Three Scottiſh Poems, with a previous Diſſertation on the Scoto-Saxon Dialect.

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THE Society of Scottiſh Antiquaries having, ſome years ago, done me the honour to name me one of their correſponding members, I attempted to thank them by an Epiſtle, written in the Scoto-Saxon dialect, which, until of late, was the general language of all the low lands of North Britain, and is ſtill prevalent among the people of the north-eaſt provinces.

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The gentlemen, who are now employed in preparing for the preſs a volume of their Tranſactions, have intimated a wiſh that I would conſent to have that Epiſtle publiſhed; to which I can have no objection but one, namely, that I think it hardly worthy of publication. It was the haſty production of a very few leiſure hours, when, after being exhauſted with the incredible labour of collating a Greek manuſcript, I ſat down, towards the cloſe of the day, to a ſolitary meal, and amuſed myſelf in trying how far I could give to the dialect of my native country an air of novelty and elegance, that might not diſpleaſe even a critical Engliſh reader.

It is my opinion, that thoſe who, for almoſt a century paſt, have written in Scots, Allan Ramſay not excepted, have not duly diſcriminated the genuine Scottiſh idiom from its vulgariſms. They ſeem to have acted a ſimilar part with certain pretended imitators of Spencer, Shakeſpeare, and Milton, who fondly imagine that they are copying from thoſe great models, when they only mimic their antique mode of ſpelling, their obſolete terms, and their irregular conſtruction. Thus, to write Scottiſh poetry, (for proſe has been ſeldom attempted), nothing more was deemed neceſſary than to interlard the compoſition with a number of low words and trite proverbial phraſes, in common uſe among the illiterate; and the more anomalous and farther removed from polite uſage thoſe words and phraſes were, ſo much the more appoſite and eligible they were accounted. It was enough that they were not found in an Engliſh lexicon to give them a preference in the Scottiſh gloſſary; nor was it ever once conſidered, that all words truly Anglo-Saxon were as truly Scoto-Saxon words; and that every exotic term which the Engliſh have borrowed from other languages, the Scots had an equal right to appropriate.

In the mean while, grammatical analogy and critical accuracy were totally neglected. There was no general ſtandard of either

 orthoëpy

orthoëpy or orthography; and every one adopted that mode of ſpelling and phrazing which "was good in his own eyes."

Perhaps this inveterate error is, at this day, ſcarcely worth the pains of correcting. Few perſons of genius and learning will be inclined to write in the Scottiſh dialect; and if any were inclined, they could not look for encouragement or imitators. Men will ever follow thoſe purſuits that lead to riches or fame; and Scottiſh compoſition, either in proſe or poetry, will neither fill the writer's purſe nor emblazon his reputation.

Yet I cannot help ſometimes thinking, that the neglect of cultivating the Scoto-Saxon tongue has been attended with ſome detriment to the Engliſh language; that many words and phraſes of great energy and beauty are ſtill preſerved in the former which the latter wants, and which all its borrowed treaſure but imperfectly ſupplies; and that, if the Scots, remaining a ſeperate nation, with a King and court reſiding among them, had continued to improve and embelliſh their own dialect, inſtead of ſervilely aping the Engliſh, they would at preſent be poſſeſſed of a language in many points ſuperior to the Engliſh.

That this may not be conſidered as a paradox, I will endeavour to ſupport it by proofs that appear to me nearly concluſive; proofs drawn from the hiſtory and compariſon of the two dialects.

That the Engliſh and Scottiſh were originally but one language, is hardly queſtionable. It was introduced into Britain by the Anglo-Saxons about the middle of the ſixth century, and, with their conqueſts, ſoon ſpread itſelf over all the ſouthern part of the iſland, except whither the old inhabitants retired in bodies, and with their own laws and cuſtoms, retained alſo their Celtic dialect.

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How long the Saxon remained in Britain, in the form in which it was introduced, it is now impoſſible to aſcertain, for want of coeval written monuments. Some Britiſh words would naturally mix with it, either from connubial aſſociation or contiguous abode. The old names of places (with perhaps ſome little variety of pronunciation) would be generally adopted; and, if there were any ſcience, art, uſage, implement of war or huſbandry, ſpecies of food or raiment, or any other thing peculiar to the Britons, or unknown to the Saxons, the Britiſh appellation would probably be retained. In the ſame manner, though not perhaps in the ſame proportion, would the Britons borrow from the Saxons.

But, as their mutual friendſhip was not of long continuance, and was ſucceeded by mutual averſion, it is not in the leaſt probable, that the original genius and texture of either language received any conſiderable alteration from ſo ſhort an intercourſe. Accordingly, the people of Wales and Cornwall continued to ſpeak the Celtic dialects that were peculiar to them at the time of the Saxon invaſion; and the Saxons to uſe nearly the ſame Teutonic dialect which they brought from the Continent.

Some changes, indeed, may probably have been made in it by the introduction of Chriſtianity among them, through the medium of Roman miſſionaries. From theſe they certainly received their alphabet, and learned the art of writing, which they adapted ſooner to their mother tongue than perhaps any other barbarous nation. Their mother tongue, if not a poliſhed, muſt, even then, have been a copious language, as they could expreſs in it the myſteries, ſacraments, and rites, of their new religion, which we ſhall hardly find any other converted people to have done. The miſſionaries themſelves very wiſely encouraged the cultivation of the Saxon among their new converts, as the beſt mean of ſecuring their converſion. The laws of

Edelbert,

Edelbert, the firſt Chriſtian King of Kent, were written in Saxon *. In Bede's time, many of the clergy knew no other language. This we learn from Bede himſelf, in his letter to Biſhop Egbert †. For the ſake of ſuch, as well as for that of the laity, he tranſlated into Engliſh the Creed and the Lord's prayer ‡. This, indeed, ſhows the great ignorance of the clergy; but it alſo ſhows that the Saxon was then, and muſt have been before, a written language.

It had been applied even to poetry. Caedmon, who died in 670, turned almoſt all the Scripture hiſtory into Saxon verſe; and ſo ſweetly pathetic were his ſtrains, that he was, like all other great poets, ſuppoſed to be inſpired: No poſterior bard could rival him ‖. It is much to be regretted that thoſe poems of Caedmon are loſt, except a very ſmall fragment, preſerved in Alfred's tranſlation of Bede's Hiſtory, and which may be ſeen there, or in the 3d volume of Hickes's *Theſaurus*.

On the invaſion of the Danes, towards the cloſe of the ninth century, and their complete conqueſt of the country in 1017, the Saxon idiom

* Quae conſcripta Anglorum ſermone hactenus habentur; *Bede, lib.* 2. *chap.* 5.

† Et quidem omnes, qui Latinam linguam lectionis uſu didicerunt, etiam haec (ſymbolum Apoſtolorum et Dominicam orationem) optime didiciſſe certiſſimum eſt: Sed idiotas, hoc eſt eos qui propriae linguae notitiam habent, haec ipſa ſua lingua dicere, ac ſedulo decantare facito. Quod non ſolum de Laicis, *i. e.* in populari adhuc vita conſtitutis, verum etiam de Clericis, ſive Monachis, qui Latinae ſunt linguae expertes, fieri oportet; *Epiſt. ad Ecgberctum Antiſt. et Smith, p.* 306.

‡ Propter quod et ipſe multis ſaepe ſacerdotibus idiotis haec utraque in linguam Anglorum tranſlata obtuli.

‖ Et quidem, et alii poſt illum in gente Anglorum religioſa poemata facere tentabant: Sed nullus eum aequiparare potuit. Nam ipſe, non ab hominibus, ſed divinitus adjutus, gratis canendi donum accepit.

idiom was ſomewhat altered, though not nearly ſo much as Hickes and others would have us to believe. The Daniſh, being originally derived from the ſame ſource, readily incorporated itſelf into a ſiſter dialect; and the wiſe, unviolent, conduct of Canute contributed not a little towards this incorporation.

In this Dano-Saxon, we have a ſufficient number of monuments remaining to enable us to form a juſt idea of its comparative value, with reſpect to other languages of that age; and, impure as it may be called, it will certainly bear the compariſon.

But the Norman Conqueſt was like to be more fatal to the Saxon. William, by a tyranny peculiar to himſelf, endeavoured to aboliſh the very language of his Engliſh ſubjects, and to ſubſtitute, all at once, his own French jargon in its ſtead. French was the only tongue that was tolerated at court; the laws were written in French; French ſchools were eſtabliſhed all over the country; and the Saxon was univerſally proſcribed.

The Saxon, however, which has always been the language of freemen, tenaciouſly kept its ground, and in the end triumphed over its imperious rival, although not without retaining the ſcars of many wounds received in the conflict.

This Normanic-Dano-Saxon is the preſent Engliſh tongue; but ſo much amended, amplified, and embelliſhed, ſince the revival of letters, that it is, confeſſedly, one of the moſt correct, moſt copious, and moſt energetic languages in the world *.

Let

* A good hiſtory of the origin, progreſs, and perfection of Engliſh proſe is yet wanting. The Rev. Mr Herbert Croft has aſſured me, that he has ample materials for ſuch a

Let us now inquire when and how the Saxon was firſt introduced into Scotland; what was its gradual progreſs; and what were its diſtinctive characteriſtics at the union of the two kingdoms under one Sovereign.

If it were true, as ſome modern writers have imagined, that the low-lands, or eaſtern parts of Scotland, were originally peopled by German Goths *, this inquiry would be unneceſſary; and the Scottiſh dialect would, in point of Britiſh naturaliſation, have a prior claim to the Engliſh; for thoſe parts of Scotland were certainly inhabited by the Picts before the Saxons entered Britain.

But, that the language of the Picts was a Gothic dialect, I have never yet ſeen any thing like a poſitive proof; while, on the other hand, we have at leaſt one very ſtrong negative proof that it was not a Gothic dialect. The names of all the rivers, mountains, towns, villages, and caſtles, of any note or antiquity, from Berwick-law to Buchanneſs, and from Buchanneſs to Arder-Sier, are all evidently Celtic. We muſt, then, either ſuppoſe that the language of the Picts was a dialect of the Celtic; or that they were not the original inhabitants of the country; or, in fine, that, after the extinction of the Pictiſh empire, or rather its union with that of the Iriſh-Scots, the language

a work. May we not hope, then, that, when he has finiſhed his preſent great undertaking, (a complete Dictionary of the Engliſh Language), he will apply thoſe materials to their proper uſe?

* Mr Hume, in the firſt edition of his Hiſtory, had ſaid, "This cannot be doubted," and added, that "the language ſpoken in thoſe counties is a ſtronger proof of this "event, than can be oppoſed by the imperfect, or rather fabulous annals which are ob-"truded on us by the Scottiſh hiſtorians." This ſeems to me an odd ſort of argument. By the ſame mode of reaſoning, I might prove, that the eaſt of England was originally peopled by Angles or Saxons. In the latter editions of Hume's Hiſtory, this paſſage is not found.

language of theſe latter univerſally prevailed, and effaced the very remembrance of its Gothic predeceſſor. The ſecond of theſe ſuppoſitions is contrary to hiſtory; the third is belied by experience: The firſt, then, is the only one that is founded on probability.

To this ſtrong negative argument, we may add a ſort of poſitive preſumption. The names of the Pictiſh Kings, and the few appellatives of their tongue, that have been preſerved in Bede, and other ancient writers, ſeem to be as much Celtic as the proper names of places. I am perfectly aware, how deceitful are the arguments derived from mere etymology: there is hardly any branch of literature that is liable to be more abuſed. Still, however, a rational etymology is often of great uſe in diſtinguiſhing nations, and tracing their remote origins; eſpecially if corroborated by other probable arguments; and we find that thoſe even who affect to deſpiſe it the moſt, have occaſionally recourſe to it, for the ſupport of their own favourite ſyſtems.

Whether the Pictiſh dialect were exactly the ſame with that of the Iriſh-Scottiſh, there is no certain criterion, by which we can judge. I am inclined to believe that there was a ſhade of difference; as great perhaps as there is between the Erſe of Arran and that of Uiſt; but ſtill it was a Celtic dialect; and more or leſs intelligible to all thoſe who ſpoke Celtic. The Aberdeen breviary commemorates, on the 24th of Auguſt, a Saint Erchad, born at Kincardine in Mearns, (confeſſedly a part of the Pictiſh kingdom) who, going to Rome, was conſecrated Biſhop of the Scottiſh nation; and, on his return, paſſed through the provinces of the BRITONS and SCOTS, preaching the word of God, until he came to the place of his nativity. That is, as I conceive it, he preached to all the CELTIC inhabitants in his mother-tongue; but not to the SAXONS, whoſe language he did not underſtand. It is alſo worth remarking,

 that

that of about one hundred Saints names, of which the Scottiſh Calendar conſiſts, there are only three, I think, that are Saxon; and thoſe three are poſterior to the tenth century.

Taking it for granted, then, at preſent, that the inhabitants of Scotland received their Saxon dialect from England, I will try to account for its progreſs, and its peculiarities, the beſt I can.

With regard to the more ſouthern provinces, between the Tweed and the Forth, we may eaſily conceive, that the language of their Engliſh neighbours may have more or leſs been uſed by them, even before the Daniſh invaſion. Oſwy, King of Northumberland, had, as early as 650, made both the Scots and Picts, in ſome meaſure, his tributaries: and a great number of Engliſh had ſettled in the ſubjected provinces. In 681, the Picts, as Bede informs us, had an Engliſh Biſhop given them, who was under the juriſdiction of the Biſhop of York, and whoſe ſee was *Abercurnig* (Abercorn) on the banks of the Forth *. Accordingly, in a ſynod holden by Archbiſhop Theodore in 685, we find *Trumwine* deſigning himſelf *Epiſcopus Pictorum*. This, however, muſt have been after his expulſion from the ſee, that ſame year, in which the Picts, having defeated Egfrid, who, though brother-in-law to their King, had wantonly invaded their territories, either killed or captived all the Engliſh who could not ſave themſelves by flight, and ſo recovered their former poſſeſſions, which the Engliſh had uſurped †.

As

* Poſito quidem in regione Anglorum, ſed in vicinia freti, quod Anglorum terras Pictorumque diſterminat.—*Bede, lib. iv. ch.* 26.

† Ex quo tempore ſpes coepit et virtus Anglorum fluere ac retro ſublapſa referri. Nam Picti terram poſſeſſionis ſuae quam tenuerant Angli---receperunt---ubi inter plurimos

As the Engliſh domination had laſted only thirty-five years, it is hardly poſſible that their language had ſo far prevailed over that of the natives, as to become the common, or even a current dialect among them: yet, as it was a poliſhed and written tongue, while the Pictiſh remained in its priſtine barbarity, it would probably be learned by the clergy and the better ſort, were it only for the purpoſe of diſtinguiſhing themſelves from the herd of the people. And, as the Greek was firſt propagated among the Romans, through their Grecian captives*; ſo might the Engliſh captives be inſtrumental in ſpreading the Saxon among their Pictiſh maſters. For, as Hume moſt juſtly obſerves, 'The ſuperiority of civility and knowledge, however ſmall, over total ignorance and barbariſm is prodigious†.'

How far, ſouthward from the Forth, the boundary between the two nations was now removed, it is hard to ſay; though I am inclined to believe that a part of the preſent Northumberland, and perhaps of Cumberland, was on the Pictiſh ſide.

mos gentis Anglorum, vel interemptos gladio, vel ſervitio addictos, vel de terrâ Pictorum fuga lapſos, etiam vir Dei Trumwinus, qui in eos epiſcopatum acceperat, receſſit.—*Bede, lib. iv. chap.* 26.

* Graecia capta ferum victorem cepit, et artes
Intulit agreſti Latio.—*Horat.*

† The number of theſe Engliſh ſlaves or ſervants was greatly augmented in the reign of Malcolm III. who, after ravaging the north of England, carried away ſo many young men and women captives, that ſcarcely a village, or even hamlet, in Scotland, was to be ſeen without ſome of them. "Anno duodecimo Willielmi, Rex Malcolm venit in Angliam, et praedavit in Northumbriam uſque ad Tinam, et multos theſauros et homines in vinculis ſecum duxit."—*Annal. Waverl. ad an.* 1078. "Repleta eſt ergo Scotia ſervis et ancillis Anglici generis, ita ut etiam uſque hodie, nulla, non dico villula, ſed nec domuncula ſine his valeat invenire."—*Hoveden. p.* 452. *ed. Francof.*

The long ceſſation of hoſtilities, that enſued, muſt have been attended with a conſtant mutual intercourſe; during which the Saxon would make nearly the ſame progreſs in ſupplanting the Celtic as it has ever ſince done; and of which, even in our own days, I ſhall, afterwards, have occaſion to obſerve ſome remarkable inſtances.

When Bede finiſhed his hiſtory, in 731, the Picts lived in the moſt perfect peace and amity with their Engliſh neighbours; and had even adopted from them the Romiſh diſcipline, with reſpect to the celebration of Eaſter; which the Britons ſtill obſtinately rejected: another ſtrong preſumptive proof of the prevalence of Saxon uſages, and conſequently of the Saxon language: for uſages and language are commonly communicated together.

This peace between the Picts and Engliſh appears to have been of long duration, and not to have been groſsly violated until the reign of Edward the Elder, who, in 924 (ſays the Saxon Chronicle) entered into Pictland as far as Badecanwyllan*; near to which he built and garriſoned a town, and received the homage of the Scottiſh King†, and of all the Scottiſh nation. From this garriſon, undoubtedly compoſed of Engliſhmen, would the Saxon make daily encroachments upon the Celtic; as we ſhall always find it to have done, on ſimilar occaſions.

Whatever

* Badecanwyllan is ſuppoſed by Gibſon to be Bakewell in Derbyſhire. But this is altogether incredible. It muſt have been a place, I think, in the heart of the Pictiſh territories, where there had been no town or garriſon, before this period; but which was now neceſſary to keep the Scots in awe. A garriſon in Derbyſhire could never have anſwered that purpoſe.

† This was Kenneth, who, either by conqueſt or alliance, united the two nations of Picts and Scots into one kingdom, henceforward to be denominated Scotland.

Whatever of the Saxon tongue had hitherto been received by the Picts and Scots, was untainted with any other dialect, and moſt probably remained ſo till after the Norman Conqueſt. For it does not appear, that the Danes, during their ſtruggles with the Engliſh, and their eventual conqueſt of England, made any permanent ſettlement on the north ſide of the Tweed. Canute, indeed, once appeared with his army on the Scottiſh borders; but it was only to enforce the homage of the Scottiſh King for the dominions which he held of the Crown of England.

It is not then until the reign of Henry II. towards the year 1175, that we can look for any material alteration in the Scoto-Saxon dialect; but, in that year, the Caſtles of Berwick, Roxburgh, Jedburgh, Edinburgh, and Stirling, were put into the hands of the Engliſh for a ſtipulated time; and the two firſt were entirely and perpetually ceded to England. As far as the influence of thoſe garriſons reached, it would give a Norman tinge to the Scoto-Saxon; for the Engliſh of that period was ſtrongly Normanized.

But the reign of Malcolm Kenmore ſeems to have been the firſt period of a general denization of Saxon in Scotland. That Monarch had been bred in England, and married an Engliſh Princeſs. Her retinue were all Engliſh. Engliſh, in conſequence, would become the language of the Court. The courtiers would carry it to their reſpective homes; their domeſtics would be ambitious to ſpeak the language of their maſters; and thus it would be gradually introduced into every faſhionable circle. Many Saxons likewiſe left England on account of the Norman oppreſſion, and very naturally took refuge in the neighbouring country, where they had all reaſon to hope for a friendly reception. Commerce and intermarriages became now frequent between the two nations; and that chain of predi-

diſpoſing,

diſpoſing cauſes was begun to be forged, which has ſince happily united them into one kingdom.

Although, from what has been ſaid, it may reaſonably be ſuppoſed, that the Engliſh had made a conſiderable progreſs in the ſouthern parts of Scotland, even before the Norman Conqueſt, it would be unfair thence to conclude, that it had become the common language of the people. On the contrary, it is my belief, that it was yet but little known beyond the Forth, and hardly known at all beyond the Tay. We learn from Turgot, that St Margaret was obliged to make uſe of an interpreter, when ſhe would ſpeak to her Scottiſh ſubjects*; and the King, who knew both languages, uſually performed that office. Indeed, we can hardly conceive it poſſible, that the common people of the more northern regions ſhould have yet abandoned their vernacular tongue, to adopt a foreign dialect. Their religion would partly ſerve to guard them againſt this innovation. They had been converted to Chriſtianity by Iriſh miſſionaries, who ſpoke the ſame language with themſelves. Icolomkil was the parent ſtock, from which their whole eccleſiaſtical oeconomy had proceeded. From it they had received not only their faith, but alſo their diſcipline. The Abbot of Hii was their ſole Patriarch, to whom even their Biſhops were originally ſubordinate†. Their Saints, as it has been obſerved, were all Iriſh; and the Roman-Saxon ritual ſeems not to have been fully eſtabliſhed among them, until the reign of David.

Then,

* Even to the Biſhops convened in council. See *Turgot Vita S. Marg.* apud Bollandum.

† Habere autem ſolet Inſula (Hii) Rectorem ſemper Abbatem, Preſbyterum; cujus juri et omnis Provincia, et ipſi etiam Epiſcopi, ordine inuſitato, debeant eſſe ſubjecti.—*Bede, lib. iii. c.* 4.

Then, indeed, an inundation of religious orders, chiefly from England, not only altered the form of their worſhip, but alſo greatly contributed towards the propagation of the Engliſh language amongſt them. The Culdees (whoſe morals were not the moſt edifying, nor their learning the moſt extenſive) were perſecuted and aboliſhed; Icolomkil was depretiated and deſerted; and the newly erected monaſteries became the only reputable ſeminaries of every ſort of learning. In them were educated the paſtor and the prelate, the lawyer and the gentlemen; and each of theſe ſerved as a vehicle to ſpread the language of their Engliſh teachers.

The attempts of Edward I. and of Edward III. on Scotland, ſeem to have entirely baniſhed the Celtic from all the coaſts of the eaſtern counties, as far as Buchan, and paved the way for its gradual expulſion from the other parts of the kingdom. From the numerous garriſons which he placed in all the principal towns and faſtneſſes, was the Engliſh diffuſed over all the Lowlands; in the ſame manner as it has, in latter times, been diffuſed over the Highlands, from the garriſons of Inverneſs, Fort George, Fort William, Fort Auguſtus, Ruthven, Braemar, Cargarff, &c. It began, ſoon after, to be employed in public deeds, in lieu of Latin; and, in the reign of James I. our acts of Parliament were written in it.

From this laſt period, there are a ſufficient number of printed books and manuſcripts, written in the Scoto-Saxon dialect, to enable us to form a juſt idea of its component parts, and comparative excellence.

On analyſing the Scoto-Saxon dialect, I find it compoſed; Firſt, and chiefly, of pure Saxon; Secondly, of Saxonized Celtic, whether Welſh, Pictiſh, or Erſe; Thirdly, of Saxonized Norman or old French; Fourthly, of more modern French Scoticized; Fifthly,

of

of Daniſh, Dutch, and Flemiſh, occaſionally incorporated; Sixthly, of words borrowed from the learned dead languages. It muſt not however be ſuppoſed, that all theſe are blended together in the ſame proportion in every Scottiſh provincial dialect. The Welſh words are principally to be found in the more ſouthern provinces, the Pictiſh and Erſe in the more northern; The Daniſh, Dutch, and Flemiſh all along the eaſtern coaſt, eſpecially in the trading towns and fiſhing villages*: terms relative to the arts, politeneſs, and luxury, are moſtly French; and Greek and Latin words are rarely to be found but in authors.

I now proceed to the laſt part of my deſign; which is to ſhew, that the Scoto-Saxon dialect was, at the union of the two nations, equal in every reſpect, in ſome reſpects ſuperior, to the Anglo-Saxon dialect.

Three things ſeem to conſtitute the perfection, or rather relative ſuperiority, of a language: *richneſs*, *energy*, and *harmony*.

A language is rich in proportion to the copiouſneſs of its vocabulary; and this will principally depend, Firſt, on the number of its primitive or radical words. Secondly, on the multiplicity of its derivations and compounds. Thirdly, on the variety of its inflexions. Now to me it appears, that in all, or almoſt all, theſe reſpects, the Scottiſh dialect of the Saxon has ſome advantage over the Engliſh dialect.

As to primitives, there is no ſort of doubt. All thoſe contained in our beſt Engliſh lexicons are to be met with in the Scottiſh writers,

* The inhabitants of the latter have, indeed, many words and phraſes, that appear to be peculiar to them. Their intermarrying only among themſelves may be one cauſe of this.

writers, and are ſtill uſed in the Scottiſh colloquial dialects, and many hundreds, beſides, which are not found in our lexicons; but which are as pure Saxon or Teutonic as any of thoſe we uſe: not to mention a conſiderable number of Celtic and French radicals, which, as I have already obſerved, have been adopted into the Scottiſh nomenclature; without the leaſt violence to the genius of the language, or the ſmalleſt appearance of heterogeneouſneſs.

On the ſame ſide is alſo the ſuperiority ariſing from the multiplicity and multifariouſneſs of derivatives and compounds*. It is true, indeed, that neither the Scots nor the Engliſh are extremely rich in this particular: ſtill, whatever ſuperabundance there is, belongs evidently to the former. In the richeſt of all languages, that of the Greeks, one copious ſource of wealth is the great number of terms that diminiſh, augment, or modify that primary idea; and it was the great ambition of the beſt Latin writers to rival them in this point. For inſtance, from the Greek ανθρωπος a *man*, we find the following diminutives ανθρωπιον. ανθρωπαριον, and ανθρωπισκος; which the Latins tried to imitate by their *homulus*, *homuncio*, and *homunculus*. So from κορη a *girl*, come κορσιον, κορασιον, κορισιον, κορισκη and κορισκιον; for which the Latins have only *pupa*, *puella*, and *puellula*. It is incredible what variety, what imagery, and what ſweetneſs ariſe from the proper uſe of ſuch diminutives. The well known ode of Adrian to his dying ſoul ſhall ſerve as an example,

Animula vagula, blandula!
Hoſpes comeſque corporis!
Quae nunc abibis in loca
Pallidula, rigida, nudula,
Nec, ut ſoles, dabis jocos.

The

* I join theſe together, becauſe it is not eaſy to diſtinguiſh them. Perhaps, to ſpeak more properly, every derivative is a compound; although in thoſe members of a word,

The Greeks and Latins not only modified their terms by diminutives, but alſo, though not to ſo great an extent, by augmentatives. Thus, the former called a man with great lips χειλων from χειλος; a very rich man πλουτας from πλουτος, &c. So, likewiſe, the latter had the *labro*, *naſo*, *capito* &c. Hence it is that the Italians, not without reaſon, boaſt of their language, as being the moſt copious and expreſſive of modern tongues, and are wont to give, as an inſtance, the word *capello*; from which they have the diminutives *capelletto*, *capellino*, *capelluccio*, of which the laſt two expreſs *prettineſs* likewiſe, and the augmentatives *capellone*, *capellaccio*, of which the laſt brings alſo the idea of *ugline/s*.

But the Scots ſeems to be richer, at leaſt in diminutives, than the Italian; and to equal the Greek itſelf. For the word equivalent to *capello* may be diminutively modified after all the following manners. *Hat*, *hatty*, *hattik*, *hattiky*, *hattiken**: nor are theſe uſed indiſcriminately, any more than *capelletto* and *cappellino*.

Nor were the Scots entirely without augmentatives. Theſe were formed by adding *um* to adjectives, and *o* to ſubſtantives; as *greatum*, *goodum*, *heado*, *mano*. It is true, they are both become obſolete: yet it is not many years ago, ſince I heard a farmer's wife laughing heartily at her neighbour, for calling a horſe of a middle ſize a *horſie!* "He is more like a *horſo*," ſaid ſhe.

It

word, which we call inſeperable particles, the original meaning is ſometimes ſo obſcure as not readily to be perceived, nor eaſily aſcertained. But we are accuſtomed to call thoſe words derivatives, which have ſome ſuch particle added; and compounds, ſuch as have it prefixed to them. Thus *un-true* is called a compound; but *truly* a derivative. Yet *ly* is only the abbreviation of *like* or *lick*, and *true-like* is as much a compound as *untrue*.

* So correſponding to the Greek examples, *man*, *manny*, *mannik*, *manniky*, and *mannikin*; *laſs*, *laſſy*, *laſſik*, *laſſiky*, and *laſſikin*.

It has been remarked by Grammarians, that the Latins, in order to make their common diminutives ſtill more diminutive, ſometimes prefixed the words *parvus*, *minutus*, &c. as *parva munuſcula*, *minutae interrogatiunculae*. So the Scots, a *little manikin*, a *wee wifikin*, and a *wee-wee babiky*, &c.

With regard to the variety of compounds, both Engliſh and Scots are greatly defective, compared with ſome other languages: but the former, I think, is more ſo than the latter. When I ſpeak of compounds, I mean not here, ſuch as we have adopted from the Greek and Latin, as *philoſophy*, *mathematics*, *conſecration*, *concurrence*, &c. but ſuch as are made up of two or more Saxon terms, whether ſeparable or inſeparable, as *man-ſervant*, *maid-ſervant*, *ſtone-cutter*, *heedleſs*, *childiſh*, *untoward*, *godlike*, *unjuſtly*, *loathſome*, &c. In all theſe and other ſimilar combinations, the Scots is equally rich with the Engliſh, and has in ſome of them a variety of forms unknown to the Engliſh. Thus we uſe either *ty* or *tith*, as *poverty* and *poortith*, *rarety* and *raretith*; *dom* or *rik*, as *kingdom* and *kingrik*; *ly* or *ſum*, as *ugly* or *ugſum*; *un* or *wan*, as *unlucky*, *wanchancy*, *unhappy*, *wanwierdy*. And this laſt mentioned particle is uſed not only with adjectives, but alſo with ſubſtantives; as *wan-reſt*, *wan-hope*, *wan-worth*, *wan-thriſt*, *wan-heil*, *wan-thank**, &c.

Of inflexion there is nearly the ſame (that is very little) variety, in both Scots and Engliſh. Here we equally feel our wants; and the more ſo, as there is little hope of their ever being ſupplied. How our forefathers could abandon the principles of Saxon grammar, to adopt thoſe of one ſo inferior to it, is certainly matter of aſtoniſhment; but ſo it is. I am inclined to believe that the authority of Chaucer contributed not a little towards completing this re-

 volution

* We have ſtill ſome veſtiges of this ſort of combination in Engliſh; as *untruth*, *unreſt*.

volution in Engliſh literature: for in Wiclef, who preceded him but a few years, we find many traces of pure Saxoniſm. Some of theſe the firſt Scottiſh writers retained; and many more of them, not half a century ago, were employed in common ſpeech. On the whole, the inflections of Scottiſh grammar were more varied, and leſs anomalous than thoſe of Engliſh grammar; as any one may convince himſelf, by reading Douglas's Virgil, or the admirable Cathechiſm of Archbiſhop Hamilton, of which I ſhall have occaſion to ſpeak afterwards.

The ſuperior ENERGY of a language (independent of peculiarity of ſtile) ſeems to conſiſt in this, that it can expreſs the ſame ſentiments in fewer words, and with fewer ſymbols, than any other: and this, I apprehend, is the juſt boaſt of the Engliſh. Our numerous monoſyllables, rough, rigid, and inflexible as our oaks, are capable of ſupporting any burthen; whilſt the polyſyllables of our ſouthern neighbours, tall, ſmooth, and ſlender, like the Lombardy poplar, bend under the ſmalleſt weight. From this, no doubt, ariſes the confeſſed ſuperiority of our poetry; eſpecially of the higher kinds, the *epic* and *tragic*. This, alſo, gives a peculiar ſtrength to our apophthegms, and to every ſort of compoſition, where ſtrength is a chief ingredient.

It would be ridiculous to attempt a general compariſon between the Scottiſh and Engliſh poetry: it would be comparing a ſmall grove to an immenſe foreſt: yet in thoſe kinds of poetry which the bards of Scotland chiefly cultivated, the hiſtorical, allegorical, and ſatyrical *tale*, and the tragic and comic *ballad*, I would engage to pick out, of the few of their compoſitions that remain, ſeveral pieces in every reſpect equal, in energy far ſuperior, to any contemporary Engliſh production. Nay, I know not if, in any language whatever, a more energetic compoſition can be produced than the well-known

known ballad of Hardinknute. It conſiſts almoſt entirely of radical words. In 776 lines there are not above ten triſyllables, and four of theſe are proper names*.

Although *harmony* and *energy* be not altogether incompatible, it is certain that they are never found in the ſame proportion in the ſame language. Muſcular ſtrength and lovely ſymmetry are rarely conjoined: Adonis is not a Hercules, nor Venus a Thaleſtris. The languages allowed to be the moſt harmonious, are the Greek and Italian; and the nearer any other approaches to their genius, the more harmonious it is accounted. In this ſcale of eſtimation, the Engliſh (like all other northern dialects) is far from being high. Its hiſſing ſounds, its cluſters of uncoaleſcing conſonants, the little variety of its inflexions, and the paucity of its polyſyllables, are all againſt its harmony; and it requires much art and labour in the arrangement of words and ſentences, to make it in any degree melodious.

If it now be aſked, whether of the two dialects, the Scoto-Saxon, or the Anglo-Saxon, I think the leaſt unharmonious; I readily give my ſuffrage, ſuch as it is, in favour of the former. For,

Firſt, in the Scoto-Saxon dialect, there are fewer hiſſing ſounds. The *ſh* rarely occurs, its place being generally ſupplied by *s* ſingle; as *ſal*, *bus*, *polis*, *peris*, *punis*, *deminis*, *preadmonis*, for *ſhall*, *buſh*, *poliſh*, *periſh*, *puniſh*, *demniſh*, *preadmoniſh*. In like manner is the *s* itſelf, whether ſingle or double, excluded from the Scots, by a different and often more regular derivation of verbs from the Latin. For,

* I am well aware that Hardinknute is a modern production; but it is ſo perfect an imitation of the beſt Scottiſh compoſitions, that it may fairly ſerve as an example of their excellence.

For, whereas the Engliſh verb is chiefly derived from the ſupine; as to *expreſs*, *depreſs*, *compreſs*, *expoſe*, *depoſe*, *compoſe*; the Scots is formed from the preſent or infinitive, as to *expreme*, *depreme*, *compreme*, *expone*, *depone*, *compone*; although the other ſort of formation is alſo occaſionally uſed.

Secondly, There are not, I mean there were not formerly, in the Scots ſuch harſh combinations of conſonants, as in the Engliſh *bt*, *ct*, *lf*, *lfth*, *lm*, *mn*, *nct*, *ng*, *ngth*, *pt*, *mpt*, and the like, which, though in the Latin, whence they were derived, they had nothing diſagreeable, becauſe they were never final, and could be disjoined in ſyllabication, cannot certainly, as terminations, be pronounced without an effort by an ordinary tongue, nor heard without pain by a delicate ear. All thoſe ſounds the Scots avoided, either by retrenching the laſt letter, and ſpeaking and writing *neglek*, *ſel'*, *twel*, *precink*, *decerp*, *temp. kil*, &c. for *neglect*, *ſelf*, *twelve*, *precinct*, *decerpt*, *tempt*, *kiln*; or by an eliſion of the prior conſonant, with or without a change of the preceding vowel; as *perfet*, and *perfyt*, *ſolen*, *ſtown*, &c. for *perfect*, *ſolemn*, and *ſtoln*; or by changing the ſyllable altogether, as in all the active participles in *ing*; which in Scots, terminate in *and**; as *doand*, *ſayand*, *flytand*, *bytand*, &c. And even here the final *d* was frequently cut off by writers, and never heard in ſpeech.

Thirdly, the Scots, in borrowing words from other language, ſeem to have paid a juſt attention to the nicer and leſs diſcernible ſhades of ſound (if I may ſo ſay), in the commutation and arrangement of conſonants, generally preferring the ſofteſt of the ſame claſs, or thoſe that coaleſced the moſt readily with the following letter. Thus they ſaid *deſcryv*, *luf*, *haif*, *optene*, *obliſit*; for *deſcribe*, *love*, *have*, *obliged*. For the ſame reaſon they frequently changed the place of the liquids, particularly of *r*, and for *third*, *thirty*, *thirſt*, *firſt*, *dirt*, *wart*; ſaid *thrid*, *thritty*, *thriſt*, *friſt*, *drit*, *wrat*. The ſound which we now expreſs by *th*, and which almoſt all other nations, except the Spaniards, in vain attempt to utter, was changed by the Scots into *d* or *dd*, or, to ſpeak more properly, they retained the ancient Saxon and Teutonic ſound and ſymbol *d*, which the Engliſh have changed into *th*, as *fader*, *moder*, *broder*, *hidder*, *quhidder*.

* Or in *ant*. This latter ſeems to be preferable.

Fourthly, it is my opinion, that even the vowel ſounds that predominate in the Scottiſh dialect, are of themſelves more harmonious than thoſe which are the moſt prevalent in Engliſh. That the open or broad *a*, for example, is one of the moſt harmonious vocal ſounds, is clear both from its being the moſt common, in almoſt all known languages, European or Aſiatic, from the Italian to the Hindoo. Yet this ſound very rarely occurs in Engliſh, but in Scots is extremely common, even now, and was formerly ſtill more ſo. Not only did it take place of the Engliſh open ſhort *a*, as in *graſs*, *hand*, *man*, *maſs*, *&c.* but even of the long ſlender *a* as in *fame*, *dame*, *ſpake*, *awake*, *brake*, *take*, *nation*, *conſideration*, *&c.* It was alſo retained in a number of Saxon words, in which we have gradually changed it into *o* long, as *ſnaw*, *knaw*, *craw*, *blaw*, *thraw*, for *ſnow*, *know*, *crow*, *blow*, *throw*, *&c.*

Neither will it be denied, I think by any, but perhaps an Engliſhman, that the Italian *i*, equivalent to our *ee*, is a more harmonious ſound than the Engliſh *i* long. The Scots, accordingly, preferred the former, as in the words *admire*, *retire*, *live*, *ſurvive*, *require*, &c. which they pronounced, as if they were written *admeer*, *reteer*, *leeve*, *ſurveeve*, *requeer*.

I know

I know not if I ſhould rank among the peculiar characteriſtics of the Scottiſh dialect, that it loves to place the emphatical accent on the laſt ſyllables of words, or as near to the laſt ſyllables as it is poſſible; becauſe it appears, not only from Chaucer, but from Shakeſpeare, and Spenſer, that there has latterly been made a conſiderable change in Engliſh accentuation: nor will I poſitively affirm, that the placing of the accent on the laſt ſyllable conduces to harmony. This much, however, I will venture to ſay, in every ſort of iambic meaſure, (in which moſt of our poems are compoſed) the preſent Scottiſh and ancient Engliſh mode of accenting contributes not a little to facility in verſification.

There is, indeed, one found in the Scottiſh dialect, which muſt appear highly diſagreeable to an Engliſh, French, or Italian ear*, I mean the guttural *ch*. Yet, that this was an ancient Saxon ſound, is hardly to be queſtioned, as it ſtill prevails in all the other Teutonic dialects. It may be alſo obſerved in its favour, that the *round-mouthed* Greeks themſelves were ſo far from deeming it harſh, that they frequently combined it with other conſonants, eſpecially the liquids λ, ν, ϱ, as in χλαμυς, χνοη, χϱημα; and even in the ſemi-guttural θ, as in χθων. Nothſtanding all this, I muſt confeſs, that it appears to me, even who was early accuſtomed to it, an unpleaſant ſound; eſpecially when it is pronounced with a German or Arabic emphaſis, which the throat muſt labour as much to produce, as the tongue to produce the ſound of *th*. Be this as it will, it is certainly a very frequent ſound in the Scottiſh tongue; and is by the Scots, Germans, Swedes, Danes, and Dutch, conſidered as having nothing harſh in it; and that at any rate it is not ſo harſh as *k*. The truth is,

* It is remarkable that of all the ſouthern European nations, the Spaniards only acknowledge this ſound; which they expreſs by *x* or *j*. This ſeems to be a part of their Mooriſh inheritance.

is, or at leaſt ſo to me it appears, that it may occaſionally become a beauty in the hand of an orator or poet; who might uſe it to paint ſtrong rough images, and make the ſound an echo to the ſenſe. In this reſpect it has been admired even by a French critic, in the following lines of Homer:

Αι μεν ιπειτ' εφεροντ' επικαρσιαι· ισια δε σφιν
Τειχθα τε και τετραχθα διεσχισεν ις ανεμοιο. OD. ix. 71.

which Pope has endeavoured to imitate by

Now here, now there, the giddy ſhips are born;
And all the ratt'ling ſhrouds in fragments torn.

Will the reader pardon me for aiming at a Scottiſh verſion.

Headlong the ſhips are driv'n! *Thick thuds of wind*
In threes and fours the ſoughand ſails reſcind!

If the words *threes* and *fours* be pronounced with the deep northern guttural ſound *chrees*, *fouhrs*, the *gh* in *ſoughand* as the Greek χ; and reſcind as it were written *reſhind* (all after the Scottiſh pronounciation) I flatter myſelf that there will be found a feeble imitation of the original. So might a Scottiſh bard avail himſelf of ſuch words as *dochty* (doughty) *maucht* (might) *roch* (rough) *ſich* (ſigh) *teuch* (tough) with a better effect, I think, than would be produced by their Engliſh equivalents. May I be permitted to quote one of my own lines as an example? It is the 18th of the tranſlation of Virgil's firſt eclogue; where I have endeavoured to expreſs the great difficulty which poor Melibeus had to drag along his goat, by a word which, if I am not greatly deceived, has no match in Engliſh:

"And en, this en I drékhli drag alyv!"

There is yet one thing, in which the dialects of the two nations may be compared; namely, their peculiar mode of ſpelling the ſame words. This, if I had more leiſure, would afford me ample room for philological diſcuſſion. As it is, I muſt be contented with making a few obſervations.

Perhaps there never exiſted a nation, which had a conſiſtent and uniform orthography; or, if it were ſo at firſt, it did not long ſo remain. Of the moſt ancient Greek and Latin manuſcripts, that have eſcaped the wreck of time, there are not any two copies of the ſame author, in which the orthography is entirely the ſame: and although, ſince the invention of printing, much pains have been employed to reduce both thoſe dead languages to ſome ſort of orthographical ſyſtem; it is, at this day, far from being a ſettled point, which is the beſt orthography.

With reſpect to living tongues, the variety is, and muſt be, much greater. In the ſpace of almoſt every century, there are many changes made in the pronounciation; and this naturally leads to a change in orthography. So that, ſuppoſing the firſt writer, in every language, to have had the forming of his own alphabet, and to have ſo happily adjuſted ſounds and ſymbols, as that in the latter there was at firſt, neither deficiency nor redundancy; it is impoſſible that this perfect conſonance could be of any long duration. But the firſt writers, at leaſt in modern tongues, had not this advantage. They were obliged, or choſe to adapt the Latin alphabet to their vernacular ſounds; in the ſame manner that the Latins themſelves had adapted the Greek, and the Greeks the Phenician alphabet.

But as there might be, and generally were, ſounds in the vernacular tongue, which no letter or combination of letters in the Latin alphabet could expreſs; an approximation was all that could be obtained;

tained; unleſs new characters ſhould be invented to ſupply the defect. This was ſometimes attempted, but did not remove the difficulty. The new character remained; but the ſound which it at firſt repreſented, varied like its parent wind. A few examples will illuſtrate this.

When the Spaniſh, formed out of the Latin, began to be a written language, they very naturally adopted the Latin alphabet, and moſt probably found it adequate to the purpoſe. Let us ſuppoſe then, what is extremely probable, that the Latin word *folioſus*, was according to the genius of their tongue changed into *folioſo*. In that caſe, the Latin letters would perfectly expreſs the ſound. But when the Mooriſh gutturals began to predominate in the Spaniſh language, the letters *f. o. l. i. o. f. o.* no longer expreſſed the ſounds which they repreſented; hence writers were under the neceſſity of ſubſtituting the guttural aſpirate *h*, for the labial aſpirate *f*; and the deep guttural χ (repreſented by *j*) for the liquid *li*; which produced the word *hojoſo*.

In like manner it is ſcarcely to be doubted, but the Italians at firſt wrote *ſagitta*; for the hard ſound of *g* was as familiar to the northern nations who corrupted the Latin, as to the Latins themſelves. But, in proceſs of time, the ſound was ſoftened; and *ſagitta* no more expreſſed it: ſo that the word is now written *ſäëtta*.

So the French *mâitre*, and the Engliſh *maſter*, were, doubtleſs, originally *magiſter*; the French *eveque* and the Engliſh *biſhop* as certainly ἐπισκοπος; and the French and Engliſh *beau* was *bellus*. It is not the leaſt curious and entertaining part of etymology, to trace ſuch words up to their roots, and to obſerve by what various gradations they have been metamorphoſed into their preſent form. In *magiſter*, for inſtance, the firſt change that happened was in the

 ſound

found *g*, which, when it ceaſed to be hard, muſt be expreſſed by a ſofter element; hence *maïïſter*. As this produced a ſort of hiatus, one of the *i. i.* was ſoon ejected; this left *maïſter*. In time the *s* ceaſed to be heard; it was therefore excluded, and the word *maiter* aroſe; and by a tranſpoſition of the *e*, the preſent *mâitre:* which, after all, does not expreſs the preſent ſound of the French word in any other pronounciation but their own and ours. For an Italian and a Spaniard would pronounce it *maweetré*, and a German *mytré**. The whole French orthography is equally imperfect, notwithſtanding the pains that have been taken by their academy to render it a model.

It has been long the fate of England to be influenced by French uſages. The Normans firſt corrupted our language, and from the more modern French we have adopted a very erroneous orthography. Our alphabet is at the ſame time both deficient and redundant. We are obliged to combine letters to denote ſimple ſounds, and we denote compound ſounds by ſingle letters; the ſame letter, or combination of letters, repreſents different ſounds; and the ſame ſound is repreſented by different letters and combinations: we have ſounds which none of our letters or combinations of letters can expreſs; and our letters, and even the combinations of our letters, have often no ſound at all. All this is ſo evident, that exemplification ſeems unneceſſary. Nor is there any well grounded hope of a reformation. At leaſt, thoſe who have, from time to time, attempted it, have been only laughed at for their pains; from the ingenious Sir Thomas Smith, down to the ingenious Mr Elphinſton. Yet ſurely

* To expreſs the ſound repreſented by *maitre*, there ſhould be only four elements or letters; and four letters, which ſhould not repreſent any other ſound. The Oriental orthography, which European prejudice has repreſented as ſo imperfect, is far more perfect than any of ours.

ſurely it were a deſireable thing, that orthoëphy and orthography ſhould correſpond; and that every language had an alphabet ſufficient, and not more than ſufficient, to expreſs all its ſimple ſounds. It is nearly ſo with the preſent Italian, and might have been ſo with the preſent Engliſh, if our firſt writers had retained the Saxon alphabet, with the Saxon mode of uſing it.

The Scots, moſt certainly, deviated leſs from the Saxon orthography than the Engliſh: and hence, their oral and written language more reſembled one another. Their letters and combinations of letters were much more ſimply adapted to their ſounds, and more naturally expreſſed them: they generally painted the ſame ſound by the ſame ſymbol; and they generally contented themſelves with ſymbols that were barely neceſſary: ſo that a ſtranger, once acquainted with their alphabet, might nearly pronounce the word; and, on hearing the word, as nearly write it. The following inſtances taken at random from Archbiſhop Hamilton's Catechiſm, and contraſted with our Engliſh orthography, may ſerve as examples.

SCOTS.	ENGLISH.	SCOTS.	ENGLISH.
pepil	people	blud	blood
exempil	example	chaſt	chaſte
wemen	women	gudnes	goodneſs
levit	levite	hevin	heaven
jugis	judges	gret	great
tym	time	ydilnes	idleneſs
epiſtil	epiſtle	brekars	breakers
brak	brake	tuk	took
parabil	parable	ſecund	ſecond
ſteil	ſteal	evin	even
wyſman	wiſeman	pleſure	pleaſure
fynally	finally	ludgin	lodging.

Let

Let theſe two tables be preſented to any foreigner, who knows no more of our language than the power of each ſingle letter; I will venture to ſay, that he ſhall read the firſt in a manner much leſs unintelligible, even to an Engliſh ear, than he ſhall read the latter.

On the whole, then, I am of opinion, that if a philoſophical grammarian had exiſted in Scotland, prior to the reign of Mary, or about that period, and turned his attention to this object; it would have been no hard matter for him to reduce the Scottiſh orthography into a ſyſtem of equal perfection with that of the Italian. But I will go yet a ſtep farther; and, ſuppoſing myſelf to be ſuch a grammarian, will attempt to do, what I fancy he might have done: or rather what I would do at this day, if I had to reform the Scottiſh orthography. If this be accounted a folly, it is at leaſt an innocent one. I do not expect that my ſyſtem will ever be followed; but it pleaſes myſelf, and cannot well diſpleaſe any one beſides. It is on occaſions like this, that theory may take its free ſwing; becauſe its ſwings can do no injury.

If the Scottiſh were ſtill an unwritten language, and if I were permitted to regulate its orthography, I would certainly reduce the number of our preſent letters, change ſome of their forms, and add two or three which are wanting: ſo that my alphabet ſhould be as ſhort at leaſt as that of the Hebrews, and yet more comprehenſive than the Engliſh one: but ſince the eyes of my countrymen have been ſo long familiarized to the latter, I will not offend them by making any violent innovation in their horn-book. Contenting myſelf with the common ſymbols, and their common arrangement, I will only endeavour to aſcertain and diſtinguiſh their powers, and to ſupply their deficiency, either by diacritic marks, or approximate combinations.

combinations. The numerical figures in the following Table, refer to the ſubſequent obſervations.

TABLE.

	Symbols.		Powers.
1.	a	*a* ſhort, as in *hand*, or nearly ſo.
2.	á	*a* Italian, as in *father*.
3.	à	*a* broad, as in *law*.
4.	â	*a* ſlender, as in *fate*, *nation*.
5.	b	*b*.
6.	c	*c* ſoft.
7.	d	*d*.
8.	e	*e* ſhort, as in *element*.
9.	é	*e* middle, as in *ſend*.
10.	è	*e* long, as in *ſcene*.
11.	ei	*ei* German and Italian, nearly Engliſh *ay*.
12.	f	*f* or *ph*.
13.	g	*g* hard.
14.	gh	*y* conſonant.
15.	h	*h*
16.	i	*i* ſhort, as in *ſin*.
17.	ì	*i* Italian, or Engliſh *ee*.
18.	iou	*iou* a ſound peculiar to the Scots.
19.	j	*j* or *g* ſoft.
20.	k	k.
21.	kh	χ Greek, *ch* German, *x* Spaniſh.
22.	l	*l*.
23.	m	*m*.
24.	n	*n*.

	Symbols.	Powers.
25.	o	*o* ſhort, as in *hot*.
26.	ò	*o* long, as in *bone*.
27.	p	*p*.
28.	ph	*f*.
29.	q	*q*.
30.	r	*r*.
31.	s	*ſ*.
32.	ſh	*ſh*, or *ſch*, German.
33.	t	*t*.
34.	th	*th*, or θ, Greek.
35.	u	*u* ſhort, as in *ſhut*.
36.	ù	*oo*, or *u*, Italian.
37.	û	*u* Engliſh as in *pure*.
38.	v	*v*.
39.	w	*w*.
40.	x	*x*.
41.	y	*y* as in *by*, or *i* as in *wine*.
42.	z	*z*.

OBSERVATIONS.

1. This is not entirely the Engliſh *a* ſhort, as in *hand*, a ſound not known in Scotland, till very lately; but the ſhorteſt and moſt indiſtinct of all vocal ſounds, and which might be almoſt equally well expreſſed by a very ſhort *i*, and even by *e* or *u*. Sir William Jones informs us, that, in all the Indian dialects, "this vowel is conſidered as *inherent* in every conſonant*;" and ſo it ſeems evidently

* See Aſiatic Reſearches, vol. i. p. 14.

dently to have been by the Hebrews, Chaldees, Syrians, and Arabs. I have retained it particularly in all active participles; as *doand*, *writand*, &c. where it is plain, that *i*, *e*, or *u*, if rapidly pronounced, might be readily ſubſtituted for it.

2. The Scots ſeem formerly to have known no other ſound of this letter, which is indeed the general ſound all over the world, except in England.

3. This is only a prolongation of the preceeding.

4. This is plainly a ſimple ſound, and would be better repreſented by the Greek η. I believe the Scots have but lately adopted it from the Engliſh. It approximates to *é*, but is longer.

5. This letter is almoſt uniformly pronounced over all Europe, though in ſome countries it is confounded with *v*.

6. There is abſolutely no need for this letter; but I have retained it to expreſs occaſionally the ſound of *ſ*, and, in combination with *h*, that of *tſh*.

7. The Saxons uſed this letter with a daſh through it, to expreſs the Greek θ, or *th*.

8. *E* ſhort is leſs common in Scots than in Engliſh; the next letter commonly taking its place.

9. The mean ſound of *e*, though not mentioned by grammarians, is more or leſs an Engliſh ſound: for ſurely it is not pronounced exactly in the ſame manner in *elegy* and *lend*. But the difference is much more apparent in Scots.

10. The ſound of this letter is hardly diſtinguiſhable from that of *i* or Engliſh *ee*.

11. The combination *ei* is not known in England, at leaſt in the Metropolis. It is the Italian *ei*, and nearly the Engliſh *ay*.

12. This letter renders *ph* unneceſſary. See No. 28.

13. This letter was originally *z* or *zeta*, but by degrees took place of *c* or *gamma**. In Engliſh it has a hard and ſoft ſound; but here it is always hard. See No. 19.

14. I have choſen to make this combination expreſs our *y* conſonant, both becauſe I find it was the old Saxon uſage, and becauſe our Scottiſh writers almoſt univerſally adopted it. See No. 42. In ſome parts of Scotland it is ſtill aſpirated.

15. This is the ſofteſt of all aſpirates, and might, by the aid of two diacritic points, ſerve to denote other two harder ones. See No. 21.

16. This letter has often ſo nearly the ſound of ſhort *a*, that it may be uſed for it.

17. This is the true original ſound of *i*, and the only one the Italians, Spaniards, and Germans know. It is often uſed by the northern Scots, where the Engliſh pronounce it *y*, as in *write*, *rival*, *ſkill*.

18. By this combination I expreſs a ſound peculiar to the Scots and northern Engliſh, and might in Engliſh be written *you*; or it might

* In the Gothic alphabet *g* had the ſound of *i*.

might be expreſſed by ſome diacritic mark over the preceding conſonant, like the Spaniſh n. See No. 22.

19. The *j* repreſents ſufficiently the ſound of ſoft *g*. It would have been better, perhaps, to have retained the latter with a diacritic point.

20. This letter is the Greek *kappa*, and renders *c* hard altogether unneceſſary.

21. I chooſe to expreſs the hard guttural χ by this combination. See No. 15.

22. This is the ſofteſt of all the liquids, and the Scots make it ſtill more liquid than the Engliſh, by retaining its Gaelic or Celtic ſound; which is alſo common in Spaniſh, and expreſſed by *ll*. It is nearly the *ll* in French, and exactly the *gl* in Italian. It might in my alphabet have been denoted by a diacritic point —; but as other three liquids are liable to a ſimiliar modification, and as one combination of vowels, namely *iou* after the ſingle conſonant, ſuits all the four, I thought it better to uſe that combination, than, without neceſſity, to multiply ſymbols.

23. The liquid ſound of this letter alluded to above, is found in the word *maw* (in Engliſh mew) which is to be pronounced *miàu*; and ſo I write it.

24. Liquid *n*, or Spaniſh ñ, is heard in the word *anew*, (beneath) which is pronounced and here written *aniou*.

25. It has been obſerved, that this ſound when rapidly pronounced, coincides nearly with *a* ſhort.

26. This ſound might be expreſſed by *oo*, for *o* long, is only a protraction of *o* ſhort.

27. This letter was frequently uſed by the Scots for *b*.

28. I have retained this combination to expreſs the Greek φ, and Latin *ph*. It is otherwiſe entirely ſuperfluous.

29. This letter is equally redundant; but I retain it in ſome words derived from the Latin. The Scottiſh writers combined it with *uh* to expreſs what the Engliſh do by *wh*; as *quhen*, *qhuat*, *quhy*, which they probably pronounced more gutturally than they now do. The preſent ſound is ſufficiently expreſſed by *hu* or *hw*, for it is a ſoleciſm in orthography, to put the *w* foremoſt.

30. In ſome parts of Scotland this letter is pronounced with an aſpiration, though not ſo hard as that of Northumberland. The Greeks ſeem to have given it the ſame ſound.

31. This ſound is exactly the ſame with ſoft *c*. One of them is therefore ſuperfluous.

32. That we want a ſymbol to denote this ſimple ſound is evident; for neither the French *ch*, nor the German *ſch*, nor our own *ſh*, at all expreſs it. It is the Hebrew *w*; and might be diſtinguiſhed from *s*, by a diacritic point. The neareſt ſound is that of *ſt*, which, in Greek and Latin words, might be ſubſtituted.

33. This letter is, in Scots, combined with *i* in the ſame manner as the liquids, as *tiav*; the long ſmall root of *heather*.

34. This ſeems alſo to be a ſimple ſound; badly repreſented by *th*. The Greek element θ might be adopted, or *t* with a diacritic point might be its ſubſtitute.

35. This ſhort ſound of *u* is peculiar I think to the Scots and Engliſh.

36. This is the genuine ſound of *u*. How we came to expreſs it by *oo*, it is not eaſily conceived. The Scottiſh combination *ou* was much nearer the ſound.

37. This is in reality a compound of *e* and *u*. It is, however, to be obſerved, that it is not founded exactly in the ſame manner by the the Scots and Engliſh. In the mouths of the latter it ſeems to be compoſed of *i* and *eù*; while the former pronounce it more like the French *u* or *eu* in the word *pœur*.

38. This letter is by the Scots often interchanged with *f*, and in ſome countries with *w*, as in London.

39. This is an unneceſſary element; I have uſed it only at the beginning of words in the form of a conſonant.

40. This letter is entirely uſeleſs; as its two ſhades of the ſame ſound are perfectly repreſented by *gs* and *ks*.

41. I appropriate this letter, and this alone, to denote the Engliſh *i* long, or the Italian *ai*. I have not even excepted the pronoun I, although I know its place will, at firſt, ſeem aukwardly filled by Y.

42. This ſymbol I always uſe to expreſs its ſofter ſound, or that of *s* in the Engliſh word *praiſe*. Its harder ſound which is that of *ds*

or *ts*, may be expreſſed either by that combination, or by a diacritic point. The Scottiſh writers generally uſed *z* inſtead of *y* conſonant. But in this I think they were miſtaken. The figure which they found in manuſcripts, though reſembling an *z*, was in reality an abbreviation of *gh*, and ſo Wiclef, and the Engliſh writers of his day always wrote. But the ſtrong reſemblance between the abbreviation of *gh*, and the laſt letter of the alphabet, made them gradually to be taken for the ſame. See No. 14.

I admit no ſuperfluous or mute vowel, nor improper diphthong or triphthong. Whether double conſonants ſhould alſo be excluded, I have ſome doubt. They may ſerve occaſionally to make the ſound more ſmart and determinate, and ſo to regulate the emphaſis: but this can only happen in middle ſyllables.

I am perfectly ſenſible that this novel orthography will, at firſt, have an unſouth appearance, even to Scottiſh readers; but I flatter myſelf, that ſuch of them as are capable of reflection, and can read with both ears and eyes, will ſoon recover from their aſtoniſhment; and confeſs that my ſymbols repreſent their ſounds more properly and diſtinctly than their preſent orthography.

I have now only to put my theory in practice; and this the reader will find done in the two laſt of the following pieces. For the firſt, or *epiſtle*, I have left nearly in the ſame form in which it was originally written and ſent to the Society. It thenceforth became in ſome ſort their own; and I hardly thought myſelf at liberty to make experiments on it. I have ventured, however, to make the orthography a little more uniform, and more agreeable to the Scottiſh idiom, than the orthography of the preſent day. Thus *ou* and *ow* are never confounded. The former is equivalent to the Engliſh *oo*, the latter to *ow* in *town*, or *ou* in *loud*. *Eu* and *ew* likewiſe

likewiſe expreſs diſtinct ſounds, *eu* is equivalent to the Engliſh *eu* or *ew*, but *ew* has a ſound peculiar to Scotland, and which can hardly be repreſented in Engliſh characters; perhaps the combination *iow* pronounced ſmartly, will give ſome idea of it. The combination *ie* is always to be pronounced as *ee*, and *ea* like *e* ſhort, or as the Engliſh pronounce *ea* in death.

Theſe rules are only neceſſary for thoſe who would read the lines according to the Scottiſh pronounciation. An Engliſhman may read them according to his own; only he is to remark that the rimes muſt be pronounced *à l'Ecoſſoiſe*; otherwiſe they will frequently be no rimes at all.

It was once my intention to add a complete gloſſary for the whole; but this, in my preſent ſituation, I find impracticable. A Scoto-Saxon Lexicon I take to be a deſideratum in Engliſh literature; and would earneſtly recommend it to the attention of the Scottiſh Antiquaries. It is probable that the Society hath members in every county. Theſe might, with little pains, collect the words and phraſes that are peculiar to the people among whom they live. In the ſhires of Forfar, Kincardine, Aberdeen, Banff, and Elgin, the Scottiſh ſtill exiſts in its native purity, or, if you will, in its native rudeneſs. But even there it is every day loſing ground; and yielding to the Engliſh idiom. Hence the greater expediency of collecting the old terms as ſoon as poſſible, and from the mouths of the oldeſt inhabitants.

Although any perſon who has common ſenſe and can write, might be employed to make ſuch a collection; yet it were to be wiſhed that men of ſome learning would charge themſelves with the taſk. The miniſter of the goſpel would find here a pleaſant relaxation from his apoſtolic labours; and the idle gentleman an innocent and uſeful amuſement.

In

In forming the collections, no word ſhould be omitted, however barbarous it might appear; no phraſe rejected, howſoever vulgar. The common names of plants, ſhrubs, and trees; of beaſts, birds, and fiſhes; of brooks, and rivers; of hills, and mountains; of towns, caſtles, villages, and even ſingle homeſteads; of every domeſtic utenſil; of every implement of huſbandry; of every tool and engine peculiar to the manual arts, &c. all ſhould be ſcrupulouſly noticed.

The different collections being ſent to the Society, ſhould be put into the hands of a perſon capable of digeſting them into one body. That perſon muſt have made a previous ſtudy of analytical grammar, and general etymology; ſo as to be able to trace the ſame term through all the variety of pronounciation which it aſſumes in different provinces, often in the ſame province, and ſometimes in the ſame pariſh. He ought, moreover, to be well acquainted not only with Latin and Greek; but alſo with the ancient Saxon and other Teutonic dialects. The want of this knowledge was one of the greateſt defects of our great Engliſh Lexicographer.

EPISTLE