

orthoëpy or orthography; and every one adopted that mode of spelling and phrasing which "was good in his own eyes,"

Perhaps this inveterate error is, at this day, scarcely worth the pains of correcting. Few persons of genius and learning will be inclined to write in the Scottish dialect; and if any were inclined, they could not look for encouragement or imitators. Men will ever follow those pursuits that lead to riches or fame; and Scottish composition, either in prose or poetry, will neither fill the writer's purse nor emblazon his reputation.

Yet I cannot help sometimes thinking, that the neglect of cultivating the Scoto-Saxon tongue has been attended with some detriment to the English language; that many words and phrases of great energy and beauty are still preserved in the former which the latter wants, and which all its borrowed treasure but imperfectly supplies; and that, if the Scots, remaining a separate nation, with a King and court residing among them, had continued to improve and embellish their own dialect, instead of servilely aping the English, they would at present be possessed of a language in many points superior to the English.

That this may not be considered as a paradox, I will endeavour to support it by proofs that appear to me nearly conclusive; proofs drawn from the history and comparison of the two dialects.

That the English and Scottish were originally but one language, is hardly questionable. It was introduced into Britain by the Anglo-Saxons about the middle of the sixth century, and, with their conquests, soon spread itself over all the southern part of the island, except whither the old inhabitants retired in bodies, and with their own laws and customs, retained also their Celtic dialect.

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