory.) But there are external agencies which, by their diversity in kind, space and time diversify language, although this again is in accordance with a rigid law, so that the language of a nation is necessarily as it is, and it would not be proper to say, this nation gives expression to its mental operations, but rather, it is those operations themselves that speak. Hence, is not only a language the same at all times, but all languages taken together are still the identical original language, for human language, (in the abstract) + the organ of the nation when their first sound was produced = x; x + all the developments which this first sound must reach under the given circumstances = the present language of that people.*—From this we may perceive at least that he does not think language to be something arbitrary or conventional, but “the immediate, natural energy exerted by a life of consciousness.” We have no wish to forestall the criticism of the reader.

Among those more immediately engaged in investigations on language, following the hint of Humboldt, we shall choose one in the department of Linguistics, and one in that of Philology. The first is Adelung, whose view on the origin of language we shall gather from the “Fragments on the Formation and Perfection of Language,” prefixed to his celebrated *Mithridates*. He says that men ascribe the origin of language to the Deity, because they look upon it in its present perfected state, just as the savage would think a man-of-war or a steam-ship the work of a superhuman being, who would not consider that the great ship had its beginning in a small raft or canoe. We can still trace the process of development through which language has passed, in the various languages of the globe that may be found in nearly every stage of this process. The first man, just like every new-born child now, brought nought into the world, except his faculties. In the same manner as Herder, he maintains that pain presses his first sounds from him. But, continues he, he has a soul inclosed in a body, through which the external

* We must use these signs both in order to abridge the exposition of the doctrine, and, at the same time, to represent, to the best of our ability, the very mind of the philosopher.

world has access to it by "five doors" (the senses), but two only are apt to retain what is necessary for the mind, the eye and the ear. The eye is but imperfectly adapted for it, as all it perceives and retains is shape, colour and motion. But the ear makes up for all defects—the ear and its auxiliary organ (*Hülfs-Organ*), language; and as long as this was not fully developed, man must really have been that *dumb animal* which the ancients supposed him to have been. For language and reason are mutual aids. The first effort at language, then, consisted in enunciating the vowels; afterwards were the more artificial consonants produced. Of course, all words are imitations of sounds heard in nature.

But we need go no further to convince the reader of the unphilosophical spirit of this theory; it contains nothing new, nothing that had not been set forth in a more acceptable manner before by Monboddo or Herder. It commences again the old circle: Language and reason are intimately connected, there can be no development of the reasoning faculties without speech, and yet language is *invented* before the existence, so to speak, of reason. Another objection is that it confounds sounds with words. We shall but mention one more, and that is, his view of the creation of man as a rude animal, whereas the Scripture narrative conveys an altogether different impression.

It is true, the beginning of this century, at which time Adelung wrote, was still a dark age compared with the present, as it is illumined by those resplendent stars, the brilliant results of modern investigations into the nature of language and languages. A philosophical and historical view of them was then still a desideratum, the supply of which great men, such as Bacon, Leibnitz, and others had wished and hoped for. But now these results are becoming more and more common property. It was reserved for our day to show and explain (in some measure) the intimate union of human language and the human mind, or rather language as the first fruits of that mysterious union of mind and matter which constitutes our present life, and in all its stages and at every moment of its existence as the perfect counterpart of mind, as the most exact impression of its very being, as the most immediate and the purest reflection of its unceasing activity. Thus, at the same time, we come to

understand how language can be a product of an organic process which is continuing in a slow development, and which only by degrees expands its diversified powers. To have set forth this in a clear, masterly and comprehensive manner, remains the inalienable claim of W. von Humboldt; but he was not alone; he was great among the great. Scores of minds and pens were employed in elucidating the same great question from various points of view. The history, the philosophy, and the æsthetics of language not only, but also its grammar (and this perhaps preeminently) were cultivated as they never had been before. German grammar especially received an attention altogether unparalleled at any other period or in any other country. The old etymology and paradigm methods of Gottsched and Heinsius had been followed in rapid succession by the correcting method, the style method, the belles-lettres method, and the historical method of grammatical study. Now a man appeared, who founded a strictly systematic and yet natural, because logical method, and though his influence was less felt in the field upon which his immediate exertions were directed, yet we may say that his rules are taught and learnt in every school and academy of Germany, England, and America, that makes use of the labours of the later school of grammarians.* We need not add that we mean *Karl Ferdinand Becker*, who spent his life in the erection of his beautiful system. We select him as Humboldt's forerunner, as we might call him, though in point of time merely he is perhaps not earlier. His views on the subject, under review, are contained in his *Organism of the German Language*,† in his *Larger German Grammar*,‡ and most fully in *The word in its Organic Change*.§

Life, he observes, as appearing in individual objects, is called *organic* life, and the disposition or arrangement of an object, as

* It may not be superfluous to observe that the method of study and instruction in grammar (German), now followed in Germany, is a combination of the last two, that is, the *historical* and the *logical* methods, as represented by Jacob Grimm and Becker respectively, with a third, the *psychological* method. The main object of the latter is to point out the psychological relations of language to the human mind, and particularly of the German language to the genius of the Germans.

† *Organism der deutschen Sprache.*

‡ *Ausführliche deutsche Grammatik als Kommentar der Schullgrammatik*, 2 vols. pp. 428, 693.

§ *Das Wort in seiner organischen Verwandlung.*

connected with that life so that the latter is at the same time the ground and the aim of the operations of the object, is called its *organism*. Actions and relations, then, which are caused by the life of an object, are called *organic* actions and *organic* relations. These, of course, are *necessary* actions and *necessary* relations as distinguished from such actions and relations as have an external cause in arbitrariness or chance. The laws by which certain phenomena and actions are necessarily connected with the peculiar manifestation of the organic life of an object, are its *organic* laws. Human language, just like the process of thinking which becomes manifest in language, has its cause in the organic life of man, and is closely connected with it; therefore, language is an *organic* action of man, and the relations of language must be considered as necessary ones, as necessary as life itself, from which they are inseparable. The extent of the organic actions of man, and the formation of his organic relations are determined by the fact, that man stands on the highest step of the scale of organic life, for he is a union of body and mind. Mind is free; the body is not; still, as mind is connected with the body, it belongs to the sphere of organic life; the process of thinking, therefore, must be considered as an organic process, following certain laws. The union spoken of effects a mutual influence of mind and body. What is external becomes internal, as the world of sense passes into the world of perceptions and ideas; and what is internal becomes again external, as perception and thought are again embodied in the word.* The senses perceive external things, as the mouth receives food; and as the latter is changed into flesh and blood

* Humboldt's view concerning the same things is, that subjective activity forms an *object* by the act of thinking. For no species of representations, says he, can be considered as a merely receptive contemplation of an object already present. The activity of the senses must have a *synthetic* connection with the inward action of the mind; this connection precipitates, as it were, the conception, which becomes an object over against the subjective power, and anew perceived as such it returns into this power. But for this, *language* is essentially necessary. For, by means of it, the mental endeavour breaks through the lips and carries back its production to the same person's ear. Thus, the conception becomes really objective without being withdrawn from the subject. Language alone, can effect this; for even when this process takes place without audible sounds, the formation of an idea, and consequently all actual thinking is inconceivable without it. Language, therefore, is necessary, not only for the interchange of thought between man and man, but for the solitary musings of the individual. (pp. lxiii., lxix.)

by a physical assimilation, so the sensations are changed into thoughts and conceptions by a mental assimilation. On the other hand, the process of thought again calls forth the action of the organs of speech (without any further mediation or instrumentality,) and so thoughts and conceptions are again embodied in sounds—the thinking spirit becomes corporeal in language. Thus, language proceeds *necessarily* from the nature of man as a thinking being: man *speaks* because he *thinks*. As man, therefore, is a union of spirit and body, so are the word and language the union of an *immaterial* element—conception and thought—and a *material* element—sound.

This, in fact, anticipates in some measure what we shall find to be the view of WILLIAM VON HUMBOLDT, the brother of the illustrious author of *Kosmos*, in the philosophical study of language, the brightest star among the scholars of Germany. In the scientific investigation of the subject there has certainly none been equal to him in power of concentration, in profundity of research, in excellency of judgment, in extent of learning, in acuteness of penetration, in subtle perception of real difficulties, in poetic glow of fancy, and in depth and delicacy of feeling. Endowed with an intellect towering far above his kind, with a knowledge of more languages than was ever gained by any single man, having travelled extensively, in uninterrupted literary correspondence with the greatest linguists of the age, he composed his last and greatest work *On the Kawi Language in the Island of Java, with an Introduction on the Difference of Structure observable in Human Language, and its Influence on the Intellectual Development of the Race*.

In this work, the author sets out with the inquiries to which he says a precise and entirely definite answer would be very difficult, whether the whole civilization of the Indian Archipelago is of Indian origin; and whether the elements of the languages found there, warrant the conclusion that there were connections existing between the Sanscrit and the Malay families, even in a time which, as he says, must precede all literature, and the last and most refined development of a language. The difficulty experienced in these ethnographical and linguistic investigations consists in separating from one another the *various* external influences that must have operated upon the Malay-Polynesian

family. Three distinct families of languages are in close proximity with them, the Semitic, through Arabia, the Sanscrit, through India, and the Chinese. The influence of India he thinks the oldest and most prominent. For the purpose of discussing the subject in its most comprehensive, as well as in its truest aspect, he selects the Kawi language, which in its bloom exhibits the period of most intimate union of Indian and Polynesian culture.

In the first volume he shows the impossibility of fixing any historical dates as to the commencement of the connection between India and Java, on account of a peculiar method of denoting numbers by words, the origin of which he ascribes to the metrical composition of their records, but which is not reliable, for various reasons. He argues therefore from the general impression which he receives from the legends, customs, manners, and the language of the people, that the influence of India is very ancient. He shows, however, that even before Islam had penetrated thither, both Brahmanism and Buddhism had received foreign admixtures. On p. 251, he finds occasion to observe that, as in the Tagala language, in the island of Luçon, the word *Bathala* denotes the supreme God, or the Deity in general, if the original signification of the word was ever connected with it, then the idea of the descent of a divine being had penetrated even thus far.

The second volume treats of the grammatical structure of the Kawi language, as developed in the epic poem, *Brata Yuddha*, and at the same time compares it constantly with all the other languages of the Malay family, and of the South-sea Islands, as far as they are known.

In the third volume he defines the character of each of these idioms more distinctly, especially those of Madagascar, the Tonga Islands, Tahiti, New Zealand, and the Tagala. The state and condition of the inhabitants of these islands, their laws, their religions, their observances, he traces back, though but in isolated phenomena, to the firm ground of the Sanscrit family.

But it is in the Introduction that the author appears to have poured out his very soul. Its professed object is to show that as the division of the human race into *nations* and *tribes* and

the difference of their *languages* and *dialects* stand in immediate connection, so they are at the same time together dependent upon a third, higher phenomenon, and that is *the power of the human intellect as producing* ever new and frequently progressive forms. It is easy to see that by showing the mode of this dependence, the author will at the same time explain that connection, in as far as it can be penetrated by human search and comprehended by human intellect. According to our author, to find how the *mind of man* reveals itself in time and space, in degree and kind, is the highest object of all intellectual effort, the real and sole problem of history. Thus his actual endeavour is to aid philology by means of history on the one hand, and on the other, history by means of philology. He begins therefore, with an examination of the principal factors in the intellectual development of the race, first by regarding the mode of this development as it is promoted by culture and civilization, but also by some external and extraordinary, partly inexplicable, immaterial agency; then by considering the somewhat more tangible agency of a joint influence of individuals and nations. This leads him to the subject of language as one of the chief instruments of that process of development. Then he points out the path which philology must pursue in order to gain its proper object. At this point he enters into a profound discussion of the nature and constitution of language as consisting of articulate sounds, and the changes which the latter undergo on account of their intimate connection with the notions which they represent, as well as on account of the relations which they are used to designate. Having thus endeavoured to *define* language in its most general features, he begins (p. cxx.) to direct his attention to particulars, such as the *form* of *words* individually, and also as to their *affinities*. He finds three distinguishing characteristics of languages, *Isolation*, *Inflection* and *Agglutination*; these are the methods which the different languages employ to give a grammatical form to their logical categories; this forms the unity of the sentence. The unity of the word is affected by the *pause*, *change of letters* and *accent* (p. cli.) These characteristics furnish the means of classifying languages. In §§. 20—24, he shows by an inductive process, from the Indo-Euro-

pean, the Semitic, American, and Monosyllabic languages, that a language possesses capacity for development, perfectibility and influence on the character of a nation in proportion to its *synthetic* power (p. cclxv,) which is the creative act of the mind, by which the inward thought is so *united* to the outward sound, that this union produces a third element "in which the distinctive nature of both disappears."

The almost constant endeavour of the author to explain the inexplicable, or that, the explanation of which had never been attempted before, or in which human ingenuity had utterly failed—joined to his innate candour, and freedom from *wilful* obscurity, leads him to observe, on various occasions in the course of his investigation, that there are instances of *progress* in the process of development going on in the human race, which can only be reached, because an extraordinary power is unexpectedly exerted in that direction, cases where all explanation ceases and a *foreign agency* must be *assumed* in place of it. Nay more, all advancement in the department of mind can only proceed from an inward power, and accordingly it has always a hidden and inexplicable, because spontaneous, cause. Now, when this inward power exerts its creative agency so suddenly and so powerfully, that the previous course in itself could in no way have led to the result apparent, the *possibility* of an explanation is, of course, at once precluded. As an example he adduces in one place (p. xxxiii.) the different structure of the Chinese and the Sanscrit. A gradual progress from the one to the other he thinks is not inconceivable. But if one really *feels* the nature of language in general, and of these two in particular, if the investigator reaches that point where the idea and the sound become one, he will discover the self-acting, creative principle of their different organisms. Then the possibility of the gradual development of the one from the other will be given up, and the idea of regarding them as steps in the formation of a perfect language must *remain* an idea. To this question he reverts in the conclusion of this extraordinary production of the human intellect, but in a different form. That is, he does not ask whether polysyllabic languages are but the development of monosyllabic ones, but whether languages now polysyllabic were not originally monosyllabic. We believe he

gives an affirmative answer, although we must confess he is not very clear on the subject. There appears to be something analogous, though not similar, in this part of the discussion, to Mozart's state of mind (which musicians say they can still trace) in the composition of the overture of Don Giovanni.

Humboldt's conception of the nature of language must be called highly original. With Becker, as we have seen, language is still the offspring of the union of sound and thought, at best it is on a level with the latter; and Humboldt frequently declares it as the same: yet in another aspect he will call it "spirit," "power," "the absoluteness [essence?] of thought," as Aristotle calls the soul the ἐντελέχεια of the body; in other words, as he himself says, "the soul of the soul." It is the organ of being aside from its external manifestations; it is being itself in a state of obtaining a knowledge of itself, and at the same time an outward activity: or more specific—the power of the human mind is ever active, language is one of the manifestations of this activity. In other words, it may be regarded as the *endeavour* to gain an existence in reality for the idea of the *perfection of language*. It is not a *production* simply, but rather a birth; though as to its office, it is the sign of objects and means of communication; yet its nature and origin can only be perceived by contemplating the influence it exerts upon the mind from which it springs itself. It is not a thing ready, at rest, but considered as to its real nature, it is something *passing, transitory*. It is not a work (*ergon*), but an activity (*energeia*.) Its true definition, therefore, is, the ever-repeated *labour of the mind* to enable *articulate sound* to express *thought*. Strictly this is the definition of *speaking* rather than of *speech*; but the totality of the action is what constitutes speech essentially. From this it cannot be inferred that thinking and speaking are identical, as little as are the ideas lily and rose; but language and mind are identical in the same way as lily and flower. (Of course, this has nothing in common with Condillac's or Horne Tooke's notion, that our reason is the gradual result of language.) Although, however, speaking and speech are identical, yet the latter is different from that *which is spoken*, for it is the totality of what is produced in this. A language in its whole extent contains every-

thing that has been changed by it into sound; but as the matter of thought and the infinity of its combinations can never be exhausted, the same must be the case with what language is to designate or combine. Language consists, therefore, not only of the elements already formed, but also and especially of methods of combining the work of the mind, which work has both path and form prescribed by language. The elements already formed and fixed do indeed constitute in a certain sense a dead mass; but this mass again carries within itself the living germ of a never-ending destiny. At every single point, therefore, and in every single epoch, language, just as nature herself, appears to man, in opposition to everything previously known or thought by him, as an inexhaustible mine in which his mind can still discover things hitherto unknown to him, and his feelings can still be impressed in a manner not felt before; and whenever a truly novel and great genius wields this wondrous weapon, the phenomenon appears in reality. (p. lxxvii. sq.) And thus, full, rich, and copious as is the stream of language in its flow down the course of time, so must its full tide reach as far as our eye can follow it up towards its source; for it would not be correct to think that *language at first* possessed but few words: such a view arises from those utterly erroneous assumptions that language was called forth by the necessity of mutual *assistance*, and that man was then in a so-called state of nature. Man is not so needy, and, merely for assistance, inarticulate sounds would have sufficed. Even the languages of what are generally called *savages*—who, of course, ought to be nearer that “state of nature”—show everywhere a copiousness and variety of expression which far exceeds their immediate necessities. Words spring from the breast spontaneously, without need and without labour, and there has perhaps not been a wandering horde in the desert who have not had their songs: “For man, as to his animal nature, is a singing creature, which, however, connects thoughts with its tones.” (p. lxxv.) For man to *speak* is an *inward necessity*, not one merely outward, merely existing for the maintenance of general intercourse, but one lying in his very nature, with a view to his development, and to his gaining a knowledge of his relation to the world.

Thus, instead of refuting the opinion that *man* made language, Humboldt maintains that it was not *made* at all, but that it bursts forth from the breast of man, as necessarily, and as easily as her warbling notes from that of the nightingale. The agencies supposed to precede and call forth the formation of language, such as society, culture, and civilization, are so far from being its cause, that they owe themselves their existence to the same energy by which it is produced. Java, for instance, evidently received a higher civilization and culture from India, and both in an eminent degree; yet, not only did the language of Java not change its imperfect form, but it deprived even the noble Sanscrit of its form in order to press it into the mould of its modes of conception. Besides, language and civilization do not always bear the same relation to one another. Peru was certainly the most civilized country of America, yet its language was by no means superior to any of the Western Continent; the Mexican, for instance, is far superior to it. It would be equally far from the truth to say that the character of a nation had no influence upon the character of its language, for then there could be but *one*, and not many languages. Their diversity, indeed, is owing to the fact that the endeavour whereby the power of speech granted to *man* breaks forth, is more or less successful as it is either favoured or impeded by the mental powers given to *nations*. It is therefore not a mere play upon words, when "language is represented as having its source in itself, divinely free and acting independently, but the languages as serving and dependent upon the nations to whom they belong." But at the same time, "individual variety within the bounds of general agreement is so wonderful in the domain of language, that it may be said with equal correctness, that the whole human race have but one language, and that each man has one for himself." (Compare above, the note on p. 422.)

The real gist of the matter, then, to inclose it in a nutshell, appears to be this: If language is divine, whence arises the diversity of languages? (Or must we assume a continued act of creation?) On the other hand, if it is human, whence this astonishing unity of principle, both as to the logic and grammar of the various tongues? The reader may have already gath-

ered the solution of the difficulty from what has been said; we shall have to add but little more. Humboldt does not keep himself on historical ground merely, viewing the origin of language as something past, but inquires of physiology in regard to the ever recurring formation of speech in each individual.

What we see in *children*, he remarks, when they *learn to speak*, does not consist in a close measuring off of words, laying them up in the memory, and imitating them with the lips, but it is rather a growing of the faculty of speech by age and practice. What is heard does more than merely communicate itself; it fits the soul for a more ready understanding of what has not been heard up to that time; it makes clear what had been heard long ago, but not understood, and increases the desire and the ability of appropriating to the memory more and more of what is heard, and of letting less pass by as mere sound. As a proof of this theory of development in the faculty of speech, in opposition to a mere mechanical learning to speak, he adduces the fact that as the principal faculties in man have assigned to them a certain period in his life for their development, so all children, in the greatest variety of circumstances, speak and understand at an age which is nearly the same everywhere and at all times, and which is circumscribed by a very limited period. To the objection arising from the fact that a child which is brought under the influence of a different language from that of its parents, before it is able to speak, develops its faculty of speech in that new language, he answers, that in such cases it has not been observed with sufficient accuracy how difficult it was to overcome the original inclination, and that after all, in the niceties of the language, that primary bent always remained unconquered. Moreover, in as much as man is the same everywhere, the unity was by no means destroyed, and the development of the faculty could proceed with the aid of any individual; it needs some external impulse, and it will be analogous to that impulse, especially as all human languages are one. "Language, then, cannot be taught; properly speaking, it can only be awakened in the mind."

Schiller's dilemma,—

*Warum kann der lebendige Geist dem Geist nicht erscheinen?
Spricht die Seele, so spricht ach! schon die Seele nicht mehr;*

if he does not remove it, he does at least not shrink from encountering it: language is the forming organ of *thought*. The *activity of the intellect*, altogether spiritual, altogether internal, and leaving, as it were, no trace behind, is represented externally in speech by *sound*, and becomes thus perceptible to the senses. This activity, then, and language, are one and indivisible; but it lies, at the same time, under the necessity of constituting a *connection* with sound; else the thought cannot become clear, the perception cannot become an idea. The inseparable connection of *thought*, the *organs of speech*, and the *ear*, with language, is fixed unalterably by the original, inexplicable arrangement of the human system. But the agreement of sound and thought is also clearly apparent. As the thought, like a flash of lightning, collects the whole power of perception into a single point, and excludes everything contemporaneous, so the sound is heard in abrupt precision and unity; as the thought seizes all the feelings, so the sound possesses a penetrating, thrilling power over the nerves. (p. lxvi.) But our author is always keen in perceiving *what* the point is where inquiry must strive to *cut* a Gordian knot, or cease entirely. In regard to the most important as well as the most refined philological investigation, he finds the difficulty frequently to consist in the fact, that something flowing from the language as a whole cannot be represented with a satisfactory fulness, or defined by lines distinctly marked, although it may be felt in the clearest and most convincing manner. The characteristic form of each of the different languages is connected with *every single one of its elements*, even the most insignificant and inconsiderable; every one of these, again, is determined by that form in some manner, however inexplicable each instance may be. On the other hand, it is scarcely possible to discover points of which it could be maintained that this form depended on them individually. If, therefore, any given language be investigated, there may be found much which might have been different without the form of the

language being altered in the least; and in order to perceive the latter by itself, we are always directed to the *language as a whole*. But here the very reverse takes place immediately. The most decided individuality presents itself clearly, and makes itself most distinctly felt. Language, in this respect, can be compared, with the least degree of incorrectness, to the various *human countenances*. The individuality is there undeniably, resemblances are recognized, but no measuring, and no description of the different parts singly; or in their connection, can give a distinct idea of the peculiarity of any single countenance. This peculiarity adheres to it as a whole, and depends also on the impression upon the individual beholder; whence it is certainly true that each face appears different to each person. The same must be the case with language in whatever shape it is taken up, as it is ever "the immaterial emanation of an individual national life." However much in it there may be which can be fixed and solidified, singled out and dissected, there is always something which remains unknown, and just this which escapes the touch is that in which the unity and the spirit of the living organism is contained. A thorough examination of languages leads, therefore, to a toilsome investigation, which often must enter into their minutest elements; but it is precisely these little things upon which depends the impression which these languages in their totality produce; and nothing is so incompatible with the true study of them as to seek in them only what is grand, superior, and permanent. Every grammatical subtilty must be searched into, words must be dissected into their elements, and almost reduced to atoms, if every judgment concerning them is not to be liable to error. But *comparative philology* is not confined to such minutiae, though these form the mosaic floor upon which it erects its imposing and magnificent temples; for though its immediate object be the discovery of the various modes in which numberless nations solve the problem of the formation of language, proposed to them as *men*, yet it would lose all higher interest, unless it seek out and touch the very point at which the language of a nation joins the formation of the *national mind*. In a word, then, as language is the *endeavour* to realize its own ideal of perfection, to follow up and to represent this

endeavour is the business of the philologist in its last and simplest resolution.

To sum up the inquiry: We have seen how with Humboldt on the one hand, speech and speaking are identical, and on the other, how the origin of language is involved in its nature. To explain the latter, therefore, is to point out the former. This he has done, and has therefore accomplished what neither history unaided, nor empty hypotheses could effect. From an investigation of our own nature, from a descent into the depths of our own minds, he returns with the pearl sought; for, maintains he, as language arises in us, so it originated in the first man.

And is this the settlement of the question? Men have not only generally acquiesced in Humboldt's views, but they have adopted them. Nay more, multitudes of writers have taken up one or the other of his ideas, given them a new shape, or dressed them in a new garb, and paraded them in books and pamphlets, in addresses and dissertations. One late phase of the German mind is to endeavour to make the higher walks of science somewhat more popular, and the books "for the People," and "for the Million," and "for the dear German Nation," &c., have become quite numerous.

We select one of these "philosophy" books, to present these views in the popular, or, we should perhaps say more correctly, in the amateur dress; that is, not in the academic gown. Thus—Language, to be brief, is the mediator of sensations; it furthers, increases, expands the faculty and the operation of thinking. As it contains articulate sounds as signs and designations of all sensations, of every thing felt and conceived, internal and external, for every object and individual, their qualities, etc., it must be regarded as a collection and storehouse of all that is conceivable. It may be compared to money. As this represents a certain amount and is the means of trade and commerce, so language is the means of the exchange of thought. But as money considered as metal, has some intrinsic value aside from that which it represents, on account of its solidity, malleability, cohesion, divisibility, lustre, etc., so language is adapted to its purpose by similar qualities, its euphony, its rhythm, its poesy and prose, its music, its assonance, its rhymes, its facility of

being communicated, and its durability. Thought and speech together are, as it were, a national bank. It contains, in the treasuries of science deposited in it, the intellectual life of the nation. The words are its bank-notes. Without this deposit they would be mere sound, worthless paper. When words are spoken, thoughts exchanged by means of language, this is done in the belief that the words represent some real capital. The origin of language, both as to time and space, lies far back in infinity. Its source cannot be pointed out. It is as old as the human race. We can trace its growth and development, but the genesis of the first germ will ever remain a mystery.—Animals have no language; still they exchange [what—is not said.] For instance; when ants crawl across a narrow path, whenever two meet, they strike their heads together, etc.—The result is, feeling, perception and thought become solid (so to speak); they take a body to themselves; this body is articulate language.*—Of this mixture of wheat and chaff, the above fair specimen may suffice.

But a small space is left us for the notice of the second book at the head of our article. Dr. Steinthal is *privatim docens* in the department of linguistics at the University of Berlin. To the world of letters he has become known by some few small treatises on subjects within his department. In 1848 he published *William von Humboldt's Philosophy of Language and the Philosophy of Hegel*,† in which he endeavours to show the untenable nature of the dialectic method of Hegel from the fact that it must ultimately land in the *genetic*‡ mode of reasoning which had been adopted by W. von Humboldt, whose philosophy he at the same time analyzes, both as to its principles and its objects, defending the latter against the Hegelian system.—In 1850 he published *The Classification of Languages represented as the Development of the Idea of Language*,|| which contains a critique of all preceding classifications and of

* Philosophie eines Dilettanten von *Friedrich Ludwig Bührlen*. Stuttgart, 1847.

† Die Sprachwissenschaft Wilhelm von Humboldt's und die Hegelsche Philosophie.

‡ We retain the term, merely observing that it denotes the objective, inductive method as distinguished from the purely subjective, *a priori* argument.

|| Die Classification der Sprachen dargestellt als die Entwicklung der Sprachidee, pp. 91.

linguistics generally. He then propounds a new theory of the nature of language, and divides the languages of the earth into thirteen classes, after a method analogous to the prevalent systems of botany and zoology. The treatise contains many strictures on W. von Humboldt.—To be published this year is a dissertation which has received the prize from the National Institute in Paris, which gives a *comparative view of the Susu, Mandingo, Bambara and Vei languages*,* basing an examination of the psychological organization of these tribes on a comparison of the sounds of their languages.†

Steinthal calls Humboldt the Descartes of language; but he himself wishes to be regarded as his Spinoza. Of the latter we know that he drew forth from the Cartesian principles their ultimate results; we have seen like instances often enough. In our days we have seen what are called Coleridge's disciples, and we have seen what is termed the left side of the Hegelians. We see those devoted disciples take their honoured master upon their shoulders and carry him in triumph—perhaps to places where the reverend sage has not the least desire to go.—“But they keep the same direction towards which the face of the master was turned.” They may at first, but a slight impediment which their master would perhaps have overcome, will easily turn them aside. Moreover, frequently what is called “drawing forth from certain principles their ultimate results”, is only carrying them to dangerous lengths and illegitimate extremes. We should sometimes be suspicious of these Spinozas. It must be confessed, language in the hands of some is what Bacon calls the etymology of his day—*materia quasi cerea*; comments may be made upon an author's words utterly at variance with his sentiments. An author may live to be as old as Methuselah, and might never arrive at those “ultimate results,” but as soon as he sleeps that

μάλα μακρὸν, ἀτέρμονα, νήγρετον ὕπνον,

some grateful pupil may endeavour to continue his master's life, and perhaps make free with his opinions, for νεκρὸς οὐ δάκνει. There is no doubt, it is the fruit which reveals the quality of

§ Vergleichende Darstellung eines afrikanischen Sprachstammes, nach seiner phonetischen und psychologischen Seite.

† Dr. Steinthal is also the editor of *Schwartz's Coptic Grammar*.

the tree; the value or worthlessness of principles frequently is not known until their results appear, and the principles a man discovers may be destined to live longer than he. There is no doubt that this propagation and inheritance of principles has done much good and averted much harm. But are there not notorious instances where a man's expressions have been egregiously perverted and his sentiments caricatured? We do not say positively that this applies to Dr. Steinthal, but when a man *sets up* for a Spinoza, our prepossession, we must acknowledge, is not, and perhaps should not be, in his favour. We should like, however, to give him a fair hearing, but fear he has been crowded out; we must be as brief as possible. We would remark, nevertheless, that if what we understand Dr. Steinthal to say on p. 24, and elsewhere* are the legitimate results of Humboldt's principles, we solemnly repudiate them; and although Dr. Steinthal takes pains to show that he is no Hegelian, we would humbly suggest that he is no better. But we will be passive.

He points out the analogy between Descartes and Humboldt: 1, Descartes said, *Cogito ergo sum*: Humboldt said, Man speaks, because he thinks. 2, In the "dualism" of both. With Descartes, body and soul were two different substances, both created by God. Absolutely diverse, God mediates between them, who, as a *tertium quid*, remains external with reference to them. With Humboldt, mind and language stand somewhat in the same relation as soul and body, which originate in a common source. This common source of mind and language Humboldt makes the real essence of the human mind. So far, says Steinthal, language would be of human origin. But, as the inscrutable essence of the human mind can only be in God, Humboldt is inconsistent in maintaining the human origin, unless he assumes the creative power of God to be exerted and operative continually, "a Cartesian *systema assistentiæ*." Humboldt declares this whole matter to be incomprehensible by man. Steinthal proceeds therefore to explain the inexplicable, and flatters himself "to do this in a manner which he trusts Humboldt would certainly have approved of," because he follows his example. He does this by asserting the *identity of*

* His style is rather ambitious, but by no means lucid or elegant.

the human and the divine spirit.* — — The reason, he says, that Humboldt did not give this easy explanation is that he did not dare to do so, because it would be conceiving of God otherwise than as absolute and infinite. And as Dr. Steinthal thinks it of no use to shrink from conclusions, he does give it. Thus he escapes the union of the human and divine as being the origin of language, and makes it altogether human. Humboldt said, as we have seen above, that language is a birth; Steinthal says it is the *birth-place* of human spirit. With him, then, to explain the origin of language is *merely* to explain the origin of spirit.

This is no more than a nude statement of Dr. Steinthal's view—a view in which freedom gives place to psychological necessity, where man's spirit is absorbed in the Divine Spirit, or rather where God becomes synonymous with the human mind. We fear that such a system would be too much honoured even by that name which its author seems to crave for it himself—*Spinozism*; for in that philosophy, though God is a *necessary* being, he is at least free from all constraint. For ourselves, we can but say with Lessing, *Legimus aliqua, ne legantur.*

So much is certain from Scripture that language is not the fruit of a slow process—that it is not a human invention gradually perfected—man is represented as *immediately* capable of conversing with his Maker. We have not the slightest intimations that his terms were crude or inappropriate; and if we believe that he was created after the image of God, “in *knowledge, righteousness, and holiness,*” it is certainly reasonable to suppose, to say the least, that he was endowed not only with the faculty of speech, but with language itself. God brought the animals to Adam, “*to see what he would call them.*” This,

* How far, or even whether, this differs from *Hegel's* results, at least, the reader may find by comparing *Hegel's* Rel. Phil. vol. II, his “*explication*” of the Trinity, especially p. 233.—It cannot be denied however, that the absence of a personal God from *Humboldt's* philosophy does open the door to pantheism in some shape or other. Modern German theology, too, is doubtless on a track which must lead to the βίβη τοῦ Σαραῶ, if the tendency of *Schleiermacher* be followed “to remove the *dualism* of the finite and the infinite,” and to establish the *essential* identity of the divine and human. (Comp. *Dorner's* *Entwicklungsgeschichte der Lehre von der Person Christi*, p. 340, p. 487 sq.; *Delitzsch's* *Biblich-prophetische Theologie*, p. 216.)

doubtless, intimates the close union between *thought* and *word*. Those unfortunate beings even, whose eyes, ears, and lips are closed, whose souls dwell within their clay tabernacle, without the use of those glorious avenues to the outward world which other men enjoy—even they have some *sounds* for the different objects of their—what we are loth to call—sensation. “I was lately looking at a negro who was occupied in feeding young mocking-birds by the hand. ‘Would they eat worms?’ I asked. The negro replied: ‘Surely not: they are too young; *they would not know what to call them.*’—A singular commentary, almost touching, in its simplicity, on the passage in Genesis to which allusion has been made.”*

Perhaps the only lawful question in the matter would be: *How* does man speak? Is language an organic production of man’s nature, as Becker maintains, or is it a wholly immaterial, “spiritual emanation of an individual national life,” as Humboldt holds, or is it neither? But even these inquiries may have the appearance of subtleties;

“For wonderful indeed are all God’s works,
Pleasant to know, and worthiest to be all
Had in remembrance always with delight;
But what created mind can comprehend
Their number, or the wisdom infinite
That brought them forth, but *hid their causes deep.*”

ART. V.—*Austria in 1848-49.—Being a history of the late political movements in Vienna, Milan, Venice, and Prague; with details of the campaigns of Lombardy and Novara; a full account of the revolution in Hungary; and historical sketches of the Austrian Government and the Provinces of the Empire.* By William H. Stiles, late Chargé d’Affaires of the United States at the Court of Vienna. With portraits of the Emperor, Metternich, Radetsky, Jellacic and Kossuth. 2 vols. 8vo. Harper and Brothers, New York, 1852.

THE series of startling events which have occurred within the last few years upon the Continent of Europe, and the important part enacted by the Austrian Empire in the great po-

* Dr. Lieber, l. c.