

INTRODUCTION.

I have not been able to find it. Besides, *man* and *mut* are words radically distinct, and thus originated in different families.

"Sir," says the author, "is, in our language, the common title of respect; and the same term is employed in the same sense throughout every quarter of the globe. In the Sanscrit and Persian, it means the organ of the head itself." He finds the word in Arabia, Turkey, in Greek, among the Peruvians in South America, in Germany, Holland, and the contiguous countries. In some of the languages of these countries, I have found no such word, but if it exists, the author's inference, that the name of the head gave rise to this term of respect, (for this is what I understand him to mean,) is totally unfounded; and equally fanciful and unfounded is his supposition, that, by the loss of *h* from *sher*, the pronoun *her*, and the German *herr*, lord, are to be deduced from *sir*. In all this, it is demonstrably certain there is no truth or even semblance of reality.

Man, the author deduces from the Hebrew מַן to discern or discriminate, [a sense I do not find in the Lexicons,] and hence he infers that the radical idea of *man* is that of a *thinking or reasonable being*. With this word he connects *Menu*, *Menes*, *Minos*, and *mens*, *mind*; a sweeping inference made at random from a similarity of orthography, without a distant conception of the true primary meaning of either of these words. But what is worse, he appears, if I do not mistake his meaning, to connect with these words, the *tane*, *tanato*, or *tangi*, of the Sandwich isles; words, which are formed with the radical initial consonant not convertible with *m*, and most certainly unconnected with *man*. See the words *father*, *man*, and *sir*, in the Dictionary.

The author offers some other etymologies and affinities equally remote from truth, and even from probability.

The governing principles of etymology are, first, the identity of radical letters, or a coincidence of cognates, in different languages; no affinity being admissible, except among words whose primary consonants are articulations of the same organs, as *B, F, M, P, V* and *V*; or as *D, T, Th* and *S*; or as *G, C, hard*, *K* and *Q*; *R, L* and *P*. Some exceptions to this rule must be admitted, but not without collateral evidence of the change, or some evidence that is too clear to be reasonably rejected.

Second, Words in different languages are not to be considered as proceeding from the same radix, unless they have the same signification, or one closely allied to it, or naturally deducible from it. And on this point, much knowledge of the primary sense of words, and of the manner in which collateral senses have sprung from one radical idea, is necessary to secure the inquirer from mistakes. A competent knowledge of this branch of etymology cannot be obtained from any one, or from two or three languages. It is almost literally true, that in examining more than twenty languages, I have found each language to throw some light on every other.

That the reader may have more clear and distinct ideas of what is intended by *concurrent letters*, and the principles by which etymological deductions are to be regulated, it may be remarked that *commutable or interchangeable letters* are letters of the same organs; that is, letters or articulations formed by the same parts of the mouth. Thus *b, m* and *p* are formed immediately by the lips, the position of which is slightly varied to make the distinction between these letters. *F* and *v* are formed by the lips, but with the aid of the upper teeth. Now the difference of the joinings of the organs to utter these letters is so small, that it is easy for men in utterance to slide from one form into another.

The following examples will illustrate this subject.

Labial letters commuted for other labials.

English *bear*, Lat. *fero*, *pario*, G. *φωω*, *φοω*, D. *voeren*, G. *föhren*.

Here is the same word written in different languages, with five different initial letters.

German *vahr*, true, L. *verus*.

Celtic *lamh*, *lab*, the hand, Goth. *lofa*.

L. *guberno*, Fr. *gouverner*, Eng. *govern*.

Dental letters commuted for other dentals.

Eng. *dew*, G. *thau*.

Eng. *good*, G. *gut*.

Eng. *dare*, Gr. *δαρρη*.

Eng. *day*, G. *tag*.

Eng. *thank*, D. *danken*.

Eng. *brother*, D. *broeder*.

Palatal letters commuted for other palatals.

Eng. *call*, W. *gwyl*, Gr. *καλω*.

Eng. *gel*, It. *callare*.

Greek *χειμα*, L. *hiems*, winter.

Dentals converted into sibilants.

Eng. *water*, G. *wasser*.

Lat. *dens*, a tooth, G. *zahn*.

Eng. *let*, Fr. *laisser*.

Ch. חָבַד, Heb. חָבַד.

Sax. *tid*, time, G. *zeit*.

Change of linguals.

Eng. *escort*, Sp. Port. *escorta*.

Fr. *blanc*, white, Port. *branco*.

Letters formed by different organs are not commutable; hence we are not to admit a radical word beginning or ending with *b, f* or *v*, to be the same as a word beginning or ending with *g, d, t, r* or *s*; nor a word whose radical letters are *m, n*, to be the same as one whose elements are *r, d*, or *s, t*. If such words are in any case the same, they must have suffered some anomalous changes; changes which are very unusual and which are never to be admitted without the clearest evidence.

When this work was in the press, I first obtained a sight of a "History of the European Languages," by the late Dr. Alexander Murray, Professor of Oriental languages in the University of Edinburgh.

From a hasty perusal of the first volume, I find this learned professor studied the European languages with much attention and profit. He has gone further into the origin and formation of languages, than any author whose works I have read; and his writings unfold many valuable principles and facts. But he formed a theory which he attempted to support, in my opinion with little success: at least, on his principles, all the usual rules of etymology are transgressed; and all distinction between words of different radical letters is abandoned. According to his theory, nine words are the foundations of language, viz. *ag, wag, huag, bag*, or *huag*, [of which *fag* and *pag* are softer varieties], *dwag, thwag* or *twag, gwag* or *ciwag, lag* and *hag, mag, nag*, and *huag*, *rag* and *brag*, *swag*. "By the help of these nine words and their compounds all the European languages have been formed." These are the author's words.

To make out his scheme, he joins *ag*, having, to *wag*, move, and forms a diminutive, *wuag*, to move a little off. With *ba*, bear or bring, and *la*, hold, *leagaba* signifies literally *move-bearing*, and *wagla* is *move-having*. Then *wagaba* contracted into *wabba*, to wave, to weave, and *wagla* into *wala*, to turn. From *dag*, to wet, bedew, comes *damp*; from *eng*, to chew, comes *chump*; *ful*, joined, wrought together, from *fag*, to work, to join; *hwal* and *hal*, to hold, and turn, from *huag*; *bat* from *bagd* or *bagt*; *bigt*, a bite, from *bigt*; *bladder* from *blag*; *modera*, mother, the producer, from *magd*, produced; *bottom* from *bagt*, a stump, root or foundation; *field* from *fugd*, *earth* from *airtha*, *acetha* from *acer*, *aker*, *ager*; *field*, an uncultivated plain, from *fag*, to make to fall.

It seems that in order to maintain his theory, it was necessary to make it appear that *g* formed a part of all original words, and that this letter has, in modern words, been dropped. The author then introduces this letter into words where it never had any place, such as *field*, *earth*, *bat*, &c. The author's work presents one of the most singular medleys of truth and error, of sound observation and visionary opinions, that has ever fallen under my notice.

On the same principles, he must have inserted the letter *g* in *bear*, *fero*, *pario*, חָבַד, in *bend*, *found*, *tame*, *δωω*, *domo*; in *dream*, *wander*, *turn*, &c.; and supposed them to have been originally *benger*, *segro*, *pagri*, חָבַד, *begad*, *fougnd*, *tagne*, *δωωω*, *dogmo*, *dreang*, *wuander*, *tugra*, &c.

Now on such a principle as this we might deduce any word in the language from any other word, or from any root that could be imagined. In short, all such theories are the produce of wild conjecture, and they serve no purpose but to confound the student and bring the study of etymology into contempt.

ACCENTUATION.

ACCENT is the more forcible utterance of a particular syllable of a word, by which it is distinguished from the others. The accented syllable of a word serves therefore as a kind of resting place or support of the voice, which passes over the unaccented syllables with more rapidity and a less distinct utterance.

Accent is of two kinds, or rather of two degrees of force, *primary* and *secondary*. Words of one syllable can have no accent. Words of two syllables have the primary accent only. Words of three and four syllables may have the primary and secondary accent; but many of them have no secondary accent that deserves notice; such are *dignity*, *enemy*, *annuity*, *fidelity*. In words of four, five or more syllables, a secondary accent is often essential to a clear distinct articulation of the several syllables. Thus *heterogeneous* cannot be well uttered without two accented syllables; the fourth syllable receiving the principal stress of the voice, and the first clearly distinguished by more forcible utterance, than the second, third, fifth, and sixth.

The accent of most English words has been long established; and evidently, it has been determined by the natural ease of speaking, without the aid of rules or instruction. If any man should ask, why we lay the accent of such words as *election*, *meditation*, *relation*, *congratulation*, on the last syllable, except one; the answer is, that such accentuation renders the pronunciation more easy to the organs of speech and more agreeable to the ear, than the accentuation of any other syllable. The ease of speaking, and a kind of prosaic melody, resulting from a due proportion of accented and unaccented syllables, which enables the speaker to bound with ease from one accented syllable to another, without omitting those which are unaccented, are the two great principles by which the accentuation of words has been