

**THE ORIGIN OF THE DUTCH: WITH
A SKETCH OF THEIR LANGUAGE
AND LITERATURE, AND SHORT
EXAMPLES, TRACING THE
PROGRESS OF THE LANGUAGE**

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The origin of the Dutch: with a sketch of their language and literature, and short examples,
tracing the progress of the language by J. Bosworth

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OF
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A SKETCH OF THEIR LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE,

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SHORT EXAMPLES,

TRACING THE PROGRESS OF THE LANGUAGE.

BY THE
REV. J. BOSWORTH, F.R.S., F.S.A.

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TO

THE RIGHT HONOURABLE BARON VAN DOORN,

AND

BARON COLLOT D'ESCURY,

THIS LITTLE WORK IS INSCRIBED,

WITH THE GREATEST RESPECT,

By J. BOSWORTH.

P R E F A C E.

THE following Sketch was drawn up as part of the Introduction to the DICTIONARY of the ANGLO-SAXON LANGUAGE. A few copies have been separately printed, to meet the wishes of those who are interested in Dutch literature. This Sketch might have been easily extended to a large volume; but, as ample justice has been done to the Dutch language and literature, by the authors named in the note at the foot of the twenty-ninth page, it is only deemed expedient, at present, to refer those who wish to enter more fully into the subject, and the British public in general, to these respectable authorities.

In every part, reference is made to the source from which the information has been derived. The author, however, to ensure as much correctness as possible, has consulted some of his personal friends, eminent for their knowledge of Dutch. Here he deems it necessary to express his obligation to one of the most celebrated native scholars, Professor Siegenbeek; at the same time that he acknowledges himself greatly indebted to a foreigner, C. H. Stahl, Esq. LL.D., late Vice-Chancellor of Holstein, whose predilection for the Dutch has induced him, after traversing nearly every province in Europe, to take up his residence at Haarlem, and to become perfectly acquainted with the Dutch language and literature.

THE ORIGIN
OF
THE DUTCH.

1.—THE IMPORTANCE OF A CLOSE INVESTIGATION OF LANGUAGES IN CORROBORATING REVELATION, AND TRACING THE ORIGIN AND AFFINITY OF NATIONS.—ALL LANGUAGES HAVE A DISTANT VERBAL RESEMBLANCE, INDICATING A PRIMITIVE CONNEXION.—THERE IS ALSO A GREAT DIVERSITY IN THE FORM AND STRUCTURE OF LANGUAGES, WHICH IS MOST RATIONALLY ACCOUNTED FOR BY THE CONFUSION RECORDED BY MOSES.—LANGUAGES ARE DIVIDED INTO CLASSES, SUCH AS THOSE SPOKEN BY THE DESCENDANTS OF SHEM, HAM, AND JAPHETH.—THE PEOPLE AND LANGUAGES OF EUROPE WERE OF JAPHETIC ORIGIN.—THE FIRST TRIBES THAT ENTERED EUROPE WERE CELTS,—THE NEXT WERE THE TRUTONI OR GERMANS,—AND THE THIRD THE SCLAVONIANS.—AS WE ARE MOST CONCERNED WITH THE TEUTONIC, OR GERMAN TRIBES, THEY CLAIM A PARTICULAR NOTICE.

1. It is mind, understanding, or the power of reasoning, which is the distinguishing property of man. The mind is a man's self; by it we are allied to the highest intelligence. Can it then be unimportant for an intellectual being to examine the operations of the mind? But its operations or thoughts are so quick and fugitive, that no real apprehension of them can be obtained, except by their representatives, that is, by words. These, when spoken, quickly vanish from the mind. It is only when words are written, that they become tangible; they are then the lasting representatives or signs of ideas. Those, therefore, who philosophically and effectually examine the structure and the right meaning of words, the instruments of thought, are most likely to have the clearest apprehension of the mental powers and their operations.

2. Words, as the instruments for expressing thoughts,* are the constituent parts of language. It is by language that the feelings, experience, and indeed the whole mind of individuals, can be communicated and made the property of our whole species. The most sublime thoughts and extensive

* Whately's *Elements of Logic*, Ch. ii. p. 55.

knowledge of those who have been favoured with the highest order of intellect, are in their writings concentrated and perpetuated: thus the exalted endowment of reason is perfected by the gift of rational language.

3. The minute investigation of language is not only important in examining the mental powers, but in bearing its testimony to the truth of Revelation, and in tracing the origin and affinity of nations.

4. The physical history of man, the researches of the most eminent geologists, the investigations of the most able philosophers, and the close and patient examination of all the phenomena of nature, are so many distinct confirmations of the Mosaic record. At present we need only refer to the physical or natural history of man.* Here every candid inquirer is led to the conclusion, that all the diversities of the human race originally sprang from one father and mother; and hence we reasonably infer, that this primitive pair had one primitive language. We now find a great diversity of tongues. To account for this diversity, philosophers have started different theories:† but there is no theory which so satisfactorily accounts for the variety of languages, and yet the similarity observable in their fragments, as the plain statement of facts recorded by Moses.

5. "The whole earth was of one language and one speech," or of one *lip*,‡ and of like words.§ "And it came to pass, as they (the families of the sons of Noah) journeyed from the east, that they found a plain in the land of Shinar; and they dwelt there." Because the people said, "Let us build us a city and a tower, whose top may reach unto heaven; and let us make us a name, lest we be scattered abroad upon the face of the whole earth," when the Lord had determined that they should be dispersed, and thus "replenish the earth," God "confounded their *lip*, language, or pronunciation, that they could not understand one another's speech." "Therefore is the name of it called Babel; because the Lord did there confound the language of all the earth; and from thence did the Lord scatter them abroad upon the face of all the earth." (Gen. xi. 1, 2, 4, 7, 9.)

6. On a close examination and analysis of languages, even as we find them at the present day, nearly forty-two centuries after the confusion,

* *Researches into the Physical History of Mankind*, by C. J. Prichard, M.D., F.R.S., &c.

† Some French naturalists and physiologists, with a few writers on history and antiquities in Germany, speak of the Adamic race as of one among many distinct creations. Von Humboldt speaks of the Americans as a distinct stock. Malte Brun has taken it for granted that each part of the earth had its own race, of whose origin it was in vain to inquire. Niebuhr is of the same opinion as to the early inhabitants of Italy.—Dr. Prichard's *Eastern Origin of the Celtic Nations*, 8vo. Oxford, 1831.

‡ Heb. כְּלִי-זָמָר שֶׁפִּי אֶחָד. *Septuagint* Καὶ ἦν πᾶσα ἡ γῆ χεῖλος ἓν: *Fulgate* Erat autem terra labii unius.—שֶׁפִּי a *lip*, talk, margin; labium, sermo, ora.

§ Heb. וְדַבְרֵיהֶם אֶחָדִים; *Septuagint* καὶ φωνὴ μὲν πᾶσι: *Fulgate* et sermonum eorundem.—אֶחָדִים pl. ones, alike, the same, from אָחָד one; Arab. اِحْدَانٌ pl. ones, from اِحْدَانٌ one.—דַּבְרֵיהֶם words, speech, from דָּבַר a word, matter, thing; verbum, res, aliquid.

there are, in almost every tongue, a few fragments and whole words so similar, as to indicate an original connexion. The great diversity in their vocabularies and grammatical structure is still more apparent. The facts recorded by the Hebrew legislator of one original language, the subsequent confusion of lip or pronunciation, and the consequent dispersion, alone account for this pervading identity or resemblance, and the striking diversity.* Both these claim a brief notice.

7. First, there are resemblances or identities still observable in the severed fragments of an original language. These occur most frequently in words of the commonest use. Such words, if not composed exactly of the same letters, are from letters of the same organ, or from those which are interchangeable.

8. A slight inspection of the ten numerals, even in a few languages, will prove that they had an original connexion.

* Those who wish to see this subject fully and satisfactorily discussed, are referred to the admirable papers of Sharon Turner, Esq., F.S.A. *On the Affinities and Diversities in the Languages of the World, and on their Prineval Cause*, in the *Transactions of the Royal Society of Literature of the United Kingdom*, Vol. I. Part I. 4to. 1827. p. 17—106, and Vol. II. Part II. 1834, p. 252—262. He has arranged the words used to denote *Father* in more than five hundred languages. He has also made a similar classification of the various terms to designate *Mother*, as well as the first two numerals. Mr. Turner observes: "In my letters on the first and second numerals, it was endeavoured to show, that the words which various nations have used to express them, were either simple sounds of one syllable, or compound terms resolvable frequently into these simpler elements, and most probably always made from them; but a more important object was to evince, that both the elementary and the composite sounds have resemblances and connected analogies, which, although used by nations that were strangers to each other, were too numerous to have been accidental.

I intimated that the languages or people, among whom such similarities prevailed, however disparate and divergent they had been, or now were, must have had some ancient and primeval consanguinity.—In meditating on this subject, it occurred to me, that if the mind were not pursuing an illusory idea, the same facts and the same intimation would appear as strikingly in some other words, as they were visible in the numerals. This impression, and the desire neither to mislead, nor to be misled, have induced me to observe, whether the words that are used in the different languages of the world to express the first, the dearest, the most universal, and the most lasting relations of life, *Father* and *Mother*, would be found to confirm, or overthrow the principles suggested. The words were arranged into classes, according to their primitive or more simple elements. These classes demonstrate that the common use of sounds to express the same ideas, must have had some common origin, and are evidences of a common and early affinity. While each class proves a similarity or an identity, the numerous classes indicate great diversity. Identity without diversity would have proved only a common derivation, and diversity without identities would disprove community of origin. But so much partial identity and resemblance remaining, at this advanced period of the world, visible amid so much striking and general disparity, exactly coincides with the Hebrew statement of an anterior unity, and of a subsequent confusion, abruption, and dispersion.

Amongst his deductions Mr. Turner observes, that the "primeval language has not been anywhere preserved, but that fragments of it must, from the common origin of all, everywhere exist; that these fragments will indicate the original derivation and kindredship of all; and that some direct causation of no common agency has operated to begin, and has so permanently affected mankind, as to produce a striking and universally experienced diversity." A gentleman, whose erudition is universally acknowledged, and whose opinions, from his extensive lingual knowledge, and especially from his critical acquaintance with the oriental tongues, deserve the greatest attention, has come to this conclusion; for he has stated ("De oorspronkelijke taal, wier oudste dochter het Sanskrit is, de vruchtbare moeder van zoovele dialecten, bestaat niet meer.") the original language, of which the oldest daughter is the Sanscrit, the fruitful mother of so many dialects, exists no longer.—Professor Hamaker's *Abstemische voorlezingen*, &c. Leyden, 8vo. 1835, p. 7. These interesting lectures have just appeared; English and German translations of them are preparing for the press. Ere long we hope to see Professor Hamaker's two other learned works: *A Comparison of the Radical Words of the Sanscrit with those of other Dialects*; and, *Grammatical Remarks on the Indo-Germanic Languages*—on both of which he has for some time been diligently, and it may be added, very successfully engaged.