

Sketch of the various attempts
made to diffuse a Knowledge
of the Holy Scriptures through the
medium of the Irish Language

Memorial in behalf of the
Native Irish with a view to
improvement in Moral and
Religious Knowledge

Thoughts on the tendency of
Bible Societies in Ireland.

Morton Pitt's address to the Land
interest on the deficiency of habi-
tations & fuel for the poor.

Remarks on the Practicability of
W. Ovens Plans to improve the
Condition of the Poor

Observations on Medical Reform
State of Medical Science in Great
Britain & Ireland (over)

Duncan's Remarks on
the Royal Infirmary of Edinb.

Report of the Executive Com-
mittee for the Management of
the Methodist Mission instituted
by Wesley

A
BRIEF SKETCH
OF VARIOUS ATTEMPTS WHICH HAVE BEEN MADE TO DIFFUSE
A KNOWLEDGE OF

THE HOLY SCRIPTURES,

THROUGH THE MEDIUM OF

The Irish Language.

Therefore, if I know not the meaning of the Voice, I shall be unto him that speaketh a barbarian, and he that speaketh shall be a barbarian unto me.

1 COR. xiv. 11.

Dublin :

PRINTED BY GRAISBERRY AND CAMPBELL, 10, BACK-LANE.

1818.

Houses of the Oireachtas

BRIEF SKETCH, &c.



THERE is nothing, perhaps, which more remarkably, and it scarcely need be added, more gloriously characterizes the present era, than that desire of diffusing religious information which so remarkably prevails. With a view to this object, translations of the Scriptures have been multiplied abroad, and increased circulation has been given to the Words of Life at home; and yet, is it not a melancholy singularity, a most affecting anomaly, that while our efforts in this truly interesting cause have been directed to almost every other part of the world, we should have so entirely overlooked that part of the population of this country which uses exclusively the Irish tongue, or is at least incapable of receiving moral or religious instruction through any other medium; a people so nearly connected with us, living as it were at our very doors, breathing the same air, and

governed by the same laws? It may indeed be said, that public attention has but recently been directed to the peculiar situation of this class of the community ; and of those more actively engaged in the dissemination of the Scriptures, that few have been so situated as to be capable of ascertaining *their* spiritual wants. It might therefore be expected, that, in order to obtain a hearty co-operation on their behalf, nothing more would be necessary than simply to state the vast proportion of the people so circumstanced ; and that a general and ardent desire would at once be excited among all who appreciate the advantages of religion, to put into their hands the Holy Scriptures, and to enable them to read, in their vernacular tongue, the Words of Life. Unfortunately, however, experience does not here keep pace with expectation ; and some, even of those who are warm advocates for giving the widest possible extension to the principles of Christianity, have questioned the expediency of employing the Irish language for that purpose. As this reluctance on the part of such men must arise from a want of full information, or of just views upon the subject, it will be necessary to enter into the question more fully, to meet objections, to propose arguments, and to bring forward facts. It may not, however, be uninteresting first to take a short view of what has already been done in this respect.

Judging from what was the practice in the earlier ages of Christianity, we might naturally imagine that the Irish, after their conversion from Paganism, would not long remain without a version of the Scriptures in their own tongue; and what in a manner confirms this supposition, is the statement of the venerable Bede, who informs us, that in his time (that is, little more than 200 years after the period usually assigned for the introduction of Christianity into this island) the Bible was read in Great Britain in five dialects then vulgarly used, those of the Angles, the Britons, the Scots, the Picts and the Latins.* The close connexion which prevailed between Ireland and the country now called Scotland, makes it highly probable that the version used by the natives of North Britain, was also in use among those of this island. The little intercourse too between the Irish Church and that of Rome, whose interference and controul the former so long resisted, renders it unlikely that the services were performed at that period in the Latin tongue. But no traces of the version which, according to Bede, did exist in that tongue, now remain, either in Scotland or Ireland. Thus we find Bishop Carsuel com-

* Bede, Hist. Eccles. Lib. 1. cap. 1. p. 41. fol. Cantab. 1722.

plaining, in the year 1566-7, that the Gael of Scotland and Ireland had not the Holy Bible printed in Gaelic;† and though this complaint refers more immediately to the want of a *printed* copy in Gaelic, yet from the context we may fairly infer, that he was unacquainted with the existence of any version in that tongue, either in print or in manuscript.

Richard Fitzrauf, or Fitzralph, a man singularly enlightened, and bold in declaring against the corruptions of the Church in his day, was the first person on record known to possess a version of any part of the Scriptures in Irish. He was born at Dundalk, and educated in the University of Oxford, of which he was Chancellor in the year 1333. He was first made Dean, or according to some, Archdeacon of Litchfield; afterwards, in the year 1347, Archbishop of Armagh.* According to the information of Bale, he concealed a version of the New Testament, probably made by himself, in a certain wall of his church, with the following note at the end: "When this book is found, truth will be revealed to the world; or, Christ will shortly appear."†

† See Epistle dedicatory of the "Confession of Faith and Prayer-book, &c." by Bishop Carsewell or Carsuel, printed in the Year 1566-7.

* Ware, de Scriptoribus Hiberniæ, lib. I. p. 69. quarto, Lond. 1639.

† Balæus, Script. Brit. 14. Centuriæ. Centuria decima quarta. p. 246. fol. Bas. 1559.

About 1530, one hundred and seventy years after his death,* the copy of the New Testament above-mentioned was found, on repairing the church at Armagh.

The reformed Religion having been introduced into Ireland about the year 1551, the 5th of Edward VI., the necessary consequence was the ordering the Common Prayer to be read in English in the churches. On the accession of Queen Elizabeth, the Liturgy, which had been prohibited during the reign of her predecessor, was restored, and English Bibles were sent over to be distributed gratis.

The vast majority of the people, however, not understanding English, were no way bene-

Fox, in his Martyrology, as quoted by Usher, says, that he himself had seen ancient copies of this version in England; and that persons who might be relied on informed him, that fragments of such books existed every where in Ireland. Vide Fox's Acts and Monuments, London, 1596, p. 381. Usher. Hist. Dogm. p. 156. quarto, Lond. 1695.

* He died in 1360, at Avignon, whither he had been cited in 1357, to appear before the Pope and Cardinals in consistory, to answer for opinions maintained by him in opposition to the sentiments which prevailed in his days relative to voluntary mendicity. His bones are reported to have been brought over to Dundalk about the year 1370, by Stephen de Valle, Bishop, first of Limerick, afterwards of Meath, where he was well known, as Ware informs us, under the title of St. Richard of Dundalk. And "so great were his virtues, and so many the miracles ascribed to him, that," notwithstanding the controversy in which he had been engaged, and which was left undecided at the time of his death, "Boniface IX., by diploma, ordered these miracles to be examined into."—Ware, de Script. Hib. lib. 1. p. 71.

fited by these regulations. The Irish Parliament therefore, at the same time that it marked its preference of an IRISH LITURGY, yet conceiving that the delay of printing, and the general ignorance of the Irish letter, would form objections to it, recommended to the Queen, that wherever the minister did not understand English, the Liturgy might be read in Latin†; there being no alternative between this and the performing of the service in English, a language of which the minister understood neither the meaning nor the pronunciation.

The advantage, however, of employing their own language as a medium for conveying religious knowledge to the native Irish, we have reason to believe was not altogether disregarded, since we find that in the year 1571, the 13th of Elizabeth, about eleven years after the passing of the above-mentioned act, a fount of Irish types, provided by the Queen at her own charge, “in hope, that God in mercy would raise up some to translate the New Testament into their mother tongue,” was sent over to Nicholas Walsh, Chancellor, and John Kearney, Treasurer of St. Patrick’s, Dublin; and it was ordered that the prayers of the church should be printed in the Irish language and character; and that a church should be set apart in the chief town of every diocese, where they were to be read, and a sermon preached

† See Appendix A.

to the common people in their own language ; which, as Richardson informs us, was attended with the desired success. Many of the clergy and laity, eminent for rank and piety, heartily joined in this work. Among others, the Lord Deputy himself, Sir Henry Sidney, strongly recommended to the Queen, in his letter of the 28th April, 1576, to provide ministers capable of instructing the people, through the medium of their own language, in those parts of the country where it prevailed.*

Such also was the advice of no less a man than the great Lord Bacon. In a paper of his, entitled, considerations touching the Queen's service in Ireland, addressed to Mr. Secretary Cecil, A. D. 1601, he thus observes ; " But there would go hand in hand with this some course of advancing Religion indeed, where the people is capable thereof ; as the sending over some good preachers, especially of that sort, which are vehement and zealous preachers, and not scholastical, to be resident in principal towns ; endowing them with some stipend out of her Majesty's revenues, as her Majesty hath most religiously and graciously done in Lancashire ; and the recontinuing and replenishing the College begun in Dublin, the placing of good men to be Bishops in the Sees there, and the taking care of the versions of Bibles and Catechisms, and other books of

* See Appendix B.

instructions into the IRISH LANGUAGE; and the like religious courses, both for the honour of God, and for the avoiding of scandal and insatisfaction here, by the shew of toleration of Religion in some parts there.”*

Mr. Kearney composed a Catechism in Irish, which was the first book printed in that character.† Nicholas Walsh, after his promotion to the See of Ossory, began the translation of the New Testament, but was barbarously murdered in his own house while engaged upon it. Mr. Kearney, and Nehemias Donnellan, Archbishop of Tuam, then undertook the work, but died, leaving it still unfinished.‡ It now devolved upon William Daniel or O'Donel, Archbishop of Tuam,|| by whom it was comple-

* Works of Lord Bacon, vol. 4. p. 552. Fol. London 1740.

† This must be understoed with limitation to Ireland, as it is uncertain whether the Irish Liturgy for the Highlands and Islands of Scotland, composed by Mr. Carsewell, first Bishop of the Isles, and afterwards Bishop of Argyll, was in the Irish character, as also where it was printed.—Ames. Vol. iii. p. 1524.

‡ Such is the natural inference from the words of Archbishop Daniel, in the dedication of his translation of the New Testament to King James. Ware, however, speaks of a translation of the same made by Mr. Kearney, which was extant in manuscript in his time.—Ware de Script. Hib. p. 86.

|| He was one of the three first Scholars of Trinity College, Dublin, *nominat.* ' by the charter, one of the first *elected* Fellows of that House, and the first or second who commenced Doctor of Divinity in that University. Ware informs us, that he was a proficient in Hebrew, and

ted, and published in the year 1602, the province of Connaught and Sir William Usher, Clerk of the Council, defraying the expense of this first edition.† After this the same pious and learned prelate translated the Book of Common Prayer into Irish, which was printed at his own expense, by J. Frampton, A. D. 1608-9, with a dedication to the Lord Deputy.‡

How favourable King James himself was to this line of proceeding, we learn from the King's letter in behalf of all the prelates and clergy of the kingdom of Ireland, dated 26th February, 17°. Jac. I. addressed to the Lord Deputy and Chancellor, and all other the King's officers and ministers whom it shall concern. In this letter, after noticing the dangers to which the people were exposed, for want of ministers capable of speaking to them in their own language, after expressing his concern and surprise that this evil had not yet been remedied, the College of Dublin having

c

“ was indeed a man of distinguished learning.” Harris's Ware, vol. i. p. 616. fol. Dublin, 1739.

† This translation was made from the original Greek, “ to which,” says Archbishop Daniel in his dedication to king James I. “ I tied myself as of duty I ought.”

‡ History of the attempts that have been made to convert the Natives of Ireland &c. by Rev. J. Richardson, Rector of Anna, *alias* Belturbet, and Chaplain to his Grace the Duke of Ormond, and to the Lord Bishop of Clogher, p. 14, 15. 8vo, London, 1712,

been founded by Elizabeth, and further endowed by himself, principally with a view to the instruction of the natives ; and after requiring the Visitors of the University to examine into the manner in which the Governors of the College had performed the trust reposed in them as to this point, he directs that a competent number of young men of talents, acquainted with the Irish language, should be maintained for two or three years in the University, that they might acquire such a knowledge of the grounds of religion as would render them capable of catechising the natives ; ordering, that these men should be put, in preference to others, into such small livings “ among the “ meere Irish” as might fall vacant, or else be maintained as their interpreters by other able ministers, who, owing to their livings being so situated, and their own ignorance of the language, were themselves capable of doing but little good.*

This document is not a little interesting, as from it we learn that one of the principal objects which Elizabeth had in founding, and James in further endowing the College of Dublin, was to train up natives skilled in the Irish language, that they might thereby be able to instruct their fellow countrymen. And this, connected with what Richardson informs us,

* See Appendix C.

respecting “ a small allowance having been settled in that house for the encouragement of a few natives,”* may lead us to conclude, that those places in the College called Natives’ Places, endowed with about £20 per annum, and which are usually bestowed on scholars of good character, were originally founded for the maintenance of students whose native tongue was Irish, with a view to their being afterwards employed as ministers in those parts of Ireland where that language was spoken.

About four years after this, we meet with a no less decided expression of James’s sentiments relative to this subject, in certain orders and directions concerning the state of the church of Ireland, and the possessions thereof, &c.† dated 3d of February, 1623, signed H. Falkland; the manuscript of which Richardson saw in the library of the Honourable Mr. Bridges, from which the following is an extract: “ We do also command, that the New Testament and Book of Common Prayer, translated into Irish, be hereafter frequently used in the parishes of the Irishrie; and that every non-resident there do constantly keep and continue one to read service in the Irish tongue;” and what should give the greater

* Richardson, p. 43.

† Entitled “ Articles of direction to the Lord Chichester,” who was then Lord Deputy. See Appendix (note) p. 5.

weight to this order is, that it appears to have been given upon report made to the King by the Lord Deputy, the Lord Chancellor, Lord Wilmot, Lord Caulfield, Sir William Jones, Sir Dudley Norton, Sir Francis Annesley, Sir Nathaniel Rich, and others, to whom he had issued a commission to enquire into and report on the state of Ireland.

The following sensible instruction, sent about this time, in a letter from the English Privy Council to Sir Arthur Chichester, Lord Deputy of Ireland, dated from the Court at Whitehall, though not immediately connected with the use of the Irish tongue, is worthy of being brought forward here, as explaining their views of the manner in which pure Religion ought to be propagated in Ireland:—"Conformity," say they, "must be wrought with time; and by the care which you must take to enlarge the passage of God's word by choice, and plantation of sufficient and zealous men to teach and preach the same unto his people, wherein we have more hope of good effects, (by the favour of God) than by any sudden or violent course in that kingdom, where the people have so little means as yet to be instructed."*

Charles I. was by no means indifferent to this work. In this King's letter to the Archbishop of Armagh, Usher, with instructions

* Richardson, p. 17—20.

relative to ecclesiastical matters, dated July 8, 2^o Car. I. we find him, at the request of Usher himself, and upon certain propositions made by him for the confirmation of the orders of King James, &c. directing the Primate to take special care that, agreeably to those orders, the very language of which he adopts, “the New Testament and Book of Common Prayer, translated into Irish, be frequently used in the parishes of the the Irishrie, and that every non-resident there do constantly keepe and continue one to reade service in the Irish tongue.”*

It was evidently not imagined that these measures could retard the progress of English, as in another document, of the same date, relative to the education of the Irish, that monarch expresses no less anxiety than his predecessors, to extend the knowledge of English.† The former of those documents affords the clearest evidence of what was the opinion of Archbishop Usher, whose authority as a man of piety, judgment, and learning, few will question. Indeed we want not this proof; for, independently of the support which he gave Bishop Bedell in the Convocation of 1634, and the manner in which he all along encouraged and assisted him in his translation of the Bible, Dr. Parr, in his life of Usher, mentions his having required a person

* See appendix D.

† See appendix E.

unacquainted with the learned languages, who came to him for holy orders, (the only one indeed he ever ordained who had not received a liberal education) to learn Irish; "being satisfied that such an ordinary man was able to do more good than if he had Latin without any Irish at all;" nor was he, as the Doctor informs us, deceived in his expectations.*

But of all who engaged in this work, none entered upon it with more ardour than Bishop Bedell. Richardson informs us, that even before his coming to Ireland he was intent on following this Apostolical way with the natives. From one of his letters to Primate Usher† he seems to have made some progress, even while Provost of Trinity College, Dublin, in translating the Psalter; and from another, written after his elevation to the Episcopal Bench, we have reason to believe that he encouraged the study of Irish in the College, during the time that he was at the head of that seminary; for, speaking of one who had translated the Archbishop's Catechism into Irish, he mentions his having been instructed at the Irish lecture there.‡ That translation does not appear to have been printed, and it probably is not now in existence.

* Parr's Life of Usher, p. 90, 91, fol. Lond. 1686.

† Idem, p. 403.

‡ Life of Bedell by Bishop Burnet, p. 47. 8vo. Dub. 1736. The materials for this memoir were furnished by the Rev. Mr. Clogy, who was son-in-law to Bishop Bedell.

On his promotion to the sees of Kilmore and Ardagh, he shewed how much he had this work at heart; and from the success which attended his exertions, we may presume what good effects would have followed, had the same measures been universally adopted. "He thought," says Bishop Burnet, "the use of the Scriptures was the only way to let the knowledge of Religion in among the Irish, as it had first let the Reformation into the other parts of Europe." He frequently repeated an observation which he heard Fulgentio make at Venice, in preaching on these Words of Christ, "Have ye not read?" that if Christ were now to ask this question, all the answer which they could make to it was, "No, FOR THEY WERE NOT SUFFERED TO DO IT.* Possibly the Bishop might conceive, that had Fulgentio been preaching to an Irish auditory, the answer would have been, *No, for we have not the Scriptures in our own language!!!*

At the age of fifty-seven Bishop Bedell commenced the study of Irish, in which he made so great a proficiency as to be able to compose an Irish grammar, and to superintend the translation of the Old Testament, which was undertaken by a Mr. King, whom he had selected for that purpose by the advice of Primate Usher and other eminent persons; "a man," as Bedell writes

* Life of Bedell, p. 93.

to Lord Strafford, then Lord Lieutenant, “ of that known sufficiency for the Irish especially, either in prose or verse, as few are his matches in the kingdom.”*

In this work he seems to have been subsequently assisted by a Mr. Dennis Sheridan; and though this translation was made from the English version, the translator having been ignorant of Hebrew, yet it was regularly revised by the Bishop, who usually read over a chapter after dinner or supper; “ and as he compared the Irish translation with the English, so he compared the English with the Hebrew and the Seventy Interpreters, or with Diodati’s Italian translation, which he valued highly; and he corrected the Irish where he found the English translators had failed.†” He was well fitted to conduct this revision, having studied Hebrew under Rabbi Leo, Italian also was familiar to him, as he had been long resident at Venice in quality of Chaplain to Sir Henry Wotton, during the time of the Interdict, where he contracted a friendship with the celebrated Paul Sarpi.

He published a Catechism in English and Irish, arranged in parallel columns, which he distributed throughout his diocese, also the following tracts in Irish; some forms of Prayer;

* Bedell’s Life, p. 92, and 103.

† Bedell’s Life, p. 93.

a selection of the most instructive and edifying passages of Scripture; the three first of Chrysostom's Homilies upon the parable of the rich man and Lazarus, and some sermons by Leo, which tended chiefly to commend the Scriptures in the highest strains of eloquence.* Those labours, as Richardson informs us, were so well received by the natives, as to give good grounds of hope that further endeavours of this kind would not be vain or fruitless. He was moreover desirous of procuring Clergymen able to preach to the natives in their own language, regarding it as a qualification absolutely necessary in every minister employed in a diocese almost wholly inhabited by natives. Several were rejected by him for want of this attainment; and, notwithstanding much opposition, he obliged every minister to perform Divine offices in a tongue understood by the people.†

In the year 1634, the version of the Bible and the Liturgy of the Church of England into Irish, were ordered to be used by the Convocation held in Dublin; not, however, till

D

* Vide Bedell's Life, p. 106.

† Bishop Burnet, in his Life, gives us a translation of the concluding part of his Form of Collation, which runs thus: "Obtesting you in the Lord, and enjoining you by virtue of that obedience which you owe to the great Shepherd, that you will diligently feed his flock committed to your care, which he

after considerable debate, "Bedell being for the affirmative, and Dr. Bramhall, Bishop of Derry, opposing it." The reasons of the latter, as Dr. Dopping, Bishop of Meath, informs us,* "were drawn from an act of Parliament, passed in this kingdom in the reign of King Henry VIII. for obliging the natives to learn the English tongue." However, the arguments of Bishop Bedell were deemed so satisfactory, (especially being countenanced by the authority of Primate Usher), that the Convocation thought fit to pass three canons on the subject, requiring the Confession, Absolution, and all the Second Service, at or before the Communion, as far as the homily or sermon, to be read in Irish, where the majority of the people are Irish, and providing every thing requisite for carrying this into effect.†

The translation of the Old Testament was finished in 1640, but Bedell did not live to see it published, as he died the following year, at the age of 71. Had he lived, it was his intention to have had it printed at his own

purchased with his own blood: that you instruct them in the Catholic Faith, and perform Divine offices in a tongue understood by the people, &c." *Bedell's Life*, p. 60. And herein he set an example himself, having the Common Prayer read in Irish every Sunday in his cathedrals, at which he always was present.

* App. to Boyle's *Life*, by Birch, prefixed to his works, vol. 1. p. clxxxii. clxxxiii.

† See Appendix F.

house, and at his own charge.* The great esteem which was shewn by the native Irish, and even those of the Romish communion, to this “best of English bishops” as they called him, and the singular marks of honour and affection which they paid him, even in the great heat of the rebellion, are strongly encouraging proofs that the method he pursued, as it was most likely to benefit them, so was it most calculated to win the hearts of the Irish.†

Notwithstanding the troubles which followed, and the overthrow of the Kingly power, the course pursued by this excellent man does not appear to have been altogether abandoned; for we find that a catechism, entitled the Christian Doctrine, one column in English, and the opposite in Irish, “with places of Scripture, was printed at Dublin, in the year 1652, by one Godfrey Daniel, with rules for reading

* Bedell’s Life, p. 106.

† Although the bishop was considered by the rebels as a heretic, it is an interesting circumstance, that they suffered him to be interred in his own burial place, desiring, if his friends thought fit, that the office proper for that occasion might be used, according to the Liturgy of the Church of Ireland. The chiefs of the rebels also having gathered their forces together, and accompanied his body to the churchyard in great solemnity, discharged a volley of shot at his interment, crying out in Latin “Quiescat in pace ultimus Anglorum;” and one of the priests, (Edmund Farilly) who was present on the occasion, exclaimed, “O sit Anima mea cum Bedello.” Harris’s Ware, vol. i. p. 240. 241.

the Irish tongue, short and excellent, taking up no more than half a sheet of paper.*

The advantage of addressing the people in a language which they understood, seems also to have been felt by the government which was established here during the Protectorate, as may be judged from a document to be found in the Appendix.†

About the year 1680, that very excellent man, and truly Christian philosopher, Mr. Boyle, who had largely contributed to translations of the Scriptures into other languages and through whose means the Society for promoting Christian Knowledge received its charter, determined on republishing, at his own expense, the Irish New Testament, which was out of print, most of the copies of the former edition having been, as he was informed, bought up, from time to time, by Romish ecclesiastics. For this purpose he caused a fount of Irish types to be cast, having ascertained that the old one had fallen into the hands of the Jesuits, who had carried them over to Doway, where several tracts in Irish were published by them—a convincing proof what a powerful instrument the members of that indefatigable and sharp-sighted Society conceived the vernacular tongue might be

* See Dr. Sall's letter to Mr. Boyle. Boyle's Works, vol. vi. p. 595. Quarto, Lond. 1772.

† See appendix G.

made for acting on the minds of the people. Mr. Boyle had also an able printer instructed for printing necessary books in the Irish tongue, and caused the Church Catechism in Irish, with the elements of that language, to be published in 1680.*

In the mean time, however, he did not neglect the New Testament, the publication of which was delayed by the necessary corrections made under the superintendence of Mr. Rely, a native of Ireland, and a good Irish scholar.† It came out in the year 1681, in the Irish character, with a large preface in English and Irish, composed by Doctor Andrew Sall, and translated by Mr. Rely. It contains answers to some of the most plausible objections against putting the Scriptures into the hands of the lower orders, and shews the opinion of the Fathers and most eminent divines of all ages, even in the Romish communion, on that subject.‡

In the mean time Doctor Henry Jones, Bishop of Meath, to whom the manuscript of Bedell's version had been intrusted by Mr. Sheridan, having learned Mr. Boyle's anxiety to give the Scriptures to the Irish in their own

* Richardson, p. 26.

† Boyle's Works, vol. I. p. clxxii.—cciv. in the Appendix to his life, and vol. vi. p. 591—610.

‡ Boyle's Works, Vol. I. p. clxxxiii.—clxxxviii.

language, wrote to inform him of the existence of such a manuscript, and solicited his aid towards publishing it.*

Mr. Boyle, immediately entering into the Bishop's views, generously subscribed £50 himself, towards defraying the expense, and gave every assistance towards obtaining subscriptions. The manuscript was put into the hands of Dr. Andrew Sall, who considered it a work of so much importance, that he relinquished all those studies in which he had before engaged, and which, from a previous letter of his to Mr. Boyle, embraced an extensive field of ethical and theological disquisitions.

His words, in a letter to Mr. Boyle, dated 7th February, 1681, are interesting, as shewing the favourable reception which the edition of the New Testament met among the people. "My labour and industry," says he, "I will not spare, and will lay aside other studies I was engaged in, to attend to this work, being

* From this letter of Bishop Jones it would appear that, together with the Old Testament, the Psalms had been translated into metre fitted to the ordinary tunes. They were not, however, published; and, from a letter of Bedell, to Primate Usher, written in the year 1629, shortly after his promotion to the Bishoprick of Kilmore, it seems that on the advice of a Mr. James Nangle, he early relinquished the idea of this metrical translation. Boyle's Works, Vol. I. p. clxxii. Parr's Life of Usher, p. 423.

persuaded that none other can be of more importance for the glory of God, and the good of souls, in this poor country. I have been confirmed in this persuasion, by the great joy I see in the country for the publication of the New Testament, with many blessings on you, and prayers for you, whose great piety and bounty procured this happiness for them."

"Several Gentlemen of this country, Romanists, came to me this term, earnestly desiring to have them (Irish New Testaments) for reading to their families; and one promised to urge their Priests to read chapters of it at Mass to the congregation. For this purpose, I wish that a great number of the next edition may be exposed to sale at a low rate."

Nor were his labours in this field confined to the revisal of the text of Bedell's version—for we learn from his letters, that in Cashel and elsewhere he preached in the Irish tongue, catechising also every Sunday in English and Irish in the city of Cashel, for which purpose he enlarged the Church Catechism where he thought it necessary. In all this he was materially aided by the countenance of the Archbishop of Cashel (Dr. Thomas Price, formerly Fellow of Trinity College, Dublin,) who had appointed the Psalms and the Common Prayer in Irish, to be read in his Cathedral; and who besides maintained many Irish

Clergymen to preach to the natives in their country language.* This countenance of the Archbishop was not in itself, however, sufficient to prevent opposition to Doctor Sall. In one of his letters he writes thus: "Our good Archbishop has continual battles with them upon this subject. But I hope God will help us to carry on his work against oppositions, which shall never be wanting, and of this unwelcome tidings no more": and in another place he writes, that "he was told, while he went about to gain the Irish (to God) he would lose the English." He did not, however, live to complete the revisal. The manuscript therefore which he had given to Doctor Anthony Dopping, formerly Fellow of Trinity College, Dublin, and successor to Jones in the See of Meath, was by him committed to Doctor Narcissus Marsh, then Provost of Trinity College, Dublin, (afterwards Lord Primate of Ireland) who employed a Mr. Higgins in finishing the revision. This Gentleman was engaged at the Provost's own charge in teaching Irish in the University; and having afterwards been admitted into holy orders, was, as Richardson informs us, instrumental in effecting much good. The Provost himself, whose knowledge of Irish was sufficient to enable him to undertake the composition of

* Harris' Ware, Vol. I. p. 487. fol. Dublin, 1739.

an Irish Grammar, assisted in the correction. He early saw the propriety of attending to this language, as we find him listening to the recommendation of Bishop Jones, in having Irish prayers read publickly in the College. From another letter of the same Bishop to Mr. Boyle, we learn that Doctor Marsh countenanced an Irish Teacher in that seminary whose public lecture was attended by 80 students, while some of the Fellows and chief members of that Society attended him privately.—He also caused a sermon in Irish to be preached every month, commencing on Easter Sunday, on which occasion the Chapel was unusually crowded; among others, Lord Viscount Dillon was of the auditory. The Duke of Ormond, then Lord Lieutenant, also attended, and promised to countenance it by his presence. The following testimony to Doctor Marsh's exertions in this cause, is borne by Bishop Dopping, in a letter to Mr. Boyle:—"That which gives me the greatest hopes of success in this, is our good Provost's care and zeal in training up the present youth in the College in reading the Irish, which, by the books from you now in their hands, is much forwarded. This may be a seed Plot for the church;" to which the Bishop subjoins the following pious reflections, to which every wellwisher to his country, every sincere Christian, will heartily subscribe:—"The harvest is

great and the labourers few, therefore is the Lord of the harvest to be earnestly desired to prepare and send forth more labourers for the great harvest of souls which we hope for." The work did not, however, proceed without opposition. The objections which have been commonly urged against it, were then brought forward; and we find Dr. Jones, in one of his earliest communications on the subject, thus expressing himself to Mr. Boyle:—"I found it almost a principle of their politics to suppress that language utterly, rather than in so public a way to countenance it."—Of the opposition to Doctor Sall, notice has been already taken. Doctor Marsh too, in a letter written after his promotion to the see of Ferns, on which he gave up neither his grammar nor the revision of the Bible, after mentioning that "the Lord Lieutenant had promised assistance and encouragement," adds, that "he (the Lord Lieutenant) was surprised at what was related to him of the discouragements (and indeed threats) that I have had on this account." The work, however, received no inconsiderable patronage: the Archbishop of Canterbury* aided in defraying the expense: the Bishop of

* Dr. William Sancroft. He was one of the seven bishops committed, in the reign of James II. to the Tower. Refusing, however, from motives of conscience, to take the oaths of allegiance to William and Mary, he was, in 1690, deprived of his see, in which he was succeeded by Tillotson. See Biographica Britannica, Article SANCROFT.

St. Asaph was also favourable to it.* Nor were the dignitaries of the Irish Church backward in giving it their support. The Bishop of Kilmore, son of that Mr. Sheridan who had assisted in translating the Old Testament, encouraged it; and the Bishop of Kildare, Doctor William Moreton, (afterwards Bishop of Meath) promised "to promote it." Dr. Marsh in a letter to Mr. Boyle, writes thus:—"The Bishop of Meath has written to several Bishops, whose answers (which he shewed me) generally are, that they will cast in their mites for the carrying on so good a work, when they know what methods will be used for the gathering them."

At length, after many delays, it was put to press in the year 1685, under the superintendence of Mr. Rely, the same who had superintended the printing of the New Testament.

* The very learned Dr. William Lloyd, afterwards Bishop successively of Coventry and Litchfield, and Worcester. He was one of the bishops committed to the Tower with Archbishop Sancroft. For a high character of him, see Burnet's History of his own times, vol. I. p. 190, 191. fol. Lond. 1724. After speaking in the strongest terms of his talents, industry and acquirements, he adds "Yet, as much as he was set on learning, he never neglected his pastoral care;" and concludes with these words, "He was a holy, humble and patient man, ever ready to do good when he saw a proper opportunity; even his love of study did not divert him from that." See also Burnet's Preface to his History of the Reformation, Part I.

Two editions of the Irish scriptures were printed in the year 1690, one in the Roman, the other in the Irish character; the latter intended for Ireland, the former for the Highlands of Scotland. For Mr. Boyle having sent thither 200 copies of the Bible, a general interest was excited, particularly among the clergy, to supply that country more abundantly, and proposals were immediately made for publishing 3000 copies of the Scriptures in Irish for the use of the Highlanders.—In this edition the use of the Roman letter was adopted, as the people had been previously taught to read English without understanding it, a practice which prevailed in that country till very lately. In those proposals an interesting account is given of the manner in which the former copies were received by the people; “such is their zeal that they send for the Bible sometimes to one part of the parish, and sometimes to another, that they may read it on the week-days, and then they return it to the Church on the Lord’s day, that all may hear it read publicly.” The following testimony is also borne to the efficacy of the Scriptures upon the minds of the people, in producing principles and habits of peaceable submission to the constituted authorities. “And it is very remarkable, that amidst the public commotions in that kingdom, scarce any of those Highlanders, who have received Bibles and catechisms,

and have been instructed in the knowledge of truth, have joined themselves to the adversaries of the present happy settlement.”

It may lead us to form some notion of the weight of those objections which are urged in the present day, to know that even with respect to that country, the idea was entertained of *abolishing* the language by *not teaching it*; and even a doubt, which it was necessary gravely to meet and remove, was then suggested whether the language was so exclusively spoken, as to call for such a version of the Holy Scriptures. Persons unacquainted with the state of a country ought always, therefore, to be very cautious in giving a decided opinion on such subjects. The proposals before referred to, without a single line of alteration, might be adopted in the present day in recommendation of similar plans for the Highlands; and were it not that the custom of preaching in Irish is appealed to as a proof that the language was not yet extinct, (an appeal which unhappily cannot be made in this country) they would be equally applicable to the present state of Ireland. The following extracts will shew their view of the subject. “We may very reasonably suppose, that many who send their children to school to learn English, are not able to keep them so long under the care of a school-master as to have them taught *to speak*, though they may have time to learn to read and

understand it pretty well in books ;” and again, “ Suppose one of ten should learn to speak it perfectly, yet what is this to the extirpating the language in this age ? What must be done with the four or five, or nine or ten children, not to say any thing of aged persons who cannot speak for lack of knowledge ? OR SHALL THE BLESSED MEANS OF HEAVENLY LIGHT AND COMFORT BE WITHHELD FROM THEM, AS FROM A GENERATION THAT GOD HATH CURSED AND FORSAKEN ? Far be it from all those that bear the honourable name of Christians, to harden themselves against their brethren, and under pretence of any human policy, to fight against the kingdom of our God and Saviour ;” and again, —“ many can buy and sell in English, who do not understand a sermon in that language.”*

A letter of thanks was written by Mr. Spalding to Mr. Boyle, dated Edinburgh, Jan. 28, 1690, by desire of the Church Meeting of the Ministers and Elders in Scotland. Thanks were also in the most affectionate manner returned to him for his munificent present by the Presbytery of Ross, synodically convened (that is, the Bishop of Ross and his clergy) through a Mr. Kirkwood, who was extremely active in this work.

* See an Account of the design of printing 3000 Bibles in Irish for the use of the Highlanders,” with an Answer to the objections against printing the Bible in Irish.” Boyle’s Works, vol. 1. p. cxc—cxci.

There is also a letter on this subject from the Bishop of Ross himself to Mr. Kirkwood, in which, after temperately observing that he “cannot condemn the design of some to have that language quite worn out of this country,” (Scotland) he goes on to observe, “what he had done, notwithstanding, for the instruction of the people through the medium of their own language.” “I took care, a considerable while ago, to request some of the Presbyters, who were best skilled in that language, to translate into Irish a catechism, which is appointed to be made use of in all the diocese either in English or Irish,” and the advantages he hoped presbyters would derive from the version of the Scriptures are noticed as follows : “and in places where most of the people understand only the Irish, he is at the pains to translate it into that language, for which this noble present of the Irish bible will be very useful to them, because I have heard some of them complain, that they could not get words to express in Irish some passages of holy writ.*”

It was during the printing of this edition of the Irish Scriptures for the Highlands of Scotland, that Mr. Kirk superintended the press, and not, as Richardson supposes, when the New Testament was published in 1681, and the Old in 1685, that office having, as may be inferred

* Boyle's Works, vol. I. cxciii—cciv.

from the correspondence published on the subject in Boyle's Works, and the Appendix to his life, devolved on Mr. Rely.

Shortly after this the beneficial effects of addressing a people through the medium of their own language, received confirmation even in this island. Richardson informs us, that after the siege of Londonderry was raised, many of the Irish natives having left their habitations in the barony of Inishowen in the county of Donegal, and having followed the Irish army to the southern parts of Ireland, several Protestant families from the Highlands of Scotland settled in their places. They having petitioned the then Bishop of Derry, the celebrated Dr. William King, afterwards Archbishop of Dublin, that he would send them a minister to perform divine offices to them in their own language, their request was readily granted, and two ministers were encouraged to preach in Irish in that barony, one of whom had a benefice, and the other a competent allowance from the Bishop, and by the blessing of God upon their labours, they got four or five hundred hearers, none of whom understood English.*

In consequence of those good effects, several persons were employed in the northern parts of the county Antrim, and continued to be so till the time of Richardson, that district hav-

* Richardson, p. 28.

ing been likewise deserted by the Irish on the landing of the English army near Carrickfergus in 1689, in consequence of which many families from the Western Isles of Scotland, who understood no other language than Irish, settled there. On their first coming to Ireland, they attended the worship of the Established Church, but soon, being incapable of understanding the service celebrated there, went over to the communion of the Church of Rome, only for the benefit, as they themselves acknowledged, of those exhortations, which are usually given in Irish, wherever that language is prevalent. Some persons observing this, presented a petition to the Bishop of Down, requesting that these Highlanders might have a minister to officiate to them in their own tongue; upon which Mr. Duncan Mac Arthur was sent to them, who performed the offices of religion to them in their own language, to their great satisfaction. After his death the Bishop appointed Mr. Archibald Mac Collum to succeed him in the same office; in which his contemporary Richardson informs us, he was successful, not only among the Highlanders, but also the natives of Ireland. Besides him, there were in Richardson's time, three or four other such preachers in that country, having every one of them considerable congregations.*

F

* Richardson, p. 28, 29.

A few years after, the Rev. Nicholas Brown, Rector of the parishes of Donacavy, Drumore and Rossory, in the diocese of Clogher, adopted this course with considerable success. In the year 1702 he began to preach in Irish, for which he seems to have been well qualified, by his knowledge of the language and happy faculty of expressing terms of divinity therein. To this he had been advised and encouraged by the Bishop of Clogher,* and was aided and countenanced by Audley Mervin, Esq. one of the knights of the shire for the county of Tyrone. "He was a man of an exemplary life and conversation," and embraced every occasion of winning the hearts of the people, to whom he was kind, humane and charitable. Perceiving how much they were pleased at hearing divine service in their own tongue, he took opportunities of instructing them, and administering ordinances to them in Irish; appointed public meetings with them; went to their houses, and attended at the places where they usually assembled to hear Mass. Respecting his labours, the plan he pursued, and the manner in which it was received, we have a very interesting document from the Provost, Burgesses, and principal inhabitants of Enniskillen, dated January 14th, 1711, stating that

* Dr. St. George Ash, who had been previously Fellow and Provost of Trinity College, Dublin, and Bishop of Cloyne. He was afterwards Bishop of Derry.

during the three or four years he was among them, ending 1705, he frequently, and in summer time every Sunday in the afternoon, had great numbers of the natives convened in some convenient place in or near the town; that he always read some chapters out of the Old or New Testament to them in Irish; and the prayers of the Church out of an Irish common prayer book of the church of England, in which the people joined devoutly, expressing great satisfaction at what they heard.*

In addition to this, we have a letter of a Mr. Gratten, who attended him in his last sickness, dated January 24th, 1811, stating that the prayers he used were taken chiefly out of the Communion Service; and the discourses he read were the Sermon on the Mount, and other select passages of Scripture, as also the Gospel and Epistle for the day. To this gentleman Mr. Browne expressed his conviction of what would be the happy result in a few years, if the Convocation could prevail on the Parliament, among other things, to establish Irish preachers and schoolmasters, in every diocese in the kingdom. He also recommended the translation of "choice books" into Irish, and with this view had the first part of Thomas a Kempis translated, at his own care and expence. Mr. Grattan saw the manuscript among

* Richardson, p. 30—33.

his papers, and proposed to obtain it for Richardson. The characters were fairly written, and the translation, as he was informed, exact. Whether it be yet extant, is uncertain.*

During this time the body of the clergy was not inattentive to the subject, for we find the Lower House of Convocation, March 3d, 1703, passing a resolution, which they sent to the Upper House, setting forth among other things, the advantage of preachers in all the dioceses of this kingdom, who should address the people in the Irish tongue, and thereupon determining that an application should be made to the Archbishops and Bishops to take into consideration what number of such preachers would be necessary in each diocese, as also how they should be supported. To this application, as far as related to preaching in Irish, their Graces and Lordships returned the following answer:—"As to preaching in the Irish, we think it useful where it is practicable."†

The Rev. Walter Atkins, treasurer of the cathedral church of Cloyne, and vicar of the parish of Middleton in the county of Cork and diocese of Cloyne, was the next who strenuously engaged in this work, concerning whose labours we learn, from an account he himself gave of them to Richardson, that soon after

* Richardson, p. 34—36.

† Ibid. p. 37.

his collation, he applied himself diligently to the study of Irish, with which he was before not altogether unacquainted. He then proceeded, with the sanction of the Bishop of Cloyne,* to perform the offices of religion to the natives in their own language, for which the Earl of Inchiquin furnished him with a Common Prayer Book. “He buried their dead according to the Liturgy of the church of England, which the living liked so well, that they expressed great devotion at it, and joined their voices in the Lord’s Prayer, and the responses before it. His labours were so acceptable, that they sent for him from all parts of the parish to baptize their children, to visit their sick, to bury their dead, to church their women, and to solemnize matrimony, insomuch that he hath married six or eight couple in a day.”†

In 1709, the Lower House of Convocation, in consequence of an earnest recommendation from the Lords for their advice and assistance, resolved, among other things, to print the Liturgy and Scriptures in Irish, to draw up an exposition of the Church Catechism in that tongue, and to encourage clergymen, duly qualified, to perform divine offices therein.‡

* Dr. Charles Crow, formerly Amanuensis to Dr. Andrew Sall.

† Richardson, p. 27—28.

‡ See Appendix H.

The Rev. Dr. Hall, Vice Provost, supported for some time a person of the name of Dunne, for the purpose of giving private lectures in the College to such scholars as desired to learn Irish, while the Archbishop of Dublin, Dr. William King, (probably as visitor,) encouraged one Lyniger, to teach it publickly. The Provost and Fellows also liberally contributed to his support, and gave him the following certificate :

“ Mr. Charles Lyniger, for three years last past, with our consent and approbation, has taught many of the Students in the said College the Irish language. Humbly of opinion if said work were promoted and encouraged, it might prove a means, by God’s blessing, to convert the Irish natives, and bring them over to the established church.”

<i>Benjamin Pratt, Precep.</i>	<i>John Hall,</i>
<i>Richard Baldwin,</i>	<i>Claudius Gilbert,</i>
<i>Nicholas Forster,</i>	<i>John Elwood,</i>
<i>Thomas Coningsby,</i>	<i>Mathew French.*</i>

It is pleasing to recognize here the venerable names of BALDWIN and GILBERT.

In 1710, some clergymen of the established church, followed the example set them by the Rev. Messrs. Browne and Atkins. The people attended with much devotion, and expressed great satisfaction at hearing prayers in their own language. “ It was,” says Richardson,

* Richardson, p. 42—44.

“ a joyful surprize to them, and like giving sight to the blind : some were highly pleased, and much affected when the word of God, “ which rejoiceth the heart, and enlighteneth the eyes,” was read to them : and two men, of 30 years of age at least, were so much taken with it, that they bought primers, and learned to read, that so they might be able to search the Scriptures themselves.*

One of the above mentioned Clergymen having bought a fount of Irish types in London, in order to print the Bible, Liturgy, and such other books in the Irish language as might be necessary or useful, a proposal to this effect was drawn up and laid before several noble and estimable persons of Great Britain, who expressed their approbation of it, and desired that those books should be printed with all expedition, offering to contribute towards defraying the charges of the press. However, the Hon. Francis Annesly, of Lincoln's-Inn-Fields, not doubting that the Duke of Ormond would encourage and support this undertaking, and intercede with Her Majesty, recommended it to the Hon. Mr. Southwell, Secretary of State for Ireland, who approved of his design, declaring also his belief that it would be acceptable to the Duke of Ormond. It was therefore laid before the Lord Bishop of Kil-

* Richardson, p. 45.

dare (Dr. Welbore Ellis), and several of the Nobility, Clergy, and Gentry of Ireland, who consented it should be presented to the Duke of Ormond in their names, and particularly submitted to the consideration of the Right Hon. the Earl of Anglesea; "whose approval," says Richardson, "gave the design a hopeful prospect."*

The memorial, after noticing the great satisfaction expressed by the natives on hearing Divine Service performed in their own tongue, and after remarking the want of printed books on religion in Irish, proposes "that some numbers of the New Testament and Common Prayer Books, Catechisms, and Expositions thereon, the Whole Duty of Man, and select sermons upon the principal points of religion, be translated and printed in the Irish character and tongue," for distribution in the Irish families that could read, and especially among such Ministers as laboured in this interesting work.†

That the Memorialists had no intention of retarding thereby the progress of English, is evident from their recommending "charity schools to be erected in every parish in Ireland, for the instruction of the Irish children gratis

* Richardson. p. 45—46.

† See Appendix I.

in the English tongue.* No; they had in view a grand system for the intellectual, moral, and religious improvement of the people, in which they conceived, and justly, that an attention to the Irish language should make a part.

The Duke of Ormond gave the memorial a kind reception, promised his patronage, and sent it to Ireland with a favourable letter to the Lords Justices, desiring them to lay it before the Lord Primate and Archbishops in Dublin, for their opinion as to the usefulness of the plan, and what would be fit to propose to Her Majesty thereon. Their Graces and Lordships were favourable to it, but considered that it would require the advice and assistance of Parliament and of the Convocation.

The prejudices against Irish seem, however, to have been too powerful; since, in the petition which was afterwards presented to Her Majesty relative to the general education of the people of Ireland, no notice whatsoever is taken of that language.† The same objections were brought forward then, as formerly in the time of Bedell, and latterly in our own days—That it would be the destruction of the English interest; and that it was contrary to law, as being prohibited by an act passed in the 29th year of Henry VIII. for the encouragement of the English order, habit and language.

G

* Richardson, p. 48.

† Ibid. p. 49—53.

In the mean time the Archbishop of Armagh* and his clergy joined in a subscription for maintaining two missionaries to preach in Irish to the natives in the diocese of Armagh. The Bishop of Derry† and his clergy acted similarly for the diocese of Derry, which was not without success, according to the accounts that Richardson received.‡ On the meeting of the Irish Parliament, the subject was taken into consideration by a Committee of the House of Commons, from whose resolutions on the occasion the following is an extract: “ It will be requisite that a competent number of ministers, duly qualified to instruct the natives of this kingdom, and perform the offices of religion to them in THEIR OWN LANGUAGE, be provided, and encouraged by a suitable maintenance.”

A bill, conformable to the resolutions, was prepared by order of the House; but it was brought in too late to be passed into a law that session,§ nor was the subject ever after revived there.

The lower House of Convocation, after long and full consideration, resolved to apply for a

* Dr. Narcissus Marsh, whose zealous endeavours in the publication of Bedell's version of the Old Testament have been noticed above.

† Dr. Charles Hickman.

‡ Richardson, p. 54.

§ Richardson, p. 55—57.

fund for the education of NATIVES in the University of Dublin, and for the maintenance of persons in Holy Orders skilled in the Irish tongue, who should be appointed by the Bishops, with the consent of the respective incumbents, to assist the parochial clergy wherever a considerable number of the parishioners did not understand English. They further resolved on placing at the disposal of the Archbishops and Bishops, a sufficient number of bibles and prayer books in the Irish tongue.* In addition to this, they recommended schools for teaching ENGLISH gratis, “for that, among other reasons, that the Irish language may in time be utterly abolished,” though they proposed to teach it; a strong proof that nothing was farther from their thoughts or their expectations than the idea of perpetuating that language.†

In the year 1711, the Rev. John Richardson, rector of Annah, alias Belturbet, in the diocese of Kilmore, published “Practical Sermons on the Principal Points of Religion, translated into Irish,” with a dedication to the Duke of Ormond: and in the following year, in consequence of an application made by him, the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, of which he was a corresponding member, directed 3000 copies of his “Short History,” &c.

* See Appendix I.

† Richardson. p. 57—66.

from which so much of the preceding matter has been drawn, to be printed and circulated. This was written evidently with a view to obviate the objections which were started at this time. To it was annexed a proposal for printing the Bible, Liturgy, and Exposition of the Church Catechism, and other useful treatises in Irish. The erection of charity schools for the education of the children of the Irish gratis, in the English tongue, also entered into the plan. Subscriptions towards this design were received at Bartlett's Buildings, by the Rev. Mr. Shute, and by a committee of members appointed for that purpose, among whom we find the names of the Rev. Dr. Charlett, Master of the University College, Oxford; the Rev. Dr. Richardson, Master of St. Peter's, Cambridge; the Rev. Dr. Woodward, and Archdeacon Maurice. By the encouragement then obtained, the Society was enabled speedily to print an edition of 6000 copies of the Book of Common Prayer,* the the same number of the Church Catechism, with the Irish alphabet and elements of the Irish language for the use of the charity schools, and 6000 copies of Lewis's Exposition of the

* Lord Chief Justice Parker subscribed £20. towards the printing of the Irish Liturgy, and through his hands was remitted to the Society £80, from a person unknown, for the same purpose, towards which Mr. Francis Annesley also subscribed £10. the following year.

Church Catechism,* all in the English and Irish languages, in parallel columns, which were distributed, partly in Ireland, and partly in the Highlands of Scotland.†

In the year 1714, a pamphlet was published in Dublin, in which the propriety of attending to the language in the Irish University was suggested.

The author of that pamphlet, after remarking that “ the present clergy are generally ignorant of the Irish language, and therefore incapable of discoursing with the meer natives on the Liturgy and religion of the Established Church, &c.” further advises, “ but if exhibitions‡ were paid annually to such a number of students in the College of Dublin as shall be thought convenient, who shall qualifie themselves to speak the Irish tongue; and a new Fellow of the College was appointed to be Professor thereof, and allowed a stipend for examining such exhibitioners, this would in a few years enable many of the Protestant clergy to converse familiarly with the natives in their own language,” &c. “ who would, at

* This catechism was translated by Richardson, and dedicated by him to Robert Nelson, author of the work on the the Feasts and Fasts.

† See “ A General Account of the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge,” p. 10, 11. London, 1816.

‡ Four hundred pounds was the sum proposed to be laid out annually on these exhibitions, and the salary of the Professor.

the same time, learn a better disposition to them by their kind treatment, and at once propagate our religion and manners ; and be so far from inculcating the Irish tongue, that the English language and religion would insensibly take place, and spread among them."

The last attempt made till within these few years to instruct the natives, through the medium of their own language, was, so far as we have any account, that of performing Divine Services in Irish to the inhabitants of the Island of Raghlin, preparatory to which the Church catechism in Irish, with the English placed in opposite columns, was published in Belfast in the year 1722, under the title of *Tesag Kreesdee*, edited by two clergymen whose names are unknown ; to this was added the visitation of the sick, select texts of scripture, and a vocabulary, to which are prefixed some grammatical observations. It was printed in the Roman letter. An impracticable attempt, however, was made in this work, to reduce the orthography in both languages to more certain rules of analogy, the reasons for which are given in the preface.

Among those who patronized this undertaking were the Lord Primate, Dr. Thomas Lindsay, the Archbishop of Dublin, Dr. William King, the exertions of which latter in this cause we have already had occasion to notice more

than once, the Bishop of Down and Connor, Dr. Timothy Godwin, afterwards Archbishop of Cashel, the Dean and Archdeacon of Down, the Dean of Cashel, several of the clergy, and many of the nobility and gentry. Whether their intention of building a church in the island, and settling a minister there for the purpose of performing Divine Services in Irish, and towards which they either contributed or promised money, books or building-materials, was carried into effect, and if so, what success attended it, has not been ascertained.*

Although we do not hear of any thing being attempted after this,† yet we find Dr. Madden, in his *Reflections and Resolutions*, printed in Dublin, 1738, and reprinted in 1816, at the expense of that celebrated philanthropist, Mr. Thomas Pleasants, recommending “a body of itinerant clergy to preach to the natives in Irish.”‡

At length, however, in our own times, this work has begun to attract attention. In 1799,

* *The Church Catechism in Irish*, duod. Belfast 1712.

† In a list of books printed by one Gunne, annexed to “a Defence of Free Thinking in Mathematics, &c. by the Author of the Minute Philosopher,” (Bishop Berkeley,) published in octavo at Dublin, in 1735, we find the “*IRISH and English Common Prayer*; a circumstance which plainly shews what demand books of this kind in Irish, at that time, had.

‡ *Reflections and Resolutions proper for the Gentlemen of Ireland*, &c. p. 80, 8vo. Dublin, 1816.

Dr. Stokes, late Senior Fellow of Trinity College, Dublin, now Lecturer on Natural History in the University, published 2000 copies of St. Luke's Gospel and the Acts of the Apostles from Daniell's version, which were well received by the people. These, as well as an impression of the four Gospels and the Acts, which followed in the year 1806, were in parallel columns of English and Irish, and in the Roman character. The same gentleman, also, in 1806, printed and circulated in Dublin observations "on the necessity of publishing the Scriptures in the Irish language."

In 1810, the British and Foreign Bible Society, whose liberality has been felt in the most distant parts of the world, extending their benevolent views to Ireland, determined on printing a version of the New Testament in Irish.* The manner in which they expressed themselves on this subject is peculiarly interesting, inasmuch as it shews they were of opinion, that the reasons for adopting this line of conduct were not less weighty at present than formerly. "This resolution," say they "has not been adopted without much deliberation, and after the most minute inquiry into the expediency of it. The doubts on this subject, which have long delayed the execution of this work, are not new,

* This edition, which was stereotyped, was published in octavo in 1813.

as the question respecting the use of the Bible and Liturgy in the Irish tongue, was amply discussed in a convocation held in Dublin as long ago as the year 1634. It was then decided in the affirmative, and the arguments admitted in favour of the proposition did not appear to your Committee to have lost their weight when considered as applicable to the question at this time.”*

In 1812, Dr. Dewar, a gentleman who, from his personal knowledge of the advantages attendant on preaching to the Highlanders in their own language,† is an authority that should be highly valued, strongly urged the propriety of pursuing a similar course, with respect to the Irish. He frequently conversed with them, while on his visit to this country, in their own language, and bears testimony to the readiness with which they would receive any instruction con-

H

* Reports of the British and Foreign Bible Society, vol. I. p. 293.

† In consequence of the great extent of the Highland parishes, and the manner in which the several parts are dis-united by the intervention of mountains, lakes, arms of the sea, and rivers, clergymen of the Church of Scotland have been in many places appointed, under the title of Missionaries, to assist the minister in providing for the spiritual wants of the parish. Dr. Dewar, at no very remote period, was one of such Missionaries. The General Assembly of the Church of Scotland receive an annual grant of £2000 towards the support of these missions.

veyed through that medium.* The importance of paying attention to this language, in a system of national education, was also forcibly recommended in a Pamphlet, published in Dublin in the year 1814, entitled " Suggestions relative to a System of National Education," &c.†

But of all that has appeared on the subject, in none has it been more fully treated of than in the " Memorial" of the Rev. Christopher Anderson, Secretary to the Society in Edinburgh for promoting Gaelic Schools in the Highlands and islands of Scotland, and who, from his official situation, was peculiarly fitted for coming to a right judgment on the matter. That judgment has strictly accorded with the views of those high authorities, which, as we have seen, sanctioned the encouragement of the national language.‡

An edition of the Proverbs of Solomon was published at Dublin in the year 1815, in Irish and English, in parallel columns, the Irish in the Irish character. To this was prefixed an Irish alphabet and table of contractions.

In 1817, Robert Newenham, Esq. undertook

‡ Observations on Ireland, by Daniel Dewar, 8vo. London, 1812. See especially chap. iv. and chap. xi. sect. iii.

† P. 32—37.

‡ Memorial on behalf of the Native Irish, &c. 8vo. Lond. 1815.

the publication of the Gospel of St. Luke in the Irish language and letter. Many copies of this work have been distributed among the people, and received by them with the utmost cordiality and pleasure.

In the same year the Committee of the British and Foreign Bible Society resolved on stereotyping the Bible in the Irish letter; and the Prayer Book and Homily Society having at the same time determined on publishing the Book of Common Prayer in the Irish language and letter, with the English in an opposite column, have called on the friends of Ireland, and the National Church, to afford pecuniary aid towards carrying this determination into effect.*

Such are the principal facts† connected with the various attempts that have been made for the religious instruction of the native Irish by means of the ancient language. Having taken, therefore, this hasty review of them, and having seen, for our encouragement, that a success bearing in some degree a proportion to their magnitude almost always attended those attempts, we come to consider the principal objections that

* In the years 1793 and 1794, the Society for promoting Christian Knowledge contributed £150 towards the printing a translation of the Liturgy into the Gaelic language, for the use of the natives of the Highlands of Scotland. See General Account of the Society for promoting Christian Knowledge, p. 12.

† It is needless to say any thing respecting the London Hibernian, and Baptist Societies, as their Reports are before the public.

are generally made to prosecuting a similar line of conduct at the present day.

Previous, however, to entering into a more minute examination of those objections, it may be worth observing, that were the broad abstract question proposed—through the medium of what language can moral, religious, or indeed any other instruction whatsoever, be most speedily and most efficiently conveyed to a people; the answer undoubtedly would be, through the medium of that language which they understand best, and to which they are most warmly attached, the language of their thoughts and of their feelings: and he who would argue against the application of this general principle to any particular instance, may fairly be called upon to shew, that there is something peculiar in that particular instance, and what that something peculiar is, which would prevent the extension of the principle to it. Having premised so much, let us now take a nearer view of the objections generally alleged.

And those may be classed under two heads.

I. The inutility of the project; which objection necessarily implies a waste of expenditure.

II. The evil, and even dangerous consequences that would result from its success.

Under the first of these heads, the inutility of the project, an assertion is made in general terms, at the outset, which, as it would paralyze all active exertion, it is necessary to meet in limine. The number, it is said, of persons whose sole language is Irish, is so small, that the benefit that might be expected to follow from adopting such a vehicle of instruction, would be totally inadequate to the expense. To this it may be answered, first, that those who speak solely Irish are much more numerous than is probably supposed. Persons residing in the metropolis, and large cities, and in those parts where English is the prevailing language, are not in general aware how large a population occupies the less frequented parts of the southern, western, and north-western counties, including peninsulas and islands, together with the wild sequestered glens and mountainous districts of even some of the inland counties, who still cherish, with an almost exclusive attachment, the language of their fathers. The little intercourse which the inhabitants of these districts, owing to their insulated situation, had with those of the other parts of Ireland, at the same time that it retarded the progress of the English language among them, rendered the fact of the prevalency of the Irish less generally known.*

* See Dewar's Observations, p. 96. 97. who informs us, that he heard very little English in places where he was assured not a word of Irish was spoken.

Secondly, let it be observed, that even of those who to that of Irish have added some knowledge of English, immense numbers there are, who are notwithstanding incapable of using this latter as a medium through which they might receive moral and religious instruction. Irish is to them the language of social intercourse, of family communion; every feeling connected with moral duty is closely interwoven with that language. If consciousness of guilt sting the bosom of one of these, the reflections it excites, the anguish of remorse, the terrible paintings of a smitten conscience, the brightening hopes of mercy, all pass in rapid succession before his mind, clothed in the habiliments which his native tongue has given to them. If the operations of creative power awaken his attention to the majesty of the Creator, the idea of Deity rushes on his mind in closest union with that name, to which early association has in a manner indissolubly bound it, and with which are connected in his mind so many ideas of solemnity and awe. Man, to whom he owes kindness, God, to whom he owes devotion, are presented before him in the mirror of his native tongue. Thus all those principles on which morality is founded, are embodied in his own language, in that language in which he conceives, in which he reasons, in which he feels. Can the same be

said of English? It is to him but the language of barter, of worldly occupations; taken up solely at the market, laid aside when he returns home, a very confined vocabulary, and that too consisting of a selection of words of a very different class from what would be necessary to convey sentiments of morality and religion, will prove sufficient for carrying on that ordinary intercourse for which alone he considers an acquaintance with English desirable. How little such a knowledge of a language (if that can be called knowledge which does not embrace any operation of the intellect, and relates only to the poor perishing concerns of the body) will avail in communicating to him the truths of Christianity, is surely too evident to every reflecting mind, to require the aid of further argument. But even as to those, who, though their vernacular tongue is Irish, have a tolerably competent knowledge of English, let it be recollected that this latter is to them at best but a language of secondary signs, whose connection with the conceptions in their minds is established only through the intervention of their own tongue, requiring of course the slow process of mental translation, before any truth so conveyed can convince the understanding, lay hold upon the imagination, or interest the feelings. How much light must such truths necessarily lose in the transmission! How

much risk must they run of confusion in the image!

On the whole, to employ Irish as a means of disseminating religious knowledge, will scarcely appear useless, when it is considered that a moderate calculation estimates the numbers of those, who are either totally incapable, or at best capable but imperfectly of receiving religious instruction through any other language, at one million and a half.* And when the discovery of a population of not quite three hundred thousand souls similarly circumstanced in the HIGHLANDS and ISLANDS of SCOTLAND has been considered as affording a sufficient answer to similar objections brought forward against instructing *them*, through the intervention of Gaelic,† shall about five times that number of our countrymen appeal unsuccessfully to the humanity and Christian charity of Irishmen?

But admitting the numbers who speak Irish to be so great, it is again objected that few can read it.

* See Dewar's Observations, &c. p. 95, and indeed the whole of chap. iv. on the Irish language. In one place, (p. 88.) he states the number so high as two millions. See also Wakefield's account of Ireland, &c. vol. ii. 4to. Lond. 1812; and Shaw Mason's Statistical Account, &c. of Ireland, *passim*, vol. i. 1814, vol. ii. 1816, 8vo. Dublin.

† See First Annual Report of the Society for the support of Gaelic Schools, &c. p. 10. 2d Edit. Edinburgh, 1812.

This objection, if it proves any thing, would equally prove the inexpediency of disseminating the Scriptures, and giving instruction in any language which the mass of the people cannot read ; and this, till very lately, was the situation of a great majority, and is indeed in some degree still, of a considerable proportion of those who speak English, and yet it has not operated to prevent the wide diffusion of the Scriptures in that language. Nay, this should rather act as a stimulus on all, who appreciate the advantages to be derived from a personal examination and study of the Word of God, to attempt to remove the objection by teaching those to read Irish, who ordinarily converse in that tongue, and thus to give every possible efficiency to the noble liberality of the British and Foreign Bible Society, which has so munificently determined to stereotype the Irish Bible.* But, indeed, though hitherto the number of those who could read Irish may have been comparatively few, that number is every day encreasing, and it is the duty of those who have influence in the coun-

I

* This edition is to be in the Irish letter. The British and Foreign Bible Society have already published it in the Roman letter. See thirteenth Annual Report of the Society, p. xxiv. among the various editions of the Scriptures, &c.

try, to give this disposition to learn a proper direction.*

Again, it is objected, that there are but few books in Irish. As the former objection seems more directly opposed to the dissemination of the Scriptures in Irish, this would appear more particularly urged against the utility of teaching to read that language. Without questioning how far this objection may be founded in fact,†

* In the Statistical Account of the parish of Clonmany, in the county of Donegal, published in Shaw Mason's Statistical Account, &c. of Ireland, it is remarked, "some of the old men in this parish have a genius for reading the Irish language, in Irish characters; and there is one old man, upwards of 80 years of age, who can write it tolerably well." See vol. I. p. 184, 185.—Dr. Stokes calculates from the number, about two thousand, of Irish Catechisms of the Church of Rome sold annually, that there are at least twenty thousand who have made some attempt at reading that language. See Dewar's Observations, p. 88.

† Were the number of printed books still fewer, there are yet many valuable manuscripts in that tongue, with a view to the more accurate investigation of which, some might be willing that the language should not be totally lost until they had been translated into English. Among the Irish MSS. preserved in Trinity College, Dublin, there is a dictionary of the language by one Norton, which contains many more words than in Johnson. All the words in Norton, and many thousands beside, will be found in the Irish Dictionary lately published in Dublin by Mr. Edward O'Reilly. It is, perhaps, the most copious vocabulary extant, of any language except the Greek. The late celebrated Mr. Flood was so convinced of the advantages that might be derived to literature

it may in general be stated, that it can have but little weight, when considering the subject in a moral and religious point of view. The great object, it should be recollected, of teaching the reading of Irish, &c. is not to make those who are to be the subjects of that instruction a learned, or what may be called a reading people, or to convey to them, through the medium of that language, any general knowledge ; but almost exclusively to bring them acquainted with the great principles of morality, founded on the important truths and doctrines of Christianity ; and for this purpose the Bible itself, with some few elementary books, will amply suffice. Were there no other books, therefore, extant in that language but the Bible, that alone should hold out a sufficient inducement to the most unremitting exertion. When to this are added the Book of Common

from an acquaintance with the remains of antiquity in the Irish language, that he bequeathed a considerable property, in lands, to Trinity College, for the purpose of founding an Irish Professorship, and purchasing Irish manuscripts, &c. See " Observations on the bequest of Henry Flood, Esq. to Trinity College, with a defence of the Ancient History of Ireland, by Sir Lawrence Parsons," now Earl of Ross, 8vo. Dublin, 1795. In this work the considerable knowledge which the ancients had of Ireland, and the confirmation which the Mosaic history receives from the Irish Records, is maintained by the noble author with much learning and ingenuity. The validity of the bequest having been questioned, the College instituted a suit for the purpose of establishing their claim, with a view to carry Mr. Flood's intentions into effect.

Prayer and Church Catechism in Irish, surely a want of books cannot seriously be made an objection. This has not weighed with the members of the Church of Rome, who have published therein many tracts in Irish, and among others, one by the Titular Archbishop of Armagh (Dr. O'Reilly), entitled, the "Tasag Kreesty," or Christian Doctrine.* Nay, this very scantiness of Irish books is not altogether without its advantages, inasmuch as it affords an opportunity of communicating the benefits of religious instruction, free from the risk of corrupting the mind by the productions of a licentious and immoral press: the danger of which has been urged as one of the strongest arguments against the rendering general a capability of reading. Here it is possible to supply the most wholesome aliment to the mind, without exciting at the same time a dread, lest a vitiated taste might seek to gratify its diseased and pampered appetite in feeding upon poison. It is the part of wisdom, therefore, to take possession of this field, before an enemy plants his standard upon it.

* See "Report of the Committee of the Highland Society of Scotland, appointed to inquire into the Nature and Authenticity of the Poems of Ossian," Appendix, p. 303, Note p. — To Butler's Catechism, twelfth Edition, Dublin, 1814, are annexed Acts of Contrition, Faith, Hope and Charity, with a Prayer to be said before Mass, all in Irish and English, upon opposite pages.

Again, the difficulty of learning is made the ground of an argument against teaching to read Irish. This is obviously the objection of one originally unacquainted with the language, and and who, if he has any knowledge of it, has merely taken it up as a dead language, and in this way the same might be said of any language whatever. It should, therefore, be kept in view, THAT THERE CAN BE NO INTENTION OF TEACHING TO READ IRISH WHERE IT IS NOT ALREADY SPOKEN, and, in this case, *a priori* reasoning, as well as every analogy from what has been happily found to take place in the various attempts that have been made by different institutions to teach the reading of English, shew that the task will not be so difficult, or the time ordinarily necessary for acquiring it so very great.

The Reports of the Welsh circulating schools, and those of the Society for promoting Gaelic schools through the Highlands and Islands of Scotland, bear testimony to the ease with which a people may be taught to read in their own language;* and let it be observed, that the close affinity of the Welsh and Gaelic tongues to the Irish, as also the similarity of their circumstances

* See Reports of the Society for the support of Gaelic Schools, First Report, p. 53—57, 63; Second Report, p. 3—7, 25; also Welsh Piety, or a collection of the several accounts of the Circulating Welsh Charity Schools, from their rise in 1737, to Michaelmas 1753, in three vols. 8vo.

with respect to the English, should give additional weight to every argument derived from analogy coming from those quarters. And we find there, that instances of learning to read in the short space of three months are not unfrequent. But we are not left here to mere *a priori*, or analogical reasoning. Examples are not wanting in our own country, of the readiness with which the reading of the native language may be acquired. Three months, six weeks, and, in some instances, even so short a space as twelve days, have been found sufficient for this purpose. Indeed, the much greater expedition with which a man who *speaks* Irish will learn to *read it* than English, is one of the strongest arguments for preferring the former in affording primary instruction to the latter, both as it regards the saving of expence by the saving of time, and as it enables him (which is the great object) the sooner to become acquainted with the Holy Scriptures. What an encouragement will such speedy success prove to increased exertion on the part of those who have already made some progress! What an excitement to commence the study will it be to those, who have witnessed the rapid success which has attended the labour of others!—On the other hand, let it be recollected how long a time (generally from three to four years) he must spend in learning English, without properly, if

at all, understanding the meaning of the words he learns, or acquiring any new or definite ideas therein.* All this time he is condemned to the drudgery of learning mere words, which to him have no meaning, and consequently cannot, by any strong association, lay hold upon his memory. Nor is he supported by the consciousness that he is acquiring knowledge; his mind is making no advances. He feels no enlargement of his views. What wonder, then, if hopeless of attainment, the irksomeness of the task should lead him in despair to its final abandonment. Not so when taught in Irish, as on learning the characters, he immediately recognizes many of the words as familiar to him, while the context leads him to the knowledge of such as are less so. If it is one of the leading principles on which elementary works for facilitating the progress of the beginner, in acquiring the art of reading, are constructed, that too many new words should not be crowded together upon his mind; it surely is not the part of wisdom to introduce him at once to a language, almost all the terms

* This was formerly the case in the Highlands of Scotland, where it was not an uncommon thing to meet with one who could read English with tolerable fluency, who yet at the same time understood not a single word of what he was reading. See Reports of the Gaelic School Society, 1st Rep. p. 5. 37. 41. 2d Rep. p. 13. See also Welsh Piety.

of which are new to him (even though he may have an imperfect knowledge of it) as the majority of them have never occurred in those situations, in which hitherto he has been obliged to have recourse to that language. Or shall an attempt be made so to construct English elementary books for this class of the population, as to lead its members through the gross and sordid ideas of barter, and the terms connected therewith, into all those finer sentiments of moral duty and religious hope, the oral signs of which at present exist for them only in their own language.

On the whole, so far from the objection holding true, it will appear to every candid mind, which fairly estimates the greater comparative ease and readiness with which one so circumstanced will learn to read Irish than English, that this is one strong argument for preferring the former, for the purpose of conveying to him moral and religious information.

Another objection under this head is, the variety of dialects into which the Irish language is divided, which, it is argued, will prevent any books published in it being of general use, inasmuch as, it is said, a book that may be understood in one part of the country becomes hence unintelligible in another.

To this it may be answered, that the difference of dialects alluded to, consisting rather in

a different mode of pronunciation, than in a real diversity of root, this objection loses much of its weight when applied to the language as written. In proof of the truth of this reasoning it may be stated, that the same printed Irish Sermons have been preached in different parts of the country. Experience shews, indeed, that there is not much in the objection, as persons speaking different dialects are capable of mutually understanding one another. Nay more, a native of the Highlands or Islands of Scotland can carry on, with tolerable ease, a conversation in Erse with one speaking Irish. The same also is true respecting those who use the Manks dialect. Nor should we here overlook the argument which may be drawn from the Greek language, divided and sub-divided as it was into so many varied dialects, spoken over such a wide extent of country, which embraced parts of the three great Continents then known, and was intersected at the same time by large and numerous seas. There appears, however, to have been a very free circulation of the writings in that language from Magna Græcia and Sicily to Ionia, from Macedonia and even Thrace to Egypt. Nor does the Ionic dialect of Herodotus appear to have been any bar to his receiving the applauses of assembled Greece at Elis. May it not also be worth noticing here, that while there is a diversity of style in the

Books of the New Testament, there appears nothing like an adoption of dialect to suit those to whom they were addressed, or for whose use they were more particularly composed. An instance is also furnished in the Romansh, a language spoken over part of the Grisons. Though divided into two main dialects, and these again into a multiplicity of sub-dialects, yet the Bible, in one of the dialects, is understood in those parts where the other is spoken, and is indeed the only version there used.*

But indeed we need not go so far from home, or search into antiquity for arguments, to combat this objection. English has itself its dialects; and the natives of Cumberland, of Yorkshire, of Somersetshire, of London, and even of the Lowlands of Scotland, (whose language is certainly a dialect of English), would probably find a difficulty in understanding one another if conversing together; and yet this has never been urged against the utility of circulating among them the approved Version of the Holy Scriptures, or teaching them to read English.

This seems to be a proper place for noticing an objection, alledged more particularly with a

* See a very interesting account of the Romansh language by Joseph Planta, F. R. S. in the Philosophical Transactions for 1776. Part I. p. 129—159. This paper was drawn up in consequence of a Bible in that language having been presented to the Royal Society by the Count de Salis.

view to undervalue the benefit that might be expected from circulating Bishop Bedell's version of the Old, and Archbishop Daniell's version of the New Testament, that its style is too antiquated to be understood by those who at present speak Irish. But to this it may be answered, that so late as the year 1712, according to the statements of Richardson, this version was sufficiently understood; and it can hardly be imagined, that in little more than a century, the language spoken could have been materially altered, particularly when it is considered that, during that period, it has been preserved among a people who have had very little intercourse with those who spoke another language, by an admixture with which alone it could suffer so great a corruption; the same causes which tended to its preservation, would, in all probability, also tend to the maintenance of its purity.

But the truth is, this version is understood and prized wherever Irish itself is understood. Of the high estimation in which it is held, the following may be considered as affording abundant proof. Several persons in Cork acquainted with Irish, and desirous of reading the Scriptures in that language, petitioned the Bishop of Cork to let them have the use of that copy of the Irish Bible which is in the library of St. Barry's Church, Cork. His Lordship readily complied with their request, and

numerous copies are now taking by them, in manuscript, of that Bible. The Rev. Mr. Graham also, Curate of Kilrush, County of Clare, in a letter dated the 3d of February, 1806, when speaking of certain young people who had learned to read Irish, says, "they are in the habit of reading in the intervals of labour, and particularly during the long winter nights, to circles of their friends and neighbours, who are illiterate, and *understand the Irish only.*" "By this means" he observes, "the knowledge of the divine truths of *Scripture* are propounded to the *hearts and understandings* of multitudes, who would otherwise have gone to the grave as ignorant as myriads of their ancestors." "Whenever Mr. Dewar announced that the Scriptures would be read in the Irish language, crowds not only came to hear, but they listened with manifest pleasure, and eager intelligence."*

It has indeed been argued by some, on the consideration that a population of only twenty thousand, speaking the Manks language, have been furnished with the Scriptures in their own tongue, that even were the former version of the Irish Bible obsolete, it would be reasonable to undertake a new one in behalf of the immense numbers who speak the Irish language. Without, however, examining into the justness

* See Memorial in behalf of the native Irish, p. 61.

of the argument, which is happily unnecessary, it may be remarked that an example of a line of acting somewhat similar, has been lately furnished us in Russia, by the Holy Synod, which, at *the recommendation of his Majesty the Emperor of Russia*, has resolved on a translation being made of the Bible into the modern Russian. "His Majesty had observed, that while the Society, *i. e.* the Russian Bible Society, was supplying all the nations in Russia with the Scriptures, the Russians themselves were obliged either to read the Divine oracles in a language *they understood imperfectly, or in a foreign tongue*; for the translation of the Slavonian Bible having been made in the ninth century, the language of it differs more from the modern Russian than Wickliff's translation of the Bible from the modern English version."*

Before leaving this part of the subject, it may not be unnecessary to take notice of another objection which regards not so much the language itself, as the character in which it is proposed to print it. Many conceive that were the Roman character employed instead of the Irish, it would much facilitate, to such as might desire it, the after acquisition of the English tongue. This objection to the character goes on the supposition that the power of the various Roman

* See twelfth Report of the British and Foreign Bible Society, p. 24. 25.

characters, when used in the Irish and English languages, is always exactly the same, which is by no means the case; some even of the simple characters* have not exactly the same sound in both languages, while the effect of combining *h* with another letter, is very different; for example, *sh*† and *th* in Irish, have only the force of an aspiration; *dh* and *gh* are sometimes pronounced as *y*, and sometimes have a weak guttural sound, somewhat stronger than that of *w*; *bh* and *mh* sound as *v* or *w*, according to their position in a word; *fh* is not sounded. Is it not evident, therefore, that an acquaintance with the Roman character, in connexion with Irish, will, so far from affording assistance towards obtaining a knowledge of English, rather throw an additional impediment in the way, inasmuch as certain sounds will be associated with certain letters or combinations of letters, which association of sounds and characters it will be necessary afterwards, in acquiring English, to dissolve; a task which will prove much more difficult, than to acquire a new character. In illustration of the truth of these assertions may be mentioned, the greater comparative ease with which one previously capable of reading English can read Irish in the Irish, than in

* Thus *d* sometimes sounds rather like *th* in *that*.

† *sh* in certain cases is mute.

the Roman character, even though Irish had been his vernacular tongue. From what has been said above, it is evident that even with a view to future instruction in English, putting a dot (.) over a letter, as *ḡ*, will be preferable to annexing *h*, in order to express the power arising from the combination, whether the character employed be Irish or Roman; of this Dr. Neilson has been so convinced, that he has used the dot, even though he employs the Roman character; a further advantage is, that less room is occupied by the word, a benefit which affects not merely the size of the book, but also the ease with which the meaning of the word thus presented in a condensed form to the eye, will be understood. It is further to be remarked, that the change of power of the letter, which is to be expressed, arising in general from an inflection, as it were, of the word, but no way affecting its radical meaning, that radical meaning will present itself more directly to the mind when there is no change of the character, than when it is in some measure disguised by the insertion of *h*. What advantage this will afford in understanding printed works, it is unnecessary to insist on. Hence we see how erroneous the Editors of the Catechism for the Island of Raghlin were, in endeavouring to adapt the orthography to the sounds of the words, rather than to their ety-

mology. Were their plan generally adopted, the injury inflicted on the etymology of languages would be greater than the benefit gained to the orthography.

These remarks will prepare the mind to perceive how little there is in an objection, which is however commonly brought forward, and which arises out of the inability of persons who know Irish merely as a spoken language, but are capable of reading English, to understand an Irish book when put into their hands, though in a character, the Roman, with which they are already acquainted. It is thereupon at once objected, that the Irish of that book, the Bible for example, is too antiquated, &c. to be of general use among the people, forgetting that a man must be taught to read a language before he can be expected to understand it when written. An acquaintance with the characters, when presented to the eye, will afford him no assistance, unless he is at the same time acquainted with the powers which it is intended that these characters should convey to the ear or mind. Who is there that would expect a man whose vernacular language is French, but who never learned any written language unless English, to be capable of understanding a French book immediately on its being put into his hand, without being previously made acquainted with the several laws which regulate the quiescence

or pronunciation of the various letters of that language.

II. Having thus taken a view of the principal objections brought forward against the UTILITY of communicating instruction in Irish, we now come to consider others of a graver character, which are urged against such a measure, from an apprehension of the EVIL, nay, DANGEROUS consequences that must result from its success.

Under this head, it is said that teaching it only tends to perpetuate a barbarous language, at the same time that it opposes a bar to the amalgamation of the people, excites disunion among them, and keeps alive a spirit of disaffection towards the Government, and of disinclination to the English connexion.

Without waiting to examine into the truth of the assertion that it is a barbarous language,* it may be noticed, that in conveying religious information, the comparative excellence of the medium should be of little consequence. The barbarous languages (as the Greeks fondly called all others but their own,) of Mesopotamia, and of Media, of Elam, and of Parthia, were equally honoured with the more polished tongues

L

* To some, perhaps, it may appear that this objection more properly belongs to the former head; it should, however, be recollected, that whatever tends, in even the remotest degree, to plunge into, or retain a people in barbarism, is worse than unprofitable, it is injurious.

of Greece and Rome, in proclaiming on the day of Pentecost, from the inspired lips of the disciples, the wonderful works of God.* Happily the principle of this objection has not been acted on elsewhere. Why then should Ireland be selected as a solitary instance for adopting a line of conduct so contrary to sound reason, to humane feeling, to pious sentiment? Some of the most barbarous languages of Africa, the Bullom and the Susoo, equally with that most difficult and singular language of Asia, perhaps of the world, the Chinese, have been cultivated with a view to the dissemination of divine truth. Poor will be your excuse, if on such shallow grounds as the rude and barbarous nature of the language, you shall, by refusing to give the Gospel through that medium, incur the heavy responsibility of thus endeavouring, though such may not be your intention, to defraud *God of his glory*, and *man of his hopes*.

Perhaps, after all, the Apostle Paul, in his application of the term barbarian, as being merely relative to an incapability on the part of the hearer to understand the words of the speaker, has been more philosophically just than the wise men of Greece and Rome. "Therefore, if I know not the meaning of the voice, I shall be to him that speaketh a barbarian, and he that

* Acts ii. 1. 11.

speakeſh ſhall be a barbarian to me.”* In this point of view Engliſh is itſelf a barbarous language to many of the Iriſh.

It may not, however, be conſidered as altogether irrelevant to quote here the opinion of the Rev. A. Downie, in his letter to the Society for promoting inſtruction in Gaelic, reſpecting the Erſe, and which there is every reaſon to ſuppoſe is no leſs applicable to its cognate dialect, the Iriſh. On this ſubject he writes thus : “ It is one of the peculiarities of the Gaelic, that the illiterate ſpeak it with as much propriety as thoſe who have received the advantage of education ; and that as far as regards language merely, the common herd will underſtand the beſt orator.”† This ſeems, indeed, to be the natural conſequence of the language containing all its roots in itſelf, and receiving all its modifications from within, which will of courſe render the ideas conveyed by it more precise and definite. How often has the ſtudy of foreign and dead languages been recommended to enable the ſtudent to acquire a more adequate knowledge of the Engliſh ! This is, however, for the reaſon above ſtated, unneceſſary with reſpect to Iriſh : ſo that conſidered merely in this point of view, even the perpetuation of a language once ſpoken

* 1 Cor. xiv. 11.

† Firſt Report of the Society for promoting Gaelic Schools, &c. p. 36.

over a great part of Europe, might not perhaps be so much to be deplored.

But charges of a more serious nature are involved in the objection, that the perpetuation of the ancient language will operate as a bar to the amalgamation of the people, and keep alive in them a spirit of disunion and disaffection.* It might be fairly asked on what grounds this is asserted, as there seems to be no necessary connexion here between the cause and the effect assigned? Perhaps, it will be said, that in keeping up the language you keep up a mark of distinction between the different classes of the community who use the different tongues. It cannot be denied, indeed, that diversity of languages tends much to prevent that free intercourse which every philanthropist would wish to promote, and that therefore considered in this light, it would be desirable that the language not only of every state, but even of the whole earth were one. But must not every one acknowledge that a unity of sentiment, a unity of

* It has been found adviseable here to consider, under one head, the two objections; one arising from the supposed danger of exciting a spirit of disaffection towards the Government; the other from a dread of disuniting the people; inasmuch as, independent of their close connexion, one principal answer is applicable to both—the salutary influence which an enlarged knowledge of the divine truths of Christianity may be expected to have upon the minds of the people.

customs, a unity of laws, tend much more to the amalgamation of the people than a mere unity of language? Is there any thing in diversity of tongue alone which must of necessity induce diversity in these respects? Does not the history of past ages—does not the history of the present time furnish abundant instances of whole tribes of people who use different languages, living peaceably together under the same government? Look to Great Britain; there we see the Gael in Scotland, the Briton in Wales, and the Saxon in England, living together in the utmost harmony. Are we then to suppose there is something peculiar in the combination of the sounds or characters that constitute the Irish language, rendering it an involuntary and necessary agent for the production of all the ills of disaffection and disunion? Can we continue of this opinion, when we reflect how harmless and inoffensive the same language has proved in Scotland? If there is any thing in it hostile to British connexion, why does it show so little of this noxious quality there? In truth, it is not a diversity of language which produces a diversity of sentiment. This effect is attributable to education, political or religious feuds, prejudices, and other similar causes. To give moral and religious instruction in Irish cannot increase the influence of these; nay, it will tend most powerfully to counteract them. It is said Irish is calculated to revive recollections of past transactions, which it were

better were forgotten, as the tendency of these recollections is to disunite the people. If it was indeed intended to publish details of the mutual struggles of adverse sects contending for ascendancy, there might perhaps be some force in this objection: such is not the intention here: to enable the native to read the Scriptures in his own tongue is the sole object. You thus afford him that knowledge which is most calculated to heal every irritable feeling, and to allay every animosity which such recollections may unhappily still cherish. If the only language they know has hitherto carried the poison of disaffection and disunion through every part of the system which it has visited in its circulation, let it now convey, through ramifications not less extensive, the antidote for that poison. Instruct them in that precious faith, through whose blessed influence prophetic vision "sees an innumerably great multitude gathered together out of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, standing before the Throne and before the Lamb, crying aloud" in harmonious concert, as with one single voice, "Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the Throne, and unto the Lamb." Is it not the glory of the Gospel that it is to be preached to every nation, and kindred, and tongue? Were not the commands of Christ to his disciples to evangelize all nations? And does not the ample provision made on the day of Pentecost, for con-

veying it through the medium of every language, stamp, as it were, a sanction of Divine authority on similar attempts at the present day? Or shall it be said that it was right to do so in the first century, and wrong in the nineteenth? This were to say, that the genius of Christianity has changed. Is it not the glorious privilege of true Christianity that, like her great founder, she is ever the same, and, as one of the loveliest traits of her character, while yet in the freshness of youth, was that winning influence through which she closely drew together all her children by a community of interest and of feeling, so it may be hoped that age has not yet deformed her countenance, but that still beneath her smiles her children of every country, clime, and tongue, may present the lovely spectacle of "brethren dwelling together in unity?" It has been observed above, that unity of customs, of laws, of government, and of manners, form a stronger tie than merely that of speech. Christianity has her customs, and they are essentially the same beneath every clime. Christianity has her opinions, her sentiments, her principles, her laws, and they speak the same language to the heart in every tongue. Christianity acknowledges her Prince of Peace, and wherever the hymn of praise ascends to him, his name is one.* Christianity induces certain

* Zech. xiv. 9.

manners, cherishes certain tempers, awakens certain feelings, and there is a unity to be recognised in those manners, in those tempers, in those feelings, though among people living under different governments,—among families claiming a different descent. But her blessed harmonizing influence ends not here. She gives a unity and community of hopes. Her children, lovely in their lives, in death are not divided. If then, you would unite your people, bind them together in the bands of one faith; let one common hope point them to one common centre of attraction, and let the sympathetic magnetism of Christian charity gently draw them, with one common influence, to each other.

Irish has been the language, some say, of disorganization and rebellion,—make it henceforward the language of loyalty and peace, by causing the Bible to speak in it. Or will you say, that instructing a people in their duty towards God will weaken that principle of submission which the Bible tells them is due to the powers that be of God? Or that inculcating love to man will root out that which is the best guarantee of union and order among them—mutual affection, and plant in its stead the rankling thorns of jealousy and envy, of savage ferocity, of hatred and revenge? Can it be imagined, on the one hand, that principles of obedience to the constituted authorities will be weakened in the

minds of an Irishman, by perusing such passages as these?—"Render to Cæsar the things which are Cæsar's."—"Let every soul be subject to the higher powers; for there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God. Whosoever, therefore, resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God."—"Wherefore ye must needs be subject, not only for wrath, but also for conscience sake."—"Render, therefore, to all their dues: tribute to whom tribute is due; custom to whom custom; fear to whom fear; honour to whom honour."—"Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake: whether it be to the King, as supreme, or unto governors, as unto them that are sent by him for the punishment of evil doers, and for the praise of them that do well."—"Honour the King." Or, on the other hand, that every humaner feeling will be suppressed, and every more malignant passion excited by such as follow?—"Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them that despitefully use you, and persecute you."—"Love worketh no ill to his neighbour; therefore, love is the fulfilling of the law." Surely such truths, whether expressed in the English or Irish language, are equally well calculated to infuse the most exalted and firmly grounded sentiments of loyalty to the ruling powers, and of mutual affectionate attachment of man towards man.

Nor is this matter of mere speculation. Mr. Dewar informs us that an Irishman, into whose hands a New Testament had been put, exclaimed, on reading it, "if I believe this it is impossible for me to remain a rebel."* Similar to this also were the expressions of that priest, who, on his flock asking his advice as to the propriety of their reading the Proverbs, when lately published in the Irish language, informed them, after examining it, that if they read that book it would make them better husbands, better wives, better children, better parents, better servants, better masters, and better subjects.

But, in truth, it is a mistake to suppose that teaching it will necessarily perpetuate the language. Can it be expected that a man will renounce his old language unless he is previously furnished with a new one? And what motive can induce him to take the trouble necessary to acquire such new language, unless it be the advantage which the acquisition holds out in transacting the ordinary business of life, or in gratifying an ardent spirit of enquiry? Will instructing him in Irish make it less his interest to become acquainted with English? Nay, will it not make it more so; as education, by enlarging his powers, will render him fitter

* Observations on Ireland, p. 139. On this Mr. Dewar remarks, "Behold the means which a beneficent Providence has appointed to make good men, and *good citizens!*"

for, and so open out to him a greater likelihood of obtaining situations of profit or distinction, for which a knowledge of English will be necessary? Will instructing him in Irish weaken the force of that most powerful incitement to the search after knowledge which a spirit of enquiry affords? Nay, will not the information already given him in that language be most probably the means of awakening this spirit, in many instances, where before it did not exist, and increasing it where it did? In whom is this desire of knowledge found most powerfully to operate? In the ignorant, or in those who have been in some degree enlightened? Shall we then withhold from him the means of reading his own language, and expect that he will, as it were, intuitively learn another? Shall we leave him in ignorance, and expect in him that knowledge which is the offspring of curiosity, excited by previous information? No, let us teach him to read a language he already understands; his intellectual powers will thus be roused, and he will be induced to learn the language of the State, from an acquaintance with which he will promise himself the protection of the law, and fertile sources of emolument and advantage to himself and his family. There will thus be created in him a thirst which will soon exhaust the springs that are to be found in his own language; he will therefore be impelled, by the acquisition of English, to roll

away the stone from a well which promises so plentifully to satisfy that thirst; as it has been well expressed by one writing on this subject, “as the mind becomes enlightened it becomes inquisitive, and if this disposition cannot be gratified in Irish, which it is evident it cannot, it will seek it in English.” In the forcible language of another, “the stone will be set a rolling, and there is little doubt that it will not stop till it has arrived on English soil.” “Knowledge,” says Doctor Johnson, “always increases; it is like fire, which must be kindled by some external agent, but which will afterwards propagate itself. When they once desire to learn, they will naturally have recourse to the nearest language by which that desire can be gratified; and one will tell another, that if he would obtain knowledge, he must learn English.”* And if this reasoning is just with respect to imparting to him knowledge in general, how much more so will it be in communicating to him religious knowledge. A taste will thus

* See a letter of Doctor Johnson to Mr. William Drummond, on the propriety of publishing a version of the Scriptures in Gaelic. Johnson's Works, vol. xv. p. 162—167. 12mo. Edinburgh, 1806; where also are to be found two other letters on the same subject, from which it appears that this letter was published under the revision of Dr. Robertson, the celebrated Historiographer. See also Appendix, K.

See also Reports of the Society for promoting Gaelic Schools, &c. First Rep. p. 15. 38. Second Rep. p. 4. 26. Fourth Rep. p. 25. 36. 39.

be given him for divine things, a relish for heavenly wisdom ; at the same time he will be furnished with but one book. True, it is the Book of Life, the best of books. Do we not however find, that amongst English readers the effect of such improved taste is an eager desire after works of devotion and Christian experience ; and when the Irish Biblical student is informed that such are to be found in English, his religious feelings co-operating with his curiosity, now enlisted in the best of causes, will naturally urge him to new exertions to obtain them, while the success attendant on his former efforts to become acquainted with the written character of his own language, will make him disregard the difficulties of acquiring a new one, which would otherwise perhaps have appeared to him insuperable.

Here we may observe how futile is that objection which argues against affording instruction in Irish, as though it would increase the difficulty of afterwards learning English. The very contrary is the truth. Such a mode of reasoning could only be supported on the supposition that the capabilities of the mind are in an inverse ratio to its cultivation, and that in proportion to its attainments, its powers of attainment are diminished. In truth, the better any one is acquainted with his vernacular tongue, the easier will he find it to attain ano-

ther ; and the more languages a man knows, the more capable will he be of learning new ones. He does not at once understand the connexion of written with oral signs, and through them with the conceptions of the mind ; having, however, learned the nature of that connexion in his own language, he finds less difficulty in tracing it through others. Besides, the way whereby new languages are generally learned is hereby opened to him, namely, that of grammars, dictionaries, &c. It would indeed be scarcely credible that such an objection could seriously be brought forward, were it not known that to some in Scotland it was matter of surprise that the Islanders and Highlanders could be taught Gaelic without any previous instruction in English ;* in other words, how they could be taught their own language without having been first instructed in one with which they were almost, if not altogether unacquainted. Do we ever, it may be asked, think of having our children taught French in order to pave the way for learning English ?

But, say objectors, it is to the silent operation of an increased and increasing intercourse between those who speak English and those who speak Irish, as the way in which a new language is generally introduced, that we look

* See First Report of the Society for promoting Gaelic Schools, p. 41.

for the rapidly progressive disuse of the latter, and the corresponding substitution of the former. It is to the attempt to teach Irish, therefore, as retarding, at least, if not counteracting the effect of this principle, that we chiefly object.

In answer to this it may be asked, what tendency will such attempts have to counteract, or even retard the effect of this principle? Will it diminish the number of those around who speak English, or will it lessen the intercourse between those two classes of the inhabitants of this island? Surely not. Thus it will be found, that the attempt will not lessen the inducements to the acquisition of English. It will rather increase them, while at the same time it will supply new motives, and those the most powerful. It may therefore be confidently asserted, that it will not be any obstacle to the amalgamation of all classes of the people, or prove a wall of separation between them—will not keep alive dissension and disunion—will not cherish a spirit of disaffection to the constituted authorities of the land—nay, will not perpetuate Irish, or even arrest the progress which English may be making. No, it will induce our countrymen to learn it; it will facilitate to them the acquisition of it.

But let us suppose that it would *retard* the advancement of English, or that it even would *perpetuate* Irish; is this a sufficient reason, in a

moral and religious point of view, for withholding the Scriptures from a million and a half of our countrymen? Nay, shall any merely theoretical objections, taken from the supposed worldly, or even political disadvantages which may be imagined to be connected with this language, be considered as of sufficient weight to keep so large a proportion of the population in ignorance of that which is most interesting to them in time, most important as it regards eternity? Shall the reasonings of the politician be allowed to outweigh the obligations of the Christian? And, let it be recollected, that God rules in the affairs of men, and that if to any worldly system we sacrifice his glory and the happiness of our fellow men, he may be provoked to dissolve that very system which we would fondly endeavour to uphold. Surely, when Christ himself has declared the whole world to be nothing to a man in comparison of his soul, we should not postpone the eternal interests of a single soul to the mere secular advantages of worlds, were these advantages even certain, much less when they are only speculative.

There remains one further objection still to be considered, and that is one arising out of the act of Henry VIII. ch. 15. "For the encouragement of the English order, habit, and language." It is asserted, that to attempt to diffuse a knowledge of the Scriptures, through the

medium of the Irish language, is a direct infringement of that statute. It is however to be observed, that the act is wholly *affirmative* in the enacting provisions relating to the *language* to be used. Sec. 3. enacts, that the English language shall be used and spoken, *but contains no prohibition of the Irish*. No offence, therefore, is committed against the express provisions of the act, by either speaking or teaching the Irish tongue, any more than by speaking or teaching French or Latin. On the other hand, if, as experience has shewn in other countries, the most likely way to promote the knowledge, and ultimately the use, of the English language, is to teach the people first to read their own; then the policy of the act is thereby promoted, whilst its provisions are not violated. And a still stronger observation arises on the recital in the act, from which it appears, that the great object of the legislature, and their chief inducement, in passing the act, was, "The induction of rude and ignorant people to the knowledge of Almighty God, and of the good and vertuous obedience which, by his most holy precepts and commandments, they owe to their princes and superiors, then a good instruction in his most blessed laws, with a conformity, concordance, and familiarity in language, tongue, in maners, order, and apparel, with them that be civil people, and doe profess and knowledge Christ's religion." Now, if it be found that

those who cannot or will not accept "the knowledge of Almighty God, and of his blessed laws," or who cannot be brought to a knowledge of Christ's religion, through the medium of an English Bible, will receive the same through an Irish Bible, is it not promoting the great object of the statute, and the benevolent and wise policy of the legislature, to furnish the people with the Scriptures in Irish, and teach them to read in that language in which they will understand what they read, rather than leave them without the Scriptures, because they will not read, or cannot understand them in another tongue? That the act was formerly taken in this sense, and considered to contain no prohibition of Irish, may fairly be inferred from the several measures so favourable to that language pursued by Elizabeth, James I. and Charles I., of which an account has been already given.* This objection was brought forward in the convocation of 1634, but was not then considered of sufficient weight to prevent the passing of the canons, already noticed†,

* The first paragraph of the Instructions given, during the reign of Edward VI., to Sir James Crofts and the Council in the year 1551, within fourteen years after the passing of this act, when he was made Lord Deputy, coincides completely with this view of it. The instruction runs thus: "To propagate the worship of God in the English tongue, and the service to be translated into *Irish* to those places which need it." *Hibernia Anglicana*, by Sir Richard Cox, vol. L. p. 290. fol. Lond. 1669.

† See p. 18. This objection was renewed in the year 1711, yet we find the Primate and several of the Bishops acting, at

relative to the language. These canons are worthy of observation, not only as enabling us to judge in what light the convocation viewed the act of 28th Henry VIII., but also because they are binding on the Clergy of the Church of Ireland in matters not contrary to the law of the land.* That, in what relates to the Irish language, they are not contrary, at least, to the act of Henry VIII. it is hoped the observations on that act above will satisfy every candid mind. Indeed these canons are in strict conformity with the wishes of the legislature, expressed in the Act of Uniformity, 2d of Elizabeth, Cap. 2, Sec. xv. as follows:—"And that if some good meane were provided, that they might use the Prayer, Service, and Administration of the Sacraments set out, and established by this act, IN SUCH LANGUAGE AS THEY MOUGHT BEST UNDERSTAND THE DUE HONOUR OF GOD SHOULD BE THEREBY MUCH ADVANCED.†

The annual grant to the College of Maynooth, in which a Professorship of Irish has been founded, may also be considered as affording a legislative sanction to giving instruction in Irish, as any prohibition of instruction in that language must extend to every mode in which such instruction is bestowed. Were we, indeed,

the very time, in such a manner as plainly showed how futile they considered it. See p. 42. See also p. 46. 47.

* See Bolingbroke's Ecclesiastical Law, Title 41. chap. 4. vol. 11. p. 1240.

† That the legislature considered such language to be Irish, see Appendix A.

to take this act as prohibitory of acquiring a knowledge of the Irish language, no exception could be made in favour of any object, and thus a stop would be put at once to all enquiries into the history and antiquities of the country, through the medium of that language.

The principal objections having been now considered, let us direct our attention to the motives which should urge, and the encouragements which invite to adopt this language for the purpose of conveying religious knowledge.

Most of these have been already hinted at in answering objections. Yet it may not be unprofitable to bring them forward in an arranged order, and in some instances to enlarge on and enforce them.

With respect to motives, the first, and evidently the most weighty, is the connexion which this system has with the spiritual welfare of a large proportion of our countrymen—with awakening them to a sense of their duty to God and man, and making known to them what most materially concerns the interests of their immortal souls.

If it has been shown that a vast population speaks this language alone, and that a still greater number are incapable through any other of acquiring a competent knowledge of religion—if religion be that which is most interesting to man, teaching him his duty in this life, and the grounds of his hopes in another, surely it should

be a duty no less grateful than imperative to disseminate the Scriptures in Irish, and to afford every possible means of reading and understanding them.

All those principles which urge on us the necessity of disseminating the Scriptures throughout every part of the country, call upon us to engage in this work. A laudable anxiety has been expressed on the part of individuals, even of the highest and most venerated authority, that not "a poor man's cottage should be without a Bible." To carry this object into effect has been the basis whereupon several institutions have been formed throughout the United Kingdom. Now, why, it may be asked, give the Scriptures, but that they may be read? why desire they should be read, but that they may be understood? how shall they be understood if written in a language with which the poor man is unacquainted? what is it but mockery to put a book into his hands and tell him to read it, if he knows not the tongue in which it is written? Surely the object of giving the Bible is not merely that it may be displayed upon the shelf, but that it may be "*read*," and that the truths therein contained may be "*marked, learned, and inwardly digested*"; so that by patience, and comfort of God's holy word, the blessed hope of everlasting life "given" to sinners "in our Saviour Jesus Christ" may be embraced, and ever held fast by its possessors.

In like manner, whatever arguments have

been used to recommend instruction in reading, with a view to enabling the objects of that instruction to read the Bible, apply with equal force to the plan now recommended; and surely he, who looks forward with exultation to "the day when, throughout the compass of our island, no cabin, in which there is an eye capable of enjoying its treasures, shall be unfurnished with the hallowed code of revelation,"* will not object to giving instruction in that language, through whose medium alone many an eye is capable of receiving such enjoyment. Why teach a people to read at all but that they may be edified? How can they be edified if the language is to them barbarous? It is indeed a happy circumstance that the question is not whether we should give or withhold the scriptures—whether we should give or withhold instruction, but whether, admitting the advantage of religious instruction, we should distribute the scriptures and afford instruction in Irish, or not, inasmuch as we are thus enabled to bring forward, in support of the affirmative, whatever has been adduced by the highest and most respectable authorities in favour of the general dissemination of the Bible—in favour of the general instruction of the people, since, as has been already observed, they are no less applicable in this instance than where English is made the vehicle of communication. Let then

* See a Sermon preached before the Association for Discourteuing Vice, &c. by the Bishop of Clonfert, in the year 1807. p. 47.

the preciousness of immortal souls urge us on to engage with a holy alacrity in this most interesting cause. Let not the short-sighted speculations of mere worldly policy* interfere with the welfare of beings destined to endure when this earth shall have vanished away, and all the magnificent schemes of human invention shall have shrunk into insignificance before the grandeur of the fully developed plans of infinite mercy, wisdom, justice, power, and love. In the sacred volume are contained elements as valuable for the sustenance of the divine life, as animal food is for the support of the corporeal. In it are principles capable of imparting a no less genial and healthy glow to the powers of the soul, than material fire does to those of the body; will you then see so many of your brothers and sisters of this land perishing for lack of knowledge; a prey to the frozen apathy of indifference on heavenly themes, and yet be contented with a mere wish "be ye warmed, be

* It is a question of some consideration, whether this policy is the best and most advantageous to accomplish the end proposed? A short retrospect of the eventful period of the last twenty years might shake the confidence of the most experienced and sagacious politician, in any calculation upon the best founded schemes of worldly wisdom. He might, perhaps, be led at length to perceive that the only sound, wise, serviceable, and durable system of worldly policy, must be that which is founded upon the wisdom from above; in a few words, that the Gospel is the best code of morals and political economy that has ever been composed.

ye filled," without at the same time holding forth, in the language in which alone they can understand them, those blessed truths so nourishing and invigorating to the soul which abound in the Scriptures.

It has been attempted to weaken the force of this argument, as applied to the present instance, by suggesting, that in every case where a want of competent knowledge in the English may render it necessary, persons skilled in both languages might be employed to read the Scriptures to the people, turning, as they go on, the English version into Irish, for the benefit of their hearers. This plan, useful as it may be, where a supply of Irish Bibles is not to be had, and preferable as it is to leaving them altogether without religious instruction, is certainly at the same time not without many disadvantages which do not apply to our scheme. First, on the score of expense; inasmuch as the readers so employed must be permanent so long as Irish exists. Nor could we look forward to the time, prior to its complete disuse, when the encreased knowledge of the people would render them unnecessary. Of course the system of circulating schools, which has been found of so much advantage in both Wales and Scotland,* could not in such a case be adopted, as the removal of the reader would leave the inhabitants of the district as incapable of getting at the

* See Reports of the Society for promoting Gaelic schools, *passim*. See also Welsh Piety.

Scriptures as ever. Besides, the persons so employed being necessarily of greater than ordinary attainments, as being masters not only of Irish but English, will naturally expect higher salaries. Would not this also deprive the hearer of many advantages enjoyed by those who possess Bibles in their vernacular tongue, and are able to read them? How many moments of lassitude and idleness might he have been induced to fill up in its perusal! What a comforter is withheld from him in the hour of sorrow and distress—what a counsellor in the hour of difficulty! He is incapable of refreshing his memory on those passages which may have most interested him, and of thus keeping alive, by continual accessions to so pure a fount of heat, the sacred flame of devotion which may have been already kindled. The Bible too, as a part of family and private worship, will be altogether shut out from him, the public readings being, of course, generally confined to such times as a considerable number can be collected. How great a loss he will thus sustain they best can feel who have most enjoyed this privilege. Further, it may be questioned, how far it would be safe to follow this suggestion, as, in order to secure against any mistake in their interpretations, great care would be requisite in the selection of readers. In the first place it would be necessary to be assured of their competent

knowledge of both languages: secondly, of their ability to render English into Irish; thirdly, of their not having embraced any material errors in religion. On the second of those qualifications it may be remarked, that a knowledge of two languages does not necessarily ensure a capability of translating the one into the other. Indeed, the person who has acquired both languages in the same way, merely by constantly hearing them spoken around him, and has never been grammatically instructed in any, will in general have but a very inaccurate notion as to what particular words in the two languages mutually represent the same ideas, since he has been generally indebted to the context for a knowledge of their mutual relation. His rendering, therefore, will be more properly a paraphrase than a translation. In this every one will agree, who has demanded of a person so instructed, the meaning of an Irish sentence. We know, besides, how difficult it is even for those who have made translation their peculiar study, always to give the exact meaning of an author; and shall we then prefer the every where, and at all times varying, crude, and periphrastic translation of readers, all of them, it is more than probable, unacquainted with the *original*, to the well weighed version of Bishops Daniel and Bedell, faithfully and diligently com-

pared by them with the original, and other versions, revised and corrected by some of the best scholars of the times; and as it would appear recognised by the church of Ireland itself?*

When in addition to this are considered, in reference to the third qualification, the perversions which ignorance, or false views of christianity may put upon his version, it will probably be thought less objectionable to make use of Daniel and Bedell's Bible. It has been often mentioned as one of the interesting features of Bell's system, that by means of it a pagan Hindoo may be qualified to teach the principles of christianity, though himself be ignorant of them. In like manner, by simply reading and teaching to read the Irish Bible, one ignorant of the doctrines of christianity may instruct others in the purity of evangelical truth. Nay, almost before he is aware, he may imbibe those blessed principles himself. This has occurred in more instances than one.

Another benefit to be expected from this system is, the interest which those neglected people will see that you take in the welfare of their immortal souls, as such instruction can have no reference to mere worldly concerns. To use the language of Mr. Charles of Bala, in

* See Canon 94, of the Convocation of 1634, Appendix F
This is true at least of the version of the New Testament by Archbishop Daniel, which was published previously to this convocation.

urging the importance of teaching Welsh first ; “you prove to them that you are principally concerned about their souls, and thereby naturally impress their minds with the vast importance of acquiring the knowledge of divine truths, in which the way of salvation, our duty to God and man, are revealed ; whereas, that most important point is much kept out of sight by teaching them English, for the acquisition of the English is connected in a good measure only with their temporal concerns, which they may never want, for they may, as the majority do, die in infancy.”

The next advantage arising from the distribution of the Scriptures in Irish, and the instruction of the natives in their own language in the first instance, is the saving of expense which it would occasion.

The expense must in a great measure depend upon the time occupied in conveying instruction, which, as was observed before, must always be lessened when the language taught is the vernacular speech of the country. What father among us would expect his son to make as rapid a progress in reading, were he to commence with a foreign language, as if he were to begin with English ? The comparative saving, judging by what has been done in Wales, may be estimated at about twelve to one.* Let it also

* See an abstract from Reports respecting the Welsh Circulating Schools in the Appendix to the first Report of the Society for promoting Gaelic Schools, p. 54.

be kept in view, that expense is ever relative to the benefit conferred. How much, in this point of view, Irish will have the advantage of English, may be conceived from the fact already stated, that boys in the Highlands of Scotland, who had been a considerable time at school, so as to acquire a fluency in reading English, have been frequently found incapable of understanding a single word they read. The same has also occurred in Wales. Thus the Rev. Griffith Jones of Llandowrer, the original promoter of the Welsh Circulating Schools, speaking of the English charity schools which had been tried in Wales, says, "All that the children could do in three, four, or five years, amounted commonly to no more than to learn very imperfectly to read some easy parts of the Bible, without knowing the Welsh of it;" and as a reason for it, he adds, "nor should this be thought strange, considering that they were learning to read an unknown language, and had none to speak it but the master, and he too obliged to talk to them often in Welsh."*

A further advantage, and one of very great moment, is the benefit which the parents and relatives of those instructed may derive from hearing the children read, in a language they understand, the words of eternal life. Many interesting instances of the good effect produced upon those who have heard the English Bible

* See Memorial in behalf of the native Irish, p. 41.

read, frequently occur in the Reports of the Sunday School Society for Ireland. The same has happened on reading the Gaelic and Welsh Bibles in Scotland and Wales;* and even in this country many beneficial effects have already arisen from the use made of the Irish Bible.

We may also observe that the benefit will here be mutual, inasmuch as the parents will be able, by hearing them read, to keep up their children in the knowledge already acquired, which is too frequently lost during the absence of the teacher, or the withdrawing of the school.†

There is another advantage very closely connected with this, that persons so taught will be able to teach those to read who understand only Irish, which would be impossible were English the subject of instruction. How often children have taught their brothers and sisters, and even parents, must be known to all. And in one of the Reports of the Sunday School Society for Ireland, an interesting account is given of a little girl, aged thirteen, having herself established a most flourishing and effective Sunday School.‡

* See Reports of the Society for promoting Gaelic Schools, &c. First Report, p. 13, 16, 23, 31, 56. Second Report, p. 13, 39, 44, 45.

† See Reports of the Society for promoting Gaelic Schools. First Report, p. 43. Second Report, p. 12, 38.

‡ See its Sixth Report, p. 18, 19.—“ The Reports from

Another argument in favour of this plan is, the total failure of the opposite system. A long trial has been made of the benefit to be derived by withholding from the Irish the Scriptures in their own language. Let three centuries suffice for an experiment so awfully detrimental to the eternal interests of our fellow-countrymen: let another system now be adopted. To use the words of Dr. Johnson, in the letter quoted above, "let it be remembered, that the efficacy of ignorance has long been tried, and has not produced the consequence expected. Let knowledge, therefore, take its turn; and let the patrons of privation stand awhile aside, and admit

Ireland," says the Rev. Alexander Stewart of Dingwall, "abound with instances of parents being excited to attend to the scriptures, and of their acquiring the knowledge of the invaluable doctrines of the Gospel, by means of their children; the same thing has been happily exemplified here. The instructions inculcated upon the children have, through that medium, been transmitted to the parents. Without stooping to the humiliating attitude of learners, the parental interest and pleasure they felt in their childrens' improvement, drew their serious attention to the sacred scriptures, which the young ones read or committed to memory at home. Thus the walls of the cottage were illuminated by the taper which was lighted in the School. Prayer has been introduced into families where no form of devotion existed before; swearers, liars, and drunkards, have appeared to stand in awe of their own children, knowing how they had been taught at school to abhor these vices as sins which provoke the wrath of God, and drown the soul in perdition." Sixth Report of the Society for promoting Gaelic Schools, &c.

the operation of positive principles." In the time of Richardson it was absurdly objected, that employing Irish in conveying religious instruction, would have an effect directly opposite to that which he expected. More than a century has now elapsed, and what has the contrary system accomplished? One melancholy advantage of the failure of Richardson's suggestions is, that we have been thereby furnished with presumptive evidence of what may be expected from persisting in that system which has been hitherto supported, unhappily with too much success, in contravention of his. Let not the twentieth century have to deplore the consequence of a failure in the nineteenth, similar to that which the present mourns over as having taken place in the eighteenth!

A further argument, and one of considerable weight, is the great *attachment* of the Irish to their own language; an attachment which they have, in so many instances, so happily transferred, (and what can be more encouraging?) to the Irish Bible, and the reader of it, and even to the Irish Liturgy of the Church of England. A strong proof of this is to be found in the manner in which the labours of the Rev. Messrs. Brown and Atkins, as related above, were received by the people; and it may be said, without fear of contradiction, that those who have been most active in this work, have been most beloved and respected, even by persons out of their own

communion ; witness the general regret expressed by the Irish Roman Catholics on the death of Bishop Bedell. You thus enlist in the cause of religion their very prejudices, if attachment to their native language can be called a prejudice.

In truth, we can want no argument for employing the vernacular tongue in the present instance, when we consider how much it is preferred in the Irish districts, even by those who understand English, in their ordinary communications with one another ; owing, perhaps, to early attachment, or more probably, to the greater facility with which they can therein convey their ideas. Irish stewards, availing themselves of this circumstance, in giving the directions of their masters even to such as understand both languages, generally use Irish ; and gentlemen themselves frequently find their advantage in learning it. Nor should we here overlook the force of evidence to be derived from the practice of the clergy of the Church of Rome, of whose competency to form a judgment upon this subject no one can doubt who reflects on the situation they hold in reference to a great proportion of the people of this island. They always employ Irish in their addresses from the altar, in those parts of Ireland in which that language prevails. And that ignorance of the language on the part of the

priest may not deprive the people of being addressed in words which they can understand, an Irish Lecture, for the instruction of students, has been, as we observed above, established in the College of Maynooth. Even in London the number of those speaking Irish, (natives of Ireland) has been considered by the Clergy of that Church sufficiently great to call upon them for religious instruction in that tongue, and the appointment of a sermon in Irish has been the consequence. If, therefore, in the metropolis of the sister island there be found a population, formed by continual emigrations from this island, whose necessities on this head are so imperative, can it be imagined that in the parent country such necessities do no where exist?

Let us now take a view of those circumstances which should operate as encouragements to proceed in the course here advocated.

Among the chief are the benefits which have every where, and at all times, followed the promulgation of the Scriptures in the vernacular tongue. Three centuries have not elapsed since the translation of the holy Scriptures into the vulgar tongue has been in general circulation throughout Great Britain, and what have been the effects? Are they not to be seen in increased religious knowledge, and improved habits? What cause can we assign for the purity of religious faith, if not the diligent perusal of the Bible? To

what are we to ascribe the melancholy contrast exhibited in the ignorance and depravity of so many of our own countrymen, but to the cruel policy of withholding from them an intelligible translation of the word of God? And shall not the success which attended an opposite system in Great Britain, stimulate us to pursue a different course now? Translations of the scriptures into the numerous and various languages of the nations who embraced Christianity, were entered upon at an early period, of which we have the strongest evidence in the works of ecclesiastical writers;* nor was Ireland herself, as we observed above, overlooked at that time. And shall not the clearer light and deeper religious feeling which prevailed when the scriptures in the vulgar tongue were generally read

* Dr. Mosheim attributes much of the success and rapid propagation of the Gospel, even in the earliest periods of Christianity, to the numerous versions that were made into different languages of the books of the New Testament.—See Mosheim's *Eccles. Hist.* vol. I. cent. II. part. I. chap. I. sect. vi. p. 151. Cent. III. part. I. chap. I. sect. v. p. 245. Cent. IV. part. I. chap. I. sect. xxiii. p. 340, 8vo. London, 1811.—Eusebius, speaking of many who were eminent among the immediate successors of the Apostles, relates, besides other remarkable proofs of their zeal, “that, travelling abroad, they performed the work of EVANGELISTS to those who as yet had not heard the word of Faith, being very ambitious to preach Christ, and TO DELIVER THE BOOKS OF THE DIVINE GOSPEL.” See Eusebius, *Eccl. Hist.* translated by Edward Wells, D.D. Lib. iii. cap. xxxvii. p. 48. fol. London, 1709.

in the Churches, and were in the hands of the faithful, than did in those times which followed, be an animating inducement to an attempt which promises to give them a wider circulation among our fellow countrymen? It may in general be stated that the decay of piety, and the corruption of the faith in Christian communities, have ever been in proportion to a want of scriptural knowledge among the mass of the people.

Nor are the Scriptures themselves destitute of examples of this kind; an encouraging instance of the good effects which have arisen from bringing to light the word of God, is furnished us in the history of his peculiar people, as related in 2 Kings, xxii. xxiii. (See also 2 Chron. xxxiv.) where we read how Hilkiab found the Book of the Law, and how Josiah “ the King
 “ sent, and they gathered unto him all the el-
 “ ders of Judah and of Jerusalem. And the
 “ king went up into the house of the Lord, and
 “ all the men of Judah, and all the inhabitants
 “ of Jerusalem with him, and the priests, and
 “ the prophets, and all the people, both small
 “ and great, and he read in their ears all the
 “ words of the Book of the Covenant, which
 “ was found in the house of the Lord. And
 “ the king stood by a pillar, and made a Cove-
 “ nant before the Lord, to walk after the Lord,
 “ and to keep his commandments, and his tes-
 “ timonies, and his statutes, with all their

“ heart, and all their soul, to perform the
 “ words of this Covenant that were written in
 “ this book: and all the people stood to the
 “ Covenant,” &c. This interesting history, while it shews the advantage arising from the Scriptures being generally made known, teaches likewise the danger to which a people are exposed in being kept ignorant of the precepts of their God.

Nor should the example furnished us in the Septuagint version of the Old Testament, and the encouragement derived from its beneficial effects, be overlooked. This version, whatever may have been its origin, appears, from the frequent quotations of it in the New Testament, especially when citations are made from the Book of Psalms, to have been very generally used by the Hellenist Jews, for whom it is not improbable it was originally designed. The influence which this version had in preparing the way for Christianity, wherever the language of Greece was understood, is obvious; nor could the Jews of Berœa have proved themselves more noble than those of Thessalonica in searching the Scriptures daily, in consequence of which many of them believed, were not those Scriptures in a tongue which they could understand.* The propriety of addressing a people on religious subjects in a language they under-

* Acts, xviii. 11, 12.

stand, appears from the success of Stephen, himself an Hellenist,* in his arguments with the Hellenists,† and the selection of Paul, whose native tongue was Greek, and whose early labours were also among the Hellenists,‡ to be in a peculiar manner the apostle of the Greeks.

But we can adduce encouraging examples from what has taken place in times nearer to the present day, and in circumstances closely similar, and bearing more directly upon the point. Among the most interesting is that from the history of the Wendens, a people who used the Slavonian language. Attempts had been made for about thirty years to introduce the German among them, by keeping them in ignorance of every thing which might have been learned through the medium of their own written language. The attempt completely failed, while the miserable people were in the most unhappy condition, destitute of all spiritual knowledge. Owing, however, to the pious labours of the Rev. Gotlieb Fabricius the system was changed. The New Testament and a catechism were translated into the Wenden tongue—schools for teaching it were set up—a *taste for reading* was induced—and THE CONSEQUENCE WAS, THAT THE

* The circumstance of his election among the seven, as well as his name, which is Greek, indicate this.

† See Acts vi. 9.

‡ See Acts ix. 29.

PEOPLE OF THEIR OWN ACCORD AFTERWARDS LEARNED GERMAN, SO THAT WHAT WAS BELIEVED WOULD PROVE A HINDRANCE TO THEIR ACQUISITION OF THE GERMAN TONGUE, DID, ON THE CONTRARY TEND TO ITS INCREASE.*

We have another interesting example in the successful efforts of the Welsh Circulating Schools. In Wales, too, the mistaken attempt had been made to establish English by banishing the native language. For this purpose English Charity Schools appear to have been introduced, and what was the result? Hear the Rev. Griffith Jones: "All," says he, "that the children could do in three, four, or five years, amounted commonly to no more than to learn very imperfectly to read some easy parts of the Bible, without knowing the Welsh of it, inso-much, that they who had been so long in English schools could not edify themselves by reading till many of them lately learned to read their own language in the Welsh Charity Schools." These Schools, first erected in the year 1730, by the Rev. Griffith Jones, and continued on the same plan, after his decease, by Mrs. Bevan, a pious lady of fortune, and an intimate friend of Mr. Jones, did much towards ameliorating the condition of the people, in respect to the capability of acquiring and communicating moral and religious knowledge, though

* See Appendix L.

far from being so complete, or so well appointed as the circulating schools of modern times, in Wales and the Highlands of Scotland. From an abstract taken from the close of the third volume of the printed Reports, entitled “Welsh Piety,” &c. it appears “that one hundred and fifty thousand two hundred and twelve persons were taught to read the Welsh Scriptures during the space of twenty-four years;* and that through the superintendence and influence of a single clergyman, who was but of a weak constitution, and in a poor state of health for several years before his death. Nor was this all; for Mr. Jones informs us, at the close of one of his reports, that ‘most of the masters instructed for three or four hours in the evening, after school times, those who could not attend at other times, and who are not included in the above number, about twice or thrice as many as they had in their schools by day:’ and, further, he says, that ‘in many of the schools the adult people made two-thirds of the scholars;’ thus raising the total number benefited to above 400,000 souls! Persons above sixty attended every day, and often lamented, nay, even wept, that they had not learned it forty or fifty years sooner. Not unfrequently *the children actually taught their parents*, and some times the parents and children of one family

* See Appendix M.

resorted to the same Circulating School, during its short continuance in a district; while various individuals, who, from great age, were obliged to wear spectacles, seized the opportunity, and learned to read the Welsh at that advanced period of life."

Before Mr. Jones's death the schools increased to the amazing number of 220, and though these charitable endeavours were stopped from a want of funds, the benevolent intentions of Mrs. Bevan, who left £10,000 for this purpose, having been suspended in consequence of a protracted litigation as to the validity of her will, yet happily this cause found an able and energetic advocate in Mr. Charles of Bala. After twenty-three years labours what was he enabled to say? "I have had the only satisfaction I could wish, that of seeing the work, by the Lord's blessing, prospering far beyond my most sanguine expectations. The beginning was small, but the little brook became an overflowing river, which spread widely over the whole country in Sunday Schools, the wholesome effects of those previous institutions, fertilizing the barren soil wherever it flows."*

But the argument drawn from the Welsh

Q

* See Memorial respecting the Native Irish, p. 40—51, 67—69; also First Report of the Society for the support of Gaelic Schools, p. 52—63.

schools is attempted to be turned against us, on account of the little advancement that people have made in acquiring English; that part of Wales, it should however be recollected, which through the medium of the London road comes under the notice of the majority of travellers, had, till very lately, but little communication with England, as lying principally in the mountains. Nor even now is the intercourse between the lower orders of the people, whose ignorance would most affect and attract the attention of the casual traveller, and those of the same class in England, so great as to encourage the expectation that any rapid proficiency will thus be made by them in the language of their neighbours. It is not impossible, too, that their knowledge of English may be greater than is imagined. Who is there that knows not how different a thing it is to understand a foreign language when reading it and when hearing it spoken?

Every degree of credibility ought therefore to be attached to the statements of Mr. Charles of Bala, a gentleman, from his local situation, most capable of forming a just judgment on the subject, and from his piety not to be suspected of falsehood; he thus writes in a letter to Mr. Anderson, dated June 4, 1811, "I can vouch for the truth of it, that there are twenty to one who can now read English, to what

could when the Welsh was entirely neglected. The knowledge of the English is become necessary, from the treasures contained in it. English books are now generally called for ; there are now a hundred books, I am sure, for every one that was in the country when I removed from England, and first became a resident in these parts. English schools are every where called for ; and I have been obliged to send young men to English schools, to be trained up for English teachers, that I might be able, in some degree, to answer the general demand for them.”*

Nor is the example furnished by the Welsh in adhering to their ancient language, without benefit to us in another point of view, as it shews for how long a period a people bordering on another, much more numerous than themselves, and using a different tongue, though governed by the same laws, professing the same religion, and having some degree of intercourse with them, will retain its own tongue. The remark of Augustus, that it was impossible for him, powerful as he was, to bring a new word into use among the Romans, may be applied to the attempts of introducing a new language. This is beyond the power of princes by their proclamations, or parliaments by their acts, as

* See Memorial, &c. p. 48, 49. First Report of Society for the support of Gaelic Schools, &c. p. 61.

was exemplified in the vain attempts of William the Conqueror to introduce French among his people, by ordering the children in the schools to be taught nothing but French, and enforcing all pleadings at law to be made in that language; and the equally vain efforts of the Irish Parliament respecting English, in the 28th of Henry VIII., alluded to above.

Now it may be asked, who that has witnessed the vast advantages which the Welsh have derived from reading the Scriptures in their own tongue, will regret that the *immediate* improvement of their immortal souls, by the infusion of religious truth in a language they understood, had not yielded to the uncertain speculation of forcing them prematurely to learn English, by keeping them in ignorance of every thing else? Who can barely contemplate the idea of a people being left so long destitute of religious knowledge, without shuddering at the consequences? If the Welsh language had been totally abolished in that time, how dearly would any advantages arising from such abolition, have been purchased by the ignorance, immorality, and irreligion, that must, of necessity, for so many years have prevailed among them, in consequence of such a system? How many souls that are now, through belief of the saving truths of the Gospel, resting from their labours, in joyful expectation of a beatified re-union with

their bodies, might be looking forward to the Resurrection as to a time of increased misery and confirmed punishment? And yet this is the line of conduct which has unhappily been too long pursued towards this distracted country, and which some would wish to continue.

This may be a proper place to bring forward the authority of the Bishop of St. Asaph. Speaking on this very subject, in his charge to his clergy in the year 1709—10, among the questions proposed to them is this: “Doth he preach every Sunday, either in the English or British (i. e. Welsh) tongue?” on which he remarks, “I must leave it to the Minister’s discretion, whether this sermon shall be in the English or the British tongue—but let me take this opportunity of advising the Ministers so to divide their English and their British sermons, as may most tend to the general edification of their people. In some places, I understand, there is now and then an English sermon preached, for the sake of one or two of the best families in the parish, although the rest of the parish understand little or nothing of English, and those few families understand the British perfectly well, as being their native tongue: I cannot possibly approve of this respect and complaisance to a few, that makes the Minister so useless to the rest, and much the greatest

number of his people. I should be very glad, (for my own sake) that there WERE BUT ONE LANGUAGE COMMON TO US ALL, AND THAT ONE WERE ENGLISH; BUT TILL THAT WISH CAN BE ACCOMPLISHED, I HEARTILY DESIRE THE LANGUAGE OF THE MINISTER MAY BE ALWAYS SUCH AS WILL BEST INSTRUCT AND EDIFY HIS PEOPLE MOST; and that no civility should come in competition with his duty, much less take place of it. I know that the religion and good breeding of the gentry, will easily part with a respectful custom, when it is prejudicial to their poor neighbours. What is it for a Minister to be a BARBARIAN, AND TO SPEAK IN AN UNKNOWN TONGUE, but to preach in a language that is not understood by those who hear him? And if I were to give you rules of preaching, whatever the language were, English or British, the first should be, to speak to the greatest part of your congregation, i. e. to those who make up the body of your people." Another question is, "Have you a large Bible of the last translation with two Common Prayer Books, both in English and Welsh?" Upon which, after referring his clergy to what has been above quoted, he adds, "The edification of the most is ever to be first in the Minister's consideration."* There

* See "The Bishop of St. Asaph's Charge to the Clergy

needs no comment on these passages, which serve to shew what was his Lordship's opinion as to the circumstances that should regulate the language in which the services were to be performed, and the Scriptures read in the church: and no one will deny but that his reasonings are equally applicable to Ireland. Indeed a strong argument might be drawn out of them to enforce the expediency of encouraging our young students in divinity to qualify themselves for preaching in Irish.

The success also of the Society lately instituted "for the support of Gaelic schools in the Highlands and Islands of Scotland," affords us no small grounds of encouragement. This interesting society took its rise in Edinburgh about the latter end of the year, 1810. Its objects were simply to enable the Scotch Gael to read the scriptures in his own language. For this purpose the Society employed circulating schools, according to the plan adopted in Wales by the Rev. Messrs. Jones and Charles; and from that time to the present year, their reports

of that Diocese in 1710," p. 11—13, 51, 8vo. London, 1712. His Lordship, afterwards Bishop of Ely, was Dr. William Fleetwood, author of *Sermons at Boyle's Lecture*, and several other works, in which are displayed considerable learning. He was, notwithstanding, a man of a retiring and unambitious spirit. See *Biographia Britannica*. Article FLEETWOOD.

have continued to exhibit the most encouraging accounts of their success. Wherever their masters went, they were received with gratitude by the ministers, and with enthusiastic delight by the people. Most interesting letters from various parts of the country, detailing the progress of the Society, have been received, and selections from them published by the Committee.

It is pleasing to see the unanimity which prevailed on this point among persons of every denomination. Thus we find the Episcopalians in Scatwell, Ross-shire, readily receiving instruction in these schools. There is also an interesting letter from the Rev. Dr. Norman Mac Donald, Roman Catholic Clergyman in the parish of Ardnamurchan, Inverness-shire, dated Moidart, 22d April, 1813, from which the following extracts are made: "Sir, Please permit me to inform you, that Peter M'Ewen, the bearer hereof, has given entire satisfaction in regard to his moral conduct, which has been irreproachable since he came to this country; as also in teaching the Gaelic language, in which branch of education his pupils, I find, have made an unexpected progress, during the short period since he came here; having, by all appearance, paid the utmost attention to the trust you and the Society reposed in him. I give this character entirely unsolicited by himself."

And in proposing one who had been M'Ewen's principal scholar to succeed him, he further writes, " I have examined the boy, and have made him read different parts of the Bible, besides his ordinary lessons, when I found him as expert in reading the Gaelic, and as fluently, as you or I could read English." And again, " I would be most willing to employ him for that purpose," viz. teaching the Gaelic, " as I think him sufficiently capable of doing so." And again, " if you can find it convenient to employ Ranald M'Donald, Mr. M'Ewen's pupil, he will, in a short time hence, teach all the youth of the country to read the Gaelic Scriptures, which I wish for very much."

From the account of the teacher, this boy, so capable of instructing others, could not have received above six months instruction. There is also an interesting letter from the inhabitants of this district, the whole of whom, with the exception of a few, as Dr. M'Donald informs us in the above-mentioned letter, are Roman Catholics. The following is a copy :—

" Moidart, 22d April, 1813.

" We, the under-subscribers, and tenants in Glenuig, humbly beg leave to return our grateful thanks to the Society, who had the humanity of sending us Mr. M'Ewen, to teach our children the Gaelic language. May the great God

reward them for their good and laudable intentions! We are so well pleased with Mr. M'Ewen, that we would rejoice at his coming among us again, if the honourable Society would think us worthy. We remain, most gratefully, your most obedient humble servants."

To this were affixed, in the presence of Mr. Chisholm, of Samla, the marks of the several persons in whose names the letter was written.

That they continued grateful appears from the report of the following year, which contains the following paragraph of "a letter from Alexander Chisholm, Esq. of Samlaman, to one of the Secretaries: "they all with one voice beg that I would give you the trouble to thank the Society for their great and liberal intentions; or, using their own expressions, "Gudthugadh Dia mor nargras paidh dhaibh o nach wrain sinn a dheanamh."*

In a subsequent letter Dr. M'Donald, recommending a particular station for a teacher, mentions as a reason, "there is a Meeting-house on that farm, at a very short distance from the other houses, where I occasionally officiate; and Mr M'Ewen may have the use of it for his scholars. Thus, by degrees, I hope we shall

* "Literally, May the great God of grace give you payment, (or reward you,) as we cannot, which will be our constant prayer."

have the satisfaction of seeing the crooked ways made straight," &c.

The Committee adopted this recommendation.

And again, an extract from a letter, dated 14th October, 1814, shews the interest which Dr. M'Donald took in the plans of the Society; he writes thus:—"In regard to the Gaelic School, the intended station at Langal must be relinquished on account of some families, in an adjoining property, having removed to an inconvenient distance, which renders that station too eccentric for the purpose; yet, since yesterday, I have procured a station still more central than Langal was, even before those families retired from its neighbourhood, for their absence will be considerably more than numerically supplied by others who are at too great a distance from Langal. The name of the farm I have fixed upon for the school is Blain, where I have also bespoke as suitable accommodations as can be expected here, with an honest family for the teacher, who will likewise be accommodated with a school-house, either on the farm, or about a quarter of a mile from his lodging, which last would be rather more convenient for the generality of the scholars; but either will be left to his own option: as matters are now arranged, he may come as soon as ready. Blain is in my immediate neighbourhood, and there-

fore a more frequent opportunity will be afforded me of superintending the school there than at Glennig.”

The following too is an extract from a letter from the teacher, dated 24th November, 1814 :

‘ The people, young and old, are exhorted by the Rev. Dr. M'Donald to attend my school.’*

In the island of Canna, too, where the population is for the most part Roman Catholic, a school has been established of thirty-six souls, no inconsiderable number, when it is considered that the population of the island is but 392.†

Also from the island of Cannay, the teacher writes—“ The Roman Catholics here make no scruple in learning any thing I request,—any portion of Scripture. I am greatly obliged to Mr. M'N. for his kindness in every respect; and also to the Priest, who lives at Eigg, you know, and came to this island some days since. He has been admonishing both young and old to attend. I have heard him saying, (while talking about me,) that he should be greatly displeased, if they should not attend; ‘ for addressing them) you see he came here, not for his own interest, but for yours; therefore, I hope you'll

* See Third Report, 51—53. Fourth Report, p. 12, 13, 37, 38.

† See Sixth Report; also Second Report, p. 19, 20.

consider that.' And there is a prospect of a large attendance."*

In the Fourth Report, likewise, an interesting account is given of the progress of the school in this island, as well as the satisfaction the inhabitants received in being able to read the Scriptures in Gaelic.

"This island," says the Report, "is inhabited almost wholly by Roman Catholics; and their attention to the school-master's instructions, as well as their progress in learning to read, have been remarkable. The first parcel of books which was sent having been detained by the way, and the teacher having, in the meanwhile, taught a number of the scholars to read their letters and short syllables, when the books did arrive, "they were purchased," says the School-master, "without exception, before I could get them off the shore. Several, to assure themselves of the sacred volume, spoke to me a month ago to keep a Bible for them." At the end of the Summer Sessions, the number on the list was eighty-eight, of whom five were reading short sentences, or learning the alphabet. Forty-eight of these scholars are under fifteen years of age, thirty aged from fifteen to twenty, and ten above twenty years old. On several occasions, during the past year, the

* See Third Report, p. 60.

dispositions which have been evinced by both old and young, at this station, have afforded to your committee no small pleasure. "They are not satisfied," says the teacher, "with barely reading the word, every part of the Scriptures presents something new to them, which they never heard before, and this leads them to search them more carefully." The scholars, on getting acquainted with the New, could not be satisfied without the Old Testament, while the parents seemed greatly pleased, if not *benefited* by the progress which the children were making in reading their mother tongue. About five months after the teacher's arrival in the island, one man said, "He did not expect that his son would ever have given him so much pleasure in matters of religion, as he had done already;" he then added, "*that he had received more instructions from his son's reading about Christ, at his own fireside, than he had ever known before.*" When the teacher was about to leave the island, during the autumn vacation, one man, who had a young boy at the Gaelic School, came to him, thanking him for the trouble he had taken in teaching his son to read the Gaelic Bible, and said, that he understood from his son that he had but one half of it, and that it gave him so much pleasure to hear what he had, that he would give any thing for the other part. Another man would not, on any account, part with

the school-master till he gave him his own Bible. With this desire the teacher complied."

The following extracts also are given in the appendix to that Report :

Extract from the teacher, dated 10th January, 1814. " You know, before I proceeded to this station, I entertained some dubious thoughts about what progress I should make among the inhabitants, but I have been happily mistaken ; indeed, they are mightily pleased to see the progress my scholars are making in their mother tongue, and I have great pleasure in seeing them so diligent. My night school is daily increasing. I had thirty attendants last night, two of whom are married men. One of these did not know a single letter a few days ago, and has got the alphabet very rapidly. There is another school in the other end of the same building, (i. e. the Romish Chapel, both schools being under the same roof,) in which about thirty boys are taught to read English : a few of the people having employed a young man to do so. I have often observed some of these boys running in among my scholars (unknown to their teacher) to steal a lesson from them ; and if, on discovery, they were asked what they were doing there? they replied, "*they were learning to read what they understood.*" I teach till eight o'clock in the evening, at school, and on returning to my lodgings, there are several per-

sons longing for my return ; these I continue to teach till eleven o'clock, and often later."

Extract from the same, 4th April, 1814.—
 " There was not a Gaelic Bible in the island when I came in December last ; only two Testaments and one Psalm book, from whence any person may judge of their state as to book knowledge. Among the population of 400, there were only three or four that could read any Gaelic, and these very imperfectly ; now there are thirty that can, so as to be understood by the hearer ; ten of these, who have been supplied with Testaments, will read with accuracy. Both the English teacher, and the scholars that I mentioned in a former letter, are attending our school four hours a day ; upwards of eighty attend occasionally ; sixty of these are constant attenders."

From the same, dated 15th August, 1814.—
 " I hope the inhabitants of the island have profited by my teaching. The scholars are getting a portion of the New Testament by heart every Lord's Day, so as to be able to repeat it on Monday. They are getting so fond of their task, that they very often have double what I request, and I have the pleasure to see every one striving to have more than the other."

From the same, dated 3d September, 1814.—
 " I was really very sorry to part with these young children. Truly it was a very affecting

scene to me. When I intimated my going to leave them, tears were evidently seen in many eyes, which brought some from my own, and left an impression to this very moment. On my taking leave of the priest, (who was then in Cannay,) he expressed his sorrow at my going away, and that it gave him great pleasure to see the progress my scholars made in the Gaelic.”*

The reports, as has been noticed in the preceding part of this work, furnish numerous proofs of the readiness with which the pupils learn to read Gaelic, and the consequent saving of expense thereby, as also of the desire that has been awakened in many parts, of acquiring a knowledge of English.

One extract from a statement circulated by the Rev. Alexander Stewart, author of the Gaelic grammar, shall conclude this part of the subject.—“When,” says he, “I entered upon this charge, about eleven years ago, I found that a great majority of the labouring class of people could not read a word, and scarcely knew the simplest principles of Christianity. I well remember, that when I first examined the families of the parish, I was astonished at their ignorance. I suspected, that possibly they did not understand my language, and that that was the cause of their not answering my questions. I called the parish catechist, and desired him to

S

* See Fourth Report, 15—17, 40, 41.

examine them in my presence, in the manner he had been accustomed to do for years before. He asked a few questions from the Assembly's Catechism, to which he received answers very incorrectly repeated, and often foreign to the question. It was apparent that the people, in pronouncing the words of the Catechism (in English), annexed to them no ideas whatever. This was the case alike with parents and with children, whose knowledge extended no farther than to words and sounds; the mind was uninformed and uncultivated."—Mr. Stewart then states his having tried the effect of employing the Gaelic language, and mentions the following as the happy result of that experiment: "An ardour for knowledge was soon excited in the minds of the young, and a corresponding interest in the parents. In subsequent examinations, I could not but observe a sensible advancement in religious intelligence and knowledge among the older people, which could easily be traced to the instructions first imparted to the children.*

Nor should the example furnished us in the Manks language be disregarded. Although it was confidently affirmed, about the 1740, that "the ancient Bishop of Man had found means

* Sixth Annual Report of the Society for the support of Gaelic Schools.

to bring the Manks into disuse," yet we find, from the year 1763, several impressions of the sacred Scriptures and religious books and tracts published in the Manks tongue, by the Society for promoting Christian knowledge, at the recommendation of the venerable Bishops Wilson and Hildesley, and of the late Bishop of Sodor and Man.* The British and Foreign Bible Society also, in consequence of returns having been made by the clergy, on the recommendation of the Bishop, as to the want of the Scriptures in their respective parishes, sent 1326 copies of the Manks New Testament to the Bishop for the accommodation of the inhabitants of that island.† From this edition having been stereotyped, taken in connection with the fact that the population of the Isle of Man does not exceed twenty thousand souls, it is evident that there was no expectation on the part of the Committee of the Bible Society, that the demand for the Testament in that language would speedily cease.

Who then that considers the advantages which other people derived, and are yet deriving from having the Scriptures in their native language, will refuse to Irishmen a similar be-

* See a general Account of the Society for promoting Christian Knowledge, p. 11, 12.

† See the Reports of the British and Foreign Bible Society.

nefit; especially when he reflects on the eagerness which they manifest to receive those Scriptures in Irish, of which no greater proof need be given than (as has been already alluded to) the pains which some of the inhabitants of Cork have taken in transcribing manuscript copies of Bedell's Bible, and reading them immediately after to an anxious and attentive auditory. On the whole, what encouragements can we want? We have the translation ready made. We are promised a very liberal supply of Bibles. We have the benefit of the matured plans of Societies at home and abroad, no less useful in teaching what ought to be avoided, than what line of conduct should be pursued; and above all, we have an ardent people ready to co-operate with us, beseeching us to go forward in their behalf, their anxiety for instruction overcoming all their prejudices.

If we should think it necessary to have recourse to authority, have we not the very highest? Look to Alfred, by all justly esteemed worthy of being ranked among the first of monarchs.—“Then, indeed,” says he to Bishop Walfig, in the Preface to the Saxon Pastoral of Gregory, “it occurred to me that the law of God was first found in the Hebrew tongue, and that afterwards the Greeks, when they had learned the same, had translated the whole of it, and moreover all the other books, into their own lan-

guage; that the Latins also, as soon as they themselves understood it, expressed the same in their own tongue by means of skilful interpreters; and in like manner that every Christian people, on every side, translated some portion of it into their vernacular language; wherefore I conceive it would be a most excellent thing, if you think so likewise, that we should translate such books as we shall judge most necessary to be understood by all, into a language which all understand." Alfred himself is reported to have translated the Psalms, some say the whole Bible, into Saxon.* That celebrated master of the Greek tongue, Clenardus, travelled into Barbary to learn the Arabic, into which tongue, say Messieurs de Port Royal, "he was desirous of translating the Scriptures, with a real Christian view of promoting the conversion of the Mahometans;"† and with respect to those who more particularly favoured the dissemination of the Irish Scriptures, the authority of the great Bacon is surely not to be undervalued on a subject such as this. Nor should we disregard Sir Henry Sidney and those other statesmen, who recommended that attention should be paid to the Irish language, with a view to the civili-

* Vide Usseii Hist. Dogmat. p. 123, 124.

† See Preface to a new Method of learning with greater facility the Greek Tongue, translated from the French of the Messieurs de Port Royal, p. vii. 8vo. Dublin, 1747.

zation and religious improvement of the people. Shall we not consider the opinion of Usher as of some weight, whose researches on the subject of Biblical versions have led to the knowledge of 104 versions of the Bible into thirty-one or thirty-two different languages in the times preceding the Reformation? * Shall we pay no attention to the judgment of Bedell, who, during his residence in Italy, had an opportunity of witnessing the deplorable situation of a people debarred of all access to the Scriptures? Is Boyle to be despised, a man whose very pursuits would render him cautious in forming an opinion? Would he have been likely to have come to any conclusion without carefully examining the several particulars on which that conclusion was founded? † Though

* See the Index of the Versions of the Holy Scriptures into the vulgar Tongues, before the Reformation, &c. at the end of Usseii Hist. Dogmat.

† Boyle ranks too high as a philosopher to render it necessary to insist here on that part of his character. It will not, however, be irrelevant to the subject we are upon, to take a summary view of his very zealous exertions to disseminate a knowledge of Divine truth and of the Word of God, through the medium of the vernacular languages of various people. His biographer, Dr. Birch, informs us that "he was at the charge of the translation and impression of the Four Gospels and Acts of the Apostles into the *Malayan* language; and this book he sent over all the East Indies." "He was resolved to have carried on the impression of the New

Johnson* did not deliver his opinion in direct reference to the Irish tongue, yet, from its being capable of immediate application to the subject, have we not all the authority which

Testament into the *Turkish* language, but the Company thought that it became them to perform that work, and so suffered him only to give a large share towards it." He was at £700 charge in the edition of the *Irish Bible*, which he ordered to be *distributed in Ireland*." "He contributed also also largely to the impressions both of the *Welsh Bible* and of the *Irish Bible* for the use of the *Highlands in Scotland*." See Boyle's Works, p. cxxxiii. How great was the assistance which he afforded Mr. John Elliot, commonly called the Apostle of the Indians, in his labours among that people, and in his translation of the Bible into *their language*, may be seen in the letters of Mr. Elliot to him. See Appendix to Boyle's Life, p. ccv—ccxiv. Mr. Elliot always addresses him in some such terms as follow: "Right honourable, charitable, indefatigable, nursing Father." See also his letter to Mr. Elliot, p. cxx, cxxi. This correspondence he carried on in his capacity of Governor of the Corporation for propagating the Gospel in New England and the parts adjacent in America, for which Society, (of which he was the first Governor) and not for that for promoting Christian Knowledge, as stated by mistake above, he appears to have been instrumental in procuring the charter.

* Dr. Johnson's letter to Mr. Drummond was relative "to the translation of the New Testament into the Gaelic language, by the Rev. James Stewart of Killin, which was printed in 1767, at the expense of the Society in Scotland for propagating Christian Knowledge. The first edition of the Gaelic Old Testament was published in 1802, by the same Society." In this undertaking they appear to have been assisted by a grant of £300 from the Society for promoting Christian Knowledge. See a General Account of the Society for promoting Christian Knowledge, p. 12.

his gigantic mind could afford? See also how this cause has been espoused by a number of eminent men of the Churches of England and Ireland, the latter of whom were, from their local knowledge, best qualified to form a judgment.

Besides Archbishop Usher and Bishop Bedell, (and in earlier times Archbishop Fitzrauf,) Archbishops Donnellan, Daniel, Price,* Sancroft, Marsh, King, Lindsay, and Godwin† en-

* In addition to what has been noticed above respecting the exertions of this prelate, it is pleasing to be able to add the testimony of Bishop Jones, by which it appears, that for some time previous to the year 1676, Archbishop Price had himself laboured in this vineyard with considerable success. Bishop Jones, in page 2d of an Epistle Dedicatory of his Sermon of Antichrist, to the Earl of Essex, then Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, published in quarto at Dublin in the year 1676, while urging upon the clergy the necessity of attending to the Irish language, adds, "I cannot but mention, and recommend as a precedent to others, the zeale of a pious and learned prelate, the present Archbishop of Cashel, who has set himself on that work industriously, by instructing the Irish in their owne language, and hath already gathered the comfortable fruits of his godly labours, drawing in and retaining many of the nation firm in the faith, the number also of such increasing."

† From the readiness with which Laud makes the following communication to Usher, we might perhaps be warranted in inserting his name in this list. He writes thus in the year 1629: "The King (Charles I.) likes wondrous well of the Irish lecture begun by Mr. Bedell, and the course of sending such young men as your Grace mentions." See Parr's Life of Usher, p. 409. This communication is further interesting, as it affords indubitable evidence, if any

couraged and were most of them actively and personally engaged in various attempts to diffuse a knowledge of religious truth through the medium of the Irish tongue. Not less decidedly favourable to such measures were Bishops Walsh, Jones,* Dopping, Lloyd, Sheridan, Moreton, Ash, Crow, Wettenhall,† Hickman, together with most of the English bishops at the time in which Richardson wrote his "Short History."‡ We may indeed

T

such were wanting, of Charles's own dispositions relative to this subject.

* We owe it to Bishop Jones that Bedell's version was ever published. How anxiously he desired it previous to his letter to Boyle, we learn from the Epistle Dedicatory to the Earl of Essex, referred to in a preceding note, in which he says, speaking of Bedell's manuscript translation: "This I have in my hands in the manuscript, and wish it were for such a public good printed and published." See p. 2d of that Epistle Dedicatory.

† In consequence of a misprint in Richardson's "Short History," Dr. Welbore Ellis, Bishop of Kildare, is mentioned, in p. 40 of this Work, as having concurred in the memorial presented to the Duke of Ormond, whereas it was Dr. Edward Wettenhall, Bishop of Kilmore.

‡ This fact we learn from Dr. William Nicholson, Bishop of Derry, who, in the Preface to his Irish Historical Library, after mentioning Richardson's History, observes, that to it "a very great supplement might be added, by recounting the excellent services done in that way by the worthy author himself, who, about the same time that he sent abroad this little Treatise, published also in the Irish lan-

say, that men the most eminent as antiquarians, as statesmen, as philosophers, as philologists, as divines, have seen the subject in that point of view in which it is now presented to the eye of the Irish public.

But there are many, perhaps even of those who are anxious to give the widest possible diffusion to moral and religious instruction, who will be ready to say—"we are willing to admit,

guage and character, Sermons on the principal points of Religion, by Archbishop Tillotson, Bishop Beveridge, &c.; the Church Catechism, with Mr. Lewis's Scriptural Proofs, and his own correct translation of our Liturgy. This pious design was much encouraged, not only by the late Duke of Ormond and other great men of this kingdom but also by the generality of the English Bishops, who agreed in the good undertaker's sentiments, that the likeliest method of converting our Popish natives, was by proposing to them the saving truths of religion in their own tongue, *that being the only tongue understood by some, and most acceptable to ALL.*" See Preface, p. xxxviii. to "The Irish Historical Library, &c. by William Lord Bishop of Derry," 8vo. Dublin, 1724. From the terms in which the Bishop of Derry speaks of Richardson, and the object he had in view, we may add him to the list of prelates who were favourable to this undertaking. The above statement also affords testimony to Richardson's personal labours, and seems to confirm, what might fairly be inferred from a comparison of p. 2. of the Proposals circulated by the Society for promoting Christian Knowledge, annexed to his History, with p. 44, 45, of that work, that of the clergymen who exerted themselves about the year 1710, for the instruction of their countrymen through the medium of Irish, he was that one who bought the fount of Irish types.

that in the times of these great men there were circumstances which completely justified their manner of thinking and acting on this subject, but these circumstances now no longer exist. English has encreased rapidly in Ireland within the last century, and unless the Irish language is upheld by impolitic interference, we may reasonably expect, from its decline within the same period, that it will soon be entirely disused; and we insist that the encreased and encreasing knowledge of English will supersede the necessity of teaching Irish, since to the extension of the former we may trust altogether for the removal of that ignorance so generally deplored."

Much has been said already which affects this view of the question; and it cannot be denied that, *positively*, English *has* encreased from the establishment of schools and from the encreased population of those who speak it. But it must be admitted that Irish also has considerably encreased,* as from early marriages, cheap food, and frugal habits, the population of those who use it has become excessive. *Relatively*, therefore, it is to be feared that the English language has not gained so great an ascendancy over its rival as is generally supposed. The

* In the same period that part of the population of the Highlands, which speaks Gaelic, has doubled.

parts of the country where English prevails are open to casual observers, and are inhabited by the educated classes of society, who do not take into their calculation those remote, unfrequented, and almost inaccessible districts, in which the natives have been left in the undisturbed possession as well of their vernacular tongue, as of the soil on which they dwell. If therefore *numbers* were ever an argument for instructing them in reading Irish, that argument has gained strength in proportion to their *absolute* numerical increase; for it should be kept in mind that where souls are concerned, it is their absolute, not relative numbers that must be taken into account; and lost indeed must they be to every humane and Christian feeling, who would limit the boon of religious instruction by an arithmetical calculation of the proportional numerical value of those who are to be benefited thereby.

Let it be further remembered that this very objection was brought forward in former times, unhappily with too much effect, particularly in those of Boyle and Richardson; and it was with a full view of it, and indeed of almost every other objection which it is now usual to urge, that they determined on acting as they did. It might be well, therefore, if objectors of the present day, while they do justice to the principles of those who took an opposite view of the subject formerly, would fairly consider at which side of the ques-

tion they would then have ranged themselves. We have seen, however, that circumstances are not so much altered as some imagine; nor is high authority wanting, even at present, in support of that line of conduct which it has been the aim of the present work to recommend. The character of Dr. Dewar stands high, in every point of view, in his own country; nor have his "Observations on Ireland" diminished any thing from that character. The advantages which he possessed from his knowledge of the language, and from other circumstances, for forming his opinion, have been already insisted on.

If then Richardson appealed to the evidence of the two preceding centuries against this objection, we may unfortunately appeal to the testimony afforded by an additional century which has elapsed since his time. Melancholy and frightful is it to reflect, how many, during that period, have been left awfully ignorant of what most materially concerned their immortal souls. Let then the experience of upwards of three centuries shew us how little we should rely on the gradual increase of the English language, to supersede the present necessity of imparting the rules of faith in a language that is understood. But even admitting the possibility that, in consequence of an extended education, and a free intercourse through all parts of

the country, the encreased knowledge of English must take place in future with more rapidity than heretofore, and must thus, in the end, completely succeed in eradicating Irish ; still, however, a whole generation, at least, must perish before such a complete revolution can be effected ; and how many in that time must be born, and live, and die, without having an opportunity of reading the Scriptures, if we depend solely on their knowledge of English to afford that opportunity !

Surely, then, no one ought to question the propriety of making Irish the medium of moral and religious instruction, wherever that language is the language of the cabin.

Though the attempt may not be free from every objection which ingenuity can devise, it cannot however be considered unfair to throw the *onus* back on objectors, and to ask them, whether indolence and apathy, and a sitting still till schemes are proposed against which nothing can be urged, may not in themselves be open to objections ? Recollect “ that old age is advancing, and some, awful consideration ! perishing for lack of knowledge.”* Even now the brink of the precipice is crowded, the waves of time are silently eating away its base, the slip

* Letter from the Rev. William Findlater, Nov. 18, 1812, 3 Gael. Rep. p. 37.

is continually falling in, and multitudes, even while we are deliberating on the expediency of affording them this instruction, are constantly dropping into eternity.

THE END.

ERRATA.

- Page 29, line 1, after of read the.
 — 49, — 11, for knowedge read knowledge.
 — 90, note, third line from bottom, for vol. L. read vol. 1.
 — 103, line 1, for si read is.
 — 106, — 20, for cousse read course.
 — 122, — 17, for Gudthugadth read Gu dthugadh.
 — — — 18, for wrain read urain.
 — 124, — 3, for Glennig read Glenuig.
 Appendix, A. p. 1, line 3, for admtnistration read adminis-
 tration.
 — — —, G. p. 6, line 27, after of insert his.
 — — —, L. p. 12, — 15, for Uenedi read Venedi.
 — — —, — 30, after speaketh insert the.
 — — —, p. 14, — 30, for Fabricious read Fabricius.

APPENDIX.

A.

Extract from the “ Act for the Uniformitie of common Prayer and Service in the Church, and the admtnistration of the Sacraments.—28 Elizabeth Chap. 2. Sect. xv.

“ AND forasmuch as in most places of this realm, there cannot be found English ministers to serve in the Churches or places appointed for Common Prayer, or to minister the sacraments to the people, and that if some good meane were provided, that they might use the prayers, service, and administration of sacraments set out established by this act, in such language as they mought best understand, the due honor of God should be thereby much advanced ; and for that also, *that the same may not be in their native language, as well for difficultie to get it printed, as that few in the whole realme can read the Irishe letters.* We do therefore most humbly beseech your majesty that with your highness favor and royal assent it may be enacted by the authority of this present parliament, That in every such Church or place where the common minister hathe not the use or knowledge of the English tongue, it shall be lawful for the the same common minister or priest to say and use the mattens, even song, celebration of the Lord's Supper, and administration of each of the Sacraments, and all their common and open prayer in the *Latin tongue*, in

suche order and forme as they be mentioned and set forth in the said book established by this act, and according to the tenor of this act, and none otherwise, nor in other manners, any thing before expressed and contained in this acte to the contrarie notwithstanding."



B.

Extract of a Letter from Sir Henry Sidney, Lord Deputy of Ireland, to her Majesty Queen Elizabeth.

—"In choice of which ministers for the remote places, where the English tongue is not understood, it is most necessarie that soche be chosen, as can speak Irishe, for whiche searche would be made first, and spedilye, in your own Universities; and any found there well affected in religion, and well conditioned beside, they would be animated by your Majestic; yea, though it were somewhat to your Highness' chardge, and on peril of my liffe, you shall fynde it returned with fayme, before three years be expired: If there be no soche there, or not inough (for I wish tene or twelve at the least) to be sent, who might be placed in offices of Dignitie in the Church, in remote places of this realme, then doe I wishe, (but this most humblye under your Highness correction,) that you would write to the Regent of Scotlande, where, as I learne, there are many of the reformed church, that are of this language, that he would prefer to your Highnes so many, as shall seeme good to you to demande, of honest, zealous, and learned men, and that could speak this language; and though for a while your Majestic were at some chardge it were well bestowed, for in shorte tyme their owne preferments would be able to suffice them, and in the meane tyme thousands would be gayned to Christ, that nowe are lost, or left at the woorst, &c. xxviii April, 1576."—See "Letters and Memorials of state in

the reigns of Queen Mary, &c. written and collected by Sir Henry Sidney," &c. Vol. 1. p. 113. fol. Lond. 1746. Collin's State Papers.

C.

Extract from the "King's letter in behalf of all Prelates and Clergy of this kingdom of Ireland, dated 26th Feb. 17°. Jac. I. addressed to the Lord Deputy and Clare, and all others the King's Officers and Ministers whom it may concern."

"And because wee understand that the simple natives of that our Kingdom, whoe by experience wee heare are found to be farr more tractable amongst the rude Irishmen then amongst the unconformable English, are still kept in darkness, and apt and ready thereby to be misled into error, superstition and disobedience by the Popish Priestes, whoe abuse their simplicitie and ignorance, which proceedeth through want of ministers whoe could speake their owne language, whome they may understand, because our Colledge of Dublin was first founded by our late sister of happie memorie, Queene Elizabeth, and hath beene since plentifully endowed by us, principallie for breeding upp the natives of that kingdom in civility, learning and religion, we have reason to expect that in all this long tyme of our peaceable government, some good numbers of the natives should have beene trained upp in that Colledge, and might have beene employed in teaching and reducing those which are ignorant among that people, and to think that the governors of that house have not performed that trust imposed in them, if the revenewes thereof have bene otherwise imployed and therefore wee doe require; that henceforth special care be had, and that the visitors of that universitie be required particulerlie to looke unto and take care of this point, and the supplying of the present want, that choise be made of some competent number of to-

wardlie young men, alreadie fitted with the knowledge of the Irishe tongue, and be placed in the universite and maintained there for two or three years, till they have learned the ground of Religion, and be able to catechise the simple natives, and deliver unto them so much as themselves have learned and when any livings that are not of any great value fall void among the meere Irish, these men to be thought upon before others, or to be placed with other able ministers that possesse livings amongst the meere Irishe, where, for defect of the language, they are able to doe little good, to be interpreters unto them, and be maintained by them after they are made fitt for that imployment; and in the meane tyme, that during their continuence in the Colledge, they may be maintained partlie by the contribution from the ministers that possesse many livings among the Irishe; partlie by the sequestracons of some living in remote places where there is little exercise of the ministerie, partly by some helpe out of recusante fines or by some other good course, that shall be thought most fitting to youe, and that youe consider with our Primate and some other of our chiefe Prelates for this or some other good course, to be taken for supplying of this defect, which wee thinke will be a principall meanes to reclaime the poor ignorant people," &c.

D.

Extract from the "King's letter to the Archbishop of Armagh, with instructions relative to Ecclesiastical matters, 2^o. Car. I.

"Preamble—Right trustee, &c. At the humble request, and upon certain propositions made unto us by the Right Reverend Father in God, James Archbishop of Armagh, and Primate of all Ireland, concerning as well the Church in general there, as more particularly the Ecclesiastical state of

his owne province, that we would be pleased not only to ratifie and confirme the orders made by our deare father deceased, King James of blessed memorie, but also make some necessarie addition unto the same; we being ever readie to manifest unto the world, that we doe not only succeed our father in his kingdoms, but alsoe his pietie and zeale to God's Church and true Religion, and his extraordinarie care for the advancement thereof, have thought good in the particulars propounded unto us, to set downe theis followinge directions."

"§ 5. And we further require you to take special care, that the people there may be instructed in the principles of religion by those to whom it apperteyneth, and that the *Newe Testament and Book of Common Prayer, translated into Irish, be frequently used in the parishes of the Irishrie*, and that every non resident there do constantly keepe and continue one to reade service in the Irishe tongue, as is expresslie commanded by the 36th Art.* of the said orders, Dated 8 July, 2^o. Cha. I."

E.

Extract from the "King's letter for renewing the undertakers graunts of Ulster, 2^o. Car. I.

"And that the said Irishe shall build and dwell in villages and townreeds together, and not dispersedly on the plaines, and not in woods, nor upon unaccessible mountains; and we order their apparell after the manner used by the English, and bring upp their children with religious schoolmasters, and permitt them to learne the English language. Dated 8 July. 2^o. Cha. I."

* Articles of direction to the Lord Chichester, then Deputie.

F.

Extract from the Constitutions and Canons Ecclesiastical treated upon by the Archbishops and Bishops and the rest of Clergy of Ireland, and agreed upon with the King's Majestie's Licence, &c. in their Synod, begun Anno Dom. 1634, 4to. Dublin, 1669.

"VIII. And every Beneficiary and Curate shall endeavour that the confession of sins and absolution, and all the second service, (at or before the communion to the homily or sermon,) when the people all, or most are Irish, shall be used in English first, and after in Irish, if the ordinary of the place shall so think meet." p. 9.

"LXXXVI. And the said clerk shall be &c. and where the minister is an Englishman, and many Irish in the parish, such a one as shall be able to read those parts of the Service, which shall be appointed to be read in Irish, (if it may be)." p. 53.

"XXCIV. And where all, or most part of the people are Irish, they shall provide also the said books (the Bible and two books of Common Prayer,) in the Irish tongue, as soon as they may be had." p. 57.

G.

Extract from the Books of the Privy Council Office, in the year 1665.

"Upon reading the Report of Doctor Winter, Doctor Harrison, Mr. Wooten, and Mr. Chambers, touching Mr. James Carey, and of his fitness and abilities to preach ye word, both in English and Irish, and upon consideration had thereof, and of the usefulness of gifts in order to ye conversion of the poore ignorant natives, it is thought fitt and

ordered, that ye said Mr. Carey doe preach to ye Irish at Bride's parish, once every Lord's day, and that he doe occasionally repair to Trim and Athye to preach as aforesaid, and that for his care and paines therein he be allowed ye sallary of sixty pounds p. annum, to be paid quarterly, &c. &c."

"Dated at Dublin Castle, ye 3d. of March, 1665.

"R. P; M. C; R. G; M. T."

H.

Extract from Resolutions agreed to by the Lower House of Convocation, "Sessio 166^o Die Mercurii 1^{mo} viz. Junii, Anno Dom. 1709."

"Resolved, that the Holy Bible and Liturgy of the Church (of England) be printed in the Irish Language in the English Character.

"Resolved, that some person may be appointed to prepare a short exposition of the Church Catechism, the same to be printed in Irish and English.

"Resolved, that some fit person be provided and encouraged to preach, catechize, and perform Divine Service in the Irish tongue, at such times and in such places as the Ordinary of each Diocese, with the consent of the Incumbent of the Parish where such offices shall be performed, shall direct.

"Resolved, that such Clergy of each Diocese as are qualified by their skill in the Irish Language for this work, and are willing to undertake it, may have the preference, not only in their own Parishes, but in any other parts of the Diocese." Richardson, p. 39—42.

I.

Extract from "the humble Memorial of several of the Nobility of Ireland, the Lord Bishop of Kilmore, and several of the Gentlemen and Clergymen of that kingdom."

"To his Grace James Duke of Ormond, Lord Lieutenant General and General Governor of Ireland."

"And whereas the natives, when trial hath been made, have expressed great satisfaction upon hearing Divine Service performed in their own tongue; and lastly, whereas there are no printed books of Religion (except a very few Bibles or Common-Prayer Books) extant in Irish; therefore that our pure and holy religion may be propagated among them by Evangelical and religious means, and that so many souls may not be abandoned to utter infidelity and barbarity on the one side, or left a prey to deceivers on the other; it is humbly proposed as followeth:

"That some numbers of the New Testament and Common Prayer Books, Catechisms and Expositions thereon, Whole Duty of Man, and select sermons upon the principal points of religion, be translated and printed in the Irish character and tongue, in order to which the only set of Irish characters now in Britain is bought already, and that those books be distributed in the Irish families that can read, but especially be given to such ministers as shall endeavour to convert them, and to give them a true and practical sense of religion. Richardson," p, 47—48.

J.

Extract from Resolutions agreed to by the Lower House of Convocation. "Sessio. 242. Die Jovis, viz. 25^{to} Die Mensis, 8^{bris} 1711.

"And whereas the carrying on of this good work requires

persons of more skill in the Irish language than the generality of the parochial Clergy are masters of; It is, therefore, resolved, that application be made for a fund, for the education of natives in the University of Dublin, and for the support and maintenance of a sufficient number of grave and duly qualified persons in Holy Orders, to be provided and appointed by the several Archbishops and Bishops of the kingdom, in their respective dioceses, with the approbation and consent of each respective Incumbent of the parish where they are to officiate, to assist the parochial Clergy, where a considerable number of the parishoners do not understand English, in all such things as shall be judged necessary to promote the conversion of the Popish natives, and in such manner, and under such rules and restrictions, as by a canon to be framed for that purpose shall be appointed.

“ And the better to enable the several Incumbents, as well as such their assistants, to perform every thing necessary to so pious an undertaking, that a sufficient number of Bibles and Common Prayer books be provided at the public charge in the Irish language, and a proportionable number of the same be left in the hands of the several Archbishops and Bishops, to be distributed, as need shall require, to the several Incumbents and their assistants.” Richardson, p. 58. 59.

K.

Letter from Dr. Samuel Johnson to Mr. William Drummond.

Johnson's Court, Fleet-st. 13th August 1766.

Sir,

I did not expect to hear that it could be, in an assembly convened for the propagation of Christian knowledge, a question, whether any nation uninstructed in religion should receive instruction; or whether that instruction should be imparted to them by a translation of

the holy books into their own language. If obedience to the will of God be necessary to happiness, and knowledge of his will be necessary to obedience, I know not how he that withholds this knowledge, or delays it, can be said to love his neighbour as himself. He that voluntarily continues ignorance, is guilty of all the crimes which ignorance produces; as to him that should extinguish the tapers of a light-house, might justly be imputed the calamities of shipwreck. Christianity is the highest perfection of humanity; and as no man is good but as he wishes the good of others, no man can be good in the highest degree, who wishes not to others the largest measures of the greatest good. To omit, for a year, or for a day, the most efficacious method of advancing Christianity, in compliance with any purposes that terminate on this side of the grave, is a crime of which I know not that the world has yet had an example, except in the practice of the planters in America, a race of mortals whom, I suppose, no other man wishes to resemble.

“ I am not very willing that any language should be totally extinguished. The similitude and derivation of languages afford the most indubitable proof of the traduction of nations, and the genealogy of mankind. They add often physical certainty to historical evidence; and often supply the only evidence of ancient migrations, and of the revolutions of ages, which left no written monuments behind them.

“ Every man’s opinions, at least his desires, are a little influenced by his favourite studies. My zeal for languages may seem, perhaps, rather over heated, even to those by whom I desire to be well esteemed. To those who have nothing in their thoughts but trade or policy, present power, or present money, I should not think it necessary to defend my opinions; but with men of letters I would not unwillingly compound, by wishing the continuance of every language, however narrow in its extent, or however incommodious for common purposes, till it is repositied in some version of a known book, that it may be always hereafter examined and compared with other languages, and then permitting its disuse. For this purpose, the translation of the Bible is most

to be desired. It is not certain that the same method will not preserve the Highland language, for the purposes of learning, and abolish it from daily use. When the Highlanders read the Bible, they will naturally wish to have its obscurities cleared, and to know the history, collateral or dependant. Knowledge always desires increase; it is like fire, which must be kindled by some external agent, but which will afterwards propagate itself. When they once desire to learn, they will naturally have recourse to the nearest language by which that desire can be gratified; and one will tell another, that if he would attain knowledge, he must learn English.

“ This speculation may, perhaps, be thought more subtle than the grossness of real life will easily admit. Let it, however, be remembered, that the efficacy of ignorance has long been tried, and has not produced the consequence expected. Let knowledge, therefore, take its turn, and let the patrons of privation stand a while aside, and admit the operation of positive principles.

“ You will be pleased, Sir, to assure the worthy man who is employed in the new translation, that he has my wishes for his success; and if here, or at Oxford, I can be of any use, that I shall think it more than honour to promote his undertaking.* I am sorry that I delayed so long to write. I am, Sir, your most humble servant,

“ SAM. JOHNSON.”

L.

A Letter to J. Chamberlayne, Esq. Author of “ The present state of England,” from the Rev. and very learned Dr. Jablonski, first Chaplain to the King of Prussia, concerning the instruction of the Die Wendens, a Nation in Brandenburgh, that speaks the Sclavonick Tongue. Faithfully translated from Latin into English.”

“ Honoured Sir, with your present of other pieces of

* Johnson's Works vo xv 162-165, 12mo, Edinburgh 1806.

learning, for which I heartily thank you, I received also the Reverend Mr. Richardson's proposals for the conversion of the Irish Papists, by printing books in their native language. I found great satisfaction in reading them, because I saw in them those things wisely put together, which are sometimes asunder, but never can be so without prejudice to the best design, viz. fit and lawful means adapted to a pious end; which, I am confident, cannot fail of the Divine Blessing, whensoever they shall be put in execution, according to the mind of that author.

“ However, worthy Sir, I thought it would not be unacceptable to you, or the Reverend Mr. Richardson, if I should write you a short account of some things here, which seem to be parallel to your Irish affairs. There are, to this very day, some considerable remains of the antient Uenedi, (called by us the Die Wendens,) who formerly inhabited the banks of the Vistula, but now live along the the Oder and Sprea; at present their country begins about three miles from Berlin, and from thence runs through both the Lusatia's into Misnia on the one hand, and Silesia on the other; part of them are subject to the Emperor, and the Elector of Saxony, and part to the Elector of Brandenburg. The number of this people cannot be easily computed: in that part of Lusatia which belongs to Brandenburg, there are 124 villages of them, divided into 24 parishes, besides many more of the same nation in that electorate, as far as it extends into Silesia, and in several other places; of whose numbers, as also of those subject to the Emperor, and Elector of Saxony, I have no certain knowledge. This people, being originally Sarmatians, speaketh Sclavonick tongue, and most tenaciously keep up the use of it to this very day, notwithstanding that they have so many ages lived in the midst of Germans. Some of them having passed the Elbe in the days of Charles the Great, settled themselves in the country of Lunenburgh, but their language, by reason of the small numbers of those that spoke it, as we may imagine, having lost ground by little and

little, was at last quite disused within the memory of our fathers, nay of some now alive. Some while since, several attempts were made to bring our Wendens likewise into a disuse of it ; and to that end, there was a German school set up at every church : to most of their congregations were sent German pastors, ignorant of the Slavonick Tongue ; and no books printed in that language, that so this illiterate people might be under a necessity of learning the German tongue.

“ But none of those methods had the desired success or the schools, which seemed likeliest to effect it, were found insufficient ; because the Wendens, being husbandmen, do not inhabit cities or towns, but villages only, which being far asunder, their Children could not without difficulty go to school, especially in winter, which was the only time they could be spared, by reason that their parents could not want their assistance in summer at their country labours ; whence it came to pass, that they wilfully forgot that in summer, which they had unwillingly learnt in winter ; which their parents, who were not willing to change their own language for the German, secretly rejoiced at. The German Pastors of these Churches had very bad success in their employment, for being barbarians to their hearers, the greatest part of them, and especially the women, were not at all edified. And it was found by experience, that even after the space of 30 years and upwards, in such mongrel congregations, neither the pastor or the flock understood each other. For which reason, by order of the Chief Magistrate, German Pastors were at last exchanged for Wenden. Lastly, the want of books of piety in their own language, tended naturally to foment their ignorance, but not to kindle in them any desire to those in the German tongue ; for that barbarous nation, not knowing the good of such books, perfectly despised them.

“ And now you may easily judge, what a miserable condition these unhappy people were in, who were altogether unacquainted with letters, had not one book, no spiritual food,

nor any other help for devotion but a very few prayers, and some hymns to be got by heart. Neither was any part of the Holy Scriptures printed for the use of so many numerous congregations ; but every minister, instead of a sermon, did read some portion of the Word of God to them, translating it himself as well as he could from the German, to the Wenden language, though often with little accuracy or judgment so to do.

“ At last King Frederick, of glorious memory, applied a remedy to these great evils, the Reverend Gottlieb Fabricius, a godly and very zealous minister of the Gospel among the Wendens, having by his great piety contributed much thereunto ; for after he had, with no small labour, learned the Wenden language, and translated a catechism into it, he soon betook himself to a greater work, and in the year 1709, published the whole New Testament in that language, and is now employed in publishing an elaborate version of the Book of Psalms, and several hymns. This man being called to the parish of Peitzens, which consists of six villages, whereof he hath now the charge, and finding no Wenden school there, though he met with some difficulty at first, from the opposition even of his own parishioners, yet he so managed the matter, that a school master was immediately placed, for the use and benefit of two of those villages. This man so faithfully discharged the trust committed to him, that in a short time it came to pass, that not only those two villages were much pleased with reading their own language, but the inhabitants of the rest desired, that school-masters might be placed among them too ; which they soon obtained, and three were sent to them, Fabricius himself having, with a great deal of pains, first taught them to read, and then how to instruct the children committed to their care. He soon saw the happy success of his pious labour in this matter, for not only some hundreds of children were now taught to read by the industry of these masters, but the parents themselves (who formerly thought their children might live as happily without letters, as they had done, and out of a kind of secret envy,

would not have their children more knowing than themselves) learned to read from their own children, and practised it in their daily devotion at home. Nay, in some places, which could not then be supplied with masters, while the servants were taking care of the horses, some one of them, who had happily learned to read, would often take that opportunity to instruct the rest in reading. So much could the piety of one man do, when supported with the authority of a most religious King, whose sense of this affair he himself excellently declares in his rescript to the government of Newmark, dated September 22d, 1708, as followeth: 'The church of Grapke and Dubro is concerned lest when their pastor is removed to another place, they should again receive one ignorant of the Wenden tongue, as you may see by their inclosed petition. But forasmuch as we do not call to mind, that the use of that language was prohibited by any royal edict or mandate, and we rather esteem it our glory to have people of a foreign language subject to our dominions; you shall therefore take good care, that the aforesaid Church be provided with a Pastor, whose want of the language may be no hindrance to him, by diligent catechising to instruct the flock committed to his care, in the Christian Religion, and to guide them to the fear and obedience of God and a Christian life, and to teach, comfort, and admonish them according to every one's particular state and condition.'—Thus far the King being desirous to have the glory of God preached in the different languages of several people. The piety also of your nation hath contributed somewhat towards this work; for your excellent Mr. Hales, when he was some years ago in that country, having got a little English treatise, called, 'The Necessity of Caring for the Soul,' translated into the Wenden tongue, and printed at Budissin, a City of Saxony, he distributed copies of it among them, to the great benefit and edification of that ignorant people. There are still remaining some congregations of Popish Wendens in that country, whom we hope to bring over to the Protestant Religion, by the means

of reading, and of having printed books in their own language (both which are conferred gratis upon them.) This however is certain, that the small progress some of the Venedi have made in reading, hath so much raised their appetite, that they do now, of their own accord, apply themselves to learn the German language, that so they may enjoy the benefit of books written in it; whereby it is come to pass, that what was believed would be a hindrance to the German tongue, doth, on the contrary, evidently tend to its encrease. But, worthy Sir, I detain you too long; farewel, and continue to love your most obedient servant, Dan. Ern. Jablonski. Berlin, May 5th, 1714."

Richardson's *Folly of Pilgrimages*, p. 139—156. 8vo. Dublin, 1727.

M.

Abstract taken from the third Volume of the printed Reports, entitled "Welsh Piety," &c.

Welsh Circulating Schools.

Year.	No. of Schools.	No. of Scholars.	Year.	No. of Schools.	No. of Scholars.
1737	37	2400	1750	130	6244
1738	71	3981	1751	129	5669
1739	71	3989	1752	130	5724
1740	150	8765	1753	134	5118
1741	128	7995	1754	149	6018
1742	89	5123	1755	163	7015
1743	75	4881	1756	172	7063
1744	74	4253	1757	220	9037
1745	120	5843	1758	218	9834
1746	116	5635	1759	206	8539
1747	110	5633	1760	215	8687
1748	136	6223	Tot. of 1st Col.		71,264
1749	142	6543			
		<hr/> 71,264	Total Number,		<hr/> 150,212