VII

THE CONFLICT OF LANGUAGES

We have brought together thus far in these Anticipations the material for the picture of a human community somewhere towards the year 2000. We have imagined its roads, the type and appearance of its homes, its social developments, its internal struggle for organization; we have speculated upon its moral and æsthetic condition, read its newspaper, made an advanced criticism upon the lack of universality in its literature, and attempted to imagine it at war. We have decided in particular that unlike the civilized community of the immediate past which lived either in sharply-defined towns or agriculturally over a wide country, this population will be distributed in a quite different way, a little more thickly over vast urban regions and a little less thickly over less attractive or less convenient or less industrial parts of the world. And implicit in all that has been written there has appeared an unavoidable assumption that the coming community will be vast, something geographically more extensive than most, and geographically different from almost all existing communities, that the outline its creative forces will draw not only does not coincide with existing political centres and boundaries, but will be more often than not in direct conflict with them, uniting areas that are separated and separating areas that are united, grouping here half a dozen tongues and peoples together and there tearing apart homogeneous bodies and

distributing the fragments among separate groups. And it will now be well to inquire a little into the general causes of these existing divisions, the political boundaries of to-day, and the still older contours of language and race.

It is first to be remarked that each of these sets of boundaries is superposed, as it were, on the older sets. The race areas, for example, which are now not traceable in Europe at all must have represented old regions of separation; the language areas, which have little or no essential relation to racial distribution, have also given way long since to the newer forces that have united and consolidated nations. And the still newer forces that have united and separated the nineteenth century states have been, and in many cases are still, in manifest conflict with "national" ideas.

Now, in the original separation of human races, in the subsequent differentiation and spread of languages, in the separation of men into nationalities, and in the union and splitting of states and empires, we have to deal essentially with the fluctuating manifestations of the same fundamental shaping factor which will determine the distribution of urban districts in the coming years. Every boundary of the ethnographical, linguistic, political, and commercial map--as a little consideration will show--has indeed been traced in the first place by the means of transit, under the compulsion of geographical contours.

There are evident in Europe four or five or more very distinct racial

types, and since the methods and rewards of barbaric warfare and the nature of the chief chattels of barbaric trade have always been diametrically opposed to racial purity, their original separation could only have gone on through such an entire lack of communication as prevented either trade or warfare between the bulk of the differentiating bodies. These original racial types are now inextricably mingled. Unobservant, over-scholarly people talk or write in the profoundest manner about a Teutonic race and a Keltic race, and institute all sorts of curious contrasts between these phantoms, but these are not races at all, if physical characteristics have anything to do with race. The Dane, the Bavarian, the Prussian, the Frieslander, the Wessex peasant, the Kentish man, the Virginian, the man from New Jersey, the Norwegian, the Swede, and the Transvaal Boer, are generalized about, for example, as Teutonic, while the short, dark, cunning sort of Welshman, the tall and generous Highlander, the miscellaneous Irish, the square-headed Breton, and any sort of Cornwall peasant are Kelts within the meaning of this oil-lamp anthropology.[44] People who believe in this sort of thing are not the sort of people that one attempts to convert by a set argument. One need only say the thing is not so; there is no Teutonic race, and there never has been; there is no Keltic race, and there never has been. No one has ever proved or attempted to prove the existence of such races, the thing has always been assumed; they are dogmas with nothing but questionable authority behind them, and the onus of proof rests on the believer. This nonsense about Keltic and Teutonic is no more science than Lombroso's extraordinary assertions about criminals, or palmistry, or the development of religion from a solar

myth. Indisputably there are several races intermingled in the European populations--I am inclined to suspect the primitive European races may be found to be so distinct as to resist confusion and pamnyxia through hybridization--but there is no inkling of a satisfactory analysis yet that will discriminate what these races were and define them in terms of physical and moral character. The fact remains there is no such thing as a racially pure and homogeneous community in Europe distinct from other communities. Even among the Jews, according to Erckert and Chantre and J. Jacobs, there are markedly divergent types, there may have been two original elements and there have been extensive local intermixtures.

Long before the beginnings of history, while even language was in its first beginnings--indeed as another aspect of the same process as the beginning of language--the first complete isolations that established race were breaking down again, the little pools of race were running together into less homogeneous lagoons and marshes of humanity, the first paths were being worn--war paths for the most part. Still differentiation would be largely at work. Without frequent intercourse, frequent interchange of women as the great factor in that intercourse, the tribes and bands of mankind would still go on separating, would develop dialectic and customary, if not physical and moral differences. It was no longer a case of pools perhaps, but they were still in lakes. There were as yet no open seas of mankind. With advancing civilization, with iron weapons and war discipline, with established paths and a social rule and presently with the coming of the horse, what one might call the areas of assimilation would increase in size. A stage would be

reached when the only checks to transit of a sufficiently convenient sort to keep language uniform would be the sea or mountains or a broad river or--pure distance. And presently the rules of the game, so to speak, would be further altered and the unifications and isolations that were establishing themselves upset altogether and brought into novel conflict by the beginnings of navigation, whereby an impassable barrier became a highway.

The commencement of actual European history coincides with the closing phases of what was probably a very long period of a foot and (occasional) horseback state of communications; the adjustments so arrived at being already in an early state of rearrangement through the advent of the ship. The communities of Europe were still for the larger part small isolated tribes and kingdoms, such kingdoms as a mainly pedestrian militia, or at any rate a militia without transport, and drawn from (and soon drawn home again by) agricultural work, might hold together. The increase of transit facilities between such communities, by the development of shipping and the invention of the wheel and the made road, spelt increased trade perhaps for a time, but very speedily a more extensive form of war, and in the end either the wearing away of differences and union, or conquest. Man is the creature of a struggle for existence, incurably egoistic and aggressive. Convince him of the gospel of self-abnegation even, and he instantly becomes its zealous missionary, taking great credit that his expedients to ram it into the minds of his fellow-creatures do not include physical force--and if that is not self-abnegation, he asks, what is? So he has been, and so he is

likely to remain. Not to be so, is to die of abnegation and extinguish the type. Improvement in transit between communities formerly for all practical purposes isolated, means, therefore, and always has meant, and I imagine, always will mean, that now they can get at one another. And they do. They inter-breed and fight, physically, mentally, and spiritually. Unless Providence is belied in His works that is what they are meant to do.

A third invention which, though not a means of transit like the wheeled vehicle and the ship, was yet a means of communication, rendered still larger political reactions possible, and that was the development of systems of writing. The first empires and some sort of written speech arose together. Just as a kingdom, as distinguished from a mere tribal group of villages, is almost impossible without horses, so is an empire without writing and post-roads. The history of the whole world for three thousand years is the history of a unity larger than the small kingdom of the Heptarchy type, endeavouring to establish itself under the stress of these discoveries of horse-traffic and shipping and the written word, the history, that is, of the consequences of the partial shattering of the barriers that had been effectual enough to prevent the fusion of more than tribal communities through all the long ages before the dawn of history.

East of the Gobi Pamir barrier there has slowly grown up under these new conditions the Chinese system. West and north of the Sahara Gobi barrier of deserts and mountains, the extraordinarily strong and spacious

conceptions of the Romans succeeded in dominating the world, and do, indeed, in a sort of mutilated way, by the powers of great words and wide ideas, in Cæsarism and Imperialism, in the titles of Czar, Kaiser, and Imperator, in Papal pretension and countless political devices, dominate it to this hour. For awhile these conceptions sustained a united and to a large extent organized empire over very much of this space. But at its stablest time, this union was no more than a political union, the spreading of a thin layer of Latin-speaking officials, of a thin network of roads and a very thin veneer indeed of customs and refinements, over the scarcely touched national masses. It checked, perhaps, but it nowhere succeeded in stopping the slow but inevitable differentiation of province from province and nation from nation. The forces of transit that permitted the Roman imperialism and its partial successors to establish wide ascendancies, were not sufficient to carry the resultant unity beyond the political stage. There was unity, but not unification. Tongues and writing ceased to be pure without ceasing to be distinct. Sympathies, religious and social practices, ran apart and rounded themselves off like drops of oil on water. Travel was restricted to the rulers and the troops and to a wealthy leisure class; commerce was for most of the constituent provinces of the empire a commerce in superficialities, and each province--except for Italy, which latterly became dependent on an over-seas food supply--was in all essential things autonomous, could have continued in existence, rulers and ruled, arts, luxuries, and refinements just as they stood, if all other lands and customs had been swept out of being. Local convulsions and revolutions, conquests and developments, occurred indeed, but though the

stones were altered the mosaic remained, and the general size and character of its constituent pieces remained. So it was under the Romans, so it was in the eighteenth century, and so it would probably have remained as long as the post-road and the sailing-ship were the most rapid forms of transit within the reach of man. Wars and powers and princes came and went, that was all. Nothing was changed, there was only one state the more or less. Even in the eighteenth century the process of real unification had effected so little, that not one of the larger kingdoms of Europe escaped a civil war--not a class war, but a really internal war--between one part of itself and another, in that hundred years. In spite of Rome's few centuries of unstable empire, internal wars, a perpetual struggle against finally triumphant disruption seemed to be the unavoidable destiny of every power that attempted to rule over a larger radius than at most a hundred miles.

So evident was this that many educated English persons thought then, and many who are not in the habit of analyzing operating causes, still think to-day, that the wide diffusion of the English-speaking people is a mere preliminary to their political, social, and linguistic disruption--the eighteenth-century breach with the United States is made a precedent of, and the unification that followed the war of Union and the growing unification of Canada is overlooked--that linguistic differences, differences of custom, costume, prejudice, and the like, will finally make the Australian, the Canadian of English blood, the Virginian, and the English Africander, as incomprehensible and unsympathetic one to another as Spaniard and Englishman or Frenchman and German are now. On

such a supposition all our current Imperialism is the most foolish defiance of the inevitable, the maddest waste of blood, treasure, and emotion that man ever made. So, indeed, it might be--so, indeed, I certainly think it would be--if it were not that the epoch of post-road and sailing-ship is at an end. We are in the beginning of a new time, with such forces of organization and unification at work in mechanical traction, in the telephone and telegraph, in a whole wonderland of novel, space-destroying appliances, and in the correlated inevitable advance in practical education, as the world has never felt before.

The operation of these unifying forces is already to be very distinctly traced in the check, the arrest indeed, of any further differentiation in existing tongues, even in the most widely spread. In fact, it is more than an arrest even, the forces of differentiation have been driven back and an actual process of assimilation has set in. In England at the commencement of the nineteenth century the common man of Somerset and the common man of Yorkshire, the Sussex peasant, the Caithness cottar and the common Ulsterman, would have been almost incomprehensible to one another. They differed in accent, in idiom, and in their very names for things. They differed in their ideas about things. They were, in plain English, foreigners one to another. Now they differ only in accent, and even that is a dwindling difference. Their language has become ampler because now they read. They read books--or, at any rate, they learn to read out of books--and certainly they read newspapers and those scrappy periodicals that people like bishops pretend to think so detrimental to the human mind, periodicals that it is cheaper to make at centres and

uniformly, than locally in accordance with local needs. Since the newspaper cannot fit the locality, the locality has to broaden its mind to the newspaper, and to ideas acceptable in other localities. The word and the idiom of the literary language and the pronunciation suggested by its spelling tends to prevail over the local usage. And moreover there is a persistent mixing of peoples going on, migration in search of employment and so on, quite unprecedented before the railways came. Few people are content to remain in that locality and state of life "into which it has pleased God to call them." As a result, dialectic purity has vanished, dialects are rapidly vanishing, and novel differentiations are retarded or arrested altogether. Such novelties as do establish themselves in a locality are widely disseminated almost at once in books and periodicals.

A parallel arrest of dialectic separation has happened in France, in Italy, in Germany, and in the States. It is not a process peculiar to any one nation. It is simply an aspect of the general process that has arisen out of mechanical locomotion. The organization of elementary education has no doubt been an important factor, but the essential influence working through this circumstance is the fact that paper is relatively cheap to type-setting, and both cheap to authorship--even the commonest sorts of authorship--and the wider the area a periodical or book serves the bigger, more attractive, and better it can be made for the same money. And clearly this process of assimilation will continue. Even local differences of accent seem likely to follow. The itinerant dramatic company, the itinerant preacher, the coming extension of

telephones and the phonograph, which at any time in some application to correspondence or instruction may cease to be a toy, all these things attack, or threaten to attack, the weeds of differentiation before they can take root....

And this process is not restricted to dialects merely. The native of a small country who knows no other language than the tongue of his country becomes increasingly at a disadvantage in comparison with the user of any of the three great languages of the Europeanized world. For his literature he depends on the scanty writers who are in his own case and write, or have written, in his own tongue. Necessarily they are few, because necessarily with a small public there can be only subsistence for a few. For his science he is in a worse case. His country can produce neither teachers nor discoverers to compare with the numbers of such workers in the larger areas, and it will neither pay them to write original matter for his instruction nor to translate what has been written in other tongues. The larger the number of people reading a tongue, the larger--other things being equal--will be not only the output of more or less original literature in that tongue, but also the more profitable and numerous will be translations of whatever has value in other tongues. Moreover, the larger the reading public in any language the cheaper will it be to supply copies of the desired work. In the matter of current intelligence the case of the speaker of the small language is still worse. His newspaper will need to be cheaply served, his home intelligence will be cut and restricted, his foreign news belated and second hand. Moreover, to travel even a little distance

or to conduct anything but the smallest business enterprise will be exceptionally inconvenient to him. The Englishman who knows no language but his own may travel well-nigh all over the world and everywhere meet some one who can speak his tongue. But what of the Welsh-speaking Welshman? What of the Basque and the Lithuanian who can speak only his mother tongue? Everywhere such a man is a foreigner and with all the foreigner's disadvantages. In most places he is for all practical purposes deaf and dumb.

The inducements to an Englishman, Frenchman or German to become bi-lingual are great enough nowadays, but the inducements to a speaker of the smaller languages are rapidly approaching compulsion. He must do it in self-defence. To be an educated man in his own vernacular has become an impossibility, he must either become a mental subject of one of the greater languages or sink to the intellectual status of a peasant. But if our analysis of social development was correct the peasant of to-day will be represented to-morrow by the people of no account whatever, the classes of extinction, the People of the Abyss. If that analysis was correct, the essential nation will be all of educated men, that is to say, the essential nation will speak some dominant language or cease to exist, whatever its primordial tongue may have been. It will pass out of being and become a mere local area of the lower social stratum,--a Problem for the philanthropic amateur.

The action of the force of attraction of the great tongues is cumulative. It goes on, as bodies fall, with a steady acceleration. The

more the great tongues prevail over the little languages the less will be the inducement to write and translate into these latter, the less the inducement to master them with any care or precision. And so this attack upon the smaller tongues, this gravitation of those who are born to speak them, towards the great languages, is not only to be seen going on in the case of such languages as Flemish, Welsh, or Basque, but even in the case of Norwegian and of such a great and noble tongue as the Italian, I am afraid that the trend of things makes for a similar suppression. All over Italy is the French newspaper and the French book. French wins its way more and more there, as English, I understand, is doing in Norway, and English and German in Holland. And in the coming years when the reading public will, in the case of the Western nations, be practically the whole functional population, when travel will be more extensive and abundant, and the inter-change of printed matter still cheaper and swifter--and above all with the spread of the telephone--the process of subtle, bloodless, unpremeditated annexation will conceivably progress much more rapidly even than it does at present. The Twentieth Century will see the effectual crowding out of most of the weaker languages--if not a positive crowding out, yet at least (as in Flanders) a supplementing of them by the superposition of one or other of a limited number of world-languages over the area in which each is spoken. This will go on not only in Europe, but with varying rates of progress and local eddies and interruptions over the whole world. Except in the special case of China and Japan, where there may be a unique development, the peoples of the world will escape from the wreckage of their too small and swamped and foundering social systems, only up the

ladders of what one may call the aggregating tongues.

What will these aggregating world-languages be? If one has regard only to its extension during the nineteenth century one may easily incline to overrate the probabilities of English becoming the chief of these. But a great part of the vast extension of English that has occurred has been due to the rapid reproduction of originally English-speaking peoples, the emigration of foreigners into English-speaking countries in quantities too small to resist the contagion about them, and the compulsion due to the political and commercial preponderance of a people too illiterate to readily master strange tongues. None of these causes have any essential permanence. When one comes to look more closely into the question one is surprised to discover how slow the extension of English has been in the face of apparently far less convenient tongues. English still fails to replace the French language in French Canada, and its ascendency is doubtful to-day in South Africa, after nearly a century of British dominion. It has none of the contagious quality of French, and the small class that monopolizes the direction of British affairs, and probably will monopolize it yet for several decades, has never displayed any great zeal to propagate its use. Of the few ideas possessed by the British governing class, the destruction and discouragement of schools and colleges is, unfortunately, one of the chief, and there is an absolute incapacity to understand the political significance of the language question. The Hindoo who is at pains to learn and use English encounters something uncommonly like hatred disguised in a facetious form. He will certainly

read little about himself in English that is not grossly contemptuous, to reward him for his labour. The possibilities that have existed, and that do still in a dwindling degree exist, for resolute statesmen to make English the common language of communication for all Asia south and east of the Himalayas, will have to develop of their own force or dwindle and pass away. They may quite probably pass away. There is no sign that either the English or the Americans have a sufficient sense of the importance of linguistic predominance in the future of their race to interfere with natural processes in this matter for many years to come.

Among peoples not actually subject to British or American rule, and who are neither waiters nor commercial travellers, the inducements to learn English, rather than French or German, do not increase. If our initial assumptions are right, the decisive factor in this matter is the amount of science and thought the acquisition of a language will afford the man who learns it. It becomes, therefore, a fact of very great significance that the actual number of books published in English is less than that in French or German, and that the proportion of serious books is very greatly less. A large proportion of English books are novels adapted to the minds of women, or of boys and superannuated business men, stories designed rather to allay than stimulate thought--they are the only books, indeed, that are profitable to publisher and author alike. In this connection they do not count, however; no foreigner is likely to learn English for the pleasure of reading Miss Marie Corelli in the original, or of drinking untranslatable elements from The Helmet of Navarre. The present conditions of book production for the English

reading public offer no hope of any immediate change in this respect. There is neither honour nor reward--there is not even food or shelter--for the American or Englishman who devotes a year or so of his life to the adequate treatment of any spacious question, and so small is the English reading public with any special interest in science, that a great number of important foreign scientific works are never translated into English at all. Such interesting compilations as Bloch's work on war, for example, must be read in French; in English only a brief summary of his results is to be obtained, under a sensational heading.[45] Schopenhauer again is only to be got quite stupidly Bowdlerized, explained, and "selected" in English. Many translations that are made into English are made only to sell, they are too often the work of sweated women and girls--very often quite without any special knowledge of the matter they translate--they are difficult to read and untrustworthy to quote. The production of books in English, except the author be a wealthy amateur, rests finally upon the publishers, and publishers to-day stand a little lower than ordinary tradesmen in not caring at all whether the goods they sell are good or bad. Unusual books, they allege--and all good books are unusual--are "difficult to handle," and the author must pay the fine--amounting, more often than not, to the greater portion of his interest in the book. There is no criticism to control the advertising enterprises of publishers and authors, and no sufficiently intelligent reading public has differentiated out of the confusion to encourage attempts at critical discrimination. The organs of the great professions and technical trades are as yet not alive to the part their readers must play in the public

life of the future, and ignore all but strictly technical publications. A bastard criticism, written in many cases by publishers' employees, a criticism having a very direct relation to the advertisement columns, distributes praise and blame in the periodic press. There is no body of great men either in England or America, no intelligence in the British Court, that might by any form of recognition compensate the philosophical or scientific writer for poverty and popular neglect. The more powerful a man's intelligence the more distinctly he must see that to devote himself to increase the scientific or philosophical wealth of the English tongue will be to sacrifice comfort, the respect of the bulk of his contemporaries, and all the most delightful things of life, for the barren reward of a not very certain righteous self-applause. By brewing and dealing in tied houses,[46] or by selling pork and tea, or by stock-jobbing and by pandering with the profits so obtained to the pleasures of the established great, a man of energy may hope to rise to a pitch of public honour and popularity immeasurably in excess of anything attainable through the most splendid intellectual performances. Heaven forbid I should overrate public honours and the company of princes! But it is not always delightful to be splashed by the wheels of cabs. Always before there has been at least a convention that the Court of this country, and its aristocracy, were radiant centres of moral and intellectual influence, that they did to some extent check and correct the judgments of the cab-rank and the beer-house. But the British Crown of to-day, so far as it exists for science and literature at all, exists mainly to repudiate the claims of intellectual performance to public respect.

These things, if they were merely the grievances of the study, might very well rest there. But they must be recognized here because the intellectual decline of the published literature of the English language--using the word to cover all sorts of books--involves finally the decline of the language and of all the spacious political possibilities that go with the wide extension of a language. Conceivably, if in the coming years a deliberate attempt were made to provide sound instruction in English to all who sought it, and to all within the control of English-speaking Governments, if honour and emolument were given to literary men instead of being left to them to most indelicately take, and if the present sordid trade of publishing were so lifted as to bring the whole literature, the whole science, and all the contemporary thought of the world--not some selection of the world's literature, not some obsolete Encyclopædia sold meanly and basely to choke hungry minds, but a real publication of all that has been and is being done--within the reach of each man's need and desire who had the franchise of the tongue, then by the year 2000 I would prophesy that the whole functional body of human society would read, and perhaps even write and speak, our language. And not only that, but it might be the prevalent and everyday language of Scandinavia and Denmark and Holland, of all Africa, all North America, of the Pacific coasts of Asia and of India, the universal international language, and in a fair way to be the universal language of mankind. But such an enterprise demands a resolve and intelligence beyond all the immediate signs of the times; it implies a veritable renascence of intellectual life among the

English-speaking peoples. The probabilities of such a renascence will be more conveniently discussed at a later stage, when we attempt to draw the broad outline of the struggle for world-wide ascendency that the coming years will see. But here it is clear that upon the probability of such a renascence depends the extension of the language, and not only that, but the preservation of that military and naval efficiency upon which, in this world of resolute aggression, the existence of the English-speaking communities finally depends.

French and German will certainly be aggregating languages during the greater portion of the coming years. Of the two I am inclined to think French will spread further than German. There is a disposition in the world, which the French share, to grossly undervalue the prospects of all things French, derived, so far as I can gather, from the facts that the French were beaten by the Germans in 1870, and that they do not breed with the abandon of rabbits or negroes. These are considerations that affect the dissemination of French very little. The French reading public is something different and very much larger than the existing French political system. The number of books published in French is greater than that published in English; there is a critical reception for a work published in French that is one of the few things worth a writer's having, and the French translators are the most alert and efficient in the world. One has only to see a Parisian bookshop, and to recall an English one, to realize the as yet unattainable standing of French. The serried ranks of lemon-coloured volumes in the former have the whole range of human thought and interest; there are no taboos and

no limits, you have everything up and down the scale, from frank indecency to stark wisdom. It is a shop for men. I remember my amazement to discover three copies of a translation of that most wonderful book, the Text-book of Psychology of Professor William James,[ERRATUM: for 'The Text Book of Psychology,' read 'The Principles of Psychology'.] in a shop in L'Avenue de l'Opera--three copies of a book that I have never seen anywhere in England outside my own house,--and I am an attentive student of bookshop windows! And the French books are all so pleasant in the page, and so cheap--they are for a people that buys to read. One thinks of the English bookshop, with its gaudy reach-me-downs of gilded and embossed cover, its horribly printed novels still more horribly "illustrated," the exasperating pointless variety in the size and thickness of its books. The general effect of the English book is that it is something sold by a dealer in bric-à-brac, honestly sorry the thing is a book, but who has done his best to remedy it, anyhow! And all the English shopful is either brand new fiction or illustrated travel (of 'Buns with the Grand Lama' type), or gilded versions of the classics of past times done up to give away. While the French bookshop reeks of contemporary intellectual life!

These things count for French as against English now, and they will count for infinitely more in the coming years. And over German also French has many advantages. In spite of the numerical preponderance of books published in Germany, it is doubtful if the German reader has quite such a catholic feast before him as the reader of French. There is a mass of German fiction probably as uninteresting to a foreigner as

popular English and American romance. And German compared with French is an unattractive language; unmelodious, unwieldy, and cursed with a hideous and blinding lettering that the German is too patriotic to sacrifice. There has been in Germany a more powerful parallel to what one may call the "honest Saxon" movement among the English, that queer mental twist that moves men to call an otherwise undistinguished preface a "Foreword," and find a pleasurable advantage over their fellow-creatures in a familiarity with "eftsoons." This tendency in German has done much to arrest the simplification of idiom, and checked the development of new words of classical origin. In particular it has stood in the way of the international use of scientific terms. The Englishman, the Frenchman, and the Italian have a certain community of technical, scientific, and philosophical phraseology, and it is frequently easier for an Englishman with some special knowledge of his subject to read and appreciate a subtle and technical work in French, than it is for him to fully enter into the popular matter of the same tongue. Moreover, the technicalities of these peoples, being not so immediately and constantly brought into contrast and contact with their Latin or Greek roots as they would be if they were derived (as are so many "patriotic" German technicalities) from native roots, are free to qualify and develop a final meaning distinct from their original intention. In the growing and changing body of science this counts for much. The indigenous German technicality remains clumsy and compromised by its everyday relations, to the end of time it drags a lengthening chain of unsuitable associations. And the shade of meaning, the limited qualification, that a Frenchman or Englishman can attain with a mere

twist of the sentence, the German must either abandon or laboriously overstate with some colossal wormcast of parenthesis.... Moreover, against the German tongue there are hostile frontiers, there are hostile people who fear German preponderance, and who have set their hearts against its use. In Roumania, and among the Slav, Bohemian, and Hungarian peoples, French attacks German in the flank, and has as clear a prospect of predominance.

These two tongues must inevitably come into keen conflict; they will perhaps fight their battle for the linguistic conquest of Europe, and perhaps of the world, in a great urban region that will arise about the Rhine. Politically this region lies now in six independent States, but economically it must become one in the next fifty years. It will almost certainly be the greatest urban region in all the world except that which will arise in the eastern States of North America, and that which may arise somewhere about Hankow. It will stretch from Lille to Kiel, it will drive extensions along the Rhine valley into Switzerland, and fling an arm along the Moldau to Prague, it will be the industrial capital of the old world. Paris will be its West End, and it will stretch a spider's web of railways and great roads of the new sort over the whole continent. Even when the coal-field industries of the plain give place to the industrial application of mountain-born electricity, this great city region will remain, I believe, in its present position at the seaport end of the great plain of the Old World. Considerations of transit will keep it where it has grown, and electricity will be brought to it in mighty cables from the torrents of the central European

mountain mass. Its westward port may be Bordeaux or Milford Haven, or even some port in the south-west of Ireland--unless, which is very unlikely, the velocity of secure sea-travel can be increased beyond that of land locomotion. I do not see how this great region is to unify itself without some linguistic compromise--the Germanization of the French-speaking peoples by force is too ridiculous a suggestion to entertain. Almost inevitably with travel, with transport communications, with every condition of human convenience insisting upon it, formally or informally a bi-lingual compromise will come into operation, and to my mind at least the chances seem even that French will emerge on the upper hand. Unless, indeed, that great renascence of the English-speaking peoples should, after all, so overwhelmingly occur as to force this European city to be tri-lingual, and prepare the way by which the whole world may at last speak together in one tongue.

These are the aggregating tongues. I do not think that any other tongues than these are quite likely to hold their own in the coming time. Italian may flourish in the city of the Po valley, but only with French beside it. Spanish and Russian are mighty languages, but without a reading public how can they prevail, and what prospect of a reading public has either? They are, I believe, already judged. By A.D. 2000 all these languages will be tending more and more to be the second tongues of bi-lingual communities, with French, or English, or less probably German winning the upper hand.

But when one turns to China there are the strangest possibilities. It is

in Eastern Asia alone that there seems to be any possibility of a synthesis sufficiently great to maintain itself, arising outside of, and independently of, the interlocked system of mechanically sustained societies that is developing out of mediæval Christendom. Throughout Eastern Asia there is still, no doubt, a vast wilderness of languages, but over them all rides the Chinese writing. And very strong--strong enough to be very gravely considered--is the possibility of that writing taking up an orthodox association of sounds, and becoming a world speech. The Japanese written language, the language of Japanese literature, tends to assimilate itself to Chinese, and fresh Chinese words and expressions are continually taking root in Japan. The Japanese are a people quite abnormal and incalculable, with a touch of romance, a conception of honour, a quality of imagination, and a clearness of intelligence that renders possible for them things inconceivable of any other existing nation. I may be the slave of perspective effects, but when I turn my mind from the pettifogging muddle of the English House of Commons, for example, that magnified vestry that is so proud of itself as a club--when I turn from that to this race of brave and smiling people, abruptly destiny begins drawing with a bolder hand. Suppose the Japanese were to make up their minds to accelerate whatever process of synthesis were possible in China! Suppose, after all, I am not the victim of atmospheric refraction, and they are, indeed, as gallant and bold and intelligent as my baseless conception of them would have them be! They would almost certainly find co-operative elements among the educated Chinese.... But this is no doubt the lesser probability. In front and rear of China the English language stands. It has the start of

all other languages--the mechanical advantage--the position. And if only we, who think and write and translate and print and put forth, could make it worth the world's having!

FOOTNOTES:

[44] Under the intoxication of the Keltic Renascence the most diverse sorts of human beings have foregathered and met face to face, and been photographed Pan-Keltically, and have no doubt gloated over these collective photographs, without any of them realizing, it seems, what a miscellaneous thing the Keltic race must be. There is nothing that may or may not be a Kelt, and I know, for example, professional Kelts who are, so far as face, manners, accents, morals, and ideals go, indistinguishable from other people who are, I am told, indisputably Assyroid Jews.

[45] Is War Now Impossible? and see also footnote, p. 210.

[46] It is entirely for their wealth that brewers have been ennobled in England, never because of their services as captains of a great industry. Indeed, these services have been typically poor. While these men were earning their peerages by the sort of proceedings that do secure men peerages under the British Crown, the German brewers were developing the art and science of brewing with remarkable energy and success. The Germans and Bohemians can now make light beers that the English brewers cannot even imitate; they are exporting beer to England

in steadily increasing volume.