

REMARKS ON THE IRISH DIALECT OF THE
ENGLISH LANGUAGE.

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IN treating of the dialect of the English language used in Ireland, we may view it from three distinct points of view. We may consider (1) its origin, (2) its internal peculiarities, and (3) its relation to other dialects. Or, the three considerations may be called (*a*) the *historical* examination of it, (*b*) the *anatomical*, and (*c*) the *comparative*.

I.—INTRODUCTION OF ENGLISH.

As the English language was introduced from without, and as, like civilization in North America, its general progress was from east to west, nothing could be more natural than that we should find several stages of its progress diminishing towards the Atlantic. One could suppose an extreme case,—which has, no doubt, been frequently exemplified in the changing fortunes of the country,—(*a*) that at a point on the east coast the ancient language had been entirely driven out; (*b*) that at a corresponding point on the west coast it was still the only prevailing one; whilst (*c*) that in moving eastward or westward the per-centage of the one diminished and that of the other increased, each being the complement of the other at any particular point.

While the struggle of languages for precedence was thus going forward, it is clear that it would have been out of place to speak of an Irish dialect; for almost every county, and

often each great division of a county, exhibited its own special degree of progress. But when the English language has become for generations the recognised language of the country, when even its newspapers and books are printed in that tongue, its laws administered and its children instructed in it,—it is clear not only that we can, but that we must, speak as a whole of the form which the language assumes in the country at large.

But, besides the irregularity arising from unequal progress, there was a further irregularity arising from the nature of the article imported, which gave one version at one point and another at another. The English language, as spoken in England, is, in a certain sense, not one but many; so that to introduce a fair specimen of it into another country, it would be necessary to select the individuals either according to locality or acquirements. This, of course, was not done, though the soldiers and adventurers who found a home on the Irish side of the Channel were often of so promiscuous a character, that the special features of any one locality were effectually neutralised by those of several others.

There were a few cases, however, in which the inhabitants of foreign countries, or of particular districts of the island of Great Britain, settled down at one spot of Ireland, and thus imparted to a particular neighbourhood the specialities which they had themselves inherited. I need not go back to notice the three great settlements of the Danes at the ports of Dublin, Limerick, and Waterford; for though they have left their name in such places as Oxmantown (that is, Ostmantown), near Phœnix Park, they were soon merged in the general population. The same remark applies to the Scandinavians who settled in Donegal; to the Scythians or Scots, who found a home in Dalaradia, or the north part of Antrim and the adjoining districts; and to the Belgic and Scandinavian immigrants, who occupied the sea coasts of

Waterford and Cork. But though language is an important element in ethnological inquiries, and ethnology is, in turn, important in linguistic ones, the two subjects dont always afford mutual assistance. Sometimes, on the contrary, they have a tendency to lead astray. People the most dissimilar in character may come to speak a common language, like the population of the United States ; and people whose origin and characteristics are in a great degree identical, may come to be widely different in their modes of expression. Those ancient immigrations, therefore, are of no value whatever for our present purpose ; and they have only been referred to with the negative object of showing that, while the smallest body is supposed to influence the largest to some extent, even when it is absorbed, the traces of its influence may in time be wholly obliterated. The following cases, however, are of a very different kind, as their effects remain upon the language to this hour, or have only recently disappeared.

1. The original invaders under Strongbow, who first obtained a footing in the island in 1167 to 1169, or rather more than 700 years ago, occupied the part of the county of Wexford known as the Baronies of Forth and Bargy. There their descendants remain separate, ethnologically as well as geographically, to this hour. They were also distinct in language ; but their peculiarities in this respect have disappeared only since the commencement of the present century.

2. The Fingallians were another colony sometimes supposed, but erroneously, to have been Scandinavian. They were unquestionably English, though their name indicates the "fair strangers;" and Stannihurst notices them nearly 300 years ago as speaking "good Chaucer English." Reaching from Dublin northward as far as Swords, they occupied the sea coast, and retained some of their peculiarities of language and customs till within the last fifty or sixty years.

3. The remaining English people along the east coast were

called, generally, Anglo-Normans; but as the two opposing elements in England had become fused into one, it is not unlikely that in the more recent times there was a considerable infusion of pure Saxons. The nobility and knights, however, indeed all the leaders, were probably of pure Norman blood.

4. In the county of Down, especially the part of it which adjoins the Channel and is known as the barony of Lecale, very early Norman settlements were effected. Sir John de Courcy, Earl of Ulster, resided at Downpatrick; and the whole country round, especially between that town and the sea, is filled with square towers or castelets similar to those which are common in Forth and Bargy.

5. The settlement at Londonderry was, as its name indicates, from England; though the greater influence of Scottish people, from whose homes it was more accessible, soon gave it the appearance of a Scottish town. Further, the number of incorporated guilds or trading companies from the city of London, who obtained lands in the county of Londonderry, led to the immigration of English; whilst the lands of less promise, and requiring more self-denying and hardy cultivators, were in general occupied by the Scotch.

6. About the year 1607, when much of Ulster required to be planted or resettled, immigration, instead of being as previously a mere rivulet—or largely dependent on the condition of the regiments serving in the country—became a flood, and strangers settled, not by tens but by thousands. A large number of these were from the apple districts of Warwickshire, Worcester, and Gloucester; several were from Chester, through which the adventurers passed to take shipping at the mouth of the Dee; a few were from the neighbouring county of Lancaster; and some from London. The great English settlement commenced on the two sides of Belfast Lough; at Carrickfergus on the west, and Ballymacarrett on the east. It included the town of Belfast, which was at first English,

but, like Londonderry, became Scotticised, owing to the preponderance of North Britons in the rural districts on both sides. Pressing on by Lisburn and to the east bank of Lough Neagh, the English settlers cover eleven parishes in Antrim alone, all of which preserve to this hour their English characteristics; and crossing still further, over Down to Armagh, they stopped only at the base of the Pomeroy mountains in Tyrone. Thus, from the tides of the Channel to beyond the centre of Ulster there was an unbroken line of English settlers, as distinct from Scotch; and the district which they inhabit is still that of the apple, the elm, and the sycamore—of large farms and two-storied slated houses.

7. The Scotch settlers entered at the two points which lie opposite to their own country—namely, at the Giant's Causeway, which is opposed to the Mull of Cantyre, on one side, and at Donaghadee, which is opposed to the Mull of Galloway, on the other. Two centuries and a half ago, Ireland was to them what Canada, Australia, and the United States have been to the redundant population of our own times; and it is only necessary to state that people of all grades, but especially cottagers, farm labourers, and very small proprietors, flocked into the country by thousands. They not only occupied the ground in the line of their march, but brought under cultivation most of the unpromising lands in the immediate neighbourhood. The county of Antrim, therefore, is as a whole Scotch, and those of Down and Londonderry are very largely so. But these are the only three counties in which the descendants of Scottish immigrants outnumber those of English origin.

8. In numerous other districts—in Armagh, Tyrone, and Fermanagh—the people of the two countries were mingled in varying proportions, so that the English language was introduced with unequal degrees of purity, and sometimes with a marked provincial accent.

9. There were several small foreign communities scattered over the country, as French at Maryborough, Lisburn, and other points; Germans at Gracehill or Bally-Kennedy, near Ballymena; and the people called Palatines at various points on the south and west.

II.—SOME CHARACTERISTICS OF THE DIALECT.

We are thus prepared either to predict *a priori* the form which the dialect will assume, or to ascertain by observation what it is, without regard to antecedents;—and if the two modes of investigation lead to the same conclusions, or tend to corroborate and verify each other, the evidence is unanswerable that the principle advocated is correct. It would at first sight appear incorrect to speak of such a thing as the Irish dialect; but if we withdraw our attention from peculiarities that are merely local, if we eliminate specific differences and direct our attention to that which is more or less common to all the thirty-two counties, we reach by generalisation what is known as “the Irish dialect.” Let us first, however, notice briefly the effect of these partial immigrations. Even in reference to the Celtic tongue, the Munster Irish is distinguishable from that of Connaught, and both from that of Ulster; so that an Irish dialect is quite consistent with differences arising from local causes.

Until the end of last century there was a tradition in Ulster that pure English was spoken in the neighbourhood of Lisburn; but this is certainly not the case at present, as the generation who now inhabit the locality have become in a great degree assimilated in the matter of speech to that of their neighbours. It was, no doubt, approximately true, at the time when broad Scotch was perhaps spoken in one adjoining parish, and Hibernic English with a very marked brogue in another.

Within the present generation, Scotch, much purer than

that spoken in many parts of Scotland, was common in the counties of Down and Antrim ; and the poems of Burns and other writers of the same class were as well known and as highly appreciated as in their native country. At the present moment, however, much of this is changed. The Scottish dialect, *i.e.*, *pronunciation*, is restricted to those parishes of the three counties of Down, Antrim, and Londonderry, which adjoin the sea ; but *words* of Scotch origin, and which are not found in any English dictionary, are very numerous. In the neighbourhood of Belfast, local peculiarities are so marked, that there has sprung up of late years a sort of local dialect literature, such as is common in many towns and districts of England.

There exists a Glossary of the Fingallian language, extending to about 260 words, many of them being corrupt or peculiar versions of old English words,—probably identical with those in the district from which the ancestral people came. This Glossary is supposed to have been made out about the middle of last century, but the people retained their peculiar manners and customs for at least 75 years after, or down to the end of the first quarter of the present century.

We have mentioned that the dialect of Forth and Bargy was referred to by Stannihurst 300 years ago ; that is to say, four centuries after their original settlement ; and an account was given of it to the Royal Irish Academy by Vallancey in December, 1788, or nearly 100 years ago. Further, it was treated of twenty-one years ago, by Dr. Russell of Maynooth, before the British Association for the Advancement of Science. An account of it was given to the Literary and Philosophical Society of Liverpool, in January, 1867, by Mr. Picton, F.S.A. ; and it has attracted the attention of the Philological Society of London. But the singular fact is, that the Rev. Mr. Barnes, the learned

illustrator of the Dorsetshire dialect in England, published an interesting volume in 1867, explaining the dialect of this remote region, which is in many respects kindred with his own. His book contains a glossary of nearly 1400 words, and specimens of the speech of the people, both in poetry and prose. In 1836, an address in this dialect was presented to the Earl of Mulgrave, the lord lieutenant of the day; but even then it was nearly extinct. Many of the words in the glossary are only dialectal variations of common words;—the voice consonants B, V, D, Z, J, &c., being used, for example, instead of their respective equivalents P, F, T, S, Ch, &c. After every deduction has been made, the subject must be admitted to be one full of interest, and the scholars of England fully appreciate it. It is, however, only one of many points of interest connected with the Irish dialect of the English language.

The following may be noticed as a few minor peculiarities, not arising from influx of population, but from local causes. In Kerry, for example, people join "f" with "wh," and say "fwhat," "fwhen," "fwhere;" whilst in a portion of the county of Cork the principle of a well-known Hibernicism is inverted, and a table is called "teeble." Within the city of Dublin itself, we have two marked peculiarities, namely, the softening of "t" till it becomes "s," and the inability of some to pronounce "th." Thus there are hundreds of respectable people who call water virtually "wasser," and butter "busser;" just as the Greeks wrote *γλωσσα* and "*γλωττα*" for "tongue," and *θαλασσα* and "*θαλαττα*" for "sea." The other case is that of "*De boys of de Liberty*," one of whom is mentioned in anecdote books as inviting his neighbour "to "sky *de* coppers for a pint of *de* stuff."

It is clear that if "Chaucer English" were that which was taught to the Irish people, and if it was followed up by that of the wars of the Roses and of the long Elizabethan period,

it was an ancient form of our tongue, and not the modern one, that was presented to the Celtic inhabitants. Now this is a point of no small importance. The English settlers in the north, in like manner, brought the language of the Elizabethan era with them; and the Scotch, instead of altering the general effect, increased and confirmed it. It is known to students of English literature that our old English is in a great degree coincident with modern Scotch, and that several old English ballads and songs have been slightly touched, and have appeared in a modern Scottish garb, after having been superseded and having lain on our shelves for centuries in England. The Scottish expressions, therefore, of 1620 might be said to be in a great degree the English of 1420; and thus a further archæological element was thrown into the mixture which we call "Hibernic English." Add to all this that books were then few, that schools were little known, or quite unknown, among the masses of the people, and that intercourse with both Scotland and England was difficult and rare. There was thus an isolation in the highest degree favourable for the assimilation of the various contributions and for the perpetuation of the whole.

The dialect which these remarks are designed to illustrate, can scarcely be spoken of as an existing fact before the beginning of last century. Previous to that date, the various immigrants spoke the dialects of their respective localities; and the same difficulties in understanding each other mutually, existed, that we find to-day in the various portions of Great Britain. The civilized Celts, on the other hand, spoke what is known as "broken English." In the ballads of the republican and revolutionary periods of English history, the Celtic Irishman is represented as using language similar to what is found in the "banjo" songs of modern times; and the language of the stage Irishman of those

days is like what would be attributed to any foreigner, in similar circumstances. Those who are familiar with the doggerel lines known as "Lilliburlero" have a specimen of it; and one sees part of the reason for the effect which this song produced, in the low intellectual grade which was evidently attributed to the persons represented.

In the course of time, however, the fusion of the various portions into one homogeneous mass, was complete. But many of the characteristic terms in it have recently disappeared, and others are obsolete or obsolescent; for a higher intellectual tone has been given to the population by the National Schools, so that words which are not found in printed books, though still employed, are less common among the rising generation.

If, for the sake of distinction, we call the whole Irish dialect a *national* one, and it is certainly that of a "kingdom," it is obvious that it has less comprehension of characteristics than the local or truly provincial ones, but greater extension geographically or numerically. It drops the characteristics which prevail only in Belfast, Cork, Dublin, or Galway; and embraces none but those which are more or less common to the whole thirty-two shires. It has been frequently brought before the public, but is especially known through Carleton's *Traits and Stories of the Irish Peasantry*. In the more recent editions of that work, the author informs us that at first his narrative was far more Irish than it became subsequently; but that the public taste would not bear the dialect in its broadest form. The truth is that the author was at first *too* accurate in his representations of dialogue; for some of them were *provincial* pictures, not *national* ones; and the change which he made was not merely from one kind to another, but from wrong to right. A similar mistake was sometimes made by Lover; and, in like manner, Galt's novels present us with local Scotch, and the Waverleys with that which is general.

After making due allowance for the mediæval English words which were introduced by the early invaders, and also for the words and expressions of our own time, it is clear that *the basis of the Irish dialect is the current English of the time of Elizabeth*. Just as old fashions and ancient customs are preserved best in remote districts, so the language, being freer from change and innovation in Ireland than in Great Britain itself, has been better preserved than on its native soil. Similar facts are found in Australia and Canada; and they were formerly found among the New Englanders of the United States.

In the works of Addison or Swift, there is little that would not be understood by a modern Englishman. Milton is more difficult; and there are many passages even in his prose works that would be greatly simplified by a note or a glossary; while a glossary of more than 2000 words is required to enable the modern Englishman to read his favourite Shakspeare. Chaucer cannot be read at all by the uninitiated; while the few works which were written antecedent to his time, are almost sealed books, even to the majority of scholars. Yet the curious fact is, that probably not 200 words, or one in ten, would be required to enable an intelligent Irish peasant to understand Shakspeare. One is amazed at the ponderous waste of criticism on such terms as "*dry*," meaning thirsty, or "*bell book and candle*." And the expression of Othello, "let housewives make a *skillet* of my "*helm*," would be understood by every cottager from Carrickfergus to Cape Clear.

Everyone knows the jocular canon in reference to derivation, that "vowels pass for nothing, and consonants for very little;" and when we find the pure English words *band*, *bend*, *bind*, *bond*, *bound*, *bundle*, all connected with a common centre, it would appear as if part of it, at least, were approxi-

mately true. But the genius of language, or rather we should say of dialect, applies also to proper names both of persons and things. For example, Mr. *Ould* is evidently an Irishman ; Mr. *Auld*, his cousin, is a native of the south of Scotland ; and Messrs. *Elder* and *Alderman* of the same family, are of English birth. Also, a single irregular verb *drive* has no fewer than four imperfect tenses, viz., Old English *drave*, modern English *drove*, and vulgar or provincial English *driv'* and *druv'*.

It would be tedious, and it is obviously unnecessary, to analyse in detail the changes of vowels as *consint*, *repint*, *attintion* ; *consate*, *repate*, *desate* ; *obsarve*, *larn*, *dissarn* ; *sperits*, *noan*, *Kessil*, *Divil*, *Room*, &c. But it may be interesting to know that not one of these is lacking in the authority of our English writers of the past, while some have a few respectable words to keep them in countenance still.

Thus while the Irishman speaks of *sarvent* and *marchant*, he can quote a similar use in writers not a century old ; he can point to the English *clerk* and *serjeant*, as well as to the French *marchand* ; he can turn on the map to the counties of *Derby* and *Hertford*, and the castle of *Berkely*,—in all of which “er” has the sound of *ar* ;—and he can produce worthy gentlemen of the names of *Darby*, *Darbyshire*, and *Barclay*. The instances are few, but the analogy is there.

A similar analogy is found, covering a great number of Hibernicisms, in the English words *great*, *break*, and *steak*. These are not *breek*, *greet*, and *steek*. An inversion of this analogy has been noticed in the local use of *teeble* for *table* ; and such things are not uncommon elsewhere. Thus in Cumberland and Lancashire, the same person who says *brote* instead of *brought* will say *spok* instead of *spoke* : and even in a single word the sounds are inverted, as *oondherstud* for *understood*.

There are two English words, *blood* and *flood*, in which the

diphthong *oo* has the force of short *u* ; while in other cases it is sounded as in *food*. But the populace of almost every district in the British Islands, and certainly of all the four provinces in Ireland, adopt the short *u* in a certain set of words, *e.g.*, *gud*, *stud*, *wud*, *shud*, &c. Now it is remarkable that Pope in sixty-nine couplets, has the pronunciation *stud* (for *stood*) forty-eight times, *wud* (for *would*) seventeen times, and *gud* (for *good*) four times ; but such words as *food*, *mood*, *snood*, are never pronounced with the short *u* by the populace, neither do we find one instance of it in all his voluminous writings. The following parallel explains itself :—

CLASSIC ENGLISH.

Thus round Pelides, breathing war and *blood*,
Greece, sheathed in arms, beside her vessels *stood*.
Pope, *Hom. Il.*, xx, 22.
Soon pass'd beyond their sight, I left the *flood*,
And took the spreading shelter of the *wood*.
Pope, *Hom. Odys.*, xiv, 388.

HIBERNICISMS.

I strove in vain, and by his side I *stood*,
Till as you see I dyed my sword in *blood*.
Battle of Aughrim, p. 18.
My lord this moment as I firmly *stood*,
Lodg'd in my post, near the adjoining *wood*.
Ibid., p. 25.

One of the most characteristic pronunciations in the Irish dialect is the substitution of the sound *u* as in *table* for *e* as in *hero*. This occurs not only when the sound is represented by the diphthong *ea*, as in *say* for “*sea*,” but also in other words, as *complate*, *desave*. Now the writings of Pope exhibit no fewer than seventy-six examples of this pronunciation, in cases where we should now call it decidedly vulgar, did we not know how to make allowance for the changes of time.

It is interesting to compare, with the examples from Pope and others, a genuine specimen of Hibernic literature ; and such we find in the dramatic pamphlet just quoted, of very extensive circulation in Ireland, entitled the *Battle of*

Aughrim and Siege of Londonderry. Other illustrations are readily procured.

CLASSIC ENGLISH.

Here thou, great Anna, whom three realms obey,
Dost sometimes counsel take, and sometimes tea.
Pope, *Rape of the Lock*, iii.

The plots are fruitless which my foe
Unjustly did conceive :
The pit he digg'd for me has proved
His own untimely grave.
Tate and Brady, Psalm viii, 14.

God moves in a mysterious way,
His wonders to perform ;
He plants his footsteps in the sea,
And rides upon the storm.
Newton, Psalm xxxvi.

I am monarch of all I survey,
My right there is none to dispute ;
From the centre all round to the sea
I am lord of the fowl and the brute.
Cowper, *Selkirk*.

Some in his bottle of leather so great,
Will carry home daily both barley and wheat. *Tusser*.

HIBERNICISMS.

Led by brave Captain Sandays, who with fame
Plunged to the middle in the rapid stream.
Battle of Aughrim, p. 6.

Without your aid I will the foe defeat,
To free my country and my lost estate. *Ibid.* p. 10.

Or as two friends who with remorse survey
Their vessels severed on the raging sea ;
Each gets a plank and his companion leaves
To the wild mercy of the raging waves. *Ibid.* p. 30.
The town of Passage is large and spacious,
And situated upon the sea ;
'Tis nate and daycent, and quite convaynient
To come from Cork on a summer's day.

Croker's Popular Songs of Ireland.

And there's Katty Neal
And her cow I'll go bail.

Lover, Pop. Song.

In a few instances the fragrance of the shamrock has adhered even to our distinguished writers ; and occasionally through life. The poems of Parnell, for example, present a still larger proportion of Hibernicisms than those of Pope ; and the *Battle of the Frogs and Mice*, frequently printed along with the poems of Pope, affords a ready instance of comparison. Some of Goldsmith's words remind us of the

banks of the Shannon: the following is an interesting specimen. In a great part of Ireland, *vault* is pronounced *vau't*; and, in like manner, *fault* is *fau't*.

A few examples are given:—

CLASSIC ENGLISH.

Whan that she swouned
Next for *fau'te* of blood,
Chaucer, *Cant. Tales*.

Let him not dare to vent his dangerous *thought*,
A noble fool was never in a *fault*.
Pope, *Jan. and May*.

But mine the pleasure, mine the *fault*,
And well my life shall pay;
I'll seek the solitude he *sought*
And stretch me where he lay.
Goldsmith, *Hermit*.

Yet he was kind, or if severe in *ought*,
The love he bore to learning was in *fault*,
Goldsmith, *Deserted Vill*.

HIBERNICISMS.

If I don't be able to shine, it will be none o' my *fau't*. Carleton, *Val. McClut*.
God pardon me for cursin' the harmless crathurs, for sure, sir, 'tisin't their *fau'ts*. Carleton, *Poor Scholar*.

As specimens of contraction, we may notice the following: cur(i)osity, or(di)nary, gar(de)ner, pro(ce)ss, her(ri)n(g).

In metathesis, we have the following, in which it will be noticed that the letter *r* is concerned: brust, crub, aks, cruds, dirl (to drill).

There is a certain class of words, nouns and adjectives, derived from geographical names. In general they indicate the productions of those places respectively; but an investigation of the whole subject shows that they have a much wider range. Ireland has its share of expressions of this kind, but they are not numerous, owing to the comparative absence of manufactures. There is a little history contained in the expression, "Lurgan-french-cambric." A certain kind of fine linen was manufactured at Cambray, from which place it took its name; when the allusion to place was forgotten and practically lost, it was called French-cambric; and this being in time regarded as a class of material, not necessarily the

production of a particular place, the present locality of its manufacture is indicated by the first of the three words in the compound.

Blarney, language of persuasive flattery. It is said that there is a stone in the castle wall of Blarney, near Cork, the kissing of which enables the operator ever after to exercise this faculty.

Crone-bane, a copper coin of the value of a halfpenny or a penny. It was made of the copper from the Crone Bane mines near Avoca, in Wicklow county. On one side is St. Patrick mitred, and on the other the arms of the mining company.

Dthrogget, drugget, or a cloth composed of linen warp and woollen weft. It is said to have first been woven extensively at Drogheda, whence its name. The term is now applied to felted and other stuffs of a very different kind. [Similarly, we have "baize" from Baia, "dimity" from Damietta, "damask" from Damascus, "calico" from Calicut, "diaper" linen d'Ypres, "frieze" from Friesland, "holland" from Holland, "jean" from Genoa, "fustian" from Fustat, "kerseymere" from Kersey, "nankin" from Nankin, "worsted" from Worstead in Norfolk, "silk" from the province of Serica or Selica in China, and many others.]

Innishowen, a peculiar kind of whiskey, much of it smuggled or "run," from the barony of Innishowen in Donegal.

Orrery, an instrument to illustrate the motions of the planetary bodies. It was dedicated by George Graham the inventor, to Charles Boyle, fourth Earl of Orrery, and called by his title. This was derived from the barony of Orrery in the county of Cork, and was transmitted to his son, the second Earl of Cork, whose descendants still possess the two titles.

Raghery, a rough hardy pony, from the island of Rathlin or Raghery, off the north coast of the county of Antrim.

Scullabogue, to murder barbarously. The word is generally used as a jocular threat. It is derived from Scullabogue, between New Ross and Wexford, the barn of the mansion of which, containing a large number of Protestant prisoners, was burned down by the insurgents in 1798.

Shillelagh, a walking stick, but more especially a fighting stick. Sticks of this kind were originally from the great oak forest of Shillelagh, the southern barony of the county of Wicklow.

We also say, "that bangs Banagher," from a strong military fort at that place, on the banks of the Shannon; or of a person who cannot be outwitted "he could keep Omagh," *i.e.*, serve as Governor to that important county prison. A remove to some very remote place is said to be "to Dingle-ty-cootch," *viz.*, to Dingle or "Dingle-i-couch" in Kerry, the most Western town in Ireland.

A well-known fact is, that no language entirely obliterates that which it practically supersedes. It invariably sucks up into itself, and assimilates a few of the commoner, or more characteristic words; especially those which represent objects or operations known only to the natives. In the United States, for example, our mother tongue has had incorporated with it a considerable number of "Indian" words; at the Cape of Good Hope the Dutch contributions are numerous, from the earlier possessors; in India, the Hindoo contributes his proportion; and even in New Zealand, the colonists use several words of native origin. In New South Wales, the settler *cooeys*, or utters a peculiar cry to be heard by his companion at a distance; he sleeps on the lee-side of a *mi-mi* or pile of bark; also he understands the use of the *boomerang*, the *waddy*, the *meri-meri*, and the *nulla-nulla*.

Now it is of peculiar interest to inquire, how many Irish words have been drawn up into the dialect of the English which is in use in the country; and the answer is that they vary in use at various places. The words which are employed by Carleton, Lover, Lever, and other writers of that class, are *known* all over the country; and when they are printed in italics and explained at the bottom of the page, this is done almost exclusively for the benefit of readers in England and in certain limited parts of the North of Ireland. But they

are *used* chiefly in those parts of Ireland, in the neighbourhood of districts where the Celtic is (or was till very recently) spoken occasionally. And as might be expected such words are most frequently employed by the peasantry and middle class. From a careful computation, I fix their number at less than four hundred; but these are of course exclusive of those which have long been part of the current speech throughout all the four provinces and thirty-two counties.

Let us group a few of them by way of illustration, and make an imaginary visit to an acquaintance in the country.

It is not necessary to select a *bodagh*¹ on the one hand, or *buccaugh*² on the other, and we shall specially avoid an *omadaun*.³ Let us take "a broth of a boy," as if the stewed and concentrated essence of respectable manhood. He lives near the *slieve*⁴ that overhangs the *knock*⁵; and you approach his house by the *boreen*⁶ or *cash*⁷, turning off the high road at the *avon-beg*⁸ into which the *arigideen*⁹ flows. There was a *crannogue*¹⁰ in an adjoining lake; but the principal curiosities of the neighbourhood are now a *Lis*¹¹, two *Raths*¹², and a *Cloch-more*¹³. These of course are inhabited by the *fairies*¹⁴, or "good people"; and some venture to hint that the *Phoca*¹⁵ and *Loughry-man*^{15*} are not far distant. As for the *Banshee*¹⁶, she is well known in the neighbourhood, and it is reported that *fetches*¹⁷ have been seen.

We are welcomed by the *vanithee*¹⁸ and *cooleen-dhas*¹⁹, whose names, by the way, are *Aileen*²⁰ and *Sheela*²⁰; and we find an old man on the premises who is one of the last of the *goatheens*²¹ of the county of Wicklow. Of the boys,

- 1 A clownish but comfortable farmer.
- 2 A lame beggar. 3 A fool.
- 4 Mountain. 5 Hill. 6 Narrow lane.
- 7 A road on which bushes have been placed, especially in the ruts, to prevent the sinking of the wheels of carts or cars.
- 8 Little river.
- 9 Little silver stream.
- 10 A hillock by a marsh; formerly a fortified island in a lake.
- 11 An earth fort.
- 12 A smaller artificial enclosure of the same general kind.
- 13 A peculiar great stone.
- 14 Like the *peris* of the East. The

fairy and the *brownie* are contrasted in Scotland.

- 15 A hobgoblin analogous to the Puck of Shakspeare.
- 15* A variety of the same.
- 16 A female spirit who utters a peculiar wailing on the death of members of certain families.
- 17 Ghosts, or supposed spiritual appearances.
- 18 The mistress or good woman.
- 19 The pretty girl.
- 20 Little Alice and Cecily.
- 21 Foundlings reared mainly in the mountains, on goat's milk.

*Shan*¹ and *Shamus*¹ are at a *Patron*², where they will dance to a *clairseagh*³; while *Paudeen*⁴ and *Pethereen*⁴ are playing *coppul hurrish*⁵ with a plank balanced over a large stone. Though the weather is warm, the men wear the *cota-more*⁶; and of course the *caubeen*⁷ and *brogues*⁸ are in daily use. There is no appearance of a *skian*⁹ or any other weapon, but we notice a *common*¹⁰, two *alpeens*¹¹, and a genuine *shillelagh*¹², any one of which, in competent hands, could knock a man into *smithereens*¹³, or tear him to *dyuggins*¹⁴ in "no time." When these people wish to put the *comether*¹⁵ on any one, it is marvellous what a profusion of *avourneens*¹⁶, and *aroon*¹⁷, and *acushlas*¹⁸, and *machrees*¹⁹ there is, to shew the extent of their *grah*²⁰ for the person; but when a *shindy*²¹ or a *ruction*²² has been "riz",—say at the *margy more*²³ or at a "berrin"—its nothing but *anim-an-diaoul*²⁴ or *corp-an-diaoul*²⁵ in every alternate sentence.

There is a *garron*²⁶ behind the house, and there are two cows in the same field; but the *muck*²⁷ or *hurrish*²⁷ is grubbing near the door, and the *boneens*²⁸ are squeeling behind. Of implements, there are a *slane*²⁹ and a *loy*³⁰ standing against the wall outside, and an old *kish*³¹ on the ground, near which is the *lam-ord*³² that has been borrowed from the smith at *Bally-gowan*.³³

Within doors, there is an appearance of *galore*³⁴, or "lashins an' lavins," and though the farm or holding is not large, the

1 John and James.

2 The celebration in honour of a Saint or "Patron." 3 A Harp.

4 Little Pat and little Peter.

5 Literally "horse and pig;" but called also "shuggy-shoe," "see-saw," and "weigh butter an' sell cheese." 6 Great coat.

7 Little hat, often with a partial brim or none at all.

8 Coarse heavy shoes. The brogue proper is scarcely known now in Ireland, if at all. It was made in a single piece, often of green hide, cut and sewn round the foot, and never removed.

9 A dagger or large knife.

10 A curved stick for playing the game so called.

11 A fighting stick, root growing, and afterwards seasoned.

12 See *ante*, p. 109.

13 Minute pieces. [ing.]

14 Tatters, applied originally to cloth-

15 Inducement, or effectual persuasion, *quasi* "come hither."

16 Oh! Beloveds. 17 My darlings.

18 My pulses. 19 My hearts.

20 Kindness or affection.

21 Fight.

22 Crowding or insurrection.

23 Great market or special fair of the year. 24 Soul to the Devil.

25 Body to the Devil.

26 Horse. 27 Pig.

28 Little young pigs.

29 A turf-cutting spade.

30 An ordinary spade.

31 A sort of railing, or crate-like boxing, for a country car, to enable it to accommodate a large load of light turf. Called also "cleeve," as if a basket.

32 Large hammer, or "sledge."

33 Literally the place of the smith.

34 Abundance.

owner seems to be "hot and full." There is bread toasting at the *mudyarn*¹ before the fire, *boxty*² in preparation for more, we hear of *barn-breck*³ cakes, and we notice on the dresser a *mether*⁴ of new milk and a *miscaun*⁵ or "wedge⁵" of butter.

A labouring man lights his *doodeen*⁶ from the hot *gree-shaugh*⁷, while another doubles up a twig, and extemporising a pair of *mudyees*⁸, holds a coal to his. Thus they *colloque*⁹ and *shannough*¹⁰, with all kinds of *gosther*¹¹, while time glides on. The good man insists on our tasting some *usquebaugh*¹², which is moderated by the pure water of the *Tobber-beg*¹³; and the *cruiskeen lan*¹⁴ is emptied more than once. One of the party sings *Molly Astore*¹⁵, and another the *Shan Van Vogh*¹⁶; but young Rory makes us nearly split our sides laughing, by telling how he had startled an English tourist, gravely assuring him that "wherivver the rale oul' Irish is 'spoken the sorra drop of water they use barrin' *whisk*¹⁶ 'in 'confusin' the tay!'"

Now, the extensive use of Irish sounds, even by those who do not adopt these words, and have never spoken Irish, gives a predisposition to the organs of speech to apply those sounds whenever that is possible. Swift has noticed the fact, though rather coarsely. He says that the pronunciation of certain Celtic sounds cannot take place without dislocating every muscle that is used in speaking, and without the speaker applying the same tone, to all other words, in every language he understands. He illustrates the principle by applying it to the people of Galway and other parts of the west; and adds that in an advertisement of some Townlands, he encountered nearly a hundred words together, which he defies

1 Literally "the bread-stick," a tripod before which oatcakes are har(de)ned at the fire.
 2 Raw potatoes grated, as if for the making of starch. [then times.
 3 Speckled cakes, derived from heat.
 4 A wooden cup, usually square instead of round, with a handle at each side. The person using it drinks from one of the corners.
 5 "Miskin," a portion of butter, weighing from one pound to six or eight pounds, and made in the shape of a prism.—*Carleton*.

6 Cutty pipe.
 7 Red hot ashes.
 8 Wooden tongs, literally "the sticks."
 9 Converse, compare "colloquy."
 10 Converse lovingly or confidentially.
 11 Gossip or divergent talk.
 12 *Aqua vitæ, Eau de vie*, water of life, whiskey.
 13 The little well.
 14 The little jug full.
 15 Molly my treasure; and the poor old woman (*i.e.* Ireland.)
 16 This was a roguish pun; Irish *uisg-e*, water.

any creature in human shape, except an Irishman of the savage kind, to pronounce.

Hence arise the preponderance of gutturals and the clustering of consonants.

Thus, from the gutturals such as *agh*, *lough*, and *clough*, the transition is easy to *dough*, *rough*, *tyough* (tough), and *shough* (a ditch). There is the same prevalence of the sounds in proper names; probably in hundreds of surnames and thousands of names of townlands. The Scotch also, for a similar reason, say *fought*, *daughter*, *slaughter*, *spleughan*.

One of the most remarkable clustering of consonants, is when, by the operation of the dialect, *d* or *t* has *th*¹ added to it. Thus, in the former case, we have *ci-dther*, *ould-ther*, *fend-ther*, *should-ther*, *hind-ther*, *yond-ther*, *murd-ther*, *und-ther*. Occasionally the *th* becomes so strong as to exclude or supersede the *d* sound altogether; as in the words *lather* (ladder), *fother* (fodder), *blether* (bladder), *slither* ("slidder"), *sother* (solder), *consither* (consider).

Of many grammatical peculiarities, the following are specially deserving of notice:—

1. In imitation of the Irish, a perfect and pluperfect tense are rudely constructed. Thus, "I *am* after seeing him," means "I *have* recently seen him;" and "I *was* after seeing him," means "I *had* seen him." In the former, the time is *present* and the action *complete*; in the latter, the time is *past* and the action *complete*.

2. The third person singular of verbs is invariably used, unless when immediately preceded by the pronoun *they*. For example, to take a few proverbial, and therefore common expressions:—Dhrames always *goes* by contraries; them that *hides* can fine'; when rogues *disagrees*, honest men *gets* their own; the shoemaker's wife and the smith's mare often

¹ *Th* as in "than," not as in "thick."

goes barefooted; them 'at *loves* the dunghill *sees* no motes in it.—We find nothing equivalent to the expressions common among the vulgar in some of the dialects of England, but let the plural pronoun be separated from the verb by only a few words, and the singular verb is used. In the uneducated circles, the verb is invariably singular with nouns, whether one plural or several of the same or different numbers form the subject of the verb.

3. Though an adjective is said to be compared, the statement of the positive is only a comparative idea. Thus, when we say an object is *white* or *black*, *long* or *short*, *handsome* or *repulsive*, the adjective expresses a *relative* not an *absolute* idea; and different hearers form very different ideas as to the degree in which the quality exists. In every country, therefore, from the nature of language, set phrases become proverbial, in order to give definiteness to the idea. Thus we say—as blind as a bat; as brisk as a bee; as light as a feather; as red as blood; as white as snow.

In Ireland some of these expressions are very peculiar, and more than one contain little histories within themselves. For example,—

As sure as a gun.

Compared with a shillelagh or stick.

As frush (brittle) as a pipe stapple.

Applied commonly to the shank of the tobacco-pipe; but the "estoppel" or "tobacco-stopper," was for pressing down the burning materials in the bowl of the pipe.

As frush as a bennel.

The dried and withered stalk of fennel.

As broad as a griddle.

As dry as a lime-burner's wig.

As crooked as a dog's hind leg.

As af'en as you have fingers and toes.

Not meaning literally twenty times, but a great many times.

As idle as a scythe stone at Christmas.

As thin as a lat.

A lath. This form is common in old English, and is still virtually preserved in the word "lattice." (*Judg.* v, 28.)

As salt as Lot's wife.

As tall as a May-powl.

These are very rare; but the meaning is understood.

As broad as a crig.

Applied usually to human feet. The "crig" is an instrument used for beating flax; it is flat, with ridges running across like those of a hemp brake.

As busy as a nailer.

A maker of nails by hand. Those to whom the proverb applied did not use a treadle in heading the nails.

As plain as a pike-staff.

A punning expression; the pike-staff is smooth or well *planed*.

As ill to herd as a stockin' full o' fleas.

As stiff as a proker (poker).

As black as the crook.

A kitchen implement for the suspension of pots and kettles.

Also, as black as a crow; as ink; as the ace of spades; as my hat; as yer shoe; as a sloe; jet, &c.

As "crass" as two sticks.

A punning, jocular expression; the person to whom it is applied being probably very good humoured.

There are nearly 150 such sayings; but it is quite clear that many who employ them, though aware of the force and design of the general expression, do not always know the meaning of the terms employed. Some of the objects compared are unknown to those who make the comparison, the thing represented by the term being out of their reach, or having become obsolete. For example, one frequently hears among the most ignorant persons, such expressions as the following:—

As coarse as raploch. (Ulster.)

Very coarse home-made woollen cloth.—*Scotch*.

As wet as drammock. (Ulster.)

Oatmeal steeped in water, dough.—*Scotch*.

As tyough as a wuddie.

A withe or twisted band of osier, when dry.

As right as a trivet.

A tripod, like a three-footed stool. The single word is not in use.

As square as a die.

A regular cube, or one of a pair of dice. The word is never used singly by the speaker.

As great (intimate) as inkle-weavers.

Inkle is narrow white tape; resembling (except in colour,) the "red tape" of public offices. Several pieces of it were formerly woven in the same loom, by as many boys, who sat close together on the same "seat-board."

As common as dish-water.

Probably ditch-water; a natural similitude in a country so imperfectly drained.

As mad as a March hare.

"Hares are unusually shy and wild in March, which is their rutting season."—*Brewer*.

There are numerous other idiomatic expressions of a general kind, some of them of great interest; but as a specimen of this branch of the subject,—and it is nothing more,—probably these will suffice.

III.—COMPARISON WITH OTHER DIALECTS.

The third aspect of the subject announced—viz., the relation of this dialect to others of the English language as spoken—is too large for our present purpose. It will be shewn in detail in a Glossary which has long been in preparation; in which the other localities are shewn, under the individual words which still exist in the current local speech of the people. But, a very imperfect specimen is given here, from the single letter A,—chiefly by way of suggestion.

It may be stated briefly, however, that there is naturally a marked coincidence with the Scotch, especially in the North, or from near Newry to the borders of Donegal. Over the same area, there is also a great similarity to the various

dialects of the ancient kingdom of Northumbria, which comprised the six Northern shires of England, The words of the West of England are common, not only in Ulster, but all through Ireland; and there are coincidences less marked with the dialects of the Southern shires, the Midland counties, and East Anglia. But, a curious fact is, that in the most remote shire of England, where one would least expect to find resemblances to Hibernic pronunciation, or Irish words and phrases, they are abundant; and some of the popular Cornish rhymes might almost be regarded as written in Ireland. The wonder disappears, however, in some degree, when we remember that the ancient Cornish language, if not a full sister to the Irish, was at least a cousin; and that the grafting of English upon such a stem naturally produces a fruit of a similar kind. In Forth and Bargy, and also in the Fingallian district, we have strong coincidences with the dialect of Dorset, Somerset, and Devon; and *Bartlett's Dictionary of Americanisms* also presents, as we might expect, a large number of Hibernicisms.

It will be admitted in general terms, that the people who have settled in numbers, from any one limited portion of Great Britain, have left on the spot which formed their new homes, ample evidences of the centre from which they started. For example, Scotticisms are most abundant in the track of the Scottish settlers, or at the points of their landing: and collateral evidences of the origin of the people are found in their religion, traditions, manners, &c. English words and phrases, on the other hand, are found from Carrickfergus to the centre of Tyrone; and if any corroboration were needed of the story of the immigration, we have it in their surnames, their protestant episcopacy, their self-respect, food, habits, and traditions. In Dublin there are a good many French surnames, the principal of which are supposed to be derived from the settlement at Maryborough; and near Belfast there are a few of both French and Welsh. These people, however,

have been so few, and have in consequence become so completely absorbed, that they have exercised no such influence upon the dialect, as the masses of Scotch and English have. Those who settled in Forth and Bargo, from the south-western shires of England, and also the people known as Fingallians, were so little mixed up with the people of the country, that they failed to communicate their respective dialects to any appreciable extent. But the greater influenced the less ; and so the English of the surrounding districts, mixed with a considerable proportion of Celtic words, has quite obliterated their local peculiarities. In general, however, the Anglo-Saxon tongue in Ireland represents a *time* rather than a *place*, an era of our history rather than the form of speech surviving at any distinct spot. With the exceptions noticed, Ireland learned the English language from the people of every county ; and, as in our colonies, the whole was fused into a characteristic mass, expressive words of local origin surviving, and new forms of speech springing up.

It has been common with Glossarists to give coincidences ; or to show in their respective Lists such words as occur in other Lists ; so that the local Glossary of any county, or even of any important section of a county, shows sometimes hundreds of provincial words which are in use elsewhere. There may be some explanation of this fact in certain cases ; as when the present fragments of population are parts of the same historical whole ; or when they have existed in similar circumstances, or have had at some time a good deal of intercourse. But such coincidences often occur where no such explanation can be given ; and usually the word is very old or very popular, and thus the common property of the nation, or of a large part of it. In Glossaries and Dictionaries which embrace a whole country, like those of Wright and Halliwell in England, or of Jamieson in Scotland, the allusion to separate districts is necessarily frequent. In the present

instance, and for our special purpose, such detail is in a great degree unnecessary; though it will be interesting to see the limited range of a word, as to Ulster or Connaught merely; and also its paternal district when not of home origin, as Scotland, Lancashire, Yorkshire, Stafford, Cornwall.

The theory is, that not only was the English language brought to Ireland, but that the form which it assumed was mainly that of the Elizabethan period; so that though many words have been in use in England for four or five centuries, the majority, and many of the forms of expression as well, are those of the sixteenth century. The illustrative quotations are therefore grouped in three classes; viz., (1) those from the old English writers,—(2) those from books, (usually small and of a humorous character,) written in illustration of certain special dialects in use in England, Scotland and America,—and (3) those which have been written more or less in illustration of the Hibernic dialect, as those of Miss Edgeworth, Lover, Lever, Banim, Carleton, and others. But the number of words is not great which admit of illustrations of all the three kinds; though many embrace two of the classes, and a still larger number only one. For example, (*a*) a word may be quite well known in Irish popular literature, and also recognizable in some one or several dialects, and yet the closest search may not find it in the writings of the older English authors. The illustrative quotations in such a case are of the second and third kinds.—Or, (*b*) it may be well known in the popular speech of Ireland, but not readily or actually found in print; and therefore it is illustrated by quotations from old English and from the dialects only.—Again, (*c*) it may be proved to be both an archaic and a popular term, but so far as we are aware not known out of Ireland; so that in its case quotations of the second class are not forthcoming.*

* The few examples given as specimens of the Glossary will show, not only the great variety in the quotations, but also in their grouping. The word *Aks* or *Aze*, has all the three kinds. The sets of quotations are separated by short lines.

This is the case with a good many of the phrases or proverbial expressions.

Besides words which are essentially distinct, there are others which are not either new or old, but merely "Hibernicised," by an alteration of the consonants or vowels according to well-known laws. Thus we have both *busser* and *but-ther*, *bother* (*pother*), *sprachell* (*sprawl*), *sayson*, *nivver*, *sperrit*; &c. If all the words of this class were entitled to admission into a provincial Glossary, nearly half the ordinary words of our English dictionary would require to be re-written. It would serve no good purpose, however, to give the Scotch *hame*, *kame*, *auld*, *lang*, &c., nor the Irish *say*, *tay*, *tint*, *repint*, *blash*,* *gother*, &c. But, of course, there are words even of this class so special and so important that they require a notice; and sometimes the same word occurs under various forms, as *agh*, *ogh*, *ugh*, &c. Even those that are mere corruptions are occasionally interesting, as "mislist" for molest; and so also is an extemporised word which substitutes the positive for the negative, the active for the passive, as "I *dis-re-mimber*."

It has been shown by Nares and others that in the more ancient pronunciation of many of our common words, the accent was at least one syllable nearer the termination than at present; and this form is largely retained in provincial dialects. We have thus *accept'-able*, *contra'-ry*, *Algib'-bera*, *Arithmat'-ic* *intric'-ate*, *discrep'-ancy*, *levia'-than*, *demonstra'-tor*, &c. The modern use throws the accent back towards the beginning. The contrary is the case with the word *man'-kind*, now *man-kind'*. Also, in the arrangement of syllables we have a consonant put in the wrong place, as *abbrev'-iate*, *dev'-iate*, *allev'-iate*; instead of *abbe'-viate*, &c.

But mere words can never properly show a dialect. There are idiomatic phrases which are often far more characteristic;

* *Plash*, or (s)*plash*.

and it is to be regretted that our local glossaries give us words, words, mere words, so exclusively. Phrases show the modes of thought, and they are frequently humorous or punning. It is scarcely credible how numerous they are, or how interesting. I have selected those which centre round half a dozen words; two under each of the first three letters. Those which are printed in italics are specially Irish.

PHRASES.

ALIVE. *Blood alive!*—*Death alive!*—*Hell alive!*—*Man alive!*—*Murdther alive!*—*Woman alive!**

ALL. All alone,†—*All an' sin'thry*,‡—*All as one*,—All one,—§ All gospel,—*All in all*,—*All overish*,—*All out*,—*All the go*,—*All there*,||—*All soarts*,—All the while,—All to, or All for to,—All to bits,—*All to pieces*,—All to nothin',—All in the well,—*An' all that*,—*An' all to that*,—*An' all that soart o' thing*,—*At all, at all*,—*Bates all*,—For all that,—*For all the wort*,—With all,—*Still an' with all*,—*Till all is blue*,—Of all things,—*The Devil an' all*,—*For good an' all*,—*When all is done*,—*When all comes to all*,—*All that's left o' me*,—*With all the veins*,—*The four Alls*,¶—*All kinds o' luck*.**

BAD. *Terrible bad* (very unwell),—*Bad 'cess*†† to you, *bad scran*,†† *bad win*,††—Bad manners,†† *Bad end*†† to you.

* These are all Irish, and they are all interjectional. In two instances, they indicate the gender of the person addressed; and these, which are both hortatory, were probably the originals. The others appear to have been formed by the addition of strong nouns, one of which makes a contradiction.

† *All alone* by myself, an' no body along wid me. *Irish pleonasm*.

‡ Like the Archaic English expression "all and some."

§ It's not *all Gospel* that he preaches.

|| Quite sane. ¶ See p. 131.

** In the manuscript of Letter A, there are fifty-eight quotations illustrative of the phrases which centre round the word "All." See "The four ALLS."

†† All semi-jocular or moderate imprecations. "'Cess" means success, and "scran" food; but the meaning is unknown to the speaker.

The *bad man** (Devil);—*bad place** (Hell);—A *bad 'un*,—*Not bad*,†—gone to the *bad*,—A *bad fellow*‡ of it.

BLACK. Beaten *black and blue*,—*Black aviced* (visaged),—The *black art* (necromancy),—Black looks,—In the *black book*,—calling *black bottom*,§—*Black clocks*,||—*Black coats*,¶—*Black eye*,** (in drinking from a bottle),—*Black fastin'*,—*Black foot*,††—*Black frost*,—*The black north* (quasi “bleak”),—(The size of) *the black o' my nail*,‡‡—*Black mouth* (Presbyterian),—*Black sheep*,§§—nothin' but *black water*

CAT. *Cat*||| and *clay*,—*Cat and dog* (a game),—to fight like cat and dog,—Cat's-tail plant,—Cat o' nine tails,—To let the *cat out of the bag*,—The *cat has nine lives*,—*Cat stairs*,—To bell the Cat (*Scotch*),—*Cat of a kind*,*†—To be a cat's paw,—Watching *like a cat at a mousehole*,—*As sleekit* (sly, wary, cautious,) *as a Cat*.

COME. *Well come home*,*†—To *come again you*,—To *come over*,—To *come roun'* (in sickness),—To *come round one* (by persuasion),—To *come to the groun'*,—To *come to grief*,*§—*Come-an'-go* (elasticity in bargain making),—*Comin' to come*,*||—*Come-at-ible*.*¶

* The euphemisms of children.

† Negative praise, but often meant as a strong approval.

‡ Not generous in sharing something good. § Like pot and kettle. || Beetles.

¶ Chimney-sweepers thus class themselves jocularly with professional men.

** This is said when the liquor has sunk so that the bottom can be seen.

†† A companion who attends a young man on a courting expedition, to keep the parents of the young woman in conversation.

‡‡ A peasant's comparison, indicating unclean hands. [than white.

§§ It is said that the sheep of Ireland were formerly more frequently black

||| Chopped straw, which is mixed with clay for building mud-wall cottages. Also the roots of vegetables in turf bog, which bind and prevent it from being friable.

*† Amply provided for.

*§ A modern expression.

*|| A jocular antithesis to the expression “go'n' to go,” or about to set out—Come on, my bold Virginnes, for I wish you for to know That for to fight the Englishers, we're goin' for to go.

*¶ A Saxonism for attainable; just as “It lies-me-upon” is another for “It is incumbent on me.” Professor Sedgewick used to argue that every idea could be expressed in Saxon words; even “the impenetrability of matter” became “the un-thoroughfare-sive-ness of stuff.” Compare this with Lover's expression in *Handy Andy*—“No, alannah! *shoe-aside* is the Latin for cuttin' your throat.”

SPECIMEN OF GLOSSARY.

LETTER A.

1. "The first, and perhaps the most important letter of the "Alphabet" is called *ay* (as in 'day') in England, *au* in Scotland, and *ah* in Ireland. These sounds are respectively traceable throughout the dialects*; and they are applied also in the pronunciation of Latin.†

2. Interchangeable with *o*; as *hondes*, *stonden*, *lond*, *strond*, in Chaucer; and *lang*, *amang*,—*bane*, *stane*,—*bauld*, *saul*, in Scotch. In Ireland, we have *thram* (*from*), *bau'* (*bond* or *bawn*), *aff* (*off*), *av* (*of* or *if*); also *plat* (*plot*, 2 Kings ix, 26), *stap*, *jab*, *af'en*, *drap-ing* (*dropping* or *falling*). Then, by contrast, *form* and *former* for *farm*, &c.; and *borra*, *fella*, *medda*, *sorra*, for *borrow*, &c.

3. In composition equivalent to *on*,‡ or *In*; as *a-fire*, *a-foot*, *a-purpose*.

4. Vulgar for *Be*, as *a-fore*, *a-hint*, *a-yont*.

5. Almost meaningless, and hence the provincial or partially recognised words to 'fright, to 'light down, to 'custom as with a grocer, 'mazed, 'shamed, 'gree, 'prentice, 'sizes.

6. Frequently used for *on* in connexion with the days of the week, as *a Thursday* (*Paston Letters*), *a Sunday* (*Dublin Penny Journ.*, ii, 236), *a Friday*.

7. Giving to the present participle the force of the infinitive mood, as *a-fishing*, that is, to fish (*John* xxi, 3, Izaak Walton p. 202, orig. edn.); *a-hunting*, *a-courting*. Different from *In* as *John* ii, 20.

8. Used for the pronoun *I*. Very common in Scotland and Ulster.

See, *A'll mind it the longest day A live. A* was 'listed at Carickforgis in the winther sayson. *Ulster Dialect*.

9. An abbreviation of the word "have."

Myght *ha'* had sum excusacion. *Serm.*, 1432.—The Jews wolde 'a' stoned him. *Maundev*, 1366.—Served Laban to 'a' wedded his daughter Rachel. *Test of Love*.—God might 'a' made you as evil as he. *Diates and Sayings*, 1477.—This form occurs frequently in the *Paston Letters*, and about thirteen times in the original edition of *Bunyan's Pilg. Prog.*

* Burns rhymes America with "thraw."

† Chaucer rhymes "eructavit" with Davit (Eng. sound); also "mater" with water (Irish sound).

‡ On-sleep occurs frequently. See Acts xiii, 36.

10. Replaced by *y* terminal. Sof-*y*, chayn-*y*, suppayn-*y*, wind-*y*, (for vulg. wind-*a*. See No. 2.)

11. Occasionally used for the other form of the indefinite article, as *a*-numberell, *a*-nawl, *a*-napple. This use is rare and vulgar, but it was formerly very common as *a*-nabby, *a*-naunt, *a*-neagle, *a*-narcher, "*a*-naxyltree." See *Mayer's Vocab.*, ed. by *Wright*; *Machyn's Diary*, 1551; *Maunde-ville*, &c.

12. "A by itself *a*." An expression formerly used in spelling, when the letter constituted a syllable,—as in the words eat-*a*-ble, *a*-mi-*a*-ble. It is connected with the expressions "A *per se*" or "A *per C*"; and "*and-per se-and*" formerly used in reading, in reference to the contraction &, then frequently used by printers.

13. Redundant. In Ireland the expressions "this-*a*-way" and "that-*a*-way" are common; as in England one hears *a*-walking, *a*-dreaming, for walking and dreaming.

ABOO, *interj.* The ancient Irish "slogan" or war cry. The O'Neills, the O'Briens, the Geraldines, the Butlers, the O'Sullivans, and others adopted it, *mutat. mutand.* Spenser in his *State of Ireland*, says concerning it—

Herodotus writeth that they [the Scythians and Parthians,] used in their battle to call upon the names of their captains or generals, and sometimes upon their greatest kings deceased, which custom to this day manifestly appeareth among the Irish. For at their joyning of battle, they likewise call upon their captaines name, or upon the word of his ancestors. As they under Oneale say *Laundarg abo*, that is, the bloody hand, which is Oneale's badge. They under Obrien call *Launlaider*, that is the strong hand. And to their example, the old English also, which there remayneth, have gotten up their cryes, Scythian-like, as *Crom-abo*, and *Butler-abo*.

Then he sees another scene,—

Norman churls are on the green,—

O'Sullivan Aboo is the cry;

For filled is his ship's hold

With arms and Spanish gold,

And he sees the snake-twined spear wave on high.

—*Davis. O'Sullivan's Return.*

Rush to the standard of dauntless Red Hugh!

Bonnought and Gallowglass,

Throng from each mountain pass!

On for old Erin!—*O'Donnell aboo!*

—*Mc Cann.*

From this it appears that the Act of 4 Hen. III, No. 20, had not been successful in silencing these cries. It was there enacted,—

... That no person ne persons, of whatsoever state condition or degree he or they be of, take part with any Lord or Gentleman, or uphold any such variances or comparisons in word or deed as in using those words *cramabo*,* *butlerabo*, or other words like, or contrary otherwise to the King's lawes, his crown and dignity and peace, but to call only upon St. George, or the name of his soueraigne lord the King of England for the time being.

The slogans of the North of England have been carefully described by Michael Hislabie Denham, Esq.; but long before some of them were in use, an old injunction had been worded thus :—

Item, that all souldiers entering into battaile, assault, skirmish, or other faction of armes, shall have for their common cry and word, *St. George forward* or *Upon them St. George*, whereby the soldier is much comforted.

This practice is referred to by several old writers :—

Our ancient word of courage, *fair St. George*,
Inspire us with the spleen of fiery dragons.
—*Shaksp., Rd. III, v, 3.*

God and *St. George*, Richmond and *Victory*.
—*Ib., Rd. III, v, 3.*

But at last they gave a shout,
Which echoed through the sky,
God and *St. George of England*,
The conquerors did cry.
—*O. Bal., Ld. Willoughby, 1586. Per. Rel.*

Some of the slogans of Scotland are well known, as
“A Douglas! A Douglas!”† :—“A Home! A Home!”‡ :—
“Set on!” [Seyton] :—“Loch Sloy!” [Macfarlane] :—

* *Crom* was a name for God. *Crom* castle appears to have had a common origin with this war cry. *Spir. of the Nation*.—Another authority says that *Crom-aboo* is from the valley of the *Crom* in *Kildare*. *Irish Hudib.* 25.

† But, ere they wist, richt in the hall
Douglas and his men coming were all,
And cried on hicht, “*Douglas! Douglas!*”
—*Barbour's Bruce.*

‡ *Scott, Marm., Can. VI, v. xxvii.*—*Lay of Last M., Can. V, v. iv.* The author says in a note “The slogan or war-cry of this powerful family was “‘A Home! A Home!’ It was anciently placed in an escrol above the crest.” It is thus given in *Drummond's “Hist. of Noble British Families.”*

“Stand sure, Craigellachie!” [Grant] :—“Albanich!” [Highlanders in general.]*

A. B. C's. *n.* The Alphabet. This name is in accordance with the practice of giving a title by repeating a portion of the beginning; as *Te Deum Laudamus*, *De profundis clamavi*, *Nunc Dimittis*, &c. Many of our own lyrical pieces, and especially our Hymns, have no actual title, but are known by their first lines respectively. The word “alphabet” is itself composed of *Alpha-Beta*, the first two letters in the Greek arrangement. The expression is still in use in Teesdale, and generally in Yorkshire; as well as in various other districts of England, the Colonies, and the United States.

† “Alphabetum,” *a nabse* [i.e., an A. B. C.] *Nominale of 15th cent.*, in *Mayer's Vocab.*—And then comes answer like an A. B. C. book [to be read “like an *absey* book.] *Shaks. Kg. John*, i. 1.—And zif zee wil wite of hire [the Greeks] A. B. C., what lettres thei ben, here zee may see hem. *Maundeville's Travels* (ed. Halliwell) p. 31.—The names ben as thei [the Jewes] clepen hem, written above, in manere of hire A. B. C. *Ib.*, p. 109.—He shall not receive, take, or buy, to barter, sell againe, chaunge, or do away, any Bibles, Testaments, Psalm-books, Primers, *Abcees*, Almanackes or other booke or books whatsoever. *Decree of the Star Chamb.* See Milton's *Areopagitica*.

† The humble school-house of my A. B. C. *Biglow Papers*, *Intro.*—If theaze wun ameng em all, at knows it A. B. C., it knows Greek. *Bairnsla Foaks' Alm.*—Their Latin names as fast he rattles, as A. B. C. *Burns, Death and Dr. Hornbook.*

† The gate lies open night and day,
To go's as plain as A. B. C. [pron. *say*, not *see*.]
—*Irish Hudib.*

The Masther by the fire side,
With Paudeen on his knee,
Roarin' out t'gether
Great A. B. C.

—*Irish song, Paddy Byrne.*

* In Chambers's “Popular Rhymes of Scotland,” p. 131, a few of the French slogans of the Middle Ages may be seen. “Ah ma vie!” [Bretagne] :—“Prigny! Prigny!” [Lorraine] :—“Ret eo!” viz., “Il faut!” [Penlivet.]

† The three sets of illustrative quotations are from the Old English, Dialect Literature, and modern Irish writings respectively.

[A few Educational remarks will perhaps be welcomed, especially in a Glossary; though they are only indirectly connected with the main subject:—

The Horn-Book was a small piece of wood, usually about half the size of the palm; and on this was pasted a piece of paper with the Alphabet, the ten Arabic numerals, perhaps a few Syllables, and the Lord's Prayer. The whole was covered with dark paper. On the back was a figure of St. George and the Dragon; and the printed part on the face was covered with a piece of transparent horn for protection; whence its name. It was well known in Burns's time, hence the name Dr. "Hornbook;" and in a slightly altered form it has been known till within the last half-century. The following descriptions are of much interest.

Quan a chyld to scole xal set be,
A boke hym is browt,
Naylyd on a brede of tre
That men callt an *a-be-ce*.

—*MS. Harl., Rel. Ant., i, 63.*

Their books, (of stature small) they take in hand,
Which with pellucid horn secured are,
To save from fingers wet the letters fair;
The work so gay that on their back is seen
St. George's high achievements does declare.

—*Shenstone,* Schoolmistress.*

If ye'd be daddy's bonny bairn, an' mammy's only pet,
Your *A. B. brod* an' lesson-time, ye mauna ance forget.
Gin you would be a clever man, an' usefu' in your day,
It's now your time to learn at e'en your *A. B. C.*†

—*Laing, Scot. Nurs. Rhymes.*

"An *A. B. C.* book, or as they spoke and wrote it an *Absey* "book, is a catechism." *Johnson*. There are frequent allusions to this subject in the older Glossaries and Dictionaries. In the *Promptorium Parvulorum*, the word occurs under the forms *abse*, *apecce*, and *apecy*. Cotgrave has "*abece*" an "*abece*, the cross-row." The cross‡ being prefixed to the Alphabet, it was often called the "Christ-cross-row."

* Shenstone was born in 1714, and he probably describes a period about 1722.

† Sounded *say*.

‡ "The *A. B. C.*, with the Shorter Catechism," was common in the Presbyterian districts of Ireland till after 1820; the one small book serving for Alphabet, Spelling-book, Reading-book, guide in theology and morals, and exercise for the memory. In those countries of the world in which education is in a backward state, the practice is followed to-day. For more advanced pupils the [New] Testament was the reading book, and after that the "Bible" [O. Test.]

† A B C D E F G H I J K L M N P
 O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z &
 a b c d e f g h i k l m n o p q r s t u v w x y z &

aeiou | aeiou
 ab eb ib ob ub | ba be bi bo bu
 ac ec ic oc uc | ca ce ci co cu
 ad ed id od ud | da de di do du

In the Name of the Father / and of the
 Sonne / and of the Holy Ghost Amen.

Our Father which art in Heaven.
 hallowed be thy Name. Thy king-
 dome come. Thy will be done in
 earth as it is in heauen ✠ Give
 vs this day our daily bredd And
 forgieue vs our trespalles / as we
 forgieue them that trespalle vs. And
 let vs not be ledd into temptation;
 but deliuer vs from euill: Amen.

i. ii. iii. liii. v. vi. vii. viii. ix. x.

Of 16th century.

See the *Illustrated London News*, of
 Nov. 6th, 1859.

A	a	aeiou	A	a	aeiou
B	b	aeiou	B	b	aeiou
C	c	aeiou	C	c	aeiou
D	d	aeiou	D	d	aeiou
E	e	aeiou	E	e	aeiou
F	f	aeiou	F	f	aeiou
G	g	aeiou	G	g	aeiou
H	h	aeiou	H	h	aeiou
I	i	aeiou	I	i	aeiou
J	j	aeiou	J	j	aeiou
K	k	aeiou	K	k	aeiou
L	l	aeiou	L	l	aeiou
M	m	aeiou	M	m	aeiou
N	n	aeiou	N	n	aeiou
O	o	aeiou	O	o	aeiou
P	p	aeiou	P	p	aeiou
Q	q	aeiou	Q	q	aeiou
R	r	aeiou	R	r	aeiou
S	s	aeiou	S	s	aeiou
T	t	aeiou	T	t	aeiou
U	u	aeiou	U	u	aeiou
V	v	aeiou	V	v	aeiou
W	w	aeiou	W	w	aeiou
X	x	aeiou	X	x	aeiou
Y	y	aeiou	Y	y	aeiou
Z	z	aeiou	Z	z	aeiou
&	&	aeiou	&	&	aeiou

In the Name of the Father, and of the
 Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen.

Our Father which art in Heaven,
 hallowed be thy Name; thy king-
 dom come, thy Will be done on
 Earth as it is in Heaven. Give
 us this Day our daily Bread; and
 forgieue us our Trespalles, as we
 forgieue them that trespalls against
 us; And lead us not into Tempa-
 tion, but deliver us from Evil.
 Amen.

Close of the 18th century.

Cammel's *cross-rowe*
 Doth playnely shoue
 Without lyes or gyle.
 —*Lemon's Catal. of Broads., S.A.*

Nay, if you turne and wind and press,
 And in the *cross-row* have such skill,
 I am put down, I must confess.
 —*Lilly, Anct. Bal. and Broads., 10.*

Two or three centuries ago, Alphabet-poems, allied to the Acrostic, were common. In the "Roxburghe Ballads," there are three, entitled respectively—

The Young Man's A. B. C., or Two Dozen of Verses which a young man sent his love who proved unkind.
 The Virgin's A. B. C., or a Vertuous Admouition* for a chaste and well governed maid, to the tune of the Young Man's A. B. C.
 A Right Godlie and Christian A. B. C., showing the duty of every degree, to the tune of Rogero.]

ACRE. *n.* [*Lat.* ager; *Ang. Sax.* aecer.] Formerly a portion of land, with little reference to its extent. Sir Henry Spelman writes as follows:—

Agrum, Germani *Acker* vocant, eaque sensu, villae quaedam in Norfolciensi, nomina sibi adsciverunt. Scilicet *castle-acre*, quasi castellum in agro vel ager et castellum pertinens; *South-acre*, ager australis; *West-acre*, ager occidentalis appellatur.

In the names of the Townlands of Ireland, one meets with *Acre-beg* and *Acre-more*, *Acre-east* and *Acre-west* in Galway, their superficial extent varying from 11 to 152 statute acres. There is *Acre-McCricket* in Down, less than 5 acres in extent, and *Acre-na-Kirka* in Tipperary. So many as thirty-three other Townlands are simply called *Acre*; their respective areas ranging from 5 to 818 statute acres. In an Anglo Saxon vocabulary of the eleventh century, we find "*Rusticus, aecer-ceorl*," a field clown. See Note on the word, *Ulster Journ. of Archaeol.*, vi, 83.

* The following is a stanza:—

D - isdainful never seeme, nor yet too much
 D - oat on thy face's beauty, sleighting such
 As sure for love, lest creeping age comes on,
 And then too late, your folly you bemoane.

CON-ACRE.—1. The letting of land in patches, to furnish a crop for a single season; usually of potatoes, or in the North, flax. The land is often specially manured for the purpose, and is let for a high rent. The custom is little prevalent in Ulster, except in Donegal.

2. The general dealing of tenants with each other, for the use of land for a limited period.

Would get a good dale of Surveyin' to do, especially in *con-acre* time.—*Carleton, Abdⁿ. of Mat. Kav.*

AKS } [Ang. Sax. *acsian* or *axian*.] To ask. Bosworth
 AX } gives the further Ang. Sax. forms *aecsian* and
 AXE } *ascian*.

As in numerous other cases, though custom sanctions the modern form, the Primitive and the Provincial uses coincide. This word occurs in nearly every local Glossary, and is probably found in all the Dialects. In the "Dictes and "Sayings of the Philosophers," 1477, the first book printed by Caxton, *axe* occurs 121 times, and *ask* only once. Robert of Gloucester has the forms *aschede* and *ascode*: and Peter Langtoft has *askie*.

He deliuereth us fro all perilis, and gives us graciously al that we nedith or willen *axen* of him. *Reliq. Antiq.* ii, 44.—Whatsoeuir ye shall *axe* in my name, ye shal haue it. *Latimer*, qu Jon. xiv, 13.—The twelve that weren with him *axiden* him to expowne the parable. *Wiclif*, Mk. iv, 10.—After which words, he kneeled down and *axed* all men forgeveness, and likewise forgive all men. *Chron. of Qu. Jane*.—The man *axed* him [Socrates] what was God. *Ascham's Toxoph.*

Axe not why, for though thou *axe* me
 I wolle not tellen Goddes privatee.

—*Chaucer, C.T.*, l. 3557.

The Abbot of Pontenay: somdel forth him broughte,
 He *axide* of him whi he were: in so deouful thogte.

—*Life and Mart. of T. Beket.*

Jugement ich *axi* of this curt: hou hit may there of bee.

—*Ib.*

When *axt*, I thoughte to pity her estate,
 A frynde of kynde, a quene, a neighbor nere.

—*Camden Misc.* iii, 14.

But houd, yor Margit's up ith' teawn ;
Aw yerd her *ax* for thee at t' Crown.

—*Lancash., Waugh.*

Wha, theau *axes* e'en little enough, considerink trubble of theaw's bin at. *Lanc., Tim Bobbin.*

"What dus te *ax* for em [a powny] canny man?" "Wey, he's weel worth twenty pun; but I'll teake hawf." *Cumberland, Anderson.*

He *asht* me atth weddin' when ea saw ye. *Westmoreland.*

Hawver ah went to Scarbro' az ah sud be reddy to say ah had, if onny body *axt* me. *Yorksh. Dial.*—It's inuf ta muddle the Railway Sarvints when thave su mony queshtans *axt*. *Ib.*

Of the Purser, this here is the maxim,—
Slops, grog, and provision he sacks;
How he'd look if you was but to *ax* him
With the Captain's clerk, who 'tis goes snacks.

—*Dibdin's Sea Songs.*

Jim Hickory, the Riproarer of Salt River, *axed* me if I know'd the Piankashaw Bottom, on Bear's Grass.—*Amer. Dial., Crockett.*

It's a question you have no right to *axe*. *Carlet. V. McClutchy.*—Why thin, one id think that the whole sae belonged to you, you're so mighty bowld in *axin* questions. *Lover, B. O'Reirdon.*—The shearers goes through Englan' an' Scotlan' like a ridgement, an' the people hes t' give them any thing they *aks* for.—*Ulst. Dial., B. Mc.*

THE FOUR ALLS.—A public-house sign, formerly common, and very popular in agricultural villages. The figures usually depicted were (1) a King in his regalia, (2) a Bishop or Clergyman in his robes, (3) a Soldier in full uniform, with his sword drawn, (4) a Farmer of a rueful countenance, with his hand in his purse. Under or over each were written the duties he performed for "All." Sometimes (5) a Lawyer was added, and then the sign was that of "the five alls;" *e.g.*, I *govern* all, *pray for* all, *fight for* all, *pay for* all, *plead for* all. There is a good deal of room for variety in carrying out the general idea; the painters, therefore, sometimes introduced a dissolute woman with the legend "I vanquish all," or Death with "I slay all," or the Devil with "I take all."

In Lilly's "Ancient Ballads and Broad-sides," there is one of about 1560, mentioned in a note.*

Again I see within my glasse† of steele,
 But foure estates, to serue eche country Soyle,
 The *King*, the *Knight*, the *Peasant*, and the *Priest*,
 The King should care *for al* the subjects still,
 The Knight should fight for to defend the same,
 The Peasant, he should labour for their ease,
 And Priests should pray for them and for themselves.

—*Gascoigne's Steele Glas*, 1576.

AZIN. *n.* The eaves of a house, especially of one that is covered with thatch. The Saxon original appears to be "Efese, eaves of a house, a brim, brink, margo." *Bosworth*. "Part of the outside of a house, the eaves or easeings." *Randle Holme's Armory*, 1688. Hence the *efesings*, that is *eaves* or *easeings*. The latter of these forms is found in Yorks., Salop, &c.: the Hibernic pronunciation accounts for the present variety. In the *Ancren Riwele* or "Regulæ Inclusionarum" of the 13th cent., the word is used in two senses, viz.:—(1) that given here, and (2) the clippings or parts cut off.

Original.

The niht fuel ithen *evesunge*
 bitocneth recluses thet wunieth,
 for thi, under chirche *evesunge*,
 that heo understonthen, that heo
 owun to beon of holi liue.

—*Ancren Riwele*, p. 142.

Modern version.

The night-fowl in the *eaves*
 betokeneth recluses who dwell
 under the *eaves* of the church,
 that they may understand that
 they ought to be of holy life.

—*Morton's Trans. for Camd. Soc.*,
 1853.

* There are five figures in the cut at the head of the Ballad, besides Death. The legends are as follows:—

The Priest. I praye for yov fower.
The King. I defende yov fower.
The Harlot. I vanquesh yov fower.
The Lawyer. I helpe yov iijj to yovr right.
The Clown. I feede yov fower.
Death. I kill yov all.

In the background, in a bower, are seated the soldier, the harlot, the lawyer, and the priest. A festive board furnished with viands, is supported on the back of the clown, who rests on his hands and knees. Death, approaching with his dart, clutches at something on the table.—There are several old epigrams, each line ending with the word *all*. The ordinary sign is well known, though not now so common as formerly. There used to be one in the town of Hillsborough, ten miles south of Belfast.

† Mirror.

Original.

Absalones schene wlite, thet
 ase ofte ase me evesede him me
 solde his *evesunge*—theo her the
 me kerf of—uor two hundred
 sicles of seofure.

—*Ib.* p. 398.

Modern version.

The fair beauty of Absalom,
 who as often as his head was
 polled the *clippings* were sold,—
 the hair that was cut off,—for
 two hundred shekels of silver.

—*Ib.*

Isycles in the evysynges.—Piers Plowman.

One portion of the mediæval house is frequently mentioned, viz., the "pentice." This is otherwise called the "eskyng," in provincial dialects the "easing," and in pure English the "eaves." The pentice (or "pent house") appears to have been originally a shed or projection over the outer door or windows, and then to have passed along the whole side walls; so that, in the absence of gutters and spouts, it threw the rain which fell on the roof clear of the wall.—*Brit. Antiq. Illustrated; Trans. His. Soc.*, vol. xx.

Siptember. Thatch the corn stacks nicely, rope them well, an' cut the *azins* very snod.—*Ulster Dial.*

When the first attempt was made to compile this Glossary, a good many years ago, the study of dialectal literature was comparatively unknown; and neither the Philological nor the Dialect Society had been founded. Also, there were few local lists of words, and fewer still accessible; but there was the great work of Jamieson for all Scotland, and the magnificent fragment for England, called *Boucher's Archaic Glossary*. Only two parts were issued, and the last word is BLADE. Yet it extends over 184 closely printed pages of three columns each; containing thousands of illustrative quotations, and has dissertations on various points connected especially with philology and antiquity. The whole is preceded by a learned introduction of 64 pages, which would have been much more beneficial to the reader if the matter had been better arranged.

These were the examples which I followed, before a line of Halliwell's or Wright's had been written, indeed before the idea of them had been entertained; until the magnitude of the work has become somewhat appalling. While the process has been going forward, words have been passing away; but

the record of them would be useful as showing what has recently been, as well as what still is.

It has been well remarked by some-one, that the duty of a collector is first to accumulate, and then to select and condense; but this latter, though a necessary operation, is a painful one, as many favourite quotations of great interest, perhaps on other and collateral grounds, must be put aside. Yet even when that is done, the mass of material is surprising.

In general, the treatises on local dialects consist of little more than skeleton lists of words, like a schoolboy's dictionary; and though these awaken curiosity or excite a smile occasionally, or serve for comparison, they are of very little value for any intellectual purpose. This appears to be the class which the English Dialect Society aims chiefly at securing.—A more advanced class of books comprises those in which some explanation is given and an occasional illustrative quotation. These comprehend Forby's *Vocab. of East Anglia*, Carr's *Craven Glossary*, Hunter's *Hallamshire Glossary*, Brockett's *North Country words*, &c.—Of a higher class still are Baker's *Northamptonshire Glossary*, and Atkinson's learned *Glossary of the Cleveland dialect*.—But a much closer approximation to perfection is found in the *Lancashire Glossary*, published as part of the English Dialect series, in which the old English and modern words are grouped together. The Lancashire dialect possesses a large literature of its own; and it is surprising how many of the words have an old English origin. Every book quoted has the date of its publication annexed; and if it be said that this involved unnecessary labour, it must be added that the plan is sometimes very useful. There appear to be 97 words under letter A, some of them of more than one form; and these exhibit 100 quotations from our old English literature, besides 68 from writings in the Lancashire Dialect. There are also 68 examples from

“colloquial use” given, and these might be increased to almost any extent. They are sometimes very illustrative, but less authoritative than passages which have been in print.*

Under letter A. in the Glossary which is referred to here, there are 175 words, and 91 phrases. These are illustrated by 282 quotations from our Old English literature, 149 from writings in the various dialects, 309 from printed books in the Hibernic dialect, and 65 of a miscellaneous kind. These amount to 805 in all. And they are exclusive of words and quotations from the dialect of Forth and Bargy. It was the intention at one time to incorporate these, but the idea was abandoned; as that dialect is provincial and obsolete, not Irish nor current.

It is obvious that a much smaller number of quotations would suffice; and that by including all the prose examples of a set in a single paragraph (as is done under A. B. C. and *Are*) and reducing each to its smallest limits, the work might be greatly diminished in size without losing any of its interest.

To reduce it to a mere skeleton list, like that of some

* It is not a little strange that the English Dialect Society, whose field of investigation is one of deep and wide interest, never had its home in London. And for the last year or two it has been settled at Manchester, where there are many able and willing workers. The publication of a Glossary of Lancashire Words had been several times suggested, and skeleton lists were not unknown; but they were not either instructive or suggestive in character. The publication of the present Glossary was undertaken virtually by the Manchester Literary Club; and the First Part, comprising 24 pages, extends to the end of letter E. It has been very carefully edited by Mr. J. H. Nodal, the Secretary, and Mr. George Milner, the Treasurer; but in collecting, examining, and describing the words in the sub-districts, there were sixteen fellow-labourers. Nearly a dozen manuscript collections were also placed at the service of the editors. It is hoped that this example may excite the people of some other shire to do something of the same kind for it; though there are few places in which the words are as interesting as those of Lancashire. It was a Society, the Camden, that printed the valuable work known as *Promptorium Parvulorum*, edited by the late Mr. Albert Way; and there are reasons in favour of a Society taking the expense and responsibility out of private hands. But the English Dialect Society is still young, and has not yet met with anything like the support which it deserves; so that it cannot undertake books of a large kind, however valuable they may promise to be.

obscure parish or division of a county would be to destroy its character utterly ; and though it would still be of much interest, the preparation and issue of it would be comparatively a waste of labour. There has not been more done for the dialect of Lancashire than it deserves ; but it is utterly incredible that the speech of a single county, subject to many rapid changes in modern times, can compare in interest with that of a whole kingdom, whose history and customs are embodied in their phraseology, which has been on the whole well preserved. And the one is a field in which there have been many labourers, the other has been unexplored to the present time.

It is possible, however, that these pages may awaken interest in the subject ; and that those whose intellectual tastes enable them to appreciate, or whose judgment is of value, may call for more extended information. In that case, I will respond promptly and cheerfully.

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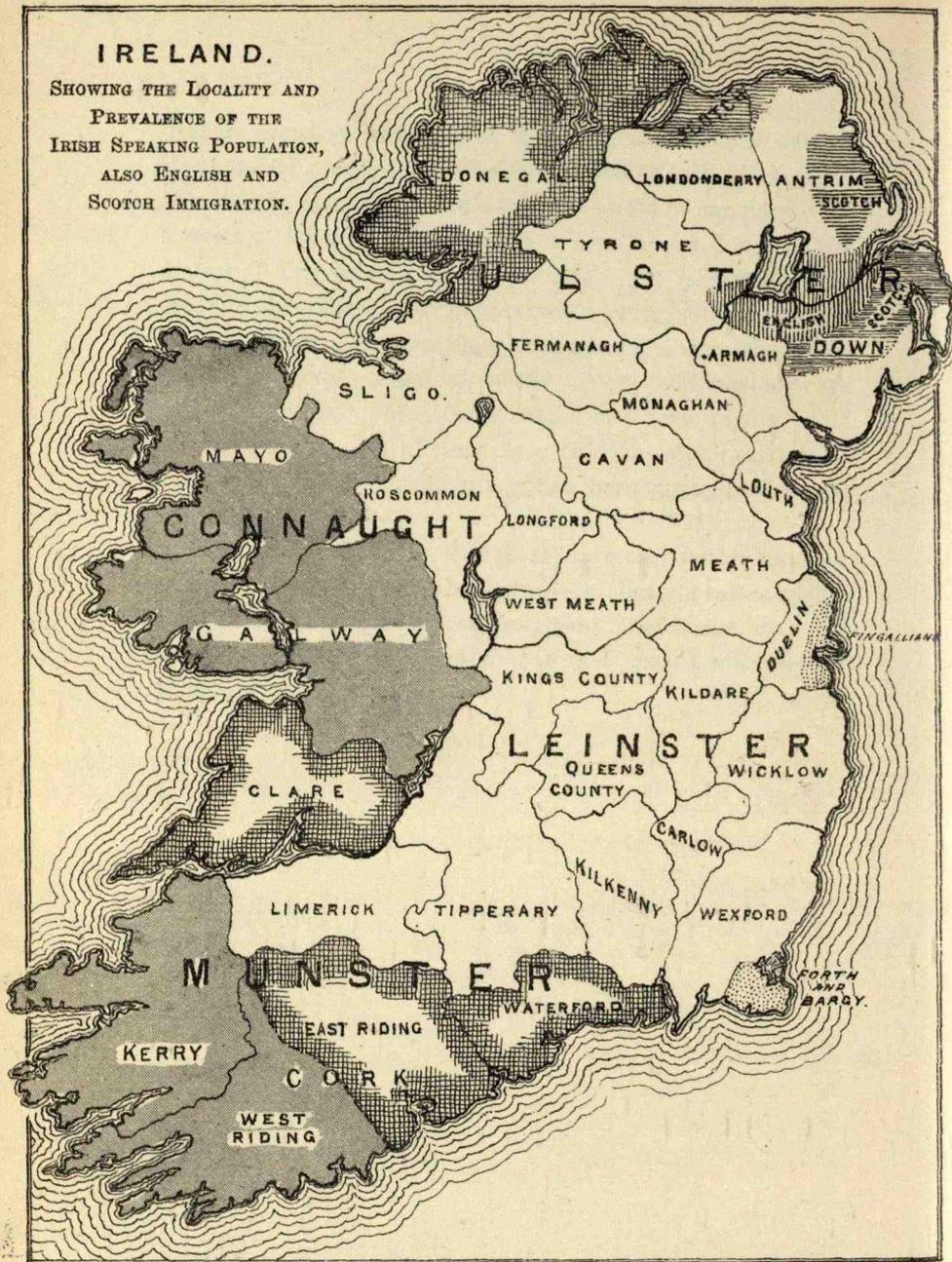
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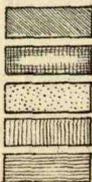
SHOWING THE LOCALITY AND PREVALENCE OF THE IRISH SPEAKING POPULATION, ALSO ENGLISH AND SCOTCH IMMIGRATION.



RIBY

EXPLANATION.

- Irish speakers only, 12 to 16 per cent
- " " " 4 to 9 "
- Old English Settlers
- Modern English
- " Scotch



- Galway, Mayo, Kerry, W. Cork.
- Donegal, Waterford, E. Cork, Clare.
- Forth and Bargo, (Wexford), Dublin County.
- Down, Antrim, Armagh, Tyrone.
- Londonderry, Antrim, Down.

APPENDIX.

ON THE PRESENT EXTENT AND FUTURE PROSPECTS OF
THE CELTIC LANGUAGE IN IRELAND.

In the early part of the present century, the Irish language was spoken more or less in every county; and those who are only fifty years old, can recollect how prevalent it was at the markets and fairs of their early days. A Roman Catholic gentleman estimates that at the beginning of the present century there were not many more than a million of people in Ireland who did not speak Irish, more or less. [That is to say, one-fourth of the gross population spoke English exclusively; while probably an equal or somewhat greater number knew Irish only.] Sometimes the Irish was used from policy, as in bargaining; sometimes from necessity, the speaker knowing little else. Of late years a marked change of a double character is noticeable. (1) The practical use of the language has sunk to a lower grade of the population; and (2) its cultivation has been undertaken warmly by the most intellectual men of the kingdom. Its philological and ethnological value is thus acknowledged, while the continued use of it as a living tongue is regarded as an impediment to civilization.

It has been said that it is the complement of the English language in Ireland; and it is interesting to know its extent, absolutely and relatively, also prospectively as well as in our own time. What is it and where is it found? Is it progressing, or stationary, or retrograde? The following figures will, in a great degree, answer the question. They are taken from the publications connected with the census of 1861,* but like every other official statement of the kind, they have been met with opposing objections. Some say that the Irish speakers are *more* numerous than they are represented to be, for that people were ashamed to state the fact that they knew that language only, or at all. Others, on the contrary, say that the Irish speakers are *less* numerous than

* This is better than an analysis according to the census of 1871, for it carries us back nearly twenty years from the present date, while still keeping within the present generation.

they are represented to be, for that people were proud of their capability, or supposed capability, to speak another tongue; and indulged in a little exaggeration. It is impossible to give weight to either of these objections, which, in fact, neutralise each other. I take the figures as I find them.

In all Ireland 28 in the thousand speak Irish only; that is, 2·8 per cent.; whilst 163 in the thousand, or 16·3 per cent., speak English and Irish both. In other words, about 162,400, or about one in thirty-six of the gross population, still know no other tongue than Irish. Let us analyse this number, and inquire the reason for the existence of even these few thousands.

1. If we first examine the *localities*, we shall find 16 per cent. of those speaking Irish only in the county of Galway; 12·7 in Mayo; 12·4 in Kerry; and 12·4 in the West Riding of Cork, which adjoins Kerry, and resembles it in its physical features. In these three counties, therefore, and in a portion of a fourth, are contained 67 per cent. or two-thirds of all the pure Irish speakers in the country: and those we may call emphatically the Celtic shires. Again, in Donegal the per centage of those speaking Irish only is 9·3; in Waterford 9·2; in the East Riding of Cork 6·7; in the town of Galway 5·2; and in Clare 4·3. Here we have, again, three counties and portions of two others embracing 27 per cent.—comprising a great portion of the remaining third,—of all the pure Irish speakers. And there is no other district of the island which does not fall below the average.

2. If we examine them, next, on the ground of *gregariousness*, we find that the town population of the whole country is to the rural as one to four; but the pure Irish speakers in the town districts are to those in the rural as one to fifty-two. In other words, the speakers of Irish merely, are thirteen times as numerous in the rural districts as in the urban or town districts.

3. If we compare the speakers of Irish only, on the ground of *education*, we find that Mayo and Galway, which stand at the top in Celtic speakers, stand at the top also in the per centage of those who can neither read nor write. The next four districts follow almost in a similar order. Cork (West Riding) having 57 per cent. who can neither read nor write; Kerry 55; Donegal 52; and Waterford 59. The only county

that is a little exceptional in this respect is Sligo, which contains 53 per cent. that can neither read nor write, and yet barely reaches the average of persons speaking Irish only.

4. If we examine them on the ground of *sex*, we find that for every 100 males speaking Irish only, there are 131 females; whereas of those who speak English and Irish both, for every 100 males there are but $97\frac{1}{2}$ females. This is only natural, as women mix less in the world than men; but it is also a reason for the longer retention of the language, as children learn it from their mothers much more than from their fathers.

5. One is sometimes surprised at the sharpness of the *line which divides* the Celtic from the English language. In the West Riding of Cork the relative proportion in the gross population of those who speak Irish only, is four times as great as in the East Riding; whilst, again, Mayo and Galway stand at the head of the list; yet Roscommon and Sligo, which adjoin them, do not contain more than the average number of Irish speakers.

6. For all Ireland, the *dividing age* of the population is $21\frac{1}{4}$ years; but as children of three years old and under scarcely speak at all, let us,—partly by way of correction and partly for convenience,—take the dividing age as 25. Below this there are 39 per cent. of Irish-speakers-only, and above it 61. That is to say, the older half of the population contains nearly twice as many Irish speakers as the younger half. Of those who speak Irish and English both, there are 36 per cent. in the lower half, and 64 in the upper; so that the results are, practically, the same.

7. But let us examine still more minutely. If we take the population whose ages vary from 10 to 20, 1.94 speak Irish only, whereas those whose ages lie between 70 and 80, contain 4.33 of Irish speakers, actually $2\frac{1}{4}$ times as many. In this case, the figures do not show the full force of the facts; for so wide a disparity is at variance with all reasoning *a priori*. One would imagine that the home influences, acting on children under ten years old, would show a much larger proportion who have not yet learned any English conversationally; and, on the other hand, one is not prepared to find $4\frac{1}{3}$ per cent. of those who have mixed with the world for at least three score years and ten, unable to hold intercourse with their Saxon neighbours. It would be difficult to show more forcibly that the Celtic Irish indicates an obsolescent,

if not yet quite obsolete, condition of society. In other words, it is clear that the use of the Irish language is diminishing, notwithstanding the strong element of maternal instruction.

8. But, while we see the Irish still maintaining an existence at the least accessible of the extremities, few are aware of how completely it has been driven away, from the head and heart. In all Leinster, there are not 240 people who speak Irish only; and if we except the "Boys of Kilkenny," (of the whole county, I mean,) there are not a dozen. In the city of Dublin, where we might expect to find 500 at least who speak Irish only, there was, in 1861, *only one*; and that person probably a stranger! It need not surprise us, then, to be told that there are hundreds, probably thousands, in Dublin who cannot enjoy Carleton's stories; just as there are hundreds, probably thousands, in Edinburgh who have great difficulty in understanding the poems of Burns.
