

# Memorial

ON BEHALF OF THE

## NATIVE IRISH,

WITH A VIEW TO THEIR IMPROVEMENT

IN MORAL AND RELIGIOUS KNOWLEDGE,

THROUGH THE MEDIUM OF

*their own Language.*

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“ Every man is more speedily instructed by his own language, than by any other.”

“ 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.”

JOHNSON.

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1815.

Houses of the Oireachtas



## INTRODUCTION.

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IT is well known, that there are still in use, by a very considerable population, several dialects of the Celtic, or, as it has been denominated by other authorities, the Iberian or Cynesian language. Within the United Kingdom four of these dialects are spoken, viz. the Irish, the Welsh, the Gaelic, and the Manks: the Cornish, which was a fifth, is now extinct. On the Continent, there is the Armorican, or Bas Bretagne, spoken by a part of the inhabitants of Brittany in France; the Basques, which was, and is probably still, spoken to a small extent in Spain; and the Waldensian, which was used by a tribe residing near the fountains of the Po, in Piedmont, but which, like the Cornish, has fallen into disuse.\* The first mentioned dialects, in which the inhabitants of this Country are more imme

\* For some further particulars, see Appendix.



diately interested, are spoken, according to the latest computation, by a population of above three millions, as follow :

<i>The Native Irish</i>	. . . . .	2,000,000
<i>The Welsh</i>	. . . . .	600,000
<i>The Gaelic</i>	. . . . .	400,000
<i>The Manks</i>	. . . . .	20 or 15,000
		<hr/>
		3,015,000

The Welsh, the Gaelic, and the Manks, are now successfully, and with great benefit, taught in Schools, and read by the people. Indeed, Scholars, from infancy to extreme old age, particularly in Wales and in the Highlands of Scotland, are at this moment learning to read with avidity and delight ; and though a very partial degree of the same spirit has broken forth among the Native Irish, the subject cannot with propriety be said to have gained the public attention. Into the reasons why the former dialects have within these few years been so zealously cultivated, while the last is still treated with comparative neglect, I shall not at present enquire ; but the fact is striking and notorious. If the reader has not been in possession of previous information, it must occasion surprise, and certainly his astonishment will not be diminished on perusing the following comparative statement.

Dialect.	Computed Population.	Number of copies of the Old and New Testament now in circulation.
GAELIC	400,000	about 50,000
WELSH	600,000	above 100,000
IRISH	2,000,000 or say only 1,500,000	} not above 3,000 copies

of the New Testament. As for the Old Testament, there



has not been any edition of the Irish Bible published for more than a hundred and twenty years ; so that the whole Scriptures in their vernacular tongue, are scarcely to be found, even in the cabinet of the Antiquarian.

With regard to suitable and efficient Schools for teaching the Irish tongue, I beg leave to refer to the subsequent pages ; as the design of the Memorial itself, is to implore the public favour on behalf of this interesting class of fellow subjects,—a people who will assuredly repay, with the warmest gratitude, the cultivation of their understandings, through the medium of a language, to which they cleave with an ardour approaching to enthusiasm ; and if this is the only language by which the Native Irish can ever be effectually raised in the scale of moral improvement, why should we decline taking advantage of this natural attachment, and turning it to the best account ?

The reader, it is hoped, will bear in mind, that they are his own Countrymen for whom we plead ; and that a particular class of British subjects, amounting to two millions, or say one million and a half, living in such circumstances in the nineteenth century, is a case of such peculiar interest to every one of us, that it certainly deserves our immediate attention, more especially as it includes the strongest claims on our personal influence or exertions, and our pecuniary aid.

The following Memorial is intended for the perusal of friends on both sides of the Irish Channel, to many of whom the subject is altogether novel, and there are others by whom it has not yet been maturely examined. Some of my readers will therefore receive this as an



apology, for parts which may appear to them too circumstantial. It was thought absolutely necessary, that deliberate consideration should be given to a subject, confessedly important, about which there has been and still exists a diversity of opinion.

CHRIST<sup>R</sup>. ANDERSON.

Edinburgh, 1st March 1815.



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# MEMORIAL

FOR THE

## NATIVE IRISH.

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### Section First.

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*Brief statement of what has been done towards the instruction of the Native Irish, through the medium of their own Language, chiefly by means of the press; including an Account of the translation of the Scriptures into Irish, their printing, and circulation.*

OUR Countrymen, to whom the Celtic or Iberian dialects are vernacular, have known but too little of 'the calm satisfaction which books afford,' and still less of the pleasure resulting from a variety of printed publications in their respective tongues. The noble art of printing, which has contributed so wonderfully to the cultivation and refinement of the English language, has been but sparingly applied to any of them, and particularly to the Native Irish. Indeed, with the exception of



parts or the whole of the Sacred Scriptures, scarcely any printed books of a moral or religious tendency have ever been circulated in that dialect; and in past ages a singular species of policy excluded the idea of teaching it systematically, like the other European languages. In tracing, therefore, what has already been done for the instruction of this interesting class of people, by means of their own ancient language, we are under the necessity of abiding almost solely by the attempts of those who have translated the Scriptures into Irish, and those who subsequently contributed towards their diffusion.

However, it is not improbable that, in our day, many will be disposed to regard the man who first produced a translation of the Scriptures into the language of his Country, as her greatest benefactor, and as deserving, on this account, a chief place in any detail with regard to her moral improvement. Without doubt, when viewed with relation only to the present world, the life and labours of such a man, constitute one of the most beneficial and important epochs, in the history of his nation; but history in general has not been constructed or written under the influence of this sentiment; and hence an authentic biographical work, embracing the lives of the original Translators of the Sacred Volume, into the languages in which it is now circulating, cannot be written. To the present generation it may appear as though some, who should have formed a proper estimate of their character, had laboured under the incapacity of discerning living worth: while others, who ought to have acted in a very different manner, not only poured upon these eminent men all the bitterness of their indignation, but actually embrued their hands in their blood. Not to mention the treatment of foreigners, it will ever be repeated to the disgrace of human nature, that one of our own illustrious Translators was strangled and burnt at the stake, and that even the sanctity of the grave was vio-



lated in regard to the bones of another. The first man who began the translation of the Scriptures into the Irish language, with a view to their being printed, fell, it will appear, by the hands of private revenge, though not on account of his labours as a translator; and his successors, though they were not persecuted, were at least opposed in their benevolent design. The lives of such persons, it may be said, could not have furnished many remarkable incidents, but we cannot tell: for although they did not all meet with similar treatment, to some of them at least the following lines are but too appropriate.

—They lived unknown,  
 'Till persecution dragg'd them into fame,  
 And chas'd them up to Heaven. Their ashes flew  
 —No marble tells us whither. With their names  
 No bard embalms and sanctifies his song;  
 And history, so warm on meaner themes,  
 Is cold on this.

The little which has been handed down to us, respecting various Translators, is now esteemed precious, and has been often related; but the materials are few, and in vain do we search for more authentic and minute information. This will perhaps account for most of the imperfections of the following statement, the particulars of which, however, have never before appeared in a regular series.

As early as the fourteenth century, there existed at least a part of the Sacred volume, the New Testament, in the Irish Language. The Wickliffe of Ireland appears to have been Richard Fitzralph or Fitzrauf; “a man,” says Fox, “worthy, for his Christian zeal, of immortal commendation.” He was first Archdeacon of Litchfield, then made Chancellor of Oxford, and finally, in the year 1347, promoted to be Archbishop of Armagh. About eleven years after this, a translation of the New Testament in Irish, said to have been made by himself, was in his possession. According to the information of



Balæus, quoted by Archbishop Usher, this copy was concealed by him in a certain wall of his church, with the following note: "When this book is found, truth will be revealed to the world; or Christ shortly appear." Fitzrauf died in 1360; and one hundred and seventy years afterwards, about 1530, when the church at Armagh was repairing, his book was found; but no vestige of this translation is supposed to remain.<sup>1</sup>

About the time when this discovery was made, that is, before the middle of the sixteenth century, the English language was spoken in Ireland but to a very limited extent; and in those days, also, a number of the old inhabitants, who had acquired the English, on intermarrying with the native Irish, returned to the Irish customs and *language*.

It was with express relation to this state of things, that, under the reign of Henry the Eighth, in the year 1537, an act of Parliament was passed, entitled, "An Act for the English Order, Habit, and *Language*;" by which it was appointed that Parochial English Schools should be established in the country. Every person was enjoined to "use and speake commonly the English tongue and language,"—"to cause and procure his childe and children" to do so; and it further enacted, that "spiritual promotions should only be given to such persons as could speake English, unless, after four proclamations, made in the next market town, such could not be had." To prevent also, if possible, the practice already referred to as a consequence of intermarriage, to use the English tongue, "without ceasing or returning at any time" to the Irish language, is mentioned as necessary to all who will acknowledge themselves true and faithful subjects."

<sup>1</sup> See Balæus Script. Brit. Cent. 14. p. 246, or Usher's *Historia Dogmatica*, &c. p. 156. Fox's *Acts and Monuments*, vol. i. p. 473.



Thus it appears that the Parochial Schools of Ireland "were at their first establishment, intended to be compulsory, as well on the people as the clergy, for the purpose of introducing the knowledge and practice of the English Language, then unknown to the Native Irish."<sup>2</sup> It may here, however, be observed, that neither in this nor in any subsequent Act, is there one word *prohibiting* the printing of books in the vernacular Irish, or preaching in that language.

Notwithstanding these enactments, in the subsequent reign, "even within the English pale,<sup>3</sup> the Irish Language was predominant, and in those tracts of Irish territory which intersected the English Settlements, no other language was at all known: so that here the wretched flock was totally inaccessible to those who had become their nominal pastors. In the mean time, the Romish Clergy found a ready admission into those districts," where those who understood English only "could neither be regarded nor understood." The former "spoke to their own countrymen and kinsmen in their own language, and were heard with attention, favour, and affection."<sup>4</sup>

Yet still the same policy was pursued. No provision was made for the instruction of the Native Irish, except in the English tongue. Accordingly, in the fifth year of King Edward the Sixth, 1551, several attempts were made to enlighten the inhabitants of Ireland, by printing and circulating the Book of Common Prayer, in English; and the liturgy in that language was read by several of the Clergy. Under the fol-

<sup>2</sup> Reports from the Commissioners of the Board of Education in Ireland, 1809—1812, p. 269 and 272.

<sup>3</sup> "The limit which divided the possessions of the English Settler from those of the Native Irish, was called the pale, and the expressions of inhabitants *within the pale* and *without the pale*, were the terms by which the two Nations were distinguished."—Edin. Rev. July 1807.

<sup>4</sup> Leland's History of Ireland, vol. ii. p. 194.



lowing reign, however, even these measures were abandoned, and it was not until Elizabeth ascended the throne that they were again pursued. English Bibles were then sent over at her expence, and an opportunity was afforded for the people to hear them read, at least in the Cathedrals of Christ Church and St Patrick in Dublin. This alteration, it is said, “disgusted the *Natives* especially, who were not at all regarded in it,” the public worship being no more intelligible to them than it was before. Yet rather than use the vernacular tongue in the church, when Englishmen could not be found, or when the Irish Clergyman could not read English, which many, if not the majority, could not, then the prayers were to be read in *Latin* by the Irish Clergyman !<sup>5</sup>

At length Queen Elizabeth, or some of her best advisers, seem either to have despaired of success in this way, or to have discerned the vanity of such methods. For about the year 1571, the Queen provided, at her own expence, a printing press, with a fount of *Irish* types, “in hope that God in mercy would raise up some to translate the New Testament into their mother tongue.”<sup>6</sup> These Irish types were immediately sent over to Mr Nicolas Walsh, Chancellor, and Mr John Kearney, Treasurer of St Patrick’s, Dublin. It was then 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 Sermons preached to the people *in their own language*. The obvious, the scriptural and apostolic method being adopted, several Bishops, and other Clergymen, “were very diligent and exemplary in those days in the performance of this their duty. They considered, that it was not only a

<sup>5</sup> Irish Statutes ; 2d of Elizabeth, chap. 2. anno 1560.

<sup>6</sup> Dedication of the Irish translation of it afterwards to James the First, by William Daniel, Archbishop of Tuam.



duty chiefly incumbent on themselves, but that their good example would animate and encourage others, and therefore they set their hands to the work ; and it pleased God to bless their labours with success, for they were the happy instruments, under God, of turning many to righteousness.”<sup>7</sup>

Mr Kearney, to whose charge the Irish types were committed, began by composing a Catechism in Irish, which was the first book printed in Ireland in that character.<sup>8</sup> About the same period, Chancellor Walsh, afterwards Bishop of Ossory, began the translation of the New Testament, but he was not permitted to finish it, having been inhumanly put to death in his own house, by a person of the name of Dullard. Mr Kearney, and N. Donellan, Archbishop of Tuam, then undertook the work ; but “ their godly endeavours were untimely cut off in God’s secret judgment,”<sup>9</sup> and at their death the translation was still incomplete. It was, however, afterwards finished, and published in the year 1602 by William Daniel, Archbishop of Tuam ; the Province of Connaught, and Sir William Usher, Clerk of the Council, defraying the expence of this first edition.

The Book of Common Prayer was also translated into Irish, and printed by J. Frankton at the expence of this Archbishop, A. D. 1608—9; and by these means, many of the Natives

<sup>7</sup> Annals of Ireland, by Sir JAMES WARE, anno 1571. See particularly a most interesting “ History of the Attempts that have been made to convert the Natives of Ireland, &c. by JOHN RICHARDSON, Rector of Belturbet, in the Diocese of Kilmore in Ireland ; and Chaplain to his Grace the Duke of Ormond, and the Lord Bishop of Clogher. London, 1712.” *Passim*.

<sup>8</sup> Richardson’s History, p. 14. Ware’s Annals, 1571. This is allowed to be the first book printed in Irish in *Ireland*. 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 printed as early as 1566 ; but it is uncertain whether it was in the Irish character, and where it was printed. Ames, vol. iii. p. 1524. See also Note <sup>30</sup>.

<sup>9</sup> Dedication of the Irish Testament to James the First.



were greatly benefited: from which, says Mr Richardson, "we may observe, that the humane and Christian methods of conversion generally prosper, when the contrary turn to nothing."

Such were some of the means adopted for the spiritual benefit of the Native Irish, during the reigns of Henry the Eighth, Edward the Sixth, Queen Elizabeth, and in the beginning of the reign of James the First. Unfortunately, about this period, the promotion of divine knowledge, through the medium of the Native language, was in a great degree either overlooked, or postponed, or obstructed. James the First was not indifferent to the subject; the unsettled state of the Kingdom, and the want of a Protestant Seminary in Ireland, have been mentioned as accounting for the change. As a proof of the King's disposition, after a Report had been given to him, about the state of Ireland, by certain Commissioners of his own appointment, we find amongst others the following order: "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."<sup>10</sup>

The New Testament in Irish, was the only part of the Scriptures yet published, with the exception of those passages which were inserted in the book of Common Prayer. For the translation of the *Old* Testament, we are indebted to the Christian zeal of the excellent and venerable Bishop Bedell. It was in 1627, four years after the order of King James, above mentioned, that he was appointed Provost of Trinity

<sup>10</sup> See Manuscript in the Library of the Honourable Mr Bridges, quoted by Richardson, dated 3d February 1623, signed H. FALKLAND, and entitled, "Orders and Directions concerning the State of the Church of Ireland, and the Possessions thereof, Free Schools," &c.



College, Dublin, and in 1629 he was advanced to the Bishopric of Kilmore and Ardagh. Though an Englishman by birth, who had never resided in Ireland, but had spent a considerable part of his time on the Continent, he, at the age of *fifty-seven*, acquired the Irish, and soon became such a proficient, that he composed a Grammar in that language. By the advice of the Primate, Usher, "he pitched on one Mr King, then about seventy years of age, put him in orders, gave him a benefice, and set him to work, in order to translating the Old Testament into Irish, which he was to do from the English translation, since there were none of the Natives to be found that knew the original."<sup>11</sup> A Mr Dennis Sheridan seems to have been joined with Mr King in these labours. "After dinner or supper, Bedell read over a chapter, and as he compared the Irish translation with the English, so he compared the English translation with the Hebrew, and the Seventy, and with Diodati's Italian translation, which he valued highly, and he corrected the Irish when he found the English had failed."<sup>11</sup> For these comparisons of the text, Bedell was peculiarly qualified. His knowledge of the Italian was complete, as he had lived some years at Venice, and was the intimate friend of Paul Sarpi. There also he studied the Hebrew Language under Rabbi Leo, from whom he acquired the Jewish pronunciation. "He thought," says his Biographer, "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. And he used to tell a passage of a Sermon that he heard at Venice, with which he was much pleased. It was on these words of Christ, *Have ye not read in the Scriptures?* and so the Preacher took occasion to tell the Auditory that if Christ were now to ask

<sup>11</sup> Clogy's Life of Bedell, edited by Bishop Burnet. Mr Clogy was son-in-law to Bishop Bedell.



this question, Have ye not read, &c. all the answer which they could make to it was—*No, for they were not suffered to do it.*—

In 1634, a Convocation, which met at Dublin, aware of the importance and necessity of communicating with the Natives on the subject of Christianity, through the medium of their vernacular tongue, made several Canons, among which were the following. “Where most of the people are *Irish*, the Church-wardens shall provide, at the charge of the Parish, a Bible and two Common Prayer Books, in the *Irish Tongue*.” And, again, “Where the Minister is an Englishman, such a Clerk may be chosen as shall be able to read those parts of the Service which shall be appointed to be read in *Irish*.” No one exerted himself with so much zeal as Bedell, in following up these Canons, and, indeed, it was principally through his influence, at the Convocation, that they were enacted; yet he met with much opposition, even from persons of his own communion. “It is,” says Mr Richardson, “very melancholy to reflect upon the obstructions and difficulties that good designs commonly meet with in the world. Wicked men will oppose them, because they are good; and even good men will sometimes discourage them, because they take a wrong view of them, or because the manner of proposing them, or the means by which they are to be accomplished, are not altogether agreeable and well-pleasing to them.”

Bedell, however, proceeded in his work. Already he had published several small tracts, particularly a Catechism, having English and Irish in parallel columns, which was well received by the Natives. In 1640, he completed his superintendence of the translation of the books of the Old Testament; but in the following year, to the grief of many, this valuable man died, at the age of seventy-one. He was lamented by all, and by none more than by the native Irish. The ma-



manuscript of the Old Testament he left with Mr Sheridan, one of the translators, by whom it was afterwards communicated to Dr Henry Jones, Bishop of Meath. The year after the death of Bedell, a full period was put to all exertions of this nature, by the great rebellion of 1641; nor does it appear that any thing worth notice was effected, till about forty years afterwards.

It is a circumstance not unworthy of particular remark, that, upon the termination of these efforts, the *Irish* types, which had been used for the printing of the New Testament and other books, were procured by the Jesuits, and by them carried over to Douay, for the express purpose of promoting their own views in Ireland, through the medium of the Irish language.<sup>12</sup>

A new set of Irish types being therefore required, before any thing further could be accomplished, the generous spirit of the Hon. Robert Boyle was most providentially directed to this object. About the year 1680, he ordered a fount of Irish types to be cast, and having procured the former edition of the New Testament, he sent it to the Provost of Trinity College, that, with the assistance of learned Natives, he might make such corrections as were thought requisite. The Provost himself, (Dr Narcissus Marsh, who was afterwards Lord Primate of Ireland,) assisted in the revision of the work, and it was put to press in London. Mr Robert Kirk, minister of Aberfoyle in Monteith, in the Highlands of Scotland, was called up to superintend the printing there; and the New Testament, thus carefully corrected, was published, with a large Preface, in 1681.

The Manuscript copy of the *Old* Testament, completed under the care of the venerable Bishop Bedell, was now in-  
in-  
in-

<sup>12</sup> Appendix to the Life of the Hon. Robert Boyle, by Birch, prefixed to his Works, vol. i. p. 109.



red after. Mr Sheridan, one of the translators, it has been remarked, had given it to the Bishop of Meath, by whom its value seems to have been duly appreciated. In a letter to Mr Boyle, dated the 4th August 1680, he says: "This completing of the Bible in Irish, added to what is already printed, would be a work greatly to God's glory, in bringing, by his grace, many from darkness to light, and of deserved praise to the happy undertaker." Some persons, however, were of a different opinion from the Bishop; for, in writing upon the subject further, he says, "I found it almost a principle in their politics to suppress that language utterly, rather than in so public a way to countenance it." In the face of this opposition, or diversity of sentiment, the manuscript of the Old Testament was committed by the Bishop, with the concurrence of Mr Boyle, to Dr Andrew Sall, who, though he did not live to complete the revision, entered warmly into the design. Dr Sall also alludes to opposition, even from professed Protestants, to the design of promoting Christianity among the Native Irish through means of their own language: "Our good Archbishop," says he, "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 tiding no more." In a letter from this Gentleman to Mr Boyle, dated 7th February 1681, he says, "My labour and industry I will not spare, and will lay aside other studies I was engaged in, to attend to this work, being 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 the country, Romanists, came to me



this term, earnestly desiring to have them (Irish New Testaments) for reading to their families;—for this purpose I wish, that a great number of the next edition may be exposed to sale at a low rate.”

It had been customary for some of the Students attending Trinity College, Dublin, to pay some attention to their native tongue; but the laudable endeavours of Mr Boyle seemed to have greatly increased the zeal for its cultivation, and for preaching in it, the gospel of our Lord and Saviour. At this period there were in Trinity College not less than about eighty Students, besides several of the Fellows, and even the Provost himself, learning the Irish; and an Irish Sermon was preached once a month in the College Chapel. Lord Viscount Dillon, and others, including persons of the Romish persuasion, had been present; and the Lord-lieutenant proposed to countenance this exercise by his attendance.<sup>13</sup>

In the year 1685, the Old Testament was published through Mr Boyle's vigilance and bounty. Many copies of it were immediately transmitted to Ireland, and above 200 of them were sent down from London to the Highlands of Scotland; some of which, I have had occasion to know, remain in the Highland parishes to the present day.

For some years after this, there must have been a considerable demand for the Irish Scriptures, as, in the year 1690, two editions were printed in London; one of which was in the *Roman*, and the other in the *Irish* character.

On the third of March 1703, the Lower House of Convocation gave their opinion in favour of the Irish; and in 1709, in consequence of an earnest recommendation from the Lords, we find, among other resolutions of the Lower House, the following: “That the Holy Bible, &c. be printed in the

<sup>13</sup> Appendix to Boyle's Life, vol. i. p. 109—119.



*Irish* language in the English character." The prospect now seemed to brighten a little. In the beginning of the following year, owing to particular circumstances, which need not be specified here, considerable zeal appeared among some clergymen, who were able to read and preach to the people in the Irish Language. "It was a joyful surprise," says Mr Richardson, "to the poor people, and like giving sight to the blind. Some of them were observed to be much affected, and highly pleased when the word of God, 'which rejoiceth the heart, and enlighteneth the eyes,' was *read* to them: and it was very remarkable, that two men, of thirty years 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."

Had measures like these only been kindly and steadily pursued, in what an improved condition would our Irish brethren of the south and west have been, at the present hour!

To proceed: One of the clergymen just referred to, bought a fount of Irish types in London, in order to print another edition of the Scriptures, and other books. A proposal for printing the whole Bible was drawn up, and having been submitted to several Noblemen and Gentlemen, was warmly approved: but, alas! this affair soon began to take a different direction. At the recommendation of the Hon. Francis Annesley of Lincoln's Innfields, who conceived that all this should be done at the public charge, the matter was, in the shape of a Memorial, laid before the Lord-lieutenant, James, Duke of Ormond. In this Memorial it is proposed, "That some numbers of New Testaments, &c. be 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



give them a true and proper sense of religion." The Duke gave this Memorial a very kind reception ; but, in the Petition laid before Queen Anne, no explicit reference is to be found with respect to the *Irish* Language : its chief design being the establishment of an incorporated Society, for propagating the reformed Religion. Upon the sentiments of the Memorial, considerable difference of opinion immediately began to prevail, which occasioned great delay, and completely prevented any thing being done. At last a Committee of the Irish House of Commons again took the case of the Native Irish into their serious consideration, and, amongst a number of Resolutions then passed, we find the following sentiment, which, with regard to the language, is decisive of their opinion: " 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."

By the order of the House of Commons, a bill was prepared to meet the sense of the Resolutions now alluded to ; but when it was brought to the door of the House, the Parliament was just adjourned, so that no more could be done by the Members at that time !<sup>14</sup> Nor would this unfortunate circumstance have been the subject of so much regret to the benevolent and humane of the present day, had the subject again been taken up ; but, for *a whole century* subsequent to this period, we look in vain for any farther exertions in printing or circulating the Word of God, in the only language which this interesting people understand,—so understand, as to receive moral and religious instruction in it.

The Resolutions of the Irish Members, to which we have alluded, were framed in the year 1710 ; and, in 1711, or the

<sup>14</sup> Richardson's History, p. 57.



year after, the idea of abolishing the *Irish*, by teaching the *English* language, again became a favourite project, as it had been in the days of Henry the Eighth. No coercive measures, indeed, had been or were then adopted, to banish the Irish tongue, nor were fines imposed for speaking or reading it; but those who could not appreciate the value of the English language, or did not choose to learn it, were taught no other; a language which, though they should learn to read it, was to them unintelligible. No Irish Bibles were printed,—no Irish Schools opened,—nor to the present day has there been any *enlarged* and liberal plan—any wise and well regulated method for *directly* teaching the Irish language.

Exactly one hundred years after this, in the year 1810, the Committee of the British and Foreign Bible Society, regarding with the same wisdom and benignity every class of men, took into consideration the state of the Native Irish; and, in mentioning their determination to print a version of the New Testament in the Irish language, they thus express themselves:—"This Resolution 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 the work, are not new, 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."<sup>15</sup>

Again, therefore, the subject is before the public mind; but several generations of our Countrymen have gone down to the

<sup>15</sup> Reports, vol. i. p. 293.



grave without having once seen the Scriptures, and without having been taught even to read their own language. If the neglect of the education of youth, operates like the "loss of the spring in nature," how frequently has that loss been incurred! Nor is it only the absence of good, but the presence of evil, which in this instance we have to regret; for as the soil when neglected, will not merely disappoint but annoy, and produce all that is noxious, so the reader is left to advert to this vital part of our empire, for the proof of a melancholy similarity of effect, in the moral world. The history of the time which has been suffered to elapse, without regard to the *only* language in which this body of peasantry can receive education, has amply verified the saying of one of our most illustrious poets:

'Tis dangerous sporting with the world,  
With things so sacred as a nation's trust,  
The nurture of her youth, her dearest pledge.

COWPER.

We have been giving the Sacred Oracles to foreign Countries in their respective languages, and have been teaching their inhabitants to read the translations when printed; yet, for the long period of a century, has this object been utterly abandoned, at least as far as the *vernacular* speech of this part of the realm is concerned. After more than twenty years have elapsed, since an unparalleled degree of public spirit has been displayed in Britain, how much is it to be deplored, that in a populous district within the United Kingdom, the *same policy* has not been heartily and generally adopted, which the community at large has been applying (most laudably) towards the distant tribes of Heathen nations!

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## Section Second.

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*Of the present extent of the Irish Language ; and of  
the Counties or Districts in which it is spoken.*

THE precise extent to which the Irish is spoken at present, it may be almost impossible to ascertain, nor is such precision necessary to our purpose : but there can now be no doubt, that, in this instance, just as it was for some time in the case of the Welsh and Gaelic populations, many of our countrymen have overlooked the subject, while others have misapprehended it, or been misled.

In the year 1806, some pertinent observations were printed and circulated in Dublin, on the “necessity of publishing the Scriptures in the Irish language.” In this small tract,<sup>16</sup> we find the following passage. “In order to shew the importance of the subject, I shall state such information as I have received of the prevailing language in most counties of Ireland. I acknowledge my information has not been precise or methodically obtained, but I suppose it was fairly given, and is sufficiently accurate for my present purpose. To begin then with the Province of LEINSTER : In Louth, Meath, and Westmeath, Irish is mostly spoken ; in Dublin, Kildare, and Wick-

<sup>16</sup> By Dr Whitley Stokes, of Trinity College, Dublin.



low, scarcely any: in the King's and Queen's county, very few speak Irish. In the south-west part of Carlow, a considerable proportion speak Irish; in Kilkenny, the language prevails greatly: in Wexford, it is very little used in the south-east part of the county; but it is pretty general in the north-west. In all the counties of the province of MUNSTER, the Irish language prevails beyond comparison, if we except the large towns, their immediate neighbourhood, and some of the country along the coast.<sup>17</sup> The Native Language is more prevalent in CONNAUGHT than in the rest of Ireland: in this province the Gentlemen often find it convenient to acquire the language, in order to deal with the Peasantry without an interpreter. In ULSTER, there is a greater proportion of Irish speakers than is generally supposed. Cavan and Monaghan contain many; Tyrone, about half its inhabitants; Donegal, more than half; Armagh and Down, a few; Antrim, a few, along the eastern coast; Derry, a few, in the mountains to the south-west; Fermanagh, scarce any. By comparing this list with the population of each county, it is evident, that those who speak *Irish* are too numerous to be neglected in any plan for the instruction of the inhabitants of Ireland."

"The true cause," continues the Doctor, "which has kept up the proportion of Irish speakers, appears to me to have been overlooked. Those who used this language have long been the inhabitants of the inland, remote, mountainous and infertile districts."—"Those who spoke English were more settled in towns, and fertile plains; from the *latter* they have been occasionally displaced by the increase of wealth and

<sup>17</sup> And *one* only of the Counties of this province, viz. Cork, contains more than a third of the population of Scotland. "The population of the County and City of Cork," says Mr Newenham, in a Letter dated 9th July 1811, "is 675,364. This, at least, is the common result of two very different methods of computation, grounded on different public documents, and supported by facts."—C. A.



luxury, and by the grazing system of farming. Meanwhile, many of those who came into towns, or their neighbourhoods, were laying aside their native language, while no instance could be found of persons laying aside the English tongue; hence it was natural to conclude, that the Irish language was rapidly declining, *the great natural increase* of those who used it *being altogether overlooked.*"

In a Statistical Account of Ireland, published in 1812, the Author of which had travelled for two years through a considerable, if not by far the greater, part of Ireland, we find the following notices upon the subject before us. It may be remarked previously, that this Gentleman appears to have had no idea of encouraging the language of the Native Irish, although, in various parts of his work, he thus incidentally speaks of its prevalence: "On the coast of Donegal, I met with a peasantry who appeared to be Native Irish, and who were very different from the people in the inland parts. Most of them speak the original language; many do not know a word of English, which they call Scotch."—"Having described the Northern Irish as consisting of two classes, to give a just delineation of their character, it will be necessary to advert to other distinctions. Of these may be mentioned those connected with origin and extraction. Considered in this point of view, they may be divided into four classes. I. The old Native Irish, who, as already mentioned, speak their primitive language. II. The Scotch Hibernians, whose ancestors settled in Ulster, in the time of James the First. III. A mixed race between the Old Irish and Scotch Highlander. And, IV. A class sprung from Irish progenitors."—On "the Leitrim mountains, which I crossed in the month of August 1809," and which "appear to be tolerably well peopled, Irish is the common language."—"In the province of Connaught, the Gentry understand Irish, which facilitates their



intercourse with the peasantry ; they are, consequently enabled to become acquainted with their wants, to assist them with advice, and restrain them by admonition.”—“ In the Southern part of Ireland, the language is every where nearly the same ; even in the city of Cork, and, in Youghall, the common people speak Irish.”—“ In Tipperary and Limerick the Irish language is very common.”—“ In Meath and Louth, the language universally spoken is the Irish.”<sup>18</sup>

The last authority which I shall mention, is one to whom particular attention should be paid, the Rev. Daniel Dewar, who, from his knowledge of the *Gaelic*, was able to converse familiarly with the Native Irish, to read the Scriptures, and preach to them so as to be understood. “ The number of people,” says Mr Dewar, “ who speak this language, is much greater than is generally supposed. It is spoken throughout the province of Connaught by all the lower orders, a great part of whom scarcely understand any English ; and some of those who do, understand it only so as to conduct business : they are incapable of receiving moral or religious instruction through its medium. The Irish is spoken very generally throughout the other three provinces, except among the descendants of the Scotch in the North. It cannot be supposed that calculations on this subject should be perfectly accurate, but it has been concluded, on good grounds, that there are about two millions of people in Ireland, who are incapable of understanding a continued discourse in English.”—“ But supposing this calculation to be overrated by half a million, there remains a million and a half, a number that is five times greater than all the inhabitants of the Highlands.”<sup>19</sup>

<sup>18</sup> Wakefield's Statistical Account, vol. ii.—*N. B.* The only difference to be found between these two authorities is immaterial. It is in relation to Queen's County and Kildare, in both of which they agree that the Irish is spoken, but differ merely as to its extent.

<sup>19</sup> Observations on the Character, Customs, and Superstitions of the Irish, by



We have thus the advantage of three distinct authorities—that of an Irish, of an English, and of a Scotch Gentleman. The first of these had the best opportunities of becoming acquainted with the subject, by means of information from the most intelligent Irishmen residing in the Country, or attending at Trinity College, Dublin; the second actually travelled through the Country itself, and had frequent practical proofs of the existence of the language, from his inability to understand it; and the third attests its prevalence, after having conversed freely and generally with the people themselves. I have only to add, that, in travelling through the West and South of Ireland, last Summer, I did not meet with a single circumstance to weaken the force of the united testimonies here produced; but, on the contrary, such evidence as left no doubt of the accuracy of the general statement.

Nothing has yet been said of the *Islands* belonging to Ireland, in many of which, particularly on the West and South coast, the Irish language is generally, if not almost exclusively spoken. That the reader may form a more accurate conception of the number of these Islands, it may be necessary to state a few facts. The extreme length of Ireland is 306 miles, its extreme breadth 207, and speaking loosely, the circumference is about 888 miles. “The sinuous line of its sea coast, however, exclusive of such parts as lie within estuaries, or above the first good anchorage in every harbour, but inclusive of the river Shannon, as far as the tide reaches, and the shores of Bantry Bay, Dunmanus Bay, and Kenmare River, will, if accurately followed through all its windings, be found to measure 1737 miles. In this line there are not fewer than one hun-

Daniel Dewar, London, 1812, p. 88. Mr D. must refer here to the population of the Highlands *only*: that of the Highlands and Islands of Scotland is estimated at 400,000, viz. 300,000 in the Highlands or Mainland, and 100,000 in about 68 inhabited Islands.



dred and thirty harbours, and places where ships may anchor for a tide, or find shelter.”<sup>20</sup> Around a Country of this description, it might be previously conjectured, that the number of Islands will be very considerable. Within these few years, many persons seemed surprised to hear, that, on the West Coast of Scotland, there were so many as sixty-eight Islands, inhabited by a population of one hundred thousand souls ; but the Irish inhabited Islands are much more numerous, and their inhabitants, to say the least, are deplorably destitute of the means of education. “ *Exclusive* of those which lie within the Great Bays, there are nearly *one hundred* inhabited Islands,”<sup>21</sup> most of which are said to be fertile ; some of them, as the Isles of Arran, off the coast of Galway, the Island of Valentia, and the Magharea Islands, off the coast of Kerry, surprisingly so.

The number of inhabitants throughout these Islands is unknown, but it must be very considerable. The population of only one of them is said to be greater than that of the largest of the Hebrides. What a field is this for the exertions of Christian benevolence !

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<sup>20</sup> Newenham's View of Ireland, 4to, London, 1809, p. 6.      <sup>21</sup> Idem. p. 11.



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### Section Third.

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*Answers to the most prevalent and plausible  
Objections.*

TO advocate the cause of the education of the poor, is here certainly almost altogether unnecessary, as the great majority of those by whom these pages will be read, now most cordially approve of "Schools for all." It is presumed also, that the number of those who oppose the progress of knowledge by the shew of argument, has become trifling, although there still remain a few who seem to think, that considerable caution should be used in promoting its universal diffusion among the lower ranks of society. "Some," says an eminent living writer, "have objected to the instruction of the lower classes, from an apprehension that it would lift them above their sphere, make them dissatisfied with their station in life, and, by impairing the habit of subordination, endanger the tranquillity of the state; an objection devoid surely of all force and validity. It is not easy to conceive in what manner instructing men in their duties can prompt them to neglect those duties, or how that enlargement of reason, which enables them to comprehend the true grounds of authority, and the obligation to obedience, should indispose them to obey. The admirable mechanism of society, together with that subordination of



ranks which is essential to its subsistence, is surely not an elaborate imposture, which the exercise of reason will detect and expose. The objection we have stated, implies a reflection on the social order, equally impolitic, invidious, and unjust. Nothing in reality renders legitimate government so insecure as extreme ignorance in the people. It is this which yields them an easy prey to seduction, makes them the victims of prejudice and false alarms, and so ferocious withal, that their interference in a time of public commotion, is more to be dreaded than the eruption of a volcano.”<sup>22</sup>

It is to education, however, through the medium of the *Irish* tongue, that objections are made ; and to these our attention must be confined.

1. “ *Such measures would give too much encouragement to the language itself, and the sooner it is destroyed the better.*”

This is an old objection, but as it is still brought forward, both on this and the other side of the Channel, it becomes necessary to give it full consideration. To endeavour to abolish a language, by suffering it to fall into disuse, and not teaching the people to read it, or by enforcing the reading of another, as the only channel of conveying instruction to the poor, and as the only road to preferment, is an attempt, the merits of which should be tried by the *result*. It is an experiment which has been often made, but which, in every instance, has uniformly failed.

“ How hard a matter it is,” says Brerewood, “ utterly to abolish a vulgar language in a populous country, may well appear by the vain attempt of our Norman conqueror, who, although he compelled the English to teach their young chil-

English.

<sup>22</sup> “ *The Advantages of Knowledge to the lower Classes,*” by Robert Hall, A. M. third edit. p. 7.



dren in the schools nothing but *French*, and set down all the laws of the land in *French*, and enforced all pleadings at the law to be performed in that language, (which custom continued till king Edward the Third his days, who disannulled it), purposing thereby to have conquered the language together with the land, and to have made all *French*; yet all was labour lost, and obtained no further effect than the mingling of a few French words with the English. And even such also was the success of the Franks among the Gauls, and of the Goths among the Italians and Spaniards.”<sup>23</sup>

The following instances, which determine the question at issue, the reader, it is presumed, will find to be interesting, and the more so, when the coincidence of date is observed. In Germany, in Wales, in the Highlands of Scotland, in the Isle of Man, and in Ireland, there seems to have been (unconsciously) an unity of design, which, in each of the cases, proved abortive.

Wenden.

For about thirty years, viz. from 1678 to 1708, an attempt was made to destroy the Wenden language, which is a dialect of the Slavonian, spoken by a tribe of people called Die Wendens, living in the circles of Upper and Lower Lusatia, Silesia, &c. In a Latin letter to J. Chamberlayne, Esq. from the Rev. Dr Jablonski, first chaplain to the King of Prussia, dated Berlin, 5th May, 1714, there is the following distinct account of this business. “Worthy Sir—I thought it would not be unacceptable to you, or the Rev. 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 ancient Venedi (called by us the Die Wendens), who formerly inhabited the banks of the Vistula, but now live along the Oder and the Sprea; their

<sup>23</sup> Inquiries touching the diversity of Languages, through the chief Parts of the World, by Ed. Brerewood; London, 1674, p. 27.



country runs through both the Lusatias, 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.”—“ This people being originally Sarmatians, speak the Slavonian tongue, and most tenaciously keep up the use of it, to this 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 in the country of Lunenburg; 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 Slavonian tongue; and no books were printed in that language, that so this illiterate people might be under a necessity of learning the *German* tongue.

“ But none of these methods had the desired success; for the Schools which seemed most likely to effect it, were found to be insufficient, because the Wendens, being husbandmen, do not inhabit cities or towns, but villages only, which, being often far asunder, their children could not, without difficulty, go to School, especially in winter, which was the only time they could be spared, as their parents could not dispense with their assistance in summer, at their country labours: thus, they wilfully forgot that in summer, which they had unwillingly learned 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 espe-



cially the women, were not at all edified : and it was found by experience, that, after the space of *thirty* years and upwards, neither the pastor nor the flock understood each other. Finally, 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 they, 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 helps for devotion, but a very few prayers, and some Hymns to be got by heart. Neither was any part of the Sacred Scriptures printed for the use of so many numerous congregations ; but every Minister, instead of a Sermon, read to them some portion of the Word of God, translating it himself as well as he could from the German into the Wenden language, too often with little accuracy or judgment.

“ At last the king (Frederic,) applied a remedy to these great evils ; the Rev. Gottlieb Fabricius, a godly and very zealous Minister of the Gospel among the Wendens, having by his great piety contributed much thereto. 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. He 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 Schoolmaster was immediately placed for the benefit of two of these Villages. This



man so faithfully discharged the trust committed to him, that, in a short time, not only these two Villages were much pleased with *reading their own language*, but the inhabitants of the rest desired that Schoolmasters might be placed among them too. These they soon obtained; 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 effect of his pious labours. 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 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.*"

The sentiments of Frederic in relation to this affair, are excellently expressed in a rescript of his to the Government of Newmark, dated 22d September 1708, which is inserted at length in the above Letter, when the Doctor concludes as follows: "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 increase.*"<sup>24</sup>

The above is not the only instance within the German em- Bohemian.

<sup>24</sup> Published at the end of Richardson on Pilgrimages. Dublin, 1727



pire. At so recent a period as the year 1765, the idea of destroying the vernacular tongue of Bohemia was entertained. The Bohemian, or Tschechnish dialect of the Slavonian language, is spoken generally by the peasantry, and by many of superior rank; yet in the year alluded to, an attempt was made, *but without success*, to introduce German Teachers into all the Schools, so that the Bohemian language might be entirely abolished."<sup>25</sup> The wakeful and judicious benevolence of the present day, has operated, in this instance also, in a more excellent way. Two editions of the Bohemian Bible, amounting to 8000 copies, have been printed within the last seven years; and these appear to be insufficient to gratify the desire which prevails among the people, to read the Scriptures in their own tongue.

To come nearer home; the scheme of abolishing a language, by either neglecting it or teaching another, has been a favourite one within the limits of the United Kingdom, and that for ages; but with what success let the following accounts testify.

Welsh.

In the principality of WALES, with allusion to the endeavours of some to banish their language by teaching English, we find the Rev. Griffith Jones of Llandowrer, the original promoter of the Welsh Circulating Schools, pleading as follows: "In the ordinary way, it is as unlikely to bring the whole body of the Welsh people to learn the English tongue, as it would to prevail with all the common people of England to learn French. I am much at a loss to know what method should be tried. Should all our Welsh books, and our excellent version of the Holy Bible, Welsh preaching, and the stated worship of God in our language, be taken away, to bring us to a disuse of our tongue? *So they are* in a manner in some places: the more our misery; and yet the people are no more better

<sup>25</sup> Historical and Political Description of Germany, 4to. London, 1800, p. 83.



Scholars than they are better Christians for it. Welsh is still the vulgar tongue, and not English. The *English* Charity Schools, which have been tried, produced no better effect in country places. All that the Children could do in three, four, or five years, <sup>26</sup> amounted commonly to no more than to learn very imperfectly to read some easy parts of the Bible, without knowing the Welsh of it: 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; insomuch that they, who have 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.” “Sure I am, the Welsh Charity Schools do no way hinder to learn *English*, but do very much contribute towards it; and perhaps you will allow, Sir, that learning our own language first, is the most expeditious way to come at the knowledge of another, else why are not your youths in England, designed for Scholars, set to Latin and Greek before they are taught English?

“But I am next,” says Mr Jones, “to consider another part of the objection, viz. ‘Why should the King’s subjects in Wales *only* <sup>27</sup> not be brought to understand English?’ We are to acknowledge ourselves greatly indebted for being admitted to enjoy the same English liberties in common with you, which we have been blessed with for many successions of reigns, and continue to enjoy under his present Majesty; but for our being of a different language, it is hoped the rea-

<sup>26</sup> i. e. Five *Winters*, for they could attend only at that period of the year, though but few of the poor could stay so long.

<sup>27</sup> There is an allusion here to the contemporary attempts in Ireland, in the Highlands of Scotland, and in the Isle of Man, to destroy the Irish, the Gaelic, and the Manks.



sons already given will so fully account for it, that whereina-soever this may be a misfortune or disadvantage to us, you will condole instead of being offended with us. Was our language understood, we could express our loyalty in the strongest terms, and its not being so *shall in no wise make us worse subjects*. Although we have not the happiness of being able to express our allegiance in the words of your language, yet we hope that in *deed* we shall not be found defective in it." Again, says this excellent man, "Experience now proves beyond dispute, that if ever it be attempted to bring all the Welsh people to understand English, we cannot better pave the way for it, than by teaching them to read their *own language first*. This method will conduce, more than any other I can think of, to assist whatever attempts may be made to spread the general knowledge of the English tongue in this country."<sup>28</sup>

As an appropriate continuation of the account of the Welsh Schools, I must not omit to notice the laborious exertions of the Rev. Thomas Charles of Bala, lately deceased,—a man, whose memory will be cherished with fervent gratitude in the Principality, for a long period to come. Not being acquainted with any account of his efforts, so minute and satisfactory, as that which is contained in a Letter of his, addressed to the present writer, dated 4th January 1811, I shall take the liberty of inserting the greater part of it here, after respectfully requesting the candid attention of Gentlemen in Ireland to the *argument* throughout, as it affects our Sister Country.

"The important intelligence which your Letter brought me of the benevolent intention of charitable persons in the

<sup>28</sup> 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. vol. 1. See also an Abstract of the labours of Mr Jones, under the head 'Observations,' in the fourth Section of this Memorial.



North, of forming a Society at Edinburgh, for the design of encouraging Schools in the Highlands and the Islands of Scotland, to teach the poor inhabitants to read their native Gaelic tongue, appears to me highly laudable, and gives me very great gratification. In compliance with your request, I shall here attempt to give you a comprehensive and succinct account of similar Institutions with us in this Principality, their nature, and the success of them.

The Rev. Griffith Jones, about A. D. 1730, made the first attempt of any importance, on an extensive scale, to erect Schools for the instruction of our poor people to read their native language. Before that time, the whole Country was in a most deplorable state with regard to the acquisition of religious knowledge. After the decease of this very pious and laborious Minister, A. D. 1761, the Schools were continued on the same plan by a pious Lady of fortune, an intimate friend of Mr Jones, and a constant attendant on his ministry; her name was Mrs Bevan. In her will, that Lady, who lived several years after Mr Jones, left *ten thousand pounds*, the interest of which was to be applied, for ever, towards perpetuating those Schools. Her executrix, a niece of her's, disputed the validity of the will, so far as it applied to this money. It was thrown into Chancery, where it continued for thirty years before a decree was obtained. About two years past, a decree was granted in favour of this charity; and the interest of the ten thousand pounds, with the accumulation of it by interest all the years it was in Chancery, is to be applied, under certain specific regulations and restrictions, to the support of *Circulating Charity Schools* throughout the whole Principality! This was a consummation devoutly to be wished, indeed! And the more so, as we had all despaired of ever seeing the money applied to the proper object. There are now forty Schools erected in different parts of the country,



and the number is continually increasing. In the course of a few years after the cessation of these, on the demise of Mrs Bevan, the country gradually reverted into the same state of stupor and ignorance in which Mr Jones found it, when he first thought of those institutions. Besides, though Mr Jones' Schools increased to the amazing number of *two hundred and twenty* before he died, yet there were many districts in this mountainous country, never visited by his Schools, or but once, and that for a very short time. In one of these districts it pleased the will of Providence to place me. Soon after I assumed the care of the parish, I attempted to instruct the rising generation, by catechising them every Sunday afternoon: but their not being able to read, I found to be a great obstacle to the progress of my work. This induced me to inquire into the state of the country, in this point of view. I soon found the poor people to be in general in the same state of ignorance. Two or three of the children of the wealthiest were sent to the next town to learn English, and this was all; the generality were left totally destitute of any instruction. As Mr Jones' Schools had ceased to circulate, no relief could be obtained from that quarter. A thought occurred to my anxious mind, for so it really was, that by the charitable assistance of some friends, I might be able to obtain means of employing a Teacher, and to remove him from one place to another, to instruct the poor ignorant people. When I had succeeded in obtaining pecuniary aid, the great difficulty of obtaining a proper person to teach, occurred. This difficulty was removed by instructing a poor man myself, and employing him at first near me, that his School might be, in a manner, under my constant inspection. The next difficulty was, to obtain proper elementary books. In this point Mr Jones' Schools were very deficient, as the books used in his Schools were little better than the English battle-doors, and very ill calculated to forward



the children in their learning. This obstruction, also, was gradually surmounted. I composed three elementary books, besides two catechisms, which are now used in all our Schools, and very essentially assist the progress of the children. My Teachers, as my funds increased, multiplied gradually from one to twenty; but of late the number is decreased, as the necessity of the Week-day Schools is *superseded* by the increase of Sunday Schools, and my attention is drawn to the extension of them, as wide as possible. The *Circulating Day Schools* have been the principal means of erecting Sunday Schools; for without the former, the state of the country was such, that we could not obtain Teachers to carry on the latter; besides, Sunday Schools were set up in every place where the Day Schools had been. My mode of conducting the Schools has been as follows:—My first greatest care has been in the appointment of proper Teachers. They are all poor persons, as my wages are but small; besides, a poor person can assimilate himself to the habits and mode of living among the poor, as it is his own way of living. It is requisite he should be a person of moderate abilities, but above all that he be truly pious, moral, decent, humble, and engaging in his whole deportment; not captious, not disputatious, not conceited, no idle saunterer, no tattler, nor given to the indulgence of any idle habits. My care here has been abundantly repaid; for my Teachers in general are as anxious as myself in the success of the work, and the eternal welfare of those they are employed to instruct in their most important concerns. In introducing the School into a place, I pay a previous visit there, after conversing a little with some of the principal inhabitants on the subject; I convene the inhabitants together, after having sent a previous message to them, intimating my intention of visiting them, and specifying the time of my coming.—When convened together, I publicly address



them on the vast importance of having their children taught to read the word of God, and afterwards I inform them of my intention of sending a Teacher, to assist in instructing their children, and also grown up people who cannot read, who will attend him on Sundays, and as many nights in the week as they please. I conclude by exhorting the parents to send their children to the school. I converse familiarly afterwards with the parents, and promise to assist them with books, if they should be too poor to buy any. I take *kind notices* of the children also; and thus, in general, we are kind friends, ever after the first interview. The Teacher is to take no entrance money—is charged not to encroach upon them, and intrude himself upon them, unless particularly invited into their houses; and then he is charged to have family prayers night and morning, wherever he goes to reside for a night; to introduce conversations respecting his own work, and not indulge himself with them in vain idle talk: that in him they may see how a Christian lives, and how they *ought* to live. His time is entirely at my command, and to be devoted wholly to the work; he is engaged in the evening, as well as through the day, and that *every* day. Before the School is removed, I go there twice, if possible, and examine the children publicly; these public examinations and catechisings I have found most profitable to the parents and grown up people: I have often seen them exceedingly affected by the intelligent and proper responses of the children. Before I leave them, I exhort them earnestly to support the Sunday School that had been begun among them, to prevent the children from forgetting what they have learned, to further their progress in learning, now they have happily begun; and this they generally comply with.

At first, the strong prejudice which universally prevailed against teaching them to read Welsh *first*, and the idea assu-



med, that they could not learn English so well, if *previously* instructed in the Welsh language; this, I say, proved a great stumbling-block in the way of parents to send children to the Welsh Schools, together with another conceit they had, that if they could read English, they would soon learn of themselves to read Welsh; but now, these idle and groundless conceits are universally scouted. This change has been produced, not so much by disputing, as by the evident salutary effects of the Schools, the great delight with which the children attended them, and the great progress they made in the acquisition of knowledge. The School continues usually at one time in the same place six or nine months, which depends on local circumstances, the number of children, and the progress which the children make. In some districts they learn with much greater rapidity than in others; the causes of this are various, which I cannot enumerate here. This has been my mode of proceeding, subject to some local variations, for above twenty-three years; and 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 has spread widely over the whole country in Sunday Schools, the wholesome effects of these previous institutions, fertilizing the barren soil wherever it flows.

As to the *expediency* of teaching young people, in the *first* place, to read the language they generally speak and best understand, if imparting religious knowledge is our primary object, as it most certainly *ought* to be, in instructing *immortal* beings, it needs no proof, for it is self-evident. However, I beg your attention for a moment to the following particulars; making no apology for the great length of this letter, as you desired me to be particular.—1. The time necessary to teach them to read the Bible in their *vernacular* language is so short, not ex-



ceeding six months in general, that it is a great pity not to give them the key immediately which unlocks all the doors, and lays open all the divine treasures before them. Teaching them English requires two or three years' time, during which long period, they are concerned only about dry terms, without receiving one idea for their improvement.—2. Welsh words convey ideas to their infant minds as soon as they can read them, which is not the case when they are taught to read a language they do not understand.—3. When they can read Welsh, scriptural terms become intelligible and familiar to them, so as to enable them to understand the discourses delivered in that language (the language in general preached through the Principality); which, of course, must prove more profitable than if they could not read at all, or read only the English language.—4. Previous instruction in their native tongue, helps them to learn English *much sooner*, instead of proving in any degree an inconveniency. This I have had repeated proofs of, and can confidently vouch for the truth of it. I took this method of instructing my own children, with the view of convincing the country of the fallacy of the general notion which prevailed to the contrary; and I have persuaded others to follow my plan, which, without one exception, has proved the truth of what I conceived to be really the case.—5. Having acquired new ideas by reading a language they understand, excitement is naturally produced to seek for knowledge; and as our ancient language is very deficient in the means of instruction, there being few useful books printed in it, a desire to learn English, yea, and other languages also, is excited, for the sake of increasing their stock of ideas, and adding to their fund of knowledge. 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 of 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. In short, the whole country is in a manner emerging from a state of great ignorance and ferocious barbarity to civilization and piety, and that principally by means of the Welsh Schools. Bibles without end are called for, and read diligently, learned out by heart, and searched into with unwearied assiduity and care. Instead of vain amusements, dancing, card playing, interludes, quarrelling, and barbarous and most cruel fightings, we have now prayer-meetings, our congregations are crowded, and public catechising is become pleasant, familiar, and profitable. One great means of this blessed change has been the Welsh Schools.—6. By teaching the Welsh *first*, we prove to them that we 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, is revealed; whereas, that most important point is totally out of sight by teaching them English; for the acquisition of the English is connected *only* with their temporal concerns, and which they may never want, for they may, as the majority do, die in infancy. In my opinion, in the education of children, it is of the utmost importance, in the first place, to impress their minds with a sense that they are candidates for another World, and that the things pertaining to their eternal felicity *there*, are of infinitely greater importance to them, than the little concerns which belong to our short existence. The ne-



glect of this is, I apprehend, a very great defect in the education of children.

What I have put down here, is, I apprehend, *equally applicable to the Irish and the Highlanders*, as to the Welsh. Praying for your success, I am, yours respectfully," &c.—

In the course of the same year in which the above letter was written, Mr Charles turned his attention to the importance of establishing *adult* Schools, of which I had the pleasure to receive the following notice, dated the 17th of December 1811.

"I am much obliged to you for your kind favour received by this day's post, and I rejoice at the persevering efforts made to teach the poor Highlanders. The Schools go on here with increasing success, and the effects of them in many parts of the Country are visible, in the increase of the knowledge of the Sacred Scriptures, and melioration of the morals of the plebeians in general.

"I have of late turned my attention more than ever to the *Aged* illiterate people in our country. On minute inquiries, I find there are very many who cannot read, and of course are very ignorant. Though I had before given general exhortations on that head, and invited them to attend the Schools; but with very little success. At last I determined to try what effect a School *exclusively for themselves* would have. I fixed upon a district, where I had been informed that most of the inhabitants above *fifty* years of age could not read, and I prevailed on a friend to promise to attend to teach them. I went there after a previous publication being given of my coming; published the School, and exhorted them all to attend. My friend went there, and eighteen attended the first Sunday. He found them in a state of most deplorable ignorance. By condescension, patience and kindness, he soon engaged them to learn, and *their desire for learning soon became as great as any we have seen among the young people.*



They had their little Elementary Books with them, whilst at work, and met in the evenings, of their own accord, to teach one another. Their School is now increased to eighty persons; and some of them read their Testaments, though it is not three months since the School commenced. Children are excluded from this School; but we have another School for them. The rumour of the success of this School has spread abroad, and has greatly removed the discouragement which old people felt from attempting to learn, from the general persuasion, that they could not learn at their age. This has been practically proved to be false; for *old persons of seventy-five years of age* had learnt to read in this School, to their great joy. Several other similar Institutions have been set up since, and promise similar success.” — <sup>29</sup>

About the beginning of last century, the opposition to the Gaelic cultivation of the GAELIC language was so strong, that several true friends to their country found it absolutely necessary to draw up and circulate a paper on the subject, entitled, “*An Answer to the Objections against Printing the Bible in Irish.*” <sup>30</sup> From this document the few following sentences

<sup>29</sup> In the last Letter with which I was favoured from this indefatigable man, he says, “The tidings respecting the Charity Schools are favourable, and our Schools are more crowded than ever with adults, as well as Children.” “I have to lament much, that I have in a degree spent half my time, though very busy, yet not in that line in which I see now most good might have been done. Now my strength begins to fail me for great exertions. Last Summer (1813) I was laid aside for two months by a great debility of body, owing, my Doctors say, to over exertion. Through mercy I am considerably recovered, but still incapable of pursuing my usual labours with that assiduity and exertion I used to do.” During last Spring, Mr Charles often said, while superintending an edition of the Welsh Scriptures lately published by the British and Foreign Bible Society; “As soon as I have finished this, I shall be content to lay my head on my pillow and die.” This work was finished on the 19th of August, and Mr Charles died on Wednesday morning the 5th of October last.

<sup>30</sup> The Irish and the Gaelic language are the same, and at this period it was generally said to be the *Irish* which was spoken in the Highlands of



are extracted : “ It is not to be doubted, that a great many who make this objection, do it without any bad design, but only through their not considering the matter sufficiently.” The impossibility of exterminating the language in that age, by the various methods proposed, is then shewn, and the improbability of its being effected in succeeding ages, or for a great while to come. “ Where,” it is asked, “ is there an instance of any such thing, that has been done any where in the world, except in such places, where the conquerors have been more numerous than the conquered? It is known to all who are acquainted with the state of Europe, that in most kingdoms, there are some provinces, which speak a different language from what is spoken in the rest of the provinces of the same kingdom.” It has not been known or heard of in this age, nor, for any thing we can learn, in some past ages, that any one parish where they have been wont to preach in Irish, has learned so much English, as not still to need a preacher in the Irish language.<sup>31</sup> “ It is very considerable,

Scotland. Those who have attended to this subject must have observed, that the word Irish was gradually changed into *Erse*, which denotes the same language that is now generally called Gaelic. The writer of this, when in Galway last summer, found a vessel lying there from Lewis, one of the Western Isles, the Master of which remarked to him, “ the people here speak curious Gaelic :” but he understood them easily; and commerce is actually carried on between the Highlanders and the Irish through the medium of their common language. There is now before me a Grammar of the *Gaelic* language in what is called the *Irish* character, published in Dublin in the year 1808.

<sup>31</sup> The pertinacious adherence of mankind to their “ mother tongue,” might be verified by a number of remarkable proofs : “ It is a curious fact,” says a writer in the Statistical Account of Scotland, vol. xx. p. 490, “ that the hills of King’s Seat and Craigy Barns, which form the lower boundary of Dowally, (parish in Perthshire,) have been, *for centuries*, the separating barrier of the English and Gaelic. In the first house below them, the English is and has been spoken; and the Gaelic in the first house, not above a mile distant, above them.” In different parts of Ireland something similar to this will be found. It is said, that, on crossing the



[worthy of consideration] that in Kintyre, whence the Highlanders were expelled, and where others, who spoke English, were planted in their stead, in process of time, by frequent conversation with the neighbouring Highlanders, many of them, instead of propagating the English language, have learned Irish; so that now they preach once a-day in Irish, in the chief churches in the country.”—“The Scriptures are the weapons of the Christian warfare; and shall we unchristianly and unmercifully deprive our brethren of that which they have so great need of in their defence and safeguard? How careful has the Church been, to translate the Holy Bible into the language of all nations, which were converted to Christianity! And not to mention what was done in other countries, Bede tells us, that in this island the Bible was read in five dialects, then vulgarly used, viz. of the Angles, (or Saxons?) the Britons, (or Welsh?) the Scots, (or Irish?) the Picts and the Latins.”<sup>32</sup>

Notwithstanding the powerful arguments then adduced, the Gaelic language stood in need of a subsequent advocate; for it was on behalf of this people that, above sixty years afterwards, Dr Samuel Johnson addressed the following admirable letter to Mr William Drummond; a letter, the sentiments of which have been frequently quoted of late.

SIR, *Johnson's Court, Fleet Street, 13th August 1766.*

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

river Barrow, a very striking difference is observable: on the eastern bank English is spoken, and Irish scarcely known; a little way interior it is quite the reverse.

<sup>32</sup> Appendix to Boyles' Life, vol. i. p. 121—123.



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 undubitable 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, how-



ever 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 dependent. 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 awhile 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.<sup>34</sup> I am sorry that I delayed so long to write.—I am," &c.

<sup>34</sup> Dr Johnson here alludes 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 expence 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 regard to the exertions which are now making to instruct the Highlanders in reading their vernacular tongue, as the particulars are in the possession of the public, it is deemed quite superfluous to insert a single extract. Suffice it to say, that there are Scholars at this moment learning the Gaelic, with remarkable avidity and profit to themselves, and that from the ages of five and six, to eighty, and even ninety years : nay, by the latest accounts, there is an Highland veteran, who, in one of the circulating Schools, at the very advanced age of *One hundred and seventeen*, is actually learning to read the Gaelic.

Manks.

Before proceeding to Ireland, we are furnished with another instance in point, in the experiment which was made in the Isle of Man. About the year 1740, it was confidently affirmed, "the ancient Bishop of Man has found means to bring the Manks into disuse." In the confidence of this being *true*, but at the same time objecting to its being received as a rational argument for the destruction of the Welsh tongue, we find the Rev. Griffith Jones thus replying : " This truly Reverend Prelate hath set a precedent in many instances very worthy of imitation ; but it will be allowed there were several circumstances to favour this undertaking in that Island. The small extent of it, being but twenty-nine miles in length, and scarce nine in breadth, and about seventeen parishes, hardly so large as the least of our Welsh counties, besides three others, reckoned English counties, viz. Monmouth, Hereford, and Shropshire, where most of the inferior people speak Welsh : and the Manksmen being a mixture of English, Scotch, and Irish, having five market towns and many villages in the island, where at least some *English* was used in common discourse, were better prepared, and furnished with greater advantages, to attain to the English tongue, than the poor Welsh people ;



and therefore the task would be more difficult, beyond comparison, in this much larger country.”<sup>35</sup>

More than seventy years have elapsed since the above assertion was made, and is it now inquired, whether it was *the fact* that the Bishop had succeeded in abolishing the vernacular speech of the Island? In reply, there is no occasion for mentioning in detail, the pious labours of Bishop Hildesley, who, in about thirty years after the above period, so zealously promoted the translation of the whole Scriptures into the Manks dialect; it is only necessary to insert the following paragraph from the Eleventh Report of the British and Foreign Bible Society: “The Right Rev. the Bishop of Sodor and Man, having recommended to his Clergy to ascertain the want of the Scriptures in their respective parishes; and returns having been made, in compliance with that recommendation, thirteen hundred and twenty-six copies of the *Manks* New Testament, together with some English Bibles and Testaments, charged at reduced prices, have been sent to the Bishop for the accommodation of the inhabitants of that island.” Future demands are also anticipated, for the New Testament in the Manks language which has been provided by this noble Institution, for the sole use of the inhabitants of Man, amounting to about twenty thousand, is a *stereotype* Edition.

To conclude this long reply, and to return to Ireland, the objection which we are now obviating, I find stated and answered with great ability, in reference to the *Irish* language, by Mr Richardson in his “Proposal,” which was printed in London in the year 1712. “How wise and how practicable a design this is, (to destroy the Irish,) we may learn from experience; for, after the trial of near two hundred

<sup>35</sup> Welsh Piety, vol. i. p. 52.



years, we find little or no progress made in it. They still retain their language—nay, the Irish tongue is so far from being abolished, that it hath spread as much among the British in proportion to their number, as the English language among the Irish.”<sup>36</sup> Exactly one hundred years after this, and in relation to the same subject, the following remarks were published. “The attachment of the human mind to any object, is increased in proportion to the reproach and persecution which is suffered for its sake. At this advanced period of the world, this obvious truth requires no illustration; or, if any be necessary, the history of Ireland will furnish it. The exertions which have been made to suppress the language of that country, have greatly strengthened the prepossessions of the natives in its favour; and they now, in some degree, consider their honour pledged for its preservation.”<sup>37</sup> Connected with this statement, there is an additional fact, of great moment, recorded by one of the best authorities, Mr Townsend, in his Survey of Cork. Speaking of the Catholic population, which, in general, constitutes the Irish proportion of the community, this Gentleman says: “Of these, the greater part derive no *eventual* advantage from their Schooling, being recalled at an early age; mixing then with a family who speak only *Irish*, even the little smattering of English they had acquired is soon lost.” Education in the English language, therefore, in the *first* instance, can, generally speaking, be of little avail indeed!

After this long detail, which, but for the views which have been entertained by many, would have been quite unnecessary, the Reader, it is hoped, will now be prepared for this certain, and, with respect to our sister country, most important conclusion, that, if it is desirable to enlighten the minds

<sup>36</sup> Richardson's History, &c. p. 110.

<sup>37</sup> Dewar's Observations, &c. p. 90.



of this class of British subjects, and at the same time extend the limits of the English language in the Irish districts, the only effectual and the most expeditious way of doing so, is by teaching them to read their own tongue, the Native Irish. Thus you implant *a thirst* for knowledge: and eventually make the learning to read English, a matter of choice and desire, an important object indeed, but one which can never be effected either by violence or neglect.

II. *But though the Irish is spoken to great extent, still many of the people understand the English language, and the English is daily spreading among them.*

Certainly the reader is now competent to answer this objection. He will naturally advert to several parts of the second Section, and to the conclusion of the last reply. Hence it will appear, that the cultivation of the Irish has been proved to be the most efficient means of accelerating the progress of the *English Language*: and as to these people at present *understanding* it, the assertion must be received with very considerable limitations. The truth is, that the great majority do not, and even with regard to those who do, *to what extent* are they acquainted with the English Language? <sup>38</sup> Every Language, let it be observed, has its different departments—commercial, political, and religious. Does it therefore follow that because a native Irishman can buy and sell, or because an Irish waiter, at an Inn in the country, can reply to a Traveller in English, that he can reason in this language, or follow the argument and address of moral and religious discourse? By no means. The Irish is still the language of his heart, and even of the best part of his understanding. In it,

<sup>38</sup> See page 30, line 18, and page 31, line 18.



he still continues to express his joy or grief; for this is the language which is associated with his earliest recollections. In it, his mother hushed him to rest in the days of infancy; and in youth, if he had an ear for music, it was charmed with the numbers of "*Erin gu brath.*" The very language of the Irish Gentlemen, therefore, interests his *feelings*, while, as long as things remain in their present state, that of the mere Englishman never can. There can therefore be no doubt, that the degree to which the great body of native Irish peasantry understand the English language, is quite compatible with absolute ignorance of Divine Revelation, and indeed, as far as English is concerned, of abstract reasoning on any subject whatever.

III. *But the Irish language, which is spoken by the population, is not the same which is to be found in books.*

For one moment I wish this to be taken for granted, and without going beyond the precincts of the United Kingdom, to enumerate the translations of Sacred Scripture which are now making ready for various foreign nations or tribes, not near so numerous as the Native Irish, might I not ask—Have not the Welsh, a population of about 600,000, long enjoyed the privilege of the Sacred Scriptures of the Old and New Testament, in the language which is perfectly intelligible to the poorest of the people? The inhabitants of the Highlands and Islands, a population of 400,000, enjoy the same blessing; nay even the inhabitants of Man, amounting to no more than 20,000, have had the New Testament granted to them in the vernacular speech, and if it is necessary, why should not the same inestimable favour be immediately extended to our fellow subjects in the south and west of Ireland? To return, however, to the objection, I have to assure the Reader, that it has al-



ready been ascertained to be founded, almost wholly, in mistake. It is probable that the idea originated in the circumstance of some *Irish* Gentlemen, who had not studied the language, having said, upon first looking at an Irish book, that they could make nothing of it. "But no person," says Dr Stokes, "would expect that one who could speak and read English, and could also speak French, having never read it, should be able to *read* French at the first trial. If, indeed, the letters had the same sounds in different languages, and that all letters were sounded, men might read a new language at sight, as they do music; but this is far from being the case."

Let us proceed, however, to matter of fact. "I have read," says Mr Richardson, "the Bible in Irish to the common people both publicly and privately, and they declared, that they understood very well; and that I might be satisfied they did so, I caused some of them to translate several sentences, which they did exactly; besides, if the case were not so, care might be taken for the future, to print the Irish as it is spoken." Thus it was above a hundred years ago, and so it is now. The Rev. Mr Graham, Curate of Kilrush, County of Clare, in a letter dated the 3d of February 1806, when speaking of certain young people, who understand and 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 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. "I was astonished," says this Gentleman, "to find, in the wildest parts of Donegal, a man with neither shoes nor stockings, who gave me a clear and correct account of the peculiarities of Irish grammar." Last Summer, the writer, in passing through part of Connaught, found a Schoolmaster teaching a School on his own account, who, for several months, had been in the habit of reading the Irish New Testament to his neighbours ; and as a proof that his labour was not lost to those poor people, one of them brought a candle alternately, or at least they furnished light, while he read to them the Irish Scriptures. On reading the affecting parable of the rich man and Lazarus, he said, they called out to him, "Read it again—read it again ;" and they also had their *favourite* passages in consequence of this exercise.

In conclusion of this Section, it is now hoped that many will agree in thinking the case of the *Native Irish* to be not only unobjectionable in itself, but one which, the more it is considered, is found to increase in interest and in its claims upon every enlightened British subject. We proceed therefore very briefly to suggest a remedy.

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### Section Fourth.

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#### *Plan recommended for adoption.*

SEVERAL years ago, it was calculated that there were about twenty thousand persons in Ireland, who had made some attempt to read their own language: but the number of Irish readers has of late greatly increased, chiefly, I believe, owing to the patriotic exertions of several Irish Gentlemen, as well as by means of what is called the Irish Class, in some of the Schools belonging to the London Hibernian Society, and probably also in consequence of the attention which is paid to the Language in Maynooth College, where M'Curten's Grammar is used, the Irish Testament is explained, and fragments are translated into English. It is, however, the English Language which has hitherto been generally taught in the Schools throughout Ireland. The teaching of the Irish Language, as may be imagined from the preceding pages, has been regarded by many with indifference, and by others the attempt has been viewed as impolitic or improper, if not unnecessary. All these ideas have already been met and considered; while, to the present hour, no general and well-regulated plan has been laid down or pursued, for teaching the Irish Language *directly and grammatically*.

It is fortunate that we here require to do nothing more



than examine the precedents furnished by the Welsh and the Gaelic Circulating Schools. In consequence of attention to both of these, and some concern in the management of the latter, the following hints are submitted for adoption.

## IRISH CIRCULATING SCHOOLS.

I. THE Schools to be opened should be for the sole and express purpose of teaching the inhabitants of those districts where Irish is spoken, particularly in the south and west, to read their *Native Language*.

II. Alphabet boards, containing the letters of the Irish Alphabet, in the Roman and Irish character in parallel columns, to be used in teaching the Alphabet; and syllable boards of two and three letters to succeed these.

III. The Elementary Books to proceed gradually with "spelling and reading Lessons;" each short set of Lessons advancing only by one letter, up to the longer and more difficult words. The Irish New Testament might succeed, and after this the Old, *without note or comment*, beginning with the easiest parts.

IV. As to the School House, no costly preparations are necessary, especially as the Teacher sent is not to be a permanent resident; and the Native Irish, who are so remarkable for hospitality and kindness, will not certainly fall behind the Highlanders, who, in a very successful attempt to teach them their own language, have, in general, most cheerfully provided the necessary accommodations.

V. When a School is to be begun, all other things being ready, intimation should be given that it will be continued only for a *limited period*, not less than six, nor more than eighteen months, during which time the young and old who attend should be instructed gratis.



## OBSERVATIONS.

1. The *adaptation* of the Circulating plan to the Country itself, should recommend it. As many, if not most of the inhabitants, live, not collected in villages, but in abodes dispersed through the range of many thousand acres, and as "Children of tender years, though of sufficient age to be capable of learning, cannot go very far from home for education,"<sup>39</sup> how can their instruction be so generally promoted as by this method?

2. The *economy* of this Scheme is a strong recommendation. It comes in an humble outward appearance, and is the better suited to the condition of the people. In Wales, they found that about *twelve* Children could be instructed in reading their Mother tongue, for the same expence which was incurred in teaching *one* to read English. To learn to read Welsh, required three or four months; to learn English, four or five successive Winters. What a saving was this both of time and money! The case will be precisely similar in teaching the Native Irish.

3. Nor should the effects of this system on the *spirit* of the people be overlooked. In Wales, and in the Highlands of Scotland, the Circulating Schools have not only shewn the inhabitants at what a cheap rate they may educate themselves and their Children, but the removal of the Schoolmaster has induced them to attempt doing so. This is an important advantage; it is, in fact, making them take the first step of that road, which will bring them, in the end, to the independent spirit of a people, who will pay with gladness for their own instruction, and to all the inestimable comforts belonging to a self-educated community. In every system adopted for the

<sup>39</sup> Reports of the Board of Education.



relief or moral improvement of a Country, the prudent benefactor should have it in view to render the people, at a certain period, *independent* of such assistance; otherwise, however laudable the attempt, his interference will cherish a spirit of mean and listless dependence. Miss Edgeworth has remarked, in the Notes appended to Leadbeater's Cottage Dialogues, that "the very poorest of the Irish shrink from the terror of their children being reproached, in after life, with having gone to a *charity* School. This prejudice," she adds, "if it cannot be removed, may at least be obviated, by annexing a stipend, however small, to the privilege of attending the School; a penny would take off the stigma, as it is, perhaps, falsely considered." Now this feeling, on the part of the Irish Peasant, will, on the plan recommended, be turned to good account. If the people are not able, or are not called upon to shew their good will to the cause, in the provision of a School-house or its accommodations, as will be the case in some districts, still a small trifle is exacted for the Elementary Books; and though the Teacher instructs *gratis*, he removes; which removal is also calculated, not only to awaken the sluggard to regret, but to excite both hope and desire in the people of the surrounding districts.

4. The bearing of this plan upon the *English* language, will be to many gentlemen an important recommendation. The teaching of *Irish* and *English* cannot indeed be combined in the person of the same man, without abandoning one of the greatest excellencies of the Scheme, viz. the loco-motion of the Teacher, or circulation of the School; but what then? As soon as an Irish Circulating Schoolmaster has fully and successfully performed his duty, and is about to remove from any district, intimation should be given to some one of the other Benevolent Institutions for instruction in the English Language, with the Managers of which a good under-



standing can be established. In such a district will be found a *thirst for knowledge*, and there also a desire for acquiring the *English* tongue. The instances which have been recorded under the third Section, abundantly warrant this conclusion, so that it may seem unnecessary to adduce an additional testimony, though it be one of the highest authority. I allude to the remarks of the Rev. Alexander Stewart of Dingwall, when speaking of the remote Highlander—remarks which apply with equal force to the many thousands of Native Irishmen. “By learning to read,” says he, “and to understand what he reads, in his native tongue, an appetite is generated for those stores of science which are accessible to him only through the medium of the English language. Hence an acquaintance with the English is found to be necessary, for enabling him to gratify his desire after further attainments. The study of it becomes of course an object of importance; it is commenced and prosecuted with increasing diligence. These premises seem to warrant a conclusion, which might at first appear paradoxical; that, by cultivating the Gaelic,” (and I may add the Irish,) “you effectually, though indirectly, promote the study, and diffuse the knowledge of the English.”<sup>40</sup>

5. The plan recommended is no *theory*. In a country deplorably destitute, poor and ignorant, the Schools of the Rev. Griffith Jones did wonders, although they were far from being so complete or so well appointed as the Circulating Schools of modern times, in Wales and the Highlands of Scotland. The following Abstract truly deserves to be put on record. It is taken from the close of the third volume of the printed Reports, entitled “Welsh Piety,” &c. which are long since out of print; and it will serve to shew, that extensive attempts in the way of Education, have not been confined to the present day.

<sup>40</sup> Introduction to the Gaelic Grammar.



## WELSH CIRCULATING SCHOOLS.

Year.	No. of Schools.	No. of Scholars.	Year.	No. of Schools.	No. of Scholars.
				Brought up,	64,721
1737 . . .	37 . . . .	2400	1749 . . . .	142 . . .	6543
1738 . . .	71 . . . .	3981	1750 . . . .	130 . . .	6244
1739 . . .	71 . . . .	3989	1751 . . . .	129 . . .	5669
1740 . . .	150 . . . .	8765	1752 . . . .	130 . . .	5724
1741 . . .	128 . . . .	7995	1753 . . . .	134 . . .	5118
1742 . . .	89 . . . .	5123	1754 . . . .	149 . . .	6018
1743 . . .	75 . . . .	4881	1755 . . . .	163 . . .	7015
1744 . . .	74 . . . .	4253	1756 . . . .	172 . . .	7063
1745 . . .	120 . . . .	5843	1757 . . . .	220 . . .	9037
1746 . . .	116 . . . .	5635	1758 . . . .	218 . . .	9834
1747 . . .	110 . . . .	5633	1759 . . . .	206 . . .	8539
1748 . . .	136 . . . .	6223	1760 . . . .	215 . . .	8687
		<hr/>			<hr/>
Carry up,		64,721	Total number,		150,212

So that one hundred and fifty thousand, two hundred and twelve persons were taught to read the Welsh Scriptures, during the above twenty-four years; and that through the superintendence and influence of this 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 time, of 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 learnt forty or fifty years sooner. Not unfrequently the Children actually taught their



Parents, and sometimes the Parents and Children of one family 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. <sup>41</sup>

Let circulating Irish Schools be but once opened in Ireland, and beyond all doubt a second edition of this spirit, with improvements, will soon be furnished by the sons of Erin.

<sup>41</sup> This excellent man, (Mr Jones,) who died on the 8th April 1761, in the 78th year of his age, was generally styled “the Welsh Apostle,” and if there was any propriety in this title, the present generation will testify how richly the late Mr Charles of Bala deserves to be styled his Successor.

It may naturally be supposed that many books or copies of the Scriptures must have been wanted to supply these Schools, and not to mention many private contributions, the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge enjoy the honour of having lent Mr Jones the most effectual aid. However, before his Schools began, several editions of the Scriptures in Welsh had been printed, and in promoting that of 1677, a spirit of harmony and union was displayed which ought not to pass unnoticed. Mr THOMAS GOUGE of London, (a nonconformist, but not the Gentleman celebrated by Dr Watts,) was the most active in procuring this edition, and the Archbishop of Canterbury, Tillotson, cordially co-operated with him. Indeed, the eminence of Mr G.’s associates was remarkable, *e. g.* E. Stillingfleet, Bishop of Worcester.—Dr B. Whichcote.—Matthew Poole, the nonconformist.—The Lord Mayor and Aldermen of London, &c. Thus befriended, he found a very candid disposition and readiness in many to assist with large and liberal contributions. During the last ten years of his life, Mr Gouge directed his influence and bounty chiefly to Wales. For some time, he travelled once or twice over this Country every year, and of his annual income, arising from his own personal estate, and amounting to about £200 per annum, he devoted *two-thirds* annually to Wales. The edition of the Welsh Scriptures, alluded to, consisted of 8000 copies—“a work of that charge,” said Archbishop Tillotson, *when preaching his funeral Sermon*, “that it is not likely to have been done in any other way ; and for which this age, and perhaps the next, will have great cause to thank God on his behalf.”



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### Section Fifth.

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*Encouragements to proceed upon the Plan  
recommended.*

IT is now a long time since Camden, in his *Hibernia*, said, with reference to the state of Ireland, "Learning, which dawned in the remotest east, has hitherto moved westward, like the great luminary of day. It would be anticipating the ordinary course of human knowledge, to suppose, that Ireland has passed her zenith ; it should rather encourage her sons, that she has not yet come to her meridian." Those who are best acquainted with the present state of this most interesting country, well know, that there is at this moment a spirit abroad, which indicates that she is at least in progress towards her meridian ; for in no part of the British dominions is there a greater desire to *learn to read*, and, I add with pleasure, a greater anxiety on the part of many gentlemen to communicate useful knowledge.

Irish readers have already been mentioned, and it is natural to inquire what books have been provided for their instruction, or have there been any books printed within these few years, in the Irish Language ?

For a considerable time past, it has been the custom to print



Irish Catechisms in Dublin, in Cork, Strabane, Dundalk, and it is conjectured, at several other places. Calculating by the number thrown off at press, from two to three thousand copies of these must be sold annually.

In the year 1799, two thousand copies of the Gospel of Luke, and the Acts of the Apostles, in parallel columns of English and Irish, in the Roman character, were printed at the charge of Dr Stokes, Trinity College, Dublin, which have been all circulated some time since. These were followed, in 1806, by an impression of the four Gospels and the Acts, printed in a similar way, Irish and English.

An edition of the New Testament in Irish, Roman character, has been printed in *stereotype* by the British and Foreign Bible Society, so that whatever number shall be found necessary, may be almost immediately procured. Already the Committee of the Hibernian Bible Society have resolved to print ten thousand copies of the Irish New Testament. I believe there has also been some correspondence between the Parent Society in London, and the Hibernian Bible Society, about the propriety of printing an edition of the New Testament, in parallel columns of Irish and English; but surely there is in this Country at present, a disposition which will be even gratified in furnishing our Countrymen, the Native Irish, with an *entire* edition of the Holy Scriptures.<sup>42</sup>

<sup>42</sup> How remarkable is it, and how much is it to be deplored, that, at this late period, there should be any degree of truth in the language of complaint or regret, uttered by Bishop CARSUEL, almost 250 years since? I quote his words only with reference to the above proposal of printing a complete edition of the *Irish Bible*, for with regard to the Scotch Gaelic, happily there is now no room for complaint. "But there is," said he, "one great disadvantage which we the Gaeil of Scotland and *Ireland* labour under, beyond the rest of the world, that our Gaelic language has never yet been printed, as the language of every other race of men has been; and we labour under a disadvantage which is still greater than every other, that we have not the Holy Bible printed in Gaelic, as it has been printed in Latin, and in English, and in every other



Within these few years, no less than three Grammars of the Language have been published ; and at the present moment there are two Irish Dictionaries ready for the press, if not printing, in Dublin. Indeed, the manuscript of one of these, by Mr Edward O'Reilly, vice-president of the *Gaelic Society* of Dublin (for such is the *name* of the Society), has been ready for some months, and was to be sent to press as soon as the names of 500 subscribers were received. "It will contain," say the proposals, "from eight to ten thousand words, which are not to be found in any Irish Lexicon hitherto published ;" and, in order to familiarize the learner to the Irish letters, and for the accommodation of foreigners, the Irish words will be printed both in the Irish and Italian characters ; the explanation will be in English, printed in the Roman letter."<sup>43</sup> At the conclusion of the prospectus, it is added, "As soon as the present work shall be finished, a Dictionary of the *English* Language, explained by the *Irish*, will be published by the same author."

These, it may be remarked, are in general preparatory measures ; but where is the instance to be found, within these few years, in which the *zeal to circulate*, and the *anxiety to receive* information, have not commenced at the same period, and increased in similar proportions ? On the one hand, we hear Irish Gentlemen themselves saying, "While the peasantry of Ireland remain uneducated, it is impossible to improve their condition by any system, that the ingenuity of man may devise ;" and again, "We are convinced that the remedy" for

language." *Extracted from the Epistle dedicatory of the "Confession of Faith and Prayer Book," &c. by Bishop Carsewell, or Carsuel, printed in the year 1566-7. See also Note 8.*

<sup>43</sup> The question with regard to the propriety of printing the Bible in the Irish or the Roman Character is an important one ; it was thought, however, unnecessary to increase the size of this Memorial by discussing it here.



many positive evils “is to be found only in the extension of education, and the consequent improvement of the moral and intellectual faculties of the people.” And are the peasantry themselves—are the *Native Irish*, insensible to the importance of these principles? By no means. In a letter, written last summer by a Native Irishman, in one of the humblest walks of life, to his friend, then in Dublin, a copy of which is now before me, there is the following sentence.—“I long to see some of the Irish books in the old letter, and a great many people in this country are impatiently waiting for you, in hopes to get some of them.”

In short, the necessity for cultivating the Irish Language, and teaching the numerous peasantry of the south and west to read it, appears now to some of the most intelligent men so urgent, and the spirit for effecting this by every possible means is, in Ireland itself, at present so powerful, that the only thing necessary is to exhibit and follow the animating precedents of the Circulating Schools.

### Conclusion.

It is with pleasure that I now introduce to the notice of the reader, a Society formed in London, the Committee of which, in July last, unanimously resolved, “That in the Schools to be established by this Society, the *Irish Language* be exclusively taught; and that such Schools be on the *Circulating or Ambulatory* plan.” This excellent resolution, it will be observed, is not only fraught with kindness, to the interesting people whose cause we are now pleading, but it excludes the idea of interference with the labours of antecedent Institutions, none



of whom have taken this precise and exclusive ground. And this is one of the finest features of the benevolence of the present day. One Society might embrace all the objects connected with education, or the improvement of man ; “ but on the principle of the division of employments, separate Societies, each devoting itself to one of these objects, are productive of greater good : they do more business upon cheaper terms. Instead of one Society, overpowered with the extent, and embarrassed with the multiplicity of its concerns, we have many, each cultivating one department, and giving the labours of its Committee to one assigned object.”<sup>44</sup>

If, therefore, the Society alluded to, while they regard all other Institutions formed for the benefit of Ireland, as so many friends and brethren, simply keep to their own specific object, and pursue it with prudence and zeal, there can be no doubt of their ultimate success. In the true spirit of their Resolution, they, with their corresponding Committee in Dublin, have already been engaged for some time, and at every step of their progress, they are assured of its being a right path. One or two Schools are already opened, a number of Irish readers are under training for Schoolmasters ; and, in the meanwhile, the accounts of the spirit of the people for even *hearing* the Irish read, are most animating.

The Institutions with which our Sister Country is favoured, for education in the English language, might have been enumerated, but this would have been wandering from the design in view. I was only desirous of making out a particular case, which it was conceived would reach the heart of all considerate and benevolent Men, and a little time will

<sup>44</sup> “ The two great Instruments appointed for the Propagation of the Gospel, and the Duty of the Christian People to keep them both in vigorous Operation,” by the Rev. Thomas Chalmers, 3d edit. p. 14.



shew whether I have been successful. The great variety of benevolent undertakings, already before the Public, might seem to render every new Society less likely to engage its favour and support: but I confess that, with regard to objects of this important nature, I entertain a higher idea of the present strength of the public feeling. Benevolence, the master principle of Christianity, begins to be better understood, and “true Christian benevolence is always occupied in producing happiness to the utmost of its power, and according to the extent of its sphere, be it larger or more limited; it contracts to the measure of the smallest; it can expand itself to the amplitude of the largest. It resembles majestic rivers, which are poured from an unfailing and abundant source. Silent and peaceful in their outset, they begin with dispensing beauty and comfort to every cottage by which they pass. In their further progress they fertilize provinces and enrich kingdoms. At length they pour themselves into the ocean; where changing their names but not their nature, they visit distant nations and other hemispheres, and spread throughout the world the expansive tide of their beneficence.”<sup>45</sup> Now all that is necessary on the present occasion, is to divert, when near its outset, merely a portion of this unfailing current, towards the “cottages and cabins” of a part of our own dear Country, a part of it too, in which all who once visit it with proper views, will ever afterwards take the deepest interest.

I have only to add, that such as are disposed to aid, by their annual Subscriptions or Donations, the *Native Irish Circulating Schools*, may communicate with the Treasurer, WILLIAM BURLS, Esq. No. 56. Lothbury; with the Secretary, the Rev. JOSEPH IVIMEY, No. 20. Harpur Street, Red Lion

<sup>45</sup> Wilberforce's Practical View, 10th edit. p. 335.



Square; or THOMAS CLARK, Esq, Bury-place, Bloomsbury, LONDON: or with the Writer of this, No. 5. Merchant Street, EDINBURGH.

Subscriptions and Donations are received in Dublin, by WILLIAM ALLEN, Esq. Dame Street, or JOHN PURSER jun. Esq. James's Gate.

FINIS.



## APPENDIX.

Of the Dialects mentioned in the Introduction, the Welsh, the Cornish, the Bas Bretagne, and the Basque, appear to be of one class ; and the Irish, the Gaelic, the Manks, and the Waldensian, of another.

### *Armorican, or Bas Bretagne.*

THE North-western extremity of France, where this Dialect is spoken, is said to have been peopled by a Colony from Wales, about the fourth century ; but whatever may have been the cause of the similarity of the two dialects, and however long these inhabitants of Brittany and the Welsh have been separated from each other, after the Capture of Belle-isle, by the British in 1761, such of the Soldiers as belonged to Wales were easily understood by the country people, and by means of their Welsh Language, served as interpreters to the English Soldiers. With regard to Brittany itself, the French Prisoners who were lately in this country, mentioned to Gentlemen, both in England and Scotland, that part of their countrymen still spoke the Bas Bretagne, and were ardently attached to it. The Reader will be pleased to hear that it is proposed to visit this part of France soon, for the purpose of opening a communication with the people through the medium of their vernacular tongue. The President of Caermarthen College, in Wales, has offered to go. It certainly appears to be of importance, in regard to this corner of Brittany, to ascertain the extent to which the dialect is still spoken, and if the population is considerable, why might not a translation of the New Testament be procured for them, if one does not exist ? This could not be very difficult, and it would be doing nothing more than following up the ancient and wise policy, which was in former ages applied to the different provinces of France, by one of her kings. So long ago as the 14th century, CHARLES THE FIFTH of France caused the Scriptures to be translated into the various *dialects* of his Kingdom. RAOUL DE PRESLE was one of the principal persons, employed by the king, for effecting this work, which was completed about A.D. 1380 ; and Antonius Molinæus professed to have had a copy in his possession, written upon parchment, in the dialect of Picardy. <sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Usserii Hist. Dogmat. p. 158. Calmet's Dict. de la Bible. It is not improbable that the Bas Bretagne was amongst the number of transla-



I hope the case of the Bas Bretons will not be considered altogether unworthy of the notice of our Countrymen, who are at this moment directing their attention to the promotion of Education in France. I allude to the views of the British and Foreign School Society.

### *Basque or Biscayan.*

THE Basque has but little *apparent* affinity with the other dialects, but Lhuyd has given a list of derivatives from it, which are still extant in the Irish tongue. Dr Percy has remarked, when speaking of the Welsh and Armorican, that “the two languages, when spoken, may have a much greater resemblance, than appears upon paper, to a person ignorant of them both;”<sup>2</sup> and the same observation may be made in reference to the Basque when compared with the other dialects. The orthography not having been settled in concert, must occasion a greater apparent dissimilarity than that which really exists.

An Edition of the New Testament in the Basque dialect, was printed at Rochelle, in France, so early as the year 1571. Whether this would be intelligible to the Biscayans is doubtful, but that the language remains is certain. “The language of the province is distinct from that spoken in the rest of the Spanish dominions—“ and the common Spanish dialect is not understood in the mountains.”<sup>3</sup>

### *Waldensian.*

IN the time of the Protectorate, Sir Samuel Morland was sent by Cromwell to intercede with the Duke of Savoy, at Turin, on behalf of the Waldenses: and to relieve their distress, as far as money could do so. Above £38,000 sterling was raised, (a large sum indeed at that period), and he resided, for some time, chiefly in Geneva, dispensing this bounty. Secretary Thurlow and Archbishop Usher had suggested to Sir Samuel, that he might employ his leisure time to good purpose, in collecting documents respecting the history and religious principles of this

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tions, as Charles is said to have caused the whole Bible to be translated not only into the dialect of Lutetia or Paris, but also into that of Picardy, Normandy, ‘and the other provinces of his kingdom.’ At an early period these translations were procured by the Waldenses, and used by some amongst them, for the promotion of their own sentiments, when an order was obtained to suppress them! However, as late as the year 1561, Car. Molinæus says that copies of these old translations were then to be met with in France.

<sup>2</sup> Preface to Mallet’s Northern Antiquities, translated by Dr Percy, who annexed the valuable preface, entitled Translator’s Preface.

<sup>3</sup> Edinburgh Encyclopædia, art. *Biscay*.



ancient people. Sir S. succeeded in procuring a number of manuscripts and other pieces; the greatest proportion of which were written by the inhabitants of the Valleys, and many of them in their own language. These papers, consisting altogether of twenty-one volumes, numbered A, B, C, &c. were presented by this Gentleman to the Public Library of the University of Cambridge, and lodged there in the month of August 1658. "In the volume F are collected and written on parchment, in that which is called the *Waldensian* language, of a very ancient, but fair and distinct character, The gospel of Matthew; the first chapter of Luke; the gospel of John, the Acts, 1st Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, 1st Thessalonians, 2d Timothy, Titus, the eleventh chapter of the Hebrews, with 1st and 2d Peter, the two last imperfect."<sup>4</sup> Whether this manuscript is written in the ancient and genuine Waldensian, I cannot at present affirm with certainty, especially as one or two of those, which are said to be in the language of the inhabitants of the Valleys, are written, in fact, in the colloquial dialect of the age, which, of course, underwent considerable changes, according as the French or Italian influence prevailed. Parts of the manuscripts which are quoted by Morland, have been considered to be specimens of the Catalanian, or a language nearly allied to it.

The distance of the Waldensian from the other dialects mentioned, in point of local situation, would render the most distant resemblance between it and them, a matter of considerable curiosity: but the resemblance between the Waldensian and the Irish or Gaelic seems to be by no means distant. "The Irish," says Davis, "appears to be, on the whole, better preserved than either the Erse or the Waldensic: it contains abundantly more of written document, but as the difference between them all is trifling, I shall speak of them in general as Irish." Chamberlayn, in his *Oratio Dominica*, has not informed us from whence he procured his specimen of the Waldensian, but that the Irish and Gaelic reader may see how nearly that specimen resembles their respective dialects, it is subjoined, from this author, who is generally considered one of the first authorities.

The superior figure (²) used below, answers the same purpose with the superior (·) or point, used by the Irish when printing in their own character, and it corresponds to the *h* of the Gaelic orthography.

#### THE LORD'S PRAYER IN WALDENSIAN.

*Our Narme ata air neamb.² Beanich atanim. Gu diga do riogda. Gu denta du hoill, air talm² in mar ta ar neamb². Tabhar d² im an mligb ar naran limb² ail. Agus mai d²uine ar fiach ambail near marhmbid ar fiacha. Na leig si²n amb² aribh ach soarsa shin on. Olc or sletsa rioghta combta agus gloir gu sibhiri. Amen.*

<sup>4</sup> Morland's History of the Churches of Piedmont, p. 98.



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