DISSERTATIONS ON THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE:

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DISSERTATIONS ON THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE,
WITH NOTES, HISTORICAL AND CRITICAL; ***

DISSERTATIONS
ON THE
ENGLISH LANGUAGE:
WITH NOTES,
HISTORICAL AND CRITICAL.
To which is added,
BY WAY OF APPENDIX,
AN ESSAY ON
A
REFORMED MODE OF
SPELLING,
WITH
DR. *FRANKLIN'S*

ARGUMENTS ON THAT SUBJECT.

BY NOAH WEBSTER, JUN. ESQUIRE.

----PRIMA DISCENTIUM ELEMENTA, IN QUIBUS ET IPSIS PARUM ELABORATUR. ***TACITUS.***



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MDCCLXXXIX.

TO HIS EXCELLENCY,

Benjamin Franklin, Esq; LL.D. F.R.S.

Late PRESIDENT of the COMMONWEALTH of PENNSYLVANIA,

The following DISSERTATIONS

Are most respectfully Inscribed,

By His Excellency's

Most obliged and most obedient Servant,

The Author.

Dedications are usually designed to flatter the Great, to acknowlege their services, or court their favor and influence. But very different motives have led me to prefix the venerable name of FRANKLIN to this publication.

Respect for his Excellency's talents and exertions, as a great Philosopher and a warm Patriot, I feel in common with all the lovers of science and freedom; but my peculiar admiration of his character, arises from considering it as *great* in *common things*.

His Excellency has not labored to perplex himself and confound his countrymen with ingenious theories in ethics, and unintelligible speculations in theology and metaphysics. He has not compiled volumes to prove or disprove the probability of universal salvation, or the eternal duration of future punishments; content with a plain doctrine, taught by philosophy and common sense, and confirmed by christianity, that virtue and happiness, vice and punishment, are inseparably connected, and that "if we do well here, we shall fare well hereafter." In the most elevated stations of life, his Excellency has

never been above a constant application to some useful business; thus complying with that precept of the fourth command, "*six days shalt thou labor and do all thy work*," which is as positive an injunction, and as binding upon all men, as the first article, "*remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy*."

In his philosophical researches, he has been guided by experiment, and sought for *practical truths*. In the world, he has been industrious to collect *facts*, (which compose all our knowlege) and apply them to the most useful purposes of government, agriculture, commerce, manufactures, rural, domestic and moral economy. In communicating his ideas he does not sacrifice truth to embellishment. His stile is plain and elegantly neat; and his remarks are not so general as to leave his ideas indefinite and obscure. His pen follows his thoughts, and consequently leads the reader, without study, into the same train of thinking. In short, he writes for the child as well as the philosopher, and always writes well, because he never takes pains to write.

Violently attached to no political party, he labors to reconcile contending factions in government. Convinced, by the experience of a long life, that all men are liable to err, and acknowleging "that he has often found himself mistaken, and had occasion to change his opinions," he consents to measures which his judgement tells him are *theoretically wrong*, when the voices of a majority declare them to be *practically right*.

He never attempts to usurp the divine prerogative of controlling opinions; never charges another with ignorance, knavery and folly, nor endeavors to stab his reputation, for not subscribing a particular creed; much less does he ever assume a dictatorial

authority, and sentence to final damnation, those who have the same chance of being right as himself, and whose conduct, whatever may be their opinions, is regulated by the rules of moral and social virtue.

For these reasons, as well as for the age, the eminent rank and public merits of this illustrious defender of American freedom, I revere a character equally known and respected in this and foreign countries.

HARTFORD, *May, 1789*.

PREFACE.

Young gentlemen who have gone through a course of academical studies, and received the usual honors of a University, are apt to contract a singular stiffness in their conversation. They read Lowth's Introduction, or some other grammatical treatise, believe what they read, without examining the grounds of the writer's opinion, and attempt to shape their language by his rules. Thus they enter the world with such phrases as, *a mean*, *averse from*, *if he have*, *he has gotten*, and others which they deem *correct*; they pride themselves, for some time, in their superior learning and peculiarities; till further information, or the ridicule of the public, brings them to use the language of other people.

Such has been my progress, and that of many of my cotemporaries. After being some years in that excellent school, the world, I recommenced my studies, endeavored, not merely to learn, but to

understand, the *a*, *b*, *c*, of the English language, and in 1783 compiled and published the First Part of my Grammatical Institute. The favorable reception of this, prompted me to extend my original plan, which led to a further investigation of the principles of language. After all my reading and observation for the course of ten years, I have been able to unlearn a considerable part of what I learnt in early life; and at thirty years of age, can, with confidence, affirm, that our modern grammars have done much more hurt than good. The authors have labored to prove, what is obviously absurd, viz. that our language is not made right; and in pursuance of this idea, have tried to make it over again, and persuade the English to speak by Latin rules, or by arbitrary rules of their own. Hence they have rejected many phrases of pure English, and substituted those which are neither English nor sense. Writers and Grammarians have attempted for centuries to introduce a subjunctive mode into English, yet without effect; the language requires none, distinct from the indicative; and therefore a subjunctive form stands in books only as a singularity, and people in practice pay no regard to it. The people are right, and a critical investigation of the subject, warrants me in saying, that common practice, even among the unlearned, is generally defensible on the principles of analogy, and the structure of the language, and that very few of the alterations recommended by Lowth and his followers, can be vindicated on any better principle than some Latin rule, or his own private opinion.

Some compilers have also attempted to introduce a *potential mode*, where they arrange those phrases that have the *auxiliary* verbs, as they are called, *can*, *may*, &c. But all the helping verbs are principal verbs, and the verb following them is generally in the infinitive.

I can go, *he may write*, *we shall see*, &c. are only a customary ellipsis of *I can to go*, *he may to write*, *we shall to see*; and are no more a potential mode than *I dare go*, *we saw him rise*.

In the indeclinable parts of speech, all authors were mistaken, till Mr. Horne Tooke explained them: Our conjunctions are mostly verbs in the imperative mode: Our adverbs and prepositions are mostly verbs, nouns and adjectives, either separate or combined; and the proper definition of adverb and preposition, is, "a word, or union of words, without the ordinary rules of government." *Because* is a compound of the verb *be*, in the imperative, and the noun *cause*; *otherwise* is merely a corruption of *other ways*; *wherefore* is a corruption of the Roman *qua-re*, with the addition of *for*; *wisely* is nothing more than the two adjectives *wise like*. So that in many cases, the want of a space between two words, or of the usual rules of government, is the only circumstance that distinguishes them from ordinary nouns and verbs; that is, the only thing that makes them *adverbs* or *prepositions*; such as, *because*, *always*, *beyond*, *before*, *behind*, *forward*, *backward*. In short, had the English never been acquainted with Greek and Latin, they would never have thought of one half the distinctions and rules which make up our English grammars.

The object of grammar, in a living language, is usually misunderstood. Men often suppose they must learn their native language by grammar; whereas they learn the language first, and grammar afterwards. The principal business of a compiler of a grammar is, to separate *local* or *partial* practice from the *general custom* of speaking; and reject what is *local*, whether it exists among the great or the small,

the learned or ignorant, and recommend that which is universal, or general, or which conforms to the analogies of structure in a language. Whether the words *means*, *pains*, *news*, ought to have been used originally in the singular form; or *sheep*, *deer*, *hose*, in the plural; or in other words, whether the language is well made, or might in some instances be mended, are questions of little consequence now; it is our business to find what the English language *is*, and not, how it *might have been made*. The most difficult task now to be performed by the advocates of *pure English*, is to restrain the influence of men, learned in Greek and Latin, but ignorant of their own tongue; who have laboured to reject much good English, because they have not understood the original construction of the language. Should the following Dissertations produce this effect, in the smallest degree, they may render essential service to our native tongue.

These Dissertations derive their origin from accidental circumstances, the history of which is briefly this. The necessity of securing the copy right of the Grammatical Institute in the different states, seconded by a desire of being acquainted with my own country, induced me to suspend my professional pursuits, and visit the Southern States. While I was waiting for the regular Sessions of the Legislatures, in those states which had not passed laws for protecting literary property, I amused myself in writing remarks on the English Language, without knowing to what purpose they would be applied. They were begun in Baltimore in the summer of 1785; and at the persuasion of a friend, and the consent of the Rev. Dr. Allison, whose politeness deserves my grateful acknowlegements, they were read publicly to a small audience in the Presbyterian

Church. They were afterward read in about twenty of the large towns between Williamsburg in Virginia, and Portsmouth in New Hampshire. These public readings were attended with various success; the audiences were generally small, but always respectable; and the readings were probably more useful to myself than to my hearers. I every where availed myself of the libraries and conversation of learned men, to correct my ideas, and collect new materials for a treatise, which is now presented to the public.

There are few men who do not at times find themselves at a loss, respecting the true pronunciation of certain words. Having no principles or rules, by which they can solve questions of this kind, they imitate some gentleman, whose abilities and character entitle his opinions to respect, but whose pronunciation may be altogether accidental or capricious.

With respect to many words, I have been in the same uncertainty; and used formerly to change my pronunciation, in conformity to the practice of the last man of superior learning whom I heard speak. My enquiries have been directed to investigate some principles, which will remove all difficulties in pronunciation; the result of which is a full satisfaction in my own mind as to almost every particular word. Whether the principles will prove equally satisfactory to others, it is impossible now to determine. Most of the varieties in pronunciation are mentioned in the second and third Dissertations; those which are not, the reader will be enabled to adjust on the principles there unfolded.

It will be observed, that many of the remarks in this publication are not new. This will be no objection to

the main design; as some remarks which are found in other philological treatises, are necessary to the general plan of this. A great part however of my opinions are new, and many of them directly opposed to the rules laid down by former writers.

In the singularity of spelling certain words, I am authorized by Sidney, Clarendon, Middleton, Blackstone, Ash, or other eminent writers, whose authority, being supported by good principles and convenience, is deemed superior to that of Johnson, whose pedantry has corrupted the purity of our language, and whose principles would in time destroy all agreement between the spelling and pronunciation of words. I once believed that a reformation of our orthography would be unnecessary and impracticable. This opinion was hasty; being the result of a slight examination of the subject. I now believe with Dr. Franklin that such a reformation is practicable and highly *necessary*.

It has been my aim to support my opinions by numerous and respectable authorities. In some cases, an author is quoted, but not the chapter or page. This was owing to neglect in first transcribing passages, which was often done, without any design to use the quotations as authorities in the present work; and the passages could not afterwards be found without great trouble, and sometimes the author could not be a second time procured. In a very few instances, a quotation has been taken at second hand on the credit of a faithful writer; but never when I could obtain the original work. Many other ancient authors would have been consulted, had it been practicable; but the most valuable of these are very scarce, and many of them I have not heard of in America. It is to be lamented that old

authors are neglected, and modern libraries composed of abridgements, compilations, short essays, &c. which are calculated only for communicating some general information and making superficial scholars, to the prejudice of profound learning and true science.[1]

The American student is often obliged, and too often disposed, to drink at the streams, instead of mounting to the sources of information.

For the remarks on English Verse in the fifth Dissertation, I am much indebted to the celebrated author of M'Fingal, a gentleman who has "drank deep of the Pierian Spring," and who is equally distinguished for wit, erudition, correct taste, and professional knowlege.

In explaining the principles of the language, I have aimed at perspicuity, with a view to render the work useful to all classes of readers. The Notes at the end are designed to illustrate some points by authorities or arguments that could not be properly arranged in the text; and to throw some light on ancient history. To the curious enquirer, these may be as entertaining as the Dissertations themselves. In two or three instances, I have found occasion to change my opinion, since the publication of the Institute; but a future edition of that work will be conformed to the criticisms in these Dissertations.

To those who ask where a writer was born and educated, before they can ascertain the value of his writings, I can only observe, it is expected this publication will fare like all others. Men every where suppose that their own state or country has some excellence that does not belong to their neighbors; and it is well, if they do not arrogate a superiority in

every respect. They think their own colleges the best; their professional men the most learned, and their citizens the most liberal and polite. I have been witness to numberless remarks and insinuations of this kind in almost every state in the union; and after personal observation, can affirm that they generally proceed from gross ignorance, or unpardonable prejudice. But it is very natural for men to think and say all these things of *home*, when they have little or no knowlege of any thing *abroad*.

Convinced that a writer is apt to overlook his own mistakes, when they are very obvious to a reader, I have submitted these Dissertations to the criticism of good judges of the subject, with full liberty of altering, amending and expunging any part of the work; by which means several passages have been omitted and others corrected. Still there may be faults in the book; and as truth is the object of my enquiries, whenever the friendly critic shall point out any errors, either in fact or opinion, it will be my pride and pleasure to acknowlege and correct them. Many years experience has taught me that the public, when well informed, usually form a very just opinion of a man and his writings, and I am perfectly disposed to acquiesce in their decision.

P. S. Several Essays, on more important subjects, intended for an Appendix to this work, are necessarily reserved for a future volume.

FOOTNOTES:

[1]——"a fungous growth of Novels and

pamphlets, the meaner productions of the French and English presses, in which it is to be feared (the reader) rarely finds any rational pleasure, and more rarely still, any solid improvement."—Harris. Hermes, 434.

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DIRECTIONS.

The sounds of the vowels, marked or referred to in the second and third Dissertations, are according to the Key in the First Part of the Institute. Thus:

	a	**e**	**i**	**o**	**u**	**y**
First sound,	late,	feet,	night,	note,	tune,	sky,
Second,	hat,	let,	tin,	tun,	glory,	
Third,	law,	fraud,				
Fourth,	ask,	father,				
Fifth,	not,	what,				
Sixth,	prove,	room,				

The capitals, included in brackets [] in the text, are references to the Notes at the end.



DISSERTATIONS ON THE *ENGLISH LANGUAGE, &c.*

DISSERTATION I.

I. *Introduction.*—II. *History of the English Language.*—III. *Remarks.*

INTRODUCTION.



A regular study of language has, in all civilized countries, formed a part of a liberal education. The Greeks, Romans, Italians and French successively improved their native tongues, taught them in Academies at home, and rendered them entertaining and useful to the foreign student.

The English tongue, tho later in its progress towards perfection, has attained to a considerable degree of purity, strength and elegance, and been employed, by an active and scientific nation, to record almost

all the events and discoveries of ancient and modern times.

This language is the inheritance which the Americans have received from their British parents. To cultivate and adorn it, is a task reserved for men who shall understand the connection between language and logic, and form an adequate idea of the influence which a uniformity of speech may have on national attachments.

It will be readily admitted that the pleasures of reading and conversing, the advantage of accuracy in business, the necessity of clearness and precision in communicating ideas, require us to be able to speak and write our own tongue with ease and correctness. But there are more important reasons, why the language of this country should be reduced to such fixed principles, as may give its pronunciation and construction all the certainty and uniformity which any living tongue is capable of receiving.

The United States were settled by emigrants from different parts of Europe. But their descendants mostly speak the same tongue; and the intercourse among the learned of the different States, which the revolution has begun, and an American Court will perpetuate, must gradually destroy the differences of dialect which our ancestors brought from their native countries. This approximation of dialects will be certain; but without the operation of other causes than an intercourse at Court, it will be slow and partial. The body of the people, governed by habit, will still retain their respective peculiarities of speaking; and for want of schools and proper books, fall into many inaccuracies, which, incorporating with the language of the state where they live, may imperceptibly corrupt the national language. Nothing

but the establishment of schools and some uniformity in the use of books, can annihilate differences in speaking and preserve the purity of the American tongue. A sameness of pronunciation is of considerable consequence in a political view; for provincial accents are disagreeable to strangers and sometimes have an unhappy effect upon the social affections. All men have local attachments, which lead them to believe their own practice to be the least exceptionable. Pride and prejudice incline men to treat the practice of their neighbors with some degree of contempt. Thus small differences in pronunciation at first excite ridicule—a habit of laughing at the singularities of strangers is followed by disrespect—and without respect friendship is a name, and social intercourse a mere ceremony.

These remarks hold equally true, with respect to individuals, to small societies and to large communities. Small causes, such as a nick-name, or a vulgar tone in speaking, have actually created a dissocial spirit between the inhabitants of the different states, which is often discoverable in private business and public deliberations. Our political harmony is therefore concerned in a uniformity of language.

As an independent nation, our honor requires us to have a system of our own, in language as well as government. Great Britain, whose children we are, and whose language we speak, should no longer be *our* standard; for the taste of her writers is already corrupted, and her language on the decline. But if it were not so, she is at too great a distance to be our model, and to instruct us in the principles of our own tongue.

It must be considered further, that the English is the

common root or stock from which our national language will be derived. All others will gradually waste away—and within a century and a half, North America will be peopled with a hundred millions of men, *all speaking the same language*. Place this idea in comparison with the present and possible future bounds of the language in Europe—consider the Eastern Continent as inhabited by nations, whose knowlege and intercourse are embarrassed by differences of language; then anticipate the period when the people of one quarter of the world, will be able to associate and converse together like children of the same family.[2] Compare this prospect, which is not visionary, with the state of the English language in Europe, almost confined to an Island and to a few millions of people; then let reason and reputation decide, how far America should be dependent on a transatlantic nation, for her standard and improvements in language.

Let me add, that whatever predilection the Americans may have for their native European tongues, and particularly the British descendants for the English, yet several circumstances render a future separation of the American tongue from the English, necessary and unavoidable. The vicinity of the European nations, with the uninterrupted communication in peace, and the changes of dominion in war, are gradually assimilating their respective languages. The English with others is suffering continual alterations. America, placed at a distance from those nations, will feel, in a much less degree, the influence of the assimilating causes; at the same time, numerous local causes, such as a new country, new associations of people, new combinations of ideas in arts and science, and some intercourse with tribes wholly unknown in Europe,

will introduce new words into the American tongue. These causes will produce, in a course of time, a language in North America, as different from the future language of England, as the modern Dutch, Danish and Swedish are from the German, or from one another: Like remote branches of a tree springing from the same stock; or rays of light, shot from the same center, and diverging from each other, in proportion to their distance from the point of separation.

Whether the inhabitants of America can be brought to a perfect uniformity in the pronunciation of words, it is not easy to predict; but it is certain that no attempt of the kind has been made, and an experiment, begun and pursued on the right principles, is the only way to decide the question. Schools in Great Britain have gone far towards demolishing local dialects—commerce has also had its influence—and in America these causes, operating more generally, must have a proportional effect.

In many parts of America, people at present attempt to copy the English phrases and pronunciation—an attempt that is favored by their habits, their prepossessions and the intercourse between the two countries. This attempt has, within the period of a few years, produced a multitude of changes in these particulars, especially among the leading classes of people. These changes make a difference between the language of the higher and common ranks; and indeed between the *same* ranks in *different* states; as the rage for copying the English, does not prevail equally in every part of North America.

But besides the reasons already assigned to prove this imitation absurd, there is a difficulty attending it, which will defeat the end proposed by its

advocates; which is, that the English themselves have no standard of pronunciation, nor can they ever have one on the plan they propose. The Authors, who have attempted to give us a standard, make the practice of the court and stage in London the sole criterion of propriety in speaking. An attempt to establish a standard on this foundation is both *unjust* and *idle*. It is unjust, because it is abridging the nation of its rights: The *general practice* of a nation is the rule of propriety, and this practice should at least be consulted in so important a matter, as that of making laws for speaking. While all men are upon a footing and no singularities are accounted vulgar or ridiculous, every man enjoys perfect liberty. But when a particular set of men, in exalted stations, undertake to say, "we are the standards of propriety and elegance, and if all men do not conform to our practice, they shall be accounted vulgar and ignorant," they take a very great liberty with the rules of the language and the rights of civility.

But an attempt to fix a standard on the practice of any particular class of people is highly absurd: As a friend of mine once observed, it is like fixing a light house on a floating island. It is an attempt to *fix* that which is in itself *variable*; at least it must be variable so long as it is supposed that a local practice has no standard but a *local practice*; that is, no standard but *itself*. While this doctrine is believed, it will be impossible for a nation to follow as fast as the standard changes—for if the gentlemen at court constitute a standard, they are above it themselves, and their practice must shift with their passions and their whims.

But this is not all. If the practice of a few men in the capital is to be the standard, a knowlege of this must

be communicated to the whole nation. Who shall do this? An able compiler perhaps attempts to give this practice in a dictionary; but it is probable that the pronunciation, even at court, or on the stage, is not uniform. The compiler therefore must follow his particular friends and patrons; in which case he is sure to be opposed and the authority of his standard called in question; or he must give two pronunciations as the standard, which leaves the student in the same uncertainty as it found him. Both these events have actually taken place in England, with respect to the most approved standards; and of course no one is universally followed.

Besides, if language must vary, like fashions, at the caprice of a court, we must have our standard dictionaries republished, with the fashionable pronunciation, at least once in five years; otherwise a gentleman in the country will become intolerably vulgar, by not being in a situation to adopt the fashion of the day. The *new* editions of them will supersede the *old*, and we shall have our pronunciation to relearn, with the polite alterations, which are generally corruptions.

Such are the consequences of attempting to make a *local* practice the *standard* of language in a *nation*. The attempt must keep the language in perpetual fluctuation, and the learner in uncertainty.

If a standard therefore cannot be fixed on local and variable custom, on what shall it be fixed? If the most eminent speakers are not to direct our practice, where shall we look for a guide? The answer is extremely easy; the *rules of the language itself*, and the *general practice of the nation*, constitute propriety in speaking. If we examin the structure of any language, we shall find a certain principle of analogy running

through the whole. We shall find in English that similar combinations of letters have usually the same pronunciation; and that words, having the same terminating syllable, generally have the accent at the same distance from that termination. These principles of analogy were not the result of design—they must have been the effect of accident, or that tendency which all men feel towards uniformity.[3] But the principles, when established, are productive of great convenience, and become an authority superior to the arbitrary decisions of any man or class of men. There is one exception only to this remark: When a deviation from analogy has become the universal practice of a nation, it then takes place of all rules and becomes the standard of propriety.

The two points therefore, which I conceive to be the basis of a standard in speaking, are these; *universal undisputed practice*, and the *principle of analogy*. *Universal practice* is generally, perhaps always, a rule of propriety; and in disputed points, where people differ in opinion and practice, *analogy* should always decide the controversy.

These are authorities to which all men will submit—they are superior to the opinions and caprices of the great, and to the negligence and ignorance of the multitude. The authority of individuals is always liable to be called in question—but the unanimous consent of a nation, and a fixed principle interwoven with the very construction of a language, coeval and coextensive with it, are like the common laws of a land, or the immutable rules of morality, the propriety of which every man, however refractory, is forced to acknowlege, and to which most men will readily submit. Fashion is usually the child of caprice and the being of a day; principles of propriety are

founded in the very nature of things, and remain unmoved and unchanged, amidst all the fluctuations of human affairs and the revolutions of time.

It must be confessed that languages are changing, from age to age, in proportion to improvements in science. Words, as Horace observes, are like leaves of trees; the old ones are dropping off and new ones growing. These changes are the necessary consequence of changes in customs, the introduction of new arts, and new ideas in the sciences. Still the body of a language and its general rules remain for ages the same, and the new words usually conform to these rules; otherwise they stand as exceptions, which are not to overthrow the principle of analogy already established.

But when a language has arrived at a certain stage of improvement, it must be stationary or become retrograde; for improvements in science either cease, or become slow and too inconsiderable to affect materially the tone of a language. This stage of improvement is the period when a nation abounds with writers of the first class, both for abilities and taste. This period in England commenced with the age of Queen Elizabeth and ended with the reign of George II. It would have been fortunate for the language, had the stile of writing and the pronunciation of words been fixed, as they stood in the reign of Queen Anne and her successor. Few improvements have been made since that time; but innumerable corruptions in pronunciation have been introduced by Garrick, and in stile, by Johnson, Gibbon and their imitators.[4]

The great Sidney wrote in a pure stile; yet the best models of purity and elegance, are the works of Sir William Temple, Dr. Middleton, Lord Bolingbroke,

Mr. Addison and Dean Swift. But a little inferior to these, are the writings of Mr. Pope, Sir Richard Steele, Dr. Arbuthnot, with some of their cotemporaries. Sir William Blackstone has given the law stile all the elegance and precision of which it is capable. Dr. Price and Dr. Priestley write with purity, and Sir William Jones seems to have copied the ease, simplicity and elegance of Middleton and Addison.

But how few of the modern writers have pursued the same manner of writing? Johnson's stile is a mixture of Latin and English; an intolerable composition of Latinity, affected smoothness, scholastic accuracy and roundness of periods. The benefits derived from his morality and his erudition, will hardly counterbalance the mischief done by his manner of writing. The names of a Robertson, a Hume, a Home and a Blair, almost silence criticism; but I must repeat what a very learned Scotch gentleman once acknowleged to me, "that the Scotch writers are not models of the pure English stile." Their stile is generally stiff, sometimes very awkward, and not always correct.[5] Robertson labors his stile and sometimes introduces a word merely for the sake of rounding a period. Hume has borrowed French idioms without number; in other respects he has given an excellent model of historical stile. Lord Kaims' manner is stiff; and Dr Blair, whose stile is less exceptionable in these particulars, has however introduced, into his writings, several foreign idioms and ungrammatical phrases. The Scotch writers now stand almost the first for erudition; but perhaps no man can write a foreign language with genuin purity.

Gibbon's harmony of prose is calculated to delight our ears; but it is difficult to comprehend his meaning and the chain of his ideas, as fast as we

naturally read; and almost impossible to recollect them, at any subsequent period. Perspicuity, the first requisite in stile, is sometimes sacrificed to melody; the mind of a reader is constantly dazzled by a glare of ornament, or charmed from the subject by the music of the language. As he is one of the *first*, it is hoped he may be the *last*, to attempt the gratification of our *ears*, at the expense of our *understanding*.

Such however is the taste of the age; simplicity of stile is neglected for ornament, and sense is sacrificed to sound.[6]

Altho stile, or the choice of words and manner of arranging them, may be necessarily liable to change, yet it does not follow that pronunciation and orthography cannot be rendered in a great measure permanent. An orthography, in which there would be a perfect correspondence between the spelling and pronunciation, would go very far towards effecting this desireable object. The Greek language suffered little or no change in these particulars, for about a thousand years; and the Roman was in a great degree fixed for several centuries.

Rapid changes of language proceed from violent causes; but these causes cannot be supposed to exist in North America. It is contrary to all rational calculation, that the United States will ever be conquered by any one nation, speaking a different language from that of the country. Removed from the danger of corruption by conquest, our language can change only with the slow operation of the causes before-mentioned and the progress of arts and sciences, unless the folly of imitating our parent country should continue to govern us, and lead us into endless innovation. This folly however will lose its influence gradually, as our particular habits of

respect for that country shall wear away, and our *amor patriæ* acquire strength and inspire us with a suitable respect for our own national character.

We have therefore the fairest opportunity of establishing a national language, and of giving it uniformity and perspicuity, in North America, that ever presented itself to mankind. Now is the time to begin the plan. The minds of the Americans are roused by the events of a revolution; the necessity of organizing the political body and of forming constitutions of government that shall secure freedom and property, has called all the faculties of the mind into exertion; and the danger of losing the benefits of independence, has disposed every man to embrace any scheme that shall tend, in its future operation, to reconcile the people of America to each other, and weaken the prejudices which oppose a cordial union.

My design, in these dissertations, is critically to investigate the rules of pronunciation in our language; to examin the past and present practice of the English, both in the pronunciation of words and construction of sentences; to exhibit the principal differences between the practice in England and America, and the differences in the several parts of America, with a view to reconcile them on the principles of *universal practice* and *analogy*. I have no system of my own to offer; my sole design is to explain what I suppose to be authorities, superior to all private opinions, and to examin local dialects by those authorities.

Most writers upon this subject have split upon one rock: They lay down certain rules, arbitrary perhaps or drawn from the principles of other languages, and then condemn all English phrases which do not

coincide with those rules. They seem not to consider that grammar is formed on language, and not language on grammar. Instead of examining to find what the English language *is*, they endeavor to show what it *ought to be* according to their rules. It is for this reason that some of the criticisms of the most celebrated philologers are so far from being just, that they tend to overthrow the rules, and corrupt the true idiom, of the English tongue. Several examples of this will appear in the course of these Dissertations.

To learn the English language in its purity, it is necessary to examin and compare the best authors from Chaucer to the present time. In executing the following work, the most approved compilations have been consulted, and the opinions of the learned authors considered as respectable, not as decisive, authorities. The language itself has been examined with great industry, with a view to discover and defend its principles on the best grounds, *analogies in structure*, and *immemorial usage*. I have had recourse to the works of authors who wrote prior to Chaucer, and have even borrowed some light upon this subject, from the early ages of Gothic ignorance. Believing, with the author of "Diversions of Purley," that the peculiar structure of our language is Saxon, and that its principles can be discovered only in its Teutonic original, it has been my business, as far as the materials in my possession would permit, to compare the English with the other branches of the same stock, particularly the German and the Danish. These researches have thrown light upon the meaning and construction of particular phrases, and enabled me to vindicate some expressions in the language which are often used, but generally condemned by grammarians.

My knowlege of the practice of speaking in different parts of America, is derived from personal observation. My knowlege of the past and present state of the language in England, is taken from the writers who have treated expressly of the subject.[7] The authorities necessary to prove particular points will be quoted, as occasion shall require.

The talk of examining words cannot be agreeable to a writer, nor can his criticisms be very entertaining to the reader. Yet this talk I have imposed upon myself; for I believe it the only method to correct common mistakes. A general rule may be sufficient for a classical scholar, who makes it his business to apply the rule to all cases: But most readers must have their particular errors laid before their eyes, or they will not discover them.

To offer to correct the mistakes of others, is also a *hazardous* task, and commonly exposes a man to abuse and ill will. To avoid this I can only say, that my motives for the undertaking were not local nor personal; my enquiries are for truth, and my criticisms, it is hoped, will be marked with candor.

But before I proceed to explain the principles of pronunciation, it is necessary to give a sketch of the history of our language from the earliest times, and endeavor to discover from what sources it is derived.

HISTORY *of the* ENGLISH LANGUAGE.

The first correct accounts we have of Britain were given by Julius Cesar, who invaded and conquered the southern parts of the island, about fifty four years before the Christian era.[8] Tacitus, in his *Life of Julius Agricola*, has described the natives of the

island, and given it as his opinion, that they came from Gaul (now France.) The inhabitants of Caledonia, now Scotland, in the color of their hair and size of their limbs, resembled the Germans. Some appearances in the people of the more southern parts of the island, and their position with respect to Spain, indicated *their* descent from the ancient Iberi. But those who inhabited the shores, opposite to France, resembled the Gauls, in their religious ceremonies, their courage, and particularly in their language: "Sermo haud multum diversus."[10]

It is an uncontroverted point, that the primitive language of Britain was the same as that of Gaul.[11] This language was denominated the Celtic, from the *Celtæ*, or *Keltæ*, a famous tribe of people that inhabited Gaul. Many writers suppose the Celtic to have been the primitive elementary language, from which most, or all the present languages of Europe, and some of the languages of Asia and Africa, are derived. Some authors go so far as to assert that the Greek and Roman may be traced to the same source. To prove this opinion well founded, they endeavor to discover an affinity between these languages, by analizing words in each, and tracing them to the same elements or monosyllabic roots. In this they have succeeded so far as to discover a great number of words, which, with small dialectical variations, are common to the Greek and Latin and to most of the living languages of Europe. Perhaps these radicals, common to all languages of which we have any knowlege, were sufficient to form a simple language, adequate to the purposes of speech among rude nations.[A]

But as the first inhabitants of the earth had, for many ages, no method of fixing sounds, or very imperfect

methods, their language must have been liable to considerable mutations, even when they lived and conversed together. But after they had separated from each other, by extending their settlements into distant regions, and an intercourse between the colonies had ceased, their languages must have in a great measure lost their affinity to each other. The radical words, common to all, must have assumed dialectical distinctions, and new objects and inventions, peculiar to the different tribes, must have originated new terms among each, to which the others were strangers. Different nations would advance, by very different degrees of rapidity, to a state of civilization, and as words multiply with ideas, one language would become more copious than another, as well as more regular and polished. In the course of many centuries, these causes would obscure the common radicals, and make such accessions of new words to each dialect, as to form them all into distinct languages. An uncivilized people have occasion for few words; perhaps five or six hundred would answer all their purposes. And if we should thoroughly examin any of the present languages of the world, we should probably find that the roots of the most copious do not amount to more than that number. The Greek, it is said, may be traced to about three or four hundred radical words. These roots or elementary words are usually monosyllables, and mostly names of sensible objects. By applying these names figuratively, savages make them answer the purpose of expressing other ideas, and by combining them in an almost infinite variety of ways, civilized nations form copious and elegant languages.

Thus it happens that in the existing languages of Europe, there are many words evidently the same;

the orthography and pronunciation do not exactly coincide in all the countries where they are used; yet the resemblance is obvious in *these* particulars; and with respect to their *meaning*, there is such an affinity, as to demonstrate that the nations, in whose languages they are found, all sprung from the same parents.

The primitive language of Europe probably retained its original form and purity in the West, much later than on the borders of Asia;[12] for the Gauls and Britons had made less advances in knowlege, than the eastern nations, and had probably suffered fewer shocks from war and conquest. The Greeks first formed an elegant language out of the barbarous dialects spoken on the borders of the Egean Sea. The Romans afterwards did the same in Italy, and gradually changed the languages of the countries which they conquered, by introducing their own. It was the policy of the Roman state to make *subjects*, rather than *slaves*, of their conquered nations; and the introduction of their own tongue among them was considered as a necessary step towards removing prejudices, facilitating an intercourse with their provinces, and reconciling distant nations to the Roman government.

Julius Cesar found the Gauls and Britons at peace, united by a similarity of manners and language, and by a sameness of interest. His conquest of their countries made some inroads upon their language. But altho the Romans had possession of these countries more than four hundred years, during which time Roman garrisons were stationed in Gaul and Britain, the young men of both countries were drafted into the Roman service, and many British youth went to Rome for an education, still the native

Celtic language remained without material alteration. It is obvious indeed that many of the higher classes of people were acquainted with Latin, and there are traces of that language still found among the Welsh, the descendants of the ancient Britons. But the body of the people, either for want of opportunity to learn the Latin, or thro an inveterate hatred of their conquerors, continued wedded to their native tongue. This would have still been the language of France and England, had it not suffered more violent shocks, than by the Roman conquests.

But in the fifth century, the southern parts of Europe began to be alarmed by the invasion of the Goths, Vandals, Huns and other fierce barbarians from the North. For three centuries, all the fertile provinces of the Roman empire were ravaged by these hardy invaders, the most of whom settled in the countries which they conquered.

These nations, mixing with the natives of the country where they settled, changed or corrupted the primitive language. From the jargon of Celtic and Roman, blended with the language of the Franks, Normans, Burgundians, &c. sprung the modern French. From the mixture of Latin, with the language of the Huns, Lombards, &c. sprung the present Italian. From a similar composition of Latin, with the language of the Visigoths and other northern tribes, and some remains of the Moorish language, left in Spain by the Saracens, are formed the modern Spanish and Portuguese.

In the general desolation, occasioned by these conquests, the island of Britain did not escape. The Saxons, a tribe of northern nations, which inhabited the country now called Denmark, or the shores of the

Baltic, now within the Empire of Germany, invaded Britain, soon after the Roman legions had been called home to defend the Empire against other tribes of barbarians. It is said the Saxons were at first invited to assist the Britons against the inroads of the Picts or Scots, and that having defeated the invaders, they were tempted, by the fertility of the soil, to remain in the island, and afterwards took possession of it for themselves.

But whatever was the first cause of their leaving their native country, it is certain, that numerous bodies of adventurers, at different times, went over and seated themselves in the island. They did not cease till they had possessed themselves of all the fertile and cultivated parts of England. The universality of the conquest is demonstrated by the total change of language; there being no more affinity between the Saxon or English, and the ancient British, than between any two languages of Europe.

The British however was not lost. The brave inhabitants, who survived the liberty of their country, and could not brook the idea of living with their conquerors, retired to the countries within the mountains on the west of the island, now called *Wales* and *Cornwall*, where they maintained their independence for many centuries, and where their language is still preserved. The Welsh and the Cornish therefore are the purest remains of the primitive Celtic language.

To these we may add the Armoric, or language of the Bas Breton, on the coast of France; the inhabitants of which are genuin descendants of the old Britons. The time and occasion of this settlement in France are not certain. Perhaps a body of Britons were driven

thither by the Saxon conquest of England; or what is more probable, as it is a tradition among the people, the Armoricans are the posterity of some British soldiers, who had been in the Roman army when it was called to Italy to defend the empire, and on their return, being informed that the Saxons had taken possession of their native country, seated themselves on the opposite coast of France.[13]

But whatever was the cause of the settlement, the language of the people is the old British or Celtic; for altho they must have been separated from their countrymen about twelve or fourteen hundred years, yet there is such an affinity still between the Welsh and the Armoric, that the Welsh soldiers, who passed thro Brittany in a late war,[14] could converse familiarly with the inhabitants. If any other proof than this were necessary to convince the reader, we might mention the name of this province, *Brittany*, and produce a long catalogue of Armoric words, collated with the Welsh and Cornish.

One would think that the Irish, by reason of their vicinity to England, would have spoken the same language; yet it is found that the old Irish tongue has very little affinity with the Welsh. Sir William Temple asserts[15] that the Erse, or Caledonian language, and the old Irish, which are radically the same, and spoken also on the Isle of Man, have no affinity with any other language now spoken. But the celebrated Lluyd and others, who have been more critical in their investigations of this subject, maintain that the Irish has a real affinity with the Cambrian or British. They further show that many names of places in S. Britain, the meaning of which is lost in the Welsh, can be explained only by words now extant in the Irish and Erse. This is a sufficient

proof of a common origin.[16]

But on this point historians are divided in opinion. Some suppose that the north of Ireland was first peopled by emigrations from Scotland, and the sameness of their language renders this opinion probable. But whence do the Scots derive their origin? The most probable account of the settlement of Scotland is, that it was peopled from Norway or some other northern country, by a tribe of those nations that went under the general denomination of *Scythians*; for *Scot* and *Scythian* are from the same root.

There are writers, however, who contend that Ireland must have been settled from Spain, for there are many Spanish words found in the language of the country. But the number of these is too inconsiderable to render the argument conclusive.

Within a few years, an attempt has been made to trace the origin of the Irish nation, to the Carthaginians. The author of a small work, entitled "An Essay on the Antiquities of Ireland," has examined, in a play of Plautus, the Punic speech which has the marks of being the genuin language of Carthage, and has collated it with the ancient Irish. In this speech there is a surprising affinity between the languages.[B]

But without running into a field of conjecture, it is sufficient for my purpose to observe, that the Irish, the Erse, and the language spoken on the Isle of Man, are indisputably the same, and must have been very ancient: That the Welsh, the Cornish, and the Armoric are now a distinct language, and unquestionably the remains of the Celtic, or that language which was common to Gaul and Britain, when they were invaded by Julius Cesar. The Irish

and the British may be as distinct as the Hebrew and the British, and yet a critical etymologist may discover in both, common radicals enough to convince him that both are the offspring of the same parent.

Hitherto our researches have thrown but little light upon the present English language. For the substance of this we must look to the Saxon branch of the Teutonic.[17]

The Teutones and Goths or Getæ were the nations that inhabited the north of Europe. They were in a rude state and had no historical records by which their descent could be ascertained. They however had a class of men under the denomination of *Scalds* or *Bards*, whose business it was to recount in verse the illustrious actions of their heroes, and to preserve their traditions. These *Scalds* all agree that their ancestors came from the east;[18] and it is well known also that Herodotus mentions the *Germans* as a Persian people.[19] It is probable that they extended their settlements gradually, or were driven from Asia by the Roman invasions under Pompey, during the reign of Mithridates, and under the conduct of Odin, their hero and lawgiver, established themselves on the shores of the Baltic.

From these nations proceeded those fierce and numerous warriors, who, under different leaders invaded and subdued all the southern parts of Europe; changed the government, the manners and the language of the primitive inhabitants, and gave them their present complexion. The Saxons, who inhabited the northern parts of Germany, or Denmark, were the tribe that conquered England, and introduced a language and a form of government, the principles of which are still existent

among their descendants, both in England and America. This happened in the fifth and sixth centuries.

Our language is therefore derived from the same stock as the German, the Dutch, the Danish, the Swedish, and the Swiss. Of all these branches, the German is perhaps the principal, and that which has suffered the least by the violence of conquest or the changes of time. Between this and the pure English, there is a close affinity, as may be observed by any person indifferently well acquainted with both.

From the establishment of the Saxons in England, to the Norman conquest, the language of the country suffered but little variation. The invasions of the Danes and their government of the kingdom, during a short period, could not but affect the language, yet not materially, as the island suffered a change of masters, rather than of people or laws; and indeed the Danes themselves spoke a dialect of the Saxon language.

But the conquest by William, the Norman, in 1066, introduced important changes into the language, as well as the government of the English nation. William was followed by multitudes of his countrymen; these formed his court, and filled the rich livings, temporal and ecclesiastical, which were forfeited or left vacant by the death of their former possessors who were slain in the battle of Hastings. The language of the conquerors, which was a mixture of Latin and Norman, immediately became fashionable at Court, and was used in all legislative and judicial proceedings. It continued to be the polite and law language of the nation about three centuries; when, in the thirty sixth year of Edward III.[20] an act of parliament was passed, ordaining

that in future all pleas in courts should be made in English and recorded in Latin. In the preamble to this act, the reason assigned for making it is, "that the people of the realm did not understand French."[21]

This proves that the Norman French was spoken only by the nobility, who were mostly of Norman extraction, and by the higher orders of men in office, at court, or in the cities. The body of the people, defendants of the Saxons, still retained their primitive tongue.[22] During this period, when French was the polite, and Saxon the vulgar language of the English, the Latin was also understood by the learned, who were mostly the regular and secular clergy. On the revival of literature in Europe, Latin was studied with classical correctness, and the number and excellence of the Greek and Roman authors, with the elegance of the languages, have recommended them to the attention of succeeding generations. The records of parliament and of judicial proceedings were kept in Latin, from the thirty sixth of Edward III. to the fourth of George II.[23] when, by act of parliament, the *English* was ordered to be the language of the *English* laws and public records. Of these three languages, the Saxon, the Norman French and the Latin, our present English is composed.

The incorporation of the Roman and other foreign tongues with the English, took place principally under the first Norman kings. It was attended with some difficulty, and Chaucer has been censured by his cotemporaries for introducing cartloads of French words into his writings.[24]

Language is the effect of necessity, and when a nation has a language which is competent to all their purposes of communicating ideas, they will not

embrace new words and phrases. This is the reason why the yeomanry of the English nation have never adopted the improvements of the English tongue. The Saxon was competent to most of the purposes of an agricultural people; and the class of men who have not advanced beyond that state, which in fact makes the body of the nation, at least in America, seldom use any words except those of Saxon original.

But as men proceed in the progress of society, their ideas multiply, and new words are necessary to express them. They must therefore either invent words, or combine those before used into compounds, or borrow words of suitable import from a foreign language. The latter method was principally pursued by the English. The learned of the nation spoke and wrote Latin, which had been the language of a polite and improved nation, and consequently abounds with terms in the various arts and sciences. When the English found their native tongue deficient, they had recourse to the Roman or Greek, where they were immediately supplied with words, expressive of their new ideas, and easily conforming to the genius of the English language.

The English retained its Saxon appearance till the twelfth century.[C] From this period to Chaucer, who wrote in the reign of Edward III. about the year 1360 or 70, the changes were slow and gradual. Chaucer was a man of a very liberal education; well versed in the Greek and Roman authors; and his mind had been improved by his travels. His genius and acquirements led him to stray from the common stile of writing, and enrich his verse with the elegance of the *Provençal* language, at that time the most polished in Europe.[25] His abilities, his reputation and his influence at court, enabled him, in

opposition to his adversaries, to introduce many beauties and much energy into our language.[D]

From Chaucer to Addison our language was progressively refined, and enriched with a variety of words, adequate to all its uses among a people highly improved. The French language has furnished us with military terms; the Dutch with sea phrases; the Greek and Roman with words proper to form and polish the poetical, historical and rhetorical stiles, and with terms in mathematics, philosophy and physic; the modern Italian has supplied us with terms in music, painting and sculpture; and in the Saxon, the ground-work of the whole, the yeomanry find all the words for which they have any use in domestic life or in the agricultural and most simple mechanical employments.

In this progress, the language has not only been enriched with a copious supply of words, but the accent of words has generally been established in such a manner as to render pronunciation melodious. The spoken language is also softened, by an omission of the harsh and guttural sounds which originally belonged to the language, and which are still retained by the Germans, Scotch and Dutch. At the same time, it is not, like the French, enervated by a loss of consonants. It holds a mean between the harshness of the German, and the feebleness of the French. It has more smoothness and fluency than the northern languages, and less music in its vocal sounds, than the Spanish and Italian. As the English have attempted every branch of science, and generally proceeded farther in their improvements than other nations, so their language is proportionably copious and expressive.

REMARKS.

Having given this general history and the present state of the language, I proceed to some remarks that naturally result from the subject.

1. The primitive language of the English nation was the Saxon, and the words derived from that, now constitute the ground-work of modern English. Hence all the rules of inflection, and most of the rules of construction, are Saxon. The plural terminations of nouns, the variations of the pronouns, the endings which mark the comparison of adjectives, and the inflections of the verbs, are wholly of Teutonic origin. For this reason, the rules of grammatical construction and the propriety of particular phrases, can be ascertained only by the ancient Saxon, and the modern English writings. The Greek and Roman languages were constructed on different principles, which circumstance has not been sufficiently attended to, by those who have attempted to compile English Grammars. The consequence is, that false principles have been introduced and taught as the rules of the English language, by which means very eminent writers have been led into mistakes.

2. It has been remarked that the common people, descendants of the Saxons, use principally words derived from the native language of their ancestors, with few derivatives from the foreign tongues, for which they have no occasion. This fact suggests the impropriety of writing sermons, or other discourses designed for general use, in the elevated English stile. To adapt a stile to common capacities, the language should consist, as much as possible, of Saxon words, or of Latin and French derivatives

which are introduced into familiar discourse. The modern taste for introducing uncommon words into writings, for rounding periods, and rising into what is falsely called the elegant and sublime stile, has had an unhappy effect in rendering language obscure or unintelligible.[26]

3. The number and perfection of the languages from which the English is collected, must account for its copiousness and the multitude of synonimous words with which it abounds.

A primitive unmixed language rarely contains two words of the same signification. On the contrary, rude nations often use one word to express several ideas, which have some resemblance or analogy to each other, in the constitution of things.

From the poverty of a language proceed repetitions of the same word, to express an idea with particular force, or in the superlative degree. Hence the Hebraisms, as they are called, of the Bible; to *rejoice* with *joy*; to *fear* with great *fear*. This mode of speaking is frequent among all nations whose languages are imperfect.

But the English, on the other hand, abounds with synonimous terms, so that a repetition of *words* is generally unnecessary, even when there is a necessity of repeating the *idea* in the same sentence.

This copiousness, while it affords great advantages to a judicious writer, may also be abused, and become the cause of a prolix verbose stile. Instances of this fault occur in almost every author; it is one of the greatest, as well as most frequent faults in writing, and yet has scarcely been censured by critics.[27]

There are indeed but few instances in which two or

three words express *precisely* the same idea; but there are many instances of words conveying *nearly* the same sense, which are thrown together by careless writers without the least occasion. Take for example a passage of Mr. Addison's Cato:

> "So the *pure*, *limpid* stream, when *foul* with
> *stains*
> Of rushing torrents and descending rains,
> *Works* itself *clear* and as it runs *refines*,
> Till by degrees the floating mirror shines."

Pure and *limpid* are here too nearly synonimous to be applied to the same object. The same objection lies to the use of "*foul* with *stains*." Between *working clear* and *refining*, there is perhaps no difference in idea: And the arrangement in the second line is objectionable, for the consequence is placed before the cause; *rushing torrents* being the consequence of *descending rains*. Such an assemblage of synonimous words clogs and enfeebles the expression, and fatigues the mind of the reader. Writers of an inferior class are particularly fond of crowding together epithets. If they would describe a man they hate, he is a *low*, *vile*, *mean*, *despicable*, *contemptible* fellow. If they would describe a man of an amiable character, he is the most *kind*, *humane*, *loving*, *tender*, *affectionate* being imaginable. Epithets, so liberally bestowed, confuse our ideas and leave the mind without any distinct knowlege of the character.[E]

To a copiousness of language, on the other hand, may be ascribed the decline of action in speaking, and the want of animation. When nations have but few words to express their ideas, they have recourse to figures, to significant tones, looks and gestures, to supply the defect. Hence the figurative language of

the Orientals of antiquity; hence the imagery of the Caledonian Bard;[28] the bold metaphorical language of the American natives, and the expressive tones and gesticulations that attend their speaking.

To this cause also must we ascribe the music of the Greek language, and the action which accompanied the rehearsals on the stage. What was the effect of necessity at first, became afterwards a matter of art. This was the origin of the pantomime. Modern operas are also an imitation of the ancient musical rehearsals of the theater.[29]

But as languages become rich and furnish words for communicating every idea, action must naturally cease. Men will not give themselves the pain of exerting their limbs and body to make themselves understood, when a bare opening of their lips will answer the purpose. This may be assigned as one principal cause of the decline of eloquence in modern ages, particularly among the English.

To the same cause, in part, may we ascribe the difference in the French and English manner of speaking. It is a common observation, that the French use more action and are more animated in conversation, than the English. The cause usually assigned, is, the natural vivacity of the French nation; which appears to me not satisfactory; for the Germans, who resemble the French, in some degree, in their manner of speaking, are nevertheless a more grave people than the English.

I suspect that the difference may in part be thus accounted for. The French, tho by no means a barren language, wants words to express many ideas, for which the English is provided. For example, the English has two forms for the future tense of verbs;

shall and *will*; each of which has a distinct meaning. *Shall* expresses event in the first person, and promise, command or threatning in the second and third. *Will*, in the first person, promises; in the second and third, foretells. The French has no such distinction. The phrase *je lui payerai*, the only form of the future, cannot convey such distinct meanings, as *promise* and *event*, unless accompanied with some expressive tone or gesture. A Frenchman therefore, to express the force of the English, *I will pay*, must supply the want of a distinct word by action, or have recourse to a circumlocution. The same remark holds with respect to *would* and *should*, which, in a variety of combinations, retain distinct significations.

The French has properly but one word, *plume*, for the three English words, *feather, en* and *quill*. Its verbs have not such a variety of combinations to express the precise time of an action as the English. *J'ecris* is the only phrase for the English, *I write* and *I am writing*, which have distinct uses; and I do not know whether there is any phrase used in French which will exactly correspond with the English phrases answering to the inceptive verb of the Romans, *I am going to write*, or, *am about writing*.[30]

This solution of a difficulty, which has occurred to many people, in comparing the manners of the English and French, may not be the true one; but it appears rational. Other causes also have a material influence upon eloquence, particularly the form of government and the state of society. In these respects England and France may not be so favorable to the cultivation of oratory, as were the republics of Greece and Rome. But if a free government is the best soil for the growth of eloquence, why should it flourish in France rather than in England, which is

said to be the fact with respect to pulpit eloquence? The genius of the nation may have its effect; but it is presumed, the state of the language may be considered as an auxiliary cause, if not a principal.

From the foregoing history of the language, we learn the causes of its incorrect orthography. The Saxon characters, some of which were Roman, both in shape and power, while others were peculiar to the language, continued in use till the fourteenth century. These were afterwards laid aside for the Old English characters, as they are usually called; which were introduced with the art of printing from Germany,[31] and continued in use, till within a century. But both the Saxon and German letters were much inferior to the Roman in the simplicity and elegance of their form; for which reason most of the European nations have rejected their primitive characters and adopted the Roman.[32]

In changing the characters of an alphabet, as well as in expressing the sounds of one language by letters of an other, some difficulty will often arise from the want of a perfect correspondence between the true sounds of letters in both. Altho there is, and must be, a great uniformity in the articulate sounds of all men, yet there are also differences peculiar to each nation, which others have not proper characters to express.

Thus the Romans, when they would express the sound of the Greek θ and of χ, for want of suitable characters, wrote *th* and *ch*. We conclude from this circumstance, that the Greek sound of the former was that of *t* followed by an aspirate, and the latter, that of *k* with an aspirate. Yet it is very probable that the sounds were guttural in Greek, and not exactly represented by the Latin combinations *th* and *ch*.

Thus two Saxon characters are represented in modern English, by the Latin combination *th*, as in *think*, *thou*. These Saxon characters were single letters and had distinct powers. We preserve the distinction of sounds to this day, but are subject to the inconvenience of having no mark by which the eye can discern that distinction.

On the other hand, *sh* was usually written by the Saxons *sc*, as *sceaft*, shaft; *sceam*, shame; *sceal*, shall. What was the pronunciation of *sc* cannot be determined; but it is evident that each letter had a distinct sound. It is most probable that before *a*, *o*, and *u*, *sc* were pronounced *sk*, or *c* might have had the force of *ch* in *choose*. It is very clear that *c* had this sound before *e* and *i*; for the Saxon words in which *ch* now precede *e* or *i*, were formerly spelt with *c* only; as *child* from the Saxon *cild*; *chill* from *cele*; *chink* from *cinnon*, to gape; *chick* from *cicen*. If therefore *c* before *e* and *i* had the force of *ch*, *sceaft* must have been pronounced *scheaft*, which would easily be softened down and contracted into *shaft*.

But whatever was the sound of *sc* in the Saxon, the sound derived from it is now simple, and has no single character to represent it in our language; for the proper sounds of *s* and *h* combined, do not form the sound which we invariably annex to *sh*. By not retaining the primitive Saxon *c* after *s*, we have probably lost the pronunciation and introduced an irregularity.

It is not certain however that a change of the alphabet was prior to the change of pronunciation; for the latter might have produced the former. But the effect is certain; we have a simple sound without a proper character, which is always an imperfection. [33]

We have therefore in English the two sounds of *th*, the aspirate in *think*, and the vocal in *this*, both of which are simple consonant sounds, peculiar to the language, and derived from two *single* characters. Each ought still to be represented by a distinct single letter. *Sh*, on the other hand, express a simple sound, derived from *two* separate Saxon consonants, which must have been originally pronounced as two letters. These irregularities must have been partly owing to a change of alphabet.[34]

Other irregularities have been occasioned by an injudicious application of the letters of one alphabet to the sounds of another language.

The Roman *c* some writers suppose was hard, like *k*, before all the vowels and diphthongs. It certainly was so before all except *e* and *i*; where, there is reason to suppose, it had the sound of *ch* or *ts*. It is very evident that it had not the sound of *s*, which we now annex to it in *civil*, *cellar*. When the Roman alphabet, therefore, took place of the primitive English characters, the Greek *k* should have been always written before *a*, *o*, *u*, as in *cat*, *cord*, *cup*; and *s* before *e* and *i*. Or *c* should have been called *ke*, limited to one sound, and always used instead of *k*. If our ancestors had retained the Roman pronunciation of *c* before *e* and *i*, they would probably have spelt *cera*, *civilis*, *chera*, *chivilis*,[35] *ch* having its English sound of *tsh*, as in *charm*. But if they pronounced these words as we do, they should have substituted *s*, *sera*, *sivilis*. In short, they should have limited every character to one sound; in which case, one of the three letters, *c*, *k*, *s*, would have been entirely omitted as useless. This would have delivered us from a large class of difficulties.

Whether the *ph* and *ch*, in Greek derivatives, were

originally introduced into English, because our ancestors preserved the aspirate; or whether the *h* was retained merely to show the etymology of words, it is not easy to decide. The probability is, that these letters were never aspirated in English, but that *ph* has ever been pronounced *f*, and *ch* generally *k*; as in *Philip*, *chorus*. It is probable however that the Romans, from whom the English borrowed their characters, preserved the aspirate; for they very scrupulously retained the *h* after *p* and *c*; and they attempted to copy exactly the Greek pronunciation. [36] They borrowed all words in *ph*, *ch* and *th* from the Greeks. We have preserved the characters, but have mostly lost the aspirate; *ph* has invariably the sound of *f*; *ch*, in Greek derivatives, generally that of *k*; and *th* has become the representative of two simple consonants. With this change of pronunciation, the orthography should have changed; *philosophy* should now be written *filosofy*; and *chorus*, *korus*; *th* might become a single character and be called *Eth*.[F]

But it was the fate of our language to be shaken by violent revolutions, and abandoned to accident or the caprice of unskillful heads. The operation of imperceptible causes, common to all languages, in all ages, has also been gradually changing the spelling and pronunciation.

In Chaucer's time, the infinitive mode and plural number of verbs, in the present tense, ended often in *en*; as *loven*, for *to love* or *they love*. But *loveth* was sometimes used in the plural, and *n* began to be omitted in the infinitive. The French termination *esse*, as in *Goddesse*, *richesse*, was used, and the final *e* was often pronounced. The plural number of nouns usually ended in *es*, as *houndes*; and in the same

manner terminated the genitive case. Nouns now ending in *y*, ended then in *ie*, as *storie*; *y* was still prefixed to participles, as *ybent*; and *y* was often used where we now write *g*, as *yeve* for *give*.

From that period the orthography was still varying, at least in some particulars, till the beginning of the present century. The group of eminent writers who were cotemporary with Swift, gave great stability to the spelling; yet some good authorities differ from them in several points. Johnson, who has been usually followed by succeeding compilers of dictionaries, preserves the *u* in *honour*, *favour*, and similar words; as also the final *k* in *publick*, &c. Ash, followed by many writers, very properly restores these words to the Roman spelling, by omitting the *u* and *k*. Excepting these particulars, the orthography of our language is nearly fixed.

The pronunciation has been neglected till a few years ago; when Sheridan and Kenrick, with several compilers of less note, attempted to give us a standard. Unluckily they have all made the attempt on false principles; and will, if followed, multiply the anomalies, which already deform the language and embarrass the learner.[37]

The language, is composed of a variety of materials, and it requires some labor to adjust the parts and reduce them to order.

To accomplish this purpose, we must search for such principles of analogy as still exist in its construction, and make them the pillars of a regular system. Where such principles cannot be found, let us examin the opinions of the learned, and the practice of the nations which speak the pure English, that we may determine by the weight of authority, the *common law* of language, those questions which do not come

within any established rules.



FOOTNOTES:

[2] Even supposing that a number of republics, kingdoms or empires, should within a century arise and divide this vast territory; still the subjects of all will speak the same language, and the consequence of this uniformity will be an intimacy of social intercourse hitherto unknown, and a boundless diffusion of knowlege.

[3] This disposition is taken notice of by Dr. Blair, Lect. 8. Where he observes, "that tho the formation of abstract or general conceptions is supposed to be a difficult operation of the mind, yet such conceptions must have entered into the first formation of languages"—"this invention of abstract terms requires no great exertion of metaphysical capacity"—"Men are *naturally* inclined to call all those objects which resemble each other by one common name—We may daily observe this practised by children, in their first attempts towards acquiring language."

I cannot, with this great critic, call the process by which *similar* objects acquire the *same* name, an act of *abstraction*, or the name an *abstract term*. Logical distinctions may lead us astray. There is in the mind an *instinctive disposition*, or *principle of association*, which will account for all common names and the

analogies in language.

[4] The progress of corruption in language is described with precision, and philosophical reasons assigned with great judgement, by that celebrated French writer, Condillac, in his Origin of Human Knowlege, Part 2.

"It is nearly the same here as in physics, where motion, the source of life, becomes the principle of destruction. When a language abounds with original writers in every kind, the more a person is endowed with abilities, the more difficult he thinks it will be to surpass them. A mere equality would not satisfy his ambition; like them he wants the pre-eminence. He therefore tries a new road. But as every stile analogous to the character of the language and to his own, has been already used by preceding writers, he has nothing left but to deviate from analogy. Thus in order to be an original, he is obliged to contribute to the ruin of a language, which, a century sooner, he would have helped to improve.

"Tho such writers may be criticized, their superior abilities must still command success. The ease there is in copying their defects, soon persuades men of indifferent capacities, that they shall acquire the same degree of reputation. Then begins the reign of strained and subtle conceits, of affected antitheses, of specious paradoxes, of frivolous and far-fetched expressions, of new-fangled words, and in short, of the jargon of persons, whose understandings have been debauched by bad metaphysics. The public applauds; foolish and ridiculous writings, the beings of a day, are surprisingly multiplied; a vicious taste infects the arts and sciences, which is followed by a visible decrease of men of abilities."

One would think that Condillac had designed

here to give a description of the present taste of the English writers, and a state of their literature.

The foregoing sentiments seem to have been borrowed from Velleius Paterculus. Hist. Rom. L. 1. Cap. 17.

The same passage is copied by Sig. Carlo Denina, Professor of Eloquence and Belles Lettres in the University of Turin, in his "Revolutions of Literature," page 47; and if I mistake not, the sentiments are adopted by Lord Kaims, in his Sketches of the History of Man.

Similar reasons may be assigned for the prevalence of an affected and vitious pronunciation.

[5] Dr. Witherspoon is an exception. His stile is easy, simple and elegant. I consider Dr. Franklin and Dr. Witherspoon as the two best writers in America. The words they use, and their arrangement, appear to flow spontaneously from their manner of thinking. The vast superiority of their stiles over those of Gibbon and Gillies, is owing to this circumstance, that the two American writers have bestowed their labor upon *ideas*, and the English historians upon *words*.

[6] The same taste prevailed in Rome, under the Emperors, when genius was prostituted to the mean purposes of flattery. "It must be acknowleged indeed, that after the dissolution of the Roman republic, this art began to be perverted by being too much admired. Men grew excessively fond of the numerous stile, and readily sacrificed the strength and energy of their discourse to the harmony of their language. Pliny the younger often complains of this contemptible affectation: And Quintilian

speaks of certain prose writers in his time, who boasted that their compositions were so strictly numerous, that their hearers might even beat time to their measures. And it should seem that even in Tully's time, this matter was carried to excess; since even then the orators dealt so much in numbers, that it was made a question, wherein they differed from the Poets."——Mason's Essay on the Power and Harmony of Prosaic Numbers. Introduction, page 4.

This was an abuse of the art. Melody should be studied; but not principally.

[7] Wallis, Johnson, Kenrick, Sheridan, with a multitude of inferior compilers.

[8] He found the inhabitants of the maritime towns somewhat civilized,[9] and in their manners resembling the Gauls, with whom they had some commercial intercourse. It is probable that the Britons came originally from the continent, from which their island is separated by a strait of no great extent.

[9] "Ex his omnibus, long esunt humanissimi, qui Cantium incolunt: Quæ regio est maritima omnis; *neque multum* a Gallica differunt consuetudine."——Cesar De Bello Gallico, Lib. 5.

[10] Tacitus. Jul. Agric. Vit 11.

[11] "Erat autem prisca isthæc Gallis et Britannis communis lingua, ultra omnium historiarum memoriam antiquæ."——Wallis Gram.

[12] This is said upon the hypothesis, that the ancient Celtic or British had a common origin with the Hebrew, Phenician and Greek. For proofs of this, see the notes at the end.

[13] Temple's Introd. to Hist. of England.

[14] At the conquest of Belisle. See the Preface to Mallet's North. Antiq. page 23.

[15] Works, Vol. 3. Introd. to Hist. Eng.

[16] Indeed a good reason may be given for the apparent difference in the several branches of the old Celtic. In this language, words are declined by changing the initial letters, or by prefixing an article with an apostrophe. By these means, words are so altered, that a superficial observer may confound the radical letters, with those which are added for the sake of expressing different relations. Thus the British word *pen* signifies, a head; *pen gûr*, a man's head; *i ben*, his head; *i phen*, her head; *y'm mhen*, my head. This by the way is no contemptible evidence that the British was derived from the Phenician or Hebrew, in the latter of which, words are declined by prefixes, as well as suffixes.

For the difference between the Irish and British, Lluyd assigns other reasons. The ancestors of the Irish and Highland Scots, who were called Guydelians, might have been the original Celts, who first inhabited Britain; and the Cymri or Welsh, another race, or a branch of the Celtic Cimbri, might, either by colonization or conquest, take possession of Britain, and introduce a very different dialect of the same radical language. The Irish language might be somewhat changed by Cantabrian words, imported by the Scots from Spain; and the Cymraeg or British might suffer considerable changes during 400 years subjection to the Romans. See Pref. to Mallet's North. Antiq. page 42.

[17] "Erat autem illa Anglo-Saxonum lingua antiquæ Teutonicæ propago, (nisi antiquæ Gothicæ seu Geticæ potius dixeris, unde forsan ipsa Teutonica duxerit originem) ut et Francica

illa in Galliam advecta, et hodierna Germanica, Belgica, Danica, Suevica, Borussica, aliæque affines linguæ."——WALLIS.

[18] Mallet's North. Antiq.

[19] "Αλλοι δε Περσαι εισι οιδε, Πανθελαιοι, Δερουσιαιοι, Γερμανιοι."——Herodotus in Clio. ed. 1570, page 34.

[20] 1362.

[21] In this act of Edward III. there is an express reservation in favor of particular law-phrases or technical terms, which, by long use, had acquired peculiar force and propriety, and whose place could not be well supplied by English words or phrases. Hence the number of French words still used in law proceedings.

[22] We have the testimony of Robert, Earl of Gloucester (who wrote under Henry III. and Edward I.) to this purpose. Page 364.

"Vor bote a man couth French, me
tolth of hym well lute,
Ac lowe men holdeth to Englyss and
to her kunde speeche yute."

For but a man knoweth French, men told of him well little, and lowe men holdeth to English and to their native tongue.—— That is, unless a man could speak French he was little esteemed.

[23] 1731.

[24] "Ex hac malefano novetatis pruritu, Belgæ Gallicas voces passim civitate sua donando patrii sermonis puritatem nuper non leviter inquinârunt, et Chaucerus Poeta, pessimo exemplo, *integris vocum plaustris ex eadem Gallia in nostram linguam invectis*, eam, nimis antea a Normannorum victoriæ adulteratam, omni fere nativa gratia et nitore spoliavit."——

Skinner Etymol. L. A. Pref.

[25] Raimond IV. of Aragon, count of Provence, rendered his Court a temple of the muses, and to this resorted the lovers of the Belles Lettres from every part of Europe. About the year 1300, a taste for the Provençal language and poetry was imbibed in Italy, and soon after in England.—Denina, Chap. 4.

[26] A remarkable example of this kind of stile, we have in Elphinstone's principles of the English Language. The author has taken great pains to be obscure, and has succeeded to admiration.

Of this kind of stile, the reader may see a specimen in the following passage, taken from Young's spirit of Athens. Page 6.

"Surely, in every mind, there is an emulation of virtuous superiority, which, however fortune or the meaner passions may hebitate its powers, still, at every example of success in the particular object of its predilection, glows into a momentary flame, which from frequent resuscitation may acquire a stability and strength sufficient to reach at the attainment of what, at first, was regarded solely as matter of admiration; the idea of imitation which hath thus enraptured the fancy, may in times of perilous crisis somewhat elevate the mind and influence the conduct; and if such ever may be the effect, what other lecture can ballance the utility of that, which thus animates the man, and urges him to noble and disinterested services in a good, great and public cause."

The author could hardly have invented an arrangement, better calculated to obscure his meaning.

It is said of Moliere, that before he would

suffer a new play of his to be acted, he read it to an old woman, and judged, by the effect it had upon her, what reception it would meet with on the stage. It is a pity, some modern writers do not copy the example.

[27] Dr. Blair has made a few excellent remarks on this fault, under the article *Precision*, Lecture 10. I do not remember to have seen any other criticisms upon this subject.

[28] Ossian.

[29] See Blair, Lecture 6, and Condillac, in his Essay on the Origin of Human Knowlege. The *dancing* of David, and others, mentioned in the Old Testament, was a solemn exercise, in which action was joined with words to express ideas.

It is said to have been a dispute between Cicero and Roscius, whether the former could express an idea by a greater variety of *words*, or the latter by a greater variety of *gesture*. ——"Satis constat, contendere cum (Ciceronem) cum ipso histrione (Roscio) solitum, utrum ille sæpius eandem sententiam variis gestibus efficeret, an ipse per eloquentiæ copiam sermone diverso pronunciaret."—— Macrob. Saturn, 2. 10.

[30] I cannot think the French *devenir* prefixed to a verb answers exactly to both these English forms. The deficiency of the French in this respect, may be observed in the following passage:

"S'il est vrai que vous *aimiez* la justice, & que vous *alliez* en Créte pour apprendre les loix du bon roi Minos, n'endurcissez point votre cœur contre mes soupirs & contre mes larmes."—— Telemaque, Liv. 4.

If we translate the passage thus: "If it is true that you *love* justice and *go* to Crete," &c. we lose the force of the verb *alliez*; for the sense is evidently, *are going, are now on your journey*. "If it is true that you *love* justice and *are going* to Crete," &c.

In French the verbs *aimiez* and *alliez* are both in the same tense, and have the same form of construction; in English the verbs should be in the same tense, but have different forms of construction. In French the force of *alliez* is collected from the sense of the passage; but in English, it is expressed by a particular construction.

[31] On the first invention of printing, letters were cut in wood and fixed. They were afterwards engraved upon metal, still fixed. The third stage of improvement was the casting of moveable types. It is probable that this was a work of labor and expense; and it must have been a long time, before they cast more than one kind of character. Hence the German character was used in England.

[32] The Germans and Dutch are exceptions: They use their old characters in their own language; but they use the Latin character and language in works of science.

[33] This may be supplied by uniting the two characters *s* and *h* in one, and naming the combination *Esh*.

[34] The Germans, who invented printing, had not proper types for the two Saxon or English characters; they therefore made use of *th* as a substitute for both, which defect we have not yet supplied.

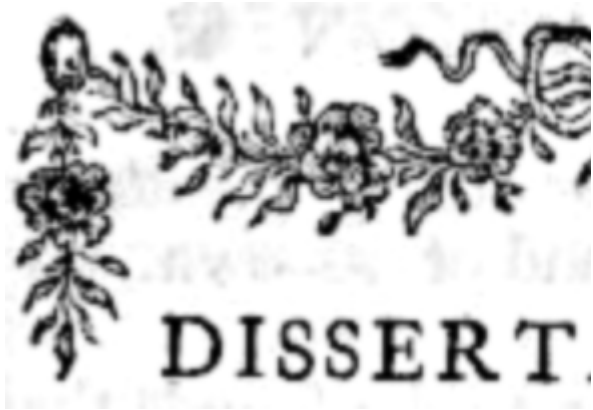
[35] Or *tsera*, *tsvilis*.

[36] "Eundem olim (*ph*) sonum habuisse ac *f*

inscriptiones veteres confirmant, in quibus alterum pro altero promiscue adhiberi cernimus: ut *phidelis*" (pro fidelis.)—— Middleton de Lat. Liter. Pron. Dis.

Our letter *f* has some degree of aspiration in its sound; but had its original Roman sound been precisely that of the Greek Φ *phi*, it is probable that *f* would have been wholly used in derivatives where the *phi* occurred. I suspect that *ph* in Latin must have been originally more strongly aspirated than *f*; but the transition from the sound of the one to that of the other was easy, and the distinction was gradually lost.

[37] We may except Kenrick, who has paid some regard to principles, in marking the pronunciation.



DISSERTATION II.

Of the English Alphabet.—Rules of Pronunciation.—Differences of Pronunciation and controverted Points examined.

Of the ENGLISH ALPHABET.



FROM a general history of the English language, and some remarks upon that subject, I proceed to examin its elements, or the powers of the letters which compose our alphabet.

There are in English, twenty five characters or letters which are the representatives of certain sounds, either simple or combined; a, b, c, d, e, f, g, i, j, k, l, m, n, o, p, q, r, s, t, u, v, w, x, y, z. The English have also the character *h*, which marks an aspiration or strong breathing, but has very little sound of its own. [G]

Letters, according to the sounds they represent, or the purposes they serve, are very naturally divided into three kinds; *vowels*, *dipthongs*, and *consonants*.

In order to obtain clear ideas of our alphabet, let us attend to the following definitions:

1. A vocal sound, formed by opening the mouth, and by a single position of the organs of speech, is a simple sound or vowel. Most of the vowels in English are capable of being prolonged at pleasure, without varying the position of the organs.

2. No more than one simple sound can be formed by one aperture of the mouth, and one position of the organs of speech. The only difference that can be made with the same position of the organs, is, to prolong and shorten the same sound.

3. Two simple sounds, closely united in pronunciation, or following each other so rapidly that the distinction is scarcely perceptible, form a dipthong. In pronouncing a dipthong, two positions of the parts of the mouth are required.

4. Those letters which are not marks of articulate sounds, but represent indistinct sounds, formed by some contact of the parts of the mouth, or by compressing those parts, check all sound, are denominated consonants.

By the first definition we ascertain the number of vowels in English. In pronouncing each of the letters a^1, a^4, a^3, e^1, o^1, o^6, u^2, we observe but one position or aperture of the mouth; the sounds are therefore simple, and the letters are called *vowels*. The six first sounds are capable of being prolonged at pleasure.

By the second definition, we determine which sounds are the same in quality, and different only in the time of being pronounced. Thus *i* in *fit* has the same quality of sound as *ee* in *feet*, for both are pronounced with the same disposition of the organs; but the first is the shortest articulation of the sound, and the last, a long or grave articulation. The other vowels have also their short or abrupt sounds; *a* in *late* has its short sound in *let*; *a* in *cart* has its short sound in *carry*; *a* in *fall* has its short sound in *folly*; *oo* in *fool* its short sound in *full*. *O* is sometimes shortened in common parlance, as in *colt*; but the distinction between *o* in *coal* and *colt*, seems to be accidental or caused by the final consonant, and not

sufficiently settled or important to require a separate consideration.

By the third definition we are enabled to ascertain the dipthongs in our language. The letters *i*, *u* and *y* are usually classed among the vowels; but the first or long sound of each requires, in pronunciation, two positions of the organs of speech, or rather a transition from the position necessary to form one simple sound, to the position necessary to form another simple sound. We begin the sound of *i* nearly with the same aperture of the glottis, as we do the broad *a* or *aw*: The aperture however is not quite so great: We rapidly close the mouth to the position where we pronounce *ee*, and there stop the sound. This letter is therefore a dipthong. *Y* has no property but what belongs to *i*.

U also is not strictly a vowel; nor is it, as it is commonly represented, composed of *e* and *oo*. We do not begin the sound in the position necessary to sound *ee*, as is obvious in the words *salute*, *salubrious*, *revolution*; but with a greater aperture of the mouth and with a position perfectly easy and natural. From that position we pass to the position with which we pronounce *oo*, and there close the sound.

It must however be observed that when these letters, *i*, *u*, are followed by a consonant, the two sounds of the dipthong are not clearly distinguishable. We do not, in *fight*, hear the sound of *ee*; nor the sound of *oo* in *cube*. The consonant compresses the organs and closes the sound of the word so suddenly, that the ear can distinguish but a simple vocal sound: And notwithstanding these letters are dipthongs, when considered by themselves, yet in combination with consonants, they are often marks of simple sounds or vowels.

The short sound of *i* and *y*, is merely short *ee*. The sound of *u* in *tun*, is a separate vowel, which has no affinity to any other sound in the language.[H]

The sound of *oi* or *oy* is dipthongal, composed of the third or broad *a*, and *ee*. The sound of *ou* or *ow* is also dipthongal, compounded of third *a* and *oo*. The sound however does not require quite so great an aperture of the mouth as broad *a*; the position is more natural, and the articulation requires less exertion.

The union of *a* and *w* in *law*, has been very erroneously considered a dipthong. Whatever might have been the ancient pronunciation of these letters (and it is probable that good reasons operated to produce their union) they now exhibit but one simple vocal sound. The same may be observed of *ee*, *oo*, *au*, *ai*, *ea*, *ei*, *ie*, *eo*, *oa*, and perhaps some other combinations, each of which actually exhibits the sound of one letter only, which sound is as simple as that of *a* or *o*.[38]

Under the head of dipthongs we may perhaps range *wa*, *we*, *wo*, *wi*, &c. *W* has nearly the short sound of *oo*; for *will*, *dwell* are pronounced as if written *ooill*, *dooell*. It is a controverted point, whether *w* should be classed with the vowels or consonants. I shall only observe, that it is pronounced by opening the mouth, without a contact of the parts; altho, in a rapid pronunciation, it approaches to a consonant.[I] It is however very immaterial, whether we class it with the vowels or consonants; as all grammarians agree that its sound is that of *oo* short. It ought to be named *oo* or *we*; which would save children much of the trouble they now experience, in learning its proper sound from that awkward name *double u*.

The sound of *y* in the beginning of words, is, by some

writers, called a vowel, but by most of them a consonant. Lowth has asserted, that it has every property of a vowel and not one of a consonant. Sheridan considers *y* in *youth*, *year*, &c. as the short *ee*. But if these writers would attend to the manner in which we pronounce *yes*, *ye*, they would acknowlege that *y* has some property different from *ee*; for it is very evident that they are not pronounced *ee-es*, *ee-e*. The fact is, that in the American pronunciation of *y*, the root of the tongue is pressed against the upper part of the mouth, above the palate, more closely than it is in pronouncing *ee*, and not so closely as in pronouncing *g* hard. The transition however from *y* to *ee* or to *g*, is extremely easy, and hence the mistake that *y* is short *ee*, as also the convertibility of *y* with *g*.[J] It appears to me that *y* in the beginning of words, is more clearly a consonant than *w*.

In many words, *i* has the power of *y* consonant; particularly after *l* and *n*; as *filial*, *union*.

The vowels therefore in English are all heard in the following words; late, half, hall, feet, pool, note, tun, fight, truth. The five first have short sounds or duplicates; which may be heard in let, hat, hot, fit, pull; and the letters *i* and *u* are but accidentally vowels. The pure primitive vowels in English are therefore seven.

The dipthongs may be heard in the following words; lie or defy, due, voice or joy, round or now. To these we may add *ua* in *persuade*; and perhaps the combinations of w and the vowels, in *well*, *will*, &c.

The consonants in English are nineteen; but for want of proper characters, five of them are expressed or marked by double letters. We annex two sounds to *th*; one to *sh*; one to *ng*; and one to *si* or *su*, as may be heard in the following words; think, this, shall, bring,

confusion or pleasure. These characters should be called *eth*, *esh*, *eng*, *ezh*; and *th* should have two names, the aspirate as in *think*, and the vocal as in *this*; the latter sound might be distinguished by a small mark drawn thro *th*. This improvement is so obvious and easy, and would be so convenient for the learners of the language, that I must believe it will soon be introduced.

The consonants may be divided into *mutes* and *semivowels*. When a consonant compresses the lips, or the tongue and roof of the mouth, so closely as to check all sound, it is called a *perfect mute*: Such are *p*, *k*, and *t*, as may be perceived by pronouncing the syllables, *ep*, *ek*, *et*. When the compression of the organs is more gentle and does not stop all sound immediately, the letters are called mutes; such are *b*, *d*, and *g*, as may be perceived by pronouncing the syllables, *eb*, *ed*, *eg*. When a consonant has an imperfect sound, or hissing, which may be continued, after a contact of the organs, it is denominated a semivowel. Of this kind are ef, el, em, en, er, es, ev, ez, eth,[39] eth,[39] esh, ezh, ing. Of these, four are aspirates, ef, es, eth, and esh. The others are vocal, having an imperfect sound.

The whole may be thus arranged.

Perfect mutes—p, k, t.
Mutes————————b, d, g.
vocal, } l, m, n, r, v, z, th,
Semivowels— } zh, ng,
aspirate,} f, s, th, sh.

They may also be classed according to the manner in which they are formed by the organs: Thus, those formed

By the lips, are called labials—b, p, f, v.

By the teeth, are called dentals—d, t, th, z, s, sh, zh.
By the palate, are called palatine—g, k, l, r.
By the nose, are called nasal—m, n, ng.

On the subject of the alphabet, I have this remark further; that for want of a proper knowlege of the powers of *sh* and *th*, some material errors in printing have obtained in common practice. *Sh* are usually united in printing, and generally with propriety, for the combination represents a simple consonant. But in several compound words *s* and *h* have been improperly united, where one is silent or where each retains its own power, as in dishonor, dishonest, dishabille, hogshead, household, falsehood, and some others. The union of *sh* in these words, is embarrassing, especially to children, who are led to pronounce them *dish-onor*, *dish-onest*. This error still prevails in printing, except in the last mentioned word, which is sometimes correctly printed *falsehood*.

Th, tho not united in character, have a tendency to produce, in some words, a wrong pronunciation. For instance, we are very apt to say *Wren-tham* instead of *Wrent-ham*. *Hotham* is also ambiguous; there is nothing in the orthography to direct us, whether to pronounce it *Hot-ham* or *Ho-tham*, altho custom decides in favor of the latter.

These remarks show the propriety of attending to our orthography, and of attempting to remove causes of error, when it can be done without much trouble or danger of giving offence.

RULES *of* PRONUNCIATION.

Having briefly explained the English alphabet, I proceed to the rules of pronunciation.

In pronunciation, two things demand our notice; the proper sounds of the vowels and consonants, and the accent.

In pronouncing both vowels and consonants, the general rule is, *that similar combinations of letters should be pronounced alike, except when general custom has decided otherwise*. Thus if *i* in the words, *bind*, *find*, *mind*, has its first sound, it ought to have the same sound in other similar combinations, *kind*, *blind*, *grind*. This is the rule of *analogy*, the great leading principle that should regulate the construction of all languages. But as languages are not formed at once by system, and are ever exposed to changes, it must necessarily happen that there will be in all languages, some exceptions from any general rule; some departures from the principle of uniformity.

The practice of a nation, when universal or ancient, has, in most cases, the force and authority of law; it implies mutual and general consent, and becomes a rule of propriety. On this ground, some deviations from the analogy of construction and pronunciation must be admitted in all languages. Thus from the analogy already mentioned, *wind* is an exception; for general practice has determined that *i* should, in this word, have its second or short sound.[40] Whether this deviation was admitted at first to distinguish this word from the verb *to wind*, or whether there were other good reasons which cannot now be explored, or whether it was merely the work of ignorance or accident, it is unnecessary to enquire; the common consent of a nation is sufficient to stamp it with propriety.

Another rule in English, which admits of no exception, is, when the accent falls on a vowel, it is

long, as *o* in ho´-ly; but when the accent falls on a consonant, the preceding vowel is short, as in *flat´-ter*.

It is also a general rule, that when a consonant closes a syllable, the preceding vowel is short, as in *fan-cy*, *habit*; altho this rule has its exceptions, as *Cam-bridge*, *dan-ger*, and perhaps *man-ger*.

From this rule, the English except also *a²ngel*, *a²ncient*. In this all the standard authors agree, except Kenrick and Burn, who mark *a* in *ancient* both long and short. The English pronunciation is followed in the middle and southern states; but the eastern universities have restored these words to the analogy of the language, and give *a* its second sound. It is presumed that no reason can be given for making these words exceptions to the general rule, but practice; and this is far from being universal, there being many of the best speakers in America, who give *a*, in the words mentioned, the same sound as in *anguish*, *annals*, *angelic*, *antiquity*.

The practice of the eastern universities therefore should be encouraged, rather than discountenanced; as it diminishes the number of anomalies. I shall only remark further, that *a* in these words must formerly have had its third or fourth sound; which is evident from the old orthography; for angel, at least, was spelt like *grant*, *command*, &c. *aungel*, *graunt*, *commaund*. In giving *a* its first sound therefore, the modern English have not only infringed the rule of analogy, but have deviated from former practice.

In the word *chamber*, *a* has its fourth sound. It is necessary to remark this; as there are many people in America, who give *a* its first sound, which is contrary to analogy and to all the English authorities.

With regard to accent, that particular stress of voice which should distinguish some syllable of a word from others, three things are to be considered; the importance of the syllable; the derivation of the word; and the terminating syllable.

The importance of a syllable is discovered by resolving a word into the parts which compose it, or reducing it to its radicals. Thus *sensible* is derived from *sensus* in Latin or *sense* in English. The first syllable therefore is that on which the meaning of the word principally depends; the others being an accessary termination.

The first syllable then is the most important and requires the accent. For the same reason, *admire*, *compare*, *destroy*, &c. have the accent on the second syllable in preference to the first; the last syllables being all derived from verbs, and the first being mere particles.[41]

Another rule for laying the accent of words arises from derivation. Thus all words that take the terminations *ing*, *ful*, *less*, *ness*, *ed*, *est*, *ist*, *ly*, retain the accent on the syllable where it is laid in their primitives; as *proceed*, *proceeding*, *wonder*, *wonderful*, &c.

But the most important article to be considered in the accentuation of words, is the terminating syllable. From the different terminations of words arise various analogies, the most of which are enumerated in the first part of my Institute. The principle which has operated to produce these analogies, is the ease of speaking or the harmony of enunciation. Consequently this principle must take place of all others; and we find that it frequently interferes with the two foregoing rules, and regulates

practice in opposition to both.

The general rule, grounded on this principle, is, that words, having the *same* terminating syllable, have the accent at the *same* distance from that termination. Thus all words ending in *tion*, *sion*, *cion*, *cial*, *cian*, have the accent on the last syllable but one;[42] and this without any regard to derivation or to the number of syllables in the word.

Thus most words in *ty*, if they consist of more syllables than two, have the accent on the antepenult; as *probity*, *absurdity*, *probability*. I recollect but two exceptions, viz. *commonalty*, *admiralty*; the accent of which is laid upon the first syllable, as in their primitives.[43]

But let us observe the force of the last rule, in opposition to the others. *Mortal* has the accent on the first syllable. Here the first rule takes place, for the first syllable, having *mors*, death, for its root, is the most important. But the derivative, *mortality*, conforms to the analogy of words ending in *ty* and has the accent on the last syllable but two. That the ease or harmony of pronunciation, is the cause of this change of accent, will be evident to any person who shall attempt to pronounce words of this class, with the accent on any other syllable than the antepenult.

Most of these rules admit a few exceptions, which are to be learnt by practice. Custom has made some inroads upon the rules of uniformity, and caprice is ever busy in multiplying anomalies. Still, rules will be of great service in ascertaining and fixing our language; for tho they may not root out *old* errors, they may prevent the introduction of *others*.

But besides the principal accent, there is, in most

polysyllables, an inferior accent laid on the third or fourth syllable from the principal. Indeed in some words, the two accents are so nearly equal, as to be scarcely distinguishable.

It is denied by some critics that there are more accents than one, in any word. But the composition of words, and the ease of speaking, both require a plurality of accent in a very great number of instances; and our ears inform us that such a plurality actually exists in practice. If a man will assert that in such words as *designation*, *exaltation*, there is but one syllable distinguished from the others by a superior stress of voice, he must deny the evidence of sense, and would not listen to argument.

I must however remark that most, if not all syllables, derived from some important word, have some degree of accent:[44] So that in compounds, there are usually as many accents as radicals. Thus in *sanctify*, which is composed of two radicals, *sanctus* and *fio*, we observe two accents; the strongest on the first syllable. The same may be observed in *magnanimity*, from *magnus* and *animus*, in *promogeniture*, &c. except that in these the principal accent is on the third syllable.

Notwithstanding it is a general rule, that there are as many accents in a word, as radicals, yet one of them at least is frequently removed from the principal syllable, by the analogy of termination, which prevails over all other reasons. Thus in *mathematics*, the two accents lie on the proper syllables; but in *mathematician*, the last accent is removed to a less important place. In *imperceptible*, the principal accent, with propriety, lies on the third syllable, which being derived from a verb (*capio*) is the most important. The particle *im*, being the privative, or

that syllable which changes the meaning of the whole word from affirmative to negative, becomes important and has some degree of accent. But in the derivative *imperceptibility*, while the first and third syllables retain an accent, the analogy of termination carries the principal accent to the fifth syllable, which is adventitious and less important than the others.[45]

In many compounds, as, *earth-quake*, *rain-bow*, each syllable is pronounced with the stress that belongs to accented syllables; and there is little or no distinction of accent. The reason is obvious: There is no difference in the importance of the syllables; both are equally necessary to convey the idea. By giving one syllable the whole accent, such a word loses its original meaning, or at least its force, as may be observed in the word *hussy*, a corruption of *house-wife*; which, from an affectation of a unity of accent, and a hasty pronunciation, has sunk into a low word. From the same ridiculous affectation, *work-house* is, by some people, pronounced *work-us*.

On this head, I shall only observe further, that some words of many syllables have three accents; of which we have an example in *val'etu'dina'rian*.

It has been already remarked that the composition of words, and the ease of speaking, require a plurality of accent. The reason why words of many syllables have two or three accents, is plain to any man that attempts to pronounce them without an accent.

We cannot pronounce more than two unaccented syllables with perfect ease; but four or five can hardly be articulated without an intervening accent. We glide over the unaccented syllables with such rapidity, that we have hardly time to place the organs in a position to articulate them. The difficulty

is in proportion to the number: So that after passing over two or three, the voice very naturally rests or falls forceably upon a particular syllable. Hence the words most difficult to be pronounced, are those of four syllables, accented on the first; as *figurative*, *literature*, *applicable*. The difficulty is very great, when the middle syllables abound with consonants, even in trissyllables, as *ag'grandize*; but is itself a sufficient reason for not accenting the first syllable of such words as *acceptable* and *refractory*. When one of the words which have the accent on the first, and three succeeding unaccented syllables, is followed by two or three particles, the passage is weak and often occasions hesitation in a speaker; as "*applicable to the affairs of common life*."

A remarkable instance of this, we find in Priestley's Preface to Letters to a Philosophical Unbeliever; "Whether of a *pleasureable or of a* painful nature." In this example there are six weak syllables following each other without interruption, and such passages are not reduceable to any kind of poetic feet. This assemblage of unimportant syllables makes a hiatus in language, which should, as far as possible, be avoided by a writer; for the melody of prose consists in a proper mixture of important and unimportant syllables.[46][K]

DIFFERENCES *of* PRONUNCIATION *and* CONTROVERTED POINTS EXAMINED.

Having laid down some general rules reflecting pronunciation, I proceed to examin local differences, and the most material points of controversy on this subject.

In the eastern states, there is a practice prevailing

among the body of the people, of prolonging the sound of *i* in the termination *ive*. In such words as *motive*, *relative*, &c. the people, excepting the more polished part, give *i* its first sound. This is a local practice, opposed to the general pronunciation of the English on both sides of the Atlantic, sometimes to the rules of accent, and always to derivation. In dissyllables, as *motive*, *active*, the genius of our language requires that the accent should be laid on *one* syllable, and that the other should be short.[47] But by prolonging *i* in the last, the distinction of accent is totally destroyed.

In polysyllables, which often have two accents, this reason has less force, but the derivation, which is from the French *motif*, *relatif*, always requires that *i* in the termination *ive* should have the sound of *ee* short, as in *live*, *give*. This is merely the short sound of the French *i*, and the consequence of the English accent on the first syllable. These reasons, with the authority of the most approved practice, should operate to discountenance the singular drawling pronunciation of the eastern people.[48]

The same reasons are opposed to another local practice of a similar nature in the middle states; where many people pronounce *practise*, *prejudice*, with *i* long. I know of no authority for this beyond the limits of two or three states; and it is clear that the practice is not warranted by any principle in the language.

Another very common error, among the yeomanry of America, and particularly in New England, is the pronouncing of *e* before *r*, like *a*; as *marcy* for mercy. This mistake must have originated principally in the name of the letter *r*, which, in most of our school books, is called *ar*. This single mistake has spread a

false pronunciation of several hundred words, among millions of people.[49]

To avoid this disagreeable singularity some fine speakers have run into another extreme, by pronouncing *e* before *r*, like *u*, *murcy*. This is an error. The true sound of the short *e*, as in *let*, is the correct and elegant pronunciation of this letter in all words of this class.

There is a vulgar singularity in the pronunciation of the eastern people, which is very incorrect, and disagreeable to strangers; that of prefixing the sound of *i* short or *e*, before the dipthong *ow*; as *kiow*, *piower* or *peower*. This fault usually occurs after *p*, *c* hard, or those other consonants which are formed near the seat of *ee* in the mouth, or in passing from which to the succeeding vowel, the organs naturally take the position necessary to pronounce *ee*. But the most awkward countryman pronounces *round*, *ground*, &c. with tolerable propriety.

This, with some other peculiarities which prevail among the yeomanry of New England, springs from causes that do not exist, in the same degree, in any other part of America, perhaps not in the world. It may surprize those who have not turned their thoughts to this subject, that I should ascribe the manner of speaking among a people, to the nature of their government and a distribution of their property. Yet it is an undoubted fact that the drawling nasal manner of speaking in New England arises almost solely from these causes.

People of large fortunes, who pride themselves on family distinctions, possess a certain boldness, dignity and independence in their manners, which give a correspondent air to their mode of speaking.

Those who are accustomed to command slaves, form a habit of expressing themselves with the tone of authority and decision.

In New England, where there are few slaves and servants, and less family distinctions than in any other part of America, the people are accustomed to address each other with that diffidence, or attention to the opinion of others, which marks a state of equality. Instead of commanding, they advise; instead of saying, with an air of decision, *you must*; they ask with an air of doubtfulness, *is it not best?* or give their opinions with an indecisive tone; *you had better, I believe*. Not possessing that pride and consciousness of superiority which attend birth and fortune, their intercourse with each other is all conducted on the idea of equality, which gives a singular tone to their language and complexion to their manners.

These remarks do not apply to the commercial towns; for people who are conversant with a variety of company lose most of their singularities, and hence well bred people resemble each other in all countries. But the peculiar traits of national character are found in the internal parts of a country, among that class of people who do not travel, nor are tempted by an intercourse with foreigners, to quit their own habits.[50]

Such are the causes of the local peculiarities in pronunciation, which prevail among the country people in New England, and which, to foreigners, are the objects of ridicule. The great error in their manner of speaking proceeds immediately from not opening the mouth sufficiently. Hence words are drawled out in a careless lazy manner, or the sound finds a passage thro the nose.

Nothing can be so disagreeable as that drawling, whining cant that distinguishes a certain class of people; and too much pains cannot be taken to reform the practice.

Great efforts should be made by teachers of schools, to make their pupils open the teeth, and give a full clear sound to every syllable. The beauty of speaking consists in giving each letter and syllable its due proportion of sound, with a prompt articulation.

Thus in order to pronounce *cow*, *power*, or *gown* with propriety, the pupil should be taught, after placing the organs in the position required by the first consonant, to open his mouth wide, before he begins the sound of *ow*: Otherwise in passing from that position to the aperture necessary to pronounce *ow*, he will inevitably articulate *ee*, *keow*.

A similar method is recommended to those polite speakers who are so fond of imitating the English stage pronunciation as to embrace every singularity, however disagreeable. I refer to the very modern pronunciation of *kind*, *sky*, *guide*, &c. in which we hear the short *e* before *i*, *keind*, or *kyind*, *skey*, &c. This is the same barbarous dialect, as the *keow* and *veow* of the eastern country people. Yet, strange as it may seem, it is the elegant pronunciation of the fashionable people both in England and America. Even Sheridan, who has laid it down as a rule that *i* is a dipthong, composed of *aw* and *ee*, has prefixed a *y* short to its sound in several words; as *kyind*, *skyi*, *gyide*, &c. We may with equal propriety prefix *e* to the dipthong *ow*, or to *o* in *poll*, or to *oo* in *fool*, or to any other vowel. It is presumed that the bare mention of such barbarisms will be sufficient to restrain their progress, both in New England and on the British theater.

Some of the southern people, particularly in Virginia, almost omit the sound of *r* as in *ware, there*. In the best English pronunciation, the sound of *r* is much softer than in some of the neighboring languages, particularly the Irish and Spanish; and probably much softer than in the ancient Greek. But there seems to be no good reason for omitting the sound altogether; nor can the omission be defended on the ground, either of good practice or of rules. It seems to be a habit contracted by carelessness.

It is a custom very prevalent in the middle states, even among some well bred people, to pronounce *off*, *soft*, *drop*, *crop*, with the sound of *a*, *aff*, *saft*, *drap*, *crap*. This seems to be a foreign and local dialect; and cannot be advocated by any person who understands correct English. [L]

In the middle states also, many people pronounce a *t* at the end of *once* and *twice*, *oncet* and *twicet*. This gross impropriety would not be mentioned, but for its prevalence among a class of very well educated people; particularly in Philadelphia and Baltimore.

Fotch for *fetch* is very common, in several states, but not among the better classes of people. *Cotched* for *caught* is more frequent, and equally barbarous.

Skroud and *skrouge* for *croud*, are sometimes heard among people that should be ashamed of the least vulgarism.

Mought for *might* is heard in most of the states, but not frequently except in a few towns.[M]

Holpe for *help* I have rarely heard except in Virginia. *Tote* is local in Virginia and its neighborhood. In meaning it is nearly equivalent to *carry*. I have taken great pains to discover the etymology of the local terms used in the several states; but this word has yet

eluded my diligence.[51]

Chore, a corruption of *char*, is an English word, still used in many parts of England, as a *char-man*, a *char-woman*, but in America, it is perhaps confined to New England. It signifies small domestic jobs of work, and its place cannot be supplied by any other single word in the language.

These local words, and others of less note, are gradually growing into disuse, and will probably be lost: Except such as are necessary in some particular occupation.

The pronunciation of *w* for *v* is a prevailing practice in England and America: It is particularly prevalent in Boston and Philadelphia.[52] Many people say *weal*, *wessel*, for *veal*, *vessel*.

These letters are easily mistaken for each other, and the name of the letter *w* now used, is a proof that the letter *v* was formerly called *u* or *oo*. The letter in the Roman language had the sound we now give *w* in *will*. *Via* and *vinum*, pronounced *wia*, *winum*, have suffered but a small change of pronunciation in our *way*, *wine*. In old English books, down to Shakespear, *v* was written for the short *u*, as *vp*, *vnder*; for *up*, *under*. On the other hand, *u* was written where we now write *v*, as *uery*, *euery*, for *very*, *every*. It seems therefore, that *v* had formerly the sound of *w* or *oo*; and that instead of corrupting the language, the Cockneys in London, and their imitators in America, who say *weal*, *wery*, have retained the primitive pronunciation. In confirmation of this opinion, it may be observed that the Danes, who speak a dialect of the Saxon, have no *w* in their language, but where we write *w*, they write *v*, and where we write *wh*, they invariably write *hv*; as *vind*, *wind*; *vej*, *way*; *vader*, *wade*; *hvad*, *what*; *hvide*, *white*; *hvi*, *why*. The

Germans, whose language is another branch of the same stock, invariably pronounce *w* as we do *v*; *wall*, *vall*; *wir*, *vir*, *we*; *wollen*, *vollen*, *will*; and *v* they pronounce as we do *f*; as *vergessen*, *fergessen*, which is the same as the English *forget*.

The retaining the old sound of *v* is a proof of the force of custom; but since the nation in general have annexed to it a precise sound, as well as to *w*, every person should resign his peculiarities for the sake of uniformity.

But there are some points in pronunciation, in which the best informed people differ, both in opinion and practice.

The words *shall*, *quality*, *quantity*, *qualify*, *quandary*, *quadrant*, are differently pronounced by good speakers. Some give *a* a broad sound, as *shol*, *quolity*; and others, its second sound, as in *hat*. With respect to the four first, almost all the standard writers[53] agree to pronounce *a* short, as in *hat*: And this is the stage pronunciation. It is correct, for it is more agreeable to the analogy of the language; that being the proper sound of the English *a* which is heard in *hat* or *bar*. With respect to the two last, authors differ; some give the first, some the second, and others the fifth sound. They all pretend to give us the court pronunciation, and as they differ so widely, we must suppose that eminent speakers differ in practice. In such a case, we can hardly hesitate a moment to call in analogy to decide the question, and give *a* in all these words, as also in *quash*, its second sound.[54]

The words *either*, *neither*, *deceit*, *conceit*, *receipt*, are generally pronounced, by the eastern people, *ither*, *nither*, *desate*, *consate*, *resate*. These are errors; all the standard authors agree to give *ei*, in these words, the

sound of *ee*. This is the practice in England, in the middle and southern states, and, what is higher authority, analogy warrants the practice. Indeed it is very absurd to pronounce the verb *conceive*, *conceeve*, and the noun *conceit*, *consate*. Such an inconsistency will hardly find advocates, except among the prejudiced and uninformed.

Importance is, by a few people, pronounced impo[1]rtance; with the first sound of *o*. The reason alleged is, that it is a derivative of *import*, and *o* should preserve the same sound it has in the original. It seems however to be affectation, for the standard writers and general practice are opposed to it. Indeed it may be considered as a mere imitation of the French pronunciation of the same word.

Decis-ive for *deci-sive* is mere affectation.

Reesin for *raisin* is very prevalent in two or three principal towns in America. One of the standard authors gives us this pronunciation; and another gives us both *raisin* and *reesin*. But all the others pronounce the word *raisin*, with *a* long; and derivation, analogy and general custom, all decide in favor of the practice.

Leisure is sometimes pronounced *leesure*, and sometimes *lezhure*: The latter is the most general pronunciation in America. It is almost singular in its spelling; *seizure* being the only word in analogy with it; and this is a derivative from *seize*. The true original orthography of *leisure* was *leasure*; this was in analogy with *pleasure*, *measure*, and its ancient pronunciation still remains.

Dictionary has been usually pronounced *dicsonary*; But its derivation from *diction*, the analogous pronunciation of *tion* in other cases, and all the

standard writers require *dicshunary*, or *dicshonary*.

One author of eminence pronounces *defile* in three syllables, *def-i-le*. In this he is singular; neither general practice, nor rules warrant the pronunciation; and all the other authorities are against him.

With respect to *oblige*, authorities differ. The standard writers give us both *oblige* and *obleege*, and it is impossible to determine on which side the weight of authority lies. The direct derivation of the word from the French would incline us to prefer *obleege*, in the analogy of *fatigue*, *machine*, *antique*, *pique*, *marine*, *oblique*, which uniformly preserve the French *i* or English *ee*. Yet Chesterfield called this affectation, and it might be so in his age; for the opinions of men are capricious. The English analogy requires *i* long in *oblige*; and perhaps this should incline all parties to meet each other on that best principle.

Some people very erroneously pronounce *chaise*, *sha* in the singular, and *shaze* in the plural. The singular number is *shaze*, and the plural, *shazes*.

Our modern fashionable speakers accent *European* on the last syllable but one. This innovation has happened within a few years: I say innovation; for it is a violation of an established principle of the language, that words ending in *ean* have the accent on the last syllable but two: Witness *Mediterra'nean*, *Pyre'nean*, *Hercu'lean*, *subterra'nean*. I do not advert to an exception,[55] and why *European* should be made one, it is difficult to determine. The reason given by some, that *e* in the penultima represents the Latin dipthong *æ*, which was long, is of little weight, opposed to the general practice of a nation, and to an established principle. The standard authors, in this

instance, as in all others, where practice is not uniform, very absurdly give both pronunciations, that we may take our choice. As this is a very easy method of getting over difficulties, and passing along without giving offence, so it is a certain way to perpetuate differences in opinion and practice, and to prevent the establishment of any standard. Analogy requires *Euro'pean*, and this is supported by as good authorities as the other.

Rome is very frequently pronounced *Room*, and that by people of every class. The authors I have consulted give no light upon this word, except Perry, who directs to that pronunciation. The practice however, is by no means general in America: There are many good speakers who give *o* its first sound. It seems very absurd to give *o* its first sound in *Romish*, *Romans*, and pronounce it *oo* in *Rome*, the radical word. I know of no language in Europe, in which *o* has not one uniform sound, viz. the sound we give it in *rose*. It is perhaps the only vowel, in the sound of which all nations agree. In English it has other sounds; but the first is its proper one. A great proportion of people in America have restored the analogy of pronunciation in giving *o* its first found in *Rome*; and a desire of uniformity would lead us to extend the practice.[56]

In the pronunciation of *arch* in many compound words, people are not uniform. The disputed words are *archangel*, *archetype*, *architecture*, *architrave*, *archives*. There seems to be no settled principle of analogy, by which the question can be determined. Etymology would require *ch*, in Greek and Hebrew derivatives, to have uniformly the sound of *k*; but before most consonants, such a pronunciation is harsh; for which reason it is generally softened into

the English *ch*, as *archbishop*. But before vowels, as in the words just enumerated, the best practice has decided for the sound of *k*; and euphony, as well as derivation, favors the decision.[N]

The sound of *ch* in *chart* is likewise disputed; and the standard authors are directly opposed to each other. There is as good foreign authority on one side as the other; but in America, *ch* has generally its soft or English sound. This must perhaps be preferred, contrary to etymology; for we uniformly give *ch* that sound in *charter*, which is from the same original; and this also distinguishes the word from *cart*; a reason which is not without its weight.

There are many people who omit the aspirate in most words which begin with *wh*; as *white*, *whip*, &c. which they pronounce *wite*, *wip*. To such it is necessary only to observe, that in the pure English pronunciation, both in Great Britain and New England, for it is exactly the same in both, *h* is not silent in a single word beginning with *wh*. In this point our standard authors differ; two of them aspirating the whole of these words, and three, marking *h* in most of them as mute. But the omission of *h* seems to be a foreign corruption; for in America, it is not known among the unmixed descendants of the English. Sheridan has here given the true English pronunciation. In this class of words, *w* is silent in four only, with their derivatives; viz. *who*, *whole*, *whoop*, *whore*.

One or two authors affect to pronounce *human*, and about twenty other words beginning with *h*, as tho they were spelt *yuman*.[57] This is a gross error. The only word that begins with this sound, is *humor*, with its derivatives. In the American pronunciation, *h* is silent in the following, *honest*, *honor*, *hour*, *humor*,

herb, *heir*, with their derivatives. To these the English add *hospital*, *hostler*, *humble*; but an imitation of these, which some industriously affect, cannot be recommended, as every omission of the aspirate serves to mutilate and weaken the language.

The word *yelk* is sometimes written *yolk* and pronounced *yoke*. But *yelk* is the most correct orthography, from the Saxon *gealkwe*; and in this country, it is the general pronunciation.

Ewe is, by the English, often pronounced *yo*; which is sometimes heard in America. But analogy and the general corresponding practice in this country, with the authority of some of the most accurate writers, decide for *yew*.

The English speakers of eminence have shortened the vowel in the first syllable of *tyranny*, *zealous*, *sacrifice*, &c. altho in the primitive words, all agree to give the vowel its first sound. This pronunciation has not spread among the people of this country; but our learned men have adopted it; and it seems in some degree to be the genius of our language. In *child*, *clean*, *holy*, &c. we uniformly give the first vowel its long sound; but when a syllable is added, we always shorten it; *children*, *clenly*, *holyday*.

On the other hand, many people in America say *pat-ron*, *mat-ron*; whereas the English say either *pa-tron* or *pat-ron*, *matron* or *mat-ron*; but all agree in saying, *pat-ronage*. In *patriot*, *patriotism*, the English give *a* its long sound; but a great part of the Americans, its short sound. In all these cases, where people are not uniform, I should prefer the short sound; for it appears to me the most analogous.

Wrath, the English pronounce with the third sound of *a* or *aw*; but the Americans almost universally

preserve the analogous sound, as in *bath*, *path*. This is the correct pronunciation; and why should we reject it for *wroth*, which is a corruption? If the English practice is erroneous, let it remain so; we have no concern with it: By adhering to our own practice, we preserve a superiority over the English, in those instances, in which ours is guided by rules; and so far ought we to be from conforming to their practice, that they ought rather to conform to ours.

It is disputed whether *g* should have its hard or soft sound, in *homogeneous* and *heterogeneous*: On this question the standard authors are not agreed. The hard sound, as in *go*, coincides with etymology; but analogy requires the other, as in *genius*. The same remarks apply to *g* in *phlogiston*.

In the middle and southern states, *fierce*, *pierce*, *tierce*, are pronounced *feerce*, *peerce*, *teerce*. To convince the people of the impropriety of this pronunciation, it might be sufficient to inform them, that it is not fashionable on the English theater. For those who want better proofs, before they relinquish their practice, I would observe, that these words are derived to us from the French; *fierce*, *tierce*, from *fiers*, *tiers*, and *pierce* from *percer*. In the two former, the French pronounce both *i* and *e*; but it is evident the English originally pronounced *e* only; for the *i* was omitted in the spelling of *fierce*, and was not introduced into *pierce* till after Spenser wrote.

"—When he him knew and had his tale herd,
As *fers* as a leon pulled out his swerd."

Chaucer, Knightes Tale 1600.

"The drought of March hath *perced* to the rote."

Canterbury Tales.

"For they this queen attended; in whose steed,
Oblivion laid him down on Laura's herse:
Hereat the hardest stones were seen to bleed,
And grones of buried ghosts the heavens did perse."

Verses to Edmond Spenser.

Pierce is also made to rhime with *rehearse*. Pope makes it rhime with *universe*.

"He, who thro vast immensity can pierce,
See worlds on worlds compose one universe."

Essay on Man, 23.

The rhime in the last quotation, is not unequivocal proof of the pronunciation in Pope's time; but the orthography in Chaucer's and Spenser's writings, are to me satisfactory evidence that *e* in these words was short. The standard English pronunciation now is *ferce*, *perce*, *terce*, and it is universal in New England. I have only to add, that the sharp abrupt sound of *e*

in the two first words is most happily adapted to express the ideas.

The English pronounce *leap*, *lep*; and that in the present tense as well as the past. Some of our American horsemen have learnt the practice; but among other people, it is almost unknown. It is a breach of analogy, at least in the present tense; the American pronunciation, *leep*, is therefore the most correct and should not be relinquished.

In the fashionable world, *heard* is pronounced *herd* or *hurd*. This was almost unknown in America till the commencement of the late war, and how long it has been the practice in England, I cannot determine. By Chaucer's orthography, one would imagine that it had been handed down from remote antiquity; for he writes *herd*, *herde*, and *herden*.[58] In reading more modern poets, I have rarely found any instance of a verse's closing with this word; so that it is difficult to say what has been the general practice among the learned. But for centuries, the word has been uniformly spelt *heard*; the verb *hear* is in analogy with *fear*, *sear*, and yet *e* in the past time and participle has been omitted, as *heard*, not *heared*. That *herd* was not formerly the pronunciation, is probable from this circumstance; the Americans were strangers to it when they came from England, and the body of the people are so to this day.[59] To most people in this country, the English pronunciation appears like affectation, and is adopted only in the capital towns, which are always the most ready to distinguish themselves by an implicit imitation of foreign customs. Analogy requires that we should retain our former practice; for we may as well change *feared*, *seared*, into *ferd*, *serd*, as to change *heard* into *herd*.

Beard is sometimes, but erroneously, pronounced *beerd*. General practice, both in England and America, requires that *e* should be pronounced as in *were*, and I know of no rule opposed to the practice.

Deaf is generally pronounced *deef*. It is the universal practice in the eastern states; and it is general in the middle and southern; tho some have adopted the English pronunciation, *def*. The latter is evidently a corruption; for the word is in analogy with *leaf* and *sheaf*, and has been from time immemorial. So in Sir William Temple's works, Virg. Ecl.

——"We sing not to the deaf,
An answer comes from every trembling
leaf."

Leaf and *deaf*, with a different orthography, are repeatedly made to rhime in Chaucer's works; as in the Wife of Bath's Prologue, L. 6217,

"For that I rent out of his book a lefe,
That of the stroke myn ere wex al *defe*."

So also line 6249.

This was the orthography of his time, and an almost conclusive evidence that *deaf* was pronounced *deef*. [60] This pronunciation is generally retained in America, and analogy requires it.

This dissertation will be closed with one observation, which the reader may have made upon the foregoing criticisms: That in many instances the Americans still adhere to the analogies of the language, where the English have infringed them. So far therefore as the regularity of construction is concerned, we ought to retain our own practice and be our own standards.

The English practice is an authority; but considering the force of custom and the caprice of fashion, their practice must be as liable to changes and to errors, as the practice of a well educated yeomanry, who are governed by habits and not easily led astray by novelty. In the instances where we have adhered to analogy, no consideration can warrant us in resigning our practice to the authority of a foreign court, which, thro mere affectation, may have embraced many obvious errors. In doubtful cases, to pay a suitable deference to the opinions of others, is wise and prudent; but to renounce an obvious principle of propriety because others have renounced it, is to carry our complaisance for the faults of the great, much farther than we can justify, and in a *nation*, it is an act of servility that wants a name.



FOOTNOTES:

[38] Dr. Sheridan has coined a word for these combinations; he calls them *digraphs*, that is, *double written*.

[39] Vocal and aspirate.

[40] On the stage, it is sometimes pronounced with *i* long, either for the sake of rhime, or in order to be heard. Mr. Sheridan marks it both ways; yet in common discourse he pronounces it with *i* short, as do the nation in general.

[41] The most significant words, and consequently the most important, are nouns

and verbs; then follow adjectives, pronouns, auxiliary verbs and participles.—Particles are the least important.

[42] I consider these terminations as single syllables.

[43] Such is the tendency of people to uniformity, that the *commonalty*, for the most part, form the word regularly, and pronounce it *commonality*. Analogy requires that both these words should end in *ity*; but custom has established them as exceptions.

[44] From this remark we must except some derivatives from the Greek; as geography, philology, antithesis, hypothesis, &c. which have but one accent. Etymology requires these words to be accented on the first and third syllables; but the genius of the language, or the analogy of termination has prevailed over etymological reasons. Etymology however resumes her rights in the derivatives, *geographical*, *philological*, &c. where each radical syllable is distinguished by an accent.

[45] To prove the utility of accent in marking the signification of words, it is only necessary to advert to the two words *omission* and *commission*. These words have the accent on the second syllable; but when we use them by way of contrast, we lay a strong accent on the first syllable of each, by which the opposition of sense is distinguished. "Sins of o'mission and com'mission." Thus when we use the word *regain*, we often lay an accent on *re* almost equal to that on *gain*; because the sense of the word depends much, or rather wholly, on the particle.

[46] In the following passage, alliteration or the similarity of the weak syllables, has a very bad effect. "We tread, as with*in an en*chanted

circle, where nothing appears as it truly is."——Blair Serm. 9.

A difficulty of pronunciation is obvious in the following sentence, "This caution while it *admirably* protects the public liberty, can never bear hard upon individuals." Change the accent from the first to the second syllable of *admirably*, and the difficulty vanishes.

"And yet the labyrinth is more *admirable than the* Pyramids."——Trans. of Herodotus, Euterpe.

[47] Except compounds, as *earthquake*, *bookcase*.

[48] The final *e* must be considered as the cause of this vulgar dialect. It is wished that some bold genius would dare to be right, and spell this class of words without *e*, *motiv*. By reason of an embarrassing orthography, one half the trouble of learning English, is bestowed in acquiring errors, and correcting them after they are formed into habits. To prevent the continuance of this erroneous practice, I have, in the first part of the Institute, distinguished the silent *e*, by an Italic character.

[49] To remedy the evil, in some degree, this letter is named *er*, in the Institute. In a few instances this pronunciation is become general among polite speakers, as clerks, sergeant, &c.

[50] Hence the surprising similarity between the idioms of the New England people and those of Chaucer, Shakespear, Congreve, &c. who wrote in the true English stile. It is remarked by a certain author, that the inhabitants of islands best preserve their native tongue. New England has been in the situation of an island; during 160 years, the people except in a few commercial towns,

have not been exposed to any of the causes which effect great changes in language and manners.

[51] I have once met with the word in Chaucer's Plowman's Tale 2014.

"The other side ben pore and pale,
And peple yput out of prese,
And semin caitiffs sore a cale,
And er in one without encrease;
Iclepid Lollers and Londlese;
Who *toteth* on 'hem thei ben untall;
They ben arayid all for pece,
But falshed foule mote it befall."

[52] I am at a loss to determine, why this practice should prevail in Boston and not in Connecticut. The first and principal settlers in Hartford came from the vicinity of Boston. Vast numbers of people in Boston and the neighborhood use *w* for *v*; yet I never once heard this pronunciation in Connecticut.

[53] By standard writers, I mean, Kenrick, Sheridan, Burn, Perry and Scott.

[54] The distinction in the pronunciation of *a* in *quality*, when it signifies the property of some body, and when it is used for high rank, appears to me without foundation in rule or practice.

[55] *Hymenean* and *hymeneal* are, by some writers, accented on the last syllable but one; but erroneously. Other authorities preserve the analogy.

[56] This is the sound which the rhime requires in the following verses:

"Give eare to me that ten years
fought for Rome,
Yet reapt all grace at my returning

home."

Rel. An. Poet. p. 204.

[57] Particularly *Perry*. I am surprized that his pronunciation has found so many advocates in this country, as there is none more erroneous.

I would just remark here that many writers use *an* before *h* aspirate, instead of *a*; which practice seems not well founded. The rapid sound of the article *a* is indistinct, but opens the mouth to a proper position to pronounce *h*; whereas *n* places the end of the tongue under the upper teeth, and the mouth assumes a new position, before the aspiration can be formed. *A* hundred, *a* house, &c. are therefore much more easily articulated, than *an* hundred, *an* house.

Thus *a* should always be used before *y* consonant, and consequently before *u* when it has the same sound, as in *union*, *universal*, &c. Indeed I cannot account for the use of *an* before *y*, on any other principle than this, that the persons who use it do not pronounce *y* at all. If they make *y* the same as *ee*, it is consistent to write *an* before it; but this is an error.

[58] See Canterbury Tales and Prologue. L. 221, 955, 1599, 15382.

[59] To prove that the Americans have a corrupt pronunciation, we are often told that our ancestors came from the western counties of England. This is but partially true.

The company that purchased New England, was indeed called the *Plymouth Company*, being composed principally of persons belonging to the county of Devon. But many of the principal settlers in these states came from

London and its vicinity; some from the middle counties, the ancient kingdom of Mercia; and a few from the northern counties. To show the falsehood of the charge, with respect to the language, it may be asserted with truth, that there is not the least affinity between the language of the New England people and the specimens of the Devonshire dialect, given in the English Magazines.

[60] The digraph *ea* seems not to have been much used in that age; for *speak* authors wrote *speke*; for *dear*, *dere*; for *leaf*, *lefe*.



DISSERTATION III.

Examination of controverted Points, continued. —Of modern Corruptions in the English Pronunciation.

EXAMINATION *of* CONTROVERTED POINTS, *continued*.



IN the preceding dissertation I have endeavored to settle a number of controverted points and local differences in pronunciation, on the most satisfactory principles hitherto discovered. I now proceed to some other differences of consequence to the language, and particularly in America.

Gold is differently pronounced by good speakers, and differently marked by the standard writers. Two of them give us *goold*, as the standard, and three, *gold* or *goold*. But we may find better principles than the opinions or practice of individuals, to direct our judgement in this particular. The word indeed has the pronunciation, *goold*, in some of the collateral branches of the Teutonic, as in the Danish, where it is spelt *guld*. But in the Saxon, it was written *gold*, and has been uniformly written so in English. Besides, we have good reason to believe that it was, in early times, pronounced *gold*, with the first sound of *o*, for the poets invariably make it rhime with *old*, *behold*, and other words of similar sound. Thus in Chaucer:

> "With nayles yelwe, and bright as any
> *gold*,
> He hadde a bere's skin, cole blake for old."

Knight's Tale, L. 2143.

IN Pope:

"Now Europe's laurels on their brows
behold,
But stain'd with blood, or ill exchang'd for
gold."

Essay on Man, Book 4.

The rhime is here a presumptive proof that the poets pronounced this word with the first sound of *o*, and it is a substantial reason why that pronunciation should be preferred. But analogy is a still stronger reason; for bold, told, fold, and I presume every similar word in the language, has the first sound of *o*. These are good reasons why *gold* should have that sound; reasons which are permanent, and superior to any private opinions.

Similar reasons, and equally forceable, are opposed to the modern pronunciation of *wound*. I say *modern*; for in America *woond* is a recent innovation. It was perhaps an ancient dialect; for the old Saxon and modern Danish orthography warrant this conjecture.

But in English the spelling has uniformly corresponded with *bound*, *sound*, and if we may judge from the rhimes of our poets, the pronunciation has also been analogous. Thus in Skelton's Elegy on Henry, Earl of Northumberland, 1489, we have the following lines:

"Most noble erle! O foul mysurd[61]
ground
Whereon he gat his finall deadly *wounde*."

Rel. An. Eng. Poet. vol. 1. page 113.

So in a song which seems to have been written in the

reign of Henry VIII.

"Where griping grefes the hart would
wounde
And doleful dumps the mynde oppresse,
There musicke with her silver sound,
With speed is wont to send redresse."

Ibm. page 165.

Similar rhimes occur in almost every page of modern poetry.

"Warriors she fires with animated sounds,
Pours balm into the bleeding lover's
wounds."

Pope.

The fashionable pronunciation of *wound* destroys the rhime and infringes the rule of analogy; two objections to it which can be removed only by universal practice. Does this practice exist? By no means. One good authority[62] at least, directs to the analogous pronunciation; and another compiler directs to both—the regular and the fashionable. But were *woond* the universal practice in Great Britain, this should not induce us to lay aside our own practice for a foreign one. There is but a small part, even of the well bred people in this country, who have yet adopted the English mode; and the great body of the people uniformly pursue analogy. The authority of practice therefore, is, in this country, opposed to the innovation. Shall we then relinquish what every man must acknowlege to be *right*, to embrace the corruptions of a foreign court and stage? Will not the Atlantic ocean, the total separation of America from Great Britain, the pride

of an independent nation, the rules of the language, the melody of English poetry, restrain our rage for imitating the errors of foreigners?

But it is said that *woond* is softer than *wound*, and therefore more agreeable. Suppose the assertion to be true, will it follow that the softest pronunciation should be preferred?

It is acknowleged on all hands, that a correspondence between sound and sense is a beauty in language, and there are many words in our language, the sounds of which were borrowed from the sensible objects, the ideas of which they are designed to express. Such are the *dashing* of waters, the *crackling* of burning faggots, the *hissing* of serpents, the *lisping* of infants, and the *stuttering* of a *stammerer*. These are considered as beauties in a language. But there are other words, the sounds of which are not adopted in imitating audible noises, which are either soft or harsh, and by the help of association are particularly calculated to express ideas, which are either agreeable or disagreeable to the mind. Of this kind are *soft* and *harsh*, *sweet* and *sour*, and a multitude of others. On the supposition therefore, that *woond* is the softer pronunciation, this is a good reason why it should *not* be adopted; for the idea it conveys is extremely disagreeable, and much better represented by a harsh word.[63]

Skeptic for *sceptic* is mere pedantry; a modern change that has no advantage for its object. The Greek derivation will be pleaded as an authority; but this will not warrant the innovation, without extending it to *scene*, *scepter*, and many others. Will the advocates write and pronounce the latter *skene*, *skepter*? If not, they should be satisfied with analogy and former practice. It is remarkable however, that

notwithstanding the authority of almost all the modern dictionaries is in favor of skeptic, no writer of reputation, whose works I have seen, has followed the spelling. The old orthography, *sceptic*, still maintains its ground.

Sauce with the fourth sound of *a* is accounted vulgar; yet this is the ancient, the correct, and the most general pronunciation. The *aw* of the North Britons is much affected of late; *sawce*, *hawnt*, *vawnt*; yet the true sound is that of *aunt*, *jaunt*, and a change can produce no possible advantage.

The words *advertisement* and *chastisement* are differently accented by the standard authors, and by people on both sides of the Atlantic. Let us find the analogy. The original words, *advertise* and *chastise*, are verbs, accented uniformly on the last syllable. Let us search thro the language for verbs of this description, and I presume we shall not find another instance, where, in nouns formed from such verbs, by the addition of *ment*, the seat of the accent is changed. We find amusement, refinement, refreshment, reconcilement, and many, perhaps all others, preserve the accent of their primitives; and in this analogy we find the reason why *chastisement* and *advertisement* should be accented on the last syllable but one. This analogy is a substantial and permanent rule, that will forever be superior to local customs. [64]

Similar remarks may be made respecting *acceptable*, *admirable*, *disputable*, *comparable*, which our polite speakers accent on the first syllable. The first is indeed accented on the second syllable, by most authors, except Sheridan, who still retains the accent on the first.

It was an old rule of grammarians, that the genius of

our language requires the accent to be carried as far as possible towards the beginning of the word. This is seldom or never true; on the contrary, the rule is directly opposed to the melody, both of poetry and prose. Under the influence, however, of this rule, a long catalogue of words lost their true pronunciation, and among the rest, a great number of adjectives derived from verbs by an addition of the termination *able*. Some of these are restored to their analogy; others retain the accent on the first syllable.

Notwithstanding the authority of Sheridan, I presume few people will contend for the privilege of accenting *acceptable* on the first syllable. How the organs of any man can be brought to articulate so many consonants in the weak syllables, or how the ear can relish such an unnatural pronunciation, is almost inconceiveable. In spite of the pedantry of scholars, the ease and melody of speaking, have almost wholly banished the absurd practice, by restoring the accent to the second syllable.

But with respect to *admirable*, *comparable* and *disputable*, the authors who are deemed authorities are divided; some are in favor of the accent on the first syllable, and others adhere to analogy.

Setting aside custom, every reason for accenting these words on the first syllable, will apply with equal force to *adviseable*, *inclineable*, *requireable*, and a hundred others. They are all formed from verbs accented on the last syllable, by annexing the *same* termination to the verb, and they are all of the *same* part of speech. Let us examin them by the rules for accentuation, laid down in the preceding dissertation.

The primitive verbs of this class of words are usually compounded of a particle and principal part of

speech; as *ad-mi-ro*, *com-paro*, *re-quæro*, &c. The last syllable, derived from a verb, is the most important, and in the primitives, is invariably accented. This is agreeable to the first rule. In nine tenths of the derivatives, the same syllable retains the accent; as, *perceiveable*, *available*, *deploreable*. In these therefore both rules are observed. The third rule, or that which arises from the terminating syllable, is also preserved in most of this class of words. It is therefore much to be regretted, that a false rule should have introduced an irregularity into the language, by excepting a few words from an analogy, which unites in itself every principle of propriety.

But the practice, with respect to the three words under consideration, is by no means general. I have taken particular notice of the pronunciation of people in every part of America, and can testify that, in point of numbers, the practice is in favor of analogy. The people at large say *admi'reable*, *dispu'teable*, *compa'reable*; and it would be difficult to lead them from this easy and natural pronunciation, to embrace that forced one of *ad'mirable*, &c. The people are right, and, in this particular, will ever have it to boast of, that among the unlearned is found the purity of English pronunciation.

Of this class of words, there are a few which seem to be corrupted in universal practice; as *reputable*. The reason why the accent in this word is more generally confirmed on the first syllable, may be this; there is but a single consonant between the first and second syllable, and another between the second and third; so that the pronunciation of the three weak syllables is by no means difficult. This word therefore, in which all authors, and as far as I know, all men, agree to lay the accent on the first syllable, and the

orthography of which renders the pronunciation easy, must perhaps be admitted as an exception to the general rule.[65]

Accessary or *accessory*, are differently accented by the best writers and speakers. But the ease of speaking requires that they should follow the rule of derivation, and retain the accent of the primitive, *access'ary*.

The fashionable pronunciation of such words as *immediate*, *ministerial*, *commodious*, is liable to particular exceptions. That *i* has a liquid sound, like *y*, in many words in our language, is not disputed; but the classes of words which will admit this sound, ought to be ascertained. It appears to me that common practice has determined this point. If we attend to the pronunciation of the body of people, who are led by their own ease rather than by a nice regard to fashion, we shall find that they make *i* liquid, or give it the sound of *y* consonant, after those consonants only, which admit that sound without any change of their own powers. These consonants are *l*, *n*, *v*, and the double consonant *x*; as *valiant*, *companion*, *behavior*, *flexion*. Here *y* might be substituted for *i*, without any change, or any tendency to a change, of the preceding consonant; except perhaps the change of *si* in *flexion* into *sh*, which is a general rule in the language, as it is to change *ti* and *ci* into the same sound.[66]

But when *i* is preceded by *d*, change it into *y*, and we cannot pronounce it with our usual rapidity, without blending the two letters into the sound of *j*, which is a compound of *dzh*; at least it cannot be effected without a violent exertion of the speaker. *Immedyate* is so difficult, that every person who attempts to pronounce it in that manner, will fall into *immejate*.

Thus *commodious*, *comedian*, *tragedian*, are very politely pronounced *commojus*, *comejan*, *trajejan*. Such a pronunciation, changing the true powers of the letters, and introducing a harsh union of consonants, *dxh*, in the place of the smooth sound of *dia*, must be considered as a palpable corruption.

With respect to the terminations *ial*, *ian*, &c. after *r*, I must believe it impossible to blend these letters in one syllable. In the word *ministerial*, for example, I cannot conceive how *ial* can be pronounced *yal*, without a pause after the syllables, *minister-*. Sheridan's manner of pronouncing the letters *ryan*, *ryal*, in a syllable, appears to be a gross absurdity: Even allowing *y* to have the sound of *e*, we must of necessity articulate two syllables.

But supposing the modern pronunciation of *immediate* to be liable to none of these exceptions, there is another objection to it, arising from the construction of our poetry. To the short syllables of such words as *every*, *glorious*, *different*, *bowery*, *commodious*, *harmonious*, *happier*, *ethereal*, *immediate*, *experience*, our poetry is in a great measure indebted for the *Dactyl*, the *Amphibrach*, and the *Anapæst*, feet which are necessary to give variety to versification, and the last of which is the most flowing, melodious and forceable foot in the language. By blending the two short syllables into one, we make the foot an Iambic; and as our poetry consists principally of iambics, we thus reduce our heroic verse to a dull uniformity. Take for example the following line of Pope.

"THAT sees immediate good by present
sense"—

If we pronounce it thus:

THAT sees | imme|jate good | by pres|ent
sense;

the line will be composed entirely of Iambics. But read it thus:

THAT sees | imme|di-ate good | by pres|
ent sense;

and the third foot, becoming an anapæst, gives variety to the verse.

In the following line:

"SOME happier island in the watery
waste:"

If we read *happier* and *watry*, as words of two syllables, the feet will all be Iambics, except the third, which is a *Pyrrhic*. But if we read *happier* and *watery*,[67] in three syllables, as we ought, we introduce two anapæsts, and give variety and flowing melody to the verse.

These remarks will be more fully confirmed by attending to the last verse of the following distich:

"In martial pomp he clothes the angelic
train,
While warring myr|iads shake | the ethe|
rial plain."

Philosophic Solitude.

On Sheridan's principles, and by an elision of *e* in *the*, the last line is composed of pure Iambics; whereas in fact, the three last feet are anapæsts; and to these the verse is, in some measure, indebted for its melody and the sublimity of the description.

These considerations are directly opposed to the fashionable pronunciation of *immediate*, and that whole analogy of words. In addition to this, I may remark, that it is not the practice of people in general. Whatever may be the character and rank of its advocates, in this country they compose but a small part, even of the literati.

Of MODERN CORRUPTIONS *in the* ENGLISH PRONUNCIATION.

I proceed now to examin a mode of pronouncing certain words, which prevails in England and some parts of America, and which, as it extends to a vast number of words, and creates a material difference between the orthography and pronunciation, is a matter of serious consequence.

To attack established customs is always hazardous; for mankind, even when they see and acknowlege their errors, are seldom obliged to the man who exposes them. The danger is encreased, when an opposition is made to the favorite opinions of the great; for men, whose rank and abilities entitle them to particular respect, will sooner dismiss their friends than their prejudices. Under this conviction, my present situation is delicate and embarrassing: But as some sacrifices must often be made to truth; and as I am conscious that a regard to truth only dictates what I write, I can sincerely declare, it is my wish to inform the understanding of every man, without wounding the feelings of an individual.

The practice to which I allude, is that of pronouncing *d*, *t*, and *s* preceding *u*; which letter, it is said, contains the sound of *e* or *y* and *oo*; and that of course *education* must be pronounced *edyucation*;

nature, *natyure*; and *superior*, *syuperior*: From the difficulty of pronouncing which, we naturally fall into the sound of *dzh*, *tsh*, and *sh*: Thus education becomes *edzhucation* or *ejucation*; nature becomes *natshure* or *nachure*; and superior becomes *shuperior*.

How long this practice has prevailed in London, I cannot ascertain. There are a few words, in which it seems to have been universal from time immemorial; as, *pleasure*, and the other words of that analogy. But I find no reason to suppose the practice of pronouncing *nature*, *duty*, *nachure*, *juty*, prevailed before the period of Garrick's reputation on the stage.

On the other hand, the writers on the language have been silent upon this point, till within a few years; and Kenrick speaks of it as a *Metropolitan pronunciation*, supported by *certain mighty fine speakers*,[68] which implies that the practice is modern, and proves it to be local, even in Great Britain. But the practice has prevailed at court and on the stage for several years, and the reputation of a Garrick, a Sheridan and a Siddons, has given it a very rapid and extensive diffusion in the polite world. As the innovation is great and extends to a multitude of words, it is necessary, before we embrace the practice in its utmost latitude, to examin into its propriety and consequences.

The only reasons offered in support of the practice, are, the English or Saxon sound of *u*, which is said to be *yu*; and *euphony*, or the agreeableness of the pronunciation.

But permit me to enquire, on what do the advocates of this practice ground their assertion, that *u* had in Saxon the sound of *eu* or *yu*? Are there any testimonies to support it, among old writers of

authority? In the course of my reading I have discovered none, nor have I ever seen one produced or referred to.

Will it be said, that *yu* is the name of the letter? But where did this name originate? Certainly not in the old Saxon practice, for the Saxons expressed this sound by *ew*, or *eo*: And I do not recollect a single word of Saxon origin, in which the warmest sticklers for the practice, give *u* this sound, even in the present age. Kenrick, who has investigated the powers of the English letters with much more accuracy than even Sheridan himself, observes, that we might with equal propriety, name the other vowels in the same manner, and say, *ya*, *ye*, *yi*, *yo*, as well as *yu*.[69]

U in *union*, *use*, &c. has the sound of *yu*; but these are all of *Latin* origin, and can be no proof that *u* had, in *Saxon*, the sound of *ew* or *yu*.

The whole argument is founded on a mistake. *U* in pure English has not the sound of *ew*, but a sound that approaches it; which is defined with great accuracy by the learned Wallis, who was one of the first correct writers upon English Grammar, and whose treatise is the foundation of Lowth's Introduction and all the best subsequent compilations.[70]

This writer defines the English letter *u* in these words, "Hunc sonum Extranei sere assequenter, si dipthongum *iu* conentur pronunciare; nempe *i* exile literæ *u*, vel *w* preponentes; (ut in Hispanorum ciudad, civitas.) *Non tamen idem est omnino sonus, quamvis, ad illum proxime, accedat*; est enim *iu* sonus compositus, at Anglorum et Gallorum *u* sonus simplex."[71]—— Gram. Ling. Angl. Sect. 2.

This is precisely the idea I have ever had of the English *u*; except that I cannot allow the sound to be perfectly simple. If we attend to the manner in which we begin the sound of *u* in *flute*, *abjure*, *truth*, we shall observe that the tongue is not pressed to the mouth so closely as in pronouncing *e*; the aperture of the organs is not so small; and I presume that good speakers, and am confident that most people, do not pronounce these words *fleute*, *abjeure*, *treuth*. Neither do they pronounce them *floote*, *abjoore*, *trooth*; but with a sound formed by an easy natural aperture of the mouth, between *iu* and *oo*; which is the true English sound. This sound, however obscured by affectation in the metropolis of Great Britain and the capital towns in America, is still preserved by the body of the people in both countries. There are a million descendants of the Saxons in this country who retain the sound of *u* in all cases, precisely according to Wallis's definition. Ask any plain countryman, whose pronunciation has not been exposed to corruption by mingling with foreigners, how he pronounces the letters, *t*, *r*, *u*, *th*, and he will not sound *u* like *eu*, nor *oo*, but will express the real primitive English *u*. Nay, if people wish to make an accurate trial, let them direct any child of seven years old, who has had no previous instruction respecting the matter, to pronounce the words *suit*, *tumult*, *due*, &c. and they will thus ascertain the true sound of the letter. Children pronounce *u* in the most natural manner; whereas the sound of *iu* requires a considerable effort, and that of *oo*, a forced position of the lips. Illiterate persons therefore pronounce the genuin English *u*, much better than those who have attempted to shape their pronunciation according to the polite modern practice. As singular as this assertion may appear, it is literally true. This

circumstance alone would be sufficient to prove that the Saxons never pronounced *u* like *yu*; for the body of a nation, removed from the reach of conquest and free from a mixture of foreigners, are the safest repositories of ancient customs and general practice in speaking.

But another strong argument against the modern practice is, that the pretended dipthong, *iu* or *yu*, is heard in scarcely a single word of Saxon origin. Almost all the words in which *d*, *t* and *s* are converted into other letters, as *education*, *due*, *virtue*, *rapture*, *superior*, *supreme*, &c. are derived from the Latin or French; so that the practice itself is a proof that the principles on which it is built, are false. It is pretended that the English or Saxon sound of *u* requires the pronunciation, *edzhucation*, *natshure*, and yet it is introduced almost solely into Latin and French words. Such an inconsistency refutes the reasoning and is a burlesque on its advocates.

This however is but a small part of the inconsistency. In two other particulars the absurdity is still more glaring.

1. The modern refiners of our language distinguish two sounds of *u* long; that of *yu* and *oo*; and use both without any regard to Latin or Saxon derivation. The distinction they make is founded on a certain principle; and yet I question whether one of a thousand of them ever attended to it. After most of the consonants, they give *u* the dipthongal sound of *eu*; as in *blue*, *cube*, *due*, *mute*; but after *r* they almost invariably pronounce it *oo*; as *rule*, *truth*, *rue*, *rude*, *fruit*. Why this distinction? If they contend for the Saxon sound of *u*, why do they not preserve that sound in *true*, *rue*, *truth*, which are of Saxon original; and uniformly give *u* its Roman sound, which is

acknowleged on all hands to have been *oo*, in all words of Latin original, as *rule*, *mute*, *cube*? The fact is, they mistake the principle on which the distinction is made; and which is merely accidental, or arises from the ease of speaking.

In order to frame many of the consonants, the organs are placed in such a position, that in passing from it to the aperture necessary to articulate the following vowel or dipthong, we insensibly fall into the sound of *ee*. This in particular is the case with those consonants which are formed near the seat of *e*; viz. *k* and *g*. The closing of the organs forms these mutes; and a very small opening forms the vowel *e*. In passing from that close compression occasioned by *k* and *g*, to the aperture necessary to form any vowel, the organs are necessarily placed in a situation to pronounce *ee*. From this single circumstance, have originated the most barbarous dialects or singularities in speaking English, which offend the ear, either in Great Britain or America.

This is the origin of the New England *keow*, *keoward*; and of the English *keube*, *ackeuse*, *keind* and *geuide*.

There is just the same propriety in one practice as the other, and both are equally harmonious.

For similar reasons, the labials, *m* and *p*, are followed by *e*: In New England, we hear it in *meow*, *peower*, and in Great Britain, in *meute*, *peure*. With this difference however, that in New England, this pronunciation is generally confined to the more illiterate part of the people, and in Great Britain it prevails among those of the first rank. But after *r* we never hear the sound of *e*: It has been before observed, that the most awkward countryman in New England pronounces *round*, *ground*, *brown*, as correctly as men of the first education; and our

fashionable speakers pronounce *u* after *r* like *oo*. The reason is the same in both cases: In pronouncing *r* the mouth is necessarily opened (or rather the glottis) to a position for articulating a broad full sound. So that the vulgar singularities in this respect, and the polite refinements of speaking, both proceed from the same cause; both proceed from an accidental or careless narrow way of articulating certain combinations of letters; both are corruptions of pure English; equally disagreeable and indefensible. Both may be easily corrected by taking more pains to open the teeth, and form full bold sounds.

2. But another inconsistency in the modern practice, is the introducing an *e*[72] before the second sound of *u* as in *tun*; or rather changing the preceding consonant; for in *nature*, *rapture*, and hundreds of other words, *t* is changed into *tsh*; and yet no person pretends that *u*, in these words, has a dipthongal sound. On the other hand, Sheridan and his copier, Scott, have in these and similar words marked *u* for its short sound, which is universally acknowleged to be simple. I believe no person ever pretended, that this sound of *u* contains the sound of *e* or *y*; why then should we be directed to pronounce *nature*, *natyur*? Or what is equally absurd, *natshur*? On what principle is the *t* changed into a compound consonant? If there is any thing in this sound of *u* to warrant this change, does it not extend to all words where this sound occurs? Why do not our standard writers direct us to say *tshun* for *tun*, and *tshumble* for *tumble*? I can conceive no reason which will warrant the pronunciation in one case, that will not apply with equal force in the other. And I challenge the advocates of the practice, to produce a reason for pronouncing *natshur*, *raptshur*, *captshur*, which will

not extend to authorize, not only *tshun*, *tshurn*, for *tun*, *turn*, but also *fatshal* for *fatal*, and *immortshal* for *immortal*.[73] Nay, the latter pronunciation is actually heard among some very respectable imitators of fashion; and is frequent among the illiterate, in those states where the *tshu's* are most fashionable. How can it be otherwise? People are led by imitation; and when those in high life embrace a singularity, the multitude, who are unacquainted with its principles or extent, will attempt to imitate the novelty, and probably carry it much farther than was ever intended.

When a man of little education hears a respectable gentleman change *t* into *tsh* in nature, he will naturally be led to change the same letter, not only in that word, but wherever it occurs. This is already done in a multitude of instances, and the practice if continued and extended, might eventually change *t*, in all cases, into *tsh*.

I am sensible that some writers of novels and plays have ridiculed the common pronunciation of *creatur* and *nutur*, by introducing these and similar words into low characters, spelling them *creater*, *nater*: And the supporters of the court pronunciation allege, that in the vulgar practice of speaking, the letter *e* is sounded and not *u*: So extremely ignorant are they of the nature of sounds and the true powers of the English letters. The fact is, we are so far from pronouncing e in the common pronunciation of *natur*, *creatur*, &c. that *e* is always sounded like short *u*, in the unaccented syllables of *over*, *sober*, *banter*, and other similar words. Nay, most of the vowels, in such syllables, sound like *i* or *u* short.[74] Liar, elder, factor, are pronounced *liur*, *eldur*, *factur*, and this is the true sound of *u* in *creatur*, *nature*, *rapture*,

legislature, &c.

I would just observe further, that this pretended dipthong *iu* was formerly expressed by *ew* and *eu*, or perhaps by *eo*, and was considered as different from the sound of *u*. In modern times, we have, in many words, blended the sound of *u* with that of *ew*, or rather use them promiscuously. It is indifferent, as to the pronunciation, whether we write *fuel* or *fewel*. And yet in this word, as also in *new*, *brew*, &c. we do not hear the sound of *e*, except among the Virginians, who affect to pronounce it distinctly, *ne-ew*, *ne-oo*, *fe-oo*. This affectation is not of modern date, for Wallis mentions it in his time and reprobates it. "Eu, ew, eau, sonanter per *e* clarum et *w*; ut in *neuter*, *few*, *beauty*. Quidem tamen accutius efferunt, acsi scriberentur *niew ter*, *fiew*, *bieuty*. At prior pronunciatio rectior est."——Gram. Ling. Ang.

Here this author allows these combinations to have the sound of *yu* or *iu*; but disapproves of that refinement which some affect, in giving the *e* or *i* short its distinct sound.

The true sound of the English *u*, is neither *ew*, with the distinct sounds of *e* and *oo*; nor is it *oo*; but it is that sound which every unlettered person utters in pronouncing *solitude*, *rude*, *threw*, and which cannot easily be mistaken. So difficult is it to avoid the true sound of *u*, that I have never found a man, even among the ardent admirers of the stage pronunciation, who does not retain the vulgar sound, in more than half the words of this class which he uses. There is such a propensity in men to be regular in the construction and use of language, that they are often obliged, by the customs of the age, to struggle against their inclination, in order to be wrong, and still find it impossible to be uniform in their errors.

The other reason given to vindicate the polite pronunciation, is *euphony*. But I must say with Kenrick,[75] I cannot discover the euphony; on the contrary, the pronunciation is to me both disagreeable and difficult. It is certainly more difficult to pronounce two consonants than one. *Ch*, or, which is the same thing, *tsh*, is a more difficult sound than *t*; and *dzh*, or *j*, more difficult than *d*. Any accurate ear may perceive the difference in a single word, as in *natur*, *nachur*. But when two or three words meet, in which we have either of these compound sounds, the difficulty becomes very obvious; as the *nachural feachurs of indivijuals*. The difficulty is increased, when two of these *churs* and *jurs* occur in the same word. Who can pronounce these words, "at this *junctshur* it was *conjectshured*"—or "the act passed in a *tshumultshuous legislatshur*," without a pause, or an extreme exertion of the lungs? If this is euphony to an English ear, I know not what sounds in language can be disagreeable. To me it is barbarously harsh and unharmonious.

But supposing the pronunciation to be relished by ears accustomed to it (for custom will familiarize any thing) will the pleasure which individuals experience, balance the ill effects of creating a multitude of irregularities? Is not the number of anomalies in our language already sufficient, without an arbitrary addition of many hundreds? Is not the difference between our written and spoken language already sufficiently wide, without changing the sounds of a number of consonants?

If we attend to the irregularities which have been long established in our language, we shall find most of them in the Saxon branch. The Roman tongue was almost perfectly regular, and perhaps its orthography

and pronunciation were perfectly correspondent. But it is the peculiar misfortune of the fashionable practice of pronouncing *d*, *t*, and *s*, before *u*, that it destroys the analogy and regularity of the *Roman* branch of our language; for those consonants are not changed in many words of Saxon original. Before this affectation prevailed, we could boast of a regular orthography in a large branch of our language; but now the only class of words, which had preserved a regular construction, are attacked, and the correspondence between the spelling and pronunciation, destroyed, by those who ought to have been the first to oppose the innovation.[76]

Should this practice be extended to all words, where *d*, *t* and *s* precede *u*, as it must before it can be consistent or defensible, it would introduce more anomalies into our tongue, than were before established, both in the orthography and construction. What a perverted taste, and what a singular ambition must those men possess, who, in the day light of civilization and science, and in the short period of an age, can go farther in demolishing the analogies of an elegant language, than their unlettered ancestors proceeded in centuries, amidst the accidents of a savage life, and the shocks of numerous invasions!

But it will be replied, *Custom is the legislator of language*, and custom authorizes the practice I am reprobating. A man can hardly offer a reason, drawn from the principles of analogy and harmony in a language, but he is instantly silenced with the decisive, *jus et norma loquendi*.[77]

What then is custom? Some writer has already answered this question; "Custom is the plague of wise men and the idol of fools." This was probably said of

those customs and fashions which are capricious and varying; for there are many customs, founded on propriety, which are permanent and constitute laws.

But what kind of custom did Horace design to lay down as the standard of speaking? Was it a local custom? Then the *keow* of New England; the *oncet* and *twicet* of Pennsylvania and Maryland; and the *keind* and *skey* of the London theaters, form rules of speaking. Is it the practice of a court, or a few eminent scholars and orators, that he designed to constitute a standard? But who shall determine what body of men forms this uncontrollable legislature? Or who shall reconcile the differences at court? For these eminent orators often disagree. There are numbers of words in which the most eminent men differ: Can all be right? Or what, in this case, is the *custom* which is to be our guide?

Besides these difficulties, what right have a few men, however elevated their station, to change a national practice? They may say, that they consult their own ears, and endeavor to please themselves. This is their only apology, unless they can prove that the changes they make are real improvements. But what improvement is there in changing the sounds of three or four letters into others, and thus multiplying anomalies, and encreasing the difficulty of learning a language? Will not the great body of the people claim the privilege of adhering to their ancient usages, and believing their practice to be the most correct? They most undoubtedly will.

If Horace's maxim is ever just, it is only when custom is national; when the practice of a nation is uniform or general. In this case it becomes the common law of the land, and no one will dispute its propriety. But has any man a right to deviate from this practice,

and attempt to establish a singular mode of his own? Have two or three eminent stage players authority to make changes at pleasure, and palm their novelties upon a nation under the idea of *custom*? The reader will pardon me for transcribing here the opinion of the celebrated Michaelis, one of the most learned philologers of the present century. "It is not," says he, "for a scholar to give laws nor proscribe established expressions: If he takes so much on himself he is ridiculed, and deservedly; it is no more than a just mortification to his ambition, and the penalty of his usurping on the rights of the people. Language is a democratical state, where all the learning in the world does not warrant a citizen to supersede a received custom, till he has convinced the whole nation that this custom is a mistake. Scholars are not so infallible that every thing is to be referred to them. Were they allowed a decisory power, the errors of language, I am sure, instead of diminishing, would be continually increasing. Learned heads teem with them no less than the vulgar; and the former are much more imperious, that we should be compelled to defer to their innovations and implicitly to receive every false opinion of theirs."[78]

Yet this right is often assumed by individuals, who dictate to a nation the rules of speaking, with the same imperiousness as a tyrant gives laws to his vassals: And, strange as it may appear, even well bred people and scholars, often surrender their right of private judgement to these literary governors. The *ipse dixit* of a Johnson, a Garrick, or a Sheridan, has the force of law; and to contradict it, is rebellion. Ask the most of our learned men, how they would pronounce a word or compose a sentence, and they will immediately appeal to some favorite author whose decision is final. Thus distinguished eminence

in a writer often becomes a passport for innumerable errors.

The whole evil originates in a fallacy. It is often supposed that certain great men are infallible, or that their practice constitutes custom and the rule of propriety. But on the contrary, any man, however learned, is liable to mistake; the most learned, as Michaelis observes, often teem with errors, and not unfrequently become attached to particular systems, and imperious in forcing them upon the world.[79] It is not the particular whim of such men, that constitutes *custom*; but the common practice of a nation, which is conformed to their *general* ideas of propriety. The pronunciation of *keow*, *keind*, *drap*, *juty*, *natshur*, &c. are neither right nor wrong, because they are approved or censured by particular men; nor because one is local in New England, another in the middle states, and the others are supported by the court and stage in London. They are wrong, because they are opposed to national practice; they are wrong, because they are arbitrary or careless changes of the true sounds of our letters; they are wrong, because they break in upon the regular construction of the language; they are wrong, because they render the pronunciation difficult both for natives and foreigners; they are wrong, because they make an invidious distinction between the polite and common pronunciation, or else oblige a *nation* to change their general customs, without presenting to their view one *national* advantage. These are important, they are permanent considerations; they are superior to the caprices of courts and theaters; they are reasons that are interwoven in the very structure of the language, or founded on the common law of the nation; and they are a living satire upon the licentiousness of modern

speakers, who dare to slight their authority.

But let us examin whether the practice I am censuring is general or not; for if not, it cannot come within Horace's rule. If we may believe well informed gentlemen, it is not general even in Great Britain. I have been personally informed, and by gentlemen of education and abilities, one of whom was particular in his observation, that it is not general, even among the most eminent literary characters in London. It is less frequent in the interior counties, where the inhabitants still speak as the common people do in this country. And Kenrick speaks of it as an affectation in the metropolis which ought to be discountenanced.

But whatever may be the practice in England or Ireland, there are few in America who have embraced it, as it is explained in Sheridan's Dictionary. In the middle and southern states, there are a few, and those well bred people, who have gone far in attempting to imitate the fashion of the day.[80] Yet the body of the people, even in these states, remain as unfashionable as ever; and the eastern states generally adhere to their ancient custom of speaking, however vulgar it may be thought by their neighbors.[81] Suppose custom therefore to be the *jus et norma*, the rule of correct speaking, and in this country, it is directly opposed to the plan now under consideration.

As a nation, we have a very great interest in opposing the introduction of any plan of uniformity with the British language, even were the plan proposed perfectly unexceptionable. This point will be afterwards discussed more particularly; but I would observe here, that the author who has the most admirers and imitators in this country, has been

censured in London, where his character is highly esteemed, and that too by men who are confessedly partial to his general plan. In the critical review of Sheridan's Dictionary, 1781, there are the following exceptions to his standard.

"Nevertheless our author must not be surprized if, in a matter, in its nature so delicate and difficult, as that concerning which he treats, a doubt should here and there arise, in the minds of the most candid critics, with regard to the propriety of his determinations. For instance, we would wish him to reconsider, whether, in the words which begin with *super*, such as *superstition*, *supersede*, he is right in directing them to be pronounced *shooper*. Whatever might be the case in Queen Anne's time, it doth not occur to us, that any one at present, above the lower ranks, speaks these words with the sound of *sh*; or that a good reason can be given, for their being thus sounded. Nay their being thus spoken is contrary to Mr. Sheridan's own rule; for he says that the letter *s* always preserves its own proper sound at the beginning of words."

Here we are informed by this gentleman's admirers, that, in some instances, he has imposed upon the world, as the standard of purity, a pronunciation which is not heard, except among the *lower ranks of people*, and directly opposed to his own rule. The reviewers might have extended their remarks to many other instances, in which he has deviated from general practice and from every rule of the language. Yet at the voice of this gentleman, many of the Americans are quitting their former practice, and running into errors with an eagerness bordering on infatuation.

Customs of the court and stage, it is confessed, rule

without resistance in monarchies. But what have we to do with the customs of a foreign nation? Detached as we are from all the world, is it not possible to circumscribe the power of *custom*, and lay it, in some degree, under the influence of propriety? We are sensible that in foreign courts, a man's reputation may depend on a genteel bow, and his fortune may be lost by wearing an unfashionable coat. But have we advanced to that stage of corruption, that our highest ambition is to be as particular in fashions as other nations? In matters merely indifferent, like modes of dress, some degree of conformity to local custom is necessary;[82] but when this conformity requires a sacrifice of any principle of propriety or moral rectitude, singularity becomes an honorable testimony of an independent mind. A man of a great soul would sooner imitate the virtues of a cottage, than the vices of a court; and would deem it more honorable to gain one useful idea from the humble laborer, than to copy the vicious pronunciation of a splendid court, or become an adept in the licentious principles of a Rochester and a Littleton.

It will not be disputed that Sheridan and Scott have very faithfully published the present pronunciation of the English court and theater. But if we may consult the rules of our language and consider them as of any authority; if we may rely on the opinions of Kenrick and the reviewers; if we may credit the best informed people who have travelled in Great Britain, this practice is modern and local, and considered, by the judicious and impartial, even of the English nation, as a gross corruption of the pure pronunciation.

Such errors and innovations should not be imitated, because they are found in authors of reputation. The

works of such authors should rather be considered as lights to prevent our falling upon the rocks of error. There is no more propriety in our imitating the practice of the English theater, because it is described by the celebrated Sheridan, than there is in introducing the manners of Rochester or the principles of Bolingbroke, because these were eminent characters; or than there is in copying the vices of a Shylock, a Lovelace, or a Richard III. because they are well described by the masterly pens of Shakespear and Richardson. So far as the correctness and propriety of speech are considered as important, it is of as much consequence to oppose the introduction of that practice in this country, as it is to resist the corruption of morals, which ever attends the wealthy and luxurious stage of national refinements.

Had Sheridan adhered to his own rules and to the principle of analogy; had he given the world a consistent scheme of pronunciation, which would not have had, for its unstable basis, the fickle practice of a changeable court, he would have done infinite service to the language: Men of science, who wish to preserve the regular construction of the language, would have rejoiced to find such a respectable authority on the side of propriety; and the illiterate copiers of fashion must have rejected faults in speaking, which they could not defend.[83]

The corruption however has taken such deep root in England, that there is little probability it will ever be eradicated. The practice must there prevail, and gradually change the whole structure of the Latin derivatives. Such is the force of custom, in a nation where all fashionable people are drawn to a point, that the current of opinion is irresistible; individuals

must fall into the stream and be borne away by its violence; except perhaps a few philosophers, whose fortitude may enable them to hold their station, and whose sense of propriety may remain, when their power of opposition has ceased.

But our detached situation, local and political, gives us the *power*, while pride, policy, and a regard for propriety and uniformity among ourselves, should inspire us with a *disposition*, to oppose innovations, which have not utility for their object.

We shall find it difficult to convince Englishmen that a corrupt taste prevails in the British nation. Foreigners view the Americans with a degree of contempt; they laugh at our manners, pity our ignorance, and as far as example and derision can go, obtrude upon us the customs of their native countries. But in borrowing from other nations, we should be exceedingly cautious to separate their virtues from their vices; their useful improvements from their false refinements. Stile and taste, in all nations, undergo the same revolutions, the same progress from purity to corruption, as manners and government; and in England the pronunciation of the language has shared the same fate. The Augustan era is past, and whether the nation perceive and acknowlege the truth or not, the world, as impartial spectators, observe and lament the declension of taste and science.

The nation can do little more than read the works and admire the beauties of the original authors, who have adorned the preceding ages. A few, ambitious of fame, or driven by necessity, croud their names into the catalogue of writers, by imitating some celebrated model, or by compiling from the

productions of genius. Nothing marks more strongly the declension of genius in England, than the multitude of plays, farces, novels and other catchpenny pieces, which swell the list of modern publications; and that host of compilers, who, in the rage for selecting beauties and abridging the labor of reading, disfigure the works of the purest writers in the nation. Cicero did not waste his talents in barely reading and selecting the beauties of Demosthenes; and in the days of Addison, the beauties of Milton, Locke and Shakespear were to be found only in *their works*. But taste is corrupted by luxury; utility is forgotten in pleasure; genius is buried in dissipation, or prostituted to exalt and to damn contending factions, and to amuse the idle debauchees that surround a licentious stage.[84]

These are the reasons why we should not adopt promiscuously their taste, their opinions, their manners. Customs, habits, and *language*, as well as government should be national. America should have her *own* distinct from all the world. Such is the policy of other nations, and such must be *our* policy, before the states can be either independent or respectable. To copy foreign manners implicitly, is to reverse the order of things, and begin our political existence with the corruptions and vices which have marked the declining glories of other republics.

FOOTNOTES:

[61] Misused.

[62] Kenrick, who was not guided solely by the fashion of the day, but paid some regard to the regular construction of the language.

[63] Sheridan has repeated with approbation,

a celebrated saying of Dean Swift, who was a stickler for analogy, in pronouncing *wind* like *mind*, *bind*, with the first sound of *i*. The Dean's argument was, "I have a great mi^{2}nd to fi^{2}nd why you pronounce that word *wi^{2}nd*." I would beg leave to ask this gentleman, who directs us to say *woond*, if any good reason can be *foond* why he *soonds* that word *woond*; and whether he expects a rational people, will be *boond* to follow the *roond* of court improprieties? We acknowlege that *wi^{2}nd* is a deviation from analogy and a corruption; but who pronounces it otherwise? Practice was almost wholly against Swift, and in America at least, it is as generally in favor of the analogy of *wound*. A partial or local practice, may be brought to support analogy, but should be no authority in destroying it.

[64] *Government*, *management*, retain also the accent of their primitives; and the nouns *testament*, *compliment*, &c. form another analogy.

[65] It is regretted that the adjectives, *indissoluble*, *irreparable* were derived immediately from the Latin, *indissolubilis*, *irreparabilis*, and not from the English verbs, *dissolve*, *repair*. Yet *dissolvable*, *indissolvable*, *repairable* and *irrepairable*, are better words than *indissoluble*, *reparable*, *irreparable*. They not only preserve the analogy, but they are more purely English words; and I have been witness to a circumstance which alone ought to determine their excellence and give them currency: People of ordinary education have found difficulty in understanding such derivatives as *irreparable*, *indissoluble*; but the moment the words *irrepairable*, *indissolveable* are pronounced, they are led to the meaning by a previous acquaintance with the words

repair and *dissolve*. Numberless examples of this will occur to a person of observation, sufficient to make him abhor and reject the pedantry of authors, who have labored to strip their native tongue of its primitive English dress, and load it with fantastic ornaments.

[66] *Flexion* resolved into its proper letters would be *fleksion*, that is *flekshun*; and *fleks-yun* would give the same sound.

[67] To an ignorance of the laws of versification, we must ascribe the unwarrantable contraction of *watery*, *wonderous*, &c. into *watry*, *wondrous*.

[68] Rhetorical Grammar, prefixed to his Dictionary, page 32. London, 1773.

[69] Rhet. Gram. 33.

[70] His grammar was written in Latin, in the reign of Charles IId. The work is so scarce, that I have never been able to find but a single copy. The author was one of the founders of the Royal Society.

[71] This sound of *u*, foreigners will nearly obtain, by attempting to pronounce the dipthong *iu*; that is, the narrow *i* before *u* or *w*; (as in the Spanish word *ciudad*, a city.) Yet the sound (of *u*) is not exactly the same, altho it approaches very near to it; for the sound of *iu* is compound; whereas the *u* of the English and French is a simple sound.

[72] Lowth condemns such a phrase as, "the introducing an *e*" and says it should be, "the introducing *of* an *e*." This is but one instance of a great number, in which he has rejected *good* English. In this situation, *introducing* is a participial noun; it may take an article before it, like any other noun, and yet govern an objective, like any transitive verb. This is the

idiom of the language: but in most cases, the writer may use or omit *of*, at pleasure.

[73] I must except that reason, which is always an invincible argument with weak people, viz. "It is the practice of some great men." This common argument, which is unanswerable, will also prove the propriety of imitating all the polite and detestable vices of the great, which are now unknown to the *little vulgar* of this country.

[74] Ash observes, that "in unaccented, short and insignificant syllables, the sounds of the five vowels are nearly coincident. It must be a nice ear that can distinguish the difference of sound in the concluding syllable of the following words, altar, alter, manor, murmur, satyr."——Gram. Diff. pref. to Dic. p. 1.

[75] For my part I cannot discover the euphony; and tho the contrary mode be reprobated, as vulgar, by certain mighty fine speakers, I think it more conformable to the general scheme of English pronunciation; for tho in order to make the word but two syllables, *ti* and *te* may be required to be converted into *ch*, or the *i* and *e* into *y*, when the preceding syllable is marked with the accute accent as in *question*, *minion*, *courteous*, and the like; there seems to be little reason, when the grave accent precedes the *t*, as in *nature*, *creature*, for converting the *t* into *ch*; and not much more for joining the *t* to the first syllable and introducing the *y* before the second, as *nat-yure*. Why the *t* when followed by neither *i* nor *e*, is to take the form of *ch*, I cannot conceive: It is, in my opinion, a species of affectation that should be discountenanced. —— Kenrick Rhet. Gram. page 32. Dic.

[76] Well might Mr. Sheridan assert, that "Such indeed is the state of our written

language, that the darkest hieroglyphics, or most difficult cyphers which the art of man has hitherto invented, were not better calculated to conceal the sentiments of those who used them, from all who had not the key, than the state of our spelling is to conceal the true pronunciation of our words, from all, except a few well educated natives." Rhet. Gram. p. 22. Dic. But if these well educated natives would pronounce words as they ought, one half the language at least would be regular. The Latin derivatives are mostly regular to the educated and uneducated of America; and it is to be hoped that the modern hieroglyphical obscurity will forever be confined to *a few well educated natives* in Great Britain.

[77] "Quem penes arbitrium est, et jus et norma loquendi." Horace.——"Nothing," says Kenrick, "has contributed more to the adulteration of living languages, than the too extensive acceptation of Horace's rule in favor of custom. Custom is undoubtedly the rule of present practice; but there would be no end in following the variations daily introduced by caprice. Alterations may sometimes be useful —may be necessary; but they should be made in a manner conformable to the genius and construction of the language. Modus est in rebus. Extremes in this, as in all other cases, are hurtful. We ought by no means to shut the door against the improvements of our language; but it were well that some criterion were established to distinguish between improvement and innovation."——Rhet. Gram. page 6, Dict.

[78] See a learned "Dissertation on the influence of opinions on language and of language on opinions, which gained the prize

of the Prussian Royal Academy in 1759. By Mr. Michaelis, court councellor to his Britannic Majesty, and director of the Royal Society of Gottingen."

[79]

> The vulgar thus by imitation err,
> As oft the learn'd by being singular.
> So much they scorn the croud, that if
> the throng,
> By chance go right, they purposely
> go wrong.
>
> POPE.

[80] There are many people, and perhaps the most of them in the capital towns, that have learnt a few common place words, such as *forchin*, *nachur*, *virchue* and half a dozen others, which they repeat on all occasions; but being ignorant of the extent of the practice, they are, in pronouncing most words, as vulgar as ever.

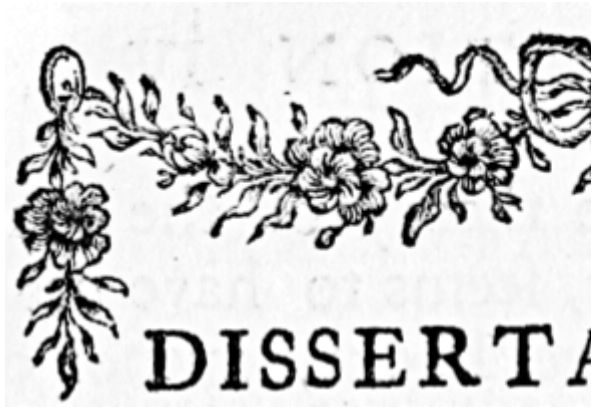
[81] It should be remarked that the late President of Pennsylvania, the Governor of New Jersey, and the President of New York college, who are distinguished for erudition and accuracy, have not adopted the English pronunciation.

[82] Not between different nations, but in the same nation. The manners and fashions of each nation should arise out of their circumstances, their age, their improvements in commerce and agriculture.

[83] Sheridan, as an improver of the language, stands among the first writers of the British nation, and deservedly. His Lectures on Elocution and on Reading, his Treatises on Education, and for the most part his Rhetorical

Grammar, are excellent and almost unexceptionable performances. In these, he encountered practice and prejudices, when they were found repugnant to obvious rules of propriety. But in his Dictionary he seems to have left his only defensible ground, *propriety*, in pursuit of that phantom, *fashion*. He deserted his own principles, as the Reviewers observe: and where he has done this, every rational man should desert his *standard*.

[84] From this description must be excepted some arts which have for their object, the pleasures of sense and imagination; as music and painting; and sciences which depend on fixed principles, and not on opinion, as mathematics and philosophy. The former flourish in the last stages of national refinement, and the latter are always proceeding towards perfection, by discoveries and experiment. Criticism also flourishes in Great Britain: Men read and judge accurately, when original writers cease to adorn the sciences. Correct writers precede just criticism.



DISSERTATION IV.

Of the Formation of Language.—Horne Tooke's theory of the Particles.—Examination of particular Phrases.

FORMATION *of* LANGUAGE.



HAVING discussed the subject of pronunciation very largely in the two preceding Dissertations, I shall now examin the *use of words in the construction of sentences*.

Several writers of eminence have attempted to explain the origin, progress and structure of languages, and have handled the subject with great ingenuity and profound learning; as Harris, Smith, Beatie, Blair, Condillac, and others. But the discovery of the true theory of the construction of language, seems to have been reserved for Mr. Horne Tooke, author of the "Diversions of Purley." In this treatise, however exceptionable may be particular instances of the writer's spirit and manner, the principles on which the formation of languages depends, are unfolded and demonstrated by an etymological analysis of the Saxon or Gothic origin of the English particles. From the proofs which this writer

produces, and from various other circumstances, it appears probable, that the *noun* or substantive is the principal part of speech, and from which most words are originally derived.

The invention and progress of articulate sounds must have been extremely slow. Rude savages have originally no method of conveying ideas, but by looks, signs, and those inarticulate sounds, called by grammarians, *Interjections*. These are probably the first beginnings of language. They are produced by the passions, and are perhaps very little superior, in point of articulation or significancy, to the sounds which express the wants of the brutes.[85]

But the first sounds, which, by being often repeated, would become articulate, would be those which savages use to convey their ideas of certain visible objects, which first employ their attention. These sounds, by constant application to the same things, would gradually become the *names* of those objects, and thus acquire a permanent signification. In this manner, rivers, mountains, trees, and such animals as afford food for savages, would first acquire names; and next to them, such other objects as can be noticed or perceived by the senses. Those names which are given to ideas called *abstract* and *complex*, or, to speak more correctly, those names which express a combination of ideas, are invented much later in the progress of language. Such are the words, faith, hope, virtue, genius, &c.

It is unnecessary, and perhaps impossible, to describe the whole process of the formation of languages; but we may reason from the nature of things that the *necessary* parts of speech would be the first formed; and it is very evident from etymology that all the

others are derived from these, either by abbreviation or combination. The necessary parts of speech are the *noun* and *verb*; and perhaps we may add the *article*. Pronouns are not necessary, but from their utility, must be a very early invention.

That the noun and verb are the only parts of speech, absolutely necessary for a communication of ideas among rude nations, will be obvious to any person who considers their manner of life, and the small number of their necessary ideas. Their employments are war and hunting; and indeed some tribes are so situated as to have no occupation but that of procuring subsistence. How few must be the ideas of a people, whose sole employment is to catch fish, and take wild beasts for food! Such nations, and even some much farther advanced towards civilization, use few or no prepositions, adverbs and conjunctions, in their intercourse with each other, and very few adjectives. Some tribes of savages in America use no adjectives at all; but express qualities by a particular form of the verb; or rather blend the affirmation and quality into one word.[86] They have, it is said, some connecting words in their own languages, some of which have advanced towards copiousness and variety. But when they attempt to speak English, they use nouns and verbs long before they obtain any knowlege of the particles. They speak in this manner, go, way—— sun, shine—— tree, fall—— give, Uncas, rum; with great deliberation and a short pause between the words. They omit the connectives and the abbreviations, which may be called the "wings of Mercury." Thus it is evident, that, among such nations, a few nouns and verbs will answer the purposes of language.

Many of this kind of expressions remain in the

English language to this day. *Go away* is the savage phrase with the article *a*, derived perhaps from *one*, or what is more probable, added merely to express the sound, made in the transition from one word to the other, for if we attend to the manner in which we pronounce these or two similar words, we shall observe that we involuntarily form the sound expressed by *a* or *aw*. In some such manner are formed *astray*, *awhile*, *adown*, *aground*, *ashore*, *above*, *abaft*, *among*, and many others. They are usually called adverbs and prepositions; but they are neither more nor less than nouns or verbs, with the prefix *a*. [87] That all the words called adverbs and prepositions, are derived in like manner, from the principal parts of language, the noun and verb, is not demonstrable; but that *most* of them are so derived, etymology clearly proves.

HORNE TOOKE's THEORY *of the* PARTICLES.

This theory derives great strength from analizing the words called *conjunctions*. It will perhaps surprize those who have not attended to this subject, to hear it asserted, that the little conjunction *if*, is a *verb* in the Imperative Mode. That this is the fact can no more be controverted than any point of history, or any truth that our senses present to the mind. *If* is radically the same word as *give*; it was in the Saxon Infinitive, *gifan*, and in the Imperative, like other Saxon verbs, lost the *an*; being written *gif*. This is the word in its purity; but in different dialects of the same radical tongue, we find it written *gife*, *giff*, *gi*, *yf*, *yef*, and *yeve*. Chaucer used *y* instead of *g*.[88]

"Unto the devil rough and blake of hewe

Yeve I thy body and my panne also."

Freres Tale, 7204.

But the true Imperative is *gif*, as in the Sad Shepherd. Act 2. Sc. 2.

——"My largesse
Hath lotted her to be your brother's
mistress
Gif she can be reclaimed; *gif* not, his prey."

This is the origin of the conjunction *if*; and it answers, in sense and derivation to the Latin *si*, which is but a contraction of *sit*. Thus what we denominate the Subjunctive mode is resolvable into the Indicative. "*If* ye love me, ye will keep my commandments," is resolvable in this manner; "Give, (give the following fact, or suppose it) ye love me, ye will keep my commandments." Or thus, "Ye love me, give that, ye will keep my commandments." But on this I shall be more particular when I come to speak of errors in the use of verbs.

An is still vulgarly used in the sense of *if*. "*An* please your honor," is the usual address of servants to their masters in England; tho it is lost in New England. But a word derived from the same root, is still retained; viz. the Saxon *anan*, to give; which is sometimes pronounced *nan*, and sometimes *anan*. It is used for *what*, or *what do you say*; as when a person speaks to another, the second person not hearing distinctly, replies, *nan*, or *anan*; that is, *give* or *repeat* what you said. This is ridiculed as a gross vulgarism; and it is indeed obsolete except among common people; but is strictly correct, and if persons deride the use of the word, it proves at least that they do not understand its meaning.

Unless, *lest* and *else*, are all derivatives of the old Saxon verb *lesan*, *to dismiss*, which we preserve in the word *lease*, and its compounds. So far are these words from being conjunctions, that they are, in fact, verbs in the Imperative mode; and this explanation serves further to lay open the curious structure of our language. For example:

"Unless ye believe ye shall not understand," may be thus resolved; "Ye believe; *dismiss* (that fact) ye shall not understand." Or thus, "*Dismiss* ye believe, (that circumstance being away) ye shall not understand." Thus by analizing the sentence we find no Subjunctive mode; but merely the Indicative and Imperative.

"Kiss the Son, lest he be angry," is resolvable in the same manner: "Kiss the Son, *dismiss* (that) he will be angry." *Else* is used nearly in the same sense, as in Chaucer, Freres Tale, 7240:

> "Axe him thyself, if thou not trowest me,
> Or *elles* stint a while and thou shalt see."

That is, "If thou dost not believe me, ask him thyself, or *dismissing* (omitting that) wait and thou shalt be convinced."

Though, or *tho*, commonly called a conjunction, is also a verb in the Imperative Mode. It is from the verb *thafian* or *thafigan*, which, in the Saxon, signified to *grant* or *allow*. The word in its purity is *thaf* or *thof*; and so it is pronounced by many of the common people in England, and by some in America.

"*Tho* he slay me, yet will I trust in him," may be thus explained; "*Allow* (suppose) he should slay me, yet will I trust in him." That this is the true sense of *tho*,

is evident from another fact. The old writers used *algife* for *although*; and its meaning must be nearly the same.

"——Whose pere is hard to find,
Algife England and France were thorow saught."

Rel. An. Poet. 115.

Since is merely a participle of the old verb *seon*, to see. In ancient authors we find it variously written; as *sith*, *sithence*, *sin*, *sithen*, &c. and the common people in New England still pronounce it *sin*, *sen* or *sence*. Of all these, *sin* or *sen*, which is so much ridiculed as vulgar, comes nearest to the original *seen*.[89] This explanation of *since* unfolds the true theory of languages, and proves that all words are originally derived from those which are first used to express ideas of sensible objects. Mankind, instead of that abstract sense which we annex to *since*, if we have any idea at all when we use it, originally said, *seen the sun rose, it has become warm*; that is, after the sun rose, or that circumstance being *seen* or *past*. We use the same word now, with a little variation; but the etymology is lost to most people, who still employ the word for a precise purpose, intelligible to their hearers.

But has two distinct meanings, and two different roots. This is evident to any person who attends to the manner of using the word. We say, "*But to proceed*;" that is, *more* or *further*. We say also, "All left the room, *but* one;" that is, except one. These two significations, which are constantly and insensibly annexed to the word, will perhaps explain all its uses; but cannot be well accounted for, without supposing it to have two etymologies. Happily the

early writers furnish us with the means of solving the difficulty. Gawen Douglass the poet, was cotemporary with Chaucer, or lived near his time, was Bishop of Dunkeld in Scotland, and probably wrote the language in the purity of his age and country. As the Scots in the Low Lands, are descendants of the Saxons, in common with the English, and from their local situation, have been less exposed to revolutions, they have preserved more of the Saxon idiom and orthography than their southern brethren. In Douglass we find two different words to express the two different meanings, which we now annex to one; viz. *bot* and *but*. The first is used in the sense of *more, further* or *addition*; and the last in the sense of *except* or *take away*.

"*Bot* thy work shall endure in laude and
glorie,
But spot or falt condigne eterne memorie."

The first Mr. Horne derives from *botan, to boot, to give more*; from which our English word *boot*, which is now for the most part confined to jockeys, is also derived; and the other from *be utan,*[90] *to be out or away*. That these etymologies are just is probable, both from old writings and from the present distinct uses of the word *but*. This word therefore is the blending or corruption of *bot* and *beut*, the Imperatives of two Saxon verbs, *botan* and *beutan*.[91]

And is probably a contraction of *anan*, to give, the verb before mentioned; and *ad*, the root of the verb *add*, and signifying *series* or *remainder*. *An ad, give the remainder.*

The word *with*, commonly called a preposition, is likewise a verb. It is from the Saxon *withan*, to join;

or more probably from *wyrth*, to be, or the German *werden*, devenir, to be. The reason for this latter conjecture, is that we have preserved the Imperative of *wyrth* or *werden*, in this ancient phrase, "woe *worth* the day;" that is, woe be to the day. The German verb, in its inflections, makes *wirst* and *wurde*; and is undoubtedly from the same root as the Danish *værer*, to be. But whether *with* has its origin in *withan*, to join, or in *werden*, to be, its sense will be nearly the same; it will still convey the idea of connection. This will plainly appear to any person who considers, that *by* is merely a corruption of *be*, from the old verb *beon*; and that this word is still used to express connection or nearness; "He lives *by* me;" "He went *by* me;" that is, he lives *be* me.

This verb *be* was formerly used in this phrase; *be my faith, be my troth*; that is, *by my faith*, as in Chevy Chace.[92] We still find the same verb in a multitude of compounds, *be-come*, *be-yond*, *be-tween*, *be-side*, *be-fore*. Thus we see what are called *prepositions*, are mere combinations or corruptions of verbs; they are not a primitive part of language, and if we resolve this phrase, *he went beyond me*, we shall find it composed of these words, *he went*, *be*, *gone*, *me*; *yond* being nothing but the participle of *go*.

Will my grammatical readers believe me, when I assert that the affirmation *yea*, or *yes*, is a verb? That it is so, is undeniable. The English *yea*, *yes*, and the German *ja*, pronounced *yaw*, are derived from a verb in the Imperative Mode; or rather, they are but corruptions of *aye*, the Imperative of the French *avoir*, to have. The pure word *aye*, is still used in English. The affirmation *yea* or *yes*, is *have*, an expression of assent, *have what you say*.[93]

That all the words, called *adverbs*, are abbreviations

or combinations of nouns, verbs and adjectives, cannot perhaps be proved; for it is extremely difficult to trace the little words, *when*, *then*, *there*, *here*, &c. to their true origin.[94] But excepting a few, the whole class of words, denominated *adverbs*, can be resolved into other parts of speech. The termination *ly*, which forms a large proportion of these words, is derived from the Saxon *liche*, *like*.

"And as an angel heaven*lich* she sung."

Chaucer, Cant. Tales, 1057.

We have in a few words retained the original pronunciation, as *Godlike*; but in strictness of speech, there is no difference between *Godlike* and *Godly*.[95]

Notwithstanding it is evident that conjunctions, prepositions, and adverbs are not original and necessary parts of speech, yet as species of abbreviations, or compound terms to express assemblages of ideas, they may be considered as very useful, and as great improvements in language. Every person, even without the least knowlege of etymology, acquires a habit of annexing a certain idea, or certain number of ideas to *unless*, *lest*, *yes*, *between*, and the other particles; he uses them with precision, and makes himself understood by his hearers or readers. These words enable him to communicate his ideas with greater facility and expedition, than he could by mere names and affirmations. They have lost the distinguishing characteristics of verbs, person, time, and inflection. It is therefore convenient for grammatical purposes, to assign them distinct places and give them names, according to their particular uses. Such of these old verbs as exhibit some connection between the

members of a discourse, may be properly denominated *conjunctions*. Others, that are used to show certain relations between words and are generally prefixed to them, may be well called *prepositions*. A third species, which are employed to qualify the sense of other words, may, from their position and uses in a discourse, be denominated *adverbs*. But the foregoing investigation is necessary to unfold the true principles on which language is constructed, and the philosophical enquirer is referred for a more general view of the subject, to Mr. Horne Tooke's *Diversions of Purley*.

The *verb* or *word* is so called by way of eminence; the ancient grammarians having considered it as the principal part of speech. The *noun* is however entitled to the precedence; it is of equal importance in language, and undoubtedly claims priority of origin. Philosophy might teach us that the *names* of a few visible objects would be first formed by barbarous men, and afterwards the words which express the most common actions. But with respect to names of abstract ideas, as they are usually called, they not only precede the formation of the verbs which represent the action, but it often happens that the same word is used, with a prefix to denote the action of the object to which the name is given. For example, *love* and *fear* are the names of certain passions or affections of the mind. To express the action or exertion of these affections, we have not invented distinct terms; but custom has for this purpose prefixed the word *do* or *to*, which, in its primitive sense, is *to act*, *move*, or *make*.[96] Thus I *do love*, or *do fear*, are merely, I *act, love*, or *act, fear*; and *to love* and *to fear* in the Infinitive, are *act, love*, and *act, fear*.

To confirm these remarks, let it be considered that formerly *do* and *did* were almost invariably used with the verb; as *I do fear*, *he did love*; and the omission of these words in affirmative declarations is of a modern date. They are still preserved in particular modes of expression; as in the negative and interrogative forms, and in emphatical assertions.

The present hypothesis will derive additional strength from another circumstance. Grammarians allege that the termination of the regular preterit tense, *ed*, is a corruption of *did*. If so, it seems to have been originally optional, either to place the word *did*, which expressed the *action* of the object, before or after the *name*. Thus, *he feared*, is resolvable into *he fear did*, and must be a blending of the words in a hasty pronunciation. But it was also a practice to say *he did fear*, which arrangement is not yet lost nor obscured; but in no case are both these forms used, *he did feared*; a presumptive evidence of the truth of the opinion, that *ed* is a contraction of *did*. Indeed I see no objection to the opinion but this, that it is not easy on this supposition, to account for the formation of *did* from *do*. If *did* is itself a contraction of *doed*, the regular preterit, which is probable, whence comes *ed* in this word? To derive *ed* in other words from *did* is easy and natural; but this leaves us short of the primary cause or principle, and consequently in suspense, as to the truth of the opinion. Yet whatever may be the true derivation of the regular ending of the past time and perfect participle of English verbs, the use of *do*, *did* and *to* before the verb, is a strong evidence, that at least one class of affirmations are formed by the help of *names*, with a prefix to denote the action of the objects expressed by the names. *I fear*, therefore, is a phrase, composed of the pronoun *I*, and the noun *fear*; and

the affirmation, contained in the phrase, is derived from the single circumstance of the position of the name after *I*. *I fear* is a modern substitute for *I do fear*; that is, *I act, fear*; all originally and strictly *nouns*. But by a habit of uniting the personal name *I* with the name of the passion *fear*, we instantly recognize an affirmation that the passion is exerted; and *do*, the primitive name of *act*, has become superfluous.

EXAMINATION *of* PARTICULAR PHRASES.

Having made these few remarks on the formation of our language, I shall proceed to examin the criticisms of grammarians on certain phrases, and endeavor to settle some points of controversy with respect to the use of words; and also to detect some inaccuracies which prevail in practice.

NOUNS.

Writers upon the subject of propriety in our language, have objected to the use of *means*, with the article *a* and the definitive pronouns singular, *this* and *that*. The objection made is, that as this word ends in *s*, it must be plural, and cannot be joined in construction with words in the singular. This objection supposes that all nouns ending with *s* are plural; but this would perhaps prove too much, and make it necessary to consider all nouns, *not* ending in *s*, as singular, which cannot be true, even on the principles of those who bring the objection. The supposition in both cases would be equally well founded.

It appears to me however, that the sense of the word, and particularly the universal practice of the English

nation, ought to have induced the critical grammarian, who wished to reduce the language to some certainty, to suppress the objection. The word *means*, applied to a single instrument of action, or cause, conveys a *single* idea; and I presume, was generally used for this purpose, till Bishop Lowth questioned the propriety of the practice; at least *mean* is scarcely used as a noun, in any author from Chaucer to Lowth. On the contrary, the best writers have used *means* either in the singular or plural number, according as they had occasion to express by it an idea of one cause or more.

"By *this means*, it became every man's interest, as well as his duty to prevent all crimes."——Temple, Works, vol. 3. p. 133.

"And by *this means* I should not doubt," &c.——Wilkins Real Character, book 1.

"And finding themselves by *this means* to be safe."——Sidney on Gov. chap. 3. sect. 36.

"For he hopeth by *this means* to acquit himself."——Rawley's Sylva Sylvarum.

"And by *that means* they lost their barrier."——Moyle on the Lacedem. Gov.

"Clodius was now quæstor and by *that means* a senator."——Middleton L. of Cic. vol. 1. p. 261.

"By *this means* however, there was nothing left to the Parliament of Ireland."——Blackstone's Com. vol. 1. p. 102.

In this manner was the word used by the elegant writers in Queen Anne's reign.

But we have not only the authority of almost every good writer in the language, for this use of *means* in

the singular as well as plural number, but we have the authority of almost unanimous national practice in speaking. It is rare to hear *mean* used as a noun, and by those only who are fettered by the arbitrary rules of grammarians. I question whether the word, in the singular form, has obtained such an establishment, as to be entitled to a place among the English nouns. The use of it appears like pedantry. No man, whatever may be his rank and abilities, has a right to reject a mode of speech, established by immemorial usage and universal consent. Grammars should be formed on *practice*; for practice determines what a language is. I do not mean a *local* practice, for this would subject us to perpetual variety and instability; but *national* or *general* practice. The latter, it has been remarked, is the standard of propriety, to which all local idioms and private opinions should be sacrificed. The business of a grammarian is not to examin whether or not national practice is founded on philosophical principles; but to *ascertain* the national practice, that the learner may be able to weed from his own any local peculiarities or false idioms.

If *this means* and *a means* are now, and have immemorially been, used by good authors and the nation in general, neither Johnson, Lowth, nor any other person, however learned, has a right to say that the phrases are not *good English*. That this is the fact, every person may satisfy himself, by consulting the good authors and observing the universal practice in discourse.

Besides, the general practice of a nation is not easily changed, and the only effect that an attempt to reform it can produce, is, to make *many* people doubtful, cautious, and consequently uneasy; to

render a *few* ridiculous and pedantic by following nice criticisms in the face of customary propriety; and to introduce a distinction between the learned and unlearned, which serves only to create difficulties for both.

Dr. Priestley is the only writer upon this subject who seems to have been guided by just principles. He observes, with great propriety, that "Grammarians have leaned too much to the analogies of the Latin language, contrary to our mode of speaking and to the analogies of other languages, more like our own. It must be allowed, that the custom of speaking, is the original and only just standard of any language." Pref. to Gram. page 9. His criticisms are exceedingly judicious, and are entitled to the consideration of the student, in preference to those of Lowth, or any other English author. He considers *means* as belonging "to that class of words which do not change their termination on account of number." It is used in both numbers, *a means*, or *these means*, with equal propriety.

To the same class of words belong *pains*, *news*, and perhaps some others. Every person who has read good English authors, or lived where the language is spoken in purity, must have observed that the word *pains* is usually preceded by *much*, and followed by a verb in the singular number; *much pains was taken*. If the word is a plural noun, it should neither be followed by a singular verb, nor preceded by *much*; for we never prefix *much* to plurals. The most untutored ear would be offended at *much papers*, *much labors*. But do we not always say *much pains*? Do we ever say *many pains were* taken? I confess I never yet heard or saw the expression. Yet Lowth contends that *pains* is plural. This criticism upon the

word is an authority in vindication of an erroneous practice of using it with a plural verb, even when it is preceded by *much*. So in Sheridan's Art of Reading, we observe these words; "If so *much pains were* thought necessary among them," &c. Temple indulges the same mistake; "I know how *much pains have been* taken to deduce the words *Baro* and *feudum* from the Latin and Greek, and even from the Hebrew and Egyptian tongue." Works, vol. 3. p. 365.

Might not these writers have used, *much sheep were killed*, with the same propriety?

The sense of the word *pains* does not require that we should consider it as a plural; for it signifies *labor* or *fatigue*, in contradistinction to those uneasy sensations, each of which singly is called a *pain*, and to express a number of which *pains* is used as a plural. On the other hand we have the authority of general practice for uniting with it *much*, which can in no case be used with a plural, and also a verb in the singular number.

—"And taken *much pains* so to proportion the powers of the several magistrates."——Sidney on Gov. sect. I.

"I found *much art* and *pains* employed."—— Middleton.

"He will assemble materials with *much pains*."—— Bolling. on Hist. letter 4.

"As to our own language, several persons have taken *much pains* about the orthography of it."——Wilkins Real Char. book I. chap. 5.

There are a few instances in which good authors have considered *news* as a plural; as

"From all regions where the best *news are* made."——B. Johnson, Staple of News.

"And seal the news and issue *them*."——The same.

But can an English ear relish this affected correctness? Hear the language of Cowley and Shakespear, who wrote as the nation spoke:

"A GENERAL joy at *this glad newes*
appear'd."

Cowley's Davideis, book 1.

"Now by St. Paul *this news* is bad indeed!"

The same.

"No news so bad abroad as *this* at home."

Rich. III. scene 1.

Such is the language at this day, and a man would expose himself to ridicule, who should say, *these news are good*.

Late writers seem to consider *riches* as plural; but erroneously. It is merely a contraction of *richesse*, the French singular, which was probably introduced into England under the Norman kings. Chaucer uses *richesse* as the singular:

"But for ye speken of swiche gentillesse,
As is descended out of old *richesse*."

Cant. Tales, 6691.

—"And he that ones to love doeth his
homage
Full oftentymes dere bought *is the*
richesse."

La Belle Dame sans mercy, 323.

The word *richesse* here is no more plural than *gentilnesse*, *distresse*, *doublenesse*, which the author uses in the same poem; and *riches* now, in strictness

of speech, is no more plural than *gentleness*, *distress*, or any other word of similar ending. When Chaucer had occasion for a plural, he wrote the word *richesses*; as in the Tale of Melibeus: "Thou hast dronke so muche hony of swete temporal *richesses* and delices and honors of this world," &c.——Works, vol. 4. p. 170. Bell's edit.

The word *riches* therefore is in the singular number and merely an abbreviation of *richesse*; as *distress* is of *distresse*; *weakness*, of *weaknesse*, &c. and the reason why the plural *richesses* has been neglected, may be, that the idea it conveys does not admit of number any more than that of *wealth*, which is also destitute of a plural form.

"Was ever *riches* gotten by your golden mediocrities?"——Cowley on Cromwell's Gov.

> "When love has taken all thou hast away,
> His strength by too much riches will
> decay."

Cowley.

"The envy and jealousy which great *riches* is always attended with."——Moyle's Essay on Lacedem. Gov. 48.

"In one hour *is* so great *riches* come to nought."——Bible.

Here *riches* is considered in its true light. Notwithstanding this, the termination of the word has led late writers into the opinion, that it is plural; so that we generally see it followed by a plural verb: Should this become the unanimous opinion and a general correspondent practice ensue, *riches* will be established as a plural, contrary to etymology and

ancient usage.

Alms is also in the singular number; being a contraction of the old Norman French, *almesse*, the plural of which was *almesses*. So in Chaucer:

> "Ye knowen wel that I am poure and olde,
> Kithe (show) your *almesse* upon me poure wretche."
>
> Freres Tale, 7190.

"*This almesse* shouldest thou do of thy propre thinges," &c.—— Vol. 5. p. 217. Bell.

"These ben generally the *almesses* and werkes of charitie of hem that have temporel richesses."—— The same.

Alms is used as a noun singular in the Bible; "To ask *an alms*." "He gave *much alms*;" that is, *almesse*, or charity. The plural of this word is not used.

Largess is a word of this class. It is from the old French *largesse*; but the idea admits of number, and accordingly we find the plural, *largesses*, still in use.

Laches, from the French *lachesse*, is still retained in the law stile; but custom has abbreviated the word into *lache*, a single syllable.

Amends may properly be considered as in the singular number, and so it is used by one of our best writers. "They must needs think that this honor to him, when dead, was but *a* necessary *amends* for the injury which they had done him, when living."—— Middleton's L. of Cic. vol. 3. p. 131.

The idea here conveyed by *amends* is as single as that expressed by *compensation*. The word has no change of termination, and may be considered as singular or plural, at the choice of the writer.

Wages is a word of the same kind.

Victuals is derived from the old French *vitaille*,[97] and was formerly used in the singular form, *victual*. But the latter is now wholly disused, and *victuals* generally used with a singular verb and pronoun. So Swift uses the word. "We had such very fine *victuals* that I could not eat *it*."[98] The editor of his works remarks, *that here is false concord*; but I believe Swift has followed the general practice of the English. The word seems to have lost the plurality of ideas, annexed to many different articles included in the term, and to have assumed the general meaning of the word *food*, which does not admit of the plural.

The word *odds* seems to be of the same kind. We sometimes find a plural verb united to it, as in Pope's translation of Homer:

> "On valor's side the *odds* of combat *lie*,
> The brave live glorious, or lamented die."

Iliad, b. 15. l. 670.

But in common practice *odds* is considered as in the singular number. We always say, "What *is* the *odds*;" and I should rank this among the words, which, altho they have the termination of regular plurals, more properly belong to the singular number.

The word *gallows* is evidently of this class. "Let *a gallows* be made," say the translators of the Bible, with perfect propriety. Indeed I cannot conceive how any man who has read English authors, can consider this word as in the plural.

Bellows, *tongs*, *sheers*, *scissors*, *snuffers*, *pincers*, have no change of termination, and it is the practice to prefix to them the word *pair*. Yet notwithstanding

these articles are composed of two principal parts, both are necessary to form a single indivisible instrument, and the names might have been considered as nouns in the singular.[99] *Pair* is more properly applied to two separate articles of the same kind, and used together; a *pair of shoes*, or *gloves*. Custom, however, has sanctioned the use of it before the words just enumerated, and therefore a pair of tongs, &c. must be admitted as good English.[100]

There are many other words in our language which have the plural termination; as *billiards*, *ethics*, *metaphysics*, *mathematics*, *measles*, *hysterics*, and many others; which properly belong to the singular number. *Ethics is a science*, is better English than *ethics are*.

On the other hand, there are many words, which, without ever taking the plural termination, often belong to the plural. *Sheep*, *deer* and *hose*, are often mentioned as belonging to this description. To these we may add many names of fish; as *trout*, *salmon*, *carp*, *tench* and others, which are in fact names of species; but which apply equally to the individuals of the species. We say *a trout*, or *five trout*; but never *five trouts*.

POSSESSIVE CASE.

In many instances we find two or three words used to describe or designate a particular person or thing; in which case they are to be considered as a single noun or name, and the sign of the possessive annexed to the last; as, "the *King of France's* army."

"*Fletcher of Salton's plan* of a militia differs little from that of Harrington."[101]—— Home, Sketch 9.

ARTICLE.

Most grammarians have given the article the first rank among the parts of speech. To me this arrangement appears very incorrect; for the article is a mere appendage of the noun, and without it cannot even be defined. The *noun* is the primary and principal part of speech, of which the *article*, *pronoun* and *adjective* are mere adjuncts, attendants, or substitutes, and the latter therefore should follow the former in grammatical order and definition.

Under this head I will introduce a few observations on the use of *a*. Grammarians have supposed that *a*, in the phrases *a going*, *a hunting*, is a corruption of the preposition *on*; a supposition, which, if we attend to the sense of the phrases, appears highly absurd, but which etymology, in a great measure, overthrows.

In the first place, the preposition is not among the original parts of language; its use, and consequently its formation, are not necessary among rude nations; it is a part of speech of a late date in the progress of language, and is itself a derivative from other words. I have, in another place,[102] given some reasons to prove *on* to be an abbreviation of the numeral *one*, or *top one*. It is very evident that *on* is a contraction of *upon*, which was formerly written *uppone*; and there are good reasons for believing the latter to be derived from *top one*. In addition to the authorities quoted in the Institute, an example or two from Chaucer will almost place the question beyond a doubt.

> "There lith on—up myn hed."

Cant. Tales, 4288.

That is, there lieth one upon my head; where *up* is used for *upon*, as it is in other places.

"No more, *up paine* of losing of your hed."

Ibm. 1709.

That is, *upon pain of losing your head.*

The word *up* is undoubtedly but a corruption of *top*, or a noun derived from the same root, and this hypothesis is supported by the true theory of language; which is, that rude nations converse mostly by names. *Up myn hed*, is *top mine head*. An improvement of this phrase would be the use of *one*, *ane* or *an*, to ascertain particular things; *uppone*, *upon*. In the progress of language, these words would be contracted into *on*, which we denominate a preposition.

I am very sensible that Chaucer used *on* in the manner mentioned by Lowth; *on live* for *alive*; *on hunting*; *on hawking*; which would seem to warrant the supposition of that writer, that *a* is a contraction of *on*, considering *on* originally as a preposition. But it is contrary to all just ideas of language to allow such a primitive part of speech. On the other hand, Chaucer uses *on* for other purposes, which cannot be explained on Lowth's hypothesis.

"His brede, his ale, was alway *after on*."

Cant. Tales, 343.

So also in line 1783. In this example *on* is allowed on all hands to be a contraction of *one*; *after one* (way, manner) that is, *alike*, or in the same manner.

"They were *at on*;" line 4195. They were *at one*; that is, together or agreed.

"Ever *in on*;" line 1773, and 3878; ever *in one* (way, course, &c.) that is, *continually*.

If therefore we suppose *on* to be merely a corruption of *one*, we can easily explain all its uses. *On hunting*, or contractedly, *a hunting*, is *one hunting*. *On live*, *on life*, or *alive*, is merely *one life*. This form of expression is very natural, however childish or improper it may appear to us. It seems very obvious to resolve *ashore*, *abed*, into *on shore*, *on bed*; but even Lowth himself would be puzzled to make us believe that *adry*, *athirst*, came from *on dry*, *on thirst*; and Wallis would find equal difficulty to convince us that they came from *at dry*, *at thirst*. If we suppose *a* to be a contraction of *one*, or the Saxon *ane* or *an*, the solution of all these phrases is perfectly easy, and corresponds with Horne's theory of the particles. For if rude nations converse without particles, they must say *go shore*, or *go one shore*; *he is bed*, or *he is one bed*; *he is dry*, or *one dry*; *I am thirst*, or *I am one thirst*. Indeed every person who will attend to the manner of speaking among the American savages, must believe this explanation of the phrases to be probably just.

That *on* was formerly used both as a preposition and an adjective, is acknowleged by the Editor of the British Poets;[103] but its uses in all cases may be easily explained on the single principle before mentioned.

This hypothesis however will be confirmed by the fact, that the English article *a*, "is nothing more than a corruption of the Saxon adjective, *ane* or *an* (one) before a substantive beginning with a consonant." Editor of Chaucer's works, Gloss. p. 23. And the article *a* and the numeral *one* have still the same signification. That *ane* or *an*, and *one* are originally

the same, is a point not to be controverted. We have therefore the strongest reason to believe that *a* in the phrases *a going*, *a hunting*, *a fishing* is derived from *one*. *On*, as a contraction of *upon*, has, in modern language, a different sense, and cannot be well substituted for *a*; for *on going*, *on fishing*, have an awkward appearance and will not obtain in the language, to the exclusion of *a going*, *a fishing*. The vulgar practice is more correct than Lowth's correction, and ought by no means to be rejected.

"O let my life, if thou so many deaths *a*
coming find,
With thine old year its voyage take."——

Cowley's Ode to the New Year.

"But these fantastic errors of our dream,
Lead us to solid wrong;
We pray God, our friend's torments to
prolong,
And wish uncharitably for them,
To be as long *a dying* as Methusalem."

Cowley.

If the foregoing opinion of the origin of *a* in such phrases, should not be deemed satisfactory, we may perhaps ascribe its origin to a mere custom of forming expletive sounds in the transition from one word to another.[104]

The following phrases, *three shillings a piece*, *a day*, *a head*, *a bushel*, it is said are elliptical forms of speech; some preposition being implied, as, *for* or *by*. This assertion can proceed only from an imperfect view of the subject. Unless grammarians can prove that some preposition was formerly used, which is now

omitted, they cannot prove that any is implied, nor should they have recourse to implication to find a rule to parse the phrases. The truth is, no such preposition can be found, nor is there need of any. *A*, in this form of speech, carries the full meaning of the Latin *per*, and the substitution of the latter, for want, as it is said, of an English word, in the phrases, *per day*, *per head*, *per pound*, is a burlesque upon the English to this day. We see continually a wretched jargon of Latin and English in every merchant's book, even to the exclusion of a pure English phrase, more concise, more correct, and more elegant. It is to be wished that *a* might be restored to its true dignity, as it is used by some of the purest English writers.

> "He had read almost constantly, twelve or fourteen hours *a day*;" that is, *one day*.——Bolingbroke on History, letter 4.
>
> "To the sixteen scholars twenty pounds *a piece*."——Cowley.

This is pure elegant English, and the common people have the honor of preserving it, unadulterated by foreign words.

VERB.

The most difficult branch of this subject is the verb. Next to the noun, this is the most important part of speech, and as it includes all the terms by which we express action and existence, in their numberless varieties, it must, in all languages, be very comprehensive.

The English verb suffers very few inflections or changes of termination, to express the different circumstances of person, number, time and mode. Its

inflections are confined to the three persons of the singular number, in the present tense, indicative mode, and the first and second persons of the past tense; unless we consider the irregular participles as a species of inflection belonging to the verb. All the other varieties of person, number, time and mode, are expressed by prefixing other words, by various combinations of words, or by a particular manner of utterance.

This simplicity, as it is erroneously called, is said to render our language easy of acquisition. The reverse however of this is true; for the use of auxiliaries or combinations of words, constitutes the most perplexing branch of grammar; it being much easier to learn to change the termination of the verb, than to combine two, three or four words for the same purpose.

Grammarians have usually divided the English verbs into *active*, *passive* and *neuter*. "*Active* verbs," say they, [105] "express action, and necessarily imply an agent and an object acted upon." But is not a man *passive* in *hearing*? Yet *hear* is called an *active* verb.

"A verb *neuter* expresses being, or a state or condition of being; when the agent and object coincide, and the event is properly neither action nor passion, but rather something between both." But is there neither *action* nor *passion* in *walking*, *running*, *existing*? One would think that *running* at least might be called *action*.

The common definitions, copied, in some measure, from the Latin Grammars, are very inaccurate. The most correct and general division of English verbs, is, into *transitive* and *intransitive*; the former term comprehending all verbs that may be followed by

any object receiving the action, or of which any thing is affirmed; the latter, all those verbs, the affirmation in which is limited to the agent. Thus *hear* is a *transitive* verb, for it affirms something of an object; *I hear the bell*.

Run is an *intransitive* verb, for the action mentioned is confined to the agent; *he runs*. Yet the last is an *active* verb, and the first, strictly speaking, is not;[106] so that there is a distinction to be made between a verb *active* and *transitive*.

In strict propriety, we have in English no passive verb; that is, we have no single word which conveys the idea of passion or suffering, in the manner of the Greek or Latin passive verb. It may be useful, in teaching English to youth or foreigners, to exhibit a specimen of the combinations of the verb *be*, with the participles of other verbs in all their varieties; but each word should be parsed as a distinct part of speech; altho two or more may be necessary to convey an idea which is expressed by a single word in another language.

TIME.

Time is naturally divided into *past*, *present* and *future*. The English verb has but two variations of ending to express time; the present, as *love*, *write*; and the past, as *loved*, *wrote*. The usual division of tenses, or combinations of words corresponding to the Latin tenses, is not wholly accurate. The definition of the second tense, in the ordinary arrangement of them in Latin grammars, may be correct, as it relates to the Roman tongue; but does not apply to the English tense, which is commonly called by the same name, the *Imperfect*. The Latin words *movebam*, *legebam*, are

translated *I moved*, *I read*. Now the English words express actions *perfectly past*, and therefore the time or tense cannot be justly denominated *imperfect*. If the Latin words expressed, in the Roman tongue, actions *imperfectly past*, they should be rendered by us, *I was moving*, *was reading*, which convey ideas of actions, as taking place at some preceding period, but not then past. In this sense, the name of the tense might have been used with propriety. But the English form of expression, *he moved*, conveys the idea of an action completely past, and does not fall within the definition of the Latin *Imperfect*.

It is surprizing that the great Lowth should rank this form of the verb, *they moved*, under the head of *indefinite* or *undetermined* time; and yet place this form, *have moved*, or what is called the perfect tense, under the head of *definite* or *determined* time. The truth is, the first is the most *definite*. *I have loved*, or *moved*, expresses an action performed and completed, generally within a period of time not far distant; but leaves the particular point of time wholly *indefinite* or *undetermined*. On the other hand, *I loved* is necessarily employed, when a particular *period* or *point* of time is specified. Thus it is correct to say, *I read a book yesterday*, *last week*, *ten years ago*, &c. but it is not grammatical to say, *I have read a book yesterday*, *last week*, &c. so that, directly contrary to Lowth's rule, *I moved*, is the *definite*, and *I have moved*, the *indefinite* time.

Great inaccuracy is likewise indulged in the usual description of the English future tense. There is no variation of the verb to express a future action; to remedy this defect, the English use *shall* and *will*, before the verb in its radical form. But these words are both in the present time; being merely the

Teutonic verbs *sollen* and *wollen*, which formerly had, and in the German still have, most of the inflections of regular verbs. Thus:

Ind. Pref. *Ich soll*, I ought or should. *Ich will*, I will.

Imp. *Ich sollt*, I ought or should. *Ich wollt*, I would.

Preter. *Ich habe gesollt*, I ought or should have. *Ich habe gewollt*, I would or would have, &c. &c.[107]

I will go is really nothing more than a *present* promise of a *future* action. I *shall go* is a *present* prediction of a *future* action. In the second and third persons, *will* expresses the prediction; and as one cannot promise for a second or third person, *shall*, in these persons, implies a promise of the first person, that he will *command* or *oblige* the second or third person to do an action in some future time. The whole may be thus explained:

I will go,

Is my own *present* promise to do a future action.

Thou wilt go—He will go,

are my (the speaker's) *present* predictions that the persons mentioned will do a future action; or perhaps more properly, a declaration of their inclination or intention.

I shall go,

is my *present* prediction of a future action.

Thou shalt go—He shall go,

are my (the speaker's) *present* promise that the

second and third persons will do a future action. But as a man cannot compel a superior, he can promise only for himself or inferiors; therefore these last expressions imply a promise in the speaker, and a right to command the second and third persons to do the thing promised; for which reason they are used only in addressing or speaking of, inferiors or subjects. The same remarks apply to the three persons in the plural number.

Hence we observe the inaccuracy of translating the future tense of the Greeks, Romans, and French, by *shall* or *will* indifferently. It is probable that the future tense in those languages, and perhaps in others, where the tense is formed by inflections, was employed merely to *foretell*. If so, *shall* only should be used in the first person of the English translation, and *will*, in the second and third. Thus:

Latin.	***French.***	***English.***
Habebo,	J'aurai,	I shall have.
Habebimus,	nous aurons,	we shall have.
Habebis,	tu auras,	thou wilt have.
Habebit,	il aura,	he will have.
Habebitis,	vous aurez,	you will have.
Habebunt,	ils auront,	they will have.

On the other hand, a promise in the first person expressed in English by *will*, and a promise or command in the second and third, expressed by *shall*, seem, in these languages, to be communicated by other words or a circumlocution.

In strictness of speech therefore, we have no future tense of the verb in English; but we use auxiliaries, which, in the present tense, express a prediction of

an action, or a disposition of mind to produce an action. These auxiliaries, united with the verb or affirmation, answer the purposes of the future tenses of verbs in other languages; and no inconvenience can arise from calling such a combination a *tense*.

MODE.

Most languages are so constructed, that the verbs change their terminations for the purpose of expressing the *manner* of being or action. In this particular, the English is singular; there being but one inflection of a single verb, which can be said to be peculiar to the conditional or subjunctive mode. [108] In all other respects, the verbs in the declaratory and conditional modes are the same; and the condition is known only by some other word prefixed to the verb.

It is astonishing to see how long and how stupidly English grammarians have followed the Latin grammars in their divisions of time and mode; but in particular the latter. By this means, we often find *may*, *can*, *should* and *must* in a conditional mode, when they are positive declarations and belong to the indicative. All unconditional declarations, whether of an action, or of a *right*, *power* or *necessity* of doing an action, belong to the *indicative*; and the distinction between the *indicative* and *potential* is totally useless. *Should* is commonly placed in the imperfect time of the subjunctive; yet is frequently used to express an unconditional obligation, as *he should go*; and belongs to the present time of the indicative, as much as *he ought*, or the French *il faut* or *il doit*.

Would is sometimes employed in a declaratory sense

to express a present volition, and then belongs to the indicative. In the past time, *should*, *would*, *might*, *could*, often express unconditional ideas, and belong to the indicative. In short, the usual arrangement of the English verbs and auxiliaries in our grammars is calculated to perplex and mislead a learner; and I have never found a foreigner who could use them with tolerable propriety.

NUMBER *and* PERSON.

Under this head, I shall remark on a single article only, the use of *you* in the singular number, with a plural verb. The use of the plural *nos* and *vos*, for *ego* and *tu* in Latin; of *nous* and *vous* for *je* and *tu* in French; seems to have been very ancient, and to have been originally intended to soften the harshness of egotism, or to make a respectful distinction in favor of great personages. But the practice became general in the French nation, was introduced by them into England, and gradually imitated by the English in their own tongue. *You*, in familiar discourse, is applied to an individual, except by a single sect of Christians; the practice is general and of long standing; it has become correct English, and ought to be considered, in grammar, as a pronoun in the singular number. It may be objected, that we unite with it a verb in the plural number, *you are*, *you have*; this is true, but the verb, in these instances, becomes singular; and both the pronoun and verb should be placed in the singular number.

In the union of *you* with a plural verb in the present time, we are all unanimous; but in the past time, there is a difference between books and common practice in a single instance. In books, *you* is commonly used with the plural of the verb *be*, *you*

were; in conversation, it is generally followed by the singular, *you was*. Notwithstanding the criticisms of grammarians, the antiquity and universality of this practice must give it the sanction of propriety; for what but practice forms a language? This practice is not merely vulgar; it is general among men of erudition who do not affect to be fettered by the rules of grammarians, and some late writers have indulged it in their publications. I should therefore inflect the verb *be* in the past time after this manner; *I was*, *thou wast*, or *you was*, *he was*, &c. Whatever objections may be raised to this inflection, *it is the language of the English*, and rules can hardly change a general practice of speaking; nor would there be any advantage in the change, if it could be effected.

AUXILIARIES.

There are several verbs in English, which, from the necessity of their union with other verbs, have obtained the name of *auxiliaries*. Originally they were principal verbs, with regular Saxon infinitives, and the usual inflections; as may be observed by any person, who has the smallest acquaintance with the modern German, which retains more of the ancient structure, than any other branch of the primitive language.

The verbs, called *auxiliaries* or *helpers*, are *do*, *be*, *have*, *shall*, *will*, *may*, *can*, *must*. The three first are often employed alone, and are therefore acknowleged to be sometimes principal verbs. That the others were so, will be made obvious by a specimen from the German, with the corresponding English.

German. ***English.***

Inf.	*Wollen*,	to will.
Ind. Pref.	Ich will,	I will.
	Wir wollen,[109]	we will.
Imper.	Ich wolte,	I would.
Preterit.	Ich habe gewolt,	I have would, or willed.
Plup.	Ich hatte gewolt,	I had would.
Fut.	Ich werde wollen,	I shall will.
Imp.	Wolle du,	will thou.
Subj.	*Ich wolle*,	(if) I would, &c.
Inf.	Wollen,	to will.
	Gewolte haben,	to have would, or willed.
Part.	Wollend,	willing.
	Gewollte,	having would, or willed.

Sollen, to shall, is inflected in the same manner. *Koennen*, to can, or be able, is inflected much in the same manner. *Ich kann*, I can, &c. Imperfect, *Ich konnte*, I could. Preterit, *Ich habe gehonnt*, I have could (or been able.) Participle, *Kœnnend*, *canning*, being able. Thus *mœgen*, to may, makes, in the past tenses, *Ich mochte*, I might or mought, as the vulgar sometimes pronounce it; *Ich habe gemocht*, *I have might*. *Must* also, which in English has lost all inflection, is varied in the German; *mussen*, to must, or be obliged; Imperfect, *Ich muste*, I must, or was obliged.

But whatever these verbs may have once been, yet

from their loss of several inflections and the participles, with their singular use in combination with other verbs, they may very well be denominated *auxiliary verbs*. Their true force in English should be ascertained and explained in grammars for the benefit of learners, and particularly for the assistance of foreigners;[110] yet in resolving sentences, each should be considered as a verb or distinct part of speech.

For want of a clear and accurate knowlege of the English auxiliaries, foreigners are apt to fall into material errors in constructing sentences. The most numerous errors appear in the use of *will* and *shall*, and their inflections. The Scots and Irish, even of the first rank, generally use *will* for *shall* in the first person; by which means, they substitute a *promise* for an intended *prediction*. Several errors of this kind have escaped the notice of the most celebrated writers.

"Without having attended to this, we *will* be at a loss in understanding several passages in the classics, which relate to the public speaking, and the theatrical entertainments of the ancients."——Blair's Lectures, p. 48. Philad. edit.

"In the Latin language, there are no two words, we *would* more readily take to be synonimous, than *amare* and *diligere*."——The same, p. 83.

In these and several other instances which occur in Blair's writings, the words *will* and *would* are used very improperly, for *shall* and *should*. The author means only to *foretell* certain events, and has employed words which carry, to an English ear, the full force of a *promise*.

English writers have rarely fallen into this error; yet

a few instances may be found in authors of reputation.

"If I draw a catgut or any other cord to a great length between my fingers, I *will* make it smaller than it was before," &c.—— Goldsmith's Survey of Experimental Philosophy, book 2. chap. 2.

In the middle and southern states of America, this error is frequent, both in writing and conversation.

"Let us suppose the charter repealed and the bank annihilated; *will* we be better situated?"—— Argument against repealing the charter of the Bank of North America.

This is very incorrect; there is hardly a possible case, in which *will* can be properly employed to ask a question in the first person.

"As soon as the diploma is made out, I *will* have the honor to transmit it to you."——Letter to Count Rochambeau.

Is not this *promising* to have the honor of a communication, an engagement which delicacy forbids? It is impossible for a foreigner to have a just idea of the absurdity of using *will* in this manner; but a correct English ear revolts at the practice.

Dr. Priestley observes very justly, that the form of the auxiliaries, *shall*, *will*, which is generally conditional, viz. *should* and *would*, is elegantly used to express a slight assertion, with modest diffidence.

"The royal power, *it should seem*, might be intrusted in their hands."——Hume's History, vol. 3. p. 383.

We say also, "I *would* not choose any." In these cases, the verbs are not conditional; they modestly declare a fact, and therefore properly belong to the

indicative mode. But in the following passage, *should* is improperly employed:

"In judging only from the nature of things, and without the surer aid of divine revelation, one *should* be apt to embrace the opinion of Diodorus Siculus," &c.—— Warburton's Divine Legation, vol. 2. p. 81.

Should, in the second and third persons, expresses *duty*, and the idea of the author was, to express an event, under a condition, or a modest declaration; he *should* have used *would*.

"There is not a girl in town, but let her have her will in going to a mask, and she *shall* dress as a shepherdess."——Spect. No. 9.

Shall, in this example, expresses *command*, an idea very different from the author's meaning.

"Think what reflection *shall* most probably arise."——Blair, Serm. 9.

"A person, highly entertained at a play, *shall* remember perfectly the impression made on him by a very moving scene."——Nugent's Trans. of Condillac, p. 1. s. 1.

I would just remark here, that the errors in the use of the auxiliary verbs before mentioned, are not English; that they are little known among the inhabitants of South Britain, and still less among their descendants in New England. This is a new proof of the force of national customs. I do not remember to have heard once in the course of my life, an improper use of the verbs *will* and *shall*, among the unmixed English descendants in the eastern states.

But of all the errors or inaccuracies in speaking or

writing the English language, the most numerous class appear in the improper use of verbs in the subjunctive mode. Not only illiterate men, but authors of the first rank, often use the present tense for the future, the future for the present, and the past for both.

"If any member *absents* himself, he shall forfeit a penny for the use of the club, unless in case of sickness and imprisonment."——Rules of the Two Penny Club, Spect. No. 9.

"If thou *neglectest* or *dost* unwillingly what I command, I'll rack thee with old cramps."——Temp. act 1. s. 4.

In both these examples, the events mentioned in the verbs are *future*; "if any member *shall* absent himself;" "if thou *shalt* neglect;" therefore the auxiliary verb *shall* should have been employed, or the sentences should have been elliptical, "if any member *absent* himself;" "if thou *neglect*;" where *shall* is understood and easily supplied by the reader.

Numberless examples of the same kind of inaccuracy may be found in good authors. Thus in Haley's Happy Prescription, act 2.

> "And if my scheme *prospers*, with joy I'll
> confess,
> What a whimsical trifle produced our
> success."

The idea is, "if my scheme *shall* prosper;" and this is obvious by the subsequent part of the sentence, where the future is employed, "with joy *I'll* confess."

"If Punch *grows* extravagant, I shall reprimand him very freely; if the stage *becomes* a nursery of folly and

impertinence, I shall not be afraid to animadvert upon it."——Spect. No. 35.

These should have been *grow* or *should grow*; *become* or *should become*.

"If any thing *offers* (shall offer) from Dublin, that may serve either to satisfy or divert you, I will not fail," &c.—— Swift's Corresp. letter 2.

In the following passage, the same writer is much more correct.

"If any one matter in it *prove* (that is, *shall prove*) false, what do you think will become of the paper?"——Letter 8.

But the use of the future for the present is much more frequent.

"If reverence, gratitude, obedience and confidence *be* our duty."——Priestley, let. 7 to a Phil. Unbeliever.

"If he *have* any knowlege of actual existence, he must be satisfied."——Same, letter 8.

The author doubtless intended these sentences to be strictly grammatical, by placing the verbs in the present tense of the subjunctive. But in the first example, *be* is wrong even on Lowth's principles. The rule of the Bishop, with respect to the use of the indicative and subjunctive modes, is this: That when something conditional, hypothetical, or doubtful, is expressed, the verb should be in the subjunctive mode; but when the fact is certain, or taken for granted, the verb should be in the indicative. He gives for examples of the former, several passages from scripture: "If thou *be* the son of God." Matth. iv. 3. "Tho he *slay* me, yet will I trust in him." Job xiii. 15. "Unless he *wash* his flesh." Lev. xxii. 6. "No power

except it *were* given from above." John xix. 11. "Whether it *were* I or they, so we preach." 1 Cor. xv. 11. "The subjunctive in these instances," says the Bishop, "implies something contingent or doubtful; the indicative would express a more absolute and determinate sense." To illustrate the latter part of his rule, he quotes a passage from Atterbury's Sermons. "Tho he *were* divinely inspired, and spake therefore as the oracles of God, with supreme authority; tho he *were* endued with supernatural powers," &c. That our Savior was divinely inspired, and endued with supernatural powers, are positions that are here taken for granted, as admitting not of the least doubt; they would therefore have been better expressed in the indicative mode; "tho he *was* divinely inspired," &c. Even on these principles, the verb in the first example from Priestley, just quoted, should have been in the indicative; for there is no doubt that reverence, gratitude, &c. *are* our duty to the Supreme Being.

But I apprehend, that however just Lowth's distinction between the modes, may have formerly been, it is not warranted by the present idiom of the language. Indeed I cannot think the rule just. In the *first*, *fourth* and *fifth* examples quoted by the Bishop, the indicative might be substituted for the subjunctive, and the passages rendered more correct, according to the present practice of speaking and writing. "If thou *art* the son of God." "No power except it *was* given from above." "Whether it *was* I, or they, so we preach." Every English ear must acknowlege that these expressions are more agreeable to our present practice, than those employed by the translators of the Bible, and they convey an idea of condition or doubt, as fully as the other form. But why did the translators deviate from

the original? In the Greek, the verbs, in the two first examples, are in the indicative mode; and in the last, the verb is not expressed. Ει υιος ει του Θεου, literally, If thou *art* the son of God. Ουκ εχεις εξουσιαν ουδεμιαν κατ' εμου, ει μη ην σοι δεδομενον ανωθεν; literally, Thou hast no power (or authority) against me, except it *was* given thee from above. In the last instance the verb is omitted; Ειτε δε εγω, ειτε εκεινοι; Whether I or they. In these instances therefore the translators of the Bible, and Bishop Lowth have evidently mistaken the true structure of the English verbs. The translators deviated from the original Greek, in changing the modes; and the Bishop has taken their error, as the foundation of a distinction which does not exist in the language. The indicative mode is employed to express conditional ideas, more frequently than the subjunctive, even by the best English writers. Take the following examples.

"And if the same accident *is* able to restore them to us."——Bolingbroke, Reflec. on Exile.

"If this being, the immediate maker of the universe, *has* not existed from all eternity, he must have derived his being and power from one who has."——Priestley, let. 4 to Phil. Unb.

"If there *is* one, I shall make two in the company."——Merry Wives of Windsor, act 3. sc. II.

> "If thou *lovest* me then
> Steal forth thy father's house tomorrow
> night."

Midsum. Night's Dream, act 1. s. 2.

> "If thou *beest*[111] Stephano, touch me and

speak to me;
If thou *beest* Trinculo, come forth."

Tempest, act 2. s. 3.

"If thou *art* any thing besides a name."

Cowley's Request.

"For if he *lives* that hath you doen
despight."

Spenser's Fairy Queen, book 2. chap. 1.

"If any one *imagines*."——Moyle.

"Why did Caligula wish that the people had but one neck, that he might strike it off at a blow, if their welfare *was* thus reciprocal."——Sidney on Gov. sect. 5.

"If Governments *are* constituted."——Sidney.

"Well, keep your own heart, if silence *is*
best,
Tho a woman, for once, I'll in ignorance
rest."

Haley's Happy Prescription.

"If she *has* stolen the color of her ribbons from another."——Spect. No. 4.

"If we *are* rightly informed."——Same, No. 8.

"If she *is* tall enough, she is wife enough."——No. 66.

"If you *are* in such haste, how came you to forget the miscellanies?"——Swift's Letter to Mr. Tooke.

"If men's highest assurances *are* to be believed."——Same.

Shall we say that the use of the indicative after *if* in the foregoing examples is improper or ungrammatical? By no means. Yet the verbs express something conditional or doubtful; and therefore Lowth's rule cannot be well founded.

Let the foregoing passages be contrasted with the following.

"But if he *say* true, there is but one government in the world that can have any thing of justice in it."——Sidney, sect. 1.

"If he *have* any knowlege of actual existence, he must be satisfied."——Priestley, let. 8.

"But tho criticism *be* thus his only declared aim, he will not disown," &c.—— Introd. to Elements of Criticism.

"But if a lively picture, even of a single emotion, *require* an effort of genius, how much greater the effort to compose a passionate dialogue, with as many different tones of passion as there are speakers?"——Elements of Criticism, vol. 1. chap. 16.

"Here we must also observe, that tho THOU *be* long in the first part of the verse, it becomes short when repeated in the second."——Sheridan's Art of Reading.

The Scotch writers, who learn the English language grammatically, are the most particular in the use of this subjunctive form of the verb; in consequence of which their stile generally appears stiff and fettered. In all the foregoing examples, and in every instance where the affirmation respects present time, the indicative form is the most correct, and the only form that corresponds with the actual present state of the language. *If he says*, *if he has*, *if he requires*, are

the true expressions universally used in speaking; and grammars should exhibit and enforce this practice, rather than amend it.

There are few or no English writers, who seem to have adhered uniformly to any rule in the use of the verbs after the conjunctions. In consequence, either of ignorance or inattention, the most correct writers have fallen into inconsistencies, even in the same sentence. This will appear by the following examples.

"If life and health enough *fall* to my share, and I *am* able to finish what I meditate."——Bolingbroke, let. 4, on History.

The author intended the verbs, *fall* and *am*, to be in the present time; but this would make him write nonsense; for the events were future at the time of writing. The first part of the sentence, to make sense, must be considered as elliptical, "if life and health enough *shall* or *should fall* to my share;" in the last part therefore *be* should be substituted for *am*, *if I shall be able*: This would make the whole sentence correct and consistent.

"Whether our conduct *be* inspected, and we *are* under a righteous government, or under no government at all."——Priestley's Pref. to Let. to a Phil. Unb.

What a confusion of modes! or rather of tenses!

"Tho THOU *be* long, in the first part of the verse," says Sheridan, in the passage just quoted; yet soon after uses the indicative in a phrase precisely similar; "And tho it *is* impossible to prolong the sound of this word." Can this great critic give a reason for this change of modes? Such examples serve to show at least the necessity of studying our language with more attention, than even many eminent scholars are willing to bestow.

It has been remarked by Lowth, and many other writers on this subject, that "the verb itself in the present, and the auxiliary both of the present and past imperfect times, often carry with them somewhat of a future sense."[112] Thus, *if he come tomorrow*, *if he should or would come tomorrow*, carry *somewhat of a future sense*. The writer should have gone farther, and said that these expressions are in future time; for they form the English future, and belong to no other tense. This would have been the truth, and have prevented the numberless errors which have proceeded from his arranging them in the present tense of the subjunctive. Let us attend to the following passages.

"This can never happen till patriotism *flourish* more in Britain."—Home's Sketches, book 2. s. 9.

"Pray heaven, he *prove* so, when you come to him."——Two Gent. of Verona, act 2. s. 10.

"But if thou *linger* in my territories."——Same, act 3. s. 2.

"Lest, growing ruinous, the building *fall*."——Same, act 5. s. 6.

"If the second *be* pronounced thus, the verse will be degraded into hobbling prose."——Sheridan's Art of Reading.

It is needless to multiply similar passages; the same use of the verb, without the personal termination, occurs in almost every page of our best writings, and it is perfectly correct.

But will any person contend that the verbs in these passages are in the present tense? The sense is entirely future, and could not be translated into Latin or French, without employing the future tense. The

expressions are elliptical, and cannot be clearly understood, without inserting *shall* or *should* before the verbs. This pretended present tense of the subjunctive is therefore the real future of the indicative. To confirm this remark, let us attend to some other passages.

"Tho he *slay* me, yet will I trust in him."

"Unless he *wash* his flesh, he shall not eat of the holy thing."

In the original Hebrew these verbs are in the future tense; and so are most similar expressions.[113]

Matth. vii. 10.—Or if he *ask* a fish, will he give him a serpent? Και εαν ιχθυν αιτηση μη οφιν επιδωσει αυτῳ;

Rom. xiv. 15.—But if thy brother *be* grieved with thy meat. Ει γαρ δια βρωμα ὁ αδελφος σου λυπειται

Luke xvii. 3.—If thy brother *trespass* against thee. Εαν αμαρτηση ὁ αδελφος σου. 4. And seven times in a day *turn* again to thee. Και επτακις της ημηρας επιστρεψη.

Luke xvi. 28.—Lest they also *come* into this place of torment. Μη και αυτος ελθωσιν εις τουτον τον τοπον της βασανου.[114]

Is not the sense of the foregoing verbs *future*? Are not the verbs in the original, either in the future tense, or in the indefinite tenses, which, in the subjunctive mode, *usually* have the sense of the future, and perhaps *never* the sense of the present? Why then should we consider the English verbs as in the present time? Either the translators made a mistake, and placed the verbs in a wrong tense; or Lowth and his followers have mistaken the tense, and called that

present which is really future.

That the fault is, in some measure, to be ascribed to the translators, is evident from their using the same form of the verb, after a conjunction, when the original Greek is in the present of the indicative.

1 Cor. xvi. 22.—If any man *love* not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be, &c.Ει τις ου φιλει τον Κυριον Ιησουν Χριστον, ητω, &c.

1 Cor. xiv. 37.—If any man think himself a prophet. Ει δε τις δοκει προφητης ειναι. 38.—If any man *be* ignorant, let him be ignorant still. Ει δε τις αγνοει, αγνοειτω.

In these instances, the verbs express conditional facts in the present time. In the original they are in the indicative present; and on what authority did the translators introduce a different mode in English? Can they be justified by the idioms of the language at the time when they lived? Was the subjunctive always used after a conjunction? By no means: Their own translation of other passages proves the contrary.

1 Cor. xv. 13.—And if there *is* no resurrection of the dead. Ει δε αναστασις νεκρων ουκ εστιν.

Here is the present tense of the indicative used, where the fact mentioned is supposed, by the argument, to be at least doubtful. In other places the present time of the same mode is used, where the future would have been more accurate.

Prov. ii. 3, 4.—"Yea if thou *criest* after knowlege, and *liftest* up thy voice for understanding; if thou *seekest* for her as for hid treasures, then shalt thou understand," &c.

What conclusion shall we draw from this state of

facts? This at least may be said with safety, either that the English modes and tenses have not been ascertained and understood, or that the best of our writers have been extremely negligent.

After an attentive and accurate examination of this subject, I believe I may venture to assert, that nine times out of ten, when the pretended subjunctive form of the verb is used after a conjunction, either in the vulgar translation of the Bible, or in our best profane authors, the sense is actually future, and to render the sentences complete, it would be necessary to insert *shall* or *should*.[115] This will be more obvious by attending to the Latin translation of the New Testament, where the future is almost always employed to express the Greek future and aorists. *Igitur si munus tuum attuleris ad altare*—If thou *bring* thy gift to the altar; *et illic memineris*—and there *rememberest*; (what confusion of modes.) If his son *ask* bread—*Si filius ejus* petierit *panem*. And if the house *be* worthy—*Et si quidem* fuerit *domus digna*; and so throughout the whole New Testament.

Will any person pretend to say that the verbs *bring*, *ask* and *be*, in the foregoing passages, are present time; or that *rememberest* is not bad English? The elliptical future, *If thou be*, *if he ask*, &c. is correct English, but should by no means be confounded with the present tense, which, in English, has but one form.

I do not deny that good authors have used this form, after conjunctions, in the present time; but I deny that the genius of the language requires it, that it is agreeable to the ancient or modern elegant languages, and that it has been or is now the general practice.

With respect to the ancient practice, examples sufficient have been already produced, to show that authors have considered the present of the indicative, after conjunctions, denoting uncertainty or doubt, as at least correct; and the present practice in speaking is wholly on this side of the argument.

With respect to the Roman and Greek languages, I believe examples enough may be brought to prove, that the subjunctive mode after the conditional conjunctions or adverbs, was not generally used, except when the idea was such as we should express by *may*, *might*, *should*, *let*, or some other auxiliary before the verb. "Quid est autem, quod deos *veneremur* propter admirationem ejus naturæ, in qua egregium nihil videmus?" "Ut, quos ratio non posset, eos ad officium religio *duceret*."—Cicero, De nat Deorum, l. I. 42. To render *veneremur* and *duceret* into English, *should* may be prefixed to *adore*, and *might* to *lead*.

At any rate, the conditional conjunctions do not all, nor generally require the subjunctive mode: "Quæ, *si* mundus *est* Deus, quoniam mundi partes sunt, Dei membra parim ardentia, partim refrigerata dicenda sunt."—Ibm. 1. I. 10. "*Si* Di *possunt* esse sine sensu," &c. The indicative after this conjunction occurs frequently in the best Roman authors.

In Greek the case is nearly the same. Several instances of the indicative after the conditional conjunction ει (if) have already been quoted from scripture; and similar instances without number may be produced from profane writers.

"Εἰ ουν ουτως εχει, εφη, ω Κῦρε, τι αν αλλο τις κρειττον ευροι, ἢ πεμπειν εις Περσας, και αμα μεν διδασκειν αυτους οτι ει τι πεισονται Μηδοι, εις Περσας το δεινον ηξει, αμα δε αιτειν πλειον

στρατευμα;"——Xenoph. de Cyri. Inst. l. 2. p. 80. Lond. Ed.

Here the verb εχει is in the present tense of the indicative, after a conjunction denoting condition or doubt; "if the affair *is* so—if such *is* the true state of affairs, Cyrus, what better method *can be taken* (ευροι) than to send to the Persians, and inform them that *if* any accident *happen* to the Medes (so we should render πεισονται, which is in the future) calamity will fall upon the Persians also, and let us ask for a greater force."

In French, the conditional conjunctions do not require the subjunctive mode. "Si ma prédiction *est* fausse, vous serez libre de nous immoler dans trois jours."—Telemaque, liv. 1. "S'il *est* vrai que vous aimiez la justice."—Liv. 4. If my prediction *is* false—if it *is* true—are correct modes of speaking in French. No argument therefore in favor of the use of the English subjunctive, can be drawn from the analogy of other languages.

But this subjunctive form is not agreeable to the structure of the language. It has been demonstrated that our conjunctions are mostly old Saxon verbs in the imperative mode. Let us resolve some sentences where the subjunctive form is used; for example, the passages before quoted.

"If he *have* any knowlege of actual existence, he must be satisfied."——Priestley's Letters.

Resolved—"He have any knowlege of actual existence, (if) give that, he must be satisfied." Is this English?

"If thou be the son of God, command that these stones be made bread."——Matth. iv. 3.

Resolved—"Thou be the son God, give that, command," &c.

"Tho he slay me, yet will I trust in him."

Resolved—"He slay me, grant it, yet will I trust in him."

This is the literal construction of those sentences; the two first are present time, the last, which is future, is merely elliptical.

If therefore, *I be*, *he have*, are good English in the present tense of the indicative, the foregoing are correct expressions; if not, they are incorrect; for every such conditional sentence is resolvable into two or more declaratory phrases. Let us substitute the Latin derivative, which precisely answers to *if*, viz. *suppose*; thus, in place of "if thou be the son of God," write, "*suppose* thou be the son of God," does not every ear acknowlege the impropriety? The only difference between the two expressions is this; *if* is a *Saxon* verb in the imperative mode, and *suppose*, a *Latin* one in the same mode.

With respect to *be*, it may be said very justly, that it was anciently used after the conjunctions in almost all cases. But it must be observed also, it was used *without* the conjunctions. Be, from the Saxon *beon*, is the true radical verb, still preserved in the German, *Ich bin*, I be, *du bist*, thou beest, in the indicative. The old English writers employed *be* in the same mode and tense.

"O, there *be* players that I have seen play."——Shakesp. Hamlet to the Players.

"They that *be* drunken, are drunken in the night."——1 Thess. v. 7.

"As we *be* slanderously reported."——Rom. iii. 8.

The common people in New England still employ *be* in the present tense of the indicative, except in the third person. They almost universally say, *I be*, *we be*, *you be*, and *they be*. While *be* remained the proper substantive verb in the indicative, it was very correctly employed after the conjunctions, *If he be*, *tho he be*, but when, *am*, *are*, *art* and *is* were substituted in the indicative, they should likewise have been employed in the subjunctive; for the latter is resolvable into the former.

From the facts produced, and the remarks made, we may draw the following conclusions; that the distinction made by grammarians between the present tense of the indicative and subjunctive mode in English, is not well founded; that it is not warranted by the construction of the language, nor by the analogy of other languages; that the expressions commonly supposed to be in the present tense of the subjunctive, are mostly in fact an elliptical form of the future in the indicative, and that the present translation of the Bible cannot be vindicated on any other supposition; that the present practice, both in speaking and writing, is generally in favor of the indicative after the conjunctions; and consequently, that the arrangement of the verbs by Lowth and his followers, is calculated to lead both foreigners and natives into error.

I have been more particular upon this article, because the Scotch writers, many of whom stand among the first authors of the British nation, follow the usual grammatical division of verbs, and thus write a stile not conformed to the present practice of speaking.

In the use of what is called the *imperfect* tense, after the conjunctions, there is something peculiar, which

has not yet been sufficiently explained. On examination it will probably be found that custom has established one singular distinction in the sense of verbs in different tenses, a knowlege of which is necessary to enable us to speak and write with precision. This distinction will readily be understood by a few examples.

A servant calls on me for a book, which his master would borrow. If I am uncertain whether I have that book or not, I reply in this manner; "If the book *is* in my library, or if I *have* the book, your master shall be welcome to the use of it."

But if I am certain I do not possess the book, the reply is different; "I have not the book you mention; if I *had*, it should be at your master's service."

Both these forms of speaking are correct; but the question is, what is the difference? It cannot be in *time*; for both refer to the same. The ideas both respect present time; "If I *have* it *now*, it *shall* be at your master's service"—"If I *had* it *now*, it *should* be." The distinction in the meaning is universally understood, and is simply this; the first expresses *uncertainty*; the last implies *certainty*, but in a peculiar manner; for an affirmative sentence implies a positive negation; and a negative sentence implies a positive affirmation. Thus, *if I had the book*, implies a positive denial of having it; *if I had not the book*, implies that I have it: And both speak of possessing or not possessing it at this *present* time.

The same distinction runs thro all the verbs in the language. A man, shut up in an interior apartment, would say to his friend, "*if it rains* you cannot go home." This would denote the speaker's uncertainty. But on coming to the door and ascertaining the fact,

he would say, "*if it rained*, you should not go;" or, "*if it did not rain*, you might go." Can these verbs be in *past* time? By no means; *if it did not rain now, you could go*, is present, for the present existence of the fact prevents the man from going.

These forms of speech are established by unanimous consent in practice.

"It remaineth that they who have wives, be as tho they *had* none, and they that weep, as tho they *wept* not; and they that rejoice, as tho they *rejoiced* not; and they that buy, as tho they *possessed* not."——1 Cor. vii. 29, 30.[116]

"Nay, and the villains march wide betwixt the legs, as if they *had* gyves on."——1 Henry IV.

"We have not these antiquities; and if *we had* them, they would add to our uncertainty."——Bolingbroke on Hist. let. 3.

"Whereas, *had* I (if I had) still the same woods to range in, which I once *had*, when I was a fox hunter, I should not resign my manhood for a maintenance."——Spect. No. 14.

"I confess I have not great taste for poetry; but if *I had*, I am apt to believe I should read none but Mr. Pope's."[117]—— Shenstone on Men and Manners.

Whatever these verbs may be in declaratory phrases, yet after the conditional conjunctions *if* and *tho*, they often express present ideas, as in the foregoing examples. In such cases, this form of the verb may be denominated the *hypothetical* present tense. This would distinguish it from the same form, when it expresses uncertainty in the past time; for this circumstance must not be passed without notice. Thus, "If he *had* letters by the last mail," denotes the

speaker's uncertainty as to a past fact or event. But, "if *he had* a book, he would lend it," denotes a present certainty that he has it not. The times referred to are wholly distinct.

As the practice of all writers and good speakers, and even of the vulgar, is nearly uniform in the distinction here mentioned, it is needless to produce more examples for illustration. One verb however deserves a separate consideration; which is *be*. In the use of this verb in the hypothetical sense, there is a difference between good authors and common parlance; the first write *were*, but most people in conversation say, *was*. Thus,

"Every rich man has usually some sly way of jesting, which would make no great figure, *were* he not rich."——Spect. No. 2.

"He will often argue, that if this part of our trade *were* well cultivated, we should gain from one nation," &c.—— Same.

"*Were* I (if I were) a father, I should take a particular care to preserve my children from these little horrors of imagination."——Same, No. 12.

> "Nor think, tho men *were* none,
> That heaven would want spectators, God
> want praise."

Milton, P. L.

> "What then he *was*, oh, *were* your Nestor
> now."

Pope, Iliad, b. 7. 189.

"Yes, if the nature of a clock *were* to speak, not

strike."——Ben Johnson.

"Where the poor knave erroneously
believes,
If he *were* rich, he would build churches,
or
Do such mad things."——Same.

Were, in these examples, is the same hypothetical present tense just described, having not the least reference to the past.[118] But in conversation, we generally hear *was*; "if I *was* in his place;" "if he *was* here *now*," &c. and I observe that modern writers are copying the general practice.

"If I *was* not afraid of being thought to refine too much."—Boling. Refl. on Exile.

Both these forms have such authorities to support them, that neither can be considered as wholly incorrect; they are both English. But custom will eventually establish the latter, *was*, as the hypothetical form of the substantive verb. It is now almost universally used, except in books; and the tide of general practice is irresistible.

The following examples will illustrate what has been advanced.

Present time. Affirmative.

If he *has* or *is*—denotes uncertainty. If he *had* or *were* or *was*—denote certainty that he has not, or is not.

Negative.

If he *has* not or *is* not—uncertainty. If he *had* not, *were* not or *was* not—certainty that he has or is.

Past time. Affirm.

If he *had* or *was* yesterday—uncertainty. If he *had* have,[119] or *had* been yesterday—certainty that he *had* not, or *was* not.

Negative.

If he *had* or *was* not—uncertainty. If he *had* not have, or *had* not been—certainty that he had or was.[120]

I cannot close my remarks on the tenses of the English verb, without noticing a common error, which must have sprung from inattention, and is perhaps too general now to admit of correction. It is the use of the past tense after another verb or *that*, when the sense requires a change of tenses. Thus,

"Suppose I were to say, that to every art there *was* a system of such various and well approved principles."——Harris.

The first part of the sentence is hypothetical, *suppose I were to say*; but the last becomes declaratory under the supposition, and therefore the form of the verb should be changed to the present, indicative, *that to every art there is a system*: For it must be remarked that when the English speak of general existence, they use the present time; as, truth *is* great above all things; the scriptures *are* a rule of faith; the heavens *display* the glory of the Lord. The past or the future, in such cases, would be highly improper. Hence the absurdity of the passage just quoted; the supposition is that every art *has* (generally—at all times) a system of principles.

"If the taxes laid by government *were* the only ones we *had* to pay."

The author's meaning is, "the only taxes we *have* to pay;" and he was probably led into the mistake by not understanding the preceding hypothetical verb,

were, which actually speaks of the present time conditionally.

The error will be more striking in the following passages.

"If an atheist would well consider the arguments in this book, he would confess there *was* a God."

There *was* a God! And why not confess that there *is* a God? The writer did not consider that the first part of the sentence is *conditional*, and that the last ought to be *declaratory* of a fact always existing.

"Two young men have made a discovery that there *was* a God."——Swift's Arg. against Abolishing Christianity.

A curious discovery indeed! Were the Dean still alive, he might find there *is* a great inaccuracy in that passage of his works.

"Yet were we to use the same word, where the figure *was* manifest, we should use the preposition *from*."——Priestley, Gram. p. 158.

Here is the same error, and the author may live to correct it.

But of all this class of mistakes, the following is the most palpable.

"I am determined to live, as if there *was* a *future* life."——Hammon, quoted by Price and Priestley.

Hammon is an atheist, and it would require the same abilities to reconcile the two words *was future*, as to reconcile his principles with the common sense of mankind.[121]

The following passage, from *Gregory's Comparative View of the State and Faculties of Man*, is remarkable

for this error.

"Men have been taught that they *did* (do) God acceptable service, by abstracting themselves from all the duties they *owed* (owe) to society; and by inflicting on themselves the severest tortures which nature can support. They have been taught that it *was* (is) their duty," &c.

"And yet one would think that this *was* the principal use of the study of history."——Bolingbroke on Hist. letter 3.

A similar fault occurs in one of Mrs. Thale's letters to Dr. Johnson, Aug. 9, 1775.

"—Yet I have always found the best supplement for talk *was* writing."

So in Blackstone's Commentaries, book 1. chap. 7.

"It was observed in a former chapter, that one of the principal bulwarks of civil liberty, or, in other words, of the British constitution, *was* the limitation of the king's prerogative."

The observation had been made in time past, but respecting a fact that exists *now*, and at all times while the British constitution exists. The sentence therefore should run thus; "it *was* observed that one principal bulwark of civil liberty, *is* the limitation of the king's prerogative."

No fault is more common; we every day hear such expressions as these; "If I thought it *was* so;" "suppose I should say she *was* handsome;" "I did not think it *was* so late," &c. *Was*, in the first and last examples, should be the infinitive, *to be*; and in the second, the present time, *is*. Had proper attention been paid to our language, so many palpable mistakes would not

have crept into practice, and into the most correct and elegant writings. Dr. Reid is perhaps the only writer who has generally avoided this error.

The Greek and Roman writers were not guilty of such mistakes. Either the varieties of inflection in their languages, or superior care in the writers, made them attentive to the nice distinctions of time. In the following passage, the translators of the Bible, by adhering closely to the original, have avoided the common error before mentioned.

"I *knew* thee that thou art an hard man."—Matth. xxv. 24. "Εγνων ὁτι σκληρος ει ανθρωπος;" literally, *having known* that thou *art* an hard man. So also ver. 26, "Thou wicked and slothful servant, thou *knewest* that I *reap*, where I sowed not;" "ηδεις ὁτι θεριζω." Had these passages been translated into the careless stile of modern conversation, and even of many excellent writings, they would have stood thus—"I knew thee that thou *wast* an hard man"—"thou knewest that I *reaped* where I sow not." But the general character and conduct of the person mentioned in this parable, are supposed to exist at all times while he is living; and this general nature of the fact requires the verb to be in the present time. To confirm this remark let the sentences be inverted; "thou art an hard man, I knew thee to be such, or I knew it." "I reap where I sowed not, thou knewest that." This is an indubitable evidence of the accuracy of the translation.[122]

An inversion of the order of the sentence in the passages first quoted, will show the common error in a most striking light.

"There *was* a God, two young men have made that discovery." "Men *did* God acceptable service, by

abstracting themselves, &c. they have been taught this; it *was* their duty, they have been taught this." "The taxes we *had* to pay to government, if these were the only ones." This will not make sense to a man who *has* taxes *still* to pay; the writer's *had to pay* will not discharge the public debt. But it is unnecessary to multiply examples and arguments; the reader must be already convinced that these errors exist, and that I ought not to have been the first to notice them.

Sometimes this hypothetical tense is used with an infinitive for the future. In the following passage it seems to be correct.

"I wish I *were* to go to the Elysian fields, when I die, and then I should not care if I *were* to leave the world tomorrow."——Pope.

But the following are hardly vindicable.

"Suppose they *marched* up to our mines with a numerous army, how could they subsist for want of provision."——Moyle, Diss. on the Rev. of Athens.

"If they *foraged* in small parties."——Same.

The sense is future, and therefore *should march*, *should forage*, would have been more correct.

"I should not act the part of an impartial spectator, if I *dedicated* the following papers to one who is not of the most consummate and acknowleged merit."—— Spect. Dedic.

If I should dedicate, would have been more accurate.

A similar fault occurs in the following passage.

> "If nature *thunder'd* in his opening ears,
> And *stunn'd* him with the music of the
> spheres."

Pope, Essay on Man.

If nature *should thunder* and *stun* him, is the meaning.

There is another article that deserves to be mentioned; which is, the use of a verb after *as* or *than*, apparently without a nominative.

"This unlimited power is what the best legislators of all ages have endeavored to deposit in such hands, as *would preserve* the people from rapine."——Swift, vol. 2. Contests, &c.

"*Would preserve*" seems to have no nominative, for *hands* cannot be inserted without changing the form of the sentence; *in those hands which would preserve*.

"A hypocrite hath so many things to attend to, *as make* his life a very perplexed and intricate thing."——Tillotson.

This mode of expression is however well established and occasions no obscurity. The truth is, *as* is an article or relative equivalent to *that* or *which*; and the criticisms of Lowth on the conjunctions, where he condemns the use of *as* and *so* in a number of instances, prove that he knew nothing about the true meaning of these words. See Diversions of Purley, page 283.

Another form of expression, peculiar to our language, is the *participial noun*, a word derived from a verb, and having the properties, both of a verb and a noun; as, "I heard of *his acquiring* a large estate." *Acquiring* here expresses the *act done*, the acquisition; yet governs the following objective case, *estate*. When a noun precedes the participle, it takes the sign of the possessive, "I heard of a *man's acquiring* an estate." This is the genuin English idiom; and yet modern writers very improperly omit the sign of the

possessive, as, I heard of a *man acquiring* an estate. This omission often changes the sense of the phrase or leaves it ambiguous.

The omission of the sign of the possessive in the following example is a very great fault.

"Of a general or public act, the courts of law are bound to take notice judicially and *ex officio*, without the *statute being* particularly pleaded."——Blackstone Comment. vol. 1. p. 86.

The preposition *without* here governs the phrase following, which might otherwise be properly arranged thus, without *the particular pleading of the statute*, or without *pleading the statute particularly*. But as the sentence stands, there is nothing to show the true construction, or how the sentence may be resolved: *Being* and *pleaded* both stand as participles; whereas the construction requires that they should be considered as standing for a noun; for *without* does not govern *statute*; *without the statute*, is not the meaning of the writer. But it governs *pleading*, or refers immediately to that idea or union of ideas, expressed by *being particularly pleaded*. As these last words represent a noun, which is immediately governed by the preposition, *without*, the word *statute* should have the sign of the possessive, as much as any word in the genitive case, *without the statute's being particularly pleaded*; that is, without the particular pleading *of the statute* by the parties; for in order to make grammar or sense, *statute* must be in the possessive.

To confirm these remarks, I would just add, that when we substitute a pronoun in such cases, we always use the possessive case. Suppose the word *statute* had been previously used, in the sentence; the writer then would have used the pronoun in the

close of the sentence, thus; "without *its* being particularly pleaded;" and I presume that no person will contend for the propriety of, "without *it* being pleaded."

So we should say, "a judge will not proceed to try a criminal, without *his* being present." But would it be correct to say, without *him* being present? This mode of speaking will not, I am confident, be advocated: But unless I am mistaken, this last expression stands on a footing with the example cited, *without the statute being pleaded.* Numberless similar examples occur in those modern writers who aim at refinement of language. "If we can admit the doctrine of the *stomach having* a general consent with the whole system."—"On account of the *system being* too highly toned," &c. It is strange the writers of such language do not see that there are in fact two possessives in such phrases—"on account *of* the too high toning *of* the system," and that both should be expressed; thus, "on account *of* the *system's* being too high toned."

It may be questioned whether the verb *need* may not with propriety be used in the third person singular of the indicative, present, without the usual termination of that person. Practice will at least warrant it.

"But tho the principle is to be applauded, the error cannot, and, in this enlightened age, happily *need* not be defended."——Erskine, Orat. Temp. vol. 1. p. 95.

"Now a person *need* but enter into himself and reflect on the operations of his own mind."——Nugent's Burlamaqui, 1. I. 9.

"Hence it was adjudged, that the use *need* not always be executed the instant the conveyance is made."——Blackstone, Com. b. 2. chap. 20.

Numberless authorities of this kind may be produced; but we may spare the trouble, and only advert to the constant practice of speakers of every class; "he need not;" "it need not." Indeed, *he needs not*, altho grammatically correct, is so offensive to most ears, that we have little reason to expect people will be persuaded to use it.

The same may be said of *dare*; "he dare not."

I am mistaken, Lowth reprobates as bad English; asserting that the phrase is equivalent to *I am misunderstood*. In this criticism the Bishop *is mistaken* most grossly. Whether the phrase is a corruption of *am mistaking* or not, is wholly immaterial; in the sense the English have used it from time immemorial and universally, *mistaken* is a mere adjective, signifying that one is in an error; and this sense the Bishop should have explained, and not rejected the phrase.

PARTICLES.

The same author disapproves of *to* after *averse*; another example of his hasty decision. The practice of good writers and speakers is almost wholly in favor of *to*, and this is good authority; the propriety of the English particles depending almost solely on their use, without any reference to Latin rules. *Averse* is an adjective, describing a certain state or quality of the mind, without regard to motion, and therefore *averse from* is as improper as *contrary from*, *opposed from*, or *reluctant from*. Indeed in the original sense of *from*, explained by Mr. Horne Tooke, as denoting *beginning*, *averse from* appears to be nonsense.

The following phrases are said to be faulty; *previous to*, *antecedent to*, with others of a similar nature. The

criticism on these expressions must have been made on a very superficial view of the subject. In this sentence, "previous to the establishment of the new government, the resolutions of Congress could not be enforced by legal compulsory penalties;" *previous* refers to the word *time* or something equivalent implied, *at the time previous*, or *during the time or period, previous* to the establishment of the new government. This is the strict grammatical resolution of the phrase; and the usual correction, *previously*, is glaringly absurd; *during the time previously to the establishment*; into such wild errors are men led by a slight view of things, or by applying the principles of one language to the construction of another.[124]

"*Agreeable to his promise*, he sent me the papers;" here *agreeable* is correct; for it refers to the fact done; he sent me the papers, which sending was agreeable to his promise. In such cases, practice has often a better foundation than the criticisms which are designed to change it.

According is usually numbered among the prepositions; but most absurdly; it is always a participle, and has always a reference to some noun or member of a sentence. "*According to his promise*, he called on me last evening." Here *according* refers to the whole subsequent member of the sentence; "he called on me last evening, which (the whole of which facts) was *according* to his promise." No person pretends that "*accordingly* to his promise" is good English; yet the phrase is not more incorrect than "*agreeably* to his promise," or "*previously* to this event," which the modern critics and refiners of our language have recommended.

"*Who* do you speak *to*?" "*Who* did he marry?" are challenged as bad English; but *whom* do you speak

to? was never used in speaking, as I can find, and if so, is hardly English at all. There is no doubt, in my mind, that the English *who* and the Latin *qui*, are the same word with mere variations of dialect. *Who*, in the Gothic or Teutonic, has always answered to the Latin nominative, *qui*; the dative *cui*, which was pronounced like *qui*, and the ablative *quo*; in the same manner as *whose* has answered to *cujus*, in all genders; *whom* to *quem*, *quam*, and *what* to *quod*. So that *who* did he speak *to*? *Who* did you go *with*? were probably as good English, in ancient times, as *cui dixit? Cum quo ivisti?* in Latin. Nay, it is more than probable that *who* was once wholly used in asking questions, even in the objective case; *who* did he marry? until some Latin student began to suspect it bad English, because not agreeable to the Latin rules. At any rate, *whom* do you speak *to*? is a corruption, and all the grammars that can be formed will not extend the use of the phrase beyond the walls of a college.

The foregoing criticisms will perhaps illustrate and confirm an assertion of Mr. Horne Tooke, that "Lowth has rejected much *good* English." I should go farther and assert that he has criticized away more phrases of *good* English, than he has corrected of *bad*. He has not only mistaken the true construction of many phrases, but he has rejected others that have been used generally by the English nation from the earliest times, and by arbitrary rules, substituted phrases that have been rarely, or never used at all. To detect such errors, and restrain the influence of such respectable names, in corrupting the true idiom of our tongue, I conceive to be the duty of every friend to American literature.

On examining the language, and comparing the

practice of speaking among the yeomanry of this country, with the stile of Shakespear and Addison, I am constrained to declare that the people of America, in particular the English descendants, speak the most *pure English* now known in the world. There is hardly a foreign idiom in their language; by which I mean, a *phrase* that has not been used by the best English writers from the time of Chaucer. They retain a few obsolete *words*, which have been dropt by writers, probably from mere affectation, as those which are substituted are neither more melodious nor expressive. In many instances they retain correct phrases, instead of which the pretended refiners of the language have introduced those which are highly improper and absurd.

Let Englishmen take notice that when I speak of the American yeomanry, the latter are not to be compared to the illiterate peasantry of their own country. The yeomanry of this country consist of substantial independent freeholders, masters of their own persons and lords of their own soil. These men have considerable education. They not only learn to read, write and keep accounts; but a vast proportion of them read newspapers every week, and besides the Bible, which is found in all families, they read the best English sermons and treatises upon religion, ethics, geography and history; such as the works of Watts, Addison, Atterbury, Salmon, &c. In the eastern states, there are public schools sufficient to instruct every man's children, and most of the children are actually benefited by these institutions. The people of distant counties in England can hardly understand one another, so various are their dialects; but in the extent of twelve hundred miles in America, there are very few, I question whether a hundred words, except such as are used in

employments wholly local, which are not universally intelligible.

But unless the rage for imitating foreign changes can be restrained, this agreeable and advantageous uniformity will be gradually destroyed. The standard writers abroad give us local practice, the momentary whims of the great, or their own arbitrary rules to direct our pronunciation; and we, the apes of fashion, submit to imitate any thing we hear and see. Sheridan has introduced or given sanction to more arbitrary and corrupt changes of pronunciation, within a few years, than had before taken place in a century; and in Perry's Dictionary, not to mention the errors in what he most arrogantly calls his "*Only sure Guide* to the English Tongue," there are whole pages in which there are scarcely two or three words marked for a just pronunciation. There is no Dictionary yet published in Great Britain, in which so many of the analogies of the language and the just rules of pronunciation are preserved, as in the common practice of the well informed Americans, who have never consulted any foreign standard. Nor is there any grammatical treatise, except Dr. Priestley's, which has explained the real idioms of the language, as they are found in Addison's works, and which remain to this day in the American practice of speaking.

The result of the whole is, that we should adhere to our own practice and general customs, unless it can be made very obvious that such practice is wrong, and that a change will produce some considerable advantage.

FOOTNOTES:

[85] It is a dispute among grammarians, whether the interjection is a part of speech; and the question, like many others upon similar subjects, has employed more learning than common sense. The simple truth is this; the involuntary sounds produced by a sudden passion, are the language of nature which is subject only to nature's rules. They are, in some degree, similar among all nations. They do not belong to a grammatical treatise, any more than the looks of fear, surprise or any other passion. The words, ah me! oh me! are mere exclamations, as are bless me! my gracious! and numberless other sounds, which are uttered without any precise meaning, and are not reduceable to any rules.

[86] See Dr. Edwards on the Mohegan tongue. New Haven. 1788.

[87] *While* is an old Saxon noun, signifying *time*; and it is still used in the same sense, *one while*, *all this while*. *Adown* is of uncertain origin. The Saxon *aduna* cannot easily be explained. *Above* is from an old word, signifying *head*. *Among* is from the Saxon *gemengan* to mix. The etymology of the others is obvious.

[88] It has been remarked that *y* and *g* are gutturals which bear nearly the same affinity to each other as *b* and *p*. Thus it happens that we find in old writings a *y* in many words where *g* is now used; as *ayen*, *ayenst*, for again, against. Thus *bayonet* is pronounced *bagonet*.

[89] Four hundred years ago, the purest author wrote *sen* or *sin* which is now deemed vulgar:

> "Sin thou art rightful juge, how may
> it be,
> That thou wolt soffren innocence to

spill,
And wicked folk to regne in
prosperitee?"

Chaucer, Cant. Tales. 5234.

[90] *Out* was originally a verb. So in the first line of the celebrated Chevy Chace,

"The Persé *owt* of Northombarlande,
And a vow to God made he," &c.

I have, in one or two instances, observed the use of it still among the lower classes of people, in this country; and I find *outed* in some good writers, as late as Charles I.

[91] Mr. Horne remarks that the French word *mais* was formerly used in the sense of *more*, or *bot*. The English word *more* was formerly often spelt *mo*.

"Telle me anon withouten wordes
mo."

Chaucer, Prol. to Cant. Tales, 810.

Is it not possible that *mo* or *more* and the French *mais* may be radically the same word?

The following passage will confirm the foregoing explanation of *beutan*. It is taken from the Saxon version of the Gospels.—— Luke, chap. 1. v. 74. of the original.

"Hæt we *butan* ege of ure feonda handa alysede, him theowrian."

This version of the Gospels was doubtless as early as the tenth or eleventh century. In Wickliff's version, made about three centuries later, the passage stands thus: "That we *without* drede, delyvered fro the hand of oure

enemyes, serve to him." Where we find *butan* and *without* are synonimous.

The word *bot* or *bote* is still retained in the law language, as *fire-bote*, *house-bote*; where it is equivalent to *enough* or *sufficiency*.

[92] So in Mandeville's works. "And right as the schip men taken here avys here, and govern hem *be* the lode sterre, right so don schip men bezonde the parties, *be* the sterre of the Southe, the which apperethe not to us."

[93] The French *oui* is said to be a derivative or participle of the verb *ouir* to hear. The mode of assent therefore is by the word *heard*; as what you say is *heard*; a mode equally expressive with the English.

[94] It is most probable that many of the English words beginning with *wh* are from the same original as the Latin qui, quæ, quod; and both coeval with the Greek. Qui and who; quod and what; are from the same root, and a blending of the Greek και ο and και οτι. This supposition is strongly supported by the ancient Scotch orthography of *what*, *where*, &c. which was *quhat*, *quhar*.

[95] The termination *ly*, from *liche*, added to *adjectives*, forms the part of speech called *adverbs*; as *great*, *greatly*; *gracious*, *graciously*. But when this termination is added to a noun, it forms an adjective, as God, *Godly*; heaven, *heavenly*; and these words are also used adverbially; for they will not admit the addition of another *ly*. *Godlily*, which has been sometimes used, that is, *Godlikelike*, and other similar words, are not admissible, on any principle whatever.

[96] *Do* and *to* are undoubtedly from the same root; *d* and *t* being convertible letters.

[97] This word is not used in modern French; but its derivatives, *avitailler*, *avitaillment*, &c. are still retained.

[98] Correspondence, letter 53.

[99] Some of these articles, in other languages, have names in the singular number, as in Latin, *forceps*, pincers; *forfex*, sheers or scissors; *follis*, bellows. In French, *souflet* is singular, and *pincettes*, plural. A *bellows* is sometimes heard in English, and is perfectly correct.

[100] Will the same authority justify our farmers in prefixing *pair* to a sett of *bars*, and other people, in prefixing it to *stairs*, when there are five or six of the former, and perhaps twenty of the latter? A *pair of bars*, a *pair of stairs*, in strictness of speech, are very absurd phrases; but perhaps it is better to admit such anomalies, than attempt to change universal and immemorial practice.

[101] "The *King of England's court*, toto nempe illi aggregato. The *King of England*, tamquam uni substantivo potponitur litera formativa *s*."——Wallis.

[102] Second part of the Grammatical Institute. Tit. Notes.

[103] Chaucer's Works, Glossary, p. 151.

[104] The Editor of Chaucer's Works before mentioned, remarks, "that *a*, in composition with words of Saxon original, is an abbreviation of *as* or *of*, *at*, *on* or *in*; and often a corruption of the prepositive particle *ge* or *y*." According to this writer, *a* is any thing and every thing; it has so many derivations and uses, that it has no certain derivation or meaning at all. In the phrase *a coming*, *a* seems now to be a mere expletive; but otherwise *a*, *one*, and *an* have the same meaning in all

cases.

[105] Lowth's Introduction. Tit. verb.

[106] *Run*, like many other verbs, may be used either transitively or intransitively. Simply *to run*, is intransitive; *to run a horse*, transitive.

[107] Lowth observes a distinction between the verb *to will*, and the auxiliary, *will*; the first being regularly inflected. *I will*, *thou willest*, *he wills*, and the latter, *I will*, *thou will*, *he will*. But altho this distinction actually exists in modern practice, yet the words are, in both cases, the same—derived from the same root, and still retaining nearly the same meaning.

[108] *If I were*, *thou wert*, *he were*, in the present hypothetical tense of the subjunctive mode, are not used in the indicative.

[109] It has been before observed, that the common people have not wholly lost this pronunciation, *woll*, to this day.

[110] See the second part of the Grammatical Institute. Appendix.

[111] It must be remembered that *be* is the old original substantive verb, and belongs to the indicative. *Am* and *art* are of later introduction into English.

[112] Lowth's Introduction, p. 39. Note.

[113] "The present tense in English hath often the *sense of the future*; as *when do you go out of town?* I go tomorrow: that is, when will you, shall you go? I shall go. *If you do well*, that is, shall do well, you will be rewarded: *As soon as*, or *when you come there*; that is, shall come, turn on your right hand: With these forms of speaking, the verb is always placed in the future in Latin, Greek and Hebrew."—— Bayley's Intro. to Lan. Lit. and Phil. 99.

This critical writer has explained this mode of speaking with accuracy; but it would be more correct to call this form of the verb, an *elliptical future*, than to say, *the present tense has the sense of the future*.

[114] So in the law stile. "If a man *die* intestate;" "if a man *die* seised of an estate in fee;" "if Titius *enfeoff* Gaius," &c. are future; and in most such phrases used in translations from the Latin and French, the verbs in the original are future. But in law the same form is used in the present very frequently, agreeable to the ancient practice. The reason may be, the convenience and necessity of copying words and phrases with great exactness. But Blackstone, the most accurate and elegant law writer, uses the other form, "if a man *has* heirs;" "if a good or valuable consideration *appears*;" and too often, when the sense requires the future. He generally gives *be* its subjunctive form, as it is called, and most other verbs the indicative.

[115] In some instances, the time is present, and the ellipsis may be supplied by *may* or some other auxiliary.

[116] In the original, the participle of the present time is employed: ἱνα και εχοντες γυναικας, ὡς μη εχοντες; and so in the other instances. The Greek is correct; "those *having* wives as *not having* them." The translation is agreeable enough to the English idiom; but the verbs represent the present time.]

[117] A similar use of the verb occurs after *wish*; "*I wish I had* my estate *now* in possession;" this would be expressed in Latin. *Utinam me habere*, using the present of the infinitive, or *Utinam ut haberem*; but this Imperfect tense of the Subjunctive, both in Latin and French, is used to convey the same ideas as English verbs

after if; *if I had*, *si haberem*, *si j'aurois*, and whatever may be the name annexed to this form of the verb, it cannot, in the foregoing sense, have any reference to past time.

The common phrases, *I had rather*, *he had better*, are said to be a corruption of *I would rather*, *he would better*, rapidly pronounced, *I'd rather*. I am not satisfied that this is a just account of their origin; *would* will not supply the place of *had* in all cases. At any rate, the phrases have become good English.

[118] The following translation of a passage in Cicero is directly in point. "Vivo tamen in ea ambitione et labore tanquam id, quod non postulo, *expectem*."——Cicero ad Quintum. 2. 15.

"I live still in such a course of ambition and fatigue, as if *I were expecting* what I do not really desire."——Middleton, Life of Cicero, vol. 2. p. 97.

Here *tanquam expectem* are rendered very justly, "as if I *were* expecting;" *now*, in present time, agreeable to the original. The words carry a negative: *if I were expecting*, implying, that *I do not expect*.

[119] This tense is not admitted to be good English; yet is often used in speaking; the *have* being contracted or corrupted into *a*, *had a written*, *if he had a received*.

[120] We have derived our substantive verb from two radical verbs; *beon*, whence come the English *be*, and the German *bist*; and *weorthan*, to be or *become*, fieri; from which probably, the Danes have their *varer*, and the English their *were*.

[121] The great source of these errors is this: Grammarians have considered *that* as a

conjunction, and supposed that "conjunctions couple like cases and modes;" a Latin rule that does not always hold in English. But Mr. Horne Tooke has clearly proved the word *that* to be always a relative pronoun: It always relates to a word or sentence; and the reason why grammarians have called it a conjunction, may be this; they could not find any word to govern it as a relative, and therefore did not know what to do with it. But it is in fact a relative word, thus, "two men have made a discovery;" this is one assertion. What discovery? "*that* or *this* is the discovery;" the word *that* carrying the force of a complete affirmation; "there *was* a God." Here we see the absurdity of Swift's declaration and the common notions of a subjunctive mode. There is no subjunctive; in strictness of speech, all sentences are resolvable into distinct declaratory phrases. "There *is* a God;" "two young men have discovered *that*;" so the sentence should be written to show the true construction.

[122] A passage in Dr. Middleton's Life of Cicero, is remarkably accurate; "The celebrated orator, L. Cassius, died of the same disease (the pleurisy,) which might probably be then, as I *was* told in Rome it *is now*, the peculiar distemper of the place." *Was* refers to time completely *past*; but *is* declares a fact that exists generally, at all times; the verb is therefore in the present tense, or as Harris terms it,[123] the *aorist of the present*. So also in Dr. Reid's Essays, vol. 1. p. 18. "Those philosophers *held*, that there *are* three first principles of all things;" which is correct English. "Aristotle *thought* every object of human understanding *enters* at first by the senses."—Page 110. The following passage is equally correct. "There is a courage depending

on nerves and blood, which *was* improved to the highest pitch among the Greeks."—— Gillies, Hist. of Greece, vol. 1. p. 248. This courage is derived from the constitution of the human body; it exists therefore at *all times*; and had our author said, "there *was* a courage depending on nerves and blood, which the Greeks *improved* to the highest pitch," the sense would have been left imperfect. Here then we see the indefinite use of this form of the present tense; for were the verb is, in the foregoing example, limited to time *now present*, it would make the author write nonsense; it being absurd to say, "the Greeks 2000 years ago *improved* a courage which exists only *at the present time*." So that verbs, in the *present* tense, express facts that have an uninterrupted existence in *past*, *present*, and *future* time.

[123] Hermes, page 123.

[124] *Previous* may be vindicated on another principle; viz. by considering it as qualifying the whole subsequent member of the sentence. "The resolutions of Congress could not be enforced by legal penalties; this *fact* was *previous* to the establishment," &c. But the other is the real construction.



DISSERTATION V.

Of the Construction of English Verse.—Pauses. —Expression.—Of reading Verse.

Of the CONSTRUCTION *of* ENGLISH VERSE.



As poetry has ever been numbered among the *fine arts*, and has employed the pens of the first geniuses in all nations, an investigation of the subject must be gratifying to readers of taste. And it must be the more agreeable, as it has been much neglected, and

the nature and construction of English verse have frequently been misunderstood.

Most prosodians who have treated particularly of this subject, have been guilty of a fundamental error, in considering the movement of English verse as depending on long and short syllables, formed by long and short vowels. This hypothesis has led them into capital mistakes. The truth is, many of those syllables which are considered as *long* in verse, are formed by the shortest vowels in the language; as *strength*, *health*, *grand*. The doctrine, that long vowels are requisite to form long syllables in poetry, is at length exploded, and the principles which regulate the movement of our verse, are explained; viz. *accent* and *emphasis*. Every emphatical word, and every accented syllable, will form what is called in verse, a long syllable. The unaccented syllables, and unemphatical monosyllabic words, are considered as short syllables.

But there are two kinds of emphasis; a natural emphasis, which arises from the importance of the idea conveyed by a word; and an accidental emphasis, which arises from the importance of a word in a particular situation.

The first or natural emphasis belongs to all nouns, verbs, participles and adjectives, and requires no elevation of voice; as,

"Not *half* so *swift* the *trembl*ing *doves* can
fly."

The last or accidental emphasis is laid on a word when it has some particular meaning, and when the force of a sentence depends on it; this therefore requires an elevation of voice; as,

"Perdition catch my soul—but I *do* love
thee."

So far the prosody of the English language seems to be settled; but the rules laid down for the construction of verse, seem to have been imperfect and disputed.

Writers have generally supposed that our heroic verse consists of five feet, all pure Iambics, except the first foot, which they allow may be a Trochee. In consequence of this opinion, they have expunged letters from words which were necessary; and curtailed feet in such a manner as to disfigure the beauty of printing, and in many instances, destroyed the harmony of our best poetry.

The truth is, so far is our heroic verse from being confined to the Iambic measure, that it admits of eight feet, and in some instances of nine. I will not perplex my readers with a number of hard names, but proceed to explain the several feet, and show in what places of the line they are admissible.

An Iambic foot, which is the ground of English numbers, consists of two syllables, the first *short* and the second *long*. This foot is admitted into every place of the line. Example, all Iambics.

"Whĕre slāves ŏnce mōre thĕir nātĭve lānd
bĕhōld,
Nŏ fiēnds tŏrmēnt, nŏ chrīstiăns thīrst, fŏr
gōld."

Pope.

The Trochee is a foot consisting of two syllables, the first *long* and the second *short*. Example.

"*Wārms* ĭn the sun, refreshes in the breeze,
Glows in the stars, and blossoms in the
trees."

Pope.

The Trochee is not admissible into the second place of the line; but in the third and fourth it may have beauty, when it creates a correspondence between the sound and sense.

"Eve rightly call'd *mōthĕr* of all mankind."

"And staggered by the stroke, *drōps thĕ*
large ox."

The Spondee is a foot consisting of two long syllables. This may be used in any place of the line.

1. "*Gōod līfe* be now my task, my doubts
are done."

Dryden.

2. "As some *lōne moūnt*ain's monstrous
growth he stood."

Pope.

But it has a greater beauty, when preceded by a Trochee.

"Lōad thĕ *tāll bārk* and launch into the
main."

3. "The mountain goats *cāme bōund*ing o'er
the lawn."

4. "He spoke, and speaking in *prōud*

*trī*umph spread,
The long contended honors of her
head."

Pope.

5. "Singed are his brows, the scorching lids
grōw blāck."

Pope.

The Pyrrhic is a foot of two short syllables; it is graceful in the first and fourth places, and is admissible into the second and third.

1. "*Nŏr ĭn* the helpless orphan dread a foe."

Pope.

2. ——"On they move,
Indis*sŏlŭ*bly firm."——Milton.

3. "The two extremes appear like man and
wife,
Coupled togeth*ĕr fŏr* the sake of strife."

Churchill.

But this foot is most graceful in the fourth place.

"The dying gales that pant *ŭpŏn* the trees."

"To farthest shores the ambrosial spirit
flies,
Sweet to the world and grate*fŭl tŏ* the
skies."

The Amphibrach is a foot of three syllables, the first

and third short, and the second long. It is used in heroic verse only when we take the liberty to add a short syllable to a line.

"The piece you say is incorrect, *whў tāke ĭt*,
I'm all submission, what you'd have *ĭt,*
māke ĭt."

This foot is hardly admissible in the solemn or sublime stile. Pope has indeed admitted it into his Essay on Man:

"What can ennoble sots or slaves ŏr
cōwărds,
Alas! not all the blood of all thĕ Hōwărds."

Again:

"To sigh for ribbands, if thou art sŏ sīlў,
Mark how they grace Lord Umbra or Sĭr
Bīlў."

But these lines are of the high burlesque kind, and in this stile the Amphibrach closes lines with great beauty.

The Tribrach is a foot of three syllables, all short; and it may be used in the third and fourth places.

"And rolls impet*ŭoŭs tŏ* the subject plain."

Or thus:

"And thunders down impet*ŭoŭs tŏ* the
plain."

The Dactyl, a foot of three syllables, the first long and the two last short, is used principally in the first

place in the line.

"*Fūrĭoŭs* he spoke, the angry chief replied."

"*Mūrmŭrĭng*, and with him fled the shades
of night."

The Anapæst, a foot consisting of three syllables, the two first short and the last long, is admissible into every place of the line.

"Căn ă bōsŏm sŏ gēntlĕ rĕmāin,
Unmoved when her Corydon sighs?
Will a nymph that is fond of the plains,
These plains and these valleys despise?
Dear regions of silence and shade,
Soft scenes of contentment and ease,
Where I could have pleasingly stay'd,
If ought in her absence could please."

The trissyllabic feet have suffered most by the general ignorance of critics; most of them have been mutilated by apostrophes, in order to reduce them to the Iambic measure.

Thus in the line before repeated,

"*Murmuring*, and with him fled the shades
of night,"

we find the word in the copy reduced to two syllables, *murm'ring*, and the beauty of the Dactyl is destroyed.

Thus in the following:

"On every side with shadowy squadrons
deep,"

by apostrophizing *every* and *shadowy*, the line loses its harmony. The same remark applies to the following:

"And hosts infuriate shake the shudd'ring
plain."

"But fashion so directs, and moderns raise
On fashion's *mould'ring* base, their
transient praise."

Churchill.

Poetic lines which abound with these trissyllabic feet, are the most flowing and melodious of any in the language; and yet the poets themselves, or their printers, murder them with numberless unnecessary contractions.

It requires but little judgement and an ear indifferently accurate, to distinguish the contractions which are necessary, from those which are needless and injurious to the versification. In the following passage we find examples of both.

"She went from op'ra, park, assembly,
play,
To morning walks and pray'rs three times
a day;
To part her time 'twixt reading and bohea,
To muse and spill her solitary tea;
Or o'er cold coffee trifle with the spoon,
Count the slow clock, and dine exact at
noon;
Divert her eyes with pictures in the fire,
Hum half a tune, tell stories to the 'squire;
Up to her godly garret after sev'n,
There starve and pray, for that's the way

to heav'n."

Pope's Epistles.

Here *e* in *opera* ought not to be apostrophized, for such a contraction reduces an Amphibrachic foot to an Iambic. The words *prayers*, *seven* and *heaven* need not the apostrophe of *e*; for it makes no difference in the pronunciation. But the contraction of *over* and *betwixt* is necessary; for without it the measure would be imperfect.

PAUSES.

Having explained the several kinds of feet, and shown in what places of a verse they may be used, I proceed to another important article, the pauses. Of these there are two kinds, the *cesural* pause, which divides the line into two equal or unequal parts; and the *final* pause which closes the verse. These pauses are called *musical*, because their sole end is the melody of verse.

The pauses which mark the sense, and for this reason are denominated *sentential*, are the same in verse as in prose. They are marked by the usual stops, a comma, a semicolon, a colon, or a period, as the sense requires, and need no particular explanation.

The cesural pause is not essential to verse, for the shorter kinds of measure are without it; but it improves both the melody and the harmony.

Melody in music is derived from a succession of sounds; harmony from different sounds in concord. A single voice can produce melody; a union of voices is necessary to form harmony. In this sense harmony cannot be applied to verse, because poetry is recited by a single voice. But harmony may be used in a

figurative sense, to express the effect produced by observing the proportion which the members of verse bear to each other.[125]

The cesural pause may be placed in any part of the verse; but has the finest effect upon the melody, when placed after the second or third foot, or in the middle of the third. After the second:

"In what retreat, inglorious and unknown,
Did genius sleep, when dulness seized the
throne."

After the third:

"O say what stranger cause, yet
unexplored,
Could make a gentle belle reject a lord?"

In the middle of the third:

"Great are his perils, in this stormy time,
Who rashly ventures, on a sea of rhime."

In these examples we find a great degree of melody, but not in all the same degree. In comparing the divisions of verse, we experience the most pleasure in viewing those which are equal; hence those verses which have the pause in the middle of the third foot, which is the middle of the verse, are the most melodious. Such is the third example above.

In lines where the pause is placed after the second foot, we perceive a smaller degree of melody, for the divisions are not equal; one containing four syllables, the other six, as in the first example.

But the melody in this example, is much superior to that of the verses which have the cesural pause after

the third foot; for this obvious reason: When the pause bounds the second foot, the latter part of the verse is the greatest, and leaves the most forcible impression upon the mind; but when the pause is at the end of the third foot, the order is reversed. We are fond of proceeding from small to great, and a climax in sound, pleases the ear in the same manner as a climax in sense delights the mind. Such is the first example.

It must be observed further, that when the cesural pause falls after the second and third feet, both the final and cesural pauses are on accented syllables; whereas when the cesural pause falls in the middle of the third foot, this is on a weak syllable, and the final pause, on an accented syllable. This variety in the latter, is another cause of the superior pleasure we derive from verses divided into equal portions.

The pause may fall in the middle of the fourth foot; as,

"Let favor speak for others, worth for me;"

but the melody, in this case, is almost lost. At the close of the first foot, the pause has a more agreeable effect.

"That's vile, should we a parent's fault
adore,
And err, because our fathers err'd before?"

In the middle of the second foot, the pause may be used, but produces little melody.

"And who but wishes to invert the laws
Of order, sins against the eternal cause."

Harmony is produced by a proportion between the members of the same verse, or between the members of different verses. Example.

"Thy forests, Windsor, and thy green
retreats,
At once the monarch's, and the muse's
seats,
Invite my lays. Be present sylvan maids,
Unlock your springs, and open all your
shades."

Here we observe, the pause in the first couplet, is in the middle of the third foot; both verses are in this respect similar. In the last couplet, the pause falls after the second foot. In each couplet separately considered, there is a uniformity; but when one is compared with the other, there is a diversity. This variety produces a pleasing effect.[126] The variety is further encreased, when the first lines of several succeeding couplets are uniform as to themselves, and different from the last lines, which are also uniform as to themselves. Churchill, speaking of reason, lord chief justice in the court of man, has the following lines.

"Equally form'd to rule, in age and youth,
The friend of virtue, and the guide to
youth;
To *her* I bow, whose sacred power I feel;
To *her* decision, make my last appeal;
Condemn'd by *her*, applauding worlds in
vain
Should tempt me to take up my pen again;
By *her* absolv'd, the course I'll still pursue;
If *Reason*'s for me, *God* is for me too."

The first line of three of these couplets, has the pause after the second foot; in this consists their similarity. The last line in three of them, has the pause in the middle of the third foot; they are uniform as to themselves, but different from the foregoing lines. This passage, which on the whole is very beautiful, suffers much by the sixth line, which is not verse, but rather hobbling prose.[127]

The foregoing remarks are sufficient to illustrate the use and advantages of the cesural pause.

The final pause marks the close of a line or verse, whether there is a pause in the sense or not. Sentential pauses should be marked by a variation of tone; but the final pause, when the close of one line is intimately connected with the beginning of the next, should be merely a suspension of the voice without elevation or depression. Thus:

> "Of man's first disobedience, and the fruit
> Of that forbidden tree, whose mortal taste
> Brought death into the world, and all our
> woe," &c.

When these lines are read without a pause after the words *fruit* and *taste*, they degenerate into prose. Indeed in many instances, particularly in blank verse, the final pause is the only circumstance which distinguishes verse from prose.

EXPRESSION.

One article more in the construction of verse deserves our observation, which is *Expression*. Expression consists in such a choice and distribution of poetic feet as are best adapted to the subject, and best calculated to impress sentiments upon the mind.

Those poetic feet, which end in an accented syllable, are the most forcible. Hence the Iambic measure is best adapted to solemn and sublime subjects. This is the measure of the Epic, of poems on grave moral subjects, of elegies, &c. The Spondee, a foot of two long syllables, when admitted into the Iambic measure, adds much to the solemnity of the movement.

"While the clear sun, rejoicing still to rise,
In pomp *rolls round* immeasurable skies."

Dwight.

The Dactyl, *rolls round*, expresses beautifully the majesty of the sun in his course.

It is a general rule, that the more important syllables there are in a passage, whether of prose or verse, the more heavy is the stile. For example:

"A past, vamp'd, future, old, reviv'd new
piece."

"Men, bearded, bald, cowl'd, uncowl'd,
shod, unshod."

Such lines are destitute of melody and are admissible only when they suit the sound to the sense. In the high burlesque stile, of which kind is Pope's Dunciad, they give the sentiment an ironical air of importance, and from this circumstance derive a beauty. On the other hand, a large proportion of unaccented syllables or particles, deprives language of energy; and it is this circumstance principally which in prose constitutes the difference between the grave historical, and the familiar stile. The greatest number of long syllables ever admitted into a heroic verse, is

seven, as in the foregoing; the smallest number is three.

"Or to a sād varīety of wōe."

The Trochaic measure, in which every foot closes with a weak syllable, is well calculated for lively subjects.

"Softly sweet in Lydian measures
Soon he sooth'd his soul to pleasures;
War he sung is toil and trouble,
Honor but an empty bubble," &c.

The Anapæstic measure, in which there are two short syllables to one long, is best adapted to express the impetuosity of passion or action. Shenstone has used it to great advantage, in his inimitable pastoral ballad. It describes beautifully the strong and lively emotions which agitate the lover, and his anxiety to please, which continually hurries him from one object and one exertion to another.

"I have found out a gift for my fair,
I have found where the wood pigeons
breed;
Yet let me that plunder forbear,
She will say 'twas a barbarous deed.
For he ne'er could prove true, she averr'd,
Who could rob a poor bird of her young:
And I lov'd her the more when I heard
Such tenderness fall from her tongue."

The Amphibrachic measure, in which there is a long syllable between two short ones, is best adapted to lively comic subjects; as in Addison's Rosamond.

"Since conjugal passion
Has come into fashion,
And marriage so blest on the throne is,
Like Venus I'll shine,
Be fond and be fine,
And Sir Trusty shall be my Adonis."

Such a measure gives sentiment a ludicrous air, and consequently is ill adapted to serious subjects.

Great art may be used by a poet in choosing words and feet adapted to his subject. Take the following specimen.

"Now here, now there, the warriors fall;
amain
Groans murmur, armor sounds, and shouts
convulse the plain."

The feet in the last line are happily chosen. The slow Spondee, in the beginning of the verse, fixes the mind upon the dismal scene of woe; the solemnity is heightened by the pauses in the middle of the second and at the end of the third foot. But when the poet comes to shake the plains, he closes the line with three forcible Iambics.

Of a similar beauty take the following example.

"She all night long, her amorous descant
sung."

The poet here designs to describe the length of the night, and the music of the Nightingale's song. The first he does by two slow Spondees, and the last by four very rapid syllables.

The following lines, from Gray's Elegy, written in a

country church yard, are distinguished by a happy choice of words.

"For who, to dumb forgetfulness a prey,
This pleasing anxious being e'er resign'd?
Left the warm precincts of the cheerful
day,
Nor cast one *longing lingering* look
behind?"

The words *longing* and *lingering* express most forcibly the reluctance with which mankind quit this state of existence.

Pope has many beauties of this kind.

"And grace and reason, sense and virtue
split,
With all the rash dexterity of wit."

The mute consonants, with which these lines end, express the idea of *rending asunder*, with great energy and effect. The words *rash* and *dexterity* are also judiciously chosen.

In describing the delicate sensations of the most refined love, he is remarkable for his choice of smooth flowing words. There are some passages in his Eloisa and Abelard, which are extended to considerable length, without a single mute consonant or harsh word.

Of READING VERSE.

With respect to the art of reading verse, we can lay down but a few simple rules; but these may perhaps be useful.

1. Words should be pronounced as they are in prose and in conversation; for reading is but rehearsing another's conversation.

2. The emphasis should be observed as in prose. The voice should bound from accent to accent, and no stress should be laid on little unimportant words, nor on weak syllables.

3. The sentential pauses should be observed as in prose; these are not affected by the kind of writing, being regulated entirely by the sense. But as the cesural and final pauses are designed to encrease the melody of verse, the strictest attention must be paid to them in reading. They mark a suspension of voice without rising or falling.

To read prose well it is necessary to understand what is read; and to read poetry well, it is further necessary to understand the structure of verse. For want of this knowlege, most people read all verse like the Iambic measure. The following are pure Iambics.

"Above how high progressive life may go!
Around how wide, how deep extend
below!"

It is so easy to lay an accent on every second syllable, that any school boy can read this measure with tolerable propriety. But the misfortune is, that when a habit of reading this kind of meter is once formed, persons do not vary their manner to suit other measures. Thus in reciting the following line,

"Load *the* tall *bark*, and launch in*to* the
main,"

many people would lay the accent on every second

syllable; and thus read, our poetry becomes the most monotonous and ridiculous of all poetry in the world.

Let the following line be repeated without its pauses, and it loses its principal beauty.

"Bold, as a hero,, as a virgin, mild."

So in the following.

"Reason, the card,, but passion, is the
gale."

"From storms, a shelter,, and from heat, a
shade."

The harmony is, in all these instances, improved much by the semipauses, and at the same time the sense is more clearly understood.

Considering the difficulty of reading verse, I am not surprised to find but few who are proficients in this art. A knowlege of the structure of verse, of the several kinds of feet, of the nature and use of the final, the cesural and the semicesural pauses, is essential to a graceful manner of reading poetry; and even this, without the best examples, will hardly effect the purpose. It is for this reason, that children should not be permitted to read poetry of the more difficult kind, without the best examples for them to imitate. They frequently contract, in early life, either a monotony or a sing song cant, which, when grown into a habit, is seldom ever eradicated.

FOOTNOTES:

[125] Sheridan's Art of Reading.

[126] Sheridan.

[127] Churchill has improved English versification, but was sometimes too incorrect. It is a remark of some writer, "That the greatest geniuses are seldom correct," and the remark is not without foundation. Homer, Shakespear, and Milton, were perhaps the greatest geniuses that ever lived, and they were certainly guilty of the greatest faults. Virgil and Pope were much inferior in point of genius, but excelled in accuracy. Churchill had genius, but his contempt of rules made him sometimes indulge a too great latitude of expression.

NOTES,

HISTORICAL AND CRITICAL.

[A], page 42, Text.

The author of the "Specimen of an Etymological Vocabulary," asserts that "the Celtic was demonstrably the origin of the Greek and Latin; of most, if not all the languages of Europe; of part of Africa and the two Tartaries."

Mons. Gebelin, who has, with great industry, investigated the origin of the European languages, is of opinion that the Celtic was spoken from the borders of the Hellespont to the ocean, and from Troy to Cape Finisterre and Ireland. "La langue Celtique, dans son sens le plus extendu, est la langue que parlerent les premiers habitans de l'Europe, depuis les rives de l'Hellespont & de la Mer Egée, jusques a celle de l'Ocean; depuis le cap Sigée aux portes de Troie, jusques au cap de Finisterre en Portugal, ou jusques en Irelande."——Dis. Prelim. art. 2.

From this language, he says, sprung the Greek or Pelasgic, prior to Hesiod and Homer—the Latin or that of Numa—the Etruscan, spoken in a considerable part of Italy—the Thracian, spoken on the Danube, from the Euxine to the Adriatic sea, which was the same as the Phrygian—the Teutonic or German, spoken from the Vistula to the Rhine—the Gaulish, spoken on the Alps, in Italy, on this side the Po, and from the Rhine to the Ocean, including France, the Low Countries, Switzerland, Alemain, and the two Bretagnes—also the Cantabrian, or ancient language of Spain—in short, the Runic, spoken in the North, Denmark, Sweden, &c.

The only pure remains of this primitive Celtic, the same author supposes, are found in Wales, Cornwall, and Brittany in France, where the people still speak dialects of a language which is proved to be the ancient British.

"Separes ainsi du reste de l'univers, ces debris des anciens Celtes ont conservé leurs anciens usages, & parlent une langue qui n'a aucun rapport a celles des peuples qui les ont subjugués, & qui s'est partagée en trois dialectes, le Gallois, le Cornouaillien, & le Bas

Breton; dialectes qui ont entr'eux le plus grand rapport, & qui sont incontestablement les precieux restes de l'ancienne langue des Celtes ou des Gaulois."——Dis. Prelim.

"Separated from the rest of the world, these remains of the ancient Celts have preserved their ancient customs, and speak a language which *has no agreement with those of their conquerors*, and which is divided into three dialects, the Welsh, the Cornish, and the Armoric—dialects which have a close affinity with each other, and which are, beyond dispute, the precious remains of the ancient Celtic or Gaulish language."[128]

In this passage the author seems to contradict what he had just before advanced, that the Celtic was the primitive language of Europe, from which sprung the Gothic or German. Now the Franks, Normans and Saxons, who subdued Gaul and Britain, spoke dialects of the Gothic; consequently there must have been, upon our author's own hypothesis, some agreement between the ancient Celtic and the more modern languages of the Goths, Saxons, and other northern conquerors of the Celtic nations. This agreement will appear, when I come to collate a number of words in the different languages.

Many learned men have attempted to prove that the Northern Goths and Teutones, and the Celts who lived in Gaul and Britain, were originally the same people. Mons. Mallet, the celebrated historian, has composed his "Introduction to the History of Denmark" upon this hypothesis. His translator is of a different opinion, and has generally substituted the English word "Gothic" for the "Celtique" of the original. In a preface to his translation, he endeavors to confute the opinion of Mons. Mallet, Cluverius,

Pellutier and others, and prove that the Gothic and Celtique nations were *ab origine* two distinct races of men. Great erudition is displayed on both sides of the question, and those who have a taste for enquiries of this kind, will receive much satisfaction and improvement, in reading what these authors have written upon the subject.

After a close examination, I freely declare myself an advocate for the opinion of Mons. Mallet, Lhuyd, and Pellutier, who suppose the Celts and Goths to be descended from the same original stock. The separation however must have been very early, and probably as early as the first age after the flood. To say that the Gothic and Celtique languages have *no affinity*, would be to contradict the most positive proofs; yet the affinity is very small—discoverable only in a few words.

The modern English, Danish, Swedish and German are all unquestionably derived from the same language; they have been spoken by distinct tribes, probably not two thousand years, and almost one half of that period, the sounds have been in some measure fixed by written characters, yet the languages are become so different as to be unintelligible, each to those who speak the other. But, suppose two languages separated from the parent tongue, two thousand years earlier, and to be spoken, thro the whole of that time, by rude nations, unacquainted with writing, and perpetually roving in forests, changing their residence, and liable to petty conquests, and it is natural to think their affinity must become extremely obscure. This seems to have been the fact with respect to the Gothic and Celtic tongues. The common parent of both was the Phenician or Hebrew. This assertion is not made on

the sole authority of Moses; profane history and etymology furnish strong arguments to prove the truth of the scripture account of the manner in which the world was peopled from one flock or family. Of these two ancient languages, the Celtic or British comes the nearest to the Hebrew, for which perhaps substantial reasons will be assigned. The Gothic bears a greater affinity to the Greek and Roman, as being derived through the ancient Ionic or Pelasgic, from the Phenician.

Lhuyd, a celebrated and profound antiquary, remarks, Arch. Brit. page 35. "It is a common error in etymology to endeavor the deriving all the radical words of our western European languages from the Latin and Greek; or indeed to derive constantly the primitives of any one language from any particular tongue. When we do this, we seem to forget that all have been subject to alterations; and that the greater and more polite any nation is, the more subject, (partly for improvement, and partly out of a luxurious wantonness) to new model their language. We must therefore necessarily allow, that whatever nations were of the neighborhood and of one common origin with the Greeks and Latins, when they began to distinguish themselves for politeness, they must have preserved their languages (which could differ from theirs only in dialects) much better than they; and consequently no absurdity to suppose a great many words of the language, spoken by the old aborigines, the Osci, the Læstrigones, the Ausonians, Ænotrians, Umbrians and Sabines, out of which the Latin was composed, to have been better preserved in the Celtic than in the Roman. "Lingua Hetrusca, Phrygia, Celtica (says the learned Stiernhelm) affines sunt omnes; ex uno fonte derivatæ. Nec Græca longe distat, Japheticæ sunt

omnes; ergo et ipsa Latina. Non igitur mirium est innumera vocabula dictarum Linguarum communia esse cum Latinis." And that being granted, it must also be allowed that the Celtic (as well as all other languages) has been best preserved by such of their colonies, as, from the situation of their country, have been the least subject to foreign invasions. Whence it proceeds that we always find the ancient languages are best retained in mountains and islands."

The result of this doctrine is, that the primitive Celtic was preserved, in greatest purity, in Britain, before the Roman and Saxon conquests, and since those periods, in Wales and Cornwall. Hence the affinity between the Hebrew and British, which will afterward appear.

Wallis remarks that it is doubtful whether many words in the English and German languages are derived from the Latin, or the Latin from the Teutonic, or whether all were derived from the same stock. "Multas autem voces, quæ nobis cum Germanis fere sunt communes, dubium est an prisci olim Teutones a Latinis, an hi ab illis, aut denique utrique ab eodem commune fonte, acceperint."—— Gram. Cap. 14.

But I presume that history, as well as etymology, will go far in solving the doubt, and incline us to believe that the Teutonic, Greek and Latin were all children of the same parent tongue.

We first hear of men in the mild climate of Asia Minor, and about the head of the Mediterranean. Soon after the flood, the inhabitants began to migrate into distant countries. Some of them went northward and settled in Bactriania and Hyrcania, thence extending westward along the shores of the

Caspian sea into Armenia. From these Asiatic colonies, sprung the Scythians and the numerous tribes that afterwards covered the territory of modern Russia, Sweden and Denmark. The different tribes or hordes of these people were called Cimbri, (perhaps from Gomer) Galli, Umbri, &c. and settled the northern parts of Europe as far as the Rhine.

The northern Greek countries, Thrace and Mysia, were peopled by the descendants of Tiras or Thiras, a son of Japhet. The whole country from Thrace to Peloponnesus was inhabited by the posterity of Javan and Cittim; indeed Ionia, the ancient name of Greece, seems to be derived from Javan, *J* or *I* being anciently pronounced as liquid *i*, or *y* consonant, and as it is still pronounced in the German *ja*, *yaw*. These settlements were made long before the Pelasgic migrations into Greece, which happened at least 2000 years before Christ. The original language of Greece was called *Ionic*, from *Javan* or *Ion*. The Pelasgi were probably Phenicians; and ancient historians relate that they carried letters into Greece; but these must have been in a very rude state, so early after their invention;[129] nor do we find that they were ever much used; at least no records or inscriptions, in these characters, are mentioned by the Greek historians.

Cadmus introduced the Phenician letters into Greece 1494 years before Christ. These letters were introduced with some difficulty, and both Cadmus and his followers were obliged to adopt the *Ionic* or original Japhetic language, which was afterwards written in his Phenician characters.

The Greeks, at different periods, sent colonies into distant parts of the country. These settled in Thrace, Macedon, on the banks of the Euxine, in Asia Minor,

in Italy, Sicily and on the southern shore of the Mediterranean. This Ionic or Japhetic language was therefore the root of the Greek and Latin. It was also the root of the Gothic language, spoken in the north of Europe; and from which, after the revolution of ages, the shocks of war, and the improvements in science, no less than seven or eight different languages are derived.[130]

Profane history therefore warrants us in asserting that the Greek, Roman, and all the modern languages of the north of Europe, and the English, among the rest, had a common stock. But history alone would not silence our objections to this theory, were it not incontestibly proved by a number of radical words, common to all, which are not yet lost in the changes of time. Etymology therefore furnishes a demonstration of what is related in history. When one sees the words γινωσκω and γνοω in Greek, *nosco*, and anciently, *gnosco* in Latin, and *know* in English, conveying the same idea, he is led to suspect that one nation borrowed the word from another. But when did the English borrow this word? The word was used by the Saxons, long before they could have had any knowlege of Greek or Roman authors. It furnishes therefore a strong presumption that all the streams came from the same fountain. But when we examin further, and find many, perhaps a hundred words or more, common to all these languages, the evidence of their common origin becomes irresistible. This in fact is the case.

The authors then who have labored to prove the Greek and Latin Languages to be derived from the *Celtic*, mistake the truth. The *Celtic* was not *prior* to the Greek and Latin, but a branch of the *same stock*;

that is, cotemporary with those languages.

This Japhetic language, I take to be coeval with the Phenician or Hebrew; and there are some Hebrew words in the English language, which must have been derived thro the Saxon or Teutonic. But the old British, as I before remarked, retained the greatest affinity to the Hebrew. The reason which appears probable, has been already assigned; the Celts and Britons in the west of Europe, remained, till the times of Julius Cæsar, less disturbed by wars and revolutions, than the inhabitants of Asia, Egypt and Greece.

But I am inclined to believe further, that the descent of the Britons from the first Japhetic tribes that settled in Greece, was more direct, than thro the Gomerians or Cimbri, who travelled northward along the shores of the Baltic. I suspect that very ancient colonies settled on the shores of the Mediterranean, in Italy and Spain, and thence found their way to Gaul and Britain, before the northern tribes arrived thro Germany and Belgium. This would account for the affinity between the Hebrew language and the Welsh. The opinion however is not well supported by historical facts, and the ancient name of the British language, *Cymraeg*, denoting its descent from the *Cimbric* is a weighty objection.[131]

It is certain however that Carthage was settled by Phenicians, about 900 years before Christ. Greek colonies went thither in the following century, and not long after they settled at Marseilles in Gaul. The people therefore on both shores of the Mediterranean were descended from the same stock as the northern nations.

Accordingly we are not surprized to find some

radical words nearly the same in all the existing languages of Europe. See Jackson's Chronological Antiquities, vol. 3, with Lhuyd, Geblin, and others.

To illustrate what I have advanced, respecting the first peopling of the world, and the derivation of most European languages from one mother tongue, I will here insert some remarks from Rowland's Mona Antiqua Restaurata, p. 261, with a table of words, evidently of Hebrew original.

> "*A* TABLE, *shewing the Affinity and near Resemblance, both in Sound and Signification, of many Words of the Ancient Languages of Europe with the Original Hebrew Tongue*.

"For the better understanding of the parallels of this following table, it is to be observed, that letters of one and the same organ are of common use in the pronunciation of words of different languages—as for example, *M*, *B*, *V*, *F*, *P*, are labials: *T*, *D*, *S*, are dentals: *G*, *Ch*, *H*, *K*, *C*, are gutturals—and therefore if the Hebrew word or sound begins with, or is made of, any one of the labials, any of the rest of the same organ will answer it in the derivative languages. The same is to be observed in using the dental and the guttural letters. For in tracing out the origin of words, we are more to regard the sound of them than their literal form and composition; wherein we find words very often, by the humors and fancy of people, transposed and altered from their native sounds, and yet in their signification they very well fit their original patterns. I shall only exemplify in the letters *M*, *B*, and *V*, which are of one organ, that is, are formed by one instrument, the lip; and therefore are promiscuously used the one for the other, in pronouncing words of one language in another. The Hebrew *B* is generally pronounced as a

V consonant. And the Irish also, most commonly in the middle of a word, pronounce *M* as a *V*; as we find the ancient Britons to have made use of *V*, or rather *F*, which they pronounce as *V*, for *M* and *B* in many Latin words; as,

Latin.	**British.**
Animal	*Anifail*
Turma	*Tyrfa*
Terminus	*Terfyn*
Calamus	*Calaf*
Primus	*Prif*
Amnis	*Afon*
Arma	*Arfau*
Firmus	*Ffyrf*
Monumentum	*Monfent*
Firmomentum	*Ffurfafen*
Lamentor	*Llefain*
Elementum	*Eifen*
Memorare	*Myfyrio*
Hyems	*Gauaf*
Clamare	*Llafaru*
Numerus	*Nifer*
Columna	*Colofn*
Gemelli	*Gefeill*
Roma	*Rhufain*
Scribo	*Scrifenu*
Liber	*Llyfr*
Remus	*Rhwyf*

Domo	*Dofi*
Rebello	*Rhyfela*
Pluma	*Pluf*
Catamanus	*Cadfan*
Dimetæ	*Dyfed*
Lima	*Llif*
Lamina	*Llafn*, &c.

"We are not to wonder at this analogy of sounds in the primitive distinction of languages. For before the use of writing, which has established the correct form of words, people were only guided by the ear in taking the sound of words, and they pronounced and uttered them again as the organs of their voice were best fitted for it; and it happening that the aptitude and disposition of those organs, peculiar to some people and countries, were various (as we find to this day some nations cannot shape their voice to express all the sounds of another's tongue,) it accordingly affected and inclined some parties of people to speak the same consonants harder or softer, to utter the same vowels broader or narrower, longer or shorter, as they found themselves best disposed to do. And thereupon custom prevailing with particular sets of people, to continue the use of such different pronunciation as they affected, the words so varied came at length to take on them different forms, and to be esteemed and taken as parts of different languages, tho in their origin they were one and the same.[132]

Hebrew.	***Derivatives.***		***English.***
Auch	Awch	*Brit.*	The edge of a sword

Even	Maen		A stone
Agam *or* Leagam	Lagam	*Corn.*	A pool or lake
Ivah	Deis-yfu	*Br.*	To desire
Auor	Awyr		Lightened air
Ano	Yno		Then
Achei	Achau		Brethren or kindred
Aedenei	Gwadnau		The soles of the feet
Calal	Cyllell		To wound or pierce
Domen	Tomen		Muck or dung
Gehel	——		Coal
Sâl	Sâl	*Br.*	Vile or of no account
Kadal	Gadael		To forsake or desist
Aggan	Angeion	*Greek*	A vessel or earthen pot
Alaph	'Alphoō		To find
Bama	Boōmòs		An altar
Hag	Agios		Holy
Hadar	Cadair	*Br.*	Honor or reverence
	Katha	*Irish*	
Hia	Y hi	*Br.*	She
Goph	Corph		A body, corpse
Deraich	Braich		An arm
	Raich		

Dad	Diden	*Br.*	The dug or udder
Ager	Aggero	*Lat.*	To heap together
Elah	-Illi, illæ		They, *masc.* & *fem.*
Angil	Axilla		The arm pit
Dapsh	Daps		Cheer or dainties
Hen	En! ecce!		Lo! behold!
Phar	Phérō	*Greek*	To bear or carry
Harabon	Arrhabon		A pawn or pledge
Phalat	Phuláttō		To keep or defend
Pathah	Peíthō		To persuade
Gab	Gibbus	*Lat.*	Bent or crooked
Dur	Duro		To endure
Laish	Lis	*Greek*	A lion
Deka	Dekō		To bite
Ephach	Ophis		A serpent
Dath	Deddf	*Br.*	A law
Denah	Dyna		This, that, there it is
Hissah	Ys taw		Be silent
	Distaw		
Cala	Claf		To be sick

Clei	Cleas	*Irish*	Jewels, ornaments
Devar	Deveirim		To speak
Ein	Ynys	*Br.*	Island
Hama	Aman	*Armor.*	Butter
	Ymenyn	*Br.*	
	Im	*Irish*	
Ivo	Nava		His enemy
Beala	Mealam		To be wasted
Vock	Vacuus	*Lat.*	Empty
	Gwâc	*Br.*	
Aita	Ydyw		Is, or are
Bar	Bar	*Irish*	Son
Bareh	Bara	*Br.*	Meat, or victuals
Beram	Verùm	*Lat.*	But, nevertheless
Beth	Bwth	*Br.*	A house, booth
Se	She	*Irish*	He, or him
Gaha	Iachau	*Br.*	To heal, or cure
Gad	Càd		An army
Boten	Potten	*Br.*	The belly
Gever	Gwr		A man
Hada	Edō	*Greek*	To cherish
Boa	Báō		To come
Aniah	Anía		Sadness
Charath	Charâttō		To insculp
Maas	Miséō		I hate

Semain	Semaínō		I shew
Aaz	'Aix		A goat
Aleth	Alaeth	*Br.*	A curse
Elil	Ellylly		Idol
Allun	Llwyn		A grove of oaks
Amunath	Amynedd		Constancy
Ap	Wep		Face
Itho	Iddo		With him
Atun	Odyn		A furnace
Atha	Aeth		Went, or came
Ische	Yssu		To burn
Emaeth	Ymaith		From him
Barach	Parch		To esteem, or bless
Gobah	Coppa		The top
Geven	Cefn		A ridge, or back
Gedad	Gwiwdod		Excellency
Gaiaph	Cau		To shut, or inclose
Evil	——		Evil
Beasch	——		Base
Babel	——		To babble, cabal; and hablar in Spanish, to speak; Lat. fabula; Fr. fariboles, idle talk

Baroth	——	Broth
Gaah	——	Gay
Dum	——	Dumb
Dusch	——	To dash
Hebisch	——	To abash
Hua	——	He, *masc. gend.*
Haras	——	To harass
Chittah	——	Wheat
Mesurah	——	A measure
Sahap	——	To sweep
Charath	——	To write
Saar	——	A shower
Aanna	——	To annoy
Phæer	——	Fair
Pheret	——	A part, or portion
Phærek	——	Fierce
Eretz	——	Earth; Sax. hertha
Sad	——	Side
Spor	——	A sparrow
Kinneh	——	A cane
Kera	——	To cry
Shekel	——	Skill
Rechus	——	Riches
Kre	——	A crow
Pasa	——	To pass
Halal	——	A hole

Catat	——		To cut
Ragez	——		To rage
Ragal	——		To rail, or detract
Maguur	Magwyr		Habitation
Madhevi	Myddfai		Distempers
Doroth	Toreth		Generations, encrease
Dal	Tal		Tall and high
Havah	Y fu		Was, or has been
Mahalac	Malc		A pathway, or a balk
Hilo	Heulo		Shining. *Apollo, Sol.*
Tor	Toar	*Irish.*	A boundary, or limit
	Terfyn	*Br.*	
Siu	Syw		Resplendent
Achalas	Achles		Defence, Achilles
Machaneh	Machno *and* Mechain		Places of defence of old in the co. of Montgomery. Penmachno
Chorau	Crau		Holes
Choresh	Cors	*Br.*	A place full of small wood or reeds

Nodah	Nodi		To make known, or note
Jadha	Addef		To know
	'Oída	*Greek*	
Hathorath	Athrawiaeth	*Br.*	Discipline
Jch	Eich		Your, or your own
Jared	I wared		Descended
Cha	Chwi		You
Jain	Gwîn		Wine
Toledouth	Tylwyth		Generations
Lus	Llyfu		To go away, or avoid
Caolath	Colled		A loss
Hounil	Ynnill		Gain
Jester	Ystyr		Consideration
Jadadh	Gwahodd		To invite
Cafodoth	Cyfoeth		Honours, or wealth
Cis	Cîst		A chest
Bar	Far	*Lat.*	Bread corn
	Bara	*Br.*	
Shevah	——		Seven
Dakar	——		A dagger
Hinnek	——		To hang
Shelet	——		A shield
Hever	——		Over, or above
Shibbar	——		To shiver, or quake

Jiled	——		[133]A child
Chœbel	——		A cable
Parak	——		To break
Gannaf	——		A knave, or a thief
Coll	——		All
Hannah	——		To annoy, or hurt
Eth	Etos	*Greek*	A year, or age
	Ætas	*Lat.*	
San	Cœna		A supper
Nabal	Nebulo		A churl
Mot	Motus	*Lat.*	Motion
Bath	Batos	*Greek*	A thorn
Eden	Edone		Pleasure
Kolah	Kleiō		To praise
Sas	Ses		A moth
Phac	Phake		Lentil
Skopac	Scopō		To speculate
Jounec	Jevangc	*Br.*	A suckling
Hamohad	Ammod		Covenant
Parad	Pared		A partition
Keren	Corn		A horn
Kefel	Cefail		The armpit
Me-Ab	Mâb		Son, or from a father
Luung	Llyngcu		To swallow
Temutha	Difetha		Destruction

Ceremluach	Cromlech		A sacrificing stone
Hamule	Aml		Plenty, or store
Mah?	Mae?		What? where? how?
Magal	Maglu		To betray
Makel	Magl		A staff
Meria	Mêr		Fat, or marrow
Mout	Mudo		To remove
Meth	Methu		To die, or fail
Mar	Maer		A lord
Marad	Brad		[134]Rebellion
Nafe	Nef		Joyful
Taphilu	Taflu		To cast
Hanes	Hanes		To signify
Nevath	Neuadd		Habitation
Jissal	Isel *or* Iselu		To throw down
Naoaph	Nwyf		Lust
Nadu	Nadu		They moan
Sethar	Sathru		To throw under feet
Heber	Aber		A ford, or passage
Nucchu	Nychu		Being smitten
Nuu	Nhwy		They, or those
Naodhad	Nodded		To escape
Gadah	Gadaw	*Br.*	To pass by
Niued	Niweid		To spoil
Goloth	Golwyth		Burnt offerings

Mohal	Moel		Top of a hill
Galas	Glwys		Pleasant
Hasem	Asen		A rib, or bone
Garevath	Gwarth		Shame
Taphug	Diffyg		Want, or defect
Phoreth	Ffrwyth		Fruit, or effect
Pach	Bach		A crooked stick
Pinnouth	Pennaeth		Chief, or uppermost
Phinnah	Ffynnu		To prosper
Path	Peth		A part or portion
Philegesh	Ffiloges		A concubine
Caton	Cwttyn		Short and little
Cir	Caer		A walled town
Reith	Rhîth		Appearance
Tireneh	Trîn		To feed and look after
Ragah	Rhwygo		To tear, rag
Rasah	Râs *and* Rhâd		Grace, or good will
Semen	Saim		Fat, or oil
Saraph	Sarph		A serpent
Sac	Sâch		A [135]sack
Phuk	Ffûg		Disguise
	Fucus	*Lat.*	
Phærek	Ferocia		Fierceness
Pinnah	Pinna		Battlement
Pigger	Piger fuit		Lazy

Naca	Neco		To slay
Ad	Ad		Unto
Nut	Nuto		To nod
Darag	Trechō	*Greek*	To run to, or come at
Bala	Palai		Some time ago
Hannak	'Agchō		To strangle
	Tagu	*Br.*	
Naar	Nearos	*Greek*	New or lately
Agab	'Agapaō		To love
Pacha	Pege	*Greek*	A fountain
Parash	Phrasō		To declare, phrase
Kol	Kalèō *G.* Galw	*B.*	To call
Mashal	Basileuō	*Greek*	To reign
Shareka	Syrinx		A syringe
Bekarim	Pecora	*Lat.*	Cattle
Ahel	Aula		A hall
Carpas	Carbasus		Fine linen, or lawn
Æsh	Æstes *La.* Tês	*Br.*	Heat, or hot weather
Gibar	Guberno	*Lat.*	To govern
Parah	Vireo		To look green
Ki	Quia		Wherefore
Olam	Olim		Of old
Golem	Glomus		A clew of thread

Amam	Ymam		Mother, mamma
Coaphar	Gwobr		Reward
Cala	Caula	*Lat.*	A sheepfold
Sarch	Serch	*Br.*	Lustful
Goliath	Glwth		A bed
Pathehen	Puttain		A whore
Burgad	Bwrgais		A burgess
Terag	Drwg		Bad, or evil
Dasgar	Dysgl		A dish
Shiovang	Sionge		Honorable
Anas	Annos		To instigate
Tam	Dim		Nothing
Pherch	Y ferch		A daughter
Tetuva	Edifar		Penitent
Leamor	Ar lafar		Saying
Casas	Ceisio		To search
Cark	Carchar		To bind; *Lat.* carcer
Kam	Cammu		To bend
Caffa	Cyff		A beam
Cevel	Ar gyfyl		Near
Dumga	Dammeg		A simile
Tor *and* Sor	Tarw		A bull; *Lat.* taurus
Turna	Teyrn		A prince, tyrant
Manos	Myddyn		A mountain
Malas	Melys		Sweet

Palac	Plygu	To fold
Banc	Mainc	A bench
Malal	Malu	To grind
Marak	Marc	A note
Cadif	Gwadu	To tell a lie
Tohum	Eyfn	Depth
Colar	Coler	A neck band, collar
Corontha	Coron	A crown
Berek	Brêg	A breach
Bagad	Bagad	A great many
Arach	Arogli	To smell
Nagash	Yn agos	To approach
Ciliah	Ceilliau	Stones
Gevr	Cawr	A giant
Kec	Cêg	A mouth
Kun	Cwyno	To lament
Natsar	Dinystr	Destruction, or ruin
Pinnah	Pinagl	Pinnacle
Mahalal	Mawl *or* Moli	To praise
Hedel	Hoedl	Life
Halal	Haul	Sun
Gavel	Gafael	Tenure
Lashadd	Glasaidd	Blueish
Gerem	Grym, grymmus	Bony or strong

Masac	Cym-myscu		To mingle
Gana	Canu		To sing; Lat. cano
Celimah	Calumnia	*Lat.*	Reproach
Netz	Nisus		Endeavor
Ptsel	Psileō		To make bear
Shushan	Souson		Lilly
Shecan	Sceneō		To dwell in tabernacles
Kalal	Gwael	*Br.*	Vile
Taffi	Diffoddi		To extinguish
Tselem	Delw		An image
Hoberi	Obry		Men over against
Aen-adon	Anudon		Disclaiming God, or perjury

Here are about fifty English words, which, from their near resemblance to the Hebrew, both in sound and signification, must have been borrowed from the latter in modern ages, or been preserved thro successive generations from Heber to the present times. But they could not have been introduced into English in modern ages, for many of them are found in the other branches of the Gothic, the German, Danish and Swedish; and it can be proved that they existed in the original Gothic or northern language. For example, our word *earth* is found in Hebrew, and in all the dialects of the Gothic. Hebrew, *ert* or *ertz*; Welsh, *d'aira*; Greek, *éra*; Latin, *terra*; Gothic, *airthai*; ancient German, *erth* or *herth*; Saxon, *eartho*; Low Dutch, *aerden*; High Dutch, erden; Swiss, erden; Scotch, airth; Norwegian or Norse, *iorden*; Danish,

iorden; Swedish, *iordenne*; Irelandic, *iordu*. In the pronunciation of these words there is little difference, except such as is common to the several languages. The ancients aspirated their words more frequently than the moderns; hence the old Germans pronounced the word with *h*, as appears by a passage in Tacitus, De Mor. Germ. 40. "Nec quidquam notabile in singulis, nisi quod in commune *Herthum*, id est *terram*, matrem colunt."—The modern nations of the north generally write and pronounce *d* where we write *th*; as *erden*; and the *i* of the Norwegians answers to our *e* or *y*, so that *iorden* is pronounced *yorden*; and it is remarkable that many of the common English people still pronounce *earth*, *yerth*.

The Hebrew *turna* is found in the British *teyrn*, signifying a prince or ruler. This word is the root of the Greek *turannos*, the Latin *tyrannus*, the British *dyrnas*, a kingdom or jurisdiction, which is still preserved in the modern Welsh *deyrnas*; and we see the word in the name of the celebrated British commander, *Vortighern*. Our word tyrant is derived from it, but it is always used in a bad sense.

In the Hebrew *rechus* or *rekus*, we have the origin of the English *rich*, *riches*, and the termination *rick* in bishop-*rick*, and anciently, in king-*rick*; the word originally denoting *landed property*, in which wealth was supposed to consist, and afterwards *jurisdiction*. From the same word are derived the Anglo Saxon *ryc*; the Franco Theotisc, *rihhi*; the Cimbric, *rickie*; the ancient Irish or Gaedhlig, *riogda*; the Low Dutch, *rijcke*; the Frisic, *rick*; the German, *reich*; the Swiss, *rijch*; the Danish, *rige*; the Norwegian, *riga*; the Swedish, *ricke*; the French, *riche*, and the Spanish, *riccos*, a general name for nobility, or wealthy

proprietors of land.

The word *Caer* seems to have been a very ancient name for a city or town. We probably see this word in a great number of Welsh names, *Carmarthen*, *Carnarvon*, *Carlisle*, &c. This word seems also to be the origin of *Cairo*, in Egypt; *Carthage* or town of the horse;[136] the *cirthe* of the Numidians, and the *Caere* of the Etruscan. "Inde Turnus Rutilique, diffisi rebus, ad florentes Etruscorum opes Mezentiumque eorum regem, confugiunt; qui *Caere*, opulento tum oppido imperitans—haud gravatim socia arma Rutulis junxit."—Liv. lib. 1. 2. Here we hear of the word before the foundation of Rome.

But the affinity between the Hebrew and British is much more obvious, than that between the Hebrew and English. There are about one hundred and eighty British words in the foregoing table, which are clearly the same as the Hebrew; and there is no way to account for the fact, but by supposing them to be all derived from the same primitive tongue.

The resemblance between the Welsh, Latin and English may be observed in the following.

Welsh.	***Latin.***	***English.***
Y'sgol	schola	school
Y'spelio	spolio	spoil
Y'sprid	spiritus	spirit
Y'stad	status	state
Y'stod	stadium	*furlong*

The old Britons however might have borrowed these words from the Romans, during their government of the Island; as the English did many of theirs at a later period.

The same remark will not apply to the following:

Welsh.	***Latin.***	***Irish.***	***English.***
Guin	vinum	fin	wine
Guyl	vigilæ	feil	watch
Gur	vir	fearr	man
Guynt	ventus	wind	
Gual	vallum	wall	
Armoric.			
Gosper	vesper	feaskor	guespor
Eng.			
Guedhar	weather		
Guerth	virtus	worth	
Guylht	wild		

In this table, we see the different nations begin the same word with a different consonant. The ancient Latin *v* was pronounced as our *w*; vinum, *winum*; hence the English *wine*. So in the following:

Latin.	***English.***
Via	way
Venio, ventum	went
Vellus	wool
Vespa	wasp
Volvo	wallow
Volo	will[137]

That the Welsh should pronounce *gu*, where we pronounce *w*, may seem strange; yet such is the fact, and an anatomist will readily assign the reason. The

French, in the same manner, use *g* where we write and pronounce *w*.

English.	***French.***
War	guerre
Warrant	garrant
Ward	gard
Wise	guise
Wile	guile
Wage	gage
Wicket	guicket
William	Guillaum
Wales	Gales, Gaul, Gallia[138]

A number at least of the words in the foregoing tables, must have existed in the several languages from the earliest times; and therefore must have been derived from the same stock.

In the following words, we trace the common origin of the Greek and Gothic languages.

Greek.	***English.***
Kardia	heart
Kear	
Kiō	hie
Kaleō	hail, call
Koilas	hollow
Kēdas	heed, care
Kerdas	hire
Keras	horn, herald

Axine	ax
Ophrun	frown
Pur	fire
Platus	plate
Xeras	fear
Mignuō	mingle
Eileō	heal, hail
Kairō	cheer
Gonu	knee
Knix	gnat
Zēteō	seek

The reader will find no difficulty in believing these words to be from the same root, when he is told that the Greeks and the northern nations of Europe pronounced with a strong guttural aspirate; and that *k* among the Greeks was often a mere aspirate, like *h*. Thus the Romans often pronounced *c*; for which reason that letter is often omitted, and *h* substituted in modern English. *Curro* and *hurry* are the same word; and so are *cornu* and *horn*; *Carolus* and *Harold*.

Greek.	***Latin.***	***English.***
'Oinos	vinum	wine
Damaō	domo	tame
Zeugos	jugum	yoke
Upper	super	upper
Gnoō	nosco	know
Ginosko	cognosco	

Some old people still pronounce the *k* in *know*.

In the following, the Welsh differ from the Greek in the prepositives or initial mutes; but they are clearly from the same root.

Greek.	*Latin.*	*English.*
Stoma	saman	mouth
Ikanos	digon	sufficient
Arkē	d'erke	beginning
Airō	d'uyrey	arise
Platun	lhydon	broad
Papyrun	bruyn	rushes
Trekō	rhedeg	run
Petalon	dalen	loaf[139]

In the following words, the Welsh are nearer the Greek than the Latin; yet all came from one stock.

Greek.	*Welsh.*	*Latin.*	*English.*
Helios	heil	sol	sun
Hypnos	hyn, heppian	somnus	sleep
Halon	halen	sal	salt
Hamolos	hamal	similis	like
Bounos	ban	mons	mountain
Kleas	klad. *Cornish*, klas	laus	praise
Pepto	pobo	coquo	cook
Hyle	hely	sylva	woods
Krios	kor	aries	ram

These words are incontestibly the same, with mere dialectical variations. All are branches of the same stock, yet neither can claim the honor of being that

stock.

But the most curious etymological analysis ever exhibited perhaps in any language, is that found in Gebelin's works. Take the following specimens.

In the primitive language (of Europe) the monosyllable *tar*, *ter*, *tor* or *tro*, for it appeared under these forms, signified *force*. It was composed of *t* and *ar* or *d'ar*, *roughness*, *rapidity*. Hence *tar* expressed the idea of force, with the collateral ideas of violence, rigor, grandeur, &c. From *tar* are derived, *taurus*, a bull; *torrent*, *target*, *trunk*, *truncare*, to cut off; *terror*, *trepan*, *tare*, *detriment*, *trancher*, to cut; *retrench*; *tardus*, *tardy*, *retard*, *tergum*, because things heavy, that require force, were carried upon the back; *intrigue*, for it implies difficulties; *trop*, too much, *troop*, *ter*, *trois*, which originally signified a multitude; for many savage nations have names only for the three first numbers; *tierce*, *tres*, very; *tresses*, a braid or plait of hair in three divisions; *triangle*, *tribunal*, *tribe*, *attribute*, *contribute*, &c. *trident*, *trillion*, *trio*, *trinity*, *entre*, *enter*, taken from a relation of three objects, *one* between *two*, makes a *third*; hence *internal*, *external*, *travers*, across; *tradition*, passing from one to another; *traffic*, *trahir*, to draw; *traitor*, *trepidation*, *intrepid*. From *tra*, between, and *es*, it is, came the Celtic, *treh*, a narrow pass, a *strait*, *strict*, Fr. *etroit*, *astringent*, *detroit*, strait; *distress*, *strength*. The compounds are numerous. *Intrinsic*, *entrails*, *introduce*, *extraneous*, *extravagant*, *transcendent*, *transfer*, *transform*, *transgress*, *transact*, *translate*, *transmit*, *transmigrate*, *transmutation*, &c.

Paltroon is from *pollex*, a *thumb*, and *truncare*, to cut off; for cowards use to cut their thumbs to avoid service.

TEM.

Tem signified river, water. Hence *tempero* in Latin signified to *plunge into water*. We to this day say to *temper iron or steel*. *To temper*, is to moderate. From this root come *temperance*, *temperature*, and a numerous catalogue of other words. The river Thames derives its name from the same root.

VA, *to go*, *radical*.

From *va*, the Celtic root, we find a multitude of branches in Greek, Latin, English and French. It is an *onomatope*, a word borrowed from the sound of our feet in walking. Its derivatives are, *wade*, *evade*, *evasion*, *invade*, *invasion*, *venio*, Lat. and *venir*, Fr. to come; *venia* and *venial*,[140] *adventure*, *avenue*, *convenio*, *convenience*, *convention*, *covenant* perhaps, *contravene*, *intervene*, *invent*, *prevent*, *province*,[141] *advance*, *via*, *way*, *voyage*, *convoy*, *convey*, *obviate*, *vex*, *invective*, *vein*, a way for the blood; *voiture*, Fr. for a load to carry; *evitare*, Lat. to shun; *inevitable*.

To these derivatives, I will just add a comparative view of the verbs *have* and *be* in several languages.

HAVE.

English.	***Latin.***	***French.***	***Germ.***	***Spanish.***	***Portuguese.***
I have	habeo	ai[142]	habe	he	éy
Thou hast	habes	as	hast	as	has
He has	habet	a	hat	as	ha
We have	habemus	avons	haben	avemos	hamos, avemos
You have	habetis	avez	habet	aveis	éys, evéys
They have	habent	ont	haben	an	ham

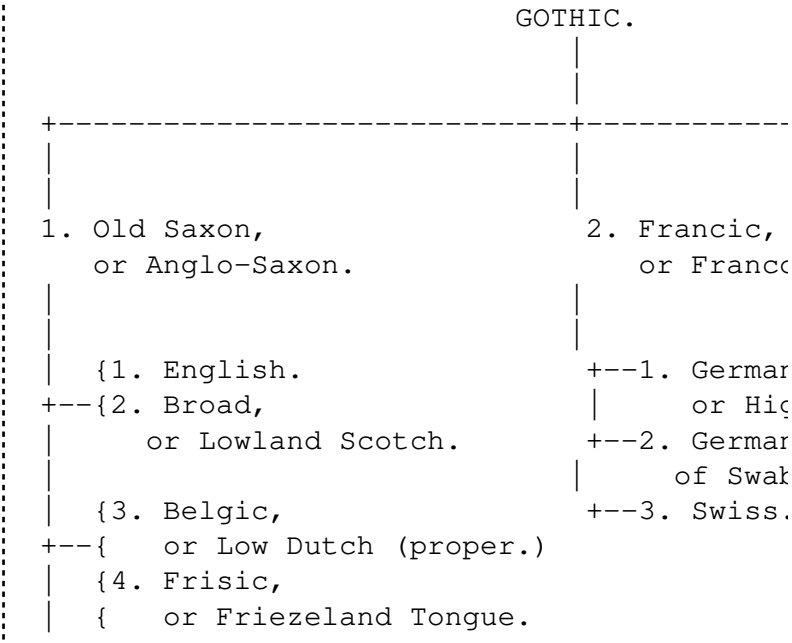
The Substantive Verb BE.

English.	***Latin.***	***French.***	***Germ.***	***Spanish.***	***Portuguese.***
I am, be	sum	suis	bin	estoy & soy	sou, estou
Thou art, beest	es	es	bist	estas, eres	es, estas
He is, be	est	est	est-es	está, es	he, esta
We are, be	sumus	sommes	sind	estamos, somos	somos, estamos
You are, be	estis	êtes	seyd	estais, sois	soys, estoys
They are, be	sunt	sont	sind	estan, son	sam, estam

It is indisputable that *have*, in all these languages, is from the same root. But there seem to have been anciently two substantive verbs, or perhaps three, from which modern nations have borrowed; viz, the Greek ειναι or ειμι, or the Latin *esse*, from which most of the foregoing are derived; the Teutonic *beon*, whence the Germans have their *bin* and *bist*, and the English their *be* and *beest*; and an old Gothic or Teutonic word, *weorthan*, whence the Danes have derived their *vœrer*, and the English and Germans their *were* and *werden*. In the old English phrase, "woe *worth* the day," we see the same verb.

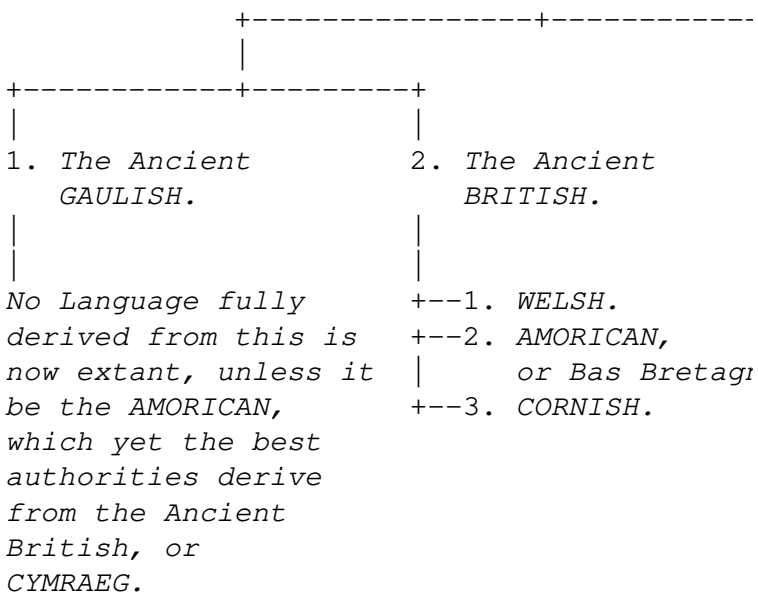
Having stated my reasons and authorities for believing all the European languages descended from one parent tongue, I will here subjoin the Lord's Prayer in several languages of Celtic and Gothic origin. The affinity between all the branches

of the Gothic is very visible; the affinity likewise between all the branches of the Celtic is very obvious, except the ancient Irish. The Cantabrian and Lapland tongues have little resemblance to either of the stocks or their branches.



Very little affinity is discoverable between the original Gothic and Celtic or their derivatives; yet this is not a proof that they were *ab origine* distinct languages; for the words in this prayer are few, and it has been proved that there are many words common to both those ancient tongues.





Specimens *of the* Gothic Languages.

The ancient *Gothic* of *Ulphilas*.

Atta unsar thu in himinam. 1. Veihnai namo thein. 2. Quimai thiudinassus theins. 3. Vairthai vilja theins, sue in himina, jah ana airthai. 4. Hlaif unsarana thana sinteinan gif uns himmadaga. 5. Jah aflet uns thatei sculans sijaima sua sue jah veis afletam thaim skulam unsaraim. 6. Jah ni bringais uns in fraistubnjai. 7. Ak lausei uns af thamma ubilin. Amen.

[From Chamberlayn's *Oratio Dominica in diversas omnium fere Gentium Linguas versa, &c.*]

The ANCIENT LANGUAGES *derived from the* GOTHIC.

I.

Anglo Saxon.

Uren Fader, thic arth in heofnas. 1. Sie gehalgud thin noma. 2. To cymeth thin ryc. 3. Sie thin willa sue is in heofnas, and in eortho. 4. Uren hlaf oferwistlic sel us to daeg. 5. And forgefe us scylda urna, sue we forgefan scyldgum urum. 6. And no inlead usig in custnung. 7. Ah gefriguiichfrom ftie. Amen.

[From Chamberlayn, p. 56]

II.

Franco Theotisc.

Fater unser thu thar bist in himile. 1. Si geheilagot thin namo. 2. Queme thin rihhi. 3. Si thin willo, so her in himile ist o si her in erdu. 4. Unsar brot tagalihhaz gib uns huitu. 5. Inti furlaz uns nusara sculdi so uuir furlazames unsaron sculdigon. 6. Inti ni gileitest unsih in costunga. 7. Uzouh arlosi unsi fon ubile. Amen.

[From Chamberlayn, p. 61.]

III.

Cimbric, or old *Icelandic*.

Fader uor, som est i himlum. 1. Halgad warde thit nama. 2. Tilkomme thitt rikie. 3. Skie thin vilie, so som i himmalam, so och po iordannè. 4. Wort dachlicha brodh gif os i dagh. 5. Ogh forlat os uora skuldar, so som ogh vi forlate them os skildighe are. 6. Ogh inled os ikkie i fretalsam. 7. Utan frels os ifra ondo. Amen.

[From Chamberlayn, p. 54]

Specimens *of the* Celtic Languages.

[** hand pointing right]I am not able to produce

any specimen of the *Celtic*, at least any version of the Lord's Prayer, which can be opposed in point of antiquity to the *Gothic* specimen from *Ulphilas*, who flourished A.D. 365.—As the *Celts* were settled in these countries long before the *Goths*, and were exposed to various revolutions before their arrival, their language has, as might be expected, undergone greater and earlier changes than the *Gothic*; so that no specimen of the old original *Celtic* is I believe, now to be found.

The ANCIENT LANGUAGES *derived from the* CELTIC.

I.

Anc. Gaulish.

Of this language I cannot find any specimen which can be depended on.

II.

Cambrian, or *Ancient British.*

Eyen Taad rhuvn wyt yn y neofoedodd. 1. *Santeiddier yr henvu tau.* 2. *Devedy dyrnas dau.* 3. *Guneler dy wollys ar ryddayar megis ag yn y nefi.* 4. *Eyn bara beunyddvul dyro inni heddivu.* 5. *Ammaddeu ynny eyn deledion, megis ag i maddevu in deledvvir ninaw.* 6. *Agna thowys ni in brofedigaeth.* 7. *Namyn myn gwared ni rhag drug. Amen.*

[From Chamberl. p. 47.]

III.

Ancient Irish, or *Gaedhlig.*

Our Narme ata ar neamb. 1. *Beanich a tainin.* 2. *Go diga de riogda.* 3. *Go denta du hoill air talm in marte ar neamb.* 4. *Tabair deim aniugh ar naran limbali.* 5. *Augus mai duin ar fiach amhail maamhia ar fiacha.* 6. *Naleig sin amaribh.* 7. *Ach saarsa sin o olch. Amen.*

[From Dr. Anth. Raymond's Introduction to the History of Ireland, p. 2, 3, &c.][143]

Specimens *of the* Gothic Languages.

I. MODERN LANGUAGES *derived from the* OLD SAXON.

I.

English.

Our Father, which art in heaven. 1. Hallowed be thy name. 2. Thy kingdom come. 3. Thy will be done in earth as it is in heaven. 4. Give us this day, our daily bread. 5. And forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors. 6. And lead us not into temptation. 7. But deliver us from evil. Amen.

[From the English Testament.]

II.

Broad Scotch.

Ure Fader, whilk art in hevin. 1. Hallouit be thy naim. 2. Thy kingdum cum. 3. Thy wull be dun in airth, as it is in hevin. 4. Gie uss this day ure daily breid. 5. And forgive uss ure debts, ass we forgien ure debtouris. 6. And leid uss na' into temptation. 7. Bot deliver uss frae evil. Amen.

[From a Scotch Gentleman.]

III.

Low Dutch, or *Belgic*.

Onse Vader, die daer zijt in de hemelen. 1. Uwen naem worde gheheylight. 2. U rijcke kome. 3. Uwen wille gheschiede op der aerden, gelijck in den hemel. 4. Onse dagelijck broodt gheest ons heden. 5.

Ende vergheeft ons onse schulden, ghelijck wy oock onse schuldenaren vergeven. 6. Ende en leyt ons niet in Versoeckinge. 7. Maer verlost ons vanden boosen. Amen.

[From the New Test. in Dutch.]

IV.

Frisic, or *Friezeland Tongue*.

Ws Haita duu deritu biste yne hymil. 1. Dyn name wird heiligt. 2. Dyn rick tokomme. 3. Dyn wille moet schoen, opt yrtyck as yne hymile. 4. Ws dielix bræ jov ws jwed. 5. In verjou ws, ws schylden, as vejac ws schyldnirs. 6. In lied ws nact in versieking. 7. Din fry ws vin it quæd. Amen.

[From Chamberlayn, p. 68.]

Specimens *of the* Celtic Languages.

II. MODERN LANGUAGES *derived from the* ANCIENT BRITISH, *or* CYMRAEG.

I.

Welsh, or *Cymraeg*.

Ein Tâd, yr hwn wyt yn y nefoedd. 1. Sanctieddier dy Enw. 2. Deved dy deyrnas. 3. Bydaed dy ewyllys ar y ddaiar megis y mae yn y nefoedd. 4. Dyro i ni heddyw ein bara beunyddiol. 5. A madde ini ein dyledion fel y maddeuwn ni i'n dyledwyr. 6. Ag nag arwain ni i brofedigaeth. 7. Eithr gwared ni rhag drwg. Amen.

[Communicated by a Gentleman of Jesus College, Oxon.]

II. *Armoric*, or Language of *Britanny* in France.

Hon Tad, pehudij sou en efaou. 1. Da hanou bezet

sanctifiet. 2. Devet aornomp da rouantelaez. 3. Da eol bezet graet en douar, eual maz eon en euf. 4. Ró dimp hyziou hon bara pemdeziec. 5. Pardon dimp hon pechedou, eual ma pardonomp da nep pegant ezomp offanczet. 6. Ha na dilaes quet a hanomp en temptation. 7. Hoguen hon diliur diouz drouc. Amen.

[From Chamberlayn, p. 51.]

III.

Cornish.

Ny Taz, ez yn neau. 1. Bonegas yw tha hanaw. 2. Tha gwlakoth doaz. 3. Tha bonagath bogweez en nore pocoragen neau. 4. Roe thenyen dythma gon dyth bara givians. 5. Ny gan rabn weary cara ny givians mens. 6. O cabin ledia ny nara idn tentation. 7. Buz dilver ny thart doeg. Amen.

[From Chamberlayn, p. 50.]

Specimens *of the* Gothic Languages.

II. MODERN LANGUAGES *derived from the* ANCIENT GERMAN, *or* FRANCIC, &c.

I.

High Dutch, (proper.)

Unser Vater in dem Himmel. 1. Dein name werde geheiliget. 2. Dein reich komme. 3. Dein wille geschehe auf erden, wie im himmel. 4. Unser taeglich brodt gib uns heute. 5. Und vergib uns unsere schulden, wie wir unsern schuldigern vergeben. 6. Und fuehre uns nicht in Versuchung. 7. Sondern erloese uns von dem vbel. Amen.

[From the common German New Testament, printed at London, 12 mo.]

II.

High Dutch of the *Suevian Dialect*.

Fatter ausar dear du bischt em hemmal. 1. Gehoyleget wearde dain nam. 2. Zuakomme dain reych. 3. Dain will gschea uff earda as em hemmal. 4. Ausar deglich braud gib as huyt. 5. Und fergiab as ausre schulda, wia wiar fergeaba ausarn schuldigearn. 6. Und fuar as net ind fersuaching. 7. Sondern erlais as fom ibal. Amen.

[From Chamberlayn's Oratio Dominica, p. 64.]

III.

The *Swiss Language*.

Vatter unser, der du bist in himlen. 1. Geheyligt werd dyn nam. 2. Rukumm uns dijn rijch. 3. Dyn will geschahe, wie im himmel, also auch uff erden. 4. Gib uns hut unser taglich brot. 5. Und vergib uns unsere schulden, wie anch wir vergaben unsern schulderen. 6. Und fuhr uns nicht in versuchnyss. 7. Sunder erlos uns von dem bosen. Amen.

[From Chamberlayn, p. 65.]

Specimens *of the* Celtic Languages.

III. MODERN LANGUAGES *derived from the* ANCIENT IRISH.

I.

Irish, or *Gaidhlig*.

Ar nathair atá ar neamh. 1. Naomhthar hainm. 2. Tigeadh do riaghachd. 3. Deuntar do thoil ar an ttalámh, mar do nithear ar neamh. 4. Ar naràn laéathamhail tabhair dhúinn a niu. 5. Agus maith dhúinn ar bhfiacha, mar mhaithmidne dar

bhféitheamhnuibh fein. 6. Agus na léig sinn a ccathughadh. 7. Achd sáor sinn o olc. Amen.

[From Bishop Bedel's Irish Bible. Lond. 1690. 8 vo.]

II.

Erse, or *Gaidhlig Albannaich*.

Ar n' Athair ata air neamh. 1. Gu naomhaichear t tinm. 2. Tigeadh do rioghachd. 3. Deanthar do thoil air an ta amh mar a nithear air neamb. 4. Tabhair dhuinn an diu ar n aran laitheill. 5. Agus maith dhuinn ar fiacha amhuill mar mhaithmid d'ar luehd-fiach-aibh.[144] 6. Agus na leig am buaireadh sinn. 7. Ach saor sinn o olc. Amen.

[From the New Testament in the Erse Language.]

III.

Manks, or Language of the *Isle of Man*.

Ayr ain, t'ayns niau. 1. Casherick dy row dt'ennym. 2. Dy jig dty reeriaught. 3. Dt'aigney dy row jeant er y thalao, myr te ayns niau. 4. Cur d oin nyn arran jiu as gaghlaa. 5. As leih dooin nyn loghtyn, nyr ta shin leih dauesyn tu jannoo loghtyn nyn' oc. 6. As ny leeid shin ayns miolagh. 7. Agh livrey shin veih olk. Amen.

[From the Liturgy in Manks, printed at London, 1765. 8 vo.]

Specimens *of the* Gothic Languages.

III. MODERN LANGUAGES *derived from the* ANCIENT SCANDINAVIAN, *or* ICELANDIC, *called (by some writers)* CIMBRIC, *or* CIMBRO GOTHIC.

I.

Icelandic.

Fader vor thu som ert a himnum. 1. Helgest thitt nafn. 2. Tilkome thitt riike. 3. Verde thinn vilie, so a jordu, sem a himne. 4. Gieff thu oss i dag vort daglegt braud. 5. Og fiergieff oss vorar skulder, so sem vier fierergiefum vorum skuldinautum. 6. Og inleid oss ecke i freistne. 7. Heldr frelsa thu oss fra illu. Amen.

[From Chamberlayn, p. 70.]

II.

Norwegian, or *Norse*.

Wor Fader du som est y himmelen. 1. Gehailiget woare dit nafn. 2. Tilkomma os riga dit. 3. Din wilia geskia paa iorden, som handt er udi himmelen. 4. Giff oss y tag wort dagliga brouta. 5. Och forlaet os wort skioldt, som wy forlata wora skioldon. 6. Och lad os icke homma voi fristelse. 7. Man frals os fra onet. Amen.

[From Chamberlayn, p. 71.]

III.

Danish.

Vor Fader i himmelen. 1. Helligt vorde dit navn. 2. Tilkomme dit rige. 3. Vorde din villie, paa iorden som i himmelen. 4. Giff oss i dag vort daglige bred. 5. Oc forlad oss vor skyld, som wi forlade vore skyldener. 6. Oc leede oss icke i fristelse. 7. Men frels os fra ont. Amen.

[From Chamberlayn, p. 70.]

IV.

Swedish.

Fader war som ast i himmelen. 3. Helgat warde titt nampn. 2. Till komme titt ricke. 3. Skei tin willie saa

paa lordenne, som i himmelen. 4. Wart dagliga brod giff oss i dagh. 5. Och forlat os wara skulder sa som ock wi forlaten them oss skildege aro. 6. Och inleed oss icke i frestelse. 7. Ut an frals oss i fra ondo. Amen.

[From Chamberlayn, p. 70.]

Specimens *of the* Finn *and* Lapland Tongues.

I.

The *Finn* Language.

Isa meidan joca olet taiwassa. 1. Pyhitetty olcon sinum nimes. 2. Lahes tulcon sinum waldacundas. 3. Olcon sinun tahtos niin maase cuin taiwasa. 4. Anna meile tanapaiwana meidan joca paiwainen leipam. 5. Sa anna meille meidan syndim andexi nuncuin mekin andex annam meidan welwottistem. 6. Ja ala johdata meita kiusauxen. 7. Mutta paasta meita pahasta. Amen.

[From Chamberlayn, p. 82.]

II.

The *Lapland* Tongue.

Atka mijam juco lee almensisne. 1. Ailis ziaddai tu nam. 2. Zweigubatta tu ryki. 3. Ziaddus tu willio. naukuchte almesne nau ei edna mannal. 4. Wadde mijai udni mijan fært pæfwen laibebm. 5. Jah andagasloite mi jemijan suddoid, naukuchte mije andagasloitebt kudi mije welgogas lien. 6. Jah sissalaidi mijabni. 7. Æle tocko kæckzællebma pahast. Amen.

[From Chamberlayn, p. 83.]

A SPECIMEN *of the* CANTABRIAN *or* BISCAYAN LANGUAGE, *still preserved in* SPAIN.

The *Basque*.

Gure Aita kerutéan caréna. 1. Erabilbedi sainduqui çure jcena. 2. Ethorbedi çure eressuma. 3. Eguinbedi çure borondatea çerú an becala turre'an ore. 4. Emandieçagucu egun gure egunorozco oguia. 5. Eta barkhadietcatgutçu gure çorrac gucere gure coidunei barkhatcendiotçaguten becala. 6. Eta ezgaitçatcu utc tentacionétan erortcerat. 7. Aitcitic beguiragaitcatçu gaite gucietaric. Halabiz.

[From Chamberlayn, p. 44.]

Here we find many of the same words, with small variations, in all the languages of Teutonic origin. It is however observable that the English have softened some words, by omitting the gutturals. Thus *gehalgud* in the Anglo-Saxon; *geheiliget* in the German; *gheheylight* in the Belgic; and *geheyligt* in the Swiss, are softened into *hallowed* in English; *taeglich* and *dagelijcht* become *daily*. Similar omissions run thro the language. Thus *nagel*, *hagel* have become in English *nail* and *hail*. The *gh* in *might*, *night* are still pronounced by the Scotch; but the English say *mite*, *nite*.[145]

The affinity between the ancient British, the modern Welsh, and the Armoric, is very obvious; but in the latter, we find a few Latin or French words—*pardon*, *peichdon*, *deliur*, which we should naturally expect from the vicinity of Britanny to the French language.

I have been at the pains to examin a great number of radical words in the Danish, and find the most of them, amounting to more than four hundred, very little different from the English. Where the English write *w*, the Danes write *v*; *vind* for *wind*. Where the

English write *c* hard, the Danes, with more judgement, write *k*; *klover*, *kan*, *kommer*, for *cleave*, *can*, *come*. Where the English write *wh*, the Danes, with propriety, write *hv*, *v* having the sound of *w*; as *hvad*, *hvi*, *hval*; *what*, *why*, *whole*.

The words, common to the Danish and English, are mostly monosyllables.

As a corroborating proof of the Eastern origin of the Goths, authors produce the resemblance between their religious opinions and the notions of the Magi. The Scandinavian mythology is preserved in the EDDA, written by Snorro Sturleson, an Icelander, a learned judge and first magistrate in the 12th century.

In this there are many notions which seem to bear a great analogy to the doctrines revealed in the Bible.

It is represented in the Edda, that before creation, "all was one vast abyss;" an idea not unlike the scripture account of what we usually call *chaos*. —"That *Surtur*, the black, shall come at the end of the world, vanquish the gods and give up the universe to the flames"—a crude notion of the conflagration.—"That *Ymer* the first man or great giant, slept and fell into a sweat, and from the pit of his left arm were born male and female;" this has some resemblance to the scripture account of the creation of the woman—"That the sons of *Bore* slew the giant *Ymer*, and all the giants of the frost were drowned, except Bengelmer, who was saved in his bark;" in which notion we observe some tradition of the deluge.

The opinion that the world will be destroyed by fire seems to have been universal among the Gothic nations. The descriptions of that catastrophe

resemble those of the Stoics and of the ancient Magi and Zoroaster, from whom the idea was probably taken. These descriptions all agree with the scripture representation of that event in the material circumstances.

The doctrine of a future state, or of a renovation of the world, was part of the Gothic system. It was taught by Zamolxis, the celebrated Druid of the Getæ and Scythians.—— Herod. Lib. 4. § 95.

In this same Edda, we also find the origin of some customs still remaining among the descendants of the northern nations. The drinking of bumpers is not an invention of modern bacchanals; it is mentioned, fable 25, of the Edda, where it is said Thor challenged one to a drinking match.

The custom of hanging up bushes on Christmas eve is derived probably from the superstitious veneration paid to the Misseltoe by the Scandinavians.

Indeed the festival of Christmas was grafted upon an ancient pagan feast, celebrated at the winter solstice, in honour of the sun and to render the new year propitious. It answered to the Roman Saturnalia, and was probably of as high an origin. The night on which it was observed was called *Mother Night*, as that which produced the rest; and the feast itself was called by the Goths *Iuul*.—See Mallet's North. Antiq. vol. 1. p. 130. Hence the old word *yeul* or *yule* for Christmas; a word that is still used, or at least has been used till within a century in Scotland and the north of England. "Yule," says that learned antiquary, Cowel, "in the north parts of England, is used by the country people as the name of the feast of our Lord's nativity, usually termed *Christmas*. The sports used at Christmas, called Christmas Gamboles, they stile *Yule Games*. *Yule* is the proper Scotch word

for Christmas."——Cowel's Law Dictionary, tit. Yule. The Parliament passed an act for discharging the *Yule Vacance*, which was repealed after the union by stat. George I. cap. 8. The feast was celebrated from time immemorial among the Romans and Goths; the Christians changed its object and name; tho such is the force of custom, that the Gothic name existed in Scotland till lately, and perhaps still exists among the lower ranks of people.

From the northern nations also we have the names of the days of the week; or at least of some of them. The ancient Goths devoted particular days to particular deities.

TUESDAY was *Tyrsdag*, from Tyr the God of bravery. It is in the Danish, *Tyrsdag*, and in the Swedish *Tisdag*.

WEDNESDAY is *Woden'sdag*, from *Woden*, a celebrated warrior deified. In Icelandic, it is *Wonsdag*; in Swedish, *Odinsdag*; in Dutch, *Woensdag*; in Anglo Saxon, *Wodensdag*.

THURSDAY is from *Thor*, god of the air. In Danish it is *Thorsdag*; in Swedish *Torsdag*.

FRIDAY is from *Frea*, the earth and goddess of love, answering to the Venus of the Greeks. In some languages it is called *Freytag*.—— See Mallet's North. Antiquities.

I will just add, it is a weighty argument in favor of the truth of the Scripture history, and of the opinion here advanced of the common origin of languages, that in all the ancient and modern European alphabets, the letters are of a similar figure and power, and arranged nearly in the same order.[146] The true Greek letters were only the Cadmean letters reversed: This reversal took place early in Greece,

when the ancient Phenician and Hebrew order of writing from right to left, was changed for the modern order, which is from left to right. The Hebrew or Phenician Alphabet was clearly the parent of the Greek, Roman and Gothic.

[B], page 52.

The reader will please to accept the following specimen, which will convey an idea of the whole.

Punic.

Yth al o nim ua lonuth! sicorathissi me com syth chim lach chunyth mum ys tyal myethi barii im schi.

Irish.

Iath all o nimh uath lonnaithe! socruidhse me com sith chimi lach chuinigh! muini istoil miocht beiridh iar mo scith.

English.

Omnipotent, much dreaded Deity of this country! asswage my troubled mind! Thou, the support of feeble captives! being now exhausted with fatigue, of thy free will, guide me to my children.

In this example the affinity between the Punic and Irish is striking; and the same runs thro the whole speech.

That Ireland received colonies from Spain or Carthage is probable from other circumstances. The Irish historians say their ancestors received letters from the Phenicians; and the Irish language was called *Bearni Feni*, the Phenician tongue. *Cadiz* in Spain was first settled by Phenicians; and *cadas* in Irish signifies *friendship*.

The Irish seems to be a compound of *Celtic* and *Punic*; and if Ireland was peopled originally from

Carthage, and received colonies from thence, the event must have been subsequent to the first Punic war; for this was the period when the Carthaginians adopted the Roman letters, and there is no inscription in Ireland in the Phenician character.

The Hebrew was the root of the Phenician and the Punic. The Maltese is evidently a branch of the Punic; for it approaches nearer to the Hebrew and Chaldaic, than to the Arabic. For this assertion we have the authority of *M. Maius*, professor of the Greek and oriental languages in the Ludovician university of Giessen, who had his accounts from *Ribier*, a missionary Jesuit and native of Malta. This fact will account for the correspondence between the Irish and the Maltese, in several particulars. In Maltese, *Alla* signifies *God*; in Irish, *All* is *mighty*. *Baol* in Maltese, and *Bel* or *Bal* in Irish, signify *Chief Deity* or *Sun*. In Maltese, *ordu* is *end* or *summit*; in Irish, *ard*, *arda*, are *hill*, *high*. These words are probably from the same root as the Latin *arduus*, and the English *hard*, implying labor. *Bandla* in Maltese, is *a cord*; in Irish, *bann* is suspension. In Maltese, *gala* is the sail of a ship; and in Irish, *gal* is a gale of wind. These Maltese words are taken from a Punica Maltese Dictionary, annexed to a treatise, Della lingua Punica presentamente usitate da Maltese, by G. Pietro Francisco Agius de Solandas.

There is also a correspondence between the Irish and Punic, in the variation of their nouns, as may be observed in the following example.

Punic.	***Irish.***
Nom. A dar, the house	an dae, the house, &c.
Gen. Mit a dar, of the house	mend na dae

Dat. La dar, with or to the house	la dae
Acc. A dar, the house	an dae
Voc. Ya dar, O house	a dae
Abl. Fa dar, with or by the house	fa dae

In several particulars the Irish bears a close affinity to the Hebrew and Greek. It was the custom with the Hebrews, and it still remains with them, to face the east in the act of devotion. From this practice it proceeded, that the same word which signified *right hand*, signified also *south*; the same with *left hand* and *north*; *before* and *east*; *behind* and *west*. This is the case also in the Irish language.

Hebrew.	***Irish.***
Jamin,[147] right hand, south	deas, the same
Smol, left hand, north	thuaidh, the same
Achor, behind, west	tar, the same
Cedem, before, east	oir and oithear, the same, or rising sun. Latin, *oriens*

That the Greeks had an intercourse with the islands of Britain and Ireland, or sent colonies thither, is not impossible; and Dr. Todd, not many years ago, discovered, at Colchester, in Essex, an altar dedicated to the Tyrian Hercules, with an inscription in Greek capitals,

ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ ΤΥΡΕΟ ΔΕΙΟ ΔΟΚΑ ΑΡΧΙΕΡΙΑ.

There is a place in Ireland called *Airchil*. And it is a remarkable fact, that some fragments of old Irish laws, which, for a long time, puzzled the antiquaries of the nation, are found to be written in a very ancient language, and in the manner which the Greeks called *Boustrophedon*; that is, from right to left, and from left to right, in the manner that oxen plow. This was supposed to be an improvement on the Hebrew and Phenician order of writing all the lines from right to left, which Cadmus introduced into Greece. This manner of writing in Greece was prior to Homer, and if the Irish copied from the Greeks, which is not impossible, the fact would prove a very early settlement of Ireland by Greek colonies or their descendants. See Leland's Hist. of Ireland, Prelim. Dis.

All these circumstances corroborate the opinion that the Celts came originally from the east, and formed settlements on the shores of the Mediterranean and Atlantic. The affinity between the Phenician, the Punic, the Maltese, the Irish and the British languages, discoverable in a great number of words, makes it probable, that after colonies were settled at Carthage and at Cadiz, some commercial intercourse was carried on between them and the nations at the head of the Mediterranean, and that an emigration from Spain might people Ireland before any settlements had been made there by the Gauls or Britons. It is however more probable that the Punic words in the Irish language might have been introduced into that island by subsequent colonization. At any rate, from the Hebrew, Chaldaic, or Phenician, or the common root of these languages, proceeded the Punic, the Maltese, the Iberian or Spanish, the Gaulish, the British, and the

Irish. The order I have mentioned is obvious and natural; and history furnishes us with some facts to strengthen the supposition.

[C], page 58.

Bishop Hickes, in his Saxon Grammar, which is a vast treasure of valuable learning, has preserved a specimen of the language and of the opinions of the English respecting it, in an extract from a manuscript of one Ranulphus Higdenus, *de Incolarum linguis*, translated by John Trevisa in 1385, and the ninth of Richard II. Trevisa's stile bears some affinity to that of Chaucer, with whom he was cotemporary.

"As it is knowne how meny maner peple beeth in this land: There beeth also so many dyvers longages and tongues. Nathless, Walschemen and Scotts, that hath nought medled with other nations, holdeth wel nyh his firste langage and speeche: But yif the Scottes that were sometime considerat and woned with the Picts draw somewhat after hir[148] speeche: But yif the Flemynges that woneth in the weste side of Wales haveth left her strange speeche and speketh Sexon like now. Also Englishmen, they had from the begynnynge thre maner speeche, northerne, sowtherne, and middel speeche in the middle of the lande, as they come of the maner peple of Germania. Nathless by comyxtion and mellynge[149]; first with Danes and afterwards with Normans, in meny the contray langage is apayred[150] and som useth strong wlafferynge,[4] chiterynge,[4] hartynge[4] and gartynge,[4] grisbayting;[151] this apayryng[152] of the burthe of the tunge is because of tweie thinges: oon is for children in scole, agenst the usage and maner of all other nations, beeth compelled for to leve hire owne langage, and for to consture hir lessons and here[153] thinges in Frenche and so they

haveth sethe[154] Normans came firste into England. Also gentilmen children beeth taught to speke Frenche from the tyme that they beeth rokked in hire cradle and conneth[155] speke and play with a childes brache and uplandissche men[156] will likne hymself to gentilmen and fondeth[157] with the greet besynesse for to speke Frenche for to be told of. [Trevisa, the translator remarks here—"This maner was moche used to, for first deth,[158] and is sithe[159] sum del[160] changed. For John Cornwaile, a maister of grammer, changed the lore[161] in grammer scole and construction of Frenche into Englishe. And Richard Penericheherned the manere techynge of him as other men, of Penriche. So that now the yere of our Lorde a thousand thre hundred and four score and fyve and of the second king Richard after the conquest, nyne; and alle the grammar scoles of England children lerneth Frenche and construeth and lerneth an Englishe and haveth thereby advantage in oon side, and disadvantage in another side. Here[162] advantage is that they lerneth hir grammer in lasse tyme, than children were wonned to doo. Disadvantage is, that now children of grammer scole conneth na more Frenche than can hir *lift heele*,[163] and that is harme for hem an they schulle[164] passe the see and travaille in strange londes and in many other places. Also gentilmen haveth now moche left for to teche here children Frenche."] *Ranulphus*.—Hit seemeth a great wonder how Englishe men and her[165] own longage and tongue is so dyverse of sown in this oon ilande, and the longage of Normandie is comlynge[166] of another lande and hath oon maner soun among all men that speketh hit arigt in England. [Trevisa's remark—"Nevertheless there is as many diverse maner Frenche in the reeme[167] of France, as is

dyvers maner Englishe in the reeme of England."] *R.* Also of the aforesaid Saxon tonge that is deled[168] athree and is abide scarceliche[169] with few uplandishe men, is great wonder. For men of the est with men of the west is as it were under the same partie of hevene accordeth more in sownynge of speeche than men of the north with men of the south. Therefore it is that Mercii, that beeth men of myddel England, as it were, parteners of the endes, understandeth bettrie the side longages than northerne and southerne understandeth either other. All the longage of the Northumbers and specialliche at York, is so scharp, slitting and frotynge and unschape that the southerne men may that longage unnethe[170] understande. I trow that is because that they beeth nyh to strange men and nations, that speketh strongliche, and also because the kinges of Englande woneth[171] alway fer[172] from that contray, for they beeth more turned to the south contray, and yif they goeth to the northe contray, they goeth with great helpe and strengthe. The cause why they beeth more in the southe contray than in the northe, for it may be better corn londe, more peple, more noble cities, and more profitable havenes."[173]

On this passage we may make the following remarks:

1. That the third person singular of the verb is invariably used with *plural* as well as singular nouns; *they beeth*, *haveth*. Whereas in Chaucer and Mandeville the same person ends generally in *en*; *they seyn* for *they say*.

The same third person was used for the imperative, by the best English writers,

"And soft take me in your armes twey,
For love of God, and hearkeneth what I
sey."

Chaucer, Knight's Tale, 2783.

"And at certyn houres, they seyn to certyn
offices,
maketh pees;" that is, *make peace*.—
Mandeville, p. 281.

2. That *yif* is used for *if*; a proof that *if* is a verb, a contraction of *gif* or *yif* (for they were used promiscuously) the imperative of *gifan*, to give.[174]

3. That the subjunctive form of verbs was not used after *if*; *and yif they goeth to the northe contray*.

4. That there were three principal dialects in the English; the *northern*, which was corrupted by the Scots and Picts, and from which the present Yorkshire language is derived; the *middle*, which came from Germany and retained its primitive purity, and is the true parent of modern English; and the *southern*, by which is meant, either the language of the southern parts which was corrupted by an intercourse with foreigners; or what is more probable, the language spoken in Devonshire, and on the borders of Cornwall, which was mixed with the old British, and is now almost unintelligible.

5. That the conquests of the Danes and Normans had corrupted the pure language of

the Saxons.

6. That this corruption proceeded principally from the teaching of French in schools.

7. That country people, (uplandish men) imitated the practice of the polite, and learnt French, as many do now, *to be told of*.

8. That Cornwail and others, in Trevisa's time, had begun to reform this practice.

9. That French had almost banished the native Saxon from the polite part of the nation, and that the *uplandish* or western people alone retained it uncorrupted.

10. That the kings of England resided principally in the southern parts of the kingdom, where the land was most fertile, best cultivated, most populous, and most advantageous for commerce.

[D], page 59.

Chaucer's particular patron was John of Gaunt, Duke of Lancaster. He married Philippa, the sister of Lady Swinford, who before her marriage and after her husband's death, was one of the Duke's family.

"Grete well *Chaucer* when you mete—
Of dittees and of songes glade,
The which he——made
The londe fulfilled is over all."

Gower.

Gower is said to have been Chaucer's preceptor.

"My maister *Chaucer*—chiefe poet of
Bretayne

Whom all this lond should of right
preferre,
Sith of our language he was *the lode starre*,
That made first to dystylle and rayne
The gold dew dropys of speche and
eloquence
Into our tungue through his excellence."

Lydgate.

Chaucer's merit in improving the English language is celebrated by other poets of his time—Occleve, Douglas and Dunbar. They call him the *floure of eloquence*, the *fader in science*, and the *firste fynder of our fayre langage*.

He died in 1400.

It must however be remarked that Chaucer did not import foreign words, so much as introduce them into books and give them currency in writing. It must further be observed that when I speak of the incorporation of Latin words with the English, I would not be understood to mean that words were taken directly from the Roman tongue and anglicised. On the other hand, they mostly came thro the channel of the Norman or Provençal French; and perhaps we may call them with propriety *French* words; for they had lost much of their Roman form among the Gauls, Franks and Normans.

The most correct account I have seen of the state of the language in the 11th, 12th, 13th and 14th centuries, is in the first volume of Bell's edition of Chaucer.

We have the authority of Ingulphus, a historian of credit, for alleging that the French began to be fashionable in England, before the conquest. Edward

the Confessor resided many years in Normandy, and imbibed a predilection for the French manners and language. On his accession to the throne of England, in 1043, he promoted many of his Norman favorites to the first dignities in the kingdom; under the influence of the king and his friends, the English began to imitate the French fashions.

But the conquest in 1066, completed the change. The court of William consisted principally of foreigners who could speak no language but French. Most of the high offices and rich livings in the kingdom were filled with Normans, and the castles which, by order of the conqueror, were built in different parts of the country, were garrisoned by foreign soldiers, in whom the king might most safely confide.[175] Public business was transacted in the French, and it became dishonorable or a mark of low breeding, not to understand that language. Indeed under the first reigns after the conquest, it was a disgrace to be called an *Englishman*. In this depressed state of the English, their language could not fail to be neglected by the polite part of the nation.

But as the body of the nation did not understand French, there must have been a constant effort to root it out and establish the English. The latter however gained ground slowly during the two first centuries of the revolution. But in the reign of king John, Normandy, which had been united with England under the Norman princes, was taken by the French, 1205, and thus separated from the British dominions. In the next reign (Henry III.) some regulations were made between the two kingdoms, by which the subjects of either were rendered incapable of holding lands in the other. These events must have restrained, in some degree, the

intercourse between the two kingdoms, and given the English an opportunity to assume their own native character and importance. In this reign the English began to value themselves upon their birth, and a knowlege of the English language was a recommendation, tho not a requisite, in a candidate for a benefice.

It appears also by the passage of Higden before quoted, that the practice of construing Latin into French, in the schools, had closed before his time. This, with the other causes before assigned, contributed to root out the French, and make the English reputable; and in the reign of Edward III. produced the act, mentioned in the text, in favor of the English. This act did not produce a total change of practice at once; for we find the proceedings in parliament were published in French for sixty years after the pleas in courts were ordered to be in English, and the statutes continued in French about 120 years after the act, till the first of Richard III.

It may be observed that the royal assent to bills was in some instances given in English during the reign of Henry VI. *Be it ordained as it is asked: Be it as it is axed.*[176] But the royal assent is now declared in French.

[E], page 66 and 34.

Sir William Temple's stile, tho easy and flowing, is too diffuse: Every page of his abounds with tautologies. Take the following specimen from the first page that presents itself on opening his third volume.

"Upon the survey of these dispositions in mankind and these conditions of government, it seems much more reasonable to pity than to envy the *fortunes*

and *dignities* of princes or *great* ministers of *state*; and to *lessen* and *excuse* their *venial* faults, or at least their misfortunes, rather than to *encrease* and *make them worse* by *ill colors* and *representations*."——Of Pop. Dis.

Fortunes and *dignities* might have been better expressed by *elevated rank* or *high stations*; *great* is superfluous, and so are *lessen* and *make them worse*, and either *colors* or *representations* might have been omitted.

"The first safety of *princes* and *states* lies in avoiding all *councils* or *designs* of innovation, in *ancient* and *established forms* and *laws*, especially those concerning liberty, property and religion (which are the possessions men will ever have most at heart;) and thereby leaving the channel of *known* and *common* justice *clear* and *undisturbed*." Several words might here be retrenched, and yet leave the author's meaning more precise and intelligible. This is the principal fault in Temple's stile.

"But men, accustomed to the free and vagrant life of hunters, are incapable of regular application to labor; and consider agriculture as a *secondary* and *inferior* occupation."—Robertson's Hist. Amer. book 4.

Supposing *secondary* and *inferior* not to be exactly synonimous, in this sentence one would have answered the purpose.

"*Agriculture*, even when the strength of man is seconded by that of the animals *which he has subjected to the yoke*, and his power augmented by *the use of the various instruments with which* the discovery of metals has furnished him, is still *a work* of great labor."—The same.

This sentence is very exceptionable. Is *agriculture, a work?* Can so *definite* a term be applied to such a *general* idea? But what a group of useless words follow! It was not sufficient to say, *the strength of man seconded by that of animals*, but the kinds of animals must be specified; viz. such as *he has subjected to the yoke*; when every person knows that other animals are never used; and consequently the author's idea would have been sufficiently explicit without that specification. In the subsequent clause, the words, *his power augmented by the use of the various instruments of metal*, would have been explicit; for the *discovery of metals* must have been implied. Such expletive words load the mind with a chain of particular ideas which are not essential to the discourse.

"—And if any one of these prognostics is deemed unfavorable, they instantly abandon the pursuit of *those* measures, *on which they are most eagerly bent*."—The same.

Here is an awkward conclusion of the period, and ascribeable to a too nice regard for grammatical rules. *They are most eagerly bent on*, would perhaps have been better; but a different construction would have been still less exceptionable. There is however a greater fault in the construction. By employing *those* and *most eagerly*, the idea is, that savages, on the appearance of unfavorable omens, would abandon *those* measures *only*, on which they are *most eagerly* bent, and not others that they might be pursuing with less earnestness. Why could not the author have said in plain English—"they instantly abandon any measure they are pursuing."

This writer's stile likewise abounds with synonims; as *strengthen* and *confirm*, *quicken* and *animate*; when

one term would fully express the meaning. "Strong liquors *awake* a savage from his *torpid state—give a brisker motion to his spirits*, and *enliven* him more thoroughly than either dancing or gaming."—Book. 4. What a needless repetition of the same idea! The author is also very liberal in the use of *all*—"*all* the *transports* and *frenzy* of intoxication."—"War, which between extensive kingdoms, is carried on with little animosity, is prosecuted by small tribes, with *all* the rancor of a private quarrel."

In short, the stile of Dr. Robertson, the great, the philosophic historian, is too labored. The mind of the reader is kept constantly engaged in attending to the structure of the periods; it is fatigued with words and drawn from the chain of events.

The stile of Kaims, tho not easy and flowing, is precise, and generally accurate. The stile of Blair's Lectures is less correct than that of his Sermons; but at the same time, less formal in the structure of the periods.

These remarks, the reader will observe, respect stile only; for the merit of Robertson, as a judicious and faithful historian; and of Kaims and Blair, as critics, is above praise or censure.

In no particular is the false taste of the English more obvious, than in the promiscuous encomiums they have bestowed on Gibbon, as a historian. His work is not properly a "*History* of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire;" but a "Poetico-Historical Description of certain Persons and Events, embellished with suitable imagery and episodes, designed to show the author's talent in selecting words, as well as to delight the ears of his readers." In short, his history should be entitled, "A Display of Words;" except some chapters which are excellent

commentaries on the history of the Roman Empire.

The general fault of this author is, he takes more pains to form his sentences, than to collect, arrange and express the facts in an easy and perspicuous manner. In consequence of attending to ornament, he seems to forget that he is writing for the *information* of his reader, and when he ought to *instruct* the *mind*, he is only *pleasing* the *ear*. Fully possessed of his subject, he describes things and events in general terms or figurative language, which leave upon the mind a faint evanescent impression of some indeterminate idea; so that the reader, not obtaining a clear precise knowlege of the facts, finds it difficult to understand, and impossible to recollect, the author's meaning. Let a man read his volumes with the most laborious attention, and he will find at the close that he can give very little account of the "Roman Empire;" but he will remember perfectly that Gibbon is a most elegant writer.

History is capable of very little embellishment; *tropes* and *figures* are the proper instruments of *eloquence* and *declamation*; *facts* only are the subjects of *history*. Reflections of the author are admitted; but these should not be frequent; for the reader claims a right to his own opinions. The justness of the historian's remarks may be called in question—facts only are incontestible. The plain narrative of the Scripture historians, and of Herodotus, with their dialogues and digressions, is as far superior, considered as pure history, to the affected glaring brilliancy of stile and manner, which runs thro Gibbon's writings, as truth is to fiction; or the vermillion blush of nature and innocence, to the artificial daubings of fashion. The first never fails to affect the heart—the last can only

dazzle the senses.

Another fault in Gibbon's manner of writing, is, the use of *epithets* or *titles* instead of *names*. "The Cæsar, the conqueror of the east, the protector of the church, the country of the Cæsars, the son of Leda," and innumerable similar appellations are employed, instead of the real names of the persons and places; and frequently at such a distance from any mention of the name, that the reader is obliged to turn over a leaf and look for an explanation. Many of the epithets are new; custom has not made us familiar with them; they have never been substituted, by common consent, for the true names; the reader is therefore surprized with unexpected appellations, and constantly interrupted to find the persons or things to which they belong.

I am not about to write a lengthy criticism on this author's history; a few passages only will be selected as proofs of what I have advanced. "Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire," vol. 3, oct. chap. 17: In explaining the motives of the Emperors for removing the seat of government from Rome to the East, the author says—"*Rome* was insensibly confounded with the dependent kingdoms which had once acknowleged her supremacy; and *the country of the Cæsars* was viewed with cold indifference by a martial prince, born in the neighborhood of the Danube, educated in the courts and armies of Asia, and invested with the *purple* by the legions of Britain." By the author's beginning one part of the sentence with *Rome*, and the other with *the country of the Cæsars*, the reader is led to think two different places are intended, for he has not a suspicion of a tautology; or at least he supposes the author uses *the country of the Cæsars* in a more extensive sense than

Rome. He therefore looks back and reads perhaps half a page with a closer attention, and finds that the writer is speaking of the *seat of empire*, and therefore can mean the *city of Rome* only. After this trouble he is displeased that the author has employed *five words* to swell and adorn his period. This however is not the only difficulty in understanding the author. Who is the *martial prince*? In the preceding sentence, Dioclesian is mentioned, as withdrawing from Rome; and in the sentence following, Constantine is said to visit Rome but seldom. The reader then is left to collect the author's meaning, by the circumstances of the birth, education and election of this martial prince. If he is possessed of these facts already, he may go on without much trouble.

The author's affectation of using *the purple* for the crown or imperial dignity, is so obvious by numberless repetitions of the word, as to be perfectly ridiculous.

"In the choice of an advantageous situation, he preferred the confines of Europe and Asia; to curb, *with a powerful arm*, the barbarians who dwelt between the Danube and Tanais; to watch, *with an eye of jealousy*, the conduct of the Persian monarch." Here the members of the sentence in Italics, are altogether superfluous; the author wanted to inform his reader, that Dioclesian designed to curb the barbarians and watch the Persian monarch; for which purpose he chose a favorable situation; but it was wholly immaterial to the subject to relate in what manner or degree, the emperor meant to exert his arm or his jealousy. Nay more, these are circumstances which are not reduceable to any certainty, and of which the writer and the reader can have no precise idea.

"With these views, Dioclesian had selected and embellished the *residence of Nicomedia*."—Is Nicomedia a princess, whose residence the emperor selected and embellished? This is the most obvious meaning of the sentence. But Nicomedia, we learn from other passages, was a city, the *residence* itself of the emperor. Yet the author could not tell us this in a few plain words, without spoiling the harmony of the phrase; he chose therefore to leave it obscure and ungrammatical.

"—But the memory of Dioclesian was justly abhorred by the *Protector of the Church*; and *Constantine* was not insensible to the ambition of founding a city, which might perpetuate the glory of his own name." Who is the *protector of the church*? By Constantine's being mentioned immediately after, one would think he cannot be the person intended; yet on examination, this is found to be the case. But why this separate appellation? It seems the author meant by it to convey this idea; That Dioclesian was a persecutor of the church, therefore his memory was abhorred by Constantine who was its protector; the *cause* of *Constantine*'s *abhorrence* is implied, and meant to be unfolded to the reader, in a single epithet. Is this history? I must have the liberty to think that such *terseness* of stile, notwithstanding the authorities of Tacitus and Gibbon, is a gross corruption and a capital fault.

In description, our author often indulges a figurative poetical manner, highly improper.

"The figure of the imperial city (Constantinople) may be represented under that of an unequal triangle. The obtuse point, which advances towards the east, and the shores of Asia, meets and repels the waves of the Thracian Bosphorus." Here the author soars on

poetic wings, and we behold the *obtuse point* of a *triangle*, *marching* eastward, *attacking* and *repulsing* its *foes*, the *waves* of the Bosphorus; in the next line, the author sinks from the heights of Parnassus, and creeps on the plain of *simple narrative*—"The northern side of the city is bounded by the harbor."

"On these banks, tradition long preserved the memory of the sylvan reign of Amycus, who defied the *son of Leda* to the combat of the Cestus." The author takes it for granted that his reader is acquainted with all the ancient fables of Greece and Rome. Such *allusions* to facts or fables make a wretched figure in *sober history*.[177]

The author, after the manner of the poets, admits episodes into his descriptions, by way of variety and embellishment. He begins a description of Constantinople; to do justice to the city, he must describe its situation; he therefore gives an account of the Thracian Bosphorus, the Propontus and Hellespont, interspersed with ancient fables, and adorned with poetical imagery. When he arrives at the mouth of the Hellespont, his fancy leads him to the seat of ancient Troy, and he cannot pass it, without telling us from Homer, where the Grecian armies were encamped; where the flanks of the army were guarded by Agamemnon's bravest chiefs; where Achilles and his myrmidons occupied a promontory; where Ajax pitched his tent; and where his tomb was erected after his death. After indulging his fancy on this memorable field of heroic actions, he is *qualified* to describe Constantinople.

But it is needless to multiply examples; for similar faults occur in almost every page. Most men, who have read this history, perceive a difficulty in understanding it; yet few have attempted to find the

reason; and hardly a man has dared to censure the stile and manner.

To what cause then shall we ascribe the almost unanimous consent of the English and Americans, in lavishing praises upon Gibbon's history? In some measure doubtless to the greatness of the attempt, and the want of an English history which should unfold the series of events which connects ancient and modern times. The man who should light a lamp, to illuminate the dark period of time from the 5th to the 15th century, would deserve immortal honors. The attempt is great; it is noble; it is meritorious. Gibbon appears to have been faithful, laborious, and perhaps impartial. It is his stile and manner only I am censuring; for these are exceedingly faulty. For proof of this I appeal to a single fact, which I have never heard contradicted; that a man who would comprehend Gibbon, must read with painful attention, and after all receive little improvement.

The encomiums of his countrymen proceed from false taste; a taste for superfluous ornament. Men are disposed to lessen the trouble of reading, and to spare the labor of examining into the causes and consequences of events. They choose to please their eyes and ears, rather than feed the mind. Hence the rage for *abridgements*, and a display of rhetorical embellishments. Hence the eclat with which "Millot's Elements of General History," is received in the world. This work is no more than an *Index to General History*; or a recapitulation of the principal events. It is calculated for two classes of people; for those who, having read history in the original writers, want to revise their studies, without a repetition of their first labors; and for those who have but little

time to employ in reading, and expect only a general and superficial knowlege of history.[178] But a man who would know the minute springs of action; the remote and collateral, as well as the direct causes and consequences of events; and the nice shades of character which distinguish eminent men, with a view to draw rules from living examples; such a man must pass by abridgements as trash; he must have recourse to the original writers, or to collections of authentic papers. Indeed a collection of all the material official papers, arranged in the order of time, however dry and unentertaining to most readers, is really the *best*, and the *only authentic* history of a country. The philosopher and statesman, who wish to substitute fact for opinion, will generally suspect human testimony; but repose full confidence in the evidence of papers, which have been the original instruments of public transactions, and recorded by public authority.

These strictures are contrary to the opinions of most men, especially as they regard the stile of the authors mentioned. Yet they are written with a full conviction of their being well founded. They proceed from an earnest desire of arresting the progress of false taste in writing, and of seeing my countrymen called back to nature and truth.

POSTSCRIPT.

The foregoing remarks were written before I had seen the opinions of that judicious and elegant writer, East Apthorp, M. A. vicar of Croydon, on the same history. The following passage is too directly in point to be omitted. It is in his "Second Letter on the Study of History."

"I was disappointed in my expectations of instruction from this book (Gibbon's History) when I discerned that the author had adopted that entertaining but superficial manner of writing history, which was first introduced by the Abbe de Vertot, whose History of the Revolutions in the Government of the Roman Republic, is one of those agreeable and seducing models which never fail of producing a multitude of imitations. There is, in this way of writing, merit enough to recommend it to such readers, and such writers, as propose to themselves no higher aim, than an elegant literary amusement: It piques their curiosity, while it gratifies their indolence. The historian has the advantage, in this way, of passing over such events and institutions as, however essential to the science of history, are less adapted to shine in the recital. By suppressing facts and violating chronology; by selecting the most pleasing incidents and placing them in a striking point of view, by the coloring and drapery of stile and composition, the imagination is gratified with a gaudy spectacle of triumphs and revolutions passing in review before it; while the rapid succession of great events affords a transient delight, without leaving useful and lasting impressions either on the memory or judgement; or fixing those principles which ought to be the result of historic information.

"Nor is it the worst consequence of this slight and modish way of compiling history, that it affords to supine and unreflecting readers a barren entertainment, to fill up the vacant hours of indolence and dissipation. The historian who gives himself the privilege of mutilating and selecting, and arranging at discretion the records of past ages, has full scope to obtrude on his careless readers any system that suits with his preconceived opinions or

particular views in writing."—"The only legitimate study of history is in *original historians*."

The same writer complains of a decline of literature in Great Britain, fixing the "settlement that followed the revolution," as the era of true science and greatness. He remarks that the "aim of modern writers seems to be to furnish their readers with fugitive amusement, and that ancient literature is become rather the ornament of our libraries, than the accomplishment of our minds; being supplanted by the modish productions which are daily read and forgotten."

[F], page 76.

For proof of what I have advanced respecting the sound of c in Rome, I would observe, that the genitive case of the first declension in Latin anciently ended in *ai*, which was probably copied from the Greeks; for it is very evident the Latin *æ* in later writers, was the true representative of the Greek *ai*. Thus *Mousai* in Greek was translated into the Roman tongue, *musæ*. Now *c* before *ai* had the sound of *k*; for where the Romans wrote *cæ* the Greeks wrote *kai*. Thus *musica*, *musicæ* in the first declension must have been pronounced *musika*, *musikai*, not *musisee*, as we now pronounce the *æ*.

As a further proof, we may appeal to the laws of the Roman poetry, by which dipthongs were always long, having the sound of two vowels combined.

But a decisive proof that *c* before the vowels *a*, *o*, *u* and the dipthongs, had the power of *k*, is that the Greeks always translated the *c* in *kappa*. They wrote Cæsar, *Kaisaros*, &c.

In confirmation of which I may add, that the Germans, among whom the word *Cæsar* became

common to all emperors, and now signifies *emperor*, spell it *Kaisar*; and in the pronunciation they preserve the true Roman sound of *Cæsar*.[179]

That the Roman *c* before *e* and *i* had the force of *ch* or *tsh*, is probable from the present practice of the Italians, who would be the most likely to retain the pure Roman pronunciation. In modern Italian *ce*, *ci* are pronounced *che*, *chi*; as *dolcemente*, *Cicero*, pronounced *dolchemente*, *Chichero*.

In this opinion I am supported by Dr. Middleton, who seems to have been thoroughly versed in Roman literature. It may gratify the learned reader to see his own words. *De Lat. Liter. pron. differ.*

"Ante vocales *a*, *o*, *v*[180] eundem olim sonum habuisse ac hodie habet certissimum est: qualem autem ante reliquas *e* et *i*, diphthongosque *æ*, *œ*, *ev* habuerit, haud ita convenit. Angli illam Gallique etiam, haud ab *s* distinguunt, in Cœna, Cæsar, Ceres, cinis, &c. at in iisdem Itali, quod Romanos etiam fecisse olim existimo, eum huic literæ sonum tribuunt, quo nos *ch* efferimus, in vocibus nostris, *cheek*, *cherry*, *cheap*, &c. itaque pronunciant Cicero, uti nos Chichester, chicheley, &c. ita tamen ac si ante *c*, cum in medio vocis sequatur vocalem, litera t leviter admodum et subobscure sonanda interponeretur; ut *Citcero*, Chitchester, quam pronuntiandi rationem expressisse plane sculptor quidam videtur, qui in inscriptione veteri contra orthographiæ regulas, *t* ante *c* interposuit in nomine *Vrbitcius*."

He observes however that Lipsius ridicules this opinion, and contends that *c* had in all cases the force of *k*. This the Doctor ascribes to his partiality for the pronunciation of his countrymen, the

Germans, which, he says, has often led him into errors. For altho *k* before *a*, *o*, *u* used frequently to be written for *c*, as *Karcer* for *Carcer*, yet it never took the place of *c* before *e* and *i*; we never find *Karker* for *Carcer*.

But that *c* had the sound of our *ch*, is probable from another fact: In old inscriptions it is found that *c* was often used for *t* before *i*; *condicio* for *conditio*, *palacium* for *palatium*. Now *ch* in English have a compound sound, which begins with that of *t*, and hence *ti* and *ci* in English have taken the sound of *ch* or *sh*. It is evident therefore that *c* before *i* had a great affinity to *ti*; an affinity which is still preserved in the Italian language. These circumstances give us reason to believe that *ci* and *ti* in *condicio* and *palatium*, were both pronounced *chi*, *condichio*, *palachium*. This sound of *ci* agrees perfectly well with the Saxon sound in *cild*, pronounced *child*; *cele*, now pronounced *chill*, as I have remarked above; text, page 72.

[G], page 82.

I shall not enter into a particular discussion of the question, whether *h* is a mark of *sound* or not. By its convertibility with *k* and *c* in the ancient languages, we have reason to conclude that it once had a guttural sound, and the pronunciation of some northern nations of Europe confirms the opinion. But it appears in modern English to have no sound by itself; it however affects, in some degree, the sound of the vowel to which it is prefixed, by previously opening the mouth wider than is necessary to articulate the vowel. Thus in *hand* we hear no sound but of *and*; yet in pronouncing *hand* we open the throat wider, and emit the breath with violence before we begin the sound, which makes an obvious

difference in pronouncing the words *and* and *hand*; and perhaps this distinction is perceiveable as far as the words can be heard. The same may be said of *th* in *think*.

The instance of a man who lost a dinner by telling his servant to *eat* it, when he meant to tell him to *heat* it, affords a useful lesson to those who are disposed to treat the letter *h* with too much neglect.

[H], page 85.

That *i* short is the same sound as *ee* we have the authority of one of the first and best English grammarians. "Hunc sonum, (ee) quoties correptus est, Angli per *i* breve, exprimunt; quum vero producitur, scribunt ut plurimum per *ee*, non raro tamen per *ie*; vel etiam per *ea*; ut, *sit*, *fit*, *feel*, *fill*, *fiend*, *near*," &c.—— Wallis, Gram. Sect. 2.

Ash confirms the opinion. "*Ee* has one sound, as in *see*, *thee*, and coincides with the narrow *i*."—Gram. Diss. pref. to his Dic.

Kenrick's arrangement of the *long* and *short* vowels is exactly similar to mine.

Sheridan entertains a different opinion respecting the short *i* and *e*. He considers them as distinct vowels, incapable of prolongation. Rhet. Gram. pref. to his Dict. page 16. In this he differs from most other writers upon the subject, who have attended to the philosophical distinctions of sounds. This appears to be an inaccuracy in his distribution of the vowels; altho it cannot affect the practice of speaking.

The sound of the Roman *i*, it is agreed on all hands, was that of the English *ee*. It retains that sound still in the Italian, French and Spanish, which are

immediately derived from the Latin. It had its long and short sounds in Latin; as in *vidi*, *homini*; the first pronounced *veedee*, and the last *homini*, as we now pronounce *i* in *fill*. The French preserve the long sound, and lay it down as a general rule, that *i* is pronounced like the English *ee*: Yet in discourse they actually shorten the sound, and in *sentimens*, *ressentiment*, &c. pronounce *i* as we do in *civil*. In the French *motif*, *i* is long like *ee*; in this and all similar terminations, we shorten the sound, *motiv*. Mr. Sheridan, in this particular, is evidently singular and probably wrong.

That *e* in *let* is but the short abrupt sound of *a* in *late*, is not so clear; but to me is evident. There is little or no difference in the position of the organs with which we pronounce both vowels. The Roman, Italian, Spanish and French *e* is considered as the representative of the English *a* in *late*, *made*; and yet in common discourse, it is shortened into the sound of *e* in *let*, *men*: Witness, *legere*, *avec*, *emmené*, *bueno*, *entendido*: We observe the same in English; for *said*, *any*, *many*, which are pronounced *sed*, *enny*, *menny*, exhibit the same vowel or short *a*; the *e* being the abrupt sound of *ai* in *said*. I must therefore differ from Mr. Sheridan, and still believe that *e* in *let*, and *i* in *fit*, are capable of prolongation. Children, when, instead of a comparison, they would express the superlative by an emphasis, say *leetle* instead of *little*; which is a mere prolongation of *i* short.

Mr. Sheridan, in my opinion, is guilty of an error of greater consequence, in marking the two qualities of sound in *bard* and *bad* with the same figure. He distinguishes the different qualities of sound in *pool* and *full*, and in *not* and *naught*; and why he should omit the distinction of sound in *bard* and *bad*, *ask*

and *man*, is to me inconceiveable. The last distinction is as obvious as the others which he has marked; and the defect of his scheme must lead a foreigner into mistakes. His scheme is singular; Kenrick, Perry and Burn all make a distinction in the time of pronouncing *a* in *ask* and *at*; and even Scott, who copies Sheridan's pronunciation almost implicitly, still makes the same distinction.

[I], page 87.

"Non multum differt hic sonus (w) ab Anglorum *oo*; Gallorum *ou*, Germanorum *u* pingui, rapidissime pronunciatis; adeoque a quibusdam pro vocali fuit habita, *cum tamen revera consona sit*, quanquam ipsi vocali admodum sit affinis."——Wallis.

"It is indeed on the celerity of utterance, that all the difference, in many cases, between consonants and vowels depends; as in *w* and *y*, in English; which, being discharged quickly, perform the office of consonants, in giving form only to the succeeding vowel; but when protracted or drawled out, acquire a tone and become the vocal *oo* and *ee*."——Kenrick, Rhet. Gram. p. 4.

Perry has adopted this opinion and contends warmly that *w* is a consonant. If *w* is a vowel, says he, then *wool*, *wolf*, will be pronounced *oo-ool*, *oo-olf*, or *ool*, *olf*. I am sensible that in the beginning of words, *w* has not precisely the power of *oo*; but it is not clear from this fact that it has the properties of a consonant. Place a vowel before *w*, as, *ow*, and there is no compression of the lips or other parts of the mouth, to obstruct the sound, as there is produced by *b* or *m*, in *eb* and *em*.

In opposition to the authorities mentioned, Sheridan ranks *w* among the vowels, and supposes it to form

dipthongs with the other vowels, as in *well*, *will*, &c. It appears to me to be a letter rather of an ambiguous nature, of which we have others in the language.

[J], page 88.

It has been remarked that by old authors *y* was often used for *g*; *yeve* for *give*; *foryete* for *forget*.—— Chaucer, Knight's Tale, 1884.

I have observed that some foreigners pronounce *year*, in the same manner nearly as they do *ear*; and *yeast* is commonly pronounced *east*. This pronunciation would easily lead a man into the supposition that *y* is merely *ee* short. But the pronunciation is vicious.

I observe also that Mr. Sheridan says, "*ye* has the sound of *e* long in *ye*; of *a* long in *yea*; of *e* long in *year*, *yean*; and of *e* short in *yearn*, *yell*, &c." This confirms my opinion, and is a proof that he does not pronounce *y* at all.

If *y* has the sound of *e* in *year*, then *e* has *no* sound, or there are in the word, *two* sounds of *e*, which no person will undertake to assert. The dispute however is easily settled. I have learnt by attending to the conversation of well bred Englishmen, that they do not pronounce *y* at all in *year* and many other words. They say *ear*, *e*, for *year*, *ye*; and the sound of *e*, they erroneously suppose to be that of *y*. In America, *y* has in these words, the consonant sound it has in *young*; and the English pronunciation must in this instance be faulty.

[K], page 103.

"Now the harmony of prose arises from the same principle with that which constitutes the harmony of

verse; viz. numbers; or such a disposition of the words as throws them into just metrical feet, but very different from those which constitute any species of verse."—Essay on the Power of Numbers, &c. page 4. Introd.

"A good stile is both *expressive* and *harmonious*. The former depends on the happy choice of the words to convey our ideas; the other on the happy choice of numbers in the disposition of the words. The language of some is expressive, but unharmonious; that is, the writer's words strongly convey his sentiments, but the order in which they are placed creates a sound unpleasant to the ear. The stile of others is harmonious but not expressive; where the periods are well turned and the numbers well adapted, but the sense obscure. The former satisfies the mind, but offends the ear; the latter gratifies the ear, but disgusts the mind. A good stile entertains and pleases both," &c—— Ibm. 2d. Part, page 17.

The author proceeds to illustrate his doctrines by showing in what the harmony of prose consists. He remarks that the words should in some degree be an echo to the sense, in prose as well as verse.

He proceeds—"Every sentence may be conceived as divisible into distinct and separate clauses; every clause, where there is an apparent cessation of the voice, should always end with a generous foot; and all the preceding numbers be so intermixt, that the short ones be duly qualified by the succeeding long ones; reserving the best and most harmonious number for the cadence."

To show how much depends on the proper arrangement of words, he quotes the following instance—"A divine, speaking of the Trinity, hath this expression—It is a mystery which we firmly

believe the truth of, and humbly adore the depth of." Here the language is expressive, but not harmonious; not merely because the clauses end with the particle *of*, but because they abound with feeble numbers, *Pyrrhics* and *Trochees*. Let us change the disposition of the feet—"It is a mystery, the truth of which we firmly believe, and the depths of which we humbly adore." The difference in the melody is very perceiveable. The force and music of the last disposition is increased by the Iambics and Anapæsts.

The most forceable feet, and those best adapted to sublime and serious subjects, are those which contain the most long syllables, or end in a long syllable; as the Iambic, the Spondee, the Anapæst. The weak feet are those which have the most short syllables or end in a short syllable; as the Pyrrhic, the Trochee, the Tribrach.

The want of proper measures, or a mixture of weak and strong syllables, is very remarkable in a passage of the Declaration of Independence. "We must therefore acquiesce in the necessity, which denounces our separation, and hold them, as we hold the rest of mankind, *enemies in war*, *ĭn pēace*, *friēnds*." The three last syllables form, if any thing, a Bacchic; the first syllable, short, and the two others, long. But in a just pronunciation, the foot is necessarily broken by a pause after *peace*. This interruption, and the two long syllables, render the close of the sentence extremely heavy. The period is concise and expressive, as it stands; but the arrangement might be much more harmonious —"Oŭr ēnĕmĭes ĭn wār; ĭn pēace, oŭr friēnds." Here the measure and melody are perfect; the period closing with three Iambics, preceded by a Pyrrhic.

[L], page 111.

In a Scotch Ballad, called *Edom o Gordon*, we find the word *dreips* for *drops*.

"—And clear, clear was hir zellow hair
Whereon the reid bluid *dreips*."

But it was often spelt *drap*, agreeable to the pronunciation. See Edward. Rel. An. Poet. 53.

The dialect in America is peculiar to the descendants of the Scotch Irish.

[M], page 111.

Mought is the past time or participle of an old Saxon verb *mowe* or *mowen*, *to be able*. It answered to the *posse* of the Romans, and the *pouvoir* of the French. This verb occurs frequently in Chaucer.

"But that science is so fer us beforne,
We *mowen* not, altho we had it sworne,
It overtake, it slit away so fast,
It *wol* us maken beggers at the last."

Cant. Tales, l. 16, 148, Bell's edit.

"To *mowen* such a knight done live or die."——Troil. and Cres. 2. 1594. That is, *to be able* to make such a knight live or die.

"And *mought* I hope to winne thy love,
Ne more his tonge could saye."

Sir Cauline, an old Ballad, l. 163.

"The thought they herd a woman wepe,
But her they *mought* not se."

Adam Bell, &c. part 3. l. 2. in Rel. of An. Poet.

"So *mought* thou now in these refined lays
Delight the dainty ears of higher powers.
And so *mought* they in their deep scanning skill,
Allow and grace our Collen's flowing quill."

Spenser, Hobbynall.

There seem to have been among our Saxon ancestors two verbs of nearly or exactly the same signification, *may* and *might*; and *mowe* and *mought*. There is some reason to think they were not synonimous; that *may* was used to express *possibility*, as *I may go next week*; and *mowe* to express *power*, as *they mowen go*, they are able to go. But it is not certain that such a distinction ever existed. The Germans use *moegen*, in the infinitive; *mag*, in the indic. pres. *mæge*, in the subj. pres. in the imperfect of the ind. *mochte*; and in the imp. of the subj. *mæchte*. The English use *may* and *might* solely in their writing; but *mought* is still pronounced in some parts of America.

Holpe or *holp* was not obsolete when the Bible was last translated, in the reign of king James; for it occurs in several places in that translation. It occurs frequently in old authors.

"Unkindly they slew him, that *holp* them oft at nede."

Skelton El. on Earl of Northum. l. 47.

In Virginia it is pronounced *hope*. "Shall I hope you, Sir."

But we must look among the New England common

people for ancient English phrases; for they have been 160 years sequestered in some measure from the world, and their language has not suffered material changes from their first settlement to the present time. Hence most of the phrases, used by Shakespear, Congreve, and other writers who have described English manners and recorded the language of all classes of people, are still heard in the common discourse of the New England yeomanry.

The verb *be*, in the indicative, present tense, which Lowth observes is almost obsolete in England, is still used after the ancient manner, I *be*, we *be*, you *be*, they *be*. The old plural *housen* is still used for houses. The old verb *wol* for will, and pronounced *wool*, is not yet fallen into disuse. This was the verb principally used in Chaucer's time, and it now lives in the purest branch of the Teutonic, the German.

For many years, I had supposed the word *dern* in the sense of *great* or *severe*, was local in New England. Perhaps it may not now be used any where else; but it was once a common English word. Chaucer uses it in the sense of *secret*, *earnest*, &c.

> "This clerk was cleped Hende Nicholas
> Of *derne* love he could and of solas."

Mil. Tale, l. 3200.

> "Ye mosten be ful *derne* as in this case."

Ibm. 3297.

The word is in common use in New England and pronounced *darn*. It has not however the sense it had formerly; it is now used as an adverb to qualify an adjective, as *darn sweet*; denoting a great degree of

the quality.

The New England people preserve the ancient use of *there* and *here* after a word or sentence, designating the *place where*; as *this here*, *that there*. It is called vulgar in English; and indeed the addition of *here* or *there* is generally tautological. It is however an ancient practice; and the French retain it in the pure elegant language of their country; *ce pays là*, *celui là*, *cet homme ici*; where we observe this difference only between the French and English idioms, that in French, the adverb follows the noun, *that country there*, *this man here*; whereas in English, the adverb precedes the noun, *that there country*, *this here man*. This form of speech seems to have been coeval with the primitive Saxon, otherwise it would not have prevailed so generally among the common people.

It has been before remarked that the word *ax* for *ask* was used in England, and even in the royal assent to acts of parliament, down to the reign of Henry VI.

> "And to her husband bad hire for to sey
> If that he *axed* after Nicholas."——

Chau. Mil. Tale, 3412.

> "This *axeth* haste and of an hastif thing
> Men may not preche and maken tarying."

Ibm. 3545.

This word to *ax* is still frequent in New England.

I no not know whether our American sportsmen use the word, *ferret*, in the sense of driving animals from

their lurking places. But the word is used in some parts of New England, and applied figuratively to many transactions in life. So in Congreve:

"Where is this apocryphal elder? I'll *ferret* him."——Old Bach, act 4, fc. 21.

Sometimes, but rarely, we hear the old imperative of the Saxon *thafian*, now pronounced *thof*. But it is generally pronounced as it is written, *tho*. It is remarked by Horne, that *thof* is still frequent among the common people of England.

Gin or *gyn* for *given* is still used in America; as Bishop Wilkins remarks, it is in the North of England.

Without, in the sense of *unless*, is as frequent as any word in the language, and even among the learned. It is commonly accounted inelegant, and writers have lately substituted *unless*: But I do not see the propriety of discarding *without*, for its meaning is exactly the same as that of *unless*. It is demonstrated that they are both the imperatives of old verbs. *Without*, is *be out*, *be away*; and *unless* is *dismiss*, or *be apart*. Instead of the imperative Chaucer generally uses the participle, *withouten*, *being out*.

The best writers use *without* in the sense of *unless*.

"—And if he can't be cured *without* I suck the poison from his wounds, I'm afraid he won't recover his senses, till I lose mine."——Cong. Love for Love, act 4. sc. 3.

"'Twere better for him, you had not been his confessor in that affair, *without* you could have kept his counsel closer."——Cong. Way of the World, act, 3. sc. 7.

The best speakers use the word in this manner, in common discourse, and I must think, with propriety.

Peek is also used corruptedly for *peep*. By a similar change of the last consonant, *chirk* is used for *chirp*, *to make a cheerful noise*. This word is wholly lost, except in New England. It is there used for *comfortably*, *bravely*, *cheerful*; as when one enquires about a sick person, it is said, he is *chirk*. *Chirp* is still used to express the singing of birds, but the *chirk* of New England is not understood, and therefore derided. Four hundred years ago it was a polite term.

"and kisseth hire swete, and *chirketh* as a
sparwe
With his lippes."——

Chaucer, Somp. Tale, 7386.

In the following it is used for a disagreeable noise.

"All full of *chirking* was that sory place."

Knight's Tale, 2006.

"And al so ful eke of *chirkings*
And of many other wirkings."

House of Fame, 858.

Shet for *shut* is now become vulgar; yet this is the true original orthography and pronunciation. It is from the Saxon *scitten*, and I believe was always spelt *shette* or *shet*, till after Chaucer's time, for he was a correct writer in his age, and always spelt it in that manner.

"Voideth your man and let him be
thereout,
And *shet* the dore."——

Chau. Yem. Tale, 16, 605.

"And his maister *shette* the dore anon."

Ibm. 16, 610.

And in a variety of other places. This word is almost universally pronounced *shet* among all classes of people, not only in New England, but in Great Britain and the southern states of America. How the spelling came to be changed, is not known; but it was certainly a corruption.

An for *if* is seen in most old authors. It remains among the common people, both in England and America. "*An* please your honor;" that is, "*if* your honor please." In New England, the phrases in which it occurs most frequently are, "Let him go, *an* he will;" "Go, *an* you will;" and others of a similar kind.

Because and *becase* were used promiscuously by our ancestors. *Becase* is found in some ancient writings, tho not so frequently as *because*. In New England, we frequently hear *becase* to this day. It is pronounced *becaze*. It is a compound of *be* and *cause* or *case*; both of these words with the verb *be* make good English; but *becase* is vulgar.

The vulgar pronunciation of *such* is *sich*. This is but a small deviation from the ancient elegant pronunciation, which was *swich* or *swiche*, as the word is spelt in Chaucer. Such is the force of national practice: And altho the country people in New England, sometimes drawl their words in speaking, and, like their brethren, often make false concord, yet their idiom is purely Saxon or English; and in a vast number of instances, they have adhered to the true phrases, where people, who despise their plain manners, have run into error.

Thus they say, "a man is going *by*," and not *going past*, which is nonsense: They say, "I *purpose* to go," and not *propose* to go, which is not good English. They say, "a ship *lies* in harbor," not *lays*, which is a modern corruption. They say, "I *have* done," and never "I *am* done," which is nonsense. They say, "it was *on* Monday evening," not "*of* a Monday evening," which is an error. They never use the absurd phrases "*expect it was*;" and "the ship will sail in *all* next week." They never say "he is home," but always, "at home." They use the old phrase, "it is half *after* six o'clock," which is more correct than *half past six*. They say, if a person is not in health, he is *sick*. The modern English laugh at them, because the English say a man is *ill*; and confine sick to express the idea of a nausea in the stomach. The English are wrong, and the New England people use the word in its true sense, which extends to all bodily disorders, as it is used by the pure English writers. *Ill* is a contraction of *evil*; and denotes a moral disorder. Its application to bodily complaints is a modern practice, and its meaning figurative. So that whatever improprieties may have crept into their practice of speaking, they actually preserve more of the genuin idiom of the English tongue, than many of the modern fine speakers who set up for standards.

[N], page 120.

The letters *ch* in Roman answered nearly to the Greek *ki* or *chi*; for *c* had the sound of *k*, at least before *a*, *o*, *u*. *Ch* or *kh* was therefore the proper combination for the Greek letter; which had the sound of *k* followed by an aspirate. This combination was copied into our language; and perhaps the aspirate was once pronounced, like the Irish guttural in *Cochran*. But when the aspirate was lost, *k* became

the proper representative of the sound. It is wished, that in all the derivatives from the ancient languages, where this character occurs, *k* might be substituted for *ch*; that persons unacquainted with etymology, might not mistake and give *ch* its English sound.



FOOTNOTES:

[128] It is said that the Celtic has a great affinity with the oriental languages. "Magnam certe cum linguis orientalibus affinitatem retinet, ut notant Dr. J. Davies passim in Dictionario suo Cambro Britannico, et Samuel Bochartus in sua Geographica sacra."—— Wallis, Gram.

[129] The invention of letters is ascribed to Taaut or Theuth, the son of *Misraim*, soon after the flood.

[130] I strongly suspect that the primitive language of the north of Europe was the root of the Sclavonic, still retained in Russia, Poland, Hungary, &c. and that the Gothic was introduced at a later period.

[131] This objection however may be obviated by Lluyd's supposition, mentioned in the note, page 50, that the primitive inhabitants of Britain were denominated Guydelians, and the Cymri or Welsh were another branch of the Celtic Cimbri, who came from the North, settled in Britain and gave name to the language.

[132] It is commonly observed, that different climates, airs and aliments, do very much diversify the tone of the parts and muscles of human bodies; on some of which the

modulation of the voice much depends. The peculiar moisture of one country, the drought of another (other causes from food, &c. concurring) extend or contract, swell or attenuate, the organs of the voice, that the sound made thereby is rendered either shrill or hoarse, soft or hard, plain or lisping, in proportion to that contraction or extension. And hence it is, that the Chinese and Tartars have some sounds in their language, that Europeans can scarcely imitate: And it is well known in Europe itself, that an Englishman is not able agreeably to converse with a stranger, even in one and the same Latin; nay, even in England, it is noted by Mr. Camden and Dr. Fuller, that the natives of Carleton Curlew in Leicestershire, by a certain peculiarity of the place, have the turn of their voice very different from those of the neighboring villages.

[133] *JILD Teka*, thou art my son. Psalm ii. 7.

[134] *MEREDUTH* is the same with *Merad*, a British name.

[135] It has this sound in most of the ancient tongues.

[136] The armorial ensign of Carthage was a *horse*.

[137] It is remarkable that the Germans pronounce this word *wollen*, and *woll*, like the Roman *volo*, pronounced *wolo*. Many old people in America retain this pronunciation to this day; I *woll*, or *wool*, for *will*.

The Roman pronunciation of *v* is still preserved in England and America; *veal*, weal; *vessel*, wessel; and *w* is often changed into *v* or *f*; *wine*, vine, or even fine.

The Romans often pronounced *t* where we use

d; as *traho*, draw.

[138] In teaching English to a Spaniard, I found that in attempting to pronounce words beginning with *w*, he invariably began with the sound of *gu*; *well*, he would pronounce *guell*.

[139] This word is found in most of the branches of the Gothic.

[140] Allusive to the ancient custom of pardoning by giving permission to depart.

[141] Frontier settlement; so called, because the Romans *passed thro* this territory, in going to or from Rome.

[142] The French and Spanish rarely or never aspirate an *h*; and in this word they have omitted it mostly in writing.

[143] The above specimen of the ancient Irish is judged to be a thousand years old. See O'Conner's Dissertation on the History of Ireland. Dublin, 1766, 8 vo.

[144] Feichneinibh.

[145] "Hunc sonum (gh) Anglos in vocibus *light*, *might*, &c. olim protulisse sentio; at nunc dierum, quamvis scripturam retineant, sonum tamen fera penitus omittunt. Boreales tamen, presertim Scoti, fere adhuc retinent seu potius ipsius loco sonum *b* substituunt."——Wallis.

[146] The Runic excepted. The Runic letters were sixteen in number, and introduced very early into the North; but they went into disuse about the tenth or eleventh century.

[147] *BENJAMIN is son of the right hand.*

[148] Their.

[149] Mixture; an old French word, now written *melange*.

[150] corrupted.

[151] These words represent barbarity and roughness in speaking.

[152] Corruption of the native tongue.

[153] hear

[154] since

[155] know. The Germans preserve the verb *kœnnen*, to be able. The pronouns *hir* and *hire* for *their*, still remain in the German *ihr*.

[156] Country-people, so called from, their living on the mountains or high lands; hence *outlandish*.

[157] attempt with eagerness.

[158] time.

[159] *sithe* is the origin of *since*.

[160] *Del* signifies a *part* or division; it is from the verb *dæler* to divide, and the root of the English word *deal*. *Dæler* is preserved in the Danish.

[161] learning.

[162] their.

[163] In the original these words are obscure.

[164] This is from the verb *sollen*, implying obligation, duty.

[165] their.

[166] foreign; Lat. *advena*.

[167] realm.

[168] divided.

[169] Scarcely.

[170] hardly.

[171] dwelleth.

[172] far.

[173] I find in an "Essay on the language and versification of Chaucer" prefixed to Bell's edition of his works, part of this extract copied from a Harlein manuscript, said to be more correct than the manuscript from which Dr. Hickes copied it. But on comparing the extracts in both, I find none but verbal differences; the sense of both is the same.

[174] In a charter of Edward III. dated 1348, *yeven* is used for *given*. *Yave* for *gave* is used by Chaucer.—Knight's Tale, line 2737. "And *yave* hem giftes after his degree." In a charter of Edward the Confessor, *gif* is used in its Saxon purity. In the same charter, *Bissop his land*, is used for a genitive. The Scotch wrote *z* for *y*; *zit* for *yet*; *zeres* for *years*.—Douglass. I do not find, at this period, the true Saxon genitive in use: The *Bissop his land*, is deemed an error. This mode of speaking has however prevailed, till within a few years, and still has its advocates. But it is certain the Saxons had a proper termination for the genitive or possessive, which is preserved in the two first declensions of the German.

Example of the declension of nouns among the Saxons.

A WORD.

	Sing.	***Plu.***
Nom.	Word	word
Gen.	Wordes	worda
Dat.	Worde	wordum
Acc.	Word	word
Voc.	Eala thu word	eala ge word
Abl.	Worde	wordum

Hickes Sax. Gram.

[175] CUSTODES in castellis strenuos viros ex Gallis collocavit, et opulenta beneficia, pro quibus labores et pericula libenter tolerâ rent, distribuit.—Orderic. Vital. lib. 4.

[176] The word *ax* for *ask* is not a modern corruption. It was an ancient dialect, and not vulgar.

[177] So Gillies, in his Hist. of Greece, chap. II. talks about the death of the "*friend* of Achilles;" but leaves the reader to discover the person—not having once mentioned the name of *Patroclus*. I would observe further that such appellations as the *son of Leda* are borrowed from the Greek; but wholly improper in our language. The Greeks had a distinct ending of the name of the father to signify son or descendants; as *Heraclidæ*. This form of the noun was known and had a definite meaning in Greece; but in English the idiom is awkward and embarrassing.

[178] Readers of the last description are the most numerous.

[179] *Czar*, the Russian appellation or Emperor, is a contraction of *Cæsar*. It is pronounced in the Russian, *char* or *tshar*.

[180] In ancient inscription, and the early Roman authors, *v* was written *u*, and pronounced *oo* or *w*. The following extracts from the laws of Romulus, &c. will give the reader an idea of the early orthography of the Latin tongue:—

1 DEOS patrios colunto: externas superstitiones aut fabulas ne admiscento.

3 NOCTURNA sacrificia peruigiliaque amouentor.

8 VXOR farreatione viro iuncta, in sacra et bona eius venito—ius deuortendi ne esto.

13 SI pater filiom ter venumduit, filius a patre liber esto.

A law of Numa.

5 QUI terminum exarasit, ipsus et boues sacrei sunto.

A law of Tullius Hostillius.

2 NATI trigemini, donicum puberes esunt, de publico aluntor.



APPENDIX.

AN ESSAY

On the NECESSITY, ADVANTAGES *and* PRACTICABILITY *of* REFORMING *the* MODE *of* SPELLING, *and of* RENDERING *the* ORTHOGRAPHY *of* WORDS CORRESPONDENT *to the* PRONUNCIATION.



IT has been observed by all writers on the English language, that the orthography or spelling of words is very irregular; the same letters often representing different sounds, and the same sounds often expressed by different letters. For this irregularity, two principal causes may be assigned:

1. The changes to which the pronunciation of a language is liable, from the progress of science and civilization.

2. The mixture of different languages, occasioned by revolutions in England, or by a predilection of the learned, for words of foreign growth and ancient origin.

To the first cause, may be ascribed the difference between the spelling and pronunciation of Saxon words. The northern nations of Europe originally spoke much in gutturals. This is evident from the number of aspirates and guttural letters, which still remain in the orthography of words derived from those nations; and from the modern pronunciation of the collateral branches of the Teutonic, the Dutch, Scotch and German. Thus *k* before *n* was once

pronounced; as in *knave*, *know*; the *gh* in *might*, *though*, *daughter*, and other similar words; the *g* in *reign*, *feign*, &c.

But as savages proceed in forming languages, they lose the guttural sounds, in some measure, and adopt the use of labials, and the more open vowels. The ease of speaking facilitates this progress, and the pronunciation of words is softened, in proportion to a national refinement of manners. This will account for the difference between the ancient and modern languages of France, Spain and Italy; and for the difference between the soft pronunciation of the present languages of those countries, and the more harsh and guttural pronunciation of the northern inhabitants of Europe.

In this progress, the English have lost the sounds of most of the guttural letters. The *k* before *n* in *know*, the *g* in *reign*, and in many other words, are become mute in practice; and the *gh* is softened into the sound of *f*, as in *laugh*, or is silent, as in *brought*.

To this practice of softening the sounds of letters, or wholly suppressing those which are harsh and disagreeable, may be added a popular tendency to abbreviate words of common use. Thus *Southwark*, by a habit of quick pronunciation, is become *Suthark*; *Worcester* and *Leicester*, are become *Wooster* and *Lester*; *business*, *bizness*; *colonel*, *curnel*; *cannot*, *will not*, *cant*, *wont*.[181] In this manner the final *e* is not heard in many modern words, in which it formerly made a syllable. The words *clothes*, *cares*, and most others of the same kind, were formerly pronounced in two syllables.[182]

Of the other cause of irregularity in the spelling of our language, I have treated sufficiently in the first Dissertation. It is here necessary only to remark, that

when words have been introduced from a foreign language into the English, they have generally retained the orthography of the original, however ill adapted to express the English pronunciation. Thus *fatigue*, *marine*, *chaise*, retain their French dress, while, to represent the true pronunciation in English, they should be spelt *fateeg*, *mareen*, *shaze*. Thus thro an ambition to exhibit the etymology of words, the English, in *Philip*, *physic*, *character*, *chorus*, and other Greek derivatives, preserve the representatives of the original Φ and X; yet these words are pronounced, and ought ever to have been spelt, *Fillip*, *fyzzic* or *fizzic*, *karacter*, *korus*.[183]

But such is the state of our language. The pronunciation of the words which are strictly *English*, has been gradually changing for ages, and since the revival of science in Europe, the language has received a vast accession of words from other languages, many of which retain an orthography very ill suited to exhibit the true pronunciation.

The question now occurs; ought the Americans to retain these faults which produce innumerable in conveniencies in the acquisition and use of the language, or ought they at once to reform these abuses, and introduce order and regularity into the orthography of the AMERICAN TONGUE?

Let us consider this subject with some attention.

Several attempts were formerly made in England to rectify the orthography of the language.[184] But I apprehend their schemes failed of success, rather on account of their intrinsic difficulties, than on account of any necessary impracticability of a reform. It was proposed, in most of these schemes, not merely to throw out superfluous and silent letters, but to introduce a number of new characters. Any attempt

on such a plan must undoubtedly prove unsuccessful. It is not to be expected that an orthography, perfectly regular and simple, such as would be formed by a "Synod of Grammarians on principles of science," will ever be substituted for that confused mode of spelling which is now established. But it is apprehended that great improvements may be made, and an orthography almost regular, or such as shall obviate most of the present difficulties which occur in learning our language, may be introduced and established with little trouble and opposition.

The principal alterations, necessary to render our orthography sufficiently regular and easy, are these:

1. The omission of all superfluous or silent letters; as *a* in *bread*. Thus *bread*, *head*, *give*, *breast*, *built*, *meant*, *realm*, *friend*, would be spelt, *bred*, *hed*, *giv*, *brest*, *bilt*, *ment*, *relm*, *frend*. Would this alteration produce any inconvenience, any embarrassment or expense? By no means. On the other hand, it would lessen the trouble of writing, and much more, of learning the language; it would reduce the true pronunciation to a certainty; and while it would assist foreigners and our own children in acquiring the language, it would render the pronunciation uniform, in different parts of the country, and almost prevent the possibility of changes.

2. A substitution of a character that has a certain definite sound, for one that is more vague and indeterminate. Thus by putting *ee* instead of *ea* or *ie*, the words *mean*, *near*, *speak*, *grieve*, *zeal*, would become *meen*, *neer*, *speek*, *greev*, *zeel*. This alteration could not occasion a moment's trouble; at the same time it would prevent a doubt respecting the pronunciation; whereas the *ea* and *ie* having different sounds, may give a learner much difficulty. Thus

greef should be substituted for *grief*; *kee* for *key*; *beleev* for *believe*; *laf* for *laugh*; *dawter* for *daughter*; *plow* for *plough*; *tuf* for *tough*; *proov* for *prove*; *blud* for *blood*; and *draft* for *draught*. In this manner *ch* in Greek derivatives, should be changed into *k*; for the English *ch* has a soft sound, as in *cherish*; but *k* always a hard sound. Therefore *character*, *chorus*, *cholic*, *architecture*, should be written *karacter*, *korus*, *kolic*, *arkitecture*; and were they thus written, no person could mistake their true pronunciation.

Thus *ch* in French derivatives should be changed into sh; *machine*, *chaise*, *chevalier*, should be written *masheen*, *shaze*, *shevaleer*; and *pique*, *tour*, *oblique*, should be written *peek*, *toor*, *obleek*.

3. A trifling alteration in a character, or the addition of a point would distinguish different sounds, without the substitution of a new character. Thus a very small stroke across *th* would distinguish its two sounds. A point over a vowel, in this manner, *ȧ* or *ė*, or *i̇*, might answer all the purposes of different letters. And for the dipthong *ow*, let the two letters be united by a small stroke, or both engraven on the same piece of metal, with the left hand line of the *w* united to the *o*.

These, with a few other inconsiderable alterations, would answer every purpose, and render the orthography sufficiently correct and regular.

The advantages to be derived from these alterations are numerous, great and permanent.

1. The simplicity of the orthography would facilitate the learning of the language. It is now the work of years for children to learn to spell; and after all, the business is rarely accomplished. A few men, who are bred to some business that requires constant exercise

in writing, finally learn to spell most words without hesitation; but most people remain, all their lives, imperfect masters of spelling, and liable to make mistakes, whenever they take up a pen to write a short note. Nay, many people, even of education and fashion, never attempt to write a letter, without frequently consulting a dictionary.

But with the proposed orthography, a child would learn to spell, without trouble, in a very short time, and the orthography being very regular, he would ever afterwards find it difficult to make a mistake. It would, in that case, be as difficult to spell *wrong*, as it is now to spell *right*.

Besides this advantage, foreigners would be able to acquire the pronunciation of English, which is now so difficult and embarrassing, that they are either wholly discouraged on the first attempt, or obliged, after many years labor, to rest contented with an imperfect knowlege of the subject.

2. A correct orthography would render the pronunciation of the language, as uniform as the spelling in books. A general uniformity thro the United States, would be the event of such a reformation as I am here recommending. All persons, of every rank, would speak with some degree of precision and uniformity.[185] Such a uniformity in these states is very desireable; it would remove prejudice, and conciliate mutual affection and respect.

3. Such a reform would diminish the number of letters about one sixteenth or eighteenth. This would save a page in eighteen; and a saving of an eighteenth in the expense of books, is an advantage that should not be overlooked.

4. But a capital advantage of this reform in these states would be, that it would make a difference between the English orthography and the American. This will startle those who have not attended to the subject; but I am confident that such an event is an object of vast political consequence. For,

The alteration, however small, would encourage the publication of books in our own country. It would render it, in some measure, necessary that all books should be printed in America. The English would never copy our orthography for their own use; and consequently the same impressions of books would not answer for both countries. The inhabitants of the present generation would read the English impressions; but posterity, being taught a different spelling, would prefer the American orthography.

Besides this, a *national language* is a band of *national union*. Every engine should be employed to render the people of this country *national*; to call their attachments home to their own country; and to inspire them with the pride of national character. However they may boast of Independence, and the freedom of their government, yet their *opinions* are not sufficiently independent; an astonishing respect for the arts and literature of their parent country, and a blind imitation of its manners, are still prevalent among the Americans. Thus an habitual respect for another country, deserved indeed and once laudable, turns their attention from their own interests, and prevents their respecting themselves.

OBJECTIONS.

1. "This reform of the Alphabet would oblige people to relearn the language, or it could not be

introduced."

But the alterations proposed are so few and so simple, that an hour's attention would enable any person to read the new orthography with facility; and a week's practice would render it so familiar, that a person would write it without hesitation or mistake. Would this small inconvenience prevent its adoption? Would not the numerous national and literary advantages, resulting from the change, induce Americans to make so inconsiderable a sacrifice of time and attention? I am persuaded they would.

But it would not be necessary that men advanced beyond the middle stage of life, should be at the pains to learn the proposed orthography. They would, without inconvenience, continue to use the present. They would read the *new* orthography, without difficulty; but they would write in the *old*. To men thus advanced, and even to the present generation in general, if they should not wish to trouble themselves with a change, the reformation would be almost a matter of indifference. It would be sufficient that children should be taught the new orthography, and that as fast as they come upon the stage, they should be furnished with books in the American spelling. The progress of printing would be proportioned to the demand for books among the rising generation. This progressive introduction of the scheme would be extremely easy; children would learn the proposed orthography more easily than they would the old; and the present generation would not be troubled with the change; so that none but the obstinate and capricious could raise objections or make any opposition. The change would be so inconsiderable, and made on such

simple principles, that a column in each newspaper, printed in the new spelling, would in six months, familiarize most people to the change, show the advantages of it, and imperceptibly remove their objections. The only steps necessary to ensure success in the attempt to introduce this reform, would be, a resolution of Congress, ordering all their acts to be engrossed in the new orthography, and recommending the plan to the several universities in America; and also a resolution of the universities to encourage and support it. The printers would begin the reformation by publishing short paragraphs and small tracts in the new orthography; school books would first be published in the same; curiosity would excite attention to it, and men would be gradually reconciled to the plan.

2. "This change would render our present books useless."

This objection is, in some measure, answered under the foregoing head. The truth is, it would not have this effect. The difference of orthography would not render books printed in one, illegible to persons acquainted only with the other. The difference would not be so great as between the orthography of Chaucer, and of the present age; yet Chaucer's works are still read with ease.

3. "This reformation would injure the language by obscuring etymology."

This objection is unfounded. In general, it is not true that the change would obscure etymology; in a few instances, it might; but it would rather restore the etymology of many words; and if it were true that the change would obscure it, this would be no objection to the reformation.

It will perhaps surprize my readers to be told that, in many particular words, the modern spelling is less correct than the ancient. Yet this is a truth that reflects dishonor on our modern refiners of the language. Chaucer, four hundred years ago, wrote *bilder* for *builder*; *dedly* for *deadly*; *ernest* for *earnest*; *erly* for *early*; *brest* for *breast*; *hed* for *head*; and certainly his spelling was the most agreeable to the pronunciation.[186] Sidney wrote *bin*, *examin*, *sutable*, with perfect propriety. Dr. Middleton wrote *explane*, *genuin*, *revele*, which is the most easy and correct orthography of such words; and also *luster*, *theater*, for *lustre*, *theatre*. In these and many other instances, the modern spelling is a corruption; so that allowing many improvements to have been made in orthography, within a century or two, we must acknowlege also that many corruptions have been introduced.

In answer to the objection, that a change of orthography would obscure etymology, I would remark, that the etymology of most words is already lost, even to the learned; and to the unlearned, etymology is never known. Where is the man that can trace back our English words to the elementary radicals? In a few instances, the student has been able to reach the primitive roots of words; but I presume the radicals of one tenth of the words in our language, have never yet been discovered, even by Junius, Skinner, or any other etymologist. Any man may look into Johnson or Ash, and find that *flesh* is derived from the Saxon *floce*; *child* from *cild*; *flood* from *flod*; *lad* from *leode*; and *loaf* from *laf* or *hlaf*. But this discovery will answer no other purpose, than to show, that within a few hundred years, the spelling of some words has been a little changed: We should still be at a vast distance from the primitive

roots.

In many instances indeed etymology will assist the learned in understanding the composition and true sense of a word; and it throws much light upon the progress of language. But the true sense of a complex term is not always, nor generally, to be learnt from the sense of the primitives or elementary words. The current meaning of a word depends on its use in a nation. This true sense is to be obtained by attending to good authors, to dictionaries and to practice, rather than to derivation. The former *must* be *right*; the latter *may* lead us into *error*.

But to prove of how little consequence a knowlege of etymology is to most people, let me mention a few words. The word *sincere* is derived from the Latin, *sine cera*, without wax; and thus it came to denote *purity of mind*. I am confident that not a man in a thousand ever suspected this to be the origin of the word; yet all men, that have any knowlege of our language, use the word in its true sense, and understand its customary meaning, as well as Junius did, or any other etymologist.

Yea or *yes* is derived from the imperative of a verb, *avoir* to have, as the word is now spelt. It signifies therefore *have*, or *possess*, or *take* what you ask. But does this explication assist us in using the word? And does not every countryman who labors in the field, understand and use the word with as much precision as the profoundest philosophers?

The word *temper* is derived from an old root, *tem*, which signified *water*. It was borrowed from the act of *cooling*, or moderating heat. Hence the meaning of *temperate*, *temperance*, and all the ramifications of the original stock. But does this help us to the modern current sense of these words? By no means. It leads

us to understand the formation of languages, and in what manner an idea of a visible action gives rise to a correspondent abstract idea; or rather, how a word, from a literal and direct sense, may be applied to express a variety of figurative and collateral ideas. Yet the customary sense of the word is known by practice, and as well understood by an illiterate man of tolerable capacity, as by men of science.

The word *always* is compounded of *all* and *ways*; it had originally no reference to time; and the etymology or composition of the word would only lead us into error. The true meaning of words is that which a nation in general annex to them. Etymology therefore is of no use but to the learned; and for them it will still be preserved, so far as it is now understood, in dictionaries and other books that treat of this particular subject.

4. "The distinction between words of different meanings and similar sound would be destroyed."

"That distinction," to answer in the words of the great Franklin, "is already destroyed in pronunciation." Does not every man pronounce *all* and *awl* precisely alike? And does the sameness of sound ever lead a hearer into a mistake? Does not the construction render the distinction easy and intelligible, the moment the words of the sentence are heard? Is the word *knew* ever mistaken for *new*, even in the rapidity of pronouncing an animated oration? Was *peace* ever mistaken for *piece*; *pray* for *prey*; *flour* for *flower*? Never, I presume, is this similarity of sound the occasion of mistakes.

If therefore an identity of *sound*, even in rapid speaking, produces no inconvenience, how much less would an identity of *spelling*, when the eye would have leisure to survey the construction? But

experience, the criterion of truth, which has removed the objection in the first case, will also assist us in forming our opinion in the last.

There are many words in our language which, with the *same orthography*, have *two* or more *distinct meanings*. The word *wind*, whether it signifies *to move round*, or *air in motion*, has the *same spelling*; it exhibits no distinction to the *eye* of a silent reader; and yet its meaning is never mistaken. The construction shows at sight in which sense the word is to be understood. *Hail* is used as an expression of joy, or to signify frozen drops of water, falling from the clouds. *Rear* is to raise up, or it signifies the hinder part of an army. *Lot* signifies fortune or destiny; a plat of ground; or a certain proportion or share; and yet does this diversity, this contrariety of meanings ever occasion the least difficulty in the ordinary language of books? It cannot be maintained. This diversity is found in all languages;[187] and altho it may be considered as a defect, and occasion some trouble for foreign learners, yet to natives it produces no sensible inconvenience.

5. "It is idle to conform the orthography of words to the pronunciation, because the latter is continually changing."

This is one of Dr. Johnson's objections, and it is very unworthy of his judgement. So far is this circumstance from being a real objection, that it is alone a sufficient reason for the change of spelling. On his principle of *fixing the orthography*, while the *pronunciation is changing*, any *spoken language* must, in time, lose all relation to the *written language*; that is, the sounds of words would have no affinity with the letters that compose them. In some instances, this is now the case; and no mortal would suspect from

the spelling, that *neighbour*, *wrought*, are pronounced *nabur*, *rawt*. On this principle, Dr. Johnson ought to have gone back some centuries, and given us, in his dictionary, the primitive Saxon orthography, *wol* for *will*; *ydilnesse* for *idleness*; *eyen* for *eyes*; *eche* for *each*, &c. Nay, he should have gone as far as possible into antiquity, and, regardless of the changes of pronunciation, given us the primitive radical language in its purity. Happily for the language, that doctrine did not prevail till his time; the spelling of words changed with the pronunciation; to these changes we are indebted for numberless improvements; and it is hoped that the progress of them, in conformity with the national practice of speaking, will not be obstructed by the erroneous opinion, even of Dr. Johnson. How much more rational is the opinion of Dr. Franklin, who says, "the orthography of our language began to be fixed too soon." If the pronunciation must vary, from age to age, (and some trifling changes of language will always be taking place) common sense would dictate a correspondent change of spelling. Admit Johnson's principles; take his pedantic orthography for the standard; let it be closely adhered to in future; and the slow changes in the pronunciation of our national tongue, will in time make as great a difference between our *written* and *spoken* language, as there is between the pronunciation of the present English and German. The *spelling* will be no more a guide to the pronunciation, than the orthography of the German or Greek. This event is actually taking place, in consequence of the stupid opinion, advanced by Johnson and other writers, and generally embraced by the nation.

All these objections appear to me of very inconsiderable weight, when opposed to the great,

substantial and permanent advantages to be derived from a regular national orthography.

Sensible I am how much easier it is to *propose* improvements, than to *introduce* them. Every thing *new* starts the idea of difficulty; and yet it is often mere novelty that excites the appearance; for on a slight examination of the proposal, the difficulty vanishes. When we firmly *believe* a scheme to be practicable, the work is *half* accomplished. We are more frequently deterred by fear from making an attack, than repulsed in the encounter.

Habit also is opposed to changes; for it renders even our errors dear to us. Having surmounted all difficulties in childhood, we forget the labor, the fatigue, and the perplexity we suffered in the attempt, and imagin the progress of our studies to have been smooth and easy.[188] What seems intrinsically right, is so merely thro habit.

Indolence is another obstacle to improvements. The most arduous task a reformer has to execute, is to make people *think*; to rouse them from that lethargy, which, like the mantle of sleep, covers them in repose and contentment.

But America is in a situation the most favorable for great reformations; and the present time is, in a singular degree, auspicious. The minds of men in this country have been awakened. New scenes have been, for many years, presenting new occasions for exertion; unexpected distresses have called forth the powers of invention; and the application of new expedients has demanded every possible exercise of wisdom and talents. Attention is roused; the mind expanded; and the intellectual faculties invigorated. Here men are prepared to receive improvements, which would be rejected by nations, whose habits

have not been shaken by similar events.

Now is the time, and *this* the country, in which we may expect success, in attempting changes favorable to language, science and government. Delay, in the plan here proposed, may be fatal; under a tranquil general government, the minds of men may again sink into indolence; a national acquiescence in error will follow; and posterity be doomed to struggle with difficulties, which time and accident will perpetually multiply.

Let us then seize the present moment, and establish a *national language*, as well as a national government. Let us remember that there is a certain respect due to the opinions of other nations. As an independent people, our reputation abroad demands that, in all things, we should be federal; be *national*; for if we do not respect *ourselves*, we may be assured that *other nations* will not respect us. In short, let it be impressed upon the mind of every American, that to neglect the means of commanding respect abroad, is treason against the character and dignity of a brave independent people.

To excite the more attention to this subject, I will here subjoin what Dr. Franklin has done and written to effect a reform in our mode of spelling. This sage philosopher has suffered nothing useful to escape his notice. He very early discovered the difficulties that attend the learning of our language; and with his usual ingenuity, invented a plan to obviate them. If any objection can be made to his scheme,[189] it is the substitution of *new* characters, for *th*, *sh*, *ng*, &c. whereas a small stroke, connecting the letters, would answer all the purposes of new characters; as these combinations would thus become single letters, with precise definite sounds and suitable names.

A specimen of the Doctor's spelling cannot be here given, as I have not the proper types;[190] but the arguments in favor of a reformed mode of spelling shall be given in his own words.

Copy of a Letter from Miss S——, to Dr. FRANKLIN, *who had sent her his Scheme of a Reformed Alphabet. Dated, Kensington (England) Sept. 26, 1768.*

DEAR SIR,

I have transcribed your alphabet, &c. which I think might be of service to those who wish to acquire an accurate pronunciation, if that could be fixed; but I see many inconveniences, as well as difficulties, that would attend the bringing your letters and orthography into common use. All our etymologies would be lost; consequently we could not ascertain the meaning of many words; the distinction too between words of *different meaning* and *similar* sound would be useless,[191] unless we living writers publish new editions. In short, I believe we must let people spell on in their old way, and (as we find it easiest) do the same ourselves.—— With ease and with sincerity I can, in the old way, subscribe myself,

Dear Sir,

Your faithful and affectionate Servant,

M. S.

Dr. Franklin.

Dr. Franklin's *Answer to Miss S——.*

DEAR MADAM,

The objection you make to rectifying our alphabet,

"that it will be attended with inconveniences and difficulties," is a very natural one; for it always occurs when any reformation is proposed, whether in religion, government, laws, and even down as low as roads and wheel carriages. The true question then is not, whether there will be no difficulties or inconveniences; but whether the difficulties may not be surmounted; and whether the conveniences will not, on the whole, be greater than the inconveniences. In this case, the difficulties are only in the beginning of the practice; when they are once overcome, the advantages are lasting. To either you or me, who spell well in the present mode, I imagine the difficulty of changing that mode for the new, is not so great, but that we might perfectly get over it in a week's writing. As to those who do not spell well, if the two difficulties are compared, viz. that of teaching them true spelling in the present mode, and that of teaching them the new alphabet and the new spelling according to it, I am confident that the latter would be by far the least. They naturally fall into the new method already, as much as the imperfection of their alphabet will admit of; their present *bad* spelling is only bad, because contrary to the present *bad* rules; under the new rules it would be *good*.[192] The difficulty of learning to spell well in the old way is so great, that few attain it; thousands and thousands writing on to old age, without ever being able to acquire it. It is besides, a difficulty continually increasing;[193] as the sound gradually varies more and more from the spelling; and to foreigners it makes the learning to pronounce our language, as written in our books, almost impossible.

Now as to the inconveniences you mention: The first is, "that all our etymologies would be lost; consequently we could not ascertain the meaning of

many words." Etymologies are at present very uncertain; but such as they are, the old books still preserve them, and etymologists would there find them. Words in the course of time, change their meaning, as well as their spelling and pronunciation; and we do not look to etymologies for their present meanings. If I should call a man a *knave* and a *villain*, he would hardly be satisfied with my telling him, that one of the words originally signified a *lad* or *servant*, and the other an under *plowman*, or the inhabitant of a village. It is from present usage only, the meaning of words is to be determined.

Your second inconvenience is, "the distinction between words of different meaning and similar sound would be destroyed." That distinction is already destroyed in pronouncing them; and we rely on the sense alone of the sentence to ascertain which of the several words, similar in sound, we intend. If this is sufficient in the rapidity of discourse, it will be much more so in written sentences, which may be read leisurely, and attended to more particularly in case of difficulty, than we can attend to a past sentence, while the speaker is hurrying us along with new ones.

Your third inconvenience is, "that all the books already written would be useless." This inconvenience would only come on gradually in a course of ages. I and you and other now living readers would hardly forget the use of them. People would long learn to read the old writing, tho they practised the new. And the inconvenience is not greater than what has actually happened in a similar case in Italy. Formerly its inhabitants all spoke and wrote Latin; as the language changed, the spelling followed it. It is true that at present, a mere

unlearned Italian cannot read the Latin books, tho they are still read and understood by many. But if the spelling had never been changed, he would now have found it much more difficult to read and write his own language;[194] for written words would have had no relation to sounds; they would only have stood for things; so that if he would express in writing the idea he has when he sounds the word *Vescovo*, he must use the letters *Episcopus*.[195]

In short, whatever the difficulties and inconveniences now are, they will be more easily surmounted now, than hereafter; and some time or other it must be done, or our writing will become the same with the Chinese, as to the difficulty of learning and using it. And it would already have been such, if we had continued the Saxon spelling and writing used by our forefathers.

I am, my dear friend,

Your's affectionately,

B. FRANKLIN.

London, Craven Street, Sept. 28, 1768.

The END.

FOOTNOTES:

[181] *Wont* is strictly a contraction of *woll not*, as the word was anciently pronounced.

[182] "*Ta-ke*, *ma-ke*, *o-ne*, *bo-ne*, *sto-ne*, *wil-le*, &c. dissyllaba olim fuerunt, quæ nunc habenter pro monosyllabis."——Wallis.

[183] The words *number*, *chamber*, and many others in English are from the French *nombre*,

chambre, &c. Why was the spelling changed? or rather why is the spelling of *lustre*, *metre*, *theatre*, *not* changed? The cases are precisely similar. The Englishman who first wrote *number* for *nombre*, had no greater authority to make the change, than any modern writer has to spell *lustre*, *metre* in a similar manner, *luster*, *meter*. The change in the first instance was a valuable one; it conformed the spelling to the pronunciation, and I have taken the liberty, in all my writings, to pursue the principle in *luster*, *meter*, *miser*, *theater*, *sepulcher*, &c.

[184] The first by Sir Thomas Smith, secretary of state to Queen Elizabeth: Another by Dr. Gill, a celebrated master of St. Paul's school in London: Another by Mr. Charles Butler, who went so far as to print his book in his proposed orthography: Several in the time of Charles the first; and in the present age, Mr. Elphinstone has published a treatise in a very ridiculous orthography.

[185] I once heard Dr. Franklin remark, "that those people spell best, who do not know how to spell;" that is, they spell as their ears dictate, without being guided by rules, and thus fall into a regular orthography.

[186] In Chaucer's life, prefixed to the edition of his works 1602, I find *move* and *prove* spelt almost correctly, *moove* and *proove*.

[187] In the Roman language *liber* had four or five different meanings; it signified *free*, *the inward bark of a tree*, *a book*, sometimes *an epistle*, and also *generous*.

[188] Thus most people suppose the present mode of spelling to be really the *easiest* and *best*. This opinion is derived from habit; the new mode of spelling proposed would save three fourths of the labor now bestowed in

learning to write our language. A child would learn to spell as well in one year, as he can now in four. This is not a supposition—it is an assertion capable of proof; and yet people, never knowing, or having forgot the labor of learning, suppose the present mode to be the easiest. No person, but one who has taught children, has any idea of the difficulty of learning to spell and pronounce our language in its present form.

[189] See his Miscellaneous Works, p. 470. Ed. Lond. 1779.

[190] This indefatigable gentleman, amidst all his other employments, public and private, has compiled a Dictionary on his scheme of a Reform, and procured types to be cast for printing it. He thinks himself too old to pursue the plan; but has honored me with the offer of the manuscript and types, and expressed a strong desire that I should undertake the task. Whether this project, so deeply interesting to this country, will ever be effected; or whether it will be defeated by indolence and prejudice, remains for my countrymen to determine.

[191] This lady overlooked the other side of the question; viz. that by a reform of the spelling, words now spelt alike and pronounced differently, would be distinguished by their letters; for the nouns *abuse* and *use* would be distinguished from the verbs, which would be spelt *abuze*, *yuze*; and so in many instances. See the answer below.

[192] This remark of the Doctor is very just and obvious. A countryman writes *aker* or *akur* for *acre*; yet the countryman is *right*, as the word *ought* to be spelt; and we laugh at him only because *we* are accustomed to be *wrong*.

[193] This is a fact of vast consequence.

[194] That is, if the language had retained the old *Roman* spelling, and been pronounced as the modern *Italian*. This is a fair state of facts, and a complete answer, to all objections to a reform of spelling.

[195] In the same ridiculous manner, as *we* write, *rough*, *still*, *neighbor*, *wrong*, *tongue*, *true*, *rhetoric*, &c. and yet pronounce the words, *ruf*, *stil*, *nabur*, *rong*, *tung*, *tru*, *retoric*.



Transcriber's Notes:

Punctuation and spelling were made consistent when a predominant preference was found in this book; otherwise they were not changed.

Simple typographical and spelling errors were corrected.

In DISSERTATION V the author was inconsistent in the use of italics in the minor headings—most of the time the language was italicized but when there were two or more languages then the language name was in standard font and the articles, conjunctions etc. were italicized. The usage was changed so that languages were always italicized and the other words were unitalicized.

Numbers used as diacritical marks were changed to superscripts.

*** END OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK DISSERTATIONS ON THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE, WITH NOTES, HISTORICAL AND CRITICAL; ***

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