

# INTRODUCTION.

the Celts, even to the borders of Sarmatia, has been a question much disputed by historians and antiquaries. The German and French writers generally contend that the Celts inhabited all the north of Europe, as far at least as Sarmatia; but some respectable English writers are of a different opinion. Now it is agreed that the Welsh are descendants of the Cimbric, inhabitants of Jutland, and their language bears strong affinity to the Celtic languages, which still exist; a fact that countenances the opinion of the German and French writers. But the dispute is of little moment: the Celtic, Teutonic and Gothic races being all of the Japhetic stock, migrating from Asia through Asia Minor at different times, and pursuing different courses westward. The first tribes probably sought the warm climates along the north coast of the Mediterranean, and established themselves in Greece and Italy. Others followed the course of the Danube and its subsidiary streams, till they found upon the rivers that conducted them to the Baltic. The first inhabitants of Greece and Italy were probably of the Celtic race; but if they were, it is very evident that tribes of the Teutonic or Gothic races invaded those countries before they were civilized, and intermingled with the original inhabitants. The Pelasgi may have been among the number. This is an inference which I draw from the affinities of the Greek and Latin languages, with those of Teutonic origin. The Teutonic and Gothic races impressed their language upon all the continent of Europe west of the Vistula, and from that river to the Rhine, or rather to the Seine, anterior to the conquest of Gaul by Julius Cæsar. The same races invading and conquering the south of Europe, in the fourth and fifth century, on the downfall of the Roman empire, infused a portion of their language into the Italian and Spanish, which is still distinguishable.

The ancient Sarmatia, including Poland and Russia, was probably peopled originally by races of men who passed into Europe by the country north of the Euxine. Their original residence was along the rivers Kur and Araxes, or on the mountains between the Euxine and Caspian. The name of the *Ruses* or Russians is clearly recognized in the *Roxolani* of Pliny and Ptolemy, and possibly the ancestors of this race may have entered Europe by Asia Minor. That the Teutonic races, originally from Persia, inhabited Asia Minor, and migrated westward by that course, is evident from the names which they impressed on mountains, rivers and places—Such as the *Cragus* of Pliny, the Welsh and English *crag*; *Perga* in Pamphylia, now *Perge* or *bergen*; *Thymbreæ*, the name of a small stream, near the site of Troy; and *Thymbra*, which we recognize the English *brook*. It was contracted by the Greeks into *Thymbrius*!

It is admitted by all gentlemen, acquainted with oriental literature, that the Sanscrit, or ancient language of India, the parent of all the dialects of that great peninsula, is radically the same language or from the same stock as the Greek and Latin; the affinities between them being remarkably clear and decisive. If so, the inhabitants of India and the descendants of the Celtic and Teutonic nations are all of one family, and must have all migrated from one country, after the separation of the nations of the Shemitic stock from those of the Japhetic race!

Whether that country was Persia, or Cashmir, or a country farther east, is a point not easily determined. One important inference results from this fact, that the white men of Europe and the black or tawny men of India, are direct descendants from a common ancestor.

Of the languages of Europe, the Greek was first improved and refined, and next to that the Latin. The affinity between these languages, and those of the west and north of Europe is very striking, and demonstrates their common origin. It is probable however that there are some words in the Greek derived from Africa, if Egyptian colonies were established in Greece, as historians inform us.

The modern Italian, Spanish, French and Portuguese, are composed chiefly of Latin words, much altered however both in orthography and inflections. Perhaps nine tenths of all the words now found in those languages are of Latin origin; being introduced by the Romans, who held Gaul in subjection, five or six centuries, and Spain next longer, or being borrowed from Latin authors, since the revival of letters. All these languages however retain many words of Celtic origin; the primitive language not having been entirely extirpated. In some instances, the same word has been transmitted through both channels, the Celtic and the Latin, and is yet retained. Thus in French *écder*, and in Italian *cedere*, is directly from the Latin *cedo*; while the French *congédier*, and Italian *congedare*, are composed of the same word, with a prefix, derived from the Celtic, and retained in the Welsh *gadu*, to quit, to leave. [I. *concedo*.] And this same verb probably appears also in *quit*, a word which is Teutonic and to the Celtic languages. See *Conge*, in the Dictionary.

It must be observed further, that the Spanish language contains some words of African origin, introduced by the Carthaginians, before the Roman conquest of Spain, or afterwards by the Moors, who, for several centuries,

were masters of that country. It contains also some words of Gothic origin, introduced by the Goths who conquered that country, at the downfall of the Roman Empire. The French also contains some words of Teutonic origin. Either from the Belgic tribes who occupied the country to the Seine, at the time of the Gothic invasion, or from the Franks who established the dynasty of the Merovingian Kings in the fifth century, or from the Normans who obtained possession of the northern part of that kingdom in the tenth century, or from all these sources.

The German, Dutch or Belgic, Anglo-Saxon, Danish and Swedish languages are of Teutonic or Gothic origin.\* They are all closely allied; a great part of the words in them all being the same or from the same roots, with different prefixes or affixes. There is however a greater difference between the Danish and Swedish, which are of the Gothic stock, and the German and Dutch, which are of Teutonic origin, than between two languages of the same stock, as between the Danish and Swedish. The Norwegian, Icelandic, and some of the languages or dialects of Switzerland, belong to the same stock; but of these I have no particular knowledge.

The Basque or Cantabrian in Spain; the Gaelic in the north of Scotland, and the Hiberno-Celtic, or native language of Ireland, are the purest remains of the ancient Celtic. From a comparison of a vocabulary of the Gaelic and Hiberno-Celtic, I find little or no difference between them; and from a long and attentive examination of this language, and of the languages of Teutonic origin, I find less difference between them, than most authors have supposed to exist.

The Armoric or language of Brittany in the northwest angle of France, and the Cornish, in the southwest of England, are also of Celtic origin. The Cornish is now extinct; but the Armoric is a living language.

The English as now spoken, is a language composed of words from several others. The basis of the language is Anglo-Saxon, or, as I shall, for the sake of brevity, call it, Saxon, by which it is closely allied to the languages of Teutonic and Gothic origin on the continent. But it retains a great number of words from the ancient languages of Britain, the Belgic, or Loegrian, and the Cymraeg, or Welsh; particularly from the latter, and some from the Cornish. Cæsar informs us, that before he invaded Britain, Belgic colonies had occupied the southern coast of England; and the inhabitants of the interior, northern and western parts, were the ancestors of the present Welsh, who call themselves *Cymry*, and their country *Cymry*, a name which indicates their origin from the Gauls, inhabitants of the modern Denmark, or Cimbric Chersonese, now Jutland.

The modern Welsh contains many Latin words introduced by the Romans, who had possession of Britain for five hundred years. But the body of the language is probably their vernacular tongue. It is more nearly allied to the languages of Celtic origin, than to those of the Teutonic and Gothic stock; and of this British language, the Cornish and Armoric are dialects.

It has been commonly supposed that the Britons were nearly exterminated by the Saxons, and that the few that survived, escaped into the west of England, now Wales. It is true that many took refuge in Wales, which their descendants still retain; but it cannot be true that the other parts of England were entirely depopulated. On the other hand, great numbers must have escaped slaughter, and been intermixed with their Saxon conquerors. The Welsh words, which now form no unimportant part of the English language, afford decisive evidence of this fact. It is probable however that these words were for a long time used only by the common people, for few of them appear in the early Saxon writers.

The English contains also many words, introduced by the Danes, who were, for some time, masters of England; which words are not found in the Saxon. These words prevail most in the northern counties of England; but many of them are incorporated into the body of the language, and are used in the United States.

After the conquest, the Norman Kings endeavored to extirpate the English language, and substitute the Norman. For this purpose, it was ordained that all laws, charters and records should be in the Norman language; and hence the early records and reports of law cases came to be written in Norman. But neither royal authority, nor the influence of courts, could change the vernacular language. After an experiment of three hundred years, the law was repealed; and since that period, the English has been, for the most part, the official, as well as the common language of the nation. A few Norman words however remain in the English; most of them in law language.

Since the conquest, the English has not suffered any shock from the intermixture of conquerors with the natives of England; but the language has undergone great alterations, by the disuse of a large portion of Saxon words, and the introduction of words from the Latin and Greek languages, with some French, Italian, and Spanish words. These words have, in some instances, been borrowed by authors, directly from the Latin and Greek; but most of the Latin words have been received through the medium of the French and Italian. For terms in the sciences, authors have generally resorted to the Greek; and from this source, as discoveries in science demand new terms, the vocabulary of the English language is receiving continual

\* Plin. N. H. Lib. 5, cap. 27. Strabo, Lib. 7, 6, informs us that the Dalmatians had the singular practice of making a division of their fields every eighth year. Hence perhaps the name from *deal*, and *math* or *madh*, country.

† Clarke's Travels.  
‡ See the word *clerk* in the Dictionary.

\* In strictness, the Swedish and Danish are of Gothic origin, and the German and Saxon, of Teutonic origin.