

INTRODUCTION.

gauges, that sense which is almost indispensable to an understanding of many obscure passages in the scriptures, has been hitherto overlooked or mistaken. In order fully to comprehend many uses of the words, it will be necessary to compare them with the uses of the words of the same family in the modern languages, and this comparison must be far more extensive than any hitherto made, and conducted on principles which have not been before duly appreciated and applied.

I have introduced the foregoing comparative view of the several significations of the same word in different languages, not merely to illustrate the general principles of language, but with a special reference to an explanation of the etymologies which occur in this work. Should my synopsis ever be finished, the learned reader might pursue the subject at his pleasure.

The results of the foregoing remarks and illustrations may be thus recapitulated.

1. The nations which now constitute the distinct families or races of Japhet and Shem, are descendants of the common family which inhabited the plain of Shinar, before the dispersion.

2. The families at the dispersion retained a large proportion of the words which were in common use, before that event, and the same were conveyed to their posterity. In the course of time, some of these words were dropped by one family or tribe, and some by another, till very few of them are retained in their original form and signification by all the nations which have sprung from the main stock. A few of them however are still found in all or nearly all the languages which I have examined, bearing nearly the same signification and easily recognized as identical.

3. Although few of the primitive words can now be recognized, as existing in all the languages, yet as we better understand the changes which have been made in the orthography and signification of the same radical words, the more affinities are discovered; and particularly, when we understand the primary sense, we find this to unite words whose appropriate or customary significations appear to have no connection.

4. A great number of the primitive radical words are found in compounds, formed in different languages, with different affixes and prefixes, which obscure the affinity. Thus *veritas* in Latin is *wahrheit* in German; the first syllable in each is the same word, the last, different. In other instances, both difference of orthography, of formation and of application occur to obscure the affinity of words. Thus, the English word *strong* is in Danish *strong*, signifying stern, severe, rigid, strict; and *strengthened* [stronghold] is severity, rigor, strictness. Now, as in these words is not radical; remove this letter and we have *strog*, *streg*, which coincide with the Latin *stringo*, *strictus*; and these words are found to be from the same radix, which signifies to draw, to strain, to stretch.

5. It appears that *b*, *p* and *f* are often prefixes, either the remains of prepositions, or casual additions to words, introduced by peculiar modes of pronunciation, which prefixes now precede consonants with which they readily coalesce in pronunciation, as *l* and *r*, forming trilateral words on biliteral roots; as in *block* from *lloc*, or *lock*; *play*, *Saxon plegen*, from *leg* or *lek*, Swedish *leka*, Dan. *leger*; *flow*, Lat. *fluo*, from *lug*, or *luc*, which appears in *light*, *lux*, *lucio*, and in *lug*, a river, retained in *Lugdunum*.

6. It appears also that *c* or *k* and *g*, are often prefixes before the same consonants, *l* and *r*, as in Lat. *clavis*, Eng. *lois*; *V. clod*, praise, from *lod*, Latin, *laus*, *laudo*; German *gluck*, English *luck*; Lat. *gratia*, *V. rhad*.

7. It appears also that *s* is a prefix in a vast number of words, as in *speed*, *spoil*, *swell*, *surge*; and it is very evident that *st* are prefixed to many words, whose original, radical, initial consonant was *r*, as in *straight*, *strict*, *strong*, *stretch*, from the root of *right*, *rectus*, *reach*, and in *stride*, from the root of the Latin *gradior*, *V. rhaz*.

If these inferences are just, as I am persuaded they are, it follows that there is a more near resemblance and a much closer affinity between the languages of Europe and of Western Asia, than has hitherto been supposed to exist. It follows also that some of the most important principles or rudiments of language have hitherto escaped observation, and that philology is yet in its infancy. Should this prove, on further examination, to be the state of philology, it is reserved for future investigators to examine the original languages of the scriptures on new principles, which may serve to illustrate some obscure and difficult passages, not hitherto explained to the general satisfaction of critics and commentators.

If any persons should be disposed to doubt or contradict these facts, let them first consider that my conclusions are not *hasty* opinions, formed on isolated facts; but that they have been forced upon me, in opposition to all my former habits of thinking, by a series of successive proofs and accumulating evidence, during a long course of investigation, in which I have compared most of the radical words, in more than twenty languages, twice and some of them three times.

No part of my researches has given me more trouble or solicitude, than that of arriving at the precise radical signification of moral ideas; such for example, as *hope*, *love*, *faith*. Nor has it been with much less labor that I have obtained a clear knowledge of some of our physical actions, as it is literally true that I have sometimes had a word under consideration for two or three years, before I could satisfy my own mind, as to the primary signification. That I have succeeded at last, in every instance, can hardly

be supposed—yet, in most cases, I am perfectly satisfied with the results of my researches.

Progress and Changes of the English Language.

It has been already observed that the mother tongue of the English is the Anglo-Saxon. The following are specimens of that language as it was spoken or written in England before the Norman conquest. The first is from the Saxon Chronicle. The original is in one column, and the literal translation in the other. The English words in italics are Saxon words. The number of these will show how large a proportion of the words is retained in the present English.

An. DCCCXCI. Her for se here east, and Earnulf cyning gefeleah with them, wæde here æn þa seipu cōmon, mid East-Francum, and Seaxum, and Bagerum, and hine gefylmide. And thry Scotas cwomon to Ælfrede cýninge on anum bate, butan ælcum gerethum, of Hibernia; and thonon hi hi beforan, forþon the hi wolde for Godes lufan on ethelcneðness bion, by ne rohtan hwæc.

An. 891. Here [this year] fared the army east and Earnulf, the king, fought with the cavalry [ride army] ere the ships came, with the East-Franks, and Saxons and Bavarians, and put them to flight. And three Scots came to Ælfred, the king, in a [an] boat, without any rowers, from Hibernia, and thence they privately withdrew [bestole] because that they would, for God's love be [or live] where they should not be inxious—[reck, care.]

Se bat was geworht of thridan healle hyde, the hie on foron, and hi namon mid him that he hæfde to secon nihtum mete, and the comon hie ymb secon niht, to lande on Cornwealum, and foran tha sona to Ælfrede cýninge.

The boat was wrought of two hides and a half [third half hide, in which they fared [came] and they took with them that they had for seven nights meat, and they came about the seventh night, to land in Cornwall, and fared [went] soon to Ælfred, the king.

The following specimen is from the Anglo-Saxon version of Orosius, supposed to be made by King Ælfred.

Othhere sæde his hlaford, Ælfrede kýninge, that he eala North-manna north mest bide. He cwæth that he bode on tham lande north-weardum with tha west se. He sæde thesah that that land sy swythe north thanon; ac hit is æl west buton on fæam stowum stice malum wicraþ Finnas, on luntathe on wintra, and on sumera on fisece be there se. He sæde that he æt sumum cyrre wolde fandian hu lange that land north riht large.

Oethere told [said] his lord, king Ælfred, that he lived north most of all the north men. He quoth that he dwelt in the [them] land north-ward, opposite [with] the west sea. He said though, that that land is due north from thence, and that it is all waste except [but] in a few places [stows] where the Finns for the most part dwell, for hunting in winter, and in summer for fishing in that sea, [by the sea.] He said that he, at some time, would find how long that land lay right north.

Laws of King Æthelbert.

Gif Cýning his heode to him gebaht, and heom mon tha yfel gedo. Hl botte and cýning L scillinga.

If the King shall call [cite] his people to him, and any one [man] shall there do evil, let double compensation be made, and fifty shillings to the King.

Gif in Cýninges tune man mannan ofsteah, L scill. gebete.

If in the King's town a man slay a man, let him compensate [boot] with fifty shillings.

Gif on Eorles tune man mannan ofsteah, XII Scil. gebete.

If in an Earl's town one man slayeth another man, let him pay twelve shillings for reparation.

Gif man thone man ofslæht, XX scil. gebete.

If man, [any one] slayeth any man, let him compensate with twenty shillings.

Gif thuman (of slæht) XX scil. Gif thuman nagl of weordeth III scil. gebete. Gif man scyrtsefinger (of slæht.) VII scil. gebete. Gif man midle finger (of a slæht.) IV scil. gebete. Gif man gold-finger (of a slæht.) VI scil. gebete. Gif man thon liflan finger (of a slæht) XI scil. gebete.

If the thumb shall be cut off, twenty shillings. If the thumb nail shall be cut off, three shillings shall be the compensation. If any one [off slæht, striketh off] cutteth off the fore finger [shoot finger], let him compensate with eight shillings. If one cutteth off the middle finger, let him pay four shillings. If any one cutteth off the gold finger [ring finger], let him pay six shillings. If any one cutteth off the little finger, let him pay eleven shillings.