

**ON THE EXISTENCE OF MIXED
LANGUAGES BEING AN EXAMINATION
OF THE FUNDAMENTAL AXIOMS
OF THE FOREIGN SCHOOL OF MODERN
PHILOLOGY, MORE ESPECIALLY AS
APPLIED TO THE ENGLISH**

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On the existence of mixed languages being an examination of the fundamental axioms of the foreign school of modern philology, more especially as applied to the English by James Cresswell Clough

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Prize Essay

BY

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πολλὰ μὲν θητοῖς γλώτται, μία δ' Ἀθανάτοιον

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PREFACE.

THIS WORK had its origin in an advertisement offering a prize for an Essay on the subject of Mixture in Languages, especially in English, which appeared in some of the literary journals of May and June 1875. The Author is aware that it possesses not a few imperfections, and that many philologists will regard the whole of it as a mistake, since they have expressly declared 'a mixed language to be an impossibility.' This assertion is called an axiom, or self-evident truth, but surely it ought not to be admitted without proof. The Author has attempted to show that, in point of fact, its contrary is the truth, and he therefore throws himself on the indulgence of the public, to whom he offers his work for what it may be worth.

STATEMENTS TO BE EXAMINED.

'IN THE COURSE of these considerations we had to lay down two axioms, to which we shall frequently have to appeal in the progress of our investigations. The first declares grammar to be the most essential element, and therefore the ground of classification in all languages which have produced a definite grammatical articulation; the second denies the possibility of a mixed language.'¹

'Taking the actual number of words from a good English dictionary, the sum total will be over 100,000. Words of classical origin are calculated to be about twice as numerous as pure English words; hence some writers, who have only considered the constituent parts of our *vocabulary*, have come to the conclusion that English is not only a mixed or composite language, but also a Romance language. They have, however, overlooked the fact that the *grammar* is not mixed or borrowed, but is altogether English.'²

PRINCIPAL WORKS CONSULTED AND NOT ACKNOWLEDGED IN THE BODY OF THE ESSAY.

- MAX MÜLLER: *Lectures on the Science of Language*, 1st and 2nd Series.
DIEZ: *Grammatik der romanischen Sprachen; Etymologische Wörterbuch der romanischen Sprachen*.
LEWES: *Essay on Origin and Formation of the Romance Languages*.
RAYNOUARD: *Levique Roman*.
EARLE: *Philology of the English Tongue*.
BORROW: *Gypsies in Spain; Romano Lavo-Lil*.
BALBI: *Atlas Ethnographique*.
ADKLUNG: *Mithridates*.
BRACHET: *Historical Grammar of the French Language*.
HALLIWELL: *Dictionary*.
The Publications of the ENGLISH DIALECT SOCIETY.
MORRIS: *Historical Outlines of English Accidence*.

¹ Max Müller, *Lectures on the Science of Language*, 1st Series, p. 74.

² Dr. Morris, *Historical Outlines of English Accidence*, p. 34.

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MIXED LANGUAGES.

INTRODUCTORY CHAPTER.

CERTAIN philologists have stated that a mixed language is an impossibility, but the truth of the axiom may well be doubted; indeed, as it would, perhaps, be impossible to find any modern language which contains no foreign elements, it is evident that the principles involved in the question are fundamental.

Language consists of three parts—sounds, words, and grammar; and a mixture in any one of these points produces a mixed language.

Perfectly pure languages have only existed in very early or very rude stages of society. Whenever there is an exception, the language which violates this rule must eventually commit suicide. Few languages have been more stringently protected than Greek, yet modern Greek is of no literary importance; and even that, in its colloquial forms, contains much Turkish; but, as these and other impurities are not permitted in literature, the lateral development of the language is crippled. The purity of Latin was jealously guarded, but it is now a dead language, whilst the Italicisms, the Tuscanisms, and vulgar Latinisms, have been developed into the modern Romance languages.

The evil of measuring out a language by rule and line may be seen in modern French. There is scarcely an European language in which a translation of Shakspeare looks so bald as in this—a result of the meagre list of classical vocables allowed by the pedantic Academy. As, then, in the physical world with animals, so also in the mental with lan-