

GRIMM'S LAW.

[In a late Number of the 'Anthropological Review' Grimm's law is explained in what is at least an ingenious manner. After describing an Aryan, or "articulate-speaking man," setting out to teach language to some rude owners of the "kitchen-middens" of the primeval age, who are supposed to be speechless, a distinguished Anthropologist thus reports the result of the attempt: "But now assume the 200 [kitchen-middeners] to be mutes, and follow the leader of the Aryans in his first lesson to the crowd around him. Naturally he would get the crowd to pronounce after him some short syllables, such as pa, ta, ka, to illustrate the use of lips, palate, and throat, and very naturally the four or five men (or women more likely) just in front of him would pronounce them rightly; but not one man in fifty can tell the real effect of his work on a crowd. On their returning to their wigwams, much would be the emotion of risibility and imitateness displayed that night among the natives; and next morning the chances are that the majority who stood some distance from the speaker would have fixed for ever upon the whole nation the wrong utterance of ba, da, ga. The main point of my whole argument is, that such a result would most naturally follow among mutes, but would never happen among speaking men."—Extract from Paper read before the Anthropological Society by the Rev. D. I. HEATH, M.A.—'Anthropological Review,' April 1867.]

GRIMM'S LAW.

A NEW SONG.

AIR—*Old Homer,—but with him what have we to do?*

ETYMOLOGY once was a wild kind of thing,
 Which from any one word any other could
 bring :

Of the consonants then the effect was thought small,
 And the vowels—the vowels were nothing at all.

Down a down, down, &c.

But that state of matters completely is changed,
 And the old school of scholars now feels quite estranged :
 For 'tis clear that whenever we open our jaw,
 Every sound that we utter comes under some Law.

Now one of these laws has been named after Grimm,
 For the Germans declare it was found out by him :
 But their rivals the Danes take the Germans to task,
 And proclaim as its finder the great Rasmus Rask.

Be this as it may, few have sought to explain
 How it came that this law could its influence gain:
 Max Müller has tried, and, perhaps, pretty well;
 But I don't understand him, and therefore can't tell.

Anthropologists say, after Man had his birth,
 There were two human races possessing the earth;
 One gifted and graced with articulate speech,
 And another that only could gabble and screech.

The Aryans could speak, and could build, and could
 plough,
 And knew most of the arts we are practising now;
 But the Dumbies that dwelt at those vile Kitchen-
 Middens
 Weren't fit but to do their Superiors' biddings.

So an Aryan went forth to enlighten these others,
 And to raise them by speech to the level of brothers;
 On the Mutes of the Middens he burst with eclat,
 And attempted to teach them the syllable PA.

This PA was intended to set things a-going
 For a lot of Good Words very well worth the knowing;
 Such as Pater, and *πολις*, and Panis, and Pasco;
 But the Midden performers made rather a *fiasco*.

Scarce one of them all would say PA for a wonder,
But each blundered away with a different blunder :
Some feebly cried A, and some, crow-like, said KA,
While the nearest they came to was FA or was BA.

Then the Aryan propounded the syllable TA,
Which his pupils corrupted to THA and to DA :
Even KA, when they tried it, they never came nearer
Than to HA or to GA, or to something still queerer.

So slow were their senses to seize what was said,
That they never could hit the right nail on the head ;
And the game of cross purposes lasted so long,
That it soon was a rule they should always go wrong.

Thus the Dumbies for ever said Father for Pater,
And Bearing and Brother for Ferens and Frater :
The Aryan cried Pecu, the Midden-man Fee,
In which Doctors and Lawyers to this day agree.

Jove's Tonitru sank into Old Saxon Thunner,
Which the High-German dunderheads changed into
Donner ;
From Domo came Tame, and from Domus came Tim-
mer,
While the hissing Helvetians said Zämen and Zimmer.

From *θυρα* came Door, and from *θυγατηρ* Tochter,
 Which dwindled away into Türe and Tochter ;
 From Hortus and Hostis came Garden and Guest,
 And from *χολη* came Gall, which so bothers the best.

The Old Aryan GAU was the Kitchener's KOO
 (Though some tribes were contented to call the beast
 Boo):

If your wife in her *καρδια* would give you a Cornu,
 The Midden-man said, " In her Heart she would Horn
 you."

Such a roundabout race I can only compare
 To the whirligig engines we mount at a fair ;
 Where each rides as in fear lest his steed be forsaken,
 But he ne'er overtakes, and is ne'er overtaken.

A theory seldom is free from a flaw,
 But the story I've told may account for Grimm's law :
 Though some others suggest, if the Bible's no fable,
 That Grimm's law was what caused the confusion at
 Babel.

Down a down, down, &c.