The Native Speaker: Examined Home.

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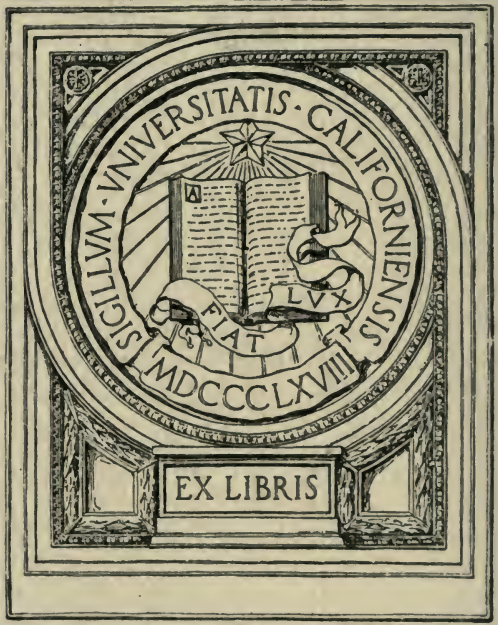

THE NATIVE SPEAKER EXAMINED HOME

Two Stalking Fallacies Anatomized

By

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PREFACE.

The purpose of this little volume is told in the title. It is simply a cry for the admission of common sanity into the treatment of the Irish language. It is a humble contribution towards the saving of the language from its great natural enemy, the Native Speaker. It is a respectful protest against the absurd uses made of the Native Speaker, word and man; above all else, against the mischievous delusion that the Native Speaker is *ipso facto* a fit teacher of the language—except where he never teaches, but is ever killing it, on the hearthstone. It is a kindly meant hint to such as it may concern, that the day of impunity for ineptitudes in Irish grammar and Irish editing may be already far spent.

THE AUTHOR.

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THE NATIVE SPEAKER

CHAPTER I.

The Native Speaker and the Scholar in Commas.

The Beautiful used, I think, be said to be Unity in Variety. Now, there is scarcely anything better fitted to square with and illustrate this definition than language; for language, as spoken, must always and everywhere lend itself to endless shades of variety, but, then, there is always the written speech to see after and to safeguard the unity. To seek, therefore, to destroy or to discredit uniformity in the written language of a nation, is a purpose so visibly towards monstrosity and chaos, that average comprehension clean fails to understand how any sane man could profess it, or even entertain it. Such men may say, and, of course, will say that it is not their purpose, that they do not entertain it; but this is of no use to us when we see but too plainly that it is, and that they do, or that whether it is, or not, or whether they do, or not, it is at any rate the unmistakable visible trend of their plan and method. The bent of an action, or plan of action in itself need not be at all conscious, to be real. Indeed nearly every projector or schematist that ever flourished professed a purpose of purification and reformation, and many of them, doubtless, must have entertained such a purpose, and believe that their work had such a tendency

That they believed so is, to be sure, so much to their credit, but it is, for all that, a thing clean outside the question, which is not what they believed about their work, but the nature and trend of that work of itself.

This Ireland has ever been singularly exempt from religious heresies, of native manufacture at any rate, but, of heresies in the radical, etymological sense of choices—parties—it must be allowed that we have seldom been afflicted with any very obstinate famine. And so, it falls out but in wonted course that there should be a choice in vogue, or elbowing its way into vogue, at present. There is, and one of a distinctly unconventional character, so unconventional, indeed, that it is only the peculiar circumstances of the weak whom it might be apt to scandalize somewhat, that could ever entitle it to any notice more serious than laughter. But the weak, in this connection, are very weak, and very numerous; and the prospect of a short and velvet road to their ends is something altogether too inviting, not to be apt to lure them from the wise highway. The prospects of a short and velvet road to Irish is held out by the present heresy, and this is the one and only reason which could make it needful to call attention to it, its clear aptitude to amuse the little ones out of the wholesome high road of study, to follow the mirage.

The heresy is this: There is no genuine Irish except "the language as it lives in the mouths of the people." Now, there is a truth, not in this proposition itself, but suggested by it, in fact simulated by it, and, because simulated by it, apt to get confused with it, and thus to shield and to shelter the fraud of it. The truth simulated is, that the language as it lives in the mouths of the people—the language in as far as it is still living—

is the main, or perhaps the only hope of the language's living on, that is, of its re-growing into the national spoken tongue of the country; and this is not only true but self-evident. But this is not what the proposition says; what it says is that no other Irish is worthy of any heed, that, in fact, there is no other Irish; and from this, of course, it follows that anything like book study of Irish is mere midsummer madness, because there is no Irish of a sort to be studied, no such thing as a written, or literary Irish. The existence of a literature, or of a literary Irish language is only the delusion of some diseased dreamers called "scholars," but there is no such thing. Irish has not been written yet, it is yet to be written. But what writing shall be done, shall be, of course, "the language as it lives in the mouths of the people," and only as it lives in the mouths of the people. From this perverse proposition is made to flow, by a logic worse perverted, a ludicrous process supposed to serve the purpose of spelling, a barbarous jargon of words, endless ill-conditioned reasoning in the domain of grammar, together with a very infinity of varieties in the way of grammatical inflection. By a logic worse perverted, because, even accepting this foolish proposition to the very fulness of its folly, these practical conclusions are in no wise contained in it. Even though we agree to write the language only as it lives in the mouths of the people, it will not follow that we are to spell it every one according to his own caprice, or humour, or fancied inspiration. It will not follow that the broad, underlying laws of grammar must go overboard, for these are part and parcel of language, and cleave inherently to it, be it never so much *only* the language as it lives in the mouths of the people. But by the

votaries of this system, grammar is practically derided, indeed almost theoretically too. And as for spelling, why, beware of that above all things. That is of all the rocks the most fatal. It is the prime delusion of the dreamers, that spelling is. Write. Write, and you will produce perfect Irish, or at least you will avoid the one great pitfall in the way of producing it, if only you can feel secure that you are perfectly ignorant of how to spell it, and especially if you have had the happy training to feel the full value of that ignorance. But if you have ever been about learning anything of spelling, if you have been so unfortunate as to have contracted any habit of it, or even any hankering after it, why, then, despair: you will never know Irish. You have the disease. You have been to the books. That craving for orthography is the symptom, the fatal token. You were never the stamp of man, indeed, to master the language. Had you been, you would by very instinct have divined the danger from afar, and flown it. You would have known better than to so disregard the "cradle" and the "mouths of the people," as to heed books, or bookish men, in your quest after the language. Spelling, indeed! As if that could have aught whatever to say to the matter. "Write down Constantinople," said the woman to her boy. "I cannot spell it, mother." "Who told you to spell it? Write it down?"

Now, though this be madness, yet there's method in it. It makes things very easy. It has the supreme advantage that you can never be wrong. It was specially devised to supply that advantage, or if not aimed at that purpose from the start, directly it was started, it was widely and eagerly seized on to serve it; but let that pass for a moment, we'll come to it by-and-bye.

You can never be wrong; for, no matter what rubbish you write, and no matter how ever so much without spelling it you write it, you can always shout the "mouths of the people" for your warrant, and anyone who cannot accept that password, is, of course, beneath being argued with. It is quite an ingenious device on the part of this system, that it has to some extent succeeded in working up a sort of grotesque contempt for Irish scholarship. It writes the word "scholar" always in commas, and has been at the most industrious pains to get the word wrought up into a sort of regulation synonym for a dreamer, or a saucy tyro, a poor fellow gone wrong about the language, incapable now of being but wrong about it, his views being hopelessly warped, and his natural powers wrested by the fatal initial mischance of having gone a roving into books for his Irish, forgetting the sole and sovereign fountain, "the mouths of the people." There is another thing very ingeniously suggested by writing the "scholar" in commas—a thing, in fact, the core and kernel of this whole device—it is sought to imply the incompatibility of scholarship and native speakership. If one is a scholar, it is supposed to immediately follow that he cannot be a native speaker. He cannot have spoken, or even heard the language from his childhood. He cannot have any knowledge of it "as it lives in the mouths of the people." To be a scholar, and to be a native speaker, these two things are inexorably twain. Accordingly, it is suggested further that a scholar's knowledge of Irish is something all devoid of reality, for his knowledge—even granted that it exists—is but knowledge of a thing that does not exist, of a thing which is not; there is no Irish but the language as it

lives in the mouths of the people. Granted, I say, even that such knowledge did exist; but, then, it does not exist. Such fellows are not scholars at all, except, of course, in their own foolish esteem—and in commas.

It will look very strange that anyone should be found to own to such reasoning as this, and it is what it looks; it is passing strange. But when a cherished purpose is to be served, it is hard to find the thing that is too strange to believe in, or pretend to believe in, so it serve that purpose. The purpose here is to get the scholars out of the way—to clear the way for the native speaker, the man who has the language as it lives in the mouths of the people. Now, if you admit, or suffer it to be credited that a scholar *is* a scholar (without commas), you admit that he might possibly be of some use once in a way, at all events in scholarly matter; you don't put him quite out of the way, and so long as you don't, you do nothing—to the purpose. Therefore it must be urged with resolute pertinacity, not only that to be a scholar is necessarily to be ignorant of the spoken language, necessarily foreign to it, but also it must be strenuously and stalwartly maintained that no Irish scholar *is* a scholar, lest he might by any chance be ever thought of as one to be consulted on any occasion, or in any circumstances, even on matters outside the range of "the mouths of the people"—lest he might be thought of at all. For him to be thought of at all, were the one thing to menace the fulness of the empire of the mouths-of-the-people authorities, and that is just what must not be imperilled. They must be the men to lay down the law, the men to be looked to in all matters, and, most paradoxically of all, their particular ambition is to be the men to be looked to in matters which crave deep and

searching scholarship, while, at the same time, flaunting as their special characteristic and prime glory, that they are above scholarship, that they have never studied the language; or, if they have, that—that is was a failure. A sapient smile of irony lights up their pen as they write this. They feel superior. Superior persons feel that it is due to them to be a failure at what is too much beneath them. It was a failure. They went about it, but "the thing was a failure." They read a little grammar, gave "the thing" a fair chance, but—it was a failure! I have seen this "failure" boast, actually paraded in print. But it is needless and superfluous to parade it; it is implied in their proposition. Assuming—what is always assumed—that Irish scholarship and native speakership are incompatible—they must profess non-scholarship, lest they might be suspected of not being native speakers. Some of these, very naturally, will not relish being deemed non-scholars, and hence much aggressive inconsistency, as is the way of fallacies. They are above scholarship and study of Irish, but as this might sound rather indiscreet and paradoxical, it is not proclaimed in quite that way. They prefer to suggest and imply; to imply much as presupposed; to hint towards some deep and hidden way of knowing, some vague, though potent intuition; not that they formulate it thus exactly in words, but that it is, for all, ever looming clear, and ever clearly the thing most sought to be got home. Among the many ways of hinting this, the writing of the "scholar" in commas is the handiest and the safest. It says nothing, and so cannot easily be brought to book. But what it seeks to suggest is: Scholarship in the matter, why, of course, there is; true scholarship. But surely the world does

not need to be told at this hour of the day where to look for it. Surely the world knows by this time the repute and the address of the native speaker. As for those poor dreaming fellows, with their books, and their foolish, little smattering of book-Irish—Sure! . . . . Thus turning the unwary attention off the point, on to the scholars, and to the commas, and to book-Irish—book-Irish being the commas for anything not in the language as it lives in the mouths of the people. An effective diversion! It sets us attending to the commas instead of to the point, and the ruse. The point, of course is the proposition above, *i.e.* that there is no Irish at all, or no genuine Irish, but "the language as it lives in the mouths of the people." But as this proposition, if for a moment examined, were stark incredible, even to the most ignorant, the ruse is to keep all searchings of it staved off, and this is done with signal success by the simple device of the commas. The commas suggest that something, somewhere, somehow, must be wrong. They give pause and hesitancy. They engender caution, for they wear a smile, a safe and sapient smile, too dignified and too discreet to commit itself. As who should say: "We, we, commas—say nothing. We say nothing. But if anyone ever will—notwithstanding—put any faith in these poor men, the 'scholars,' let him not be blaming us afterwards when he has found his mistake." In all points safe, because nothing tangible, nothing said. If they—the system people—would have any one element in the suggestion venture to peep towards articulation, it would, doubtless, be that fixed, foregone position, that no one but "ourselves" spoke Irish from the cradle. That is fundamental and foregone, and needs no saying—however much it may yearn

for it—not to mention no proof. But if proof were needed, as it never is, it is always immediate and abundant proof—that one is *not* a native speaker—to betray any symptoms of book-study of the language; that one *is* a native speaker, to flout Irish book-scholarship—to write the "scholar" in commas. Write the scholar in commas, and you have spoken Irish from the cradle.

It is surely hard to treat this to any notice more serious than laughter, but that, as I have said, there is a truth hovering round and haunting that expression, "the language as it lives in the mouths of the people," a truth which is but too apt not only to wrap itself round the fallacy and shelter it, but to lend itself to complete identification, or confusion with it. And, for the sake of the weak, it is vital to put the truth and the falsehood very distinctly asunder.

To begin, then, I will recall to your minds just here a certain estimate of the "mouths of the people," by an author who is allowed to have mastered the ways of men a little. "We have been called," he makes a certain spokesman say, "we, people, have been called the many-headed multitude, not that our heads are some brown, some black, some auburn, some bald, but that our wits are so diversely coloured; and truly I think that if all our wits were to issue out of one skull, they would fly east, west, north, south, and their consent of one direct way should be at once to all the points of the compass." That orator had a shrewd grasp of his kind, and whoever may feel disposed to question his sagacity, or demur to the justness and accuracy of his estimate, had much wiser sit at his feet a while and hear him further. But, turning his observations to the matter in hand, there is a truth suggested in this fallacy of "the mouths of the

people," which is in danger of shutting our eyes to the vital fact that it is a fallacy all the more for that. The essence of its treachery lies in its simulating of that truth. It simulates it, not for the sake of the truth of it, but to make a fair outside for the untruth it wants to get floated. The truth thus simulated and affected by this fallacy is, then, once more, roughly this: The language as it lives in the mouths of the people is, after all, the living language, and it is mainly, if not solely, through the living language, the language is to be kept living. This undoubted truth is suggested just to enable us to steal along unnoticed (as if in the way of honest inference) to the absurdly different position, that is to say—that, to say the living language is the main, or only hope for keeping Irish alive, is to say—that the spoken tongue only, and only precisely as spoken, is Irish at all. There is the exact position taken up by the advocates of "the mouths of the people." Among the people themselves, the real, undoubted native speakers, I have never met one who did not look up to the literary Irish, who did not feel most regretfully and sadly his own loss in not knowing it. But the above is the position of some would-pose champions of "the people," and it is time it were tested whether it will stand a trial at law. Now, the better to bring it to trial, and to forestall all pretence of misunderstanding, I begin by not only conceding, but by stoutly contending that the language as it lives in the mouths of the people is fundamental in every sense, but above all else, in the sense that it is the main, if not the only hope of the language's living on, and prospering as a spoken tongue. But it is a great deal more than this. Independently of this, the essential point of the

case, there are scores of other points of view from which the spoken language is of the very last and most profound importance. It is practically indispensable to fluent speaking, and, given a correct literary instinct, and a capable faculty for literary eclecticism, it will be found a great aid towards ease and fluency of style. It is indispensable towards anything like comprehensive and effective power over the language as a whole, but above all, as to its genuine native pronunciation. It is indispensible to all Irish scholars, if only—but it is not at all only—for the curious knack it is so often found to have, of throwing light on matter and phrase in far-back writings which would else remain fast locked in darkness, to be idly and gropingly guessed at. The spoken language is all this, and all this is much, but for all its being all this, it is but the veriest fustian and fag-ends in comparison to the literary Irish; and, what is worse, it is at once direct to all the points of the compass—the fag-ends are different, with ever-shifting shades of difference, in every half dozen miles of the country. Let it be noted, that I am considering the spoken language, not as in itself, but as compared with the literary language. In itself, the spoken Irish is probably not as degenerate, or as divergent from its literary counterpart as most other modern languages. What I am at is not to make light of the spoken Irish, far from it. I fear I have a much deeper sense of its value, because a much ampler acquaintance with it, than some of its noisiest champions. What I am at is by no means to make light of it, but to strangle a fallacy regarding it, to disarm a catch-cry concerning it, the catch-cry, that is, which would set it up as the model, and as the only model for intending writers of Irish, as the true and

only model, whose one danger of contamination is any leaven from the literary language. To lay bare the absurdity of such a catch-cry is imperative, because, apart from the patent and antecedently presumable inferiority of the spoken to the literary Irish, anything so divided in itself, and against itself, as the spoken Irish, though it might make a thousand literary models, it will hardly succeed in making one, and unity is a *sine qua non* of a national language, as of a nation itself.

CHAPTER II.

The Cradle, The Mouths of the People, and The Points of the Compass.

Let us, therefore, even suppose, just for the sake of argument, that this difficulty did not exist; that the language as it lives in the mouths of the people were not at all, as it distinctly is, inferior to the literary Irish; there would still remain the overwhelming difficulty of the varieties; a perfectly final reason why the spoken language could never serve as a model for intending writers, and, least of all, as the only model. Make the spoken tongue the sole example for writing Irish, and immediately it will be a matter of counting all the points of the compass, of counting all the villages in Irish-Ireland, to ascertain how many Irish languages there shall be. Of course every hamlet of these will be clear that there is only one Irish, or, at least, only one worth speaking of, *i.e.* its own—the Irish of that

particular village. What Irish dictionary will ever be able to serve for them all? Will not every one of them have to bring out its own lexicon, in order to protect the National, *i.e.*, that hamlet's own vocabulary and orthography—in order to protect unity? Aye, to protect unity, for, mind, we are all for unity—mind that. But (forget that) the unity we are all for, is *our* unity, *i.e.* the matter-of-course recognition of our hamlet's unique and unquestionable supremacy in the language. There exactly is the whole trouble. We are all for unity—why not?—but for all and for each it must be *our* unity; *we* must be admitted the models; a thing, indeed, so patently the proper thing, so visibly the only possible thing, that the man who affects not to see it—well, we may not call him a blockhead, because we could not conceive him to be *bona-fide*. This is going about securing unity by supplying a thousand independent units, each regarding other and all the others as the abomination of desolation. Then, also, what one newspaper could ever be common to them all? Will not every village want its own newspaper, too? Its own, yes, to guard and be the organ of the "National" language, and to give neighbourly warning to its readers against the "dialects?" For, once more, be it well and carefully understood, this cry of "the Language as it lives in the mouths of the people" is very plausibly and speciously constructed to conceal its own real innerness, to sound very rational, very human. And genuine and human, indeed, it is, for it is very genuine nonsense, and very human in the sense of it being very human to err, and to stand by error for lucre, or for vain-glory, or for spite and defiance, as the case may be. The size of its meaning, in as far as it has a meaning, is

very small, and very far from human in the large and brotherly sense of that word; for, what it means invariably is not the language as it lives in the mouths of the people, but the language as we have ever heard it in our little village, or, as we maintain that we have heard it, which will do as well—*i.e.* we shall be the authorities. That is the point; that is the meaning of the cry. We shall be the authorities, we of the mouths of the people; and that, too, on all questions of the language, even on those, (for all the paradox of it), where scholarship and scholarship alone can possibly be of any avail. We must still be the authorities, we of the mouths of the people, even we, who deride scholarship and despise it—as truly as ever fox did grapes. This can only be hoped to be achieved, by getting the legion unwary to swallow this delusion of the mouths of the people, and by pertinacity of commas round the scholar. To wrap the scholar round with commas, is to enwrap ourselves in mystery—ourselves of the mouths of the people. It is to invest us with the suggestion of some deeper lore than ever scholar's plummet sounded, and thus to establish us once for all as the one party to be looked to for the last word on everything—that is, in the last resort, the inwardness of that slogan, the mouths of the people.

But, though it is vital to keep this in mind, it is, nevertheless, not its inwardness that directly matters, but its outwardness, the practical, logical conclusions from it, and these, only in so far as their power to work harm calls for advertence. For instance, for just one instance, now, of such possible mischief from such practical conclusions, what sane man will consent to begin, or, having begun, to continue to squander time on a

language which he meets with in countless varieties and disguises, each claiming to be *the* language, each branding all the rest as mere corruptions and barbarisms? Take, for example, the thousands of students and of young professors in the various seminaries and colleges, who might be ardently wishing to come into the movement, and who would, without doubt, be no insignificant acquisition to it. Take one of these who, having learned his Latin and Greek from books, and from books only, but though from books only, having mastered them, determines to take up Irish and master it likewise. He will, of course, begin by consulting someone who, he is told, is an expert, as to what books he must get, in order to set about his object. Suppose this expert tells him that the only Irish worth heeding for a moment, the only genuine Irish, is something not to be come at by means of books, something to be found only in the mouths of the people; that handbooks in especial are all rubbish, all clean misrepresentative of the language; that if he will learn Irish, he must eschew and forswear them all from the start. This will be somewhat perplexing, for all there seems to be a sound of sturdy common-sense about it. It will not be readily intelligible to a man of "modern" student instincts and methods. Such a plain man will not easily grasp the notion of beginning a language, even a living language, without some manner of book to guide him; but, rather than forego his purpose altogether, he will probably make this further inquiry: whether, that is, there might not be some way of getting at it, at this mouths-of-the-people tongue, without having to run all over the country in quest of it. He will then be told, with great modesty and reluctance, to be sure, but he will be told of some

small manual by the advising party himself, or by someone of his friends, someone of his party. This manual is guaranteed mouths-of-the-people. Our student gets it, and begins. In a short time he gets far enough to make an attempt at beginning to read a little, for instance, in the Cláideam Soluis. The very first thing he meets is all different from the Irish in his manual; the next, different from that and from the manual, the third different from all three, the fourth worse again, and so on from worse again to still worse, and worst of all, that, seemingly there is no such thing as better, or worse, in the matter, that the merits of all appear about equal, that is, about equally meritless, equally worthless, and no end of the varieties, moreover; and every variety of them all is the language as it lives in the mouths of the people. He is then apt to begin to reflect that this language as it lives in the mouths of the people is somewhat a larger order than the practical, sane-looking sound of it would have led him at first to expect, which will probably drive him to ask one question more: whether there is any such thing as a literature, anything with uniformity in it, no matter how inferior it may be to this sacred but bewildering possession, this legion-tongued mouths-of-the-people Irish? In his Latin, or Greek, or French, or German he had seen the same word invariably spelled and inflected in the same way, in every grammar he had ever looked into. In every dictionary he had found the same uniformity. In every piece of prose literature he had ever read he had found the same uniformity in living practice; every word he met was identical in shape with the shape in which he had met it in every other prose piece, as well as with its shape in the grammar and the lexicon. And with all

this fixed and fast uniformity to aid him, together with regularity and continuity of application, backed by an absorbing taste and a native aptitude for linguistic studies, he had found the acquiring of those languages a task quite as tough as he could wish. How had it been with him, had he found, say, "*Terra, Terrae,*" in one book, in another "*Terrum, Terri,*" in a third, "*Terra, Terratis,*" in a fourth, "*Teras, Terantis,*" or "*logos, logou*" in one; "*logos logeos*" in another; "*logon logou*" in a third; "*logias logiantos*" in a fourth? And, then, to discover that this was the way with mostly all the words in the language, (according to the author who wrote), that he must simply make up his mind to it, and to what is very much more, to all the interminable antics of gender, accents, etc., proper to the every different form, as exhibited by the every different writer. Would it, think you, serve to reassure his discouragement, or to lessen his disgust, to be told that this was Latin and Greek as they lived in the mouths of the people—the true and only genuine Latin and Greek—and that until he saw his way to adapt his mind to the situation, and to tarry the dawning of its slow but certain beauties on him, until he dismissed all academic, puerile hankerings after mere hackneyed uniformity, he must abandon all hope of ever mastering those tongues, of ever writing them with any elegance, or power; that he must be ever crude and stiff, should he purpose writing by any rule save one, save by the rule whose very nature is to flout all rules, to make rule impossible, the rule that is at once to all the points of the compass, the rule of chaos—the mouths of the people? That the craving for any rule save this, the rule of freedom, betrayed a feeble, uninitiative, parasite

mind, an utter inaptitude for seizing the mystery of language. Would this, I say, brace up his discouragement, or temper his disgust? Would it not, on the contrary, make Latin and Greek just stink in his nostrils for the rest of his life? And how will the effect not be the same as regards Irish? But, for Irish this is what is actually set up as the only sanity, the only salvation; and is it not humiliating to be obliged to go gravely and seriously about showing that it is not sanity, but sheer, blatant absurdity.

As Irish, then, is, in this system, made an exception to all languages, in that it must carefully eschew uniformity, so, it is made an exception to them all in that it needs no study, that study is, in fact, the one bane to blast all hopes of acquiring it. Few things could be found more extraordinary than the widespread craving which has come aggressively abroad for the repute of knowing Irish, among people who never dreamt of studying it, and that for the very simple reason that they were never the stamp to study anything, and they are instinctively conscious of this, their incompetency. But repute of it they must have, and so the question becomes what shall be the contrivance to secure them the repute of it, and at the same time exemption from the real downright study of it. Now had fate itself been devising for them, it could scarcely have done better for them than this cry of the "mouths-of-the-people." For, as we have seen, the brunt and burden of this cry is, that, whereas every other language must be studied, and studied very closely, to be acquired, Irish can be gained without any study, nay, study is the only thing to blight all chances of gaining it, because the only thing to set us on a false track from the outset. This is

a principle ideally convenient, as we have partly seen already, and as we shall see more clearly as we go on. While Irish was yet a thing from which no reputation was to be achieved, save that of a fool, the generous few who had the courage to brave this reputation—from the mouths of very genuine fools—the few who had in them the generous power to brave this repute, with the galling mockeries, the bitter humiliations, the sore and enduring sacrifices it plainly pointed to, kept toiling on, till eventually they had forced the language on the notice of the country, till, in fact, the very hatred and hostility which their guilty perseverance had stirred up, had, itself, become the chief means of getting the language canvassed and talked about. When, lo! immediately enter a swarm of quacks and botches who hitherto would not have touched the "fools" with a tongs, to grab the fruits of all this toil and labour. Why not? Why should they keep quiet, while fools were being spoken of? Why should they not make a noise? Why, indeed? They, who knew Irish from the cradle! Why, of course, it were too bad, it were intolerable, that they should have Irish from the cradle, and suffer the world to pine in ignorance of that great fact, and Irish from the cradle now so emphatically in request! It were simply an insufferable wrong to their own reputation, and especially to the world! They must see to it; they must take order that the world shall know that they have Irish from the cradle. But how? To write? Alas, how will they write Constantinople without spelling it? Not to speak of any other part of grammar, how will they get over the spelling difficulty? P—phah! —no trouble whatever; spell it according to the mouths of the people! Now, mark. This principle, even if it

could be carried out by these noise-mongers, could only lead to disintegration and eventual destruction of the language; but, then, there is the further absurdity besides, *i.e.* that the noise-mongers, of all people, in the world are clean incapable of carrying it out. To capture the sounds of the language, or of any other language, exactly as the people emit them, craves a very alert and expert ear, an ear not only fine by nature, but doubly refined and educated by a long, careful linguistic training. The ears of the noise-mongers never contemplated such a purpose, for, nature, though amply endowing them with ears for noise, never designed the same for dealing with subtle phonetics. But what matter? That is not here nor there; the cry is there to vindicate them, the cry of the cradle—the mouths of the people. They can cover any multitude of absurdities with that. Under that ægis they can write anything—Constantinople, or anything else—in supreme disdain of all spelling, thus showing that it is the right Irish, the living Irish, Irish as it lives in the mouths of the people. If it were wrong Irish, dead Irish, it would brook and, possibly, need some spelling; but right Irish neither needs nor brooks such folly; it will have no spelling, all it wants is writing. And with this, withal, comes, most strange to say, that repute ever dear to weaklings, the repute of common sense—"strong" common sense—which keeps to the language of the people, and stiffly refuses to have itself confounded with "those fellows," those absurd fellows who dabble in phonetics, bookwork, and that, in careless ignorance of the cradle and the mouths of the people. "Strong" common sense! And then the delightful ease and safety of it! In this right Irish, this common-sense Irish—this only

Irish—you could not be wrong if you tried, for there is neither right nor wrong in the matter. It is not a question of right or wrong, it is a question of the cradle, or not the cradle, of the mouths of the people, or not the mouths of the people; that is, a question in which you cannot be sifted or examined, because it shuts out the possibility of verification. You can always claim that your Irish is real, true, mouths-of-the-people Irish, for you can always affirm that that is how you have heard it "evermore" in your village, and who is to contradict you—who will be at the pains of verifying your statement, or bringing it to book? And your village is the people, and your Irish is, therefore, the language as it lives in the mouths of the people.

These are your weapons of defence. For offensive purposes it will generally be sufficient to ignore (with great noise) anything and everything in the way of literary Irish, and to profess a violent disdain for "those fellows," the "scholars," that is, all and sundry, who are known to have mastered Irish as other languages are mastered, *i.e.* by hard, scientific study, and who, therefore, might prove a possible menace to your supremacy, might, in fact, by some perverse turn of chance, happen to be looked to as possible authorities in a difficulty, to the utter injury of you, the rightful authorities, you of the mouths of the people. The efficient preventive remedy for this is to get scholarship out of the running altogether, to lose no opportunity of discrediting scholars as foolish creatures, rainbow chasers, incapables. All this can be done with much noise and clatter, if clatter should seem good, or it may be done in all quietness and discreetness by writing the word, scholar, in commas, and saying no more. That will imply anything you

want to get implied, and implying is your main stock-in-trade, the essence of the method of your madness.

How is it that it never occurs to us to spell English exactly as it lives in the mouths of the people? Just because the general reason of civilised mankind would straightway be down on us, like a volcano of scorching mockery. The mouths of the people would themselves be the very first to be all around their ears at us, were we to develop any such sudden and startling benevolence in their favour. Not but what their English, as it stands, might certainly afford to accept some little aids towards improvement; but set about giving such aid by spelling for them according to their own accent and pronunciation, and you will soon find them developing a sudden benevolence towards you, a sudden and unanimous recommendation of you for a certain benevolent institution. Take all the different accents and dialects of English throughout Great Britain and Ireland, not to speak of the various shapes of that tongue's phonetics elsewhere throughout the English-speaking world; or, rather, indeed, stay, and take Ireland alone, where the variations are fewest and least, and let every shade of English accent throughout the country insist on spelling for itself, and what chance had the Tower of Babel of being in it with us? The Derryman will say, "I tell ye the h-rith," when he means "I tell you the truth"; "Did y'ondherstan' tha' h-wray'tn?" for "Did you understand that writing?" The Donegalman will say, "Em a lettle ell," for "I'm a little ill." The Belfastman will say, "It's a varra pratta place.". The Kerryman will say, "Verree'ya ny'uss" for "Very nice." The Clareman will say, "Verree harrd" and "Harrdee buys." The Dublinman will say, "Pay-oond" for "Pound,"

"Pay-oodher" for "Powder," "Tlass" for "Class," and "Dlass" for "Glass." The Meathman will call students "skewd'nts," and nature "nayker." The Longfordman will say, "Thurzh grate work goan on in the paypurzh," when he wants to convey that there is great work going on in the papers. And soforth. And this is English as it lives in the mouths of the people. Now, if the way to write language for the people, is to spell it according to all their various mouths, what a monstrous fraud the Press is, both here at home, and abroad throughout the English-speaking world, and the world at large Or how should it not be suppressed incontinent, for neglecting to give the people what would suit them in the way of language? For, this is exactly the charge preferred against literary Irish, the whole reason advanced for ignoring it, that it is not precisely and in all points in accordance with the mouths of the people, as it should be, in accordance with all their various mouths at the same time. That, therefore, literary Irish should go, should be suppressed and hounded out, to make way for sensible writers. This is the charge, and this is the verdict against it—that is, whenever the literary Irish is admitted to exist at all. Why should not the literary English go? The same reason exists, and in a far more aggravated form, for its suppression. Why not give the people practical English—the English of their own mouths? Now, suppose this impossible thing done for the people—in English. Of course they were straightway helpless. Not one in a thousand of them could ever succeed in making out one sentence of the stuff, and least of all a sentence of his own special dialect. Not one of them could endure to look at the stuff at all. They would

not believe it was English at all, but some foreign gibberish, at once bizarre and barbarous. But, once more, if it must and will be freely admitted that this were a very insanity of humbug for English, or for any other language, how is it not equally so for Irish? But, for Irish it is held up as an excellence, nay, as the only shape in which the language is to be recognised. How is this? Just because we are yet safe from the laugh. The cause is equally there, but the laugh is not—yet. The common sense of mankind is not yet sufficiently interested in the Irish language, to have heard of this system, and, without being told of it, could never light on suspecting it, and cannot laugh at what it never thought of. But the laugh will come, should the system last long enough, which is, indeed, unlikely. In English the people need merely to get the words in print before them in the correct, that is, in the received spelling. From this they will extract each his own pronunciation to his own liking, thus enjoying their free and unlimited variety, thus leaving the unity intact, while getting all the variety out of it. If this is the admitted common sense of the position for English, and for other languages, if this is simply a *sine qua non* of the very conservation and idea of a language, how is it that the very opposite is insisted on being the case in regard to Irish? How can the way to destroy every other language be the way to save Irish? How can it be the way to save Irish, to throw unity to the winds, and to permit and accept varieties *ad infinitum*? Which is, however, the direct trend of the central proposition of this system, the proposition which says that there is no Irish at all, or none to be heeded at all, especially as a model for intending writers, save the language as it lives in the mouths of the people!

But, doubtless, some smart person will ask me what *is* the correct, that is, the received spelling in Irish? That question comes simply to this: What right has usual to be usual, or what right has there to be a usual at all? What right, for instance, has Dublin to be spelled *D u b l i n* and not *Double N*, or *nn*, or *Dubling*, *à la capting*, *Lating*, etc.? Or who has any right to object, if I spell it in either, or both, of these latter ways, and excogitate its etymology accordingly? Or if I maintain that it is properly *Double in*, meaning that the tide, at flow, doubles in the Liffey, doubles it back on its source? Or might I not answer the smart one by asking, in turn, what is the *incorrect* spelling in Irish, and how many of them are there? How many of them always available for the fellow who wants the repute of knowing the language, but knows that if he attempts to write it, he must needs write it without spelling? But why pursue a fallacy which, to all thinking minds, refutes itself? That the fallacy should have ever been started is, perhaps, intelligible, but it is surely not so intelligible that it should ever have got patronised by some names of importance enough to make its refutation imperative.

CHAPTER III.

THE NATIVE SPEAKER WHERE HE HAS NEVER SPOKEN; A GUIDE NOT MERELY BLIND, BUT LAME AND DUMB AND DEAF.

But, testing the principle on, let us even suppose, the non-existence of that all-the-points-of-the-compass difficulty; suppose for a moment that all the mouths of the people were really as one mouth, that an absolute uniformity of speech reigned among them, north, south, east, and west; would there then remain no difficulty? To all intents and purposes as big a one as now, for writers at any rate. For those who want merely to learn to speak Irish, it would depend on how much they want to speak about. If they want to talk merely about those subjects with which the people are conversant, which are commensurate with the range of the folk's ideas, then the mouths of the people, uniformity supposed, were incomparably their best teacher. But if one wants to speak Irish not in that very confined and limited manner, but with all freedom, on any subject at all, or, what is the same thing, if you want to write the language, then the people's range of it will soon fail you, and you will find yourself driven to seek some ampler magazine of supplies. You must go to the literature. There is no getting out of it, you cannot choose, but must. For, if you want to write at all, you want, presumably, to write what you have to say. But then you may have many things to say which the people never said, or never thought of, at least in Irish, and never had, nor heard an Irish word for. Will you write on politics, economics, commerce, finance, resources, labour problems,

navigation, manufactures, medicine, literature, law, ethnology, history, apologetics, metaphysics, trigonometry, higher criticism? And will you go to the poor, illiterate Irish-speaking folk, and to them alone (carefully eschewing all books and scholars), for a language training to fit you for the work, to equip you for the handling of the above subjects, or of any of them, or of the thousand and one other subjects, any of which you might want to handle, and on any of which the said folk never had a thought, and for which, therefore, they never had a conscious word? It must be remembered that modern life has not spoken Irish. There is no such thing as a native speaker of modern life in Irish. There is no such thing as a native speaker of the thoughts of any present-day educated man. There is no such thing as a native speaker who can speak Irish away on any subject you like to draw down to him up-to-date. The very best native speaker who is a native speaker and nothing more, is easily five centuries behind date in ability to handle present-day life in Irish, or to follow you, if you handle it to him in Irish. And hence a very discouraging difficulty, the difficulty of finding an audience among native speakers for any address in pure Irish. I do not mean in difficult Irish, but in the simplest of simple Irish, so long as it is pure, and clear of barbarisms from English; Irish on the lines of *v.g.*, tá mé ag léigheadh, tá mo chlú os cionn agat, rather than of tá mo cheann os cionn púnáilte agat. Then, if the native speaker fails to understand you to his liking, in Irish, his verdict is prompt —you have no Irish; there is no satisfaction in your Irish. Whereas in English, if he *does* understand you, you may be looking for his contempt. Your

one road into his admiration in English is sound and fury, signifying nothing to him, except the one grand fact that *therefore* you are a potent orator. Modern life has never existed among the folk whose proper vernacular is the Irish language; and so, its ideas and its mode of presenting them have never yet taken a really Gaelic shape. In as far, therefore, as modern life has touched the folk at all, it is not through Irish, but through English, it has touched them. But it can scarcely be said to have touched them at all, and so, the value of their assistance to a man who would treat a modern subject in Irish would be exactly *nil*, and worse, waste of time and vexation of spirit. Let me just illustrate this a little. Take an illiterate man whose natural language is Irish, but who knows English well enough too for any purpose for which he is likely to need it. Whatever he understands familiarly he can express tolerably well in English, though, of course, he can convey it much better in the tongue of his nature, in Irish. But, then, he understands familiarly absolutely nothing beyond the few physical and social surroundings of his existence, of a country life which is pretty well as primitive as any Arcadia of them all. Take, now, the case where such a man even understands the thing, but not the word or words which express it. Take, for instance, "*the Congested Districts Board.*" He understands fairly well the institution which these words name, but he has not a shadow of a notion of the meaning of the words in themselves. Therefore he could not only not translate them into Irish, but it could never even strike his mind to dream of doing so. Ideas are what he wants, not the various shapes they may take in different languages. If he

gets an idea in Irish, all right—he has it. If he gets it in English, all right—it is an idea all the same. The word that brings it is nothing to him. It is neither Irish nor English to him; it is simply the sound of an idea, and it is the idea alone that interests him, the word not at all. He never thought of such exercise as comparing how ideas look in one language besides in another, and so he never dreamt of translating them, to see. Besides, the above words in themselves—the words "*Congested Districts Board*"—convey no idea to him. He happens to know something of the body they describe, but that is not by aid of the words, but by actual contact with that body, or with some of its workings. Once he has come into such contact, the sound of the words brings the body, as he is acquainted with it, before his mind, but that is not because the words convey any of their own meaning to him, but because he has grown used to associate the body with that sound—"*Congested Districts Board.*" The words, as words, convey no idea at all to him, and he could not think of translating no idea. It is quite as beyond him to say them in Irish, as to say something, and mean it, before he thought of it. Put him in mind of the possibility that the words might be said in Irish—ask him to Irish them—and his answer will invariably be, "'n Dom̓nac, *we never hurrd nayther Irish nor English for thim bud that.*" Quite so. There is the whole point—we never heard it otherwise—we never dreamt of there being an otherwise—and in what we never heard, we are helpless. The illiterate cannot make language. Whatever they "have heard"—whatever they know intimately—whatever they know with nature's power—was got through Irish. But, then,

they never "heard" but their own Irish—the mouths-of-the-people Irish, and that has no new idea for them. Anything which that has to tell them they know long ago. Any new idea that has come to them has come through English, and they take the English expression of it for better, for worse. Then, the idea and the expression of it are both strange to them, and the strange word, instead of conveying the idea to them, is rather a wall of iron to shut them out from it. That they gain the idea at all, is never through the aid of words, but through some other means. And this is the nourishment, this is the education on which the intellects of the Irish-speaking population have been subsisting for now upwards of a century. To expect that they would not be stunted, were to expect that efficient causes, efficiently applied, would manage somehow not to produce their proper effects—to expect a standing miracle. And stunted they are, accordingly, perfectly helpless as to mind and language, wherever any idea new to them is concerned. They "never heard Irish or English for it but that," and this is the same as to say—it is their way of saying—that they can put neither Irish nor English on it but that. They can do nothing with it "but as they heard it," and they are clean unconscious of any privation. They never desired, for they never dreamt of, a change in the way of saying it. There it is, and there is an end of it. Is it, then, to these we must go, and to these alone, to make ourselves up in the language with a view to writing? I think not. But it is such folk who are at home in the language as it lives in the mouths of the people? It is such who are free from all taint and suspicion of scholarship—even in commas?

Now, take a scholar, and ask him to translate the words "*Congested Districts Board*," into Irish. He may not know on earth what the particular institution called the C.D.B. is. He may never have met a member of it in his life, never heard of its existence. But he knows what *congested* means, what *district* means, what *board* means; and he will translate the expression right off into the most native Irish. Now how did the scholar attain to this expertness over the poor illiterate man, the man of the mouths-of-the-people Irish, and of that only? The answer is in the "only." There is no "only" about the scholar's Irish. He has the language not "only" as it lives in the mouths of the people, but, from long, laborious study of it from its elements on, and up to its last, finest literary finish, he has perfected his mastery of it, whether for speaking or for writing, for composing or for editing. If, then, you would be an author in Irish, depend upon it, you will have to go and do likewise—like the scholar—and especially if you are a native speaker. You will have to consent to believe that Irish, like every other language, has a beginning. It is the native speaker's peculiar disease to ignore this. He, being a native speaker, would tackle the language at any point, and, if there is any difficulty, it cannot be right Irish. No, it cannot be right, for he is a native speaker, and here he is unable to understand it, whereas a native speaker's perogative is just that, to know all about the language, whether he knows anything about it or not. Therefore, whatever puzzles him cannot be Irish at all; whatever falls short of pleasing him is necessarily inferior stuff. He never heard it, and there could be no more damning indictment against it—he is a native speaker. This is the disease. You will

have to get cured of this if you would master Irish so as to write it, or even so as to speak it—on any subject beyond the sphere of the folk. You must consent to believe that Irish has a beginning, and at that beginning all hands, even the native speaker, must condescend to begin. As you go on in it you will learn this too, that Irish cannot be known without learning it, a truism pertinaciously ignored by native speakers.

But, then, this is a very different thing from going to the opposite extreme, and suggesting that the Irish-speaking folk can be of no assistance at all in acquiring the language. They can, and of very great help, but in that place where, and where alone, anything can be of help—in their own place. Which place is, to be consulted very stealthily and discreetly by students of Irish, especially by those who would capture the blas, without which Irish-speaking is an insufferable mockery. But such students must be adroit. They must be careful not to let it seem as if they wanted to learn anything. This cannot be too much emphasised. Whatever Irish will be learned from the people will have to be learned from them unknown to them, depend upon that. If you get them on the alert for a moment, the game is up—you may be going home. And to put them on the alert is so easily done, that the difficulty is to keep clear of it. For instance—a very frequent instance, owing to their rapid method of speaking—if they happen to pronounce a word indistinctly, a word of whose living pronunciation you would wish to make certain, you will be only too apt to ask, *How is this you said it?* If you do, it is straight good-bye to business. Your native speaker gets uneasy and fidgety right off. He fears he has said the word wrong in some way, and that you

will catch him in the error, if he repeats the same word. Accordingly, he will say the thing over in some other way, carefully omitting and avoiding that word. But that word is the very thing you want out of his mouth, and you get impatient at his absurd stupidity in evading it, through the imbecile, but visible suspicion, that what you want is, to catch him wrong. Poor fellow, such a thing never entered your head, of course; what you want is the sound of that word out of a native speaker's mouth; that and nothing more. And here you are now in danger of not getting it at all, and the cup at your very lips. You will hardly avoid the traces of warmth and impatience, in your kindled eagerness to get another chance of hearing your word; and this will only stiffen the stupidity of your man, and the rest will be silence, and silence will not teach you much Irish. The game is up, and you may be going home. Do not hope to get resolute stupidity to see the point—your point. His business with you is over and done, and his only concern this moment is whether he has been worsted in the business, "put down," as himself would call it, and on his own dunghill, too, and, if so, what will the neighbours be saying, when they hear of it? To be "put down" is a shrewd calamity, even where there is no consciousness of a repute for Irish. But where there is such repute, as there sometimes is, to get "put down" is disconsolate dejection, or red, roaring war. There is an odd such repute for "a tongue of Irish"; "as sweet a tongue of Irish as you'd meet in a day's walk, sir, it's at that Paitrín Pilipe—and kind for him it was, too; it was at his father and at his grandmother before him, so it was." That it should ever 'then" betide that Paitrín got "put down," well, the

sun, in all reasonable decorum, ought to refrain from rising to-morrow at any rate. And so of many minor ꝑaıtꝛín̄ı in their several minor measures. It behoves then, to look to it, for cross-examination will infallibly drive them to silence, which, though mostly angry, is ever politic, for all that. They will turn it handsomely. "I didn't want to have anything to do with him. I dropped him, not that he put me down—he didn't put me down, it would take his betters to do that—but how could I know what detective, or government spy, or rascal o' that sort he might be?—himself an' his note takin'!" This is the complexion your man will give the affair. A shrewd complexion; for it will countenance all other natives, too, in being sparing of speech with you, and all, in reality, for fear of getting "put down." So, be wise in time, and beware of putting questions. Capture what you can without them; what you cannot, let go. Indeed, be sure of one thing—going to the people for Irish, you will find to be a tedious, irksome business, and fortunate is he who, having done more or less of it, has not found himself some day reflecting sadly on wasted time. Everybody knows the "people" way of discussing. They can neither speak, nor listen, to order. If you want silence, they will be chattering; if you want talk, they are straight mute. If you want, for example, to know of a certain word, whether it lives, and you ask them did they ever hear it, and that not, the "not" was, of course, all you wanted, and you would be for going on to something else. But it won't do—they must enlighten you. They dread lest it might infer some ignorance on their part, not to have heard it; and they must show you that it is not ignorance on their part, that it is ignorance on the word's part.

Aye, they must not let it go with you that way—they must set you right. And you will have to listen gravely while they proceed to reveal to you the (by you) undreamt of secret that "there's different Irish"—"there's Irish in some places that's different from others." "See, now, Father John, it irzhent the one Irish the Kerry people an' iz has at all. I worked beyant in England twinty-five years ago wud a boy from Kerry—an' a nice boy he was, God boo ut um—an' if ye bleeve me, hardly I would undhershtand a word oo 'is Irish; there's different Irish, Father John. An' see now, Father John, to look into id, I think there'zh noo Irish at all as good, or as plain as th' Irish the people has around here, or that comes off as nice, or as natyural." All of which may be paraphrased—"I am not at fault, Father John, but that word of yours is 'quare' Irish, it does not 'come off natural,' somehow, like the words around here. It is not my defect; it is in the word itself the trouble is. If it was 'any good of a word,' or if it 'came off any way natural' at all, I'd be sure to understand it and to have it, but it is a 'quare' word, Father John, and what I believe is, that it is not a right word of Irish at all." You wait, with such patience as you can command, until all this is over, and you return to the word, giving the same word again, to the same man, but with a bit of context this time. "Ooh, 'n eʌʊ 'ɕɳoɯɔe he heard 'that' word a thousand times!" You have found what you wanted, the certainty that the term lives; but at what a cost! Another, being asked if he ever heard such a word, answers at once, "Ar'n't we lookin' at that every day?" 'That' means not the word, but the thing the word expresses. Your man never dreams that it is about the word you are puzzled,

the word is so familiar to him, and how you could be puzzled about the thing, is what passes his comprehension. Hence the shape of his answer. It is his way of letting you know that the word lives. Another will explain any Irish, or anything else under the sun, to you. But you must be careful to look belief:

Nī fuil beʌn ʌr ʌ gcuirfeá-rʌ rinn do forg . . . That rinn do forg, now, Micil, is that word spoken amongst people?

"Ooh, fuy not, feawthir; that's that you'd *rinn* the for-g. Rinn do fóir-g, that's that he *rinn* the for-g (g slender always), that he tuk the shance mar adéarfá, or, you'd say, do ric ré an for-g, má 'r i ngaeilge béiteá ag caint; and that's that he *rinn* the for-g, and that's that he tuk the shance oo'd!" A most satisfactory explanation, and not at all far from typical. Another, again, will keep silent altogether, and wait for *you* to talk, carefully noting your every movement in a manner which he intends to be very furtive, but which will be all the more apt to disconcert you, even though you were willing to talk and had no misgivings about your fluency in Irish. You will not profit much with a man of that sort.

CHAPTER IV.

To whom, then, shall we go, if go we will? A Glance at the Native Speaker Professor. The Native Speaker the Natural Enemy of Irish; the Cradle his Great Weapon against it.

To whom, then, shall we go? It must be remembered that there are people and people "in it." There are people who are speakers and people who are jabberers. There are families still to be found, whose picked vocabulary, polished accent, and perfect elocution mark off their owners unmistakably as the remains of high, refined old antecedents; and enviable, indeed, is the Irish child whose lot is cast among such people while the tongue is yet supple and young. Be his training to love the language, or be it to despise it, one thing at any rate is safe—he will know the hawk from the handsaw. He will know the true ring of the ᵬlaᵲ from the most perfect imitations. The minutest error of timbre in the sound of an Irish word will jar straight spurious on his ear. If one could but find himself among such people, and light on one of them glad to be bidden discourse, glad, say, to talk about himself, such a one's progress in the spoken language were secure and swift. But such speakers are inevitably sporadic, and to be come at only by direction or by lucky chance. On the other hand, there are people who, though native speakers, and furnished with an ample vocabulary, are mere jabberers; and the number of the latter is not going down but mounting. Mounting, for the native article,

besides being itself a degenerate thing, and degenerating on, is being reinforced every day by an auxiliary sevenfold worse than itself, by a multitude of learners who, assuming that Irish, being only Irish, and not some high-toned foreign language, should come to us cheaply, should not have the "cheek" to expect us to study it, but should rather come and seek us out, and think itself happy if we noticed it; who, assuming all this, I say, will take not the slightest pains to capture the accent of the language, no matter what wealth of opportunity may come in their way. And what is yet worse again than this, many of these learners are, unfortunately, teachers too, and so, are, whether they will or no, by very force of their position for the time being, disseminating a ludicrous and barbarous ɒlaɾ, and this under the sacred aegis, the sealed, unchallenged warrant of the superior learning ever supposed in men of such ornate standing. This circumstance, this barbarous accent in teachers, is diseasing the hope of the people, driving them to incurable despair of the language ever living again. For, in that matter, anyhow, the matter of false accent, you can never hoodwink the real native speaker. They say sadly: You may call that what you like, you may revive as much of it as you like, but Irish it is not, and in mercy and kind reverence to august and sacred memories, do not call it Irish. Do not scandal and burlesque the race by setting down that jabber of yahoos as the accent of our ancestors. *Ta me on baoċ ditch fee the litchur; Gumma hay ditch; of deeum the jeea; Neemurra wawhur jay; Spanny tharra doorannyeess;* etc., etc. These are a few stray samples of Irish accent, as acquired from teachers; a few specimens of the desecration of the ɒlaɾ of a language probably the most sensitive ever articu-

lated by organ of mortal man. But here, now, I must fence off a possible misapprehension. When I speak of teachers, I am using the word in a sense wholly irrespective of adjectives, in a sense stiffly prescinding from class epithets. Let none of my good friends, the National teachers, conceit me as referring to themselves in especial, or to themselves at all, as such. The teacher I am contemplating may belong to any class, or creed, or to no class, or no creed, for all this question is concerned about his class adjectives. The sole concern here is his teaching, or his being supposed to be teaching Irish, his inability and unfitness for the teaching of it, and, for as much as he professes, nevertheless, to teach it, his aptitude and fitness to do large damage to the cause, by bringing into discredit the movement which tolerates him, or suffers it to be understood that it tolerates him, as a teacher of the language. That is the sole sense, the sole capacity in which the word "teacher" is used here. As a matter of fact, if one individual out of the vague scores will keep bobbing up before my mind throughout the whole course of this context, (in sheer spite of me), that one is not a National teacher, nor any functionary of the Gaelic League, either; but he teaches Irish—what he calls Irish—and so I must denominate him here by the word "teacher," because the sole meaning of that word here is verified in him, a person, namely, who teaches Irish, or what he is pleased to call Irish. He has worked his name into the papers a good deal, and passes for rather a master, therefore—exactly and solely therefore. There are even some talks of a book, too. But it is mercifully to be hoped that if he will benefit the world by a book, it will be by not writing it. And yet, perhaps, a book were less harm than what

he is at. For, by his ludicrous accent, he is doing much to discourage men who know what real Irish is, from belief in a movement that can suffer him to be abroad as one of its accredited workers, whereas he is not at all one of its accredited workers, but that he somehow manages to give the impression that he is. People who know Irish by nature, feel at once, by his accent, that he "has no Irish." Yet they see him "adjudicator"—what a fine word, this "adjudicator"—they see him adjudicator at feiseanna, etc., and are hopelessly disheartened, believing that every other adjudicator must be quite as bad a case, or rather a worse case; for, if they were only as bad as he, they had the same claim to be in the papers as much and as constantly as he, and, as they are not, the only reason must be that they are too bad even for the papers. Such men, I say, put the people to incurable despair, or, rather, such falsely supposed recognition of them by a movement whose professed business is to revive Irish. The idea, however false and unfounded it may be, that such individuals are actually foremost men, accredited masters, in such a movement, makes the people part with all hope for the language. One thing the people know—they know how they have heard it, how they have heard the language "evermore," and no false accent, no spurious idiom, no counterfeit of any sort, will escape or elude them in Irish, least of all in a professing teacher of it. Such teachers, then, can do little else but harm, and must do a great deal of that. They are men on whom, of course, the language idea never dawned. They could never handle any language with taste or power. They are utterly devoid of what may be called the Language Sense. Indeed they are not overburdened with sense

of any kind, for they can never be got so far as the faintest dawnings of a suspicion of any possible falling short of perfection in themselves, a disease ever hopelessly incurable. The only cure for it would, naturally, be its discernment by the patient; but, unhappily, its very nature and essence is to fly that discernment. Now, it is of the last importance to bear ever in mind, that the language is vastly at the mercy of the conceited incompetence of such persons, the rather that their name is long since legion. They cannot impart the blas of the language but as they know it, and that is to say that they cannot impart it at all, for they don't know it at all. And then the misfortune is, the pupils, being most unblissfully unaware of this, cannot choose but accept them, blas and all, as authoritative, and so must needs take up a diseased accent from the start, to disease others in their turn, to the eventual marring and making away of the genuine historic blas of the language. So true is this, that even the real native-speaking children have their accent equally diseased with the rest, in the process, and this is the real sore spot in all the question. This is where the pestilence can work to a finish; this is where the language can be killed out, by poisoning the very source of its life. In speaking among themselves, in their natural converse with their neighbours, these children will pronounce with a perfect accent; but in reading in school they will read like other children, like children whose first acqaintance with Irish has been made in school. The very words they pronounce with a perfect blas in their natural conversation, these very words they will pronounce with the school blas in reading or in singing at

school—just like the children who never spoke nor heard Irish, till they began to learn it at school. If anyone doubts this, he has only to go into the very first school he meets in the most Irish-speaking district he can find, or into the first ꝑeıꝛ that is toward, hear an Irish song, whether in choir, or solo, and, listening with all his ears, see if he can catch one Irish word from beginning to end of the performance. The words are there, of course, but in a disguise which is not only impenetrable to an Irish speaker, but makes him stupid with very despair; so stupid, indeed, that I must forgive him for praising the performance, or anything, all presence of mind being so scared out of him, that it will take at least five miles in the fresh air, and away from all company, to bring him back to anything like consciousness of his being, or identity. And, as above, when I use the word "school," it is in a sense as severely irrespective of adjectives as the word "teacher." I am keeping the discussion in the abstract all along, as much as it is possible to do, but in this connection these two words are dominant, and they cannot be avoided in any candid attempt at the exposition of it. The sore spot, then, to my mind the sorest in all the question, is this poisoning of the accent at the very spring, at the very source of its hope of surviving, in the native-speaking children who still have it genuine by nature. And this heart-sickening work is in full process this moment, and is, indeed, the one inevitable end of Irish teaching as we know it. The children cannot choose, but act after the manner of children; they cannot choose but accept the teacher, ꝺlaꝛ accent, and all, as authoritative, and the more Irish-speaking they are, the more they will so accept him. To them, above

all, he is the *ignotum et magnificum*; and anything false and crass and incapable in his ᵬlaɾ will be only superior Irish to them. With grown people the case would be different; but the concern just here is with children, with the native-speaking little ones, that is, with the young hope, and that the last link of hope for the dying accents of an old and storied race. With these, the teacher and everything identified with him is superiority itself; a thing, of course, most right and proper in general, but, in the particular case, the very thing to lead inevitably to fatal results. And then, to complete the mischief, plumb down upon this devoted sore spot comes all the force of that pernicious cry, "The mouths of the people." Not one of these teachers whom I am contemplating, but will claim to be himself a native speaker. Not a soul among them but would, if challenged, meet you with "the cradle," and his village, and "as he always heard it," and he heard it from the mouths of "people who knew it as good as any man can know it, I don't care who he is." It will not be easy to argue after that, which is exactly what is intended by it. It is always intended—that "I don't care who he is"—as a knock-out blow. "Lie down, asthore, you're dead," said the wailing young widow to the "corpse" of her husband, who had taken a sudden fancy to sit up. "Dead!" said the startled man; "how am I dead?" "Oh, you are asthore, dead; didn't the docthor say you were; lie down." The doctor said it—lie down! The native speaker said it—lie down! Micky Flynn pronounced it so, and Micky is a man that knows Irish, and that can tell what is good Irish as well as any man within forty miles of him, I don't care who the other man is, and, and, and—lie

down! And in good sooth it is as well. It were ill "standing up" to an argument of that sort. So far-reaching, so crushing, and so final is that cry, "the native speaker," so exquisitely fitted to shelter fraud, to bolster incapacity, to make sense and reason ludicrous. The very gist and soul of it is, "lie down!" And all is well, if it prove not to be an immortal soul, however mortal in its effects on the language. In fact, ever since it has been a cry, everyone you meet is a native speaker. Prior to its putting forth, the difficulty was rather to find them; but the cry, once floated, fetched them up from nonentity in scores of thousands. Post and salary and name had just begun to throw shadows in over the horizon, and who but the native speaker was fit for post, or charge, or even hearing in any matter connected with the language? Above all, who but the man from the cradle could be entrusted with the teaching of it? And so, the men of the cradle sprang up at once in hosts, as at the tap of the wand of a sorcerer. And here, accordingly, it is necessary to consider a little more closely that blown and pompous fallacy, that because one is a native speaker, he must be the fit and proper man for teaching Irish. Aye, Irish, for, of course, the like absurd principle was never dreamt of for any other language. But poor Irish is a special case. The things that are good for it were never good for any other tongue. But what of that? That is only in order. It is only a gem the brighter in her crown. But she is dying of the dazzle and the glory; for, the means and methods by which other languages thrive, or live, are all too gross and prosy for her case. *She is dying of the cradle and the native speaker.* The one's for use, the other uses it. The poor cradle is

blameless; it is but the weapon of the murderer; the murderer is the native speaker. Blameless, innocent weapon, but oh, woe, how deadly! The only arm, in fact, that could ever be right deadly in the case. The wielder is the native speaker. He it is, and she—indeed she especially—who has been wielding the cradle against the language for now over a century and a half, and even now, to-day, is smiting on as flush and stalwart as if Gaelic organisation had never yet been heard of on this planet. In point of fact, the real native speaker has never really heard of such organisation—never heard of it to any purpose. It has never been brought under his notice in any such vigorous or significant way, as could be honestly called making him hear of it to purpose. And so he plies on his work, slaughtering the language in serene security. And the League looks on at the havoc a-making, and, instead of coming to close quarters with the slayer, and wrenching the fatal weapon out of his hands, or of disabling him in some way from such deadly use of it, sees good to keep a long way off, to follow the enemy as at a long, safe distance, with wage and salary for the galvanising of what he has killed—nay, as if in premium for these his deadly services at the cradle, the native speaker is the name of honour in all this movement for the saving of the language! The real native speaker, the real, candid, confessing destroyer of Irish, this is the one emphatically honoured name in the Irish revival from the start! And so it comes that the native speaker is, of course, the only right man to teach the language, or to look after it in any way. So he be a native speaker, it is all one what he is not; and, what is more, his *ipse dixit* will mostly suffice to settle it, that he is a native speaker.

Surely a principle to make angels weep! And a live and lusty principle at that. As if nothing more were needed in a professor of language, but that he be a native speaker! As if any Snug, or Snout, or Bottom picked up at random, or at "recommendum" in Somerset, or Yorkshire, merely because he is a native speaker of a sort of English, must be *ipso facto* the man to whom to give charge of the English language in a school, or a college. To be a native speaker, is one thing; to have sense of language, to be a master in the speech of a race, is, I submit, quite another thing. A teacher of language is a very different article from any mere speaker of it, native or otherwise, more especially when such speaker, though native, is native only to a dialect —which is nearly always the case—and not to the language as a whole. When such native speaker, moreover, is distinctly and patently devoid of anything properly describable as education, above all, as language education, it must surely be admitted, that there is some difference between him and the idea currently associated with a teacher of language. But no such difference is admitted in the case of Irish. The tongue of the Gael is the grand exception, in all points, to such idle toys as sense and reason. As it is an exception to all languages in that it is wholly above the blighting folly of unity; as it is an exception to them all in that the only way to come by the knowing of it, is to avoid and disdain all study of it; so, it is an exception to them all in that any poor yokel may teach it. These three positions are but three ways of stating one and the same absurdity. They flow from and interproduce each other, and they are but live and inevitable consequences of that mad original principle that, viz.. there is no Irish, or at least,

no Irish worth heeding, save the language as it lives in the mouths of the people. Any poor noodle of a native speaker, can, therefore, teach Irish. Antisthenes one day entreated the Athenians to give order that asses might be employed in tilling the ground, like horses; it was answered that those animals were not destined for such a service. "That's all one," he rejoined, "you have only to order it; for, the most ignorant and incapable men you employ in your posts of war, incontinently become able men because you employ them." Any poor native speaker can, then, teach the language; the employing is all. And his *ipse dixit*, as before stated, will suffice, as a rule, to prove that he is a native speaker But suppose him always genuine; what then? The pupils read for him, say the words after him, and all is well—that is all that is to be done! One pupil pronounces in one way, another in another, a third differently again, and the native speaker professor perceives no difference whatever between their various pronunciations, or between them and his own; or, if he should, it is all one; he will not and cannot correct them. He does not know that their pronunciation is wrong, because he does not know that his own is right. His sober wishes never learnt to stray out into such idle speculation as the true and beautiful, or the false and hideous, in accent. The pupils get over the lessons, and that is all that matters. He is the teacher, and this is teaching, getting on with the business. All this for want of a language training, such training being, of course, the one thing to menace the purity and existence of the language! And all this for Irish, for poor Irish, which, of all the languages under the sun, is in sorest need of the right men in the right places, to give it a

chance of living on. Bad writing will not prevent the coming of good writers, for the literary models remain; false syntax and false accidence will also right themselves; false idiom will get laughed out sooner or later; but false blas, false accent, is a subtler thing, and sticks deeper. It spreads among the young, and is certain in most cases never to be set right for them, but to spread on from them to others, and to others, and to others, thus bringing the language into the certain danger of parting for ever with its most kindy distinctive sounds. It is in these the havoc is most rife. For, by a very unhappy coincidence, some of the sounds most distinctively racy of the Irish tongue, come just near enough certain English sounds, to get themselves confused with them; to get themselves, accordingly, pronounced with a barbarous, mongrel English rendering, which I daresay, many a native-speaker teacher would deem superior to their genuine blas, just because of the English taint in their pronunciation. These Irish sounds, I say, come, or rather seem to come, pretty near certain English ones, yet they are as different from them as Parisian is from the French of Killaloe. But the children know nothing of this, and pronounce them away with the mongrel English blas; the teacher has eyes, yet never sees a bit of the slaughter; ears and he hears it not; neither did it ever enter into his average heart to conceive that there might be such sides of the question. "Boolong, Toolong, the Kongtinong," is just as good as "Boulogne, Toulon, and Continent," and funnier; and the language pines on. To whom shall we go, it was asked some way back, for the genuine Irish accent? Well, to the native speaker, by all means, if go you will; to the best speaker if you can find him; if you cannot, and must be content with the jabberer,

well, the jabberer is all right in the ɒlaɾ anyhow; but if your native speaker should happen to be also a person professing the trade of teaching Irish, it will then be wise to take care and make sure that he *is* a native speaker, for it is not to be gainsaid that some business capacity has been abroad in connection with that conjuring word, that potent spell-word, "the Native Speaker."

CHAPTER V.

A Special Brand of Native Speaker; the Man of Common Sense, *Strong* Common Sense; the Man of all others to whom not to go.

There is one more variety left of the native speaker, to which a student might feel drawn for guidance. He is neither a teacher nor a learner; he is emphatically a practical man, a man of common sense—"strong" common sense. He is that sort of man without whom no movement can get on, and the Language movement has, naturally, not escaped him. He has, of course, spoken Irish from the cradle, or he says he has, which is all the same, for his peculiar purpose. That purpose is to dominate, and one cannot well dominate in a language movement, without some pretence of having spoken the language from the cradle. He has, therefore, spoken Irish from the cradle, all the way from the cradle. He will be very angry with anyone whom he suspects of any misgivings touching his account of himself, of any doubts about his Irish, or of the reality of its origin from the cradle. His methods of enforcing his pretensions are various, but the ever to be supposed fundamental is specially indispensable to him, the ever foregone first principle,

that scholars know nothing about the language. It is only the practical man, the man who has spoken it from the cradle, who is to be heeded at all about it, and, of course, no scholar ever spoke it from the cradle. The scholar and the cradle are eternally and immutably incompatible. This practical man is ready for all comers, for all emergencies. If he sees, or hears, any Irish which he can understand, why, then, what about it! It is only Irish; and who will expect a practical man, and a man of strong common sense, and who has Irish from the cradle, to respect Irish! If he sees or hears any which he cannot understand, why, then again so much the worse for it, for it is not Irish at all. Bad as it were to be Irish, this is a worse case, for it does not come up to the level of his understanding at all! "Those fellows" are going on with a sort of stuff now which was never spoken anywhere. They are corrupting the language. He gathers all this from the fact that he has met a piece of Irish which he fails to understand—a faultless inference, right worthy of the practical man who has Irish from the cradle. That there should presume to be any Irish which he cannot understand, is more than ample condemnation of "those fellows." Of "those fellows," yes, for, of course, that he cannot understand it, besides proving at once that it is not Irish, makes it equally clear that it is from "those fellows" it emanated. I remember once reading a few words of the opening sentence of Keating's prologue to his history, to a practical man of this type. He rejected it straight off, with angry disdain, as not Irish at all, or, what was even worse, as Gaelic League Irish, some of the Irish of "those fellows." He could not listen to any evidence to the contrary; neither, indeed, were it of much avail had

he condescended to listen, for it would only have got him so far—for, strong common sense is disdainfully deaf—as to take up that one of "those fellows" was a lad of the name of Keating; and how could that better the position? That could not better the character of the stuff he condemned, surely! He did not understand it, and that was quite enough about it; he had spoken Irish from the cradle. The case is much worse when such persons happen to be able to read a little Irish, or able to imagine that they are able, for that is what it mostly comes to. That is what it came to in the incident just mentioned. And that man stands, by position, in vital relations to the teaching of Irish! In the old times, when some Irish had to be shown up, at Confirmation or so, there naturally was an odd attempt here and there at reading it. And attempt, indeed, it was; the attempt and not the deed. Agus and cá, and a few such little words were read; the rest was spelled. Then came a guess, which immediately grew itself into a decision, that "that must be it." It must be it, because it seemed like it—like some word they had in their mind—and they pronounced it accordingly. They pronounced it accordingly—not from any power from knowledge of the rules of pronunciation—a thing they never dreamt of—but because of a word in their mind which this word in the book seemed to resemble, or "to come near," and which, therefore, it must be. They uttered the word—the word in their mind, which the word in the book must be—and because they uttered this with a book open in their hands, this was reading. This was reading, were the word a hundred miles away from the word in the book, and were there an interval of five minutes between the uttering of this word and

the uttering of the last, and five more between it and that of the next. This was reading Irish, and the fame of the reader was carried abroad, sometimes even as far as to the next village. Then the language fell away, and was needed no more, at Confirmation or at anything else, which was precisely the thing to fix and enshrine the repute of such readers, for Irish. Nay, their fame waxed with the years, for every additional year meant a further increase of the interval between the fixing of their claims to repute, and the possibility of testing them. That possibility, or even the dream of a desire of it, as the years went on, was going ever further into the dark backward and abysm of time. And imagination grew and waxed strong, nourished by fame, and thwarted by nothing, until now it is impossible for such people to conceive themselves ignorant, or even limited in the matter of Irish. And so they will walk secure in the conceit that there is nothing further for them to learn, as far as the language is concerned. They are themselves quite as advanced in the lore as any scholar can go. They can read the language; and what is in it but that? What more can the scholars do? What more is to be done? Is not that as plain as way to parish church? Should any Irish now presume to turn up which they do not understand, the remedy is prompt and simple—it is not Irish at all. It is some of the ravings of "those fellows," and over it goes. In fact, with these cradle people, it is *prima facie* evidence against any Irish, to say that it is written at all. The language of the little catechism, or so, might be all right, for all its being in a book, because they heard it, or some of it, long ago; they are sure, at any rate, that the little book was in the house long ago. A few leaves

were missing, to be sure; and those which remained were enriched with soot, but the book was there; they are clear about that. Nay, they know, too, that "the Dochthor Golluchar" was somewhere in the parish in their time, and some one from some other part of the parish was known to be able to read it. They know that. Do your Dublin fellows know that? Not at all. And yet they'll presume to be dictating to us! The language of these two books, then, might pass well enough, in spite of being in books; but, on the whole, anything in print, no matter how long ago it was printed, is bound to be some of "this late thing," some of this trash turned out by those Gaelic League fellows, and none of the right "old" Irish. This is what they call the language as it lives now—the right "old" Irish. The *real* old Irish, the middle Irish, the early modern Irish—anything they don't understand at once—is new, and not Irish. The dear old priest who always said "Mumpsimus Domine," instead of "Sumpsimus," when admonished of it, replied, "Well, I have been saying 'Mumpsimus' for the last thirty years, and I am not going to change my old 'Mumpsimus' for their new 'Sumpsimus.'" I remember, shortly after I came home from Australia, (with my memory still redolent of seven years' daily heart-sickening at the Sydney baptismal font, witnessing the beggarly efforts of Irish parents to save their children from every suspicion of Irish origin, by means of portentous and preposterous names), I begged a certain friendly family here at home, to call an infant just born, "Colm Brendan." To omit details, I received a promise that it should be done. But, as I saw most clearly that the promise was given just merely to get rid of the bore, with not the slightest intention of

carrying it out, and as I was unspeakably eager to have the thing done—especially in a family where there was good hope of its working as the germ of a precedent—I took a bond of fate. The godmother was a strong woman, on whom I knew I could rely, once she had spoken. I wrote out the two names very legibly on a card, and charged the godmother to hand it in, personally, into the hands of the priest. She engaged to do this, and she did it. Meantime, the parties, seeing that it was in or about too late now to get out of my names, carefully whispered to the priest a third name, by which, and by which only, they intended the infant should ever be known. The three names were duly entered in the parish book—I saw them. The thing went abroad, of course. Such a highly important happening was altogether too piquant a piece of news to be allowed to lie low. For quite the nine days it furnished ample fuel for gossip to twenty thorps, a little town and half a hundred witches. And the unanimous verdict, was that, "See, now, thrawth, it might be jurst as lucky to do wut sum natyeral name for the gossoor. Thim grand foreign names the priesht brought wut him from Asthreelya, they might be all right abroad there, where there was cities and all that, but here, in a place like this, where people has thing to do besides mórɒáil o' that soart, thrawth, now, it was jurst as lucky for people to take thimselves aisy, and to do wut the simple owl names that was natyural for thim." "Colm Brendan" was new and foreign. There is not a doubt but that some of these people confidently looked for the child's obliging and dutiful passing away at its earliest convenience; that once for all the venerable principle of quiet, easy-going, sonsie old "Mumpsimus" might be vindicated in

the most emphatic and significant manner, in a case highly suited to serve as a warning. And, for a fact, had anything happened to the child within any reasonable time, many a sober head would shake, and say sadly that they knew how it would be. "Thim names, and this high-flyin', and this nonsense from abroad, we never saw much luck where the likes 'id be." But the child neglected to oblige, and so the affair went quickly into oblivion, names and all, for, of course, the names were never mentioned more. And here, again, let me ask what has the League ever done at this very vital point in the Language question—the names in Irish? To think of it! Only to think of it! A sentence taken from the language while it was yet unalloyed and solid is, to the clamorous native speaker of to-day, simply not Irish, but some of their new "sumpsimus"; the apt and lovely old names that went with the race as by nature, are so thoroughly unknown to his worship, that he is fain to brand them as new-fangled toys of foreign manufacture and fashion. But that is all one, he is the practical man; and who is going to forfeit for ever his repute for sanity, by suggesting to such a man to be so good as to go and study a little of the language? "You see me, young man," said the jocund professor, "I have never learned Greek, and I don't find that I have ever missed it. I have had a doctor's cap and gown without Greek; I have ten thousand florins a year without Greek; I eat heartily without Greek; and, in short, as I don't know Greek, I do not believe there is any good in it." For "Greek" read "Irish," and you have the practical man, the native speaker who has spoken it from the cradle. There are types to be found of this practical man, who know as much Irish—quite as much--

as the professor did Greek, who have never found that they missed it, who have plenty a year without it, plenty of dividends without it, plenty in the rails and in the breweries without it, who eat heartily without it, and who believe as heartily that, as they do not know it, there can be no good in it. But the great difference between these types and the professor is, that the sincerity of the professor was so free, so unstinted, and so full, that it stands a classic aggressively refreshing for all time. He was happy without Greek, he candidly disclaimed all knowledge of it, candidly announced his contempt for it, candidly produced his reason for the said contempt of it—because he did not know it—and candidly smiled it away. It never entered into his head to pretend to a knowledge of it, to traffic on the pretence, or to try and make a name out of it. Not so our present variety of native speaker. He does not know Irish in any way to be properly called knowledge, neither does he miss it, or ever dream of missing it; he has nothing, and never had, but ignorant contempt for it; but if it opens up an opportunity for a stroke of business, it is not to be neglected, even though it entail some passing identification with it. But such identification will not be in the region of study. The type we are contemplating is much too shrewd to hope to come to the front by study, and to be at the front in everything that offers, or turns up locally, is the central craving of his being. To this purpose it is far more conducive, as well as far more learned-looking, and, at any rate, far handier, to scorn scholarship altogether—to be above it, to be haughtily and angrily superior to it. This will make up tenfold for the want of it. To come so low as to study the language, were to countenance the idea that he was

deficient in it, to admit that he had something to learn about it, to give in, indeed, that he was an ordinary man. It were to confess that his right to loud law-giving as to Irish, was limited, or absurd, and loud law-giving is the very breath of his nostrils. Moreover, to study the language is the part of those who feel the link of kindred with it, and love it with the fondness of kindred. This present type of ours never loved it, except in that very refined and generous sense in which Tom Tulliver was fond of animals, fond, that is, of pelting stones at them. Our type is fond enough of Irish in that way. In that sense the sincerity of his love for it could never be questioned, nor, indeed, in general, wherever he spied, or spies, an opportunity of making it work into his purposes in any way. Whether that is to be by hostility—by throwing stones at the language—or by indifference to it, or by the show of friendship, does not matter a pin. But, indeed, indifference is out of it. The type we are studying is constitutionally incapable of that repose and placidity of temperament which indifference supposes. There is only the hostility or the show of friendliness. So he can render himself important by open enmity to Irish, or do a stroke of business by it, it is importance and business still, and that is all his purpose. If open hostility is no longer politic, but he must needs fall in, or pretend to fall in, with the moving of the hour, all right, he'll do it, or pretend it, but the importance must go on still; he must be the man of the hour. He must lay down the law, and that on every point, from the constitution of the organisation to the fixing of the etymology of the most puzzling and fugitive place-name. And any derivation he assigns, be warned in time, and see you don't question it—has he not Irish from the cradle! It may

be observed, in passing, that this particular brand of native speaker is not unknown in other branches besides Irish. You sometimes drop across the native-speaker historian, the native-speaker physician, the native-speaker architect, the native-speaker lawyer, and even the native-speaker theologian, each and all remarkable for quarrelsome disdain of any learning derived from books. "The fifth Council of the Lateran, did you say? There never was a fifth Lateran!" Oh, yes, there was—it was closed by Leo X. such a year. "Not at all, sir, there never was such a thing—I don't care if it was in books a thousand times! It is in none of *my* books!" This with an air of severe *hauteur*, as who should say: "neither would such things be in *your* books, but for the books know well that you are the sort of man for that sort of information; just as certain stories, and certain lines of information about their neighbours, are never broached by people, save to persons well known to relish that sort of thing." The man who spoke thus to me had, indeed, a library, but he was a man of strictly one book, but that was not a library book—nor a prayer book either. I am sure he did not know that there was a first, second and third Lateran, or if he did, it was not from any reading, but from the necessary inference that the fourth supposed them. The fourth must have been hold sometime or other, for he had heard of the fourth. "Doctors! that man knows more than all the doctors in Ireland put together! That man's grand uncle had a doctor's book! It's often I heard my father say he saw it with him one night, and him going through it." "Conscience! Cardinal Newman never said that about conscience." Yes, he did; you'll find it in the letter to Norfolk. "I tell you distinctly you will not—why, that's heresy, that is!" Letter produced,

spectacles mounted. Reads. Reads again. . . . "Well, that must have been written while Newman was a Protestant—that's all!" In a word, the native-speaker whether native-speaker physician, native-speaker theologian, native-speaker historian, or native-speaker whatever else, must be accepted as the man to lay down the law. To dispute, or question anything he says, is puppyism pure and simple! The dogmatist forgets a certain very apt definition of dogmatism, and our present brand of native speaker is easily top dogmatist. He must be understood and accepted as the man of weight, the practical, capable man. These scholars and fellows—psah! fools, cranks, "queer fellows"! Sure, anything they get up, or meddle at all with, is bound to be rot! By the way, this "queer fellow," is quite a notable word in this particular connection, and does a great deal of business. The once of my life that I was in Lisdoonvarna happened to be in a year that the language movement was occasioning some considerable discussion. People were there from all parts of Ireland, from Great Britain, and from the States. For want, presumably, of other idleness, they talked rather a good deal about "this revival," and one of the peculiarities I could not help noting in every one of those conversations, or such of them as I was privileged to hear, was that none of them seemed able to get on without this "queer fellow" in one shape or another. "Oh, yes, Father, if you come to it that way, Jack's a right decent chap, no more honourable man to be met with in a fair day, but a bit odd, you see, and queer in some points, like, just now, in this Irish business. Or, "Oh, certainly, he is a sharp fellow and able, he is, but you can't get him to fall in quietly with what is practical, and creep on cannily, as he'd better do; he's just a bit

mad, or queer, like, on this Irish; he wants to have everyone go straight and join it." Or, again, "Oh, she is a queer one, she is; she has just worked herself to death for the last twelve months, sitting up a-nights, studying this Irish; and then there the other day, and a press of work on in her office, she just gets dead-beat and has to ask for a month's leave of absence." Etcetera, etcetera, etcetera. I began to wonder was there, then, no one at all to be found connected with this Irish movement but a "queer fellow" or a "queer one." What was a "queer fellow?" It was not easy to make out, but it has been my good fortune to meet nearly every one of those "queer fellows" since, and even the "queer one," and by aid of some acquaintance with them, by seeing the character at home, as it were, I found myself concluding that a "queer fellow" was a spirit which materialised in many shapes, and did not lend itself to easy definition. It would be sometimes like unto that Irishman who, having gathered a meacal to reap his field, was seated at breakfast with his men. The breakfast was the good old fare, potatoes and milk. And the good man of the house, putting his mug to his mouth for a sup, brought up a dead mouse in his lips. He looked over at his gentle better-half, dropping the mouse, unconsciously, the while, back into the mug. The good woman got up quietly, took the mug of milk, went down to the door with it, lifted the dead mouse out of it between her finger and thumb, threw the mouse out on the street, returned to the table, and placed the mug of now mouseless milk in front of her husband. The disagreeable man rose from the table silently and walked out! The wife ate on serenely, in silence, too, for a while, and then, at dead leisure, delivered herself to this effect of her just and righteous indignation, "Well,

I'm sure, indeed, but it is hard to satisfy the people! And, sure, it is a nice time o' day when you find a man who isn't satisfied with milk and a mouse in it, nor with milk and a mouse out of it!" What, indeed, can you do with him? The other men, the creatures, said nothing about their milk; there might be a mouse, or two mice, dead in every one of their noggins, for all they said about it; but he could not be like anyone. He thinks himself above everyone; you could'nt satisfy that fellow. Give him milk with a mouse in it, and he is not satisfied; give him milk with a mouse out of it, and he'll grumble still. What can you do with him? A fellow that doesn't know when he is well treated; a lad that there isn't a grain of gratitude in his composition —a queer fellow, and no second way about it—God help those that have to do with him! Again, the queer one may be likened to poor Fanny Burney, when she had to sink at last under the heavy and insupportable burden of eternal attendance on the "sweet queen." "But the established doctrine of the court was, that all sickness was to be considered as a pretence, until it proved fatal. The only way in which the invalid could clear herself from the suspicion of malingering was, to go on lacing and unlacing 'the sweet queen,' till she fell down dead at the royal feet." And, then, of course, it was never the sweet queen's work that killed her—not at all; sure, everybody knew that Miss Burney used to read a little, when, once in an age, she got away from the sweet queen for a whole quarter of an hour! *That* it was, and not the sweet queen's work, which killed her! Again, the queer party will resemble a man not easily fusible into a faction. It is factions that, for the most part, settle names. Anything, then,

not in the faction, anything built on such cross-grained lines as to resist absorption into it, anything like that is a "queer fellow." If he belonged to the faction, care would be taken that he should be a genius, or a scholar, or a very able man, or a man of very strong character, or even of strong common sense—*something* great. Not belonging to it, he is—a queer fellow. And factions are parlous things, having usually such wealth of tools and of ramification. So that it will be for the poor queer fellow to bless his stars if, go where he will, he arrives not to find himself in the predicament of that warrior in Herodotus who, in the nick of some sore necessity, found his trusty bow-string gnawed by a rat! The faction has been there before him, in some of its limbs or its tools, and he arrives a queer fellow! And all are on the watch, posted by the faction, and, being on the look-out for the queer one, "spot" the whole thing most shrewdly at once! The first Sunday poor Master John attended service, after returning from London, (where he had been a whole week), though he coughed and turned the leaves of his prayer-book just the same as before he left home, it would never do; the congregation was on the look out who should be first to remark some signs of his trip to town on him, and, so, forthwith, all hands saw clearly that he coughed and turned his leaves in quite a loftier and tonier style that Sunday, and they agreed unanimously that "*that* he hath learned in London town." Just fancy a man setting out to refute this charge of being a queer fellow! Fancy a sane man going gravely about to prove that he is not a queer fellow! Or, to set about fashioning his carriage in such a way as to prove it! But, just for this exquisite reason, it can always count on going on un-

checked and unchallenged, and, being potently patronised, all the people shall say fiat—let it be! "*Haec neque affirmare, neque refellere operae pretium est; famae rerum standum est*"—neither proof nor disproof, and the unmolested "charge" goes on, doing yeoman service. An exquisite artifice, surely, whereby so exquisitely stupid a charge, whose very essence is the visible admission, in it, that nothing can be laid to the charge of the party it is trying to brand, and yet it can do the yeoman service! To argue against a fact, is proverbially idle, and a faction is about the hardest fact of all. A faction can at any moment set so many tongues going. How many an Edgar, with "name lost, by treason's tooth bare-gnawn and canker-bit," and the 'queer-fellow' legend was able to do it all! Alone it did it. Oh, potent word, 'queer fellow' that can sway wise worlds so! "Go forth, my son, go forth; and see how little wisdom suffices to govern this world!" A queer fellow is, again, sometimes, a man somewhat unmannerly slow of belief in the most obvious accounts of things. For instance, he would be unapt to swallow at once, that it was Malcolm and Donalbain slew Duncan, or Fleance Banquo, because they, all three, ran away; or, that the mysteriously missing lay sister in the "Promessi Sposi" was gone to Holland, merely because some one, some day, happened to say that she must have gone thither. And, once more, a queer fellow may be resembled to that other man in Herodotus who grieved because he felt he was able to do a few things usefully, but was carefully prevented from doing them—the practical man being about, even in antiquity. Thus far, then, the queer fellow, not that his shapes are by any means exhausted—their variety is infinite—but we must go on.

When such poor fellows, then, have done all the pioneering, and when everything is rising and bidding fair to march, in steps your level-headed man, with his Irish from the cradle, reveals to us what incapables we are, takes us up in pity, and leads us. In one week he is a pillar of the language, its great mainstay in that part of the country. The newspapers must see to it that his merits and his "splendid services" be duly set forth to a grateful nation. The papers do not fail, and his object is attained. He is great in the papers, his importance is recognised and secured; if that serves the language, let it; he won't stop it; it is outside his object. His purpose is to be great. He *is* great, and that is the whole matter. And this is the man who has been pelting ourselves and the language with stones, openly and secretly, all along the years! Even till yesterday! Pelting was the level-headed thing then, and this is the level-headed man, a man of the great "*un*queer." This is the man of common sense, "strong" common sense. This is the sort of man we want; a fine, practical fellow, no nonsense about him! Reader, have you ever paused to reflect on the men and the contexts of this eulogium—"no nonsense about him"? Well, here is, at last, the right man; a business-like fellow, with a level head and with Irish from the cradle—from the unfortunate cradle! His name is up. A new day of hope has dawned for the language movement. It is gathering force every day, gathering into it everything that is best and most sincere, and most single-minded in the country. The latest accession to it is Y. Z., that singlest of all single-minded men, a veritable acquisition to the movement, a man bound to have influence in anything he takes in hand, a man of indomitable will, of indefatigable

energy, a very rock of "strong" common sense, a living mine of the purest Irish, a native speaker who has spoken it from the cradle! They never heard him speak a word of it, never laid eyes on a line of it from his pen, but that is all right, that only proves how much he spoke it from the cradle! Many minds are already made up to look him up next holiday, to hear him speak, or even to have to say they met him; for his importance is before the country. Now, which of us is there who has not known such a man? And who amongst us can be said not to know persons who, having striven heretofore by ostentatious and malicious hostility to the movement, are now growing into even louder importance by hollow pretences of helping it? Do we not all remember times and circumstances when dunces had ever one opportunity—the only one ever they had—of securing a repute for brains, or, at least, at the very least, for strong common sense? That repute was ever to be had, on potent warrant, for belittling the language, for branding all who were suspected of a taste for it as idiots and asses, and even for flouting the bare idea that the idiots and the asses knew it! Though Irish was, forsooth, a beggarly and contemptible thing, though it was a squalid and serflike and pauperly thing, a worthless and absurd and fatuous thing, and though, moreover, the idiots and the asses were that sort of poor wretches of whom it was wholly beneath people to know what they might be up to, yet it were all too insufferable that the idiots and asses should be allowed to be supposed to know it—to know even Irish, that admittedly contemptible Irish! So mean, so miserable, and so despicable a thing is Envy! That is changed, but not all. The times are gone, but many of these men of the "strong" common sense are

extant still, leading still, for, once more, their business is to lead, and lead they must. That the leading is now in the opposite direction to what it was of old, that it happens to be now in favour of Irish, instead of against it, this makes no difference whatever to them. It is leading all the time, and that is what mattered all the time. Whether it works out well for the language, whether such leading men are an acquisition to the movement, or not, whether they will conduce in the end to the prestige and to the credit of the organisation, or, above all, to its strength, if need for strength should ever come, these questions, though gravely important, though, indeed, of the last importance in themselves, are none, for all that, of our present concern. What we are investigating just here is, to whom shall we go, if go we must, to get into touch with Irish as it is spoken; what sort of native speaker were it advisable to go to, with a view to picking it up as it lives in the mouths of the people, and what sort, if any, had better be shunned as a fraud? Well, frauds there are not wanting in the matter, nor impostors, but the biggest, most arrant, and most unmitigated fraud of them all to go to for such an end, is our noisy leading man of the level head and the strong common sense, and the Irish all the way from the cradle. For, apart from the certain and demonstrable fact that he hates Irish as heartily as he ever did, and all connected with it, apart from the sure and demonstrable truth that he is secretly pelting the stones at it still, secretly gnawing the bow-strings still, while publicly professing the loudest loyalty, apart from all this, there is still a more pertinent reason for avoiding him—namely, that in real, sober fact, he never knew Irish, and does not. He is generally a person who

never spoke the language at all, who only heard it spoken when young, heard it only to mock and despise it, and that under parental command, or approval, for he belongs to an age of which that was the servile spirit. But, disdain it as he would, some of it would stick, like the mire and the mud it was. Some of it lived in his memory, in spite of himself and his parents, and he thought of it no more, unless to conceal or deny it, until the language movement began to make a little noise in the country. But that there should be any noise going, and him not in it, and him not the great, central figure in it, this were something not to be endured. The noise must be killed, if he could not lead it, that's all. The killing was tried for a long time, under strong auspices, and with fair hopes. The auspices passed away, and the hopes fainted, and the next thing was to essay the leading once again. But what was to be done? To be anything in this new sort of noise, it naturally seemed necessary to know some Irish. Now, our friend of the level head and of the strong common sense, had never suspected himself of knowing anything about it, and must, it should seem, give up all hope of shining in a movement which needed it, when, lo! the cry was launched in the blue, and rang through all the sky from the east even to the west—the Native Speaker! The Cradle and the Native Speaker! And our friend was straightway the man! He was the man! He chuckled at his own flatness, not to have seen it all along! Why! of course, to be sure! These books and things, that's all humbug, and the stuff for humbugs. The cradle alone is the thing, and has he not spoken it from the cradle? He has—spoken the slang words anyhow, there need be no doubt about that; and the most disreputable slang

words he knew, too. Nay, among the many other beggarly uses to which he had applied such words, he had frequently produced them in evidence, as proofs of the vileness and vulgarity of Irish, to confound some poor student, or so, who was striving to plead for its revival. But now he is the man, the man, sir, the ornament and soul of the movement! Some mutterings of a book, too, as above! Why not? And the reviewers ready long before he goes to press. A bottle of champagne may be found to fizz in more ways than one. By the same token, indeed reviewing seems in its dotage, as far as Irish work is concerned. There be speakers whom I have heard speak, and seen write, and seen others praise, and that highly, who, neither having the accent of Christians, nor the style of Christian, Pagan, nor man, have so travestied and murdered the sweet speech that, with Hamlet, I began to think of nature's journeymen's creations, they imitated the language so abominably! Some of these persons, then, there be who have worked the Press so tellingly that their names are before the world as past masters in the Irish tongue, and who might, accordingly, be visited, as such, by the unwary, in quest of the language in its purity. For even though they might easily be appraised at their worth by their little writings, if any, the opinion would still remain that their speaking, at any rate, must be golden, having spoken it all the way from the cradle. To go to such persons for pure Irish, and pure accent, were the pure quintesscence of toomfoolery.

CHAPTER VI.

Is it Necessary to go at all—to the Native Speaker?

But, now, were it not well to tackle the question straight—is it necessary to go to the native speaker at all, for Irish? The question is well worth facing, seeing that not everybody can go, or, if he can, not every day; that it is for many impossible, for all inconvenient; that, at its best, it is very unpleasant and difficult work, and generally, too, with results by no means answering to the labour of it. Is it, then, necessary to go at all, in order to secure a good knowledge of Irish? I answer unhesitatingly, No. But as categorical answers can seldom do justice to a question of this sort, I must explain a little. In the first place I use the word "necessary" in its proper sense. Next, I speak of securing a good knowledge of Irish. Now, a good knowledge of anything supposes a capable mind; and, given a capable mind, Irish may be mastered out of books, without ever going to the people. The one possible exception is, of course, the blas, and that too, may be as good as mastered out of books by anyone having a turn for languages, with the simple good sense to begin at the beginning. The beginning of a language is its letters—the letters of its alphabet—their sounds, and the sounds of their combinations. There are generally some pages of instruction on those sounds in the beginning of every grammar; and I know a man who has never seen Germany, but who began his German thus at the beginning, and mastered its pronunciation to such purpose,

that he now leaves on any German he meets, the impression that he must have spent many years in Hanover, or Berlin. There is no reason whatever why the same may not be done in the matter of Irish pronunciation; and, what is more, there will be very few students of Irish who will not get an odd chance of coming into contact with the real ɒlaɾ, and, for the student I am contemplating, an odd chance will be sufficient. In fact, this whole business of going to the people for your Irish, is all a fallacy, foolishly founded on a truth to which it is supposed to have some resemblance, but to which it has, in reality, little or none. The general truth is, of course, if you would learn a living language, go to the country where it is spoken. Go, for instance, to France for French, to Spain for Spanish; therefore, go to the Irish-speaking districts for Irish. But there is scarcely a shred of parallel. There is hardly any such thing now as an Irish-speaking district in the sense in which a piece of France, or of Spain, would be a French or a Spanish-speaking district. There are few Irish-speaking districts now where English is not spoken more or less; few, unhappily, where even the undoubted native speaker is not guilty of some little English. Guilty of murder, to be sure, but in such wise, withal, as to afford you the possibility of speaking to him in English; and thereby hangs the story—the spendthrift sigh that hurts by easing. You will be but too often apt to find yourself glad enough of this—glad to be able to turn to English. Once the "go many a Dear" and the "law braa" are said, Irish has, for not a few, a trick of tiring and going no farther. You will, then, talk English for this time; every other time you will, of couse, talk Irish. In France, or in Spain, everything you heard or saw

was French or Spanish, and there was no escape from it—no English. You must needs hear and see it all around you. Even though you and your companion may be taking English the while, yet there is no escape, the sights and sounds of the foreign nation's mind surround and importune you at every turn. You will not have to be going to the remote and barbarous places, seeking out the poor and the illiterate. The educated Frenchman or Spaniard (not being an Irishman) knows his own language quite as natively as the illiterate peasant. You will not have to be supplying the conversation; you need not even be in it; it will frequently suffice just to be about, and to listen. You will not find the people *gauche*, and awkward, and at a loss, because you are a stranger and well dressed. They will not be going in for keeping stupid silence, and waiting for you to do the speaking, watching you the while with that imbecile look of suspicious curiosity, as if their one study was to make you out, or have you any news, or what are you up to at all, about the place. You will not be obliged to put up in filthy hovels, and to lie down to sleep in still filthier beds. You will never have to task your brain for some plan to get people talking, nor for a subject which might, perhaps, suit their level and solicit their interest. They *are* talking; you have only to listen. They can talk about anything you are likely to want to hear about, and their vocabulary is ready, "cut and dry." Their language has talked about everything that has ever been spoken of yet, and neither you nor they will have to be excogitating tentative terms for present-day ideas, or using English terms with a foreign tail to them, *à la* "*build*-áil," "*paint*-áil," "*bathe*-áil," etc. Now, the direct opposite of all this

is what is the case with Irish, and with the poor, illiterate folk who speak it natively. To go to them at all, is great self-denial, in anyone conversant with the conveniences of cleanly life. Then, when you do go, and face your task, you will frequently find that your native speaker is quite as anxious to get something out of *you* as you can possibly be to knock value out of *him*, and thus you will often discover in him a robust capacity for silence—silence towards you. Now, it was not silence you came in quest of, surely. You want speech out of him, and you proceed to draw him. You find that your ideas do not flow fast enough in Irish to fetch him, and you turn to English. He will speak then, just because it is English, just because he believes you serious, now that you speak in English, and, being serious, he may get something out of you. He could not accept you as serious in Irish, nor hope for anything out of you in it, and, sure, it is hard to blame him. He will talk to you in English, quite your fill; but you could have got English without coming so far in quest of Irish. Besides the intelligence of these people, however good by nature, is necessarily confined by the nature of their bringing up, and the character of their surroundings. Their ideas are necessarily limited, and their language is naturally bounded in the same proportion. They are instinctively aware of this, and are, consequently, ever awkward, ever unprepared and still to seek, in talking to superior-looking strangers. They can talk with effect only among the neighbours of their own level and acquaintance, and not there either, should the superior-looking stranger be about. If he is about at all, of course, poor fellow, his quest is to hear them discourse, to practise his ear. But they are "not on." They will

never speak much—in Irish—while a stranger is listening. If they do talk at all in the presence of a stranger, it is apt to be in English. Irish is their language of reality, and, to speak in it, they want to feel real, to feel at repose. The preliminary craving, therefore, is the conviction and security that it is a case for repose, a case for thinking freely aloud; their natural state of mind, but a state of mind which ever vanishes at the approach of a stranger, and with it goes all thought of proceeding with the talk in Irish. The stranger will, as a rule, get English, or silence. This, then, is another element in the consideration of whether to go to the native speaker, or not. It is absurd to regard it as the same case as going to France, or to Spain, or to England, to learn language. By all means it is good to do it, if you can; but that is not the question, but is it necessary? In this system it is held to be, nay, that there is no other Irish at all, or none at all worth troubling about. I think I have supplied sufficient considerations towards proof that it is no wise necessary; to go about proving that there is some Irish other than the language as it lives in the mouths of the people, were a task well worthy of fools. I say, therefore, go to the books. A good grammar of a language is just a joy for ever, a most fascinating study to anyone who loves language. There is a Latin grammar by Roby which, I think, I should bring to gaol. And, as to editing, if I were being accorded the privilege of an Attic night with old Sophocles, I am not at all clear that I should not prefer to spend it in my room, with his incomparable editor, Professor Jebb. Unhappily for Irish, the Robys and the Jebbs have not touched it yet. Unhappily; for it is precisely such men the language needs, to do it a

little justice. No serious attempt at a modern Irish grammar, worthy of the name, has yet been made. Of the old Irish there is now an excellent grammar by M. Vendryes, lecturer (*chargé du cours*) on comparative grammar at the Sorbonne, a book which I hope to see put into English by some enterprising publisher as soon as possible. For editing of texts, I try not to think about it—it is too heart sickening. I have been looking on for twelve or fifteen years at sample after sample of it issuing from the press, showing neither scholarship, nor insight, nor care nor labour. The great *sine qua non* of editing, is vast command of contexts. Without this, an editor is necessarily in the dark. Even with it he may come short, for want of the reflex and comparing faculty, as, indeed, happens but too frequently, and in the most unexpected places. The famous crux passage in Hamlet will serve to illustrate what I want to call attention to:

> " The dram of e'il
> Doth all the noble substance of a doubt
> To his own scandal."

It is almost beyond belief the million ludicrous attempts that have been piled up by editors of Shakespeare to explain this passage; and all for want of reflection, in their reading, on the innumerable contexts supplied by Shakespeare himself to light it up. The very context in which it occurs ought to be enough for anyone. No student of Shakespeare can be ignorant of his very frequent use of the word " out " in the sense of " completely," " to a finish," &c., as in the present-day " played-*out*," " hear me *out*," &c. And in the light of this, his so frequent use of this sense of " out," what

reader can hesitate to be convinced that what Shakespeare wrote was:

> "The dram of e'il
> Doth all the noble substance OFT ADD OUT
> To his own scandal"?

'In the general censure,' in common fame, in public opinion, 'the stamp of one defect,' of one particular fault, stamps *all* the man; stamps '*all* his virtues else, be they as pure as grace, as infinite as man may undergo,' with the character of the dram of evil. The dram of evil is all the world wants to know. That there is the noble substance underneath, that there are infinite virtues, all that matters nothing in the public censure; noble substance, virtues infinite and pure as grace, all is swallowed up in the dram, all become part and parcel of it in public fame, all ADDED OUT to it. *Famae rerum standum est.* What everyone says must be true, and what everyone says is the dram; the dram is *all* the matter. It has ADDED OUT everything else to its own scandal; all, virtues, noble substance and all, it has *transubstantiated* into its own nature. Its nature is scandal, and, in the world's eyes, it is only the scandal that exists, for it has added all things else OUT to itself.

Surely a noble comment on the worth of 'the general censure'; surely as pregnant a passage as Master William has produced—but so murdered by the learned philosophies of editors! To supply parallel passages were superfluous, but I'll set down these two:

"You must needs learn, lord, to amend this fault . . .
The least of which, haunting a nobleman,
. . . . . *leaves behind a stain*

Upon the beauty of all parts besides,
Beguiling them of commendation."

Henry IV., I., 3, 176, 182.

"For let our finger ache, *and it indues*
Our other healthful members ev'n to that sense
Of pain.

Othello III., 4, 139.

Failure to study contexts, I say, it is that makes such editing possible and inevitable, and there is, unhappily, a superabundance of it exercised on our Irish texts. And slovenly editing, irritating as it is, is surely aggravated tenfold when you come across childishly wrong translation, and that repeatedly, in scores of different instances, under the hand of a supposed great authority, of a supposed master of the language! That such a thing should be found after any man 'possible' to be suggested as a man to edit a text, is very nearly incomprehensible. It is far from rare, then, in our Irish editors, for all that, and it is surely not easy to think about it and possess one's soul in patience. I confess I have found it sometimes difficult to forbear criticizing some of such work, but I said to myself what is the use in doing this to one? There are dozens as bad, and dozens more coming, and when should I have done? Besides the worst part of it, the fear of possibly seeming to wish to lessen the credit of some very prominent names, or of making them believe I had personal motives. Besides again, there is scarcely any paper that can be called suitable for the discussing of such matters, and scarcely any public to understand them, if discussed. But the work is there to do, and I suppose will get itself done sooner

or later. Some day the Robys and the Jebbs may come, but in the meantime we need not stand idly awaiting them. There is nearly always a next best thing to do, and in this case of ours it is—to read. And when I recommend you to read, I want you to note very carefully that it is the literature I am commending to your pains. The literature is above suspicion. It was there before the interests and the rivalries and the theories began. It was made not in this or that one's interest, not to fit in and square with theories, not to make name, or noise, or bother, but for the natural purposes of language, to convey ideas. This is particularly true of our Irish literature. Not of fame, and not of fortune, did *these* simple penmen dream. Had they dreamt of these things, they would, doubtless, have taken some trouble to be known, and the authors of some of our best pieces, are as unknown as if their books had grown out of the ground. The literature is anterior to our later ingenuities. It is the genuine language of Erin's mind, or, to speak more accurately, it is the language of Erin when Erin had a mind. It is exceptionally rich and copious in words, and ways of expression, and though modern life has not spoken in it, as it has spoken in other languages, it is, for all that, brimming over with mineral and material for a splendid modern literature. It is only awaiting the hand of the artificer. It will be vast work, feasible, indeed, but feasible only by being thoroughly penetrated with what we want to make the language say. Know that, and know the language, and that words will follow, is the burden of a thousand commonplaces of rhetoric. *Ipsae res verba rapiunt. Quum res animum occupavere, verba ambiunt. Verbaque praevisam rem non invita*

sequentur. Cui res potenter lecta, etc., etc. Here, it is true, only one language was contemplated, and that the language in which you read, and in which you were to write, and your cradle vernacular, withal. Ours is a stiffer task, for our reading must be done in two languages, in one for the matter, in another for the writing. In other words, two languages must be read exhaustively, in order to write in one of them, and that, perhaps, too, the less familiar of the twain. This is a very different business from that which Horace and the rhetoricians had in view. And yet I am not sure but what the difference is more in seeming than in being; for, mind, the process is not contemplated as a matter of lightning swiftness. It is not contemplated to study in the morning, and then write in the afternoon out of the fulness of your learning. No; knowledge is as food, and is no part of a man until it is digested, disintegrated, loses its form, and works itself slowly into mind, as natural food into body. The afternoon feat might do well enough for the heroes of academical examinations, who show up all they have learned after the manner of Epictetus' sheep, which cast up in the evening all the grass she had swallowed during the day, to show the shepherd how much she had eaten, instead of concocting the same into milk and wool. Any Irish such people may write, will be to the genuine language, much about what the fouled herbage would be to the milk and wool it ought to have turned into, and would have, if given time. When knowledge has been thus turned into part and parcel of a man's life, then, and not till then, is he worth listening to on his subject, for then, and then only, is he master of what he is saying. Such a masterdom will write Irish,

the language, of course, supposed. What is intimate knowledge, will find its words out of us, if only the words are in us; and the only way to a mastery of words is assiduous reading. Go to the literature. Never tire of that. If you get a convenient chance, off and on, of meeting the native speaker, that is well and good, but, even after that, go to the literature. Not that I would have you suppose me suggesting imitation of anyone. No; I am only telling you the best company to keep for your purpose, if that is to write Irish. It is with style as with manners: it is a question of the company you keep, and still more of your powers of listening, that is, not only of keeping silence, but of listening to the silence. It is only to such a mood the great voices speak. Dunces are ever ready with the maxim that silence is golden, and always mean it, not for its own sake—never—but against anyone of their acquaintance who is dowered with the gift of speech. As if anyone but the great talkers ever knew how to keep silence! It was by their great gift of silence they arrived to such power of speech. A dunce is just the fellow that never can keep silence, unless, indeed, that entertaining taciturnity which is after his kind, the silence not of listening, but of churlishness, or cowardice, or imbecile affectation, or of bucolic, beef-witted barrenness. And that is what they offer us as golden, what they set off with the name of prudence. And prudence is the one great virtue, the only virtue which can stand alone; "too often," says the good old Mr. Primrose, "the only one left at seventy-two." This is their golden cheer to us. It is in fact the native speakership of the position, the level-headed, sober thing, the sound gravity, the "strong" common sense,

the weight which, could it only be got to speak, we might be looking out for wisdom, and grace and power; but it refrains, and leaves us bereft of these, being weighted down with prudence. Keep good company, then, and listen well, and you will soon begin to be aware of the difference between it and coarseness, or hackneyed little smartness. You will soon arrive to discern whether one way of saying a thing is better, neater, wiser, wittier, than another; or if one thing is clear and lucid, logically connected, keenly grasped, and shrewdly expressed, while another is crude and forced, foggy and slovenly. Modern life has not spoken Irish. The task before us is to get it speaking it, and the question is, how is this to be done? That it will prove a stubborn task, no sane man doubts, and yet on its accomplishment depends the living on of the language. "*Ach Gott,*" exclaims Dr. Martin, "what a difficult thing it is to get the Hebrew writers speaking German! They resist it so, and are unwilling to give up their Hebrew existence, and become like Germans"! There it is. There is the problem exactly. To get modern life speaking Irish, the first thing before Irish scholars is to translate themselves. We must give up our English existence and become like Irishmen—a big task. To be a scholar, means for us to have an English existence. It is through English we have learned almost all that we have ever learned. From that side of the question then, our very existence is English, from that side of it our living language is English, and then, unhappily, it is from that side of it we must approach the task of making Irish once more the living language of our nation. To do this we must by hook or by crook get present day life speaking it, making the folk who

still speak it our basis. But, as modern or present-day life never existed among the folk, it will not find its language among them. And if we believe, as we must, that it is on the folk it depends whether Irish is to live on, or not, the logic from that is, I think, not to go to them for language, but to go to them with it. With it, yes, but in a way to engender confidence, not to strangle hope; not through Killaloe speakers, nor, if by books, not through alien dialects. The problem is not to get the language from the people, but to give them the wherewith to piece out what they have of it, and address themselves to the handling of current life in Irish, which is what they cannot do at present, not having ever dreamt of attempting it in their own language. This does not mean to shovel out high-flown jaw-breakers to them right off. No, it must be done after the kind old manner of feeding, or it will not digest—it will not even go down. This is, in basis anyhow, what is to be done. The way to do it, and the men, that is the next question. And once more make up your minds to it, and learn from the start to take kindly to the somewhat uncheering thought, it will be tough work and slow. Present-day life speaks only English to us. It will be for us to see that it speaks it so plainly to us, that it shall be speaking simultaneously, and just as clearly, in Irish, to us. That is to say, it will behove us to be so thoroughly steeped in our subject, that not a syllable of its terminology may escape our intellect, not the smallest word used in it but will convey to our minds some clear, definite idea; and not only clear and definite, but intimate to our being from old acquaintance and long assimilation. This will have to come through English, for it is in

English we must do the studying. But let it. Knowledge gained is knowledge all the same, even if it come through English words. If the knowledge is there, it is ready now for Irish expression, and Irish will take it, without asking you where you got it. Get the knowledge ready, and it will find its words, if they are in you. And if the conveying of your thought must sometimes needs take the shape of translation, and that, too, from pompous-looking English words, remember that the first thing to do is to put the pompous English words into English. There are tens of thousands of words used in English which are not English, and which very few people understand by their root-meaning. They are mostly didactic words, and no educated man can escape them in his course, or, afterwards, in his profession or every-day life. Little or no scientific knowledge can be conveyed, or acquired, without them. Though they are nearly all from the ancient languages, yet it is by them, and by them alone, that modern life has contrived to express itself in nearly all the great civilised nations. Irish needs them not, for that or for any other purpose. She is amply endowed of her mere own. But the ideas conveyed through them are now common to humanity, and will have to be expressed in some way or other in any language which means to live. They will have to get expression in Irish, if it is to live. This is one of the difficulties, but, as above, it is more apparent than real. Translate first into English. Go straight for the root-meaning of the word. See it at home. Most things are very simple at home, and if they look pompous abroad, it is often because they cannot help it. Show is for abroad, and abroad is for show. Go and see the word at home, and

you will soon see what is its fellow in Irish. "When I hear our architects thunder out their bombast words of pilasters, architraves, and cornices, and of the Corinthian and Doric orders, and such-like jargon, my imagination is presently impressed with the palace of Apollydon; when, after all, I find them but the paltry pieces of my own kitchen door. To hear men talk of metonymies, metaphors, allegories, and other grammar words, would not one think they signified some rare and exotic form of speaking? And yet they are phrases that are no better than the chatter of my chamber-maid." And, as with architecture and grammar terms, so with the million other terms of present-day life. If they must come in the way of what you want to write, face them boldly for their meaning, and you will find how their mystery will vanish, and what a simple Irish word will express them. Get your ideas clear, and ere you can make a prologue to your brains, they will have begun the play—the ideas will be running off in Irish even before you have set about starting them. But there is the last word—get the idea clear. Have your subject so mastered, so assimilated, that its every possible aspect shall be as if part of yourself, and then you may write. But this means a great deal. It means a consummate mastery of at least three things—of your subject, of the English language in which you studied your subject, and of the Irish language, in which you want to handle your subject. At least three. But, then, these three will will mostly suppose a great deal more. It is not every day English can be well known without Latin and Greek, and as for Irish, there is simply no mastering it without them. The man who sets up a pretence to Irish, while ignorant of Latin and

Greek, is a fool positive. It were all the better if he also knew Spanish and German; but without Greek and Latin he is just nowhere with Irish. It will be slow work, you will say again, and the answer again is that not only that, but it will be work which those who want royal roads need not attempt. A great deal of people crave some way of being great, while determined always on avoiding the trouble of it. Such people had better leave literature alone, and turn native speaker. They will make more of themselves at that than by writing, and with no trouble. Make up your minds in time to this—prigs and fools have not made languages. No, no; it has taken the eagles of the ages to do that, and, never doubt about it, will take them again. It will take men with great souls, great purposes, great motives, and generally great wrongs, misfortunes, and sorrows. The pampered minion of fortune, who has never known but power and favour, does not know much, and will never write anything to interest the big, broad humanity whose name in this world is "SUFFERING," too often "SUFFERING FOR RIGHTEOUSNESS' SAKE." The souls deep and lonely who love to listen to the silence, who go into crowds with reluctance, and leave with relief, as feeling less men; minds conscious of a message which they feel they must deliver, or die, even as the body dies of undelivered offspring; these are the sort of minds that have made languages, and they are the sort that must make Irish. Now such minds do not turn up to order, and when they even do turn up, the trouble is, will they write in Irish? Given a man conscious of a message to his kind, will he not like to deliver it in a language which most enables him to get at his kind? Not to mention the market

side of the question, which is, however, a side seldom neglected even by great authors. What patriotism or what disinterestedness, or what spirit of self-sacrifice will be proof against the consideration that, while by all means it is noble and glorious to write in Irish, a thousand times the audience may be commanded in English? I must confess that this is the one thing which makes me sometimes inclined to a little pessimism about the future of the language; for it is such men alone that make languages, and, if they will not write in Irish, modern Irish will never be made. It will never be made by those little men you see flitting across the newspapers on every occasion they can possibly seize, with some little platitude or plagiarism, or piracy, got up just that their friends and relations may see them in print, and circulate the fame of their genius. These can mar a language and bring it into contempt, but make it they cannot. And we have never any lack of these; they are, rather, indeed, aggressively numerous. As there are always those who would bear away the Kingdom of Heaven without the violence inseparable from that achievement, so we have always with us those who would have the name and the lucre of knowing Irish, without the trouble inseparable from the downright way to it, without the trouble of studying it. Irish takes a great deal of studying from the glosses down, and solid hard work is seldom the weakness of loud persons. They leave that to the drudges, and they take all the gains. Hence the immediate success of that cry, the cradle and the native speaker. It made things easy. It brought this Irish language question down to business. It annihilated all difficulty. It made the whole thing just as easy as the

political speech of a Sunday in the good old times, when people had common sense, "strong" common sense, when no cranks or faddists were about, but a man went and made his speech, and took his cheers like a man, came in to a good dinner, and ate heartily (without Greek), counted the hours till post time on the morrow, read his speech over twice or thrice in the paper, and felt he was, well, that he was a man who might walk down the town! The cry bade fair to reduce this language trouble to the same dutiful level, to the infallible eventual undoing of the movement, and of the glorious idea it stands for. The cry, even had it been sincere, was absurd; but, then, it was not sincere, and that makes the absurdity of it more disreputable. It was specious enough and plausible, and, as a matter of fact, it has been doing no small harm, just because of that plausibility in it. I have been watching this mischief for some time, wondering why some one was not coming forward to call attention to it. No one seemed to heed it, and this made me begin to fear that it was working mischief even in places that ought to know better. When, therefore, you did me the honour to ask me to lecture, leaving the subject to myself, I immediately decided that the dissection of this mischievous cry should be my theme. I have detained you long, but the question demanded it, and I warned you honestly from the start that it was not going to be any very brief affair. But now I have done, except to sum up: The spoken language of any people, and so of the Irish, is the merest fustian and fag-ends compared with its literary counterpart. But even if it were the very purity of diction, it could not serve as a model for writing, because of its countless

varieties. Even if the varieties were not there, folk language could never be made adequate for the million million themes that must be handled nowadays in writing. Even were it not inadequate, to whom should we go to get it from? The real native speaker, even when good, may be a man with a turn for silence, or may prefer to tell you (in English) that there is different Irish. The jabberer you can hardly ever follow at all, because of his wretched articulation; the native speaker teacher will be apt to disappoint you, and sure to defy you; and surely you are not going to go to the loud, leading, practical man of the common sense—the "strong" common sense—and no nonsense about him? In good sooth, and in one word, there is no necessity for going at all. Stay at home and work at your books. Read, read, and never tire, and let it be the literature. In the literature there is scarcely a trace of dialect; but even were there, the man who read much and many things would, by that very training, instinctively choose and use in writing what was best in every dialect. This is, in fact, what your Keating did, and this it was that made him the model that we know him. If you care for a higher example still, this is what Demosthenes did long before Keating, and, in a word, it is what every writer worth naming has ever done, and must ever do. Go, therefore, and do likewise, especially if you are a native speaker, for the spoken language is a very wilderness of chaos, without the literature from which to view it, and by which to check it for use in writing purposes. I have headed this lecture, "The Law of Writ and the Liberty," though, of course, I knew very well that the title must sound somewhat cryptic; but Elizabethan students, at

any rate, will have easily seen the meaning and, I hope, the fitness. Spoken language will, and must needs ever be, free. It will ever insist on full liberty to this dialect or that variety, or the other provincialism, and in spoken language this can do no harm whatever. But if it even could, it is a thing inevitable. The peculiar mischief of the cry above was, that it advocated this same chaos as the rule for writing, and in just a few months the consequences were already terrible. The law of written language is, above all, unity; and no language has ever observed this law more closely than Irish, no writer more devotedly than your Keating.

The Native Speaker Examined Home.

BOOK II.

THE NATIVE SPEAKER'S VERB.

Ignoscat mihi doctus et pius auctor, si dicam me haec verba, saepe perlecta et perpensa, intelligere non posse, nisi sensû perabsurdo; nam, quid est "posse, dissentire," nisi "posse ponere actum dissensionis"?

MURRAY, "*De Gratia.*"

But this vague conviction had for the general mind all the superior power of mystery over fact. Everybody liked better to conjecture how the thing was, than simply to know it; for conjecture soon became more confident than knowledge, and had a more liberal allowance for the incompatible.

GEORGE ELIOT.

Ideo minime approbo A. Lapide, S.J., qui scribit absolute CUM AUDACIA VERE STUPENDA: *Certum est Imperium Romanum esse ultimum, et duraturum usque in finem mundi.* SUNT QUI FACILE AFFIRMENT CERTUM ESSE QUOD IPSI OPINENTUR: FORTE NE QUIS EIS CONTRADICERE AUSIT.

VAN STEENKISTE.

CHAPTER VII.

The "Autonomous" Verb.

The virtue of discussion is to keep the point ever clear. The question at issue here is :—

1. Can the direct, personal agent be linked to its verb by the preposition le ? Or, in another shape :—

2. Are those forms of the Irish verb which have been hitherto known as passive, but are now set forth as active by Father O'Leary, and called "autonomous"—are those forms passive for all that ?

In yet another shape the question may be brought still closer to its trial, viz. :—

3. Have we seen in Keating and the old writers those "autonomous" forms used with a passive force ?

To this question, then, in each of its three shapes, Father O'Leary distinctly and resolutely answers, NO. Of course, to answer in the negative to it in any one of its three shapes is, practically, to answer it negatively in all three ; but Father O'Leary gives it an express negative answer in each of its three shapes.

In support of his negative answer to it in its first form, he adduces the inscription on the shrine of the Cathach : Oroit do Cathbarr Ua Domnaill, lar i ndearnad an cumtach (ra), ocus do Sitriuc Mac meic Aeda do rigne : and he claims to have demonstrated thence that the direct personal agent cannot be introduced by the preposition, le, *because* it was not Ua Domnaill that made the shrine, but Sitriuc—"Sitriuc do rigne." Here are his own very words :—("*Irish Prose Composition*," page 59)—"The presence of the clause, 'Sitriuc do

ꝑɪgne,' *proves* that ʟa does *not* introduce the direct, personal agent. *Once that general truth is established, it does not matter whether* 'Sɪttꝑɪuc ᴅo ꝑɪgne' *is present or not.*" And again (p. 69): "The purely personal agent can never be linked to the autonomous verb by means of the preposition ʟe, ... if the personal agent is to be named at all, they (Irish speakers) put *him* in *his* proper place, and say, 'Do ᴅuaıl Seáꝺan an ᴅoꝛᴅ;" there is no such Irish as 'Do ᴅuaılead an ᴅoꝛᴅ le Seáꝺan,' *meaning, the table was struck by John.*"

Now, this is all very clear. But it is particularly clear that what Father O'Leary means by the direct, personal agent is not a part of speech, not a noun, or pronoun, but a man—the live man who did the work; the man who struck the table, the man who made the shrine, the man who beheaded Goliath, etc. That man cannot be linked to his verb by ʟe; if he is found so linked, then it was *not* he that did the work; there must have been some Sɪttꝑɪuc. If it were the man joined to his verb by ʟe, that did the work, then he would *not* be linked by that preposition to his verb; he would be "in his proper place," that is, in the nominative case, with his verb in the plain, active voice, like "Do ᴅuaıl Seáꝺan an ᴅoꝛᴅ," like "Gill ᴅo ċlo-ᴅuaıl," like "Sɪttꝑɪuc ᴅo ꝑɪgne."

Now, it follows inevitably from all this, that—as far as Keating's statement is concerned—it was never David that beheaded Goliath, nor Judith that beheaded Holofernes. Both those agents are joined to the verb of decapitating by that preposition, ʟe, which can never link the direct, personal agent—*i.e.*, the man who did the work—to its verb. "Map aṫá," says Keating, "ꝺuꝛᴅ ʟa ċlaıꝺeaṁ an aṫaıꝺ, Goliath, ᴅo ᴅíċeannaᴅ le Dáıᴅıᴅ é." This piece of Irish yields very clear sense,

and yields only one possible sense, "to wit, that it was with the sword of Goliath, the giant, he was beheaded by David." But Father O'Leary's premisses are equally clear against that sense, and forbid it absolutely. We must disbelieve that it was David beheaded the giant, for two very powerful and conclusive reasons. First, because David is joined to the verb of beheading, by the preposition, le, which, by itself alone, is enough to show that it was not David did the work. "There is no such Irish as 'Do buaileadh an bord le Seagan,' *meaning the table was struck by John,*" and so there can be no such Irish as "Do dícheannadh le Dáibhidh é," *meaning, he was beheaded by David.* Secondly, David is not in the agent's proper place, that is, in the nominative case, with his verb in the plain, active voice, like "Gill do chlóbuail," like "Do buail Seagan an bord," like Sirrius do rigne" which, also, by itself alone, is firm and final proof that it was not David that did the actual beheading. The absence of the clause "Sirrius do rigne" makes no difference; Sirrius must have been there, *for the head came off*, and it cannot have been David that removed it, for he is linked to his verb by le, and there is no such Irish as "Do dícheannadh le Dáibhidh é, *meaning, he was beheaded by David.* Such Irish as that, "sounds" as if David were a knife, or a sword; just as Clóbuailte lé Gill, sounds as if Gill were a kind of ink, and as Do buaileadh an bord le Seagan, sounds as if John were a stick, or a stone, or a fist, as Father O'Leary maintains (p. 60). But an argument from sound may sometimes be a very different thing from a sound argument. However, the statement of Keating "sounds" as if David were a knife, or a sword, and not a man. That there was a sword there already, makes no difference; that it will, therefore, "sound" as

if there were two inanimate instruments, one of them used by the other, makes no matter; that there is no sense possible in the case but a passive sense, that too goes for nothing; what does matter is, that dícéannadh being "autonomous" cannot have a passive force, for then it would follow that we had seen in Keating what Father O'Leary tells us distinctly we have not. It would ensue, moreover, that David, who, in that case would be the direct, personal agent—the man who beheaded—was joined to his verb by le, while there is no such Irish as Do dícéannadh le Dáibhidh é, *meaning, he was beheaded by David.* But, without a passive force in dícéannadh, and without the possibility of linking Dáibhidh to it by le, as direct, personal agent, there is no way but Sitthuc —it was not David did it.

To give the English reader some notion of what Father O'Leary is holding, suppose the sentence, "those cottages were built by the Congested Board." Syntax would call "the Board," agent to "were built," in that sentence, linked to that passive by means of the preposition "by." But we suddenly come upon the information that not a member of the Board ever laid a stone upon a stone of those cottages, that it was one Patsy Barrett, a local mason, that built them all. This discovery alters our syntax immediately, and "the Board" is no longer agent to "were built," *because it was not the Board, but Patsy Barrett, that did the building.* Not only so, but the clause, "Patsy that built them," *proves* that "by" does not introduce the direct, personal agent—the man who did the work—and once that general truth is established, we don't want the clause any longer; we know that whoever is introduced by "by," is not the man who did it. Then, it may happen to us to be told the story in the passive

voice; someone may state it to us in this way—"those cottages were all built by Patsy Barrett," and then forthwith it follows that it was not Patsy that built them at all, because he too is introduced by "by." So that, though we *know* it *was* the mason, Barrett, that built them, we can *prove* that it *was not;* just as above, though we know it was David beheaded Goliath, we can prove home by Father O'Leary's principles, that it was not David did it. So Patsy, too, has to make way for Sitric. And Sitric himself will have to see to it that he does not get construed as an ablative, else he also will have to render up his place to another Sitric, and so on to infinity. As, for instance, on page 288 of Keating's history, Vol. 3, where we read: Do dallad Brian le Sitric mac Amlaoib: Do creacad Ceanannur leis an Sitric Gcéadna; *here*, of course, it was *not* Sitric that did the blinding, or the ravaging, but someone else, some other Sitric; for, the blinding and the ravaging took place, and there is no such Irish as "do dallad Brian le Sitric," *meaning Brian was blinded by* Sitric. Then, on the other hand, put the first sentence in the active, and say, "It was the Board that built those cottages," and it will straight ensue that it was the Board themselves that plied hammer and trowel, to the exclusion of Sitric and Patsy. Call "were built" autonomous, instead of passive, in the first sentence above, and you have Father O'Leary's teaching on Irish verbs. And from this teaching, there is, of course, no escaping the conclusion that—as far as Keating goes—it was never David beheaded Goliath nor Judith Holofernes.

The question will arise, to be sure, what then did Keating mean? If he intended to convey by Do dícheannad le Dáibhidh é, that it was by David, by very David, Goliath

was beheaded, why, then, he was no Irish speaker, for Irish speakers put the agent in *his* proper place, and say, Do dícealnuigh Dáibhí Goliath, like do buail Seagan an bord. If, therefore, it was that same fact Keating intended to convey by Do dícealnadh le Dáibhí é, he must have been no better than "our scholars" themselves. What is worse, as the literature and folk-lore simply bristle with that faulty construction—an "autonomous" construction, where an "autonomous" sense would be grotesque, and a passive indispensable and imperative, and evident withal—what is to be done with such a literature and such a folk-lore but to ignore it, and cast it aside, as all spurious? Indeed Father O'Leary implies this on page 50 of his little book, "Irish Prose Composition," where he makes E. M. ask him, Father O'Leary, "Why don't you write a grammar?" And Father O'Leary replies, "*I prefer to write the language first. When the language is written*, the grammar will set itself right, because it must. A grammar *without a written language* is like a suit of clothes without the man inside it." Surely these are frank and clear words. Had we, then, no written language until Father O'Leary began to write? And have we spent our youth and our years in the study of our country's books and manuscripts, to be told at this time of day that our country's language is yet to be written? That the language we have been wearing our lives at was but "some abuse and no such thing?"

All these inconveniences flow very clearly out of Father O'Leary's premisses. Of course he would not hold them explicitly in themselves; but that does not bate a jot of the clearness with which they are contained in what he does hold explicitly. Nor is the end yet. Why confine this "autonomous" reasoning to the passive voice? How

can the active voice escape it either? "The Board built the cottages," "The Board" is agent to "built." We find, then, that it was not the Board, but Patsy Barrett, that did the actual building, and we have quite the same case for the Sittriuc do rinne argument, as we have in the case of Lá Domhnaill and the shrine. For, the precise force and point of the Sittriuc do rinne argument is that the party who did *not* do the work cannot be the agent of the verb which expresses the work, *exactly because it was not that party that did the work, but Sittriuc that did it.* But that reasoning is just as good against an agent in the active voice, as against an agent in the passive; for an agent is only an agent, and only the same agent in the active that he was in the passive. So, "the Board," then, is no more agent to "built" in this latter sentence, than it was to "were built" in the sentence above. Grammar, to be sure, will insist on construing "the Board" as agent in both sentences; but, then, Father O'Leary will ensconce himself in history, and wind obstreperous defiance to grammar. "It was Sittriuc do rinne," he will say, "and there is an end of it." And so, by confusing the grammatical agent of a verb with the actual, living doer of the action, he has escaped his own vigilance, arguing in a circle. As thus: "The presence of the clause 'Sittriuc do rinne proves that Lá does not introduce the direct, personal agent; and once that general truth is established, it does not matter whether 'Sittriuc do rinne' is present or not." "Sittriuc do rinne," then, present, or absent, proves that Lá does not introduce the direct, personal agent; and that general truth, itself proved by "Sittriuc do rinne," straightway turns kindly round, and proves "Sittriuc do rinne." For, when work is done, it did not get done without a

doer; but ʟᴀ never introduces that doer; and so, friend Sɪᴛᴛɴɪuc must always be about, for the work was done, and the ʟe man did not do it. And so, Father O'Leary murders history by his grammar, as he murders grammar by his history.

His second grand argument is directly towards our question in its second shape. This argument, too, is founded on a confusion. He confuses verbs of action with verbs of being, and thence works on to "autonomous" conclusions. Verbs of being are, of course, by nature, incapable of a passive sense, and, therefore, in such verbs, passive inflections, whatever else they may imply, can never have any voice import. With verbs of action, whether transitive or intransitive, the case is essentially different. In all such verbs the passive endings denote true passive sense, and voice. In intransitives, to be sure, the use is impersonal, and the voice scarcely ever adverted to, but the sense and the voice are true passive none at all the less. In ɢúbᴀlᴛᴀɲ, for instance, the sense is essentially as passive as the form; the shape of the thought is identically passive with the shape of the word. That shape is: walking *is done, is being done*, &c.; the deed, or action known as walking, *is done, is being done*, &c., just as any other deed, or action might be done. But, for a deed, or action to be done, there is a doer ever necessarily implied and supposed. That such doer, or agent, is not expressed, is all a matter of the writer's purpose, or the speaker's. That purpose will vary indefinitely, according to varying circumstances. The aim will be at one time rapidity of narrative, at another, pith and pregnancy of expression, now, to avoid naming, or suggesting the agent, again, to state barely the occurrence of the action, or some occasion, or mode of it. It gets quicker to the point, to

say, "nī lámhas baint leat," than to say, nī lámhaid duine d'a bfuil annseo baint leat." To say "n-iarrad orm a déanamh," puts the asking at once to the front, the fact of the request being just the matter, not the party who made it; or, as the case might be, it being undesirable to reveal the maker. It is more pithy and comprehensive to say, "ó faigtear i nDroc-fhláinte, nī fuarthas fágail ar,' than to say "o fagann duine," &c. And so on, for countless other instances, where the agent, or doer, is not the concern, but the action itself, or some matter which cannot be told without stating that action. But in all this, the one thing to be gripped and held fast, is, that, whatever may be the immediate purpose, intrinsic or extrinsic, of omitting the agent, or doer, of the action which is stated to be done, that agent, or doer, is ever necessarily supposed, can ever be expressed if need be, and that ever with le, and the use is ever a true passive use. Take, for instance, the verb siúbal, not in its sense of walking a mile, walking a road, walking a horse, &c., but in its intransitive sense, as opposed to running, standing, sitting, riding, &c. In this sense, siúbaltar means "walking *is walked*," "walking *is done*." It is in no wise stranger to say, "to walk a walk" than to say, "to fly a flight," "to sleep a sleep," "to die a death," "to fight a fight," "to dream a dream," "to strike a stroke," "to light a light," "to live a life," "to ride a ride," "to excuse an excuse," "to practise a habit," "to do a deed." Now, Father O'Leary's grand contention is, that "tá'tar ag siúbal" is exactly siúbaltar continued, siúbaltar going on in the living present, that "tá'tar ag dúnad an doruir," is exactly "dúntar an doruir" rendered continuous. Here is his celebrated syllogism, his veritable Achilles: "Tá'tar ag dúnad an doruir,

is an active, transitive construction : but tá ag dúnadh an doras is exactly dúntar an doras rendered continuous : therefore dúntar an doras is an active transitive construction." By consequence, of course, doras is objective, not nominative case. This syllogism occurs on page 56 of the "*Irish Prose Composition.*" Then there is, on page 40 of the same book, a statement which ought always to be read alongside of this syllogism, as its counterpart, and completion. That statement runs : "It is of the very essence of buailtear (dúntar, díceannadh, &c.) that it cannot possibly ever have any passive force in it." For inexorable clearness and universality this proposition leaves, surely, nothing to be desired. And so, now, to the syllogism : The major is good. "Tá ag dúnadh an doras," *is* an active, transitive construction. No denying that. But, the minor—alas ! it must go. Needs must ; and the conclusion must follow it, as it ever must the worser premiss—*pejorem sequitur semper.* "Tá ag dúnadh an doras," is not, and could not be exactly "dúntar an doras," rendered continuous. In point of grammar the two constructions differ intrinsically. The accidental element of mere time is very far from exhausting the difference between them. In fact it does not touch their proper difference at all. For, to "dúntar an doras" add "le Seágan," and you have Irish still, perfect Irish still, the same statement still, only completed by the addition of the two words. And, for translation (not that translation is directly concerned), it will beset even a native speaker sore to knock out any shape of sense from it other than "the door is closed by John," or, "let the door be closed by John." Dr. Henry will make a desperate effort. He will say "the action of closing the door is done by John." But, *ignoscat mihi*—what on earth is "the action

of closing the door is done by John," but "the door is closed by John"? But of Dr. Henry hereafter. To "dúntar an doras," then, add "le Seáġan," and you have your statement still, only completed; you have perfect Irish still, perfect sense and clearness, perfect propriety of expression still, and for form and idiom, unexceptionable, being established and consecrated by usage constant, classic and copious, ancient, middle and modern. To "dúntar an doras" I say, add "le Seáġan," and all is not only well, but bettered. Add the same "le Seáġan" to "táthar ag dúnadh an dorais," and what have you got? Not only have you no longer the same statement left, you have no statement at all left. You have abortion, monstrosity, chaos! The very shape of the original makes the addition impossible, precludes it clean. The original shape was, "someone (some people, &c.), is closing the door." This makes an ablative agent at once impossible, superfluous and absurd. Above all else, where would an imperative sense be conceivable in such an expression? Why does not "duntar an doras" make the same chaos by the addition, if exactly the same, save in time? If time is the only difference between the two shapes, how is it that the same addition makes one of them absurd, while crowning and completing the sense of the other? If exactly sames be added to exactly sames (save for time), the wholes ought to be exactly sames, save for time. But so far are they from any such identity, that sanity and lunacy made drunk could not cleave any wider asunder. All of which comes to this, that the minor of Father O'Leary's syllogism is radically erroneous. "Táthar ag dúnadh an dorais," is not "duntar an doras" rendered continuous. "Dúntar an doras" rendered continuous, would be "tá an doras

'g a dúnad," and this will take as kindly to "le Seágan, as "duntar an dorus" itself, for *here* tense *is* the only difference. But, now, further: If "dúntar an dorus" is active and transitive like "tátar ag dúnad an doruir, and dorus objective case, how *can* it retain sense (any more than tátar ag dúnad an doruir), when followed by "le Seágan"? But it does. It is perfect Irish. It is faultless idiom. It is a construction to be found on every page of the literature, and living on in the spoken language, as I have proved elsewhere, and as I know by long, vigilant and immediate daily experience. To say it is dying out, is only to say that the Language is dying out. It does, then, retain sense after the addition of "le Seágan," nay, it acquires a fulfilled, completed sense by the addition. But this is an impossibility except on one understanding, and one only, the understanding that dúntar is passive, and dorus nominative. Once more, therefore, I urge the question: If it is of the very essence of buailtear (dúntar, díceannad, &c.), that it cannot possibly ever have any passive force in it, how comes it that "le Seágan" can be joined to it at all?—not to say joined in such a way, and in such contexts, as to make it clean impossible to doubt for a moment of its being a thoroughly passive construction? "*Domine*," says Richard of St. Victor, "*Domine, si error est, a Te ipso decepti sumus; nam ista in nobis tantis* SIGNIS *confirmata sunt, et talibus, quae non nisi per Te fieri possunt.*" Is it not most legitimate to adapt, and say: "Oh, Passive Voice, if we are deluded here, why, then, it is by yourself we are deluded; for these SIGNS, these features and lineaments are so crushingly identical with yours, that wherever they encounter us, we cannot choose but *know* that you yourself are there"! But, to show, or to lead up to a truth, is to

show that the truth was there before the showing. *Prius est esse quam demonstrari esse.* If a verb is shown, or proved to be passive, it must *be* passive first. If "le Seáġan," together with every circumstance of context and connection, shows that dúntar is passive, dúntar must *be* passive in itself, without and independently of "le Seáġan"; and dorus must be nominative, not accusative case. Is it not Father O'Leary himself that says (p. 36): "Suppose I drop 'by John,' and say 'the table has been struck,' is not the construction a true passive still"? Of course it is. But, *quid inde?* How is this not quite as applicable in Irish as in English. How has it not absolutely the same applicability to "do buaileadh an dorus," as to "the table was struck"?

I have thus far dealt only with the transitive example furnished by Father O'Leary. But what about his intransitive examples? What about "riúbaltar" and "tátar aġ riúbal"? The very self same explanation. "Siúbaltar" rendered continuous, is not "tátar aġ riúbal," but "tá riúbal 'ġ a ṁiúbal," or, "tá riúbal 'ġ a déanaṁ." And this is how Father O'Leary himself would instinctively render it (continuous), if treating of anything else in the world but grammar. See his "Eiriṫ," his distinctly beautiful "Eiriṫ," page 94, line 19. "Tá riúbal 'ġ a déanaṁ," then, is "riúbaltar," or "doġnítear riúbal," rendered continuous, and either and all of these three take just as kindly to "le Seáġan," as "dúntar an dorus" itself could; though the first type, the "continuous" type, whether transitive or intransitive, is also found with aġ, with the very same force and construction as with le. But "tátar aġ riúbal," at once excludes both aġ and le with anything like an ablative because it is simply inconsociable with the ablative idea.

Being itself a thoroughly active construction, it excludes by very nature the distinctive signs of the passive, in other words, the ablative.

But, ah! Is there, perhaps, a circle here too? "Because ꝺūnꞇaꝑ (ꝓıūḃaꞇaꝑ, ꝓꞇaꝺaꞇaꝑ, &c.), can have those signs, it is passive, and because it is passive"—oh, stop. Nothing more. We want nothing from its being passive. We only wanted *that*. Having that, we need no more, and, least of all, the signs; they are there. It were pretty work, indeed, to go about *inferring* signs—*signs!* As well go about inferring the smoke which brought us to the fire, from the fire to which it brought us. We are reasoning not *from* the passive but *to* it. It is our goal to which. Once there, our business is done, our question is answered. "Autonomous," or not "autonomous"? That is the question. And the answer is prompt: *Not* autonomous, but Passive.

The Achilles, then, lies just as prone and prostrate as the Sittuic, and we might pass on, but that it is highly desirable, and of more utility than even refutation, to lay open the "makings" of a fallacy. I have said above that this second argument of Father O'Leary's comes of a confusion of verbs of action with the verb of being. In the last resort, indeed, the whole "autonomous" fabric rests on that confusion, but the second argument will serve as a convenient occasion for the bringing out of this. The confusion in question is negative much rather than positive; that is to say, it arises not out of any sober attempt at probing the nature and functions of the verb of being, but rather out of a total neglect of any such attempt, out of haste and cock-sure precipitancy. Ꞇáꞇaꝑ, or some other "passive" part of the verb of being, was observed. Surely the passive endings (-ꞇaꝑ, &c.), did not indicate

passivity here ? Surely not ! Impossible ! And—lightning conclusion—*therefore* they did not, and could not, indicate it anywhere ; they were not passive endings at all ! And, so—a still braver flash—*therefore further*, they must be active, and are, wherever found. This is the germ of the " autonomous " growth. And out of such a mind, I can fancy an objector rushing forth in a very pride of security and confidence, to gobble up all possible opponents, with an argument somewhat like this : " If, then, you rely on your ' signs,' your passive endings, your ablatives, your contexts and so forth, to prove your passive voice, why, have with you, man ! Suppose I say ' Cáċaṁ le Seáġan,' with a passive and ablative force ? Where are you then " ? Right here, good friend, and happy to welcome your objection into the open. *Say* " Cáċaṁ le Seáġan," by all means, as with a passive, ablative force, but *think* such force in it, if you can. You can, too, but *in sensû per-absurdo*. As thus : *Being is be-d* by John = John, who was not, and while not being, while nothing at all, was *be-d by himself*, was actuated into being by himself, and now *is*. *Being is be-d*, or achieved by John, who was not there to achieve it ; and the position is, not only that John has been made by himself out of nothing, but there is even the further small circumstance, that John himself was nothing before, and when, and while making himself out of nothing. A simple humdrum sort of feat, indeed, which none but country people could think of admiring. Ouine é naċ bṗacaiḋ aon ċleaṗ aṁ ṗoġnaṁ aṁaiṁ, maṗ ġo ocuġ ṗé cleaṗ aṁ an ġcleaṗ ṗin. When Topsy says, " I 'spects I grow'd," take " grow " in her sense, and make it passive, and you will have the objected Irish situation. Growing was growed by Topsy. Topsy, not being there, was growed by herself, put into being by herself. Topsy was growed

by Topsy. Topsy was ushered into being by Topsy, said Topsy not being there to do the ushering in. A topsy-turvy situation! This is much about the way in which our "autonomous" champion supposed above, would reduce us all to "noggin-staves." And I have purposely put the objection for him much more clearly and strongly than any autonomist I know of, would be likely to put it for himself, just to give him the full benefit of all the supposed impregnability of his position. I have only to add, for the uninitiated reader, that we, passive-voice people, are supposed to be in "noggin-staves," directly this volley is fired. But we don't feel that way a bit; we simply deny all the parity, reminding the champion that he has overlooked the great gulf fixed between the verb of being and verbs of action. He has left out of sight the great fact which makes the eternal and immutable difference in the case, the fact that in verbs of action, in ɾiúbaltaɳ, buailteaɳ, &c., le Seáɣan, *John is there*, and it is only a question of working; whereas in the verb of being, in "Táṫaɳ le Seáɣan," *John is not there*, and it is a question of putting himself into being, out of nothing, himself, too, being nothing, by way of equipment for his task. This great fact being overlooked, or, in other words, all verbs being equated in nature with the verb of being, it was immediately matter of course that what was absurdity in the verb of being, was absurdity in all verbs. If Táṫaɳ le Seáɣan was absurd, why, then, so was ɾiúbaltaɳ le Seáɣan, so was buailteaɳ le Seáɣan. This, I say, is the last analysis of this clumsy "autonomous" dream. Observing impossibility where impossibility was the natural, inevitable thing, they forged this same impossibility where impossibility was the impossible thing. That endings, or cases, or context, or anything should

signify passive voice in the verb of being—this was impossible. Therefore it was all alike impossible that such endings should signify it in verbs of any kind, cases, context, nay, evidence itself, notwithstanding. And, to crown up the absurdity, this most grotesque and most visible blunder is so unseen and unsuspected by its perpetrators, that it remains their grand position, their grand stronghold whence to argue still.

But, to draw to an end, there is just one more shape in which the autonomist might return to the charge, and it is just as well to consider it, and be done with the matter. Thus: We are not talking of the verb of being as such, but as a copulative, for instance, or as an auxiliary, where it will be practically part of a verb of action. If, then, you can say Ḃuailtear le Seáġan, meaning, "striking is done by John," what is to hinder saying "Tá ag ḃualaḋ le Seáġan," meaning "striking is *being* done by John"? There are three classes of person who might put this objection. First, the *bona-fide*, who, not understanding the matter, believe it might, by any chance, be a possible Irish expression. Second, those who believe it an impossible expression which therefore proves Ḃuailtear le Seáġan impossible. Third, those who believe it possible, and good Irish, proving Ḃuailtear le Seáġan an active transitive construction. To this latter division Father O'Leary himself belongs, as will be shown in its proper place.

The objection has, of course, been completely answered above, but as that was directly in the light of verbs of action, and as I wish to afford the autonomist every advantage, I will glance at it briefly from the side of the verb of being, and that as auxiliary, too: The inwardness of the expression, Tá ag ḃualaḋ, is "*Being is be-d at striking.*" (The "at" is to be well noted). "Striking is

the shape which the being that is *be-d*, is taking." "Striking is the mode of being which is being *be-d*." In effect, of course, the sense is, "someone, something, &c., is striking." In effect, yes, but not in the shape of the Irish thought, as expressed in "Tá sé ag buaileadh." The Irish shape of the statement is, "being is *be-d* at striking," "being is being actuated at striking"; "that mode of being, known as striking, is being *be-d*." That some striker is necessarily supposed, is quite another matter, having nothing whatever to say to the shape of the statement. And now for the ablative John: "Tá sé ag buaileadh le Seán" = "Tá sé le Seán ag buaileadh" = "Being is *be-d* by John, at striking." (Once more the "at" is all important). "John is putting himself into being, at striking." "John, who is not, is actuating himself into being, at striking." This is the abortion and monstrosity spoken of above. This is what the "autonomous" leads to, in the last resort, and the whole "autonomous" dream arose out of the passive forms of the verb of being, that is, from not taking time to understand them. They have, of course, no voice import whatever, even as auxiliaries. They are merely a device, or what mathematicians would call a "convention," to enable the action of the verb to be expressed impersonally, where it was through the verbal noun, or the verbal adjective it had to be expressed. In a word, the passive forms of the verb of being, are, in function, identical with the ordinary impersonal passive, virtually nothing more than impersonal passive endings for the verbal noun and verbal adjective, to enable these to express their action impersonally. Except as an absurdity, passivity in them is, of course, unthinkable, but that is so evident at a glance, that there is utterly no danger of average sanity trying to think it in them. It

is quite safe to use them passive, because sober intelligence will never dream of taking them passive, or, of trying to conceive or to construe them in a passive sense. As already stated, they are merely a contrivance, or "convention," suggested by, and based on the analogy of, the ordinary impersonal passive, with nothing of nature in them to answer the form of them, their sole *raison d'etre* being function and nothing more. And, let it be added, they are a surpassingly neat and ingenious device for the carrying out of that function, but the function has to be grasped, or misuse and error will be inevitable.

Father O'Leary has one more argument left, and one by which he, seemingly, sets great store. It is another confusion, like the first, of grammar and fact. Here it is: "In the sentence, ᴅúnᴛaṛ an ᴅoṛuṛ, ᴅoṛuṛ is objective case, and governed by ᴅúnᴛaṛ. Why? Because every Irish speaker who ever uttered that form of expression, *meant* ᴅoṛuṛ as objective case, and governed by ᴅúnᴛaṛ." ("*Irish Prose Composition*," p. 76). This is another of those recklessly universal propositions, so common with Father O'Leary. Of course he supplies no proof, and happily does not seriously attempt to do so. The thing is stark incapable of proof. But, were it even as true as it is clearly incredible, it would not only not prove his point, it would not touch it. If a man says, "the door is closed by John," grammar will not ask him what he meant, or how he meant it. It will parse that sentence without the slightest regard to his hidden meaning, no matter how recondite or eccentric it may be. It has all it wants—a sentence intelligible in itself. This argument is very much as if because "a man is as old as he feels," and he feels at fifty quite as young as he did at thirty, therefore the system of the universe and the courses of the sun should

be recalculated and readjusted to harmonise with his thirty-year-old-ship's way of feeling. The fundamental laws of grammar must not be made to suffer for the way Irish speakers *mean*, or imagine that they mean.

And now I must call attention to a trick Father O'Leary has of asking questions. He does it in two ways, to two different purposes. First, he sets up an imaginary opponent, asks him some imaginary questions, puts imaginary answers into his, the opponent's, mouth, leads him thus on, in the most imaginary manner, to imaginary "preposterous conclusions," and nods him superbly away. We shall come in due course to a notable example of this. Or, secondly, he throws a tone of mystery into the questions, and leaves them unanswered by any opponent, or by himself, as if, lest the mysterious beauty and force of their argument might be spoiled by exposition. Here are a few specimens of the latter sort, and I propose to answer them, just to show how little is the crushing force of their mystery, and how very much beside the question they are. I give, as usual, his very words:—

FATHER O'LEARY.—"What is the true significance of the old prepositions, oc, or ʟa?"

ANSWER.—That question is wholly irrelevant. The point is not their significance, but whether the noun, or pronoun, which follows them is linked by them to the verb which you call "autonomous," and whether, therefore, the expression is passive or not. You might as well imply that we cannot know black from white, until we have ascertained the ultimate essence of colour in general, or at least of black and white in general, as to suggest that we cannot know whether a construction is passive, or active, until we have fixed the true significance of the prepositions connected with it, in themselves.

FATHER O'LEARY.—"Shakespeare has made Antony say, 'Lo! here is himself, marred, as you see, with traitors.' What did Shakespeare mean by '*with*' there?"

ANSWER.—Again off. The point is not his meaning, but whether "marred with traitors" is passive or active—whether "traitors" is agent or instrument—whether it "sounds" as if the word "traitors" were weapons, or men.

But, having pointed out the irrelevancy of the question, I now answer it, not, indeed, for its own sake, but to dispel the last shadows of this baseless fabric of a vision, this "autonomous" verb: Shakespeare meant exactly what Shakespeare said, there. He said "with," and "with" is exactly what he meant. Shakespeare is full of that same "with." See the following few random examples:—

"Men may be betrayed *with* flatterers'.—*Jul. Caes.*, II., 1, 205.

"As is the bud bit *with* an envious worm."—*Rom. and Jul.*, I., 1, 149.

"And we are governed *with* our mothers' spirits."—*Jul. Caes.*, I., 3, 83.

"Is Cæsar *with* Antonius prized so slight"?—*Ant. and Cleop.*, I., 1, 56.

"He was torn to pieces *with* a bear."—*Winter's Tale*, V., 2, 62.

"Here is himself, marred *with* traitors."—*Jul. Caes.*, III., 2, 198.

"I am sprited *with* a fool."—*Cymbeline*, II., 3, 144.

"Must I be unfolded *with* one that I have fed"?—*Ant. and Cleop.*, V., 2, 171.

"John is ta'en in flight, and brought *with* armed men back."—*Much Ado.*, V., 4, 128.

"Accompanied *with* old Menemies and senators." — *Coriolanus*, III., 3, 7.

"A reservation to be followed *with* such a number."— *Lear.*, II., 4, 256.

"Drawn *with* a team of little atomies."—*Rom. and Jul.*, I., 4, 57.

"I saw him put down *with* an ordinary fool."—*Twelfth Night*, I., 5, 91.

"To be detected *with* a jealous bell-wether."—*Merry Wives*, III., 5, 111.

"Accompanied but *with* a barbarous Moor."—*Titus Andron.* II., 3, 78.

"Thence to be wrenched *with* an unlineal hand" (ᴀᴅúᵬᴀɪᵲ ɴᴀċ ᵲᵽéɪʒᶠᵽᴀᵭ Ʀᴀċᴀɪɴ, ᴀċᵲ muɴᴀ ʒcuɪɲᵽᴀᵭ ʟáḿ ᴇᴀᵲᵲuɪʒ, ɴo ɲíoʂ, ᴀᵲ é—'ᶠoɲᴀᵲ ᶠᵽᴀᵲᴀ,' Vol. 3, p. 120).—*Macbeth*, III., 1, 63.

In every one of these contexts Master William meant "with," and said it, for the simple reason that in all such contexts, wherever found, "with," is perfectly classical English for "by." If mortal man ever understood the use of language, Master William understood the use of English, and I am glad you have appealed to Master William in this connection. For, this "with" and "by" argument looms largely up and down your writings, and it is quite time to consign it to its native nothingness. In the "*Irish Prose Composition*," p. 60, you assert:— "In the English phrase 'Printed by Gill,' the preposition 'by,' has the sense which distinguishes it from 'with.' Now, the Irish preposition, ʟe, actually means 'with,' as distinguished from 'by.'" In the "Mion-Ċaiɴᴛ" (cuiᴅ III.), p. 62, you assert:—"Why can it, ʟe, not mean 'by,' as distinguished from 'with'? *Because it does mean 'with' as distinguished from 'by.'*" Italics your own,

and the "reasoning" surely is well worth what it cost. In the "*Irish Prose Composition*," again, p. 38, you assert: "The phrase, 'clóbuailte le Gill,' as Irish for 'printed by Gill,' is the most unmitigated nonsense." To set about refuting these assertions, were, of course, after all that has been hitherto said, to set about flogging a dead horse. I quote them merely to remove them, for, at this stage of the discussion, to show that they were there at all, is the most scorching refutation of them. For "clóbuailte le Gill," being "the most unmitigated nonsense, that particular assertion is interesting, if only for one reason: it has actually, and for certain, frightened all hands away from ever venturing to put the formula on any publication which has issued from the Press ever since it appeared in print. Hence we get such formulae as "ar n-a cur amach do" . . . &c., whereas "clóbuailte le Gill," is perfect Irish, and so tidy—so "tight and yare," as Master William would say—besides the uncouth and clumsy ar n-a cur amach do . . . &c. Scores of examples might be quoted in proof, but they are not needed; nevertheless, let there be one: —"Iomcúrsa Finn, ar bhfágail sgéal na Gaoidheinne do beit cuibhighte re Diarmuid" . . "Diarmuid agus Gráinne, I., p. 45, line 4. Is "cuibhighte ré Diarmuid," the most unmitigated nonsense? If so, what is to become of the literature which is brimming over with the construction? If not so, how is "clóbuailte le Gill," the most unmitigated nonsense? Father O'Leary will take good care not to answer this. And, so, to his next question, and to an end:—

FATHER O'LEARY.—"Would an old Irish writer have said 'oc,' there? Or would he have said 'la'? Or would he have said something different from either? Confess honestly that you do not know."

ANSWER.—With all my heart! I'll yield to no man in my ignorance of what he would have said there. But, once more, the point is *not* what he would have said there, nor whether I know, or do not know what he would have said there, but *if* it is "oc," or "ʟa," he would have said there, were the following noun or pronoun the agent, and were the construction, therefore, passive, or were it "autonomous"? That is the question. That is what is to be answered.

And, so, to conclude, for the present. There was one William of Occam, famous for many things, but amongst them for a quiet maxim, most oddly styled a razor—"*entia non sunt multiplicanda praeter necessitatem.*" Now the least, the very, very least that may be said of the "autonomous" theory is, that it is wholly unnecessary. And, given a jury of twelve men, of reasonably sober habits, and the evidence against it all carefully sifted, I cannot help believing that their unanimous verdict would be—"it shall to the barber's."

CHAPTER VIII.

AUT ALANUS AUT—ALUMNUS.

THE matter of this and of the next chapter is the excursus on the "autonomous" verb at the end of the Christian Brothers' Irish Grammar. That dissertation I had to take thus piecemeal, because tissue, or continuity it has none, which might be seized on as the gist of it. It is so perplexed with that obscurity ever bred of incoherence and discordance, that an average reader, even after pondering the last chapter, might be inclined to believe that here he

had to do with something new. To penetrate disguises craves alertness at all times, and few things are more aggressively Protean than sophistry. But this very obscurity in the excursus aforesaid, is a force towards commending it for subtlety and profundity. A professor of Irish, in a college of name assured me that it "converted" himself quite. In fact, he nearly convinced me that it was himself wrote it. But, letting that be as it may, that "conversion" of his satisfied me that in the above excursus the "autonomous" verb had managed to put on another more or less successful disguise, its detection in the last chapter notwithstanding. Then, as part of my purpose is to lay the "autonomous" for good and all, there was nothing for it but to examine the excursus, and no way to do it but this: [The reader would do well to have the grammar by him].

"It is sometimes necessary, or convenient, to express an action without mentioning the subject."

So it is.

"In Irish there is a special form of the verb for this purpose."

This, then, is the purpose of that special form—to avoid mentioning the subject.

"The word bualtear is a complete sentence."

So it is; and let this be well noted. I say again let this be carefully noted, this—that the word bualtear is, or can be, a complete sentence.

"It means that the action of striking takes place."

Yes; or, "is taking place," "is wont to take place," or "let it take place"; or, better, that "the thing we call striking, *is done*," "*is being done*," "*is wont to be done*," or "*is commanded to be done*." The "*done*," implies an agent, or doer. But we are concerned not with its *meaning*

in English, but with its *construing in Irish*. We have to do with it not in its translated equivalents, nor even in its Irish equivalents, but in itself, and by itself, just as if we knew no other language but Irish, or no equivalent of buailtear, even in Irish, but had to take it as it stands, and discuss the grammar of it, as it stands.

"The autonomous form stands without a subject."

But the word "buailtear" is the autonomous form: Therefore the word "buailtear" stands without a subject. But, the word "buailtear" is a complete sentence: Therefore there is a complete sentence without a subject—a thing undiscovered up to this.

"In fact it ("buailtear") cannot be united to a subject."

It can, and nearly always is; and when it is not, it is because the subject is known, the object of the verb being the subject too, which is the real import of the impersonal passive. If it cannot be united to a subject, expressed, or understood, how is it a sentence?

"The moment we express a subject, the ordinary 3rd singular form of the particular tense and mood must be substituted."

Very well. Buailtear é. "é" is the subject. What would you substitute for it? But what you are thinking of is, that, since, according to you, "buailtear" is not the ordinary active, but the extraordinary (very!), the "autonomous" active, the moment we want to express a subject (fé), we cannot do it with "buailtear," and so must write buaileann (fé). Even admitting your *suppositum*, it would not be *that* moment, but the moment before; for, the Irish 3rd singular *precedes* its subject, and, so, the moment for expressing it must precede the moment for expressing the subject. I make no point of

this, save that it serves as an occasion to remind you that loose and inaccurate thinking is what is accountable for all the "autonomous" dream. Admitting your *suppositum*, I say; but, of course, I am not admitting it, but denying it out. That *suppositum* is, that what you call the "autonomous" is active voice, whereas it is demonstrably, and indeed visibly passive, as already proved. You suppose it active, reasoning, that because you cannot say "bualtear fé," to mean "bualeann fé," "bualtear" cannot be passive of "bualeann," must therefore be active, and so, é will be properly accusative of bualtear, not subject and nominative. This supposition is too childish even to be absurd. Besides, what has all this to do with your "word, bualtear"? It is not when you can say it, or what you must say instead of what, that is the matter. Bualtear is there. Construe *it*, and leave all other things severely alone, till that is done.

"We shall take the sentence, Bualtear an gadar le cloic ó láim Taidg."

Very well; we shall. Though, of course, that sentence was never penned for the ordinary purposes of language, for the purposes of conveying thought. It is specially concocted to a grammatical theory, as if language was made for grammar, and not grammar for language. *Dicta sunt omnia antequam praeciperentur: mox ea scriptores observata et collecta ediderunt.* But this sentence was constructed not *antequam*, but *postquam et propter*. Why not take a sentence from some work or writing which was ever heard of? Is not that a prime care with every grammarian, never to concoct, but to quote? But, we shall take your sentence. Go on.

"The word bualtear of itself conveys a complete statement."

No, sir; not here. This is one of the many rocks on which you split. Not in this sentence. It *could* do what you say; it could convey a complete statement, if it stood alone. It would then be a sentence itself, but here it does not stand alone; it is not a sentence in itself but a predicate, a mere member of a sentence, with nothing complete about it, apart from the sentence of which it is a member. *This is where you deceived yourself from the beginning, and mark it well.* Your sentence is not Buailtear, but "Buailtear an gadar le cloic ó láim Thaidg." So that Buailtear is not "of itself" at all here, nor has it anything to do with itself here, apart from the sentence in which you have incorporated it. Your fallacy is, that while you imagine you are taking only one sentence, you are most visibly taking two sentences—and two very different sentences, the one Buailtear, with no subject expressed, but a complete sentence, the other, Buailtear an gadar le cloic ó láim Thaidg, with subject, predicate, instrument and agent expressed. You are taking these two sentences and operating on them, now on the one, now on the other, imagining you are talking of only one sentence all the time. *That is exactly your sophism.* Buailtear may be in a sentence, or not in it, but it cannot manage to be in it and not in it at the same time. Buailtear can stand alone and make a sentence by itself, or it can stand not alone, but as predicate in a transitive sentence; but it cannot stand thus alone making that sentence by itself, and at the same time stand not alone, not making that sentence at all, but making part of another sentence having nothing to do with itself. Buailtear cannot be a sentence and not a sentence at the same time. It cannot be a complete sentence and at the same time not a sentence at all, but only a part of a wholly different sentence. Or,

conversely, you cannot filch bualtear from the sentence (Bualtear an gadar le cloic ó láim Taig), to deal with it apart, as a sentence in itself, and as no part of *the* sentence, and at the same time leave it in the sentence, to deal with it not apart, as a sentence in itself, but as a part of the sentence bualtear an gadar le cloic ó láim Taig. In a word, you are dealing with two verbs, two sentences, and not only so, but with two essentially different verbs and sentences, while imagining all the time that you are dealing only with one and the same thing. Go on.

"The information given by the single word bualtear is restricted to the action."

Not at all; not here. You propose and profess to take the sentence Bualtear an gadar le cloic ó láim Taig, and then you immediately leave it there, and talk to quite another sentence, to a sentence which *is not*, the sentence bualtear; and you imagine you are talking to the bualtear of your sentence, because you are talking of bualtear at all. *This is your fallacy and lure, and hence I dwell on it.* The question is not what information is given by bualtear, and were it, it would not be what information was given by the bualtear which *is not*, but what information was given by the bualtear which *is*, by the bualtear in your sentence. The question is one not of information, but of construing, and that not of a word which *is not*, but of a word which is there. This has to be understood and fixed, before we go any further. Let us at all events be clear about what it is we are discussing. And what we are discussing is whether bualtear, the bualtear *in your sentence* (Bualtear an gadar le cloic ó láim Taig), is active or passive. We have absolutely nothing to do with that other bualtear, the bualtear

which is not there; and it is not I but you that have settled that, by the sentence you have "taken"—*i.e.* concocted to the occasion. Translation even of *the* sentence, is a fallacy, because translation is not the matter. Translation of the buailteán which is not there thickens the fallacy, because, even were translation the matter, it is not the translation of the buailteán which is not there, but the translation of the buailteán which is, of the buailteán in the sentence, Buailteán an gadán le cloíċ ó láim Ċaiḋg, that were the matter. But the translation—"The action of striking takes place," completes and crowns the confusion, for besides that the business is not translation at all; besides that even were it our business, it is not the translation of the buailteán which is not, but of the buailteán in your sentence, we should want; besides that it is not about the translation but about the original we have to come to conclusions, besides all this, the translation —"the action of striking takes place," is exquisitely fitted to mislead here, for it is exquisitely fitted to get us clean off the track—to get us thinking that it is of an action we are speaking (and that, too, in English), whereas we have nothing to do with the action, or the English; we are dealing with an Irish sentence, in which we are saying nothing about the action, but saying *it* about a dog, and construing the word which expresses it. We are not looking for what took place, we find a sentence before us, telling us all about that, and the whole and only business is, to construe buailteán as in that sentence. *Do not lose sight of the point. But of course you will; and so, be brief about it;* come on again.

"There are circumstances surrounding that action of which (circumstances) we may wish to give information."

There you are—the fallacy that the action is the centre

of the discussion, that it is of the action we are saying something, and not that we are saying *it* of the dog; together (as usual), with the other fallacy that it is history not grammar we are concerned with; and as if filling in of circumstances—historical circumstances—could be any part of our business in the matter. We have a sentence *there* before us, and that a sentence specially constructed to a grammatical contention, and we are concerned not with its matter, but with the grammar of it, or rather with the grammar of Buailtear as in it. So, we have nothing to do with your filling in of circumstances, but, to clear the air once for all, we will bear your out. Go on.

"E.G.—What is the object of the action? An gadar.

No, no. Not words, but a live dog is the object of the *action*. The dog got the stone, but the words an gadar, did not. The action of hitting words with a stone does not take place. The word "object" had needs be watched in such a connection as this. "I am struck." I AM object of the action, but I IS subject of the sentence. Buailtear an gadar: The dog is the object of the action, but the words, an gadar, are the subject of the sentence. Tut! tut! Subject? Is not the subject concealed? Does not buailtear conceal it—buailtear, the "autonomous"? No. Buailtear does not conceal it. You are still dreaming of *activity* in buailtear, but as it is passive and will be proved home to be so—*nego suppositum*. You are dreaming of Sitthiuc being in Buailtear. But he is not. You shall see anon. Before we leave this "subject," however, let me ask you this. If an gadar is not the subject of the above sentence, has the sentence a subject at all? If it has, will you, please, point it out. If it has not, it is not a sentence at all. *Will you answer this? But I know you*

will not. Autonomists are remarkable for knowing the points not to touch. Go on. Your next circumstance ?

" What the instrument used ? le cloiċ."

Not at all. The instrument used was a stone, not words. The action of hitting a dog with words—especially with words flung out of a man's hand—does not take place any more than that of hitting words with a stone takes place. Mind, what we are at is not the action nor its circumstances—that is all history—but construing the verb which is used to state that action—a very different thing. But, your next circumstance ?

" Where did the stone come from ? Ó láiṁ Ṫaiḋg."

Good ! Now for Sittṁuc at last !—though this " ó láiṁ Ṫaiḋg " was specially devised to keep him out. In the early days of the autonomous discussion, the preposition " le " (denoting the agent) was very obnoxious to the autonomists, and Sittṁuc was got in to remove the nuisance. But, then, later on, it was found, as frequently happens, that the remedy was worse than the disease, that Sittṁuc himself was a bigger nuisance than " le," and the question was, how to drop *him* quietly, and get his name forgotten. Meantime the obnoxious " le " could not be accepted back, for " le " would bring Sittṁuc back with it. The moment you said Ḃuaileaṁ an ġaḋaṁ le Ṫaḋg, then you had Sittṁuc at once. It was not Ṫaḋg, then, that did it. It was Sittṁuc—Sittṁuc ḋo ṁġne. What was to be done, then, to get Sittṁuc dropped? You must drop " le," too. Say, not le Ṫaḋg, but ó láiṁ Ṫaiḋg. As if this could blot "le" out of all the literature. However, this was thought a great success, but alas ! it brings in Sittṁuc just as much as ever " le Ṫaḋg " could do. For, be careful to note, that—by the autonomists' rule—though the stone came from the hand of Ṫaḋg, and

struck the dog, we dare not say it was by Tadg the dog was struck, because Tadg is revealed, whereas the very nature and purpose of the "autonomous" is—according to the autonomists—to conceal the agent. To conceal the *subject* is what is said above, but that is only one more prerogative of the autonomists, the privilege of thinking loosely and coming abroad in disorder, the privilege of neglecting to know with any severity of accuracy what they themselves mean, and the inevitably consequent confusion in expressing it. Hence, "subject" or "agent," or even "nominative case," as we'll see later on, according as they happen to express it, but "agent" is clearly what is to be meant, and what is always said in this connection by the chief autonomists. Once more, then, though the stone came from the hand of Tadg, and struck the dog, we dare not say it was by Tadg the dog was struck, because—1st, Tadg is revealed, whereas the very purpose and nature of the "autonomous" is to conceal the agent—to conceal Tadg in case he was the agent—but it does not conceal Tadg, and, so, Tadg is not and cannot be the agent. Of course when it is said that a dog is struck with a stone, out of a man's hand, the general reason of mankind would set that man down as the agent of that action of striking. But, then, that is one of the offices of the autonomists, to tower above the general reason of mankind. The ways of the general reason of mankind are too cheap and commonplace for the carrying of autonomous erudition. Because 2nd.—as buaileadh is "essentially active," and as Tadg, even if connected with it, could only, by any possible intelligibility, be connected with it as agent of *it passive*, it follows that Tadg has no connection whatever with buaileadh, and so he cannot be the agent. It was not he that struck the dog; it was Sitthuc—Sitthuc do thuighe.

Tadhg is not the agent, then, because he is revealed, and because he could not conceivably be its agent, unless buaileadh were passive, whereas buaileadh is essentially active in the autonomist mind—in the mind of the native speaker. Neither is Tadhg the object of the action, because he is not the dog. [By the bye, the leading autonomists say that the nature of a true passive has to do simply and solely with the fact that the object of the action is the subject of the sentence. But the dog is surely the object of the action here. An gadhar should be, therefore, the subject of the sentence here. But he cannot, because he is revealed, and we know from the opening sentence that the "autonomous" conceals its "subject." But if he is *not* the subject of the sentence, why, bless us, what is? And if the dog *is* the subject of the sentence, how is buaileadh to get out of being passive? Sitthuc do dhéanfadh. Sitthuc will manage it. Sitthuc lies concealed in buaileadh, as we shall see presently.] Tadhg is only one of the circumstances surrounding the central matter, *i.e.* the action of striking, which takes place, and his share in the action of surrounding that action, is this:—He, Tadhg, had got a stone in his hand, to begin with, for, else, the stone could not come out of his hand, or from his hand, and we know it did. We know from the sentence that the stone did come out of Tadhg's hand, and struck the dog. Now, since it positively cannot be Tadhg that struck the dog with the stone (though the dog was struck sure enough with the stone, and that a stone out of, or from the hand of Tadhg, too), one of three ways is imperative. Either, 1st a miracle; the stone, transcending all the laws of gravitation and inertia, actually left Tadhg's hand, itself, and struck the dog with itself; or, 2nd, Sitthuc came and took the stone out of Tadhg's hand, pelted it and struck

the dog with it, or struck him with it without pelting it; or, 3rd, most likely of all, Daidh himself pelted the stone at the dog, all right, but while the stone was on the way from Daidh to the dog, in pops Sitthuc, gets behind the stone as it flew, transports it as far as the dog, causes the action of impinging to take place, and thus appropriates the action of striking which takes place, and Daidh has nothing to do with that action—beyond being a circumstance surrounding it—Sitthuc is the one and only doer. So, the "autonomous" is saved. Sitthuc is in buailteadh, and Sitthuc do fhighe. He popped in between Daidh and his shot, just as he popped in before between David and his declining sword, and appropriated the action of beheading.

One of these three ways, then, is imperative. All we know for certain is, *that* the dog was struck, *that* it was with a stone, *that* that stone not only came from the hand of Daidh, but even struck the dog from the hand of Daidh; but who, or what, actually transported the stone as far as the dog, and caused the action of impinging to take place (with that stone from the hand of Daidh) who, or what did this, it is the business of buailteadh to conceal from us—further than that it was Sitthuc, *i.e.*, it was *not* Daidh. Sitthuc is a vague and general person who may be—anyone but Daidh. It was *not* Daidh did it. That is all buailteadh tells us about who did it, *i.e.*, it tells us who did *not* do it, and Daidh is its instrument for the conveyance of that information. It may be anyone but the person mentioned, here, anyone but Daidh—Sitthuc may be anyone but Daidh; Daidh, he may not be. So, that, "ó Láimh Daidh" is just as fatal to the autonomists as the "le Daidh" which they so dread. For, the purpose of the "autonomous" is to conceal the agent, and to conceal the agent is to bring

in Sitthiuc; because, as Goliath's head came off, and it was not David, as the dog was struck, and it was not Tadhg, there must have been *some* agent, *because these actions took place.* That agent was Sitthiuc. So, that, "ó Láimh Tadhg" is just as bad as "le Tadhg"; so much so, that had it been "ó Láimh Sitthiuc" then, it was not even Sitthiuc himself that did it. "Ní-airgead agus do chreadadh Ceannannaigh leis an Sithiuc ceadna." Acht, in a dhiaidh sin, níorbh é Sitthiuc féin do rugne, because the "autonomous" tells no tales—about agents. Go on.

"We can thus fill in any number of circumstances we please, and fit them in their places by means of the proper prepositions."

So, you see, it is still a question not of construing, but of supplying circumstances of history, and seeing to the prepositions proper for fitting them in their places. It is a question of forging a sentence, not of *construing* one already there; a question of botching up a sentence to suit a grammatical theory; instead of construing the grammar of a given sentence. But—very good. Suppose we should please to fill in the last circumstance in its natural, undistorted shape, and to fit that circumstance in its place by means of the proper preposition, le? Suppose we say "le Tadhg"—"Buaileadh an gadhar le Tadhg"? Tut! there is no such Irish as that, *meaning the dog was struck by* Tadhg. No? Why, then I am afraid there will be consequences. The veracity of the Bible will be the first to suffer, for of course we shall have to give up believing that it was David killed Goliath, and Judith Holofernes, and several other important facts. Keating will have to go overboard and all the Irish literature with him, and the autonomists were serious when the action took place of

stating that there are speakers living now who speak better Irish than Keating ever wrote, as well as when that other action took place of plainly implying that we had no written Irish, or at least no written Irish worthy of any heed, till they, the autonomists, began to write? Go on.

"But these circumstances do not change the nature of the fundamental word, buailtear."

Here again the silly sophism that buailtear is the central, fundamental word of the sentence—that it is of buailtear the sentence is stating something, and not *it* of the dog. Why not then call buailtear the subject of the sentence? *The sophism proceeds thus*:—1st, Buailtear is taken alone and not alone at the same time, as a complete sentence and as no such thing at the same time. Taken alone, it would make a complete sentence. Taken not alone, but in company with "circumstances," it will, of course, make sense, too. But, taken alone and not alone at the same time, it makes nonsense—nothing. Taken in the sentence, "Buailtear an gadar le cloic ó láim Čaiög," and taken at the same time not as in that sentence at all, but as if it stood alone by itself, as a sentence in itself (which cannot be changed by the addition of any such circumstances as an gadar—le cloic—ó láim Čaiög) taken so, it inevitably yields nonsense.

The remark ("these circumstances do not change the *nature* of buailtear") would look somewhat germane to its matter, had you said that the circumstances could not change the *voice* of buailtear, *i.e.*, could not bring it from the active, which you hold it is, to the passive, which all the world but you, hold it is. So expressed, your remark would have at least the merit of being intelligible—intelligible, that is, as being in logical keeping with itself

and with the general tenour of your fallacy, (because, even in reasonings founded on a fallacy, there is such a thing as clearness and continuity with self, such a thing as keeping to the point, however erroneous that point may be), the fallacy, I say, which assumes that it is of buailteap, and *that* the buailteap *which is not*—the buailteap alone by itself—the buailteap which is *not* in your sentence—we are stating something, as of a subject; whereas that is in no wise in the world what we are at, but construing the buailteap *which is*—the buailteap which is stated of an gabap. This fallacy is then interentangled with another—with the assumption that the buailteap *which is not, is*, and is a sentence in itself, having nothing to do with the sentence Buailteap an gabap le cloic ó láim Caiog, and at the same time not at all a sentence in itself, nor by itself, but part of the sentence Buailteap an gabap le cloic ó láim Caiog, in fact the very essence of that sentence, the fundamental word in that sentence, everything else in that sentence being mere circumstance surrounding that fundamental word in it—that buailteap *which is not*. In a word, you are not talking of *your* buailteap at all—what buailteap would be, if it stood alone. You do not leave it alone; you surround it with circumstances, and think you are talking about it as it is surrounded, whereas you are most plainly talking about it as if taken alone and unsurrounded. Where you are wrong is, to think, whatever it is, that it could be the same buailteap as the buailteap which does not stand alone, the buailteap of your sentence—Buailteáp an gabap le cloic ó láim Caiog. Your "circumstances," indeed, do not change the voice of your buailteap, for *your* buailteap is not only not the fundamental word in your sentence but it is not in your sentence at all. There *is* a buailteap in your sentence,

but it is not *your* buailtear; it is not the buailtear which stands alone, not the buailtear that has set you dreaming, but a plain transitive buailtear, in the passive voice, with gadar for subject. *Somnium narrare vigilantis est.* Some day you will wake up and recognize your talk for a dream; for, dream in sooth it is, and a very tangled one at that, and tedious to unravel. But on, be letting us have it.

"It may be objected that the word buailtear in the last sentence . . ."

Now, again, the surrounded buailtear. *Last?* There is only one sentence. On.

"Is passive voice . . ."

So it *may* indeed be objected, for it is so.

"Present tense . . ."

And will you deny that it is present tense?

"And means, 'is struck' . . ."

So it may, indeed, again be objected, for that is just what it means.

"And that an gadar is subject of the verb."

Right again. That may be very confidently objected, for it is not only true, but it is impossible not to see the truth of it—waking. But, "buailtear *in the* (*last*) *sentence*"—brackets mine—mark well now that it is of the buailtear *in the* (*last*) *sentence* you think you are speaking. Again I say let that action take place—the action of marking well that it is of the buailtear in the (last) sentence you imagine you are talking. It will be highly important to have that well noted—that it is of the buailtear *in the* (*last*) *sentence*, you think you are talking. Go on.

"Granted for a moment that it is so," *i.e.*, that buailtear *is* passive voice, etc., and means *is struck.*

Gramercy for your generosity, even though but momentary, but you had much wiser grant it for all time. But go on.

"Then comes the difficulty what voice is tá an buailte"?

No. That difficulty *does not come—here.* Nor anywhere else, for it is no difficulty. There is no difficulty in the world about "buailtear, *in the* (*last*) *sentence*," being passive voice, present tense, meaning, "is struck," and an gadar being its subject. No difficulty whatever in all that. Go on.

"Surely it—tá an buailte—is the passive of buailtear," *i.e., of* buailtear *in the* (*last*) *sentence.*

Surely! Why, then there is no difficulty about the voice of tá an buailte? Surely! Verily an "autonomous" argument, "autonomous" being so frequently synonymous with autocratic. If a thing is thus, or thus, merely because the action of saying "surely" it is so, takes place, why, then, "surely" black is white. But, once more, "surely it—tá an buailte—is the passive of buailtear"—*the* buailtear *in the* (*last*) *sentence.* Very well. Then let us take that sentence in its passive shape, and it will run:—Tá an gadar buailte le cloch ó láimh Daigh!!! Or, if you like, Tá an buailte an gadar le cloch ó láimh Daigh!!! Of course even *you* will admit that *this* is nonsense—clean nonsense. And I would ask you to note that nonsense is worse than absurdity in this, that absurdity may be sense of a kind. When I say a part is greater than the whole, or that two and two make five—these are absurdities, but it is the very meaning in them that shows their absurdity. With nonsense it is different and worse, for nonsense is a thing that can show you no meaning, a thing which *is*

nonsense *just because it has no meaning whatever to show*, not even an absurd meaning. And you see it is nonsense not by the aid of any meaning in itself, but by seeing plainly that it has *no* meaning. Such exactly is the character of the "sentence" Tá tar an gadar buailte le cloic ó láim Taidg. But it is *your* passive of the "sentence buailtear an gadar le cloic ó láim Taidg". I should, of course, be now by no means surprised, if you tried to assert that it was of buailtear unsurrounded you were talking, and not of the buailtear in the sentence. But alas! your words stand—"buailtear *in the* (*last*) *sentence*"—buailtear in the sentence," buailtear an gadar le cloic ó láim Taidg. Of *that* buailtear, you say, "surely" tá tar buailte is the passive. I say your *words* stand; for, I profess not to be accountable for how autonomists *mean inwardly*. They are all native speakers, or give themselves out such, and, *according to them*, native speakers can *mean* very strangely when they set about it—as we shall be seeing later on. Meantime your *words* stand, and whatever you mean yourself, or however you mean it, your *words* mean very plainly, and cannot get away from meaning, that it is of the passive of the surrounded buailtear, of the buailtear in the sentence, Buailtear an gadar le cloic ó láim Taidg, you think you are speaking.

But it is not. It is of buailtear, as by itself, you are speaking. And you are just as wrong about it as if it were of buailtear in your sentence you were speaking. Don't you know that buailtear is a tense denoting present action? Don't you know that tá tar buailte, if a tense at all, is a tense denoting completed action? Can a tense denoting completed action be the passive of a tense denoting present action?

Will you just answer a simple question, or two, in this matter, and it will straighten out much? Of course I know you won't answer, but I'll put the questions for all that.

Buailtear is (according to autonomists), essentially and immutably active, and yet you can put an gadar le Tadg after it, and it is perfect Irish. Will you kindly say—if you know—HOW IS THIS? Tátar buailte, you say, is the passive of buailtear—and *that* of the buailtear *in the last sentence*, of the buailtear in the sentence Buailtear an gadar le cloic ó láimh Taidg, and you cannot put even an gadar after it—HOW IS THIS? How is it that buailtear an gadar is perfect Irish, while tátar an gadar buailte, or, tátar buailte an gadar is perfect nonsense? How is it that while what you call the active—the "autonomous"—is perfect sense, what you call the passive of that same active is pure and simple nonsense? Of course you will not answer these questions.

Tátar has assisted your delusion from the start, or rather, indeed, was the very starting of it. -tar, an ending which, in verbs of action, marks the passive voice, was observed to be joined to tá, and was felt to be a puzzle, a riddle, a mystery. To be the first to read a riddle, is an old and very human ambition. To be conscious of being the only person fit—the one man to be looked to—to read it, is a higher and serener state of mind for which I have no word just handy. But it brings with it not only the temptation but the *necessity* to read it in some way—to say something about it and call it reading. And a frequent plan is to read it in such wise as to make it far more obscure than it was before. And there is nothing to beat obscurity for looking

learned! Explanations were, accordingly, at once forthcoming, all claiming to be reading the riddle, but all much darker than the riddle itself. Some began to look for a sort of refined, subtilized, ethereal passive sense in táthar. They said to themselves that if the mere tá fé buailte was passive, tathar buailte must surely be more passive, however it might be explained. But, then, behold, they saw tathar ag bualadh! Surely ag bualadh is active! They conclude on the spot that táthar itself must be active, forgetting that "be" must ever prescind from voice, but may assist an already declared voice, may be an auxiliary to ag bualadh as well as to buailte. Thar, then, being, as they dimly saw, not denoting passivity in táthar, it suddenly flashed on the minds of the autonomists that the ending -thar could not denote passivity in any verb—most lame and impotent conclusion—that because it could not do this where this could not be done, it could not do this anywhere—it could not be a passive ending at all. *Therefore*, it must be an active ending! Others, taking táthar by itself, without reference to any active verbal noun, arrived at the same conclusion. They felt that neither -thar nor any other ending could denote passive voice, could passivize the sense, in the verb of being. And this proved to their entire satisfaction that -thar could not be a passive ending in any verb at all. And *so*, it—thar—*must* denote an active voice, *wherever found*, no exception admitted, not even for the ever-prescinding, impartial, Jove-like verb "to be." Then the odd state of affairs came up, where passivity was aggressively and crushingly evident, from context that would brook no boggling; and, to make things worse, it was precisely by means of the fatal -thar and of the various other "autonomous" (*i.e.*, "active") endings this crushingly evident passivity

appeared. This, of course, was no puzzle to the autonomists. It was merely "a mistake in the book," as the blythe, old professor used to say long ago, when a pupil had arrived at a different answer from the algebra. It was a mistake in the book—there was no such Irish. But it puzzled ordinary men, and they began to ask how, or *if*, it could be accounted for. *There was the trap*—the woodcock was fast in his own springe, and the next device was—*silence.* So much so, that even the at first derisive term "monotonous" verb—a term started at the expense of the autonomists—was now most ingeniously turned to account by those very same autonomists to ridicule the whole discussion, with a view to making it cease, and getting it forgotten. But there was to be no confession of defeat, no admission of error, no welcoming (nor suffering) IN of the truth. The autonomous theory must be upheld, come cut and longtail, come ten thousand reductions *ad absurdum.* It must be upheld, if only even by silence, for the repute of the native speaker was involved. The reductions came, not indeed ten thousand, but three, for, at that time, there were only three "arguments" to be reduced to their native absurdity. The first was the Sittuic, the second, the Achilles, "tátar ag dúnad," the third, the native speaker's mysterious manner of *meaning* actively where all the rest of the world are fain to mean passively. These three "arguments" were anatomized to some purpose, and the autonomists, who, though frequently seeming not to see a point, seldom fail of seeing a position, had the intelligence not to reply. Go on.

"And if so—if tátar buailte is passive of buailtear *in the* (*last*) *sentence*—buailtear itself cannot be passive."

"If so"? Why "*if*" so, since "*surely*" so? "If so," aye, but there is the trouble, for it is *not* so—neither

in that buailtear, nor in any other buailtear—and *so* your inference vanishes.

"Though it—buailtear—may be rendered by a passive in English."

It may. Thanks!—it may. Go on.

"If we are to be guided merely by the English equivalent then buaileann in the above phrase . . . ."

The above is not a phrase, but a sentence, and, phrase or sentence, buaileann is not in the above; but, well! "buaileann in the above phrase, you say—

"Is as much a passive as buailtear."

Ah! You are admitting, then, that buailtear is passive, are you? I thought your whole contention was that buailtear was essentially active. But supposing for a moment that you would be content to allow yourself to be right, suppose you would now admit that buailtear is passive, what is this inference of yours, that buaileann in the above (where buaileann is *not*) *is*—or would be, if it were there—as much a passive as buailtear? How on earth do you make that out? Speak.

"buaileann in the above 'phrase' is just as passive as buailtear—if we are to be guided by the English equivalent."

What do you mean? How, if guided by the English equivalent?

"Because"—if we are to be guided by the English equivalent—"it" (buaileann in the above "phrase") "can be correctly translated into English by a passive verb, viz., He is struck"—"He is struck," being the English equivalent of buailtear, and we being guided by it.

It is surely hard to get a hold of your meaning, if meaning there be at all, not to speak of disentangling the fallacy of it, when got hold of. Is this what your words would

be at—your *words*, for, once more, I refuse to be accountable for what, or how a native speaker *means* inwardly—is this how your words would argue ?—this :—" He—the dog—is struck," is the English equivalent of buailtear in the " phrase " buailtear an gadar le cloic ó láimh Taidg. Let us then be guided by " He is struck." But if we go by this equivalent, by this " He is struck," we can put buaileann in buailtear's place, and buaileann will yield us " He is struck " just as well as buailtear. Therefore, if we are to be guided by " He is struck," the English equivalent, buaileann would be just as passive as buailtear in the above " phrase." If this is the reasoning of your words—and, as far as I can see, it is the only possible reasoning in them—pray, show how you prove your minor.

" buaileann can be correctly translated by a passive verb, viz., ' He is struck '."

Oh, aye—and what more can be done for buailtear ? —so you would say. Oh, quite so ; therefore, the one is quite as passive as the other. Yes ; if we read buaileann for buailtear in the above " phrase," thus :—buaileann an gadar le cloic ó láimh Taidg, we have a perfect sentence, meaning : He—Sitthiuc, of course—*strikes* the dog with a stone (taken) out of the hand of Tadg (a far better Irish sentence, by the way, than the sentence with buailtear). Now, since he, Sitthiuc, *strikes* the dog, of course the dog " is struck," and the *meaning* is the same in effect, and so the Irish word meaning " he strikes " comes to the same—for the dog—in the last resort, as the Irish word meaning " he is struck " ; and, therefore, the Irish word meaning " he strikes " is just as passive as the Irish word meaning " he is struck." For, that is what we are guided by, that

English equivalent "he is struck"—that is what we are making for—and buaileann gets us there just as well as buailtear, *i.e.*, buaileann, by that guidance, is just as passive as buailtear—the two can be translated the same way—correctly. In a syllogism, then:—Whatever Irish can be correctly translated into English by a passive verb—as correctly, for instance, as this buaileann by "He is struck"—is passive: But, do mharbuigh re é féin le rgin beárrta, can be quite as correctly translated "*He was killed*" as this buaileann "He is struck": Therefore do mharbuigh re é féin le rgin beárrta, is passive—quite as passive as do marbuigeadh é. And "He was killed" is a model of adequate translation, a perfect equivalent for "He cut his own throat"—killed himself—with a razor!

Besides, "guided"? Guided towards what? Towards translation? If so, and that you require guidance, then you require to know that the English equivalent *is* an equivalent, else it could be no guide to you—what you do not know, cannot be a guide to what you do not know. And if you *do* know that the English equivalent *is* an equivalent, you know the meaning of the Irish, and require no guidance towards translation. So, that, besides being guilty of a fallacy—as if translation and not construing were the whole matter—you are unable to conduct your fallacy in continuity and consistency with itself. Do you mean guided towards the parsing of buailtear? If so, your "*because*" is more foolish still. Because two forms of speech can be said to come to much the same thing in effect, therefore it follows that the said two forms of speech can be construed grammatically in the same way!

CHAPTER IX.

Aut Alanus Adhuc—The Intransitive "Autonomous" Verb.

"When we come to consider this (autonomous) form in intransitive verbs, our position becomes much stronger in favour of the autonomous verb."

Ah! that is good.

"Let us consider the following sentence:

Very good! Let us. Here with it.

"Siubaltar ar an mbóthar, nuair bíonn an bóthar tirim, acht nuair bíonn an bóthar fliuch, siubaltar ar an gclaidhe."

Well?

"Where is the *nom. case* of the so-called passive here"?

That is not your question. It is not the question which arises logically out of your contention, and which would be in logical continuity with it. Your question should be: how is siúbaltar passive here; and the answer is prompt. It is passive here because the statement made is that the work, or act which we call siúbal, *is done*. That walking is walked, is not different in kind from saying that the *deed is done*. When that deed happens to be walking, then walking, or the deed of walking, *is done*. The walking is done on the road, then, or on the wall, according to the state of the road. But to say that a thing is done, necessarily implies a doer. Hence, if necessary, or fit, le Seághan may be added here, just as well as to dúntar, in "dúntar an dorus"—le Seághan, and every page of the literature will supply examples of both. Siúbal is the subject, as well as the object, of siúbaltar. Just as in

ambulatur = ambulatio fit, walking is done, and there is therefore a doer, who also could be expressed, were any purpose to be served by expressing him, and the construction is perfectly and plainly passive. That it happens to differ in form of thought from the passive of transitive verbs, makes no matter at all. "Transitive" and "intransitive" is not as happy an expression of classification as "transitive" and "immanent." Immanent action does not pass over to an object, or affect it directly like transitive action. But it is action all the same, and action is something acted, or done. But something acted or done, be it ever so immanent, craves a doer; and that doer can always be expressed by "ᒐe" if needed, or appropriate.

The action of a verb is indifferent to who or what exercises it, and so when the action alone, or the action in some manner, or way, is what is to be signified, that is all that is set down. That it is done—that the action *is done*, or, that it is in this or that manner, place, time, for this or that reason, etc., it is done—is all the matter. Who, or what, does it, does not come in. It is necessarily implied (but not in any definite way), inasmuch as an action cannot be done without an agent of some sort. An *actio in distans*, is bad enough, but an action without an agent of any sort, is inconceivable. This "agent of some sort" is implied by the -ᑕᓂ, in ᓂᐃᑲᐃᒪᑕᓂ, because the -ᑕᓂ says plainly that ᓂᐃᑲᐃᒪ *is done*. And this is oftentimes a great aid to neatness and precision of expression, as it is here, for here the matter is not who walks, nor even that walking is done, but that it is on the road, or on the top of the wall it is done, according to the weather. "ᓯᐃᑲᐃᒪᑕᓂ" expresses that fact a thousand times more neatly and relevantly than "ᓂᐃᑲᐃᒪ" with expressed persons could do. In fact, to

the true Irish ear, the expression of persons here, and in like cases, were but a clumsy impertinence; and this is the genuine impersonal passive use of the verb. Go on.

"The verb stands alone here, and conveys complete sense."

Not at all; it does not stand alone here. In fact it is not the *matter* at all here. It *could* do what you are saying, but it is not doing it here. Here it stands not alone, but in a sentence, and is not even the central idea in that sentence. The matter here is not the walking, but the fact that it is on the road the walking is done when the road is dry, and on the wall when the road is wet. If "ṗiuḃaltaṁ" stood alone—if the whole matter was, that the action of walking is done—what business had we of ḃóṫaṗ or cláiḋe, any more than of carpeted floors? or what had weather to do with us? Of course the verb (ṗiúḃaltaṁ) *could* do what you are saying, could stand alone and make complete sense—passive sense. But to be able to do a thing, and to be clearly not doing it, but doing the other thing clearly—these two are twain. Go on.

"If we wish to express the nominative, the autonomous form of the verb cannot be used."

First, *nego suppositum*. You are supposing it, ṗiúḃaltaṁ, active, whereas that's what is denied. You are thinking of ṗiúḃlann ṗe, ṗiaḋ, etc., as if ṗiúḃaltaṁ was exact equivalent, except in the circumstance of having no expressed agent, or nominative—as you call it. Whereas it is no such thing but a simple passive, whose "nominative" *could* be expressed at any moment, if in any way desirable. But it is wholly undesirable here, and that happens often enough; but to happen often to be undesirable is a very different thing from being impossible. But, besides, the

question is not when this form can be used or can not be used, or what we wish to express, or not to express, or whether we wish at all to express anything, but what is the voice of it, when it *is* used. Go on.

"In the above sentence . . . ."

Ha! so it is now again a sentence, and not merely ɾiúḃaltaɲ disconnected from the rest of it, with the rest, nevertheless, thrown in somehow—but having nothing to do with ɾiúḃaltaɲ, for all that. But, go to.

"In the above sentence we might correctly say ɾiúḃlann ɾé, ɾiaḋ, etc."

Really! This is worse than to expostulate *why* day is day, night night, and time is time; for it is simply telling us, and that in all gravity, *that* day is day, etc. Go on.

"But not ɾiúḃaltaɲ é, etc.

Not "ɾiúḃaltaɲ é," but "ɾiúḃaltaɲ ɾiuḃal," or, 'ɒoɣnítean ɾiúḃal,' could be said; and what is more, le Seáɣan could be added. And ɾiúḃaltaɲ é, too, could be said in any context where ɾiúḃal was shown by context to have a transitive force, and le Seáɣan could be added. Go on.

"Probably classical scholars will draw analogies from Latin, and quote such instances as *concurritur ad muros; ventum est*" [it used to be *erat*] "*ad Vestae; Sic itur ad astra; deinde venitur ad portam;* where we have intransitive verbs in an undoubtedly passive construction . . . ."

Undoubtedly passive. I think it will be hard to show, or to see, how those verbs *itur, concurritur, etc., in this use,* differ at all from our Irish use above. Do you not see that the action of getting there, "*ventum erat ad vestae,*" etc., is the whole matter to be told. We need not be told who got there, because we know well, who. Horace, etc., take care of that. Such strivings after expression for an

idea, as, "It had been come as far as Vesta's," or, "it had been got to Vesta's," are just—funny.

". . . And therefore, by analogy, the true signification of ɾiúbaltap in the above sentence, is, 'It is walked,' and it is simply an example of the impersonal passive construction."

No. The true significance is, walking IS DONE. And this is not the way the analogizing would take place, but the other way round. Classical scholars who knew Irish, would not be trying to get at the true signification of ɾiúbaltap by the aid of Latin, but on the contrary, they would be aided much by ɾiúbaltap towards seeing the true inwardness and the true neatness of the Latin construction.

"Now, if conclusions of any worth are to be drawn from analogies, the analogies themselves must be complete."

This principle, in this connection, is just as if one should hold that, given a resemblance between a dog and a horse, consisting in the fact that both were quadrupeds, then the moment the resemblance stopped short, and did not go on to be complete and exhaustive, so that they were both dogs, or both horses, it followed at once that they did not agree in the fact of being both four-footed. That is to say, it followed that some one of those beasts had either at least five, or at most three feet; or, that the four feet on either part was no resemblance at all, not even as to that circumstance; and, so, "*ambulatur*," in Latin, could not be similar to "ɾiúbaltap" in Irish, because *ambulo* and ɾiúbal are not inflected alike to a finish. Is it not of the very essence of analogy, to be incomplete? Analogy is defined in the best dictionaries, "agreement, or resemblance between things *in certain relations, or aspects*, as *form*, or *function*; *similarity without identity*." (Standard

Dictionary, Funk and Wagnall, 1905). Will you point out *how—if—ambulatur* differs in *form*, or in *function* from ṁúḃaltaṁ—from ṁúḃaltar either alone, or in your sentence? Will you? But, of course you will not. Come on, then, with what you will do.

"The classical form"—you mean, of course, the Latin form; Latin and classical are not convertible terms—"corresponding to the Irish ḃíteaṁ aṫ ṁúḃal, or ṫáṫaṁ aṫ ṁúḃal is wanting, and *therefore* the analogy is incomplete. . . ."

Analogy *must* be incomplete, and so your "*therefore*" is idle and meaningless. Go on.

"And deductions from it are of little value."

Who is deducing anything from it? Only you. You are deducing its non-existence from its incompleteness, forgetting that incompleteness is a very *sine qua non* of analogy. You are arguing that because the mane and wither, etc., are wanting in the dog, so that he is not completely like a horse, he is therefore not like him even in the property of having an equal number of legs, or that that resemblance is none. Go on.

"One of the strongest arguments we have in favour of the autonomous verb [*i.e.*, in favour of the theory that the passive endings as hitherto understood, are always and essentially active] is the fact that the verb "to be" in Irish possesses every one of the forms possessed by transitive and intransitive verbs."

That fact does not exist, and if it did, how would it stead you in the least? But it does not exist. Did you ever see, or hear of, v.g. ṫáim aṫ ḃeiṫ, ḃíonn ṡé 'ṫa ḃeiṫ; ḃíteaṁ aṫ ḃeiṫ, ḃíteaṁ 'ṫa ḃeiṫ; ṫáṫaṁ ṗaoi ḃeiṫ; ṫáṫaṁ ḃéiḋe (like ṫáṫaṁ ḃuailte)? If this is your strongest argument, argument and delusion are synonymous

for this gear, for this is undoubtedly not only your strongest delusion but the very stronghold of all your delusions in the matter of the "autonomous"—this verb "to be" is. Go to.

"The analogy with Latin again fails here."

Aye; the dog is also hoofless, and, *so*, he is not four-footed. On.

"The Irish autonomous form cannot be literally translated into English."

It can, and always is, where that is not the fault of English. Literality and exact similarity are not identical.

But the question is not whether it can, or not, but whether its *voice* is active, or passive. And, what is more, it *can* be literally translated, and always. Go on.

"Hence the usual method is to use the English passive voice."

Aye, and being the usual method, it is all unmeet to give scope for the display of recondite erudition. It is over hackneyed and humdrum. Aye, there's the rub—*exactly*. But it is *not* the usual method of translating the "autonomous" form, nor the *unusual* method either. It only seems so to you, because of your fixed delusion, that the Irish is *not* passive. Who that knows Irish would translate ɾiúbaltar in the above sentence, though a true passive, 'it is walked,' or 'it is being walked,' or 'it is wont to be walked'? No man. What every one would say, in English, in such a case, is:—the people walk on the road when it is dry, when wet, they walk on the wall; or, the walking—what walking is done—is done on the road, etc. So, that, to use the English passive (in translating the Irish "autonomous") is *not* the usual method, nor the method at all. But it *could* be. Go on.

"But the Irish (autonomous) verb is *not therefore* passive."

No. Not therefore, but *otherwhere*-fore. Go on.

"Notice the English translation of the subjoined example."

Once more, translation is in nowise the matter; but, come on—there may be something besides translation to be noticed in it. Here with it.

"Áit ana-aeraċ ireaḋ an áit rin: nuair ḃíteas ag gaḃáil an tseo rain i n-am mairḃ na h-oíḋċe, airiġteas coiriḋeaċt ḋ'a ḋéanaṁ, agus foċrom mar ḃéiriḋe ag siḋ, agus foċrom eile mar ḃéiriḋe ag seiċeaḋ, agus annrain airiġteas foċrom mar ṫiocfaiḋe fuar, agus mar ḃuailfiḋe, agus mar ḃéiriḋe faoi ḃualaḋ agus mar ḃrirfiḋe, agus annrain airiġteas mar ḃéaḋ seargġuaċar agus ṫóir."

1st. Who is the author of this sentence, or rather this most clumsy jumble of several sentences? A most vitally pertinent question—for, the said jumble was never written for the natural purpose of language—to convey thought—but to try and prop up a foolish theory, to try and hoist up the fallacy that the Irish passive is not passive, never passive, and *therefore* always and essentially active voice: to essay the foolish task of proving the unprovable, the impossible. It is surely an "example" well fitted to warn off the most friendly from Revival Irish, and to drive them for safety to the Literature. That, in itself, is a great service done, though the opposite was the intention. The jumble was put together specially to introduce that ḃéiriḋe faoi ḃualaḋ—an expression so grossly and jarringly uneuphonious, with its jumble of *F's* and *V's*, that it recalls the old "*bar-bar*" of the Greeks; and no man with ever so little ear for the music of speech could ever have written it—in order to prove that none of the verbs in the sentence

could be passive for all their having the passive form, because here is béirbe with it—béirbe with the same ending as buailbe—and, as béirbe can not be passive, *so*, neither can buailbe—in any context whatever! The verb "to be" is the lure, whereas it is the most powerful light possible, to light us to the plain solution of the "autonomous." Verily the real lucifer perverted into the service of darkness, as we shall see. Your beirbe proves nothing for you, and not only so, but it will be the chief instrument in exposing and upsetting your whole fabric of a vision. Take now your airigtear coirbeacc, and suppose you want to prove that it cannot be passive? Cannot I clap "le Seagan" to it at once, and can you object, or say I am wrong? Will you fall back on Sittiuc? Or will you fall back on your old trusty (but alas! most untrustworthy) question: what voice is tacar ag aireacctáil? Or, back on how the native speakers *mean*? Yes, you will fall back on anything—even on *silence*—in order to avoid the awful pass of answering what is to be done, if I add "le Seagan" to airigtear coirbeacc. You will not talk to that question, for you know that that question checkmates you once for all. And why, above all things, should you be wasting our time by asking us to stop to "notice" the *translation* of that jumble? Is it not yourself who have warned us against guidance from English translations, only a moment ago? What would you make out, or establish, by the aid of that translation? Unto what purpose do you direct it—if any? Will it bring you a jot further towards settling what is *the* question, *i.e.*, whether what you call the autonomous forms are passive, or active—and when? Not a jot, for it does not even touch that question; and it is just because you do not see this, that you bother us with it at all. Finally, your aerac is absurd in your context.

The word is aoṗaċ, from aoṗ, which has no connection whatever with *air*, but nearly always suggests preternatural —*eerie*—influences, even when used for *lampoon*. Go on.

"The autonomous form of the verb has a passive voice of its own. . . ."

Very well. Let that be the major of a syllogism. Thus: "The autonomous form of the verb has a passive form of its own: *But*, the autonomous form of the verb is found even in the verb 'to be': *Therefore*, even in the verb 'to be,' the autonomous form has a passive voice of its own." Where it is found is the trouble, though. Will you tell us? Scarcely, I think. *Silence* is wiser. Go on.

"A passive voice of its own, formed by the addition of the verbal adjective (or past participle) of the verb to the autonomous forms of the verb 'to be,' *e.g.*, ṫáṫaṗ buailtṫe, etc."

Which—"autonomous" forms of the verb "to be"—being "autonomous"—have, of course, a passive of their own, similarly formed, and so we can say, *v.g.*, ṫáṫaṗ béiṫṫe, some body, or something is "*be-d*," has suffered "*be-ing*," has "*be-ing*" perpetrated on him, etc. But, to suffer *be-ing*, to have "*be-ing*" perpetrated on one, said one must already *be*, for it is hard to suffer without *being*: And being already "be-ing," it is rather equally difficult to understand having "BE-ING," of all things, perpetrated on us. This transcends omnipotence; but the autonomous *is* mysterious.

But, now, taking even your ṫáṫaṗ buailtṫe, and supposing it to be a tense at all, and not a result, or state, *what* is it the passive *of?* Not of buailtṫeaṗ, for it is not the same tense at all. Not of ṫáṫaṗ aṡ buaḋaḋ, for the same reason. Where will you get passives for the "autonomous" simple tenses? And that, too, out of the

autonomous forms of the verb "to be"? Will you say tátar buailtear? Déirídhe buailfídhe? And what will you do for passives for the compound tenses of modal verbs, not to speak of the verb of being? Will you say tátar féadtá? Of course you will be very careful not to answer any of these questions. Go on.

"This (the 'autonomous') form of the Irish verb has a full conjugation through all the moods and tenses, active and passive voices."

Good. Now let that stand as *major*. Come on.

"All verbs in Irish (with the single exception of ir) have this form"—this "autonomous" form.

A splendid *minor*. Now, for the conclusion: *Therefore* all verbs in Irish (with the single exception of ir) have full active and passive voices. But, to have full active and passive voices, is to be necessarily transitive verbs: *Therefore* all verbs in Irish (with the single exception of ir) are necessarily transitive verbs! Go on.

"ir can have no autonomous form, because it has no meaning in itself."

I.E. It can have *every other* form *without* having any meaning in itself.? Strange that it could not have the "autonomous," if this reason (which is so inefficient against having other forms) is the only reason.

"It is as meaningless as the sign of equality (=), until the terms are placed on either side of it."

But the sign of equality is not meaningless; if it were how could it *signify*—equality, or anything else? It has at least a conventional meaning. The two little lines (=) themselves *being equal*—to the ordinary eye, at least—have, in so far, a suggestive power in themselves, suggesting equality. Goirtear clann Dé dhinn, agus ir clann Dó finn. Would you hold that ir has no meaning in

itself in this sentence ?—a sentence not concocted to the occasion either, but written by a classic Irish author good centuries ago. This, however, is a digression, having nothing to do with the matter in hand; but it is your digression, not mine.

To the point again, then—go on.

"To sum up, then . . . . "

Good! And, sure, if it is not time, bíoð áiġe! Well! To sum up ?

"The Irish autonomous form is not passive, *for* . . . ."

Good again! This, then, is the contention—this is the *quod est demonstrandum*—the Irish "autonomous" form is not passive. Let this be carefully noted—this—that the point, and matter to be proved, is, that the Irish autonomous form is not passive. And by this is meant, is active, as we shall see immediately. Go on.

"For . . ."

Very well! For . . . ?

"For—"

1st. "All verbs (except ıṙ), transitive and intransitive, even the verb ċá, have this form of conjugation."—*Major.*

2nd. "This form has a complete passive voice of its own."—*Minor.*

Therefore all verbs (except ıṙ), transitive and intransitive, even the verb ċá, have a complete passive voice of their own. (Gainsay this logic if you can). But to have a complete passive voice, is necessarily to be a transitive verb: *Therefore* all verbs (except ıṙ), transitive and intransitive, even the verb ċa, are necessarily transitive! I say oncemore, gainsay this logic if you can. I but draw the conclusions from your explicit, verbatim premisses, and it is just wonderful how you manage all unconsciously to juxtapose your propositions so opportunely, and word

them so fittingly that I found them major and minor to hand, and had only to draw the conclusion. Go on.

3rd. "The disjunctive forms of the personal pronouns are always used with it, *e.g.*, buailtear é."

Quid inde? Your remark is utterly meaningless, unless you imply that the "disjunctive" forms of the personal pronouns are necessarily *objective*, necessarily accusative. And *if* you imply that, you imply two things which are demonstrably false:—1st, that the disjunctive forms are never nominatives, and 2nd, the conjunctive forms are never accusatives. What do you make of rinn, in roillrig rinn; of rib, in aimcid rib féin? If, then, you *don't* imply that the disjunctive forms are necessarily *objective* —accusative—your observation has no meaning at all here; and if you *do* imply it, you imply what is demonstrably false. A thing, indeed, not at all new to you. Go on.

4th. "Very frequently when a personal pronoun is the object of the autonomous form of the verb. . . . ."

Object! What is this but a most bare-faced begging of the question? "*When* a personal pronoun is the *object* of the autonomous"! You forget that that is just the whole question to be settled—whether a personal pronoun is *ever* the object of the "autonomous"? Is *noun*, or pronoun, or anything else, *ever* its object? Go on.

"It (such pronoun) is placed last in the sentence, or clause to which it belongs . . ."

Quid inde?

"Thus giving a very close analogy . . ."

"Now, if conclusions of any worth are to be drawn from analogies, the analogies themselves must be complete." These are your own words (Grammar, page 317). Is "very close" the same thing as "complete"? Well?

"With the construction of the active verb, explained in par. 535."

Quid inde? Amat ille; amatur ille. The pronoun (ille) is "placed last" in the passive sentence as well as in the active, and from this "very close analogy" we infer that *amatur* is just as active as *amat*—because *ille* is placed last in both—and *ille* must be accusative, too! But moreover, what is the necessity for trying to infer what you start by assuming?—that, viz., the personal pronoun *is* the object of the "autonomous"? In passing, I may remark that your "thus giving a very close analogy with the construction of the active verb," reminds me oddly of the reasoning of Squire Thornhill:—"The premisses being thus settled," said that acute logician, "I proceed to observe that the concatenation of self-existences, proceeding in a reciprocal duplicate ratio, naturally produces a problematical dialogism, *which in some measure proves* that the essence of spirituality may be referred to the second predicable." "*Which in some measure proves*," sounds wonderfully like your "*thus giving a very close analogy*," and the "measure of proof" is very much the same in both. Go on.

5th. "Lastly, and the strongest point of all. . . ."

Then alas for the strength of the *other* "strong" points! Well?

"In the minds of *native* Irish speakers *without exception*, the word ᵭuailteaṁ in such sentences as ᵭuailteaṁ an ȝaᵭaṁ is *active*, and ȝaᵭaṁ is its object."

Here you are. This, then, is the contention from the start—the "autonomous" is (not passive but) *active*. Your strongest point, then, is 1st., an *ipse dixit* which 2nd, is clean incredible, and which even if actually the case, would, 3rd., prove nothing. It is an *ipse dixit*, for you give no proof that it is the fact, nor produce any

witness to back your assertion up. It is incredible, because it is morally impossible. Your *native* speaker is (practically without exception), a person who does not know a, b, c. And will you tell us in sober gravity and in a public book, that such persons are such exquisite experts in grammar, that they parse their words carefully and accurately in their mind, before, or while speaking, and with such inexorable unanimity ?—" the *native* Irish speakers *without exception* " ! But now, thirdly, *were it even true* that in the *native*-speaker mind, buailtear in such sentences as buailtear an gadar, was *active*, and gadar its object, not its subject, all that would follow is that the *native*-speaker was an extraordinary person, as indeed we know him to be, but wrong all the same. That is all. For, má buailtear an gadar, buailtear le duine éigin é. If the dog is struck, he is struck by some agent. And, buailtear an gadar le Seágan is quite as good Irish as buailtear an gadar ; and so long as it is, buailtear is passive, or there is no such thing in the world as a passive voice. But if le Seágan shows buailtear to be passive, buailtear is passive, for a thing must *be*, before it can be shown to be. The *native* speaker without exception ! Yes ; doubtless the native speaker without exception *spells* accurately too, in the mind, before, or while, speaking, and this likewise without a, b, c, and the autonomist, being a native speaker, and to the manner born, is an expert in their unanimous orthography ; and we get the result, we get this *unanimity* of orthography in the writings of such " native speakers " as profess to record the orthography of their class—of the *native*-speaker class. The native speaker without exception always does whatever the autonomist wants to prove—the obliging creature ! Go on.

" Before leaving this important subject . . . O'Donovan

in his Irish Grammar (p. 183) wrote as follows :—'The passive voice has no synthetic form to denote persons or numbers ; the personal pronouns, therefore, must be always expressed, and placed after the verb, and they are always *in the accusative forms*.'"

At the name of O'Donovan my hat is off ; but O'Donovan is wrong here for all that.

"For this reason." . . .

For a reason which does not exist.

"Some Irish scholars have considered the passive Irish verb to be a form of the active verb."

Such scholars should be lodged in enduring commas.

"As buailtear me." . . .

Is me accusative ?

"Thus we see that O'Donovan and Molloy bear out the fact that the noun, or pronoun after the Autonomous form of the verb is in the accusative case."

They bear out no such fact. They merely assert it, and in so doing, they merely say the thing that is not. O'Donovan is a name of quasi sacred authority on many things Irish, but, on a given point, like this, even a great authority is only just as great as the reasons he brings. O'Donovan brings no reason here—nor could he, for there *is* no reason—for stating that "the personal pronouns, here, are always in the accusative forms ;" and, so, his authority here is none. If he had even accusative "*forms*" to back him up, he were still wrong. While such *forms* served for a constant decidedly nominative *use*, as these do on every page of Irish literature, that use itself *made* them nominative. "Usus quem penes ARBITRIUM est, et JUS, et NORMA loquendi." O'Donovan, then, supplying no reason here for his assertion, is of no authority here. As for Molloy, he calls for no special comment

CHAPTER X.

Dr. Henry and the "Autonomous" Theory. Exit "Autonomous," enter "Act-of."

The lesson begins on page 19 of the Part IV. of the "Hand-book of Modern Irish." As has been said of the excursus which forms the matter of the two last chapters, this lesson has to be taken piecemeal, for the utter absence, in it, of anything like a consistent substratum, or gist. And, so, without more ado, to begin :—

"The strongest arguments advanced against its (the autonomous,) being a passive, are—

"(*a*) That it can stand by itself, without apparent subject, or object, as, ɒuaiɪceaɲ."

This same "strongest argument" might be urged against "*pugnatur*" being a passive. Would such argument make "*pugnatur*" active ?

"(*b*) That its (the autonomous,) object, if expressed, is put in the accusative case."

Will you admit that you do not see that this is a stark nude begging of the question ? "*Object*" is a begging ; "*accusative*" is a begging. Do you not see that if these two words were *proved*, the discussion was at an end ? Why, then, *not* prove them, and be done with it ? Alas, for the fatal reason that they *could not* be proved, could *never* be proved, because the opposite is not only provably but visibly the truth.

"(*c*) That *intransitive* verbs have this form." . . .

Quid inde ? Is "*itur*," "*ambulatur*," "*ventum erat*," etc. —are these "not passive," because intransitive verbs have this form ?

"E.G.—Tá‹tar, ƒéadtar, tigtear, etc."

Here is the lure; the verb of being equated with verbs of action. "Tá‹tar" is *not* an intransitive verb, because it is not a verb of action at all, but of mere being. Don't you remember that even *in*transitive verbs imply *action*, even though that action remains immanent, and does not pass over to an object? Neither is "ƒéadtar" properly an intransitive verb. It is a verb in the middle, so to speak, between the verb of being and verbs of action, a verb of ability towards action, but yet not a verb of action. For construction purposes, it is little more than a device, or "convention," after the manner of the passive forms of the verb of being.

"An intransitive verb cannot, of course, have a passive voice."

It can, and constantly does; impersonally to be sure, but indubitably and truly. Hence your "tigtear" = "coming *is done*," or, "*let* coming *be done*." In effect, by all means = "someone, etc., *comes*," or, "*is coming*"; or, "*let* someone, etc., *come*." In effect, but not in expressed form of thought, which alone is what construing is concerned with. An intransitive, then, can and constantly does have a passive voice; and, so, out go the three great "strongest arguments."

How curious it is that the Doctor himself never attempts to probe, or examine those "strongest arguments." When one quotes arguments, it is generally to criticise them, or speak to them in some way. Dr. Henry says nothing about the "strongest arguments" which he quotes. The truth is, as will be shown later on, he does not know clearly where he is, in this "autonomous" question, and, like a prudent man, says (what he deems) as little as possible. Leaving the "arguments" there, he passes on:—

"Although the autonomous cannot *itself* indicate definitely the *agent*, or *doer* of the deed, this may be done by means of the prepositions, le and aġ."

But, sure, that is just all that we want. That settles the matter once for all. But, is not that exactly what Father O'Leary denies? The Doctor's direct silence towards the three "strongest arguments" which he quotes, together with his visible determination to be at one in *some* way or other, by hook or by crook, with Father O'Leary, shows clear consent to those "strongest arguments"; but it is as clearly a consent without understanding, for, here, now, in this proposition of his which I am commenting, he knocks those three "strongest arguments" to pieces, and does not see it.

"E.G. Bualadh (*sic*) le Conn le maide é, the act of beating him with a stick was performed by Conn."

Now, gentle reader, mark! The act of beating him was done by Conn, and yet you dare not say he was beaten by Conn. "There is no such Irish as do buaileadh le Conn é, *meaning he was beaten by Conn*," but there is such Irish, meaning "*the act of beating him* WAS DONE BY CONN"! What on earth is "The act of beating him was done by Conn," but "He was beaten by Conn"? The inwardness is, that it is hoped, by avoiding "*He was beaten by Conn*," to hold harmony of some sort, no matter how vague, with the dogma of Father O'Leary, that, viz., there is no such Irish as "do buaileadh an bord le Seáġan," *meaning* "*the table was struck by John.*" Therefore he was *not* beaten by Conn, not at all; the only thing which happened was that the act of beating him was done by Conn—a totally different thing!

"Father O'Leary disputes that, in the Munster dialect the *agent*, or *doer* of the action may be thus pointed out. . . .

Not at all; that is not Father O'Leary's contention at all, nor any part of it. Father O'Leary's contention is not bounded by place or time. Father O'Leary maintains that there is NO such Irish (as Irish in which the agent, or doer may be "thus" pointed out). The word, No, is all the matter here—"No such Irish," is the contention of Father O'Leary.

"And his contention is quite correct, as far as the dialects of *Munster* and of portion of *Galway* are concerned."

It is therefore quite correct to say that there is no such thing as water in Ireland, if only a few places can be found without any! These few places make your contention that there is none at all, quite correct! Your contention is quite correct—*as far as those few places are concerned.*

"This construction is quite obsolete in the above-mentioned districts."

That is no part of the question. The question is not where, or whether it is obsolete, but *is it Irish?* Is Irish in which the *agent* or *doer* is "thus" pointed out, Irish; and is the *verb* in such Irish, *passive*, or "*autonomous*"? "The above-mentioned districts"! In some districts the whole language is obsolete and dead. Is it, therefore, "quite correct" to contend that there is *no* such thing as an Irish language? A thing must *be*, before it can be obsolete. If there is NO such Irish, such Irish cannot be obsolete. Stick to the point.

"But we have abundant examples of it in the *old* literature."

Why italics? Or why "old"? The examples of it are innumerable in Old, Middle and Modern Irish.

"And it is still a *living* form in the counties of Mayo, Sligo, Roscommon, and the whole of Ulster . . ."

Still living, and yet it never lived—"there is NO SUCH

Irish." If still living, and the literature full of it, what are autonomists driving at? The question is not where it is living or dead, but what is the voice of the verb in it. Why don't you speak to *that?* Is not that the very heart of the purpose of this lesson?

"But only in the mouths of *old* speakers."

What has *age* to do with it? The discussion is not about a point of history but one of grammar. Is to tell us the age of the speakers, to tell us the voice of the verb?

"It is becoming more and more rare among the young generation."

Quid inde? So is all the language. Talk to your point. What is the voice of the verb? The last words of your last lesson are:—"The question whether this form can ever have a passive force, will be discussed in the next lesson." Keep to that.

"The decline of the construction is probably due to the fact that ambiguity might sometimes occur where le has an idiomatic meaning, *e.g.*, 'caiteadh cloch leis' might mean either—a stone was thrown *by* him, or, someone threw a stone *at* him."

The decline is due to no such fact, but to the decline of the Language as a whole, of which decline it is but part and parcel. Besides, the question is not at all in any way about the decline of the construction, but about the construction itself. Is the construction *passive*, or *autonomous?* How is it that you are so chary of touching *this*, the very be-all and end-all of the question you profess to discuss? And now to your "ambiguous" example, where, once more, I must crave the attention of the reader to some of the ways of autonomists: Caiteadh cloch leis, you say might mean "a stone was thrown *by* him." Mark, reader, how the simple and the natural, the rational and the real

comes out when starched, ceremonious learning gets for a moment of its guard! "It might mean a stone *was thrown by* him." *Dormitat Homerus.* At normal attention, the Doctor would make it mean "*the act of throwing a stone was done by him.*" But, now, mark further: The same "caiteadh," the very self-same "caiteadh," is made to = "*was thrown*," OR "*someone threw*"; and this in a grammatical lesson on *voice.* As if, because these two expressions came to one and the same *in effect*, they were, therefore, *equally duplicates in their grammatical capacity.* As if the Irish word "caiteadh" were a sort of grammatical hermaphrodite, of this voice, or of that, as required! As if "caiteadh," the *one* Irish word made to = "*was thrown*," OR "*someone threw*," were itself, in itself, in Irish, grammatically passive and grammatically active at the same time, so that it was grammatically all one in which of the two capacities you put it into English, all one whether you render it by a passive, or by an active, and this in a grammar discussion solely concerned with *voice.* As for "ambiguity"—rubbish! All language is teeming with ambiguity, but only for those who have a *flair* for it, who look for it and want it; only for people like that man who felt a sore doubt as to whether "mile bó," meant properly a thousand cows, and not rather "*a mile of a cow*"; or for those keen Native Speakers who are always so anxious about the true and proper rendering in Irish of "*the two ends of a stick.*" For average men the great corrective context will always be ample protection against it. If you must have ambiguity, this same 'caiteadh le' could do better for you than you make it do. Take' caiteadh bróga leithe,' and, it will yield any of four meanings: shoes were thrown *at* her, shoes were thrown *by* her, shoes were *worn by* her, or shoes

were worn *wooing* her—her swain, or swains did not mind distance. And to these four perfectly sober meanings, you can add as many more of the grotesque : shoes were thrown *with* her, shoes were worn *with* her = she was used as a catapult, or sling to shoot off the shoes with, or she was shot off as well as the shoes, or she assisted at the action of shooting ; she was used as a tool to wear shoes with (v.g., she was kicked hard), or she was worn as well as the shoes, or she wore shoes in co with someone else, the two having but one pair between them, or shoes were worn dancing with her, etc., etc. Not one of these meanings but could be insisted on by a minstrel, or by the funny man in a circus, but such harmless grotesqueries will not trouble grammar among plain, everyday men. "He says a '*ship's* in the garden instead of a sheep," said Letty, with an air of superiority. "You might think he meant a ship off the sea." "No you mightn't, if you weren't silly," said Ben. *If you weren't silly!* Ex ore infantium !

It was one May afternoon, at a country ʃeiʀ. An old native speaker was being examined in the conversation competition. He was asked, among other matters, to "English" "ᴅo maʀbuiġeaᴅ le n-a ċapall ʀéin é." Whereat he put a round volume of marvel into one interjection, that a thing so *easy* should be put to him as a puzzle : "*Oh . . h sure that's that he was killed by his oon horse*" The "autonomous" war was waging away at the time, and the simple, downright answer, so dead against that theory, out of the mouth of an indisputably native speaker, was too much for the patience of one or two interested parties who were on the board, and the browbeating began. "That's wrong!" "Isn't it this?" "Isn't it that?" "Isn't it the other thing?" The poor old native speaker grew visibly

and ruefully alarmed that he would "be let home without the ᴅuaıꞅ," and with an eye to business indescribably comical, he began to agree with everyone, and would agree to any "Englishing" under the sun, of the sentence, according to how he saw the die likely to be cast. It was ludicrous to a degree to observe how he listened with all his ears and looked with all his eyes, to try and gather *what* "Englishing" exactly the browbeaters wanted, that he might agree with it at once, and not "be let home without the ᴅuaıꞅ." Poor old fellow, what was correctness or incorrectness to him, compared with not missing the prize, and the glory of winning it, and it now as good as in his grip? The browbeaters decided at last that the "Englishing" was—"he was killed *along with* his own horse," or that, at least it was "ambiguous." The old native speaker agreed like a shot, and the browbeaters dispersed in triumph, to spread the glad news that, on old-native-speaker warrant, there was no such Irish as "ᴅo mαꞃᴅuiġeαᴅ le n-α ċαραll ꝑéin é," *meaning*, "*he was killed by his own horse*," or, at least, as good as none, for that it was all, and always, "ambiguous." When Antigonus was torn to pieces *with* a bear, of course it was not *by* the bear, but *along with* the bear he was torn; or at least it was ambiguous, and must remain so!

"The following are a few examples selected from the old literature." [*Gives a list of examples*].

"Old?" And yet I remark some from Keating, from Seáġαn Ó Neαċταın, from the Lαoı Oıꞅín, and from Aoᴅġán Ó Rαᵭαılle in the collection! Surely the word 'old' is not 'ambiguous' as an adjective to 'Irish,' but has a stiffly definite sense; a sense, surely, not covering Keating and Aoᴅġán Ó Rαᵭαılle? This loose manner of thinking and writing is, I say again, accountable for much

of this whole 'autonomous' hallucination. I see down your examples 'Ḃṙıṙcɛaṁ le Ġoll a ċloġaḋ,' 'the act of breaking his helmet is performed by Goll.' What about 'ambiguity?' This is an honest case of it now, and it seems not to bother you at all. Ḃṙıṙcɛaṁ may be imperative here, may it not? This, not to speak of your translation. How in the world *can* a man of sense pen such a translation of your example? What is 'the act of breaking his helmet is performed by Goll,' but 'his helmet is broken by Goll?' Is it not like arguing to prove an axiom, to go about showing that this latter is the *visible, evident* grammatical duplicate of the Irish? And if there is NO such Irish as Ḃṙıṙcɛaṁ a ċloġaḋ le Ġoll, *meaning* '*his helmet is broken by Goll*,' how can there be such Irish, *meaning* 'the act—any act—was done by Goll?' Is it not one and the self-same English construction, to say 'the helmet is broken by a man,' or to say 'the act—any act—is done by a man'? If there is no such Irish meaning the one, how can there be such Irish meaning the other which is exactly the same as the one? Yet this is what you are building on in these inept translations.

"Taking for illustration the third example from Keating (Do maṁḋuiġeaḋ Josias le Riġ na h-Éiġipte, le h-aṁ), it seems to the writer (Dr. Henry) that the construction might be explained thus":—

Reader, now attend, if ever.

"Do maṁḋuiġeaḋ—an act of killing took place; somebody killed somebody. Here '*we*' do not state who was killed, or who did the killing."

But the sentence does; the sentence states them both. What have '*we*' to do with stating or not stating what is there stated to our hand? What ever are you thinking

of? But, of course, it is plain—do buaileadh an gadar le cloic ó Láim Caoch—to the notes on which in chapter 8, I refer you. But even letting your translations and implied theories, if any, pass, where is the explanation of the *construction* here?—the thing you put forth to give!

"Do marbuigeadh Josias. The act of killing Josias took place; someone killed Josias. Here '*we*' state who was killed, but '*we*' do not say who killed him."

But the sentence says it. The thing is *said* by the author of the sentence. All "we" have to do is to *construe* the verb, which, moreover, is what "we" profess to do, and which is exactly what "we" are keeping out from altogether. Moreover, "we" are once more sadly off guard. "Here we state who was killed." No; that would be too simple and natural. You should say, 'we state *him the action of whose killing was performed;*' as you translate 'Amhrán do rinneadh leis an Reachtaire é sin,' '*That is a song the act of composing which was done by Raftery.*' Of course it was not composed by Raftery, for there is no such Irish; "it's only how" the action of composing it *was done by Raftery, by whom it was not composed.* Again, what has it to do with the matter, *what* we state? It is not what we state that is the matter, but the parsing of what is stated by Keating, or the explanation of the construction of it, which is what you set forth to furnish.

"Do marbuigeadh Josias le Rig na-Éigipte. The act of killing Josias was done by the King of Egypt. Here '*we*' state that the killing of Josias took place, and that it was done by the King of Egypt."

And yet of course we cannot say that Josias was killed *by* the man *by whom the killing of Josias was done.* There

is NO such Irish with such meaning! The act was done by the King of Egypt; But the act was the killing of Josias; YET Josias was not killed by the King of Egypt. It was only that the act of killing him was done by the King of Egypt—a different thing altogether, of course! And, again, where, in all this, is there any explanation of *construction?*

"Do marbuigeadh Josias le Rig na h-Éigipte le h-arm. The act of killing Josias was done by the King of Egypt with a weapon. Here we give all the facts."

This piece of alleged "explanation of construction" defies all characterisation. It is a very portent of the pedantic, the fantastic and the grotesque, with yet not a spark of humour about it to indemnify the wader in any way. A little sentence of nine words, from Keating, as clear and limpid as author ever penned, stating a simple fact, is taken, to be examined solely as to its grammatical construction, by Dr. Henry, and what does he do with it? He simply says never a word about the grammar of it, but comes on, instead, with four ponderous, preposterous enumerations of the "facts," "all the facts" of that simple fact! Not a word about the construction, Irish or English; not a word about the voice of the verb, not a word about whether 'le Rig na h-Éigipte,' is an ablative, or what? not a word about 'the construction' he set out to 'explain,' not a word, but, instead, he gives us "all the facts," and walks off as if he had delivered a most copious and conclusive explanation—of the construction!

'Do marbuigeadh Josias le Rig na h-Éigipte, le h-arm:' 'Josias was killed by the King of Egypt with a weapon:' To construe 'marbuigeadh' in this little sentence, to settle whether it is passive, or

autonomous—that is exactly and solely what is to be done; and here is how Dr. Henry does it: Here: It is worth reproducing as a sample of what is expected to pass, and what too often passes, in Irish connections, for deep and searching erudition. Here, I say, is how Dr. Henry discusses the '*construction*' of 'mapbuigeadh,' in the above sentence:—

1st. Do mapbuigeadh; "An act of killing took place; somebody killed somebody. Here '*we*' do not state who was killed, or who did the killing."

2nd. Do mapbuigeadh Josias; "The act of killing Josias took place; someone killed Josias. Here '*we*' state who was killed, but '*we*' do not say who killed him."

3rd. Do mapbuigeadh Josias le Rig na h-Éigipte; "The act of killing Josias was done by the King of Egypt. Here '*we*' state that the killing of Josias took place, and that it was done by the King of Egypt." [But '*we*' do not say with what].

4th. Do mapbuigeadh Josias le Rig na h-Éigipte, le h-arm; "The act of killing Josias was done by the King of Egypt, with a weapon. Here '*we*' give all the facts!"

Ninety-nine words to translate nine! And said 'translation' to be supposed, and accepted as, *an* '*explanation of the construction!*' And the construction being thus 'explained,' the Doctor passes on:

"The Munster and Galway construction would now be . . ."

A moment back, it was only '*portion*' of Galway. And, as if the question was *what* was going now, and not the settling whether a given construction is passive, or 'autonomous!'

"In English, the passive would most naturally be used to translate all the above."

'*Most naturally!*' And, so, alas, most unmeetly for the display of learning. What is natural and simple never connotates mark, or importance, and so, it would never answer the purpose. '*Most naturally!*' How visibly *the* word!—in its own connection. But that connection is not the matter. Translation, most natural, or most unnatural, is not the matter in hand.

"As the Irish construction would sound unnatural in that language."

Nego suppositum. What you are trying to imagine *into* the Irish construction, is *not* the Irish construction, but an abortion of the 'autonomist' brain. What you are endeavouring to imagine in the Irish construction, is some duplicate of your 'most unnatural' monstrosities of translation, something, for instance, like your translation of 'Do ṁuineadh leo an comhairle rin;' 'The act of doing as they were advised was performed by them;' or, of 'dúiṁigeadh linn an eilit ṁaol;' 'The act of awaking the hornless doe was performed by us.' But the Irish is no such duplicate, and it will defy even imagination to find it so. It is only autonomists that have concocted such English for the beautiful, natural Irish construction, but the play is played pretty well out.

"This fact"—the fact that in English the passive would *most naturally* be used to translate the above—"has misled many into thinking that the form is passive."

This is about the first committal observation of Dr. Henry on the 'autonomous.' This is clearly holding that the form is *not* passive, and no 'ambiguity' left to fall back on. 'This fact has *misled many into thinking*

that the form is passive : ' *this* is the reason of the error of the many, ' this fact,' that ' in English the passive would most naturally be used to translate all the above '— *this* it is which has *caused* the error. And yet it is not this at all, but quite another, not this, but "*because* le could be used to indicate the agent." The error is caused by a fact, *because that fact is not the cause of the error at all, but another fact!* But, '*fact*' or '*because*,' we are misled anyhow ; the form is not passive but active ; *and yet it admits* le *with an oblative, to indicate the agent!*

"It must be remembered that the English passive is ambiguous, and may bear any of three meanings, each of which is clearly distinguished in Irish, *e.g.* It was made when I came home."

'Ambiguity' again! The point is not whether the passive is ambiguous, but whether it is ambiguous that the passive *is* passive, or active. Is *that* ambiguous in your example? Is there any ambiguity about the voice of 'it was made?' Don't you see that it is *voice*, not syntax, we are discussing. If syntax comes in, once in a while, to illustrate, or give evidence, that is all right where illustration, or evidence is needed. But what illustration, or evidence is needed here, to show the *voice* of 'it was made?' What has voice to do with '*when* I came home?' If there *is* ambiguity, it is not in the *voice* it is. Keep to the point.

"'It was made when I came home,' may, have (*a*), an active meaning, and may signify that the *act of making it was performed subsequent to, or immediately on my arrival.*"

And where is the active meaning in this? Are you making 'it was made' autonomous too? I thought the 'autonomous' was an exclusively Irish prerogative, but here you are actually translating 'it was made' into

'the act of making it was performed!' But even in this 'translation,' where is the *active* meaning? Say '*act-of*' meaning, if you like, and it will suit very well, for this whole lesson of yours just bristles with this '*act-of;*' '*act-of*' *doing this*, and '*act-of*' *doing that*, and nothing but '*act-of;*' but, as for '*active*,' remember that in *voice* connections it has a strictly definite application, and all the '*act-of's*' in the world could never bring an '*act-of*' to an active in that application. And here I heartily thank thee, Doctor, for teaching me that word. That '*act-of*' will surely oust the 'autonomous' name, and henceforth we shall be hearing not of the 'autonomous,' but of the '*act-of*' verb, and the autonomists will have one thing at least to boast of, that, viz., if they have failed to convince us that the 'autonomous' was *active*, they have compelled us at least to admit that it is '*act-of*,' and the two words are so near in '*sound*' that it is seldom but there will be a chance for 'ambiguity'—a darling favourite of autonomists.

"(*b*). It may mean that it was actually *being made*, when I came. The Irish for this is:—Ծí ṙé ᴅ'á ծéaṅaṁ or ծíṫeaṙ 'ʒá ծéaṅaṁ . . ."

Not at all, Doctor; the Irish for it is neither of these two renderings. Not the first, for it has only been asserted, and will take a long time to prove, that 'ᴅ'a' is Irish at all in such a construction as '*being made*.' You certainly won't hear much of it in Galway, and if you did, it would only prove that the people's articulation was degenerating. It is purely 'Revival Irish,' just as 'a ᴅ'ıaṙṙaıծ,' for 'aʒ ıaṙṙaıծ,' as 'ʒuṁa maıṫ aʒaṫ,' for 'ʒo ṙaıb maıṫ aʒaṫ,' as 'ʒo cé,' in blend for ʒo ծé (caᴅ é) and cé, and as scores of others, with however, this much of an excuse for 'a ᴅ'ıaṙṙaıծ,' etc., that, I dare say,

there are persons who use them, or, rather, who articulate that way. Slender 'ᴅ', for the slender 'ʒ' sound, is not at all unknown, even in English. I know people who could not say 'peg,' 'leg,' etc., for a fortune, but something which would be spelled exactly 'ᵽeıᴅ,' 'ʟeıᴅ,' etc., in Irish. It is doubtless persons of that same kind who originated ᴀ ᴅ'ıᴀᵽɯıᴅ; and since they were native speakers, of course, it was all one how they spoke —it was the native article, and that's the last word. Criticism of, or question about anything native would be, of course, at once stark madness. But, in any case, this is only a detail—this 'ᴅ'ᴀ' question—and that not even a detail of the main discussion, to which it will not matter a pin how it may be decided. I have touched it only to give an illustration of how it has come about that the very main discussion itself is there. It is there for exactly the same reason that the detail is there. It is there because assertions are built on, as if they were arguments, or facts, if only they come from 'native-speaker' quarters. It is there because the native speaker has never yet been challenged to give an account of his pretensions, seldom though pretensions more extravagant have been advanced. But to your alternative translation of '*it was being made*': ᵬíʇeᴀr 'ʒᴀ ᵬéᴀnᴀṁ: it is all wrong, Doctor, for the English is a purely passive expression, and the Irish purely active, and *voice* is all the matter in hand—don't forget that, ever. The matter from the start is—passive or autonomous? No amount, then, of equivalency *in effect* is a bit at all to the point; the whole question, from the outset, is a question of the *grammatical character* of a given expression, and, in those severely specific conditions, *passive capacity* can never be an *active capacity*. To botch up translation, then, which only gets there in *effect*, while

the discussion is all, and only, a matter of *the grammar* of the situation, is the merest *ignoratio elenchi*, a shifting of the issue pure and simple. Mind, I do not say that your translation is bad *Irish*. I only say that it is bad translation, the ideal worst that could be given in the case; because, as voice is the whole matter, that must needs be the very worst translation which goes to lure the attention off from voice altogether, by confusing the voices, using one indifferently for the other, as if voice, which is the very all of the question, were the one thing, of all the world, which had nothing to say to the question. Lastly, your '᚛ᚇᚐ᚜' is wrong. The 'ᚇ' should not be aspirated, nor joined into one word with the 'ᚐ,' nor should the 'ᚐ' itself be marked with the long accent.

"Similarly, the sentence—'Irish is taught'—means that it is *being taught*, or that *somebody teaches it*. . . ."

N. Another grammatical hermaphrodite, Doctor, but, happily, not in Irish this time, but in English; a fresh confusion of passive voice with active, as if they were grammatically convertible, and this in the thick of a discussion on *voice*, in a *grammar lesson*. 'Being taught,' OR 'somebody teaches'! No, Doctor; 'Irish is taught,' in this specific connection, means strictly and solely 'Irish is taught,' and does *not* mean 'somebody teaches it.' In effect it *implies* and *supposes* that; but effect is not the matter here, and to imply and suppose is a very different thing from to *mean*. If *race* is the matter of a discussion, then woman is man. If not race, but *sex*, is the question, then woman is woman, and not man. If *effect* is all the matter, then 'Irish is taught' is 'somebody teaches Irish.' If not 'effect,' but *grammatical* capacity, is all the matter, then 'Irish is taught' is precisely and strictly 'Irish is taught,' and so far from being convertible with 'somebody

teaches Irish,' it is precisely its very antipodes. In a grammar lesson, then, on *voice*, to say 'Irish is taught,' OR 'somebody teaches it,' is absurd—the 'OR' is absurd.

"*The Irish passive is formed—(a) from the verb 'to be' and the verbal adjective e.g.* tá fé déanta, it is done (finished); táthar buailte someone is beaten (beating completed)."

That is, there is no passive at all for the simple tenses; no passive where the auxiliary does not come in, no passive except in tenses of action completed. You give the passive of only the present of completed action. What about the passive of the 'timeless present'—general truths; what of the passive of *repeated* action in present time, of *momentary action* in present time, and of the historic present? How will you get passives for all these 'presents' out of your little *a*?—not to speak of past and future tenses and their various shades?

"(*b*). *From the verb 'to be' with* do, *the appropriate possessive adjective, and the verbal noun, e.g.*—Dí fé d'á déanamh, it'was (being) made; táthar d'á bualadh, someone is (being) beaten."

Passing over your 'd'a,' as a minor error, and extraneous to the actual discussion, is there no past tense, but a tense of continuous action in the past? Is there no passive of *simple past action, of momentary action in the past, of repeated action in the past, of aorist action in the past*? What about passives for all these? And without context, how will your "Dí fé d'a ('g'a) déanamh," yield 'it was (being) made,' rather than 'he was making it'? As for your '*someone is* (*being*) *beaten*,' as a translation of 'táthar d'a bualadh,' it is a nutshell of betrayal. It shows that you never understood the 'autonomous' theory, even such as it is, at all.

Tá—and yet you undertake to tell the *gender* and number! Don't you know that tá in Irish grammar is necessarily impersonal, necessarily numberless and genderless? And don't you know—but, indeed, it is clear you don't—that tá and its fellows of the verb 'to be,' joined (by ag) with a possessive adjective and a verbal noun, make the expression so visibly active that all ambiguity is immediately precluded? 'Tá sé 'g a bualadh,' by itself alone, without context, is necessarily ambiguous. As when Polonius is *at* supper, it may be either where *he eats* or where he *is eaten*; so in 'tá sé 'g a bualadh,' without context, it may always be either where he *beats*, or where he *is* (*being*) *beaten*. But it is not so in 'tá 'ga bualadh.' In 'tá 'ga bualadh,' context or no context, it is never where the party is *beaten*, but always where it *beats*. 'Tá' is strictly impersonal, strictly numberless, strictly genderless. But the passive of 'continuous' action, in Irish, as strictly demands that person, number, and gender be expressly signified. Therefore, that passive can never be signified by 'tá.' If the party in tá is at supper, it is where it *eats*, not where it *is* (being) *eaten*. 'Tá 'g a bualadh,' is *not* 'somebody is (being) beaten,' but '*somebody is beating him*.' So you see, Doctor, this verb-to-be business, though exceedingly simple, requires to be studied for all that.

"(c). *From the verb 'to be,' with the verbal noun preceded by* fá, *e.g.* ta sé fá bualadh, he is (being) beaten; tá Éire fá sgrios agus fá géan-chrádh, Ireland is (being) destroyed and persecuted."

No, Doctor, not so. 'Tá sé fá bualadh' and 'tá Éire fá sgrios agus fá géan-chrádh' are not a voice at all, for they are not *verb expressions* at all. They are

expressions not of action but of *state*. A verb expression must indicate action as opposed to state; *action*, whether completed or to come, or actually going on—ag-*tion*. Your fá cannot do this; it can only indicate fá-*tion*—state condition, situation, circumstances, etc.; and your examples are as purely *state* predications as 'tá fé faoi glar'—faoi ualach—faoi leachtrom—faoi buaidhreadh faoi gruaim, etc. In a verb expression, no matter how passive, the action and an agent are *immediately* present to the mind by immediate implication. In a *state* expression, action, if thought of at all, is but a matter of distant implication, and the agent of remoter still. fá-*tion* is not ag-*tion*, and would never be understood as such, at its best, but as used in 'Revival,' it would not be understood as anything—it would not be understood at all. What genuine speaker of Irish, unless strongly forewarned, could repress a stare, if you stated to him that Mass was being said, in the shape 'tá an t-Aifreann faoi rádh'? What such speaker but would cover his ears and flee from the torture of such stuff as this:—Tá an dorlar faoi forglaidh—tá an rséal faoi mhaidheamh—tá ór faoi fágáil—tá fíon faoi ól—tá feoil faoi ithe—tá an gnó faoi chur i gcrích—tá fé faoi fhóradh—bí an riúbal faoi dhéanadh—tá an gnó faoi fágbáil faoi—tá a teanga faoi leigint faoi—tá fé faoi thabairt faoi deara—etc., etc.? What Irish speaker, I say, could endure such trash as the foregoing? No, Doctor, that fá, fé, etc., was a forced fiction devised originally to furnish a 'continuous' to táthar buailte, which was itself devised to furnish a passive to a passive—a passive to buailtear. Having once got fairly afoot, in the shape táthar fé bhualadh, it soon made bold to appear in the shape, tá fé fé bhualadh as

convertible with tá fé 'gá buailadh, passive. But the difference between them is summed up with the oddest felicity in the two prepositions themselves. 'Ag' argues an act; fá argues a state. Ag-*tion* and fá-*tion* will serve as mnemonics, and none at all the worse for seeming a little droll.

"With the *verbal adjective*, le is often used in N.C. to indicate the doer, *e.g.*—Bád déanta le Mac Confnámha, a boat made by Forde."

And yet 'clóbuailte le Gill' as Irish for 'printed by Gill,' is the most unmitigated nonsense! Here, again, Doctor, you are off guard, and think and write naturally. You say, 'a boat made by Forde,' instead of 'a boat the act of making which was performed by Forde;' you say 'to indicate the doer,' instead of 'to indicate the person by whom the act of doing which, was performed.' It is manifest that you are anxious to seem to agree with the theories of Fr. O'Leary, and yet to be able to say, should those theories be ever found wanting, that you never agreed with them at all. Is it possible, Doctor, that you do not see what is implied in this last word of yours? "le," you say, 'is often used to indicate the doer,' and, so, you translate '*made by*,' instead of '*the act of making which, was done by*.' Bád déanta le Mac Confnámha, is, then, altogether a different thing from 'bád do finneadh le Mac Confnámha.' In 'bád déanta le Mac Confnámha,' Forde is the 'doer,' the boat is *made by* Forde; in 'bád do finneadh le Mac Confnámha,' Forde is not the doer, the boat is not made by Forde. 'Bád déanta le Mac Confnámha,' is a boat made by Forde; "Bád do finneadh le Mac Confnámha," is a boat *not* MADE by Forde, but only a boat '*the act of making which was* DONE *or* PERFORMED *by* FORDE! *Quid est posse*

dissentire, nisi posse ponere actum dissentionis? "There are a thousand other more sublimated and refined niceties of notions, relations, quantities, formalities, quiddities, haeccities, and such like abstrusities, as one would think no one could pry into, except he had not only such cat's eyes as to see best in the dark, but even such a piercing faculty as to see through an inch-board, and spy out what really never had any being." As an original description this may be just or unjust, but as a prophetic foreshadowing of the autonomous mind, it is simply perfect. Seeing through an inch-board is a small matter compared to seeing a difference, or even a distinction of sense between the expressions 'a boat made by Forde,' and 'a boat the action of making which was done by Forde;' between 'Josias was killed by the King of Egypt,' and 'the action of killing Josias was done by the King of Egypt.' Plain average acumen, even of a subtle turn enough, will fail to discover a *haeccity* or difference here, which, surely, is the minutest of all differences, but the autonomist finds a very gulf fixed of diversity, yea, more than a gulf fixed, for the difference he finds is the difference between being and nonentity. There is such Irish as 'do ṗinneaḋ an báḋ le Mac Conṡnáṁa,' *meaning* '*the action of making the boat was done by Forde,*' but there is no such Irish as 'do ṗinneaḋ an báḋ le Mac Conṡnáṁa,' *meaning* '*the boat was made by Forde!*'

And, now, Doctor, only one word more. Many other things throughout your Handbook have caught my attention, of which nothing for the present. But, let me say also, and most ungrudgingly, and with sincerest pleasure, that the said Handbook, taking it for all in all, lays the spoken language all round, but the spoken language of Connacht in especial, under a deep debt of gratitude. It is to aid

such laudable effort, to help it out, to warn it of pitfalls in parts where of late the safe but hackneyed highway has been condemned, and where we are invited off into swamps and quagmires as the true and only road, it is for this, and not for any less neighbourly motive, that I have discussed this lesson of your Handbook.

CHAPTER XI.

"I THINK THAT WILL DO, SIR."

THE AUTONOMOUS VERB.

"Obj. 'Oh, but I have seen, over and over again, in Keating and in our old Irish writers, this 'Independent' form of the verb used with a passive force.'"

"Father O'Leary's answer:—'I tell you distinctly you have not."

In answer to Father O'Reilly, I wish to repeat that statement emphatically. The little Irish word, ʇe, is the cause of all the trouble.

In order to come to the point at once, let us take our old friend, "John struck the table." That is a short narrative. The action of which it is the narrative might have taken place in any of three shapes. It might have been instantaneous. It might have been continuous. It might have been intermittent.

1. John struck the table.
2. John was striking the table.
3. John used to be striking the table.

Here is the Irish :—

1. Do buail Seáġan an bóṫo.
2. Do bí Seáġan aġ bualaḋ an búiṫo.
3. Do bíoḋ Seáġan aġ bualaḋ an búiṫo.

Here is the Autonomous form :—

1. Do buaileaḋ an bóṫo.
2. Do bíċeaṙ aġ bualaḋ an búiṫo.
3. Do bíṫí aġ bualaḋ an búiṫo.

Here is the Passive :—

1. Bí an bóṫo buailṫe.
2. Bí an bóṫo d'á bualaḋ.
3. Bíoḋ an bóṫo d'a bualaḋ.

Now, whatever voice do buaileaḋ an bóṫo is, do bíċeaṙ aġ bualaḋ an búiṫo is the same. But do bíċeaṙ aġ bualaḋ an búiṫo is necessarily active. There is no possibility of giving to the phrase, aġ bualaḋ, a passive force. Therefore do buaileaḋ is necessarily active.

Now, let us take the first of the examples which Father O'Reilly quotes from Keating: "Maṙ aṫá ġuṙaḃ le cláiḋeaṁ an aṫaiġ Goliath, do díċeannaḋ le Dáiḃiḋ é.

Here are the three forms as above :—

1. Do díċeannaḋ é.
2. Do bíċeaṙ 'ġá díċeannaḋ.
3. Do bíṫí 'ġá díċeannaḋ.

If No. 1 be passive voice, then No. 2 must be passive, and so must No. 3. But Nos. 2 and 3 are necessarily active. Therefore, No. 1 must be necessarily active voice.

I don't think it is necessary that I should go through the other four examples. They can all be proved to be active in the same way. The continuousness of the action cannot change it from passive to active. Neither can its

intermittency. If Father O'Reilly wishes, all he has to do is to furnish me with any number of examples he likes, from Keating or from any other Irish writer, ancient or modern, and I will show him, just as I have shown above that they are all necessarily active.

"But what about the phrase 'le Dáibhidh'?"

The introduction of the phrase, "le Dáibhidh," cannot change the voice of the verb. Look at this:—

1. Do dhíceannadh le Dáibhidh é.
2. Do bhíodar 'gá dhíceannadh le Dáibhidh.
3. Do bhíthí 'gá dhíceannadh le Dáibhidh.

No. 2 and No. 3 are necessarily active, in spite of, "le Dáibhidh." Therefore, so is No. 1. Keating has numerous examples of all three. All three are active, transitive, autonomous.

All that I ever wanted to prove by means of the quotation from the Caiteach was that the introduction of some sort of agent by means of oc or la was *not* a proof that the verb was passive.

In other words, that oc or la in such constructions was *not* the equivalent of the English word "by" expressing purely personal agency. As a matter of fact, "le" can, and does, both in spoken and written Irish, ancient and modern, introduce any cause, or source, of an action, when that cause, or source, is a *mixture* of both agent and instrument, *e.g.* Do leagadh cruinn mhóra le neart na gaoithe. Here the wind is both agent and instrument. Here "le" does not prove that do leagadh is passive, although it introduces a certain agent. The agent it introduces is an instrumental, not a purely personal, agent. The "le" here is not the equivalent of "by" as distinguished from "with."

"But does not the 'le' in 'le Dáibid' quoted above, express purely personal agency?"

Does it? What does it express where the operation of cutting off the head is narrated as continuous? What is the meaning of "le" in "do bíodh ag díceannadh an ceann le Dáibíd"? Keating, I think, has that construction very frequently. Does "le Dáibíd" here render "ag díceannadh" passive?

Can it possibly do so? Can "by," expressing purely personal agency, follow an active verb? What sort of English would this be: "(some one) was cutting off the giant's head by David?" Is that the same as "The giant's head was being cut off by David?"

Here are two Irish sentences for students to reflect upon:—

"Imthigh leat chun an aonaigh agus ceannuigh leat ba agus caoire agus tabair leat abhaile iad agus beir leat anran fíor ar an inse iad agus foraigh leat ann iad go dtagad-sa chugat."

Here is another form of the same sentence:—

"Imthigthear leat chun an aonaigh agus ceannuigthear leat ann ba agus caoire agus tugtar leat abhaile iad agus beirtear leat anran fíor ar an inse iad agus foraigthear leat ann iad go dtagad-sa chúgat."

In what voice are the verbs in this second form?

"Passive, of course."

Why?

"Each of them is followed by 'le' with the personal agent."

In what voice are the same verbs in the first form?

"They are in the active voice."

But they are followed there by the very same "le," with the very same personal agent.

"Oh, but 'le' in the first form has not the same meaning which the 'le' in the second has."

How do you know that?

"In the second form the 'le' connects the passive voice with the agent. In the first form the 'le' means simply 'with'; 'Go away with yourself to the fair,' etc."

Very good, sir. So, in the second form the verbs are passive, because the "le" means "by," and the "le" means "by" because the verbs are passive! I think that will do, sir.

I dare say there are people besides Father O'Reilly whose minds are not yet satisfied upon this matter. I think, therefore, that it is not to be regretted that Father O'Reilly has elicited further discussion.

I don't think it is necessary that I should say anything about the relations between grammar and historic facts. They help each other. The grammar often clears up a doubt regarding a fact. A certain fact often clears up a doubtful point of grammar. PETER O'LEARY, P.P.

"In answer to Fr. O'Reilly, I wish to repeat that statement"—that we have never seen what we have seen scores of times in Keating and the old writers—"emphatically."

Quid inde? All that follows is that we have that statement, that erroneous statement, now emphatically as well as distinctly from Fr. O'Leary, whereas we had it hitherto only distinctly. But the trouble is that neither distinctness nor emphasis, nor both, can turn an error into a truth.

"The little word le is the cause of all the trouble."

To the autonomists, yes.

"In order to come to the point at once, let us take our old friend, 'John struck the table.'"

The point, indeed, for, of course, "John struck the table," is distinctly and emphatically the same as le claidheamh an aitheis Goliath do dhíteannadh le Dáibhidh é! This is coming to the point, surely!

"Here is the Irish:—Do bhuail Seághan an bord; do bhí Seághan ag bualadh an bhuird; do bhíodh Seághan ag bualadh an bhuird: Here is the autonomous:—Do bhuaileadh an bord, etc."

Where is Seághan here? And why omitted from the autonomous form? Is it not to keep "the little word le" out of sight as long as ever possible? "The little word le," so obnoxious to autonomists.

"Here is the passive:—Bhí an bord bhuailte, etc."

No. This is not the passive of "do bhuail. .. an bord" but, go on. All this is outside the point, to which you were to come at once, and so need not detain us.

"Now, whatever voice 'do bhuaileadh an bord' is, 'do bhíthear ag bualadh an bhuird' is the same."

No. Not at all. That Achilles of yours is long since at rest—see the seventh chapter.

"Now, let us take the first of the examples which Fr. O'Reilly quotes from Keating: Mar atá gurab le claidheamh an aitheis Goliath, do dhíteannadh le Dáibhidh é."

Yes! Let us take that—THAT.

"Here are the three forms as above."

Oh, no; there is here but one form, and that alone is what we have to take, for better, for worse. But, rather than seem not to hear you out, say on.

"Do dhíteannadh é; do bhíthear 'gá dhíteannadh; do bhíthí 'gá dhíteannadh; if No. 1 be passive voice, No. 2 must be passive, and so must No. 3."

Alas, no. This is your dead Achilles, and this is the second time you invoke him from the shades. But he'll fight no more. He is dead and buried in chapter seven. Achilles shall fight no more.

"I don't think it is necessary that I should go through the other four examples. They can all be proved to be active in the very same way."

In the very same way! But that way is long since 'no road.' It is closed for good and all in chapter 7. Achilles shall fight no more.

"If Father O'Reilly wishes, all he has to do is to furnish me with any number of examples he likes, from Keating, or from any other Irish writer, ancient or modern, and I will show him, just as I have shown above, that they are all necessarily active."

Just! Very much 'just'—as you have shown above! But there's the trouble. All you have shown him above is one more example of the danger, even for great powers, of running out, sudden and unprovided, to war. But that is somewhat a different thing from showing him that 'all the above' are necessarily active.

"But what about the phrase 'le Dáibíd,' ?"

Ah! now, do please, speak to that!

"The introduction of the phrase 'le Dáibíd,' cannot change the voice of the verb."

Introduction? Change? What introduction? What change? The phrase is not introduced; it is *there*. It is a part of Keating's sentence. Construe it. Is it an ablative? If so, whether of instrument or of agent? You will scarcely maintain that it is ablative of instrument; and, if not but of agent—'what will you do with it?' 'It cannot change the voice of the verb,' you say, and you say well, It can *not*. But *nego suppositum*. You are dreaming of an

active voice in ᴅíċeannaḋ, and as if someone was trying to 'change' that voice by 'introducing' 'le Ḋáiḃiḋ' which is already there. Nothing of which is being done. It is only being maintained that 'ᴅíċeannaḋ' is true passive, and that 'le Ḋáiḃiḋ,' so far from 'changing' that passive, is one of the many things which go to make that passive evident.

"Look at this; ᴅo ᴅíċeannaiḋ le Ḋáiḃiḋ é; ᴅo ḃiṫeaṙ 'ʒá ᴅíċeannaḋ le Ḋáiḃiḋ; ᴅo ḃíṫí 'ʒá ᴅíċeannaḋ le Ḋáiḃiᴅ. Nos. 2 and 3 are necessarily active, in spite of 'le Ḋáiḃiḋ.' Therefore, so is No. 1."

Alas! the dead Achilles once more—the third time and the worst yet. Nos. 2 and 3 are necessarily active, in spite of 'le Ḋáiḃiḋ.' Yes, indeed, and, what's more, they and 'le Ḋáiḃiḋ' hold such spite to each other that they are impossible combinations. Yet here is Fr. O'Leary asserting that "Keating has numerous examples of all three."

I arrest this proposition as a fine specimen of Fr. O'Leary's magnificent recklessness. He asserts that Keating has numerous examples of a construction, not only before he finds it in Keating, but before he stops to reflect whether it is an impossible construction or not. I ask him now kindly to produce *one, even one*, of those numerous examples of 'ᴅo ḃíṫeaṙ 'ʒá ᴅíċeannaḋ le Ḋáiḃiḋ'—le cláiḋeaṁ—as identical in all but time with 'ᴅo ᴅíċeannaḋ le Ḋáiḃiḋ é, le cláiḋeaṁ—I ask him to produce '*one bare one*' of those numerous examples out of Keating, or out of any other Irish writer, old, middle, or modern. But, of course, I shall wait a long time. This assertion of Fr. O'Leary's is simply a climax. It shows him at his very best—in this particular line. That he should, not to say assert, but

even dream that they were to be found in Keating, nay, that he should for a moment even regard them as possible expressions in Keating's sense, in the sense of the discussion in hand, shows with the most ruthless clearness, that he spoke before stopping to understand what he was saying, suggests, indeed, that with him, understanding what he was saying was a matter altogether secondary to the saying of it. Within the meaning of the question in debate, that is to say, within sober meanings of any kind, 'do bhéarr 'gá bhéanamh le Dáibhí le claidheamh' is an absolutely impossible expression. When Horace piles up incongruities to depict a chimera or a monster—a woman's head, a horse's neck, limbs and body of different animals, feathers of different birds, and finally the tail of a fish; there were still head and tail, and Horace was painting a possible thing. But 'bhéarr 'gá bhéanamh le Dáibhí, le claidheamh,' as a duplicate, in all but time, of 'do bhéanamh le Dáibhí é, le claidheamh' is a stark impossible thing. It is like a man with two heads, one on his shoulders, and the other joined by a neck to the soles of his two feet, and that a woman's neck and head, too. It is a sane, active construction as far as 'le Dáibhí,' 'le Dáibhí' is the passive head and neck frozen on to its soles. Or, it is like a fowling piece with two stocks, a stock at each end of the barrels. You load and fire at one end, but there is no shot; the stock at the other end says—it is from this end you should fire, and I block your shot. It is an impossible gun. Do bhéarr 'gá bhéanamh le Dáibhí, has an agent in 'bhéarr' at one end, and an agent in 'le Dáibhí' at the other; the first an active, nominative, unnamed agent; the second, a passive, ablative, expressed agent—an impossible sentence.

Thus far, then, the merits of the construction in the sense of the discussion in hand. Of course, if one wants not sober meanings, but absurdity; if one wants something like the grotesqueries of a clown in a circus, that is another matter. If you want to split the sides of the groundlings, if you want to cater for such people as will have 'mile bó' mean 'a mile of a cow,' or 'dá pingin go leic,' 'two pence come here,' or 'port a' chuille,' 'the jig o' the wattle,' or 'drawing on wood' to mean 'drawing a cart over a wooden bridge,' or 'children in arms,' 'children in arms loaded'—if that's what you want, the construction will serve the turn fairly well: 'Cáca ag dúnad an doruir le Seágan,' Pat? How would you 'English' that?" "Oo, that's that they're putting in John oo a door, an' making a door oo um." D'fédir gur beag de'n gaoith do choingeocad fé amach 'na diaid sin! immediately added Pat. "That irz not id," says Micil, "but, someone is closing the door along with John." "Noo, nor that'sh not id, nayther," rejoins Pat, "John is well able innuff to close the door umsel; but it's fot it mains that sum wan is closin' the *door* and closin' *John!*" How do you mean, Pat? How 'closing John'? "The fellow is at the door, goin' out hoom, wut iz hand an the latch, an' he gives John his answer [*closes John!*], and thin pulls the door afther him" [closes the door]. These are exactly the senses possible in Fr. O'Leary's Irish expression. Dicear 'gá dícealnad le Daibid = any one of three things:—1st. Someone was beheading him with David—David being the deadly weapon used, the immediate, live, literal weapon. 2nd. Someone was beheading him along with David—assisting David at the work. 3rd. Someone was beheading him along with David—beheading him *and*

David. In mere, crude possibility, any one of these three grotesque senses might be possible in the Irish expression, forged by Father O'Leary, but nobody could ever know which. In other words, the only type of sense possible in Fr. O'Leary's construction, and that by bare possibility, is a type which is absolutely impossible outside of the grotesque; and this is the construction which Fr. O'Leary makes identical with Keating's, save for the matter of time; this is the construction of which numerous examples, he says, are to be found in Keating. Again, therefore, I would ask him to oblige by showing us one—'one bare one'—of those numerous examples.

"All that I ever wanted to prove by means of the quotation from the Cabac was, that the introduction of some sort of agent by means of oc, or la, was *not* a proof that the verb was passive. *In other words*, that oc, or la in such constructions was *not* the equivalent of the English word 'by', expressing purely personal agency."

But that is just what "oc," or "la" is the equivalent of in such constructions. You are dreaming of your distinction between 'with' and 'by' in such constructions; but that no such distinction exists, see all the quotations from Master William in chapter seven. You admit by your '*in other words*' that anything equivalent to the English word 'by,' expressing purely personal agency, *would be* a proof that the verb was passive. That's all we want.

You say on page 37 of the *Irish Prose Composition*: Is ua Donnall here, the agent of the verb deanadh? No such thing. Sitthiuc *is the man who executed the work.* Now, if "Sitthiuc do rigne" were not down here in black and white, our scholars would insist that deanadh is a true passive, because lar introduces the agent."

Very well. Lúigfidh ar do chorp dod chaoineadh, agus tabair fgian i n-iochtar a bhonn agus marbhtar leat mar rin é. He will bend over your 'corpse' to 'cry' you, and do you put a knife into his belly, and so let him be killed by you.—(Keating's *Ireland*, Vol. 2, p. 162). Where is Sitthiuc here? It was Tú (Cobhach) that *executed* (tabair fgian i n-iochtar a bhonn), and it was *by* Tu (leat—le Cobhach) he (Laoghaire) *was executed.* Now, if 'tabair fgian i n-iochtar a bhonn' was not down here in black and white, to put 'marbhtar leat é' beyond the possibility of a doubt as a passive, our Native speakers would insist that marbhtar was a true active, because once 'Sitthiuc do fuighe' has proved the general truth that le does not introduce the direct personal agent, it does not matter whether 'Sitthiuc do fuighe' is present or not.

You say again, page 69, *Irish Prose Composition*:—If the personal agent is to be named at all, they put him in his proper place and say 'do bhuail Seághan an bord.' But it is clear that there are *two proper places* to put him in —tuig Cobhach fgian i n-iocthar a bhonn, and do marbhuighead le Cobhach mar rin é.' Cobhach is a combination of Sitthiuc and ua Domhnaill here, and does the work of both, and so has the proper place of each. Two proper places are always ready for the personal agent, active or passive, nominative or ablative. He may, then, 'be put' in either, or, as here, in both.

"But does not le in le Dáibhí quoted above, express purely personal agency?"

This is Fr. O'Leary's question, and here, for the first time he touches the point, to which he was to come at once. This is his question, and let the reader mark how he answers it. He answers it by giving simply no answer, but, instead of an answer, *eight* further *questions*! Mark:

"Does it?" (Question 1). "What does it express where the operation of cutting off the head is narrated as continuous?" (2. Poor Achilles for the fourth time). "What is the meaning of 'le' in 'do bíodar as díceannad an adaig le Dáibid'?" (3. *What*, indeed!). "Keating, I think, has that construction very frequently"!!!

"Does 'le Dáibid' here render 'as díceannad' passive?" (4). "Can it possibly do so?" (5). "Can 'by' expressing purely personal agency, follow an active verb?" (6). "What sort of English would this be: (someone) was cutting off the giant's head by David?" (7). "Is that the same as the giant's head was being cut off by David?" (8).

This is Fr. O'Leary's way of coming to the point 'at once,' and of dealing with it. He puts himself on his trial with great confidence regarding his view of the matter, makes an imaginary opponent ask him a question about it, and for answer he gives no answer, but asks the opponent eight questions off the reel! The opponent's question *is the point exactly*—'le' in 'le Dáibid' *quoted above*, in Keating's le Dáibid—and from that question, accordingly, Fr. O'Leary runs off with all his might, and begins to *start* questions about matters that have nothing to do with opponent or point. His questions need not detain us (unless, indeed, as a sample of his method), because they are altogether beside the purpose, and because they are all long since answered directly, or incidentally, or both the one way and the other, in these pages.

"Here are two sentences for students to reflect upon."

I quite agree; and the reflection most apt to come first and remain to the last, is that 'Revival Irish' is something to guard against with all our vigilance, and that it is hard to know where one is secure of Revival Irish. Ir fánad an áit i bfuigtéá Gliomach, said the Frogless-

Islander when he met the frog on the mainland. Here with your sentences :—

"Imtiġ leaṫ ċun an aonaiġ, agus ceannuiġ leaṫ ba agus caoire, agus taḃair leaṫ aḃaile iaḋ, agus beir leaṫ anran fíor ar an inse iaḋ, agus foraiġ leaṫ ann iaḋ go dtagaḋ-sa ċúġat. Here is another form of the same sentence :—Imtiġṫear leaṫ ċun an aonaiġ, agus ceannuiġṫear leaṫ ba agus caoire, agus tuġtar leaṫ aḃaile iaḋ, agus beirtear leaṫ anran fíor ar an inse iaḋ, agus foruiġṫear leaṫ ann iaḋ go dtagaḋ-saċúġat."

On these two sentences, then, I reflect—for Fr. O'Leary gives them to have them reflected on—as follows : 1st They wrong Fr. O'Leary badly from more sides than one. They wrong him in grammar ; they wrong him in composition ; they wrong him in style ; they wrong him in understanding, and they wrong him in singleness of purpose. In grammar and composition, for 'ceannuiġ leaṫ,' 'foruiġ leaṫ, ceannuiġṫear leaṫ' and 'foruiġṫear leaṫ' are absurd in the connection. 'Buy *on*,' 'keep *on* buying,' *before you have begun to buy, before you have started for the fair.* 'Herd *on*,' stick *on* to your herding, *before having anything bought to herd.* In style, for the tautology, the clapper iteration of leaṫ, leaṫ, leaṫ, would go to suggest a very crude literary ear, and a copious poverty of vocabulary. In understanding, for the whole article, and every part of it, wrongs his understanding. In singleness of purpose, for the construction of these two sentences is only too visibly a piece of legerdemain. They are only too visibly contrived to charm and confuse. The forced and not unartful use of le, is apt to streak unpractised eyes with the juice of the magic flower. And then to thicken up the mess, Father O'Leary comes on with another shower

of questions, with imaginary answers to the same, in the person of an imaginary opponent, and, in fine, emerges with a magnificent imaginary triumph. Here is his process :—

"In what voice are the verbs in this second form? Passive, of course. Why? Each of them is followed by ʟe with the personal agent. In what voice are the same verbs in the first form? They are in the active voice. *But they are followed by the very same* ʟe *with the very same personal agent.* (Italics mine). Oh, but ʟe in the first form has not the same meaning which ʟe in the second has. How do you know that? In the second form ʟe connects the passive voice with the agent. In the first form the ʟe means simply 'with.' Very good, sir. So, in the second form the verbs are passive because ʟe means 'by,' and the ʟe means 'by' because the verbs are passive. I THINK THAT WILL DO, SIR."

This is superb! I THINK THAT WILL DO, SIR! As clearness has been a great object with me all along, I leave this (superb) part without any comment, because comment could only cloud its native splendour, or, at least, it were but trying to add another hue unto the rainbow. But some of the questions and answers above may be usefully considered, not indeed for any connection they have—for connection they have really none—with the matter in debate, but as very specially illustrative of the method pursued. Therefore :—"In what voice are the verbs in this second form?"

The discussion is not of that or of the other form; we are discussing a sentence of Keating. But, to hear all out, and get done with it, let it be passive, as you put into the opponent's mouth. They are passive, then, be it so, just to draw to an end.

"Why? Each of them is followed by le with the personal agent."

No, they are not, nor any of them. They are, indeed, followed by le but not by the le of the personal agent. You shall see anon.

"In what voice are the same verbs in the first form? They are in the active voice. But they are followed by the very same le with the very same personal agent."

Quite so; and that is exactly where you are to your own springe. They *are* followed by the very same le, but *not* by the very same personal agent, because not by *any* agent. It is, indeed, just possible, but *only* just possible, to take leac as expressing an agent in ceannuigtear leac and in forguigtear leac, because the leac does not belong of right to the active forms ceannuig and forgaig in the context, such context as there is; but, for the other verbs used, where leac is part of the expression in the active form, it is all the same part of it in the passive, and you need another leac for an agent. Thus: imtigtear leac leac—tugtar leac leac—beirtear leac leac, etc. You did not see this, and, so, could never have dreamt that answers other than your own fine, awaiting and accommodating ones might be forthcoming.

"Oh, but le in the first form has not the same meaning as the le in the second has."

Yes, it has exactly the same; and, so, the sleight is resolved. This is not the answer you counted on, and, so, your next question is irrelevant to *this*, and meaningless, but let it come on.

"How do you know that?"

Neither you nor I know it. No one can know the thing that is not. This is not the imaginary answer you had awaiting the question; it is only the true answer, and,

as is the way of truth, not half so obliging as the reply in waiting, but it cannot help itself. The next.

"In the second form the le connects the passive voice with the agent."

No, it does not; for it is not there at all. The le that should connect the passive voice with the agent is not there at all. There is only 'imtigtear leat,' tugtar leat, beirtear leat, all of which should be imtigtear leat leat—tugtar leat leat—beirtear leat leat, and, in case you want leat to belong likewise to ceannuig and foruig, ceannuigtear leat leat, and foruigtear leat leat.

"In the first form le means simply 'with.'

And in the second it means it '*all so*' and '*like wise.*' But 'with you,' 'leat,' is the Irish for 'on' (in the second person singular), in the sense of going *on* with, *continuing* something already in hand. 'Beautiful bird, sing on'—feinn leat. This is the 'leat' of ceannuig leat and forais leat, above, barring some cryptic meaning; and the putting of them there in that sense, will be called a deft or a clumsy device, according to the audience. And now for the circle and the grand finale:

"Very good, sir. So, in the second form the verbs are passive because the le means 'by,' and the le means 'by,' because the verbs are passive! I THINK THAT WILL DO, SIR."

This may be a square circle, but it is undoubtedly not round. A square circle is a thing not yet achieved, even in imagination, and this circle of Fr. O'Leary's bids fair to rival it in that. I, for one, cannot see round corners; perhaps the imaginary opponent does. It was he, not I, that gave the imaginary answers which are supposed to circle. Whether they do circle or not, may be a subtle

question for mathematico-logical acrobats, but concerning which I stand both neutral and detached.

"I dare say there are people besides Fr. O'Reilly whose minds are not yet satisfied upon this matter. I think, therefore, that it is not to be regretted that Fr. O'Reilly has elicited further discussion."

In this there is the most perfect unanimity between Fr. O'Leary and myself; and, so, I THINK THAT WILL DO.

FINIS.