

INTRODUCTION.

supra, I think to be very obvious; and here we observe that the Welsh have one important sense derived from the root, that of *good*, which occurs in none of the other languages. But the primary sense is the same as that of the other significations, to go forward, to advance; hence to promote interest or happiness. Here we have undeniable evidence that the sense of good, Welsh *mael*, and the sense of *matter*, pus, proceed from the same radix.

LEGO.

The Greek *lego* is rendered, to speak or say; to tell, count, or number; to gather, collect, or choose; to discourse; and to lie down. This last definition shows that this word is the English *lie* and *lay*; and from this application, doubtless, the Latins had their *lectus*, a bed, that is, a spread, a lay.

The Latin *lego*, the same verb, is rendered, to gather; to choose; to read; to steal, or collect by stealing; and the phrase, *legere oras*, signifies to coast, to sail along a coast; *legere vela*, is to furl the sails; *legere halitum*, to take breath; *legere littus*, to sail close to the shore; *legere milites*, to enlist or muster soldiers; *legere pugno*, to strike, perhaps to lay on with the fist.

It would seem, at first view, that such various significations cannot proceed from one radix. But the fact that they do is indubitable. The primary sense of the root must be to throw, strain or extend, which in this, as in almost all cases, gives the sense of *speaking*. The sense of collecting, choosing, gathering, is from throwing, or drawing out, or separating by some such act; or from throwing together. The sense of lying down is also probably, from throwing one's self down. The sense of reading, in Latin is the same as that of speaking in the Greek, unless it may be from collecting, that is, separating the letters, and uniting them in syllables and words; for in the primitive mode of writing, diacritical points were not used. But probably the sense of *reading* is the same as in *speaking*.

The phrases *legere oras*, *legere littus*, in Latin, may coincide with that of our seamen, to stretch or lay along the shore or coast, or to hug the land; especially if this word *lay* in Sanscrit signifies to cling, as I have seen it stated in some author, but for which I cannot vouch. If this sense is attached to the word, it proves it closely allied to the L. *ligo*, to bind.

That the sense of throwing, or driving, is contained in this word, is certain from its derivatives. Thus, in Greek, *λεγεσθαι* signifies to select, to collect and also to reject, to repudiate, and to forbid; which imply throwing, thrusting away.

Now, if throwing, sending, or driving, is the primary sense, then the Latin *lego*, to read, and *lego*, *legare*, to send, are radically the same word; the inflections of the verb being varied, arbitrarily, to designate the distinct applications, just as in *pello*, *appello*, *appellere*, to drive, and *appello*, *appellare*, to call.

And here it may be worth a moment's consideration, whether several words with prefixes, such as *slay*, *flog*, and the Latin *plico*, W. *plygu*, are not formed on the root of *lay*, that is, *lag* or *lak*. The sense of *slay*, Sax. *slagan*, *slaen*, is properly to strike, to beat; hence in Saxon, "Hig slo-gan heora weld," they slew their league, or contract; that is, they struck a bargain. It signifies also to throw, as to *slag* one into prison; also to fall; to set on fire. The sense of killing is derivative from that of striking; a striking down.

Flog, Lat. *flog*, signifies primarily to rush, drive, strike, Eng. to lick and if formed on the root of *lay*, is precisely the popular phrase, to lay on.

If *plico* is formed with a prefix on *lay* or its root, it must have been originally *pelico*, that is, *belico*, to belay. Then to fold, would be to lay on or close; to lay one part to another. Now this word is the Welsh *plygu*, to which Owen makes to be a compound of *py* and *liq*. The latter word must be a contraction of *flyg*.

We know that the word *reply* is from the French *replier*, the Latin *replio*. Now, to *reply*, is not to fold back, but to send back, to throw back, as words, or an answer; and this gives the precise sense of *lay*, to throw, to send, which must be the sense of the radical word.

It is no inconsiderable evidence of the truth of my conjecture, that we constantly use the phrase to lay on, or lay to, as synonymous with play, a word belonging to this family. To pledge, another of this family, is to lay down, to deposit; and the primary sense of play, Sax. *plegan*, Dan. *leger*, Sw. *leka*, is to strike or drive.

In Welsh, *llucau* signifies to throw, fling, cast, or dart; to pelt; to drift; from *lluc*, a darting, a flash, glance, or sudden throw; hence *llucau*, lightning. *Llug* signifies also, that breaks, or begins to open, a gleam, a breaking out in blotches; the plague. *Llug* signifies also, that is apt to break out, that is bright, a tumor, eruption. These words coincide with English *light*, Lat. *lucere*, the primary sense of which is to throw, shoot, or dart; and these words all contain the elements of *flag* and *fling*.

In Welsh, *llwyl* signifies to flat flat, to lie extended, or to squat. This is essentially allied to *lay* and *lie*.

These senses agree also with that of *luck*, to fall, or come suddenly; that is, to rush or drive along.

In Russ. *vlagay* is to lay, or put in; equivalent to the German *einlegen*. The Latin *fluo* is contracted from *flugo*; and the radical sense of flow is

the same as that of *light*. So the river *Aar*, in Europe, is doubtless from the same source as the Oriental *אור*, to shine, whence *air*. And *נור*, which, in Hebrew, signifies to flow as water, as well as to shine, chiefly signifies in Chaldee and Syriac, to shine.

To show the great importance, or rather the absolute necessity, of ascertaining the primary sense of words, in order to obtain clear ideas of the sense of ancient authors, more particularly of difficult passages in dead languages, let the reader attend to the following remarks.

In commenting on certain parts of Isaiah xlviii, Lowth observes in his Preliminary Dissertation, the difficulty of determining the meaning of *רצה*, in verse 15th. In our version, as in others, it is rendered *agreement*; but, says Lowth, "the word means no such thing in any part of the Bible, except in the 18th verse following; nor can the lexicographers give any satisfactory account of the word in this sense." Yet he agrees with Vitrina, that in these passages it must have this signification. The difficulty, it seems, has arisen from *see*, and as a noun, the word signifies sight, the verb generally signifies to see; and as a verb, the word signifies sight, vision; and so it is rendered in the Latin version annexed to Vanderhooght's Bible. The seventy render it by *συνθεω*, a covenant or league; and they are followed by the moderns. "Nous avons intelligence avec le sepluchre." French. "Noi habbiam fatta lega col sepluchro." Italian of Diodati.

Parkhurst understands the word to signify, to fasten, to settle, and he cites 2 Sam. xx, 9, *רצה*, "Joab took Amasa by the beard." Here the sense is obvious; and from this and other passages, we may infer with certainty, that the radical sense is to reach to, or to seize, hold, or fix. If the sense is to reach to, then it accords with *covenant*, *convention*, *coming to*; if the sense is to fix, or fasten, then it agrees with *league*, *Lat. ligo*, and with *pactum*, from *pango*, to make fast; all from the sense of extension, stretching, straining. Hence the meaning of *רצה*, the breast; that is, the firm, fixed, strong part. And if the English *gaze* is the same word, which is not improbable, this determines the appropriate sense of seeing in this word, to be to fix, or to look or reach with the eye fixed.

But we have other and decisive evidence of the primary signification of this word in the obvious, undisputed meaning of *רצה*, the same word with a prefix, which signifies to catch, or lay hold on; to seize; hence, behind, following, as if attached to; and hence drawing out in time, to delay.

Now it is not improbable that the Arabic *حاز* *hauz*, may be a word of the same stock; and this signifies among other senses, to collect, contract or draw together, to accumulate, to have intercourse or commerce with another. The latter sense would give nearly the signification of the Hebrew word.

Lexicographers are often embarrassed to account for the different signification of words that are evidently derived from the same root. Thus, in Hebrew, *שר* is rendered to sing; to look, behold, or observe; and to rule; and its derivatives, a ruler, a wall, the navel-string, a chain or necklace, &c. How can a word signify to rule, and to sing, and to look? Nothing can be more easy or natural. The sense is in both cases to stretch or strain, to reach. To sing is to strain the voice; to rule is to restrain men; and to see is to reach, or to hold in view.

In Latin *sero*, signifies to sow, to plant, to beget, to spread; *consero*, to sow, and to close or join; *desero*, to leave off, to desert; *asser*, to plant by or near, and to assert, affirm, and pronounce; *dissero*, to discourse; *insero*, to insert, to implant; *resero*, to unlock, to open, to disclose. *Desero*, to desert, Asinworth says, is a compound of *de* and *sero*, "ut sit desertum quod non sentit nec colitur." And *dissero* he supposes must be a metaphorical use of the word. Now, on the principles I have unfolded, nothing is easier than an explanation of the sense of *sero*. The sense of *sero* is to throw, to thrust; its literal sense is applied to sowing and planting; *consero* is to thrust or drive together; *desero* is to throw from; *asser* is to throw, in words, or to throw out, as in *appello*; *dissero* is to throw or words or arguments, with the sense of spreading, expatiating; *insero* is to throw or thrust in; *resero* is to throw or drive from, hence to unlock or open.

It is by resorting to the primary idea of words that we are able to explain applications, apparently, or in fact, diverse and even contrary. A very common example of this contrariety occurs in words which signify to guard or defend. For instance, the Latin *arceo* signifies to drive off, and to protect, to secure, hold, restrain, or keep from departing or escaping; two senses directly opposite. This is extremely natural; for *arceo* signifies to thrust off, repel, drive back; and this act defends the person or object attacked. Or if we suppose the sense of *straining* to be anterior to that of repulsion, which is not improbable, then the act of straining or holding produces both effects; to repel or stop what advances to assault, and protect what is inclosed or assaulted. The words *guard* and *warren* present a similar application of the primary idea, and all languages which I have examined, furnish a multitude of similar examples.

These examples illustrate the utility of extensive researches in language; as all cognate languages throw light on each other; one language often explaining the radical meaning of a word which the others have lost. Who, for instance, that is acquainted only with the English use of the verb to have, would suspect that this word and *heppen* are radically one, and that the primary sense is to fall or rush, hence to fall on and seize? Yet nothing