

Our native language was of slow growth. It did not begin to settle into the likeness of our speech, until long after Caxton, in 1477, set up the first Printing Press at Westminster.

While the Latin remained the language of the Church, the Law, Court and Diplomacy, until the Long Parliament of 1640: whose proceedings were first reported in English, and the Courts of the Protectorate anglicised the forms of the Law: yet, all the foreign Treaties and Diplomacy of that Era were in Latin, by Oliver's great Latin or "Foreign" Secretary, John Milton: and on the Restoration of Charles II, (1660), the Courts resumed the old law Latin, which was not banished by the Act of Wm. IV.: but only to a partial extent by their recent Code of Procedure (1865) and its amendments. The Statutes, only from about the Era of the Reformation, have assumed an Anglicised Latin form.

Our standards of the 17th Century: the Book of Common Prayer, the Version of the Bible, Shakspeare and Milton with their contemporaries, have become Archaic and need Glossaries. The Version is soon to be superseded by the work of the Revisers; who, in 1871, chosen from all denominations by Royal Commission, are pursuing their work in the Jerusalem Chamber, Westminster Abbey. Each generation raises new standards: in fact our language is ever changing as it grows, like our race.

I may be allowed to linger yet around the Era of this old Patent—the English Fountain of our race. Its date (1306) was the era of the full developement of Chivalry in England.

Chivalry, in its theory of Church militant; or the honors and wealth of Knighthood and Peerage, conferred for Loyalty and Beneficence, adorns the romantic ballad of the Trouveurs of Provence: and doubtless in many a gloomy robber castle of England, its coarse inmates listened often to the evening song and harp of the wandering minstrel from France, about their fabled Knights and Ladyes fair.

The actual English Knight or Baron, like his Continental Peers, was a rough soldier, warring for Estate and Rank.

Rarely, even in the Ballads of the Time, is any Knight's memory enshrined in deeds of mercy or self-sacrifice for the public good.

The Crusades had just closed (1096—1291) their eventful career: and from the many returned survivors, their influence still reigned. But all the useful and elegant Arts, Culture and Learning of the East, which they brought back to Europe, were acquired by the commercial and industrious Cities of Italy and Flanders.