

ART. XXXIII.—*Numerals formerly used for Sheepscoring in the Lake Country, No. 1.* By REV. T. ELLWOOD.

Read at Furness Abbey, August 16th, 1877.

SOME years ago, when in communication with Mr. Ellis about versions of the dialects of Cumberland and Furness, he sent me as specimens three or four versions of a system of numerals which were used for sheepscoring in the northern countries. They were, I believe, all the versions he then had, and he had obtained them chiefly from Yorkshire. As his circle of information on the subject widened, however, he obtained numerals bearing a strong affinity to them from Westmorland, from Durham, and from Northumberland, and he learned from Dr. Trumbull, of Hartford, Connecticut, the president of the Philological Society, that there were numerals in use at present, or had formerly been in use, among the North American Indians of Maine, of Rhode Island, and Massachusetts, almost identical in sound and bearing the same peculiarities and alliteration and rhythm with those found in the north of England. In 1874, Mr. Ellis read a paper on the subject before the Philological Society, of which he was then president, and this paper he has most kindly given me the fullest permission to use. Since that time, however, several other important versions have been obtained, and I have myself obtained three—one found in the Isle of Man, which seems to have found its way there from Cumberland: one, as far as five, which I obtained from Ritson, of Wastdale Head; and one from Coniston, High Furness, which had been used there many years ago by the sheep farmers, and which enables us to stamp this curious and unique system of numerals as extending to Lakeland. I will read to you the versions which are
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more immediately in the province of the Westmorland and Cumberland Antiquarian Society, but I think you will find, upon contrasting them with the whole of the other systems which I have here, that they possess all the distinctive features which are to be found in those of the other northern countries, and which are to be found also among the versions used by the North American Indians.

Their distinctive peculiarities are that they run in pentads or fives, accounted for, I think, by the practice of counting upon the fingers, of which we have also a reminiscence in the word *digit*; and that there is a sort of rhythm and alliteration about them which gives the sound and form to the whole system.

Some of the North of England versions bear a much closer affinity to the North American Indian versions than they do to each other; and the Manx *fheed*, Durham *feeba*, the Maine Indian *frith-en-y*, and the Gaelic *fichead*—which are here given for the sake of comparison—have a common form, of which there is no trace to be found in any other versions hitherto found. *Yan-a-boon*, *taen-a-boon*, &c., which are found in the Westmorland and some other versions, are evidently put for *one-above*, *two-above*, &c. No one who has lived long in the north will have any difficulty with *yen* or *yan*, which is found in most of the systems, and yet it has, no doubt, all the family features of *one*—Latin *unus*, and Greek *en*. In the same way, *pimp*, *pip*, *mimph*, *mimph*, *pep*, and *pepsy*, are, I think, but cognate forms of Greek *pente*, Latin *quinque*, a trace of which you will find in the name of the county in whose neighbourhood the Indo-Germanic family of languages had their origin, namely the Punjaub, or country of the Five Rivers.

In two instances there are numerals for eight, which seem to be somewhat strongly assimilated with the Gaelic *oa-akh*, and they are often called, when found in Yorkshire, the Scotch (that is, the Gaelic) sheepscore numerals; but I shall endeavour to show before I have completed my
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paper, that they have evidently come from the Welsh. The *dick* (ten) of Westmorland and *dick* of High Furness are identical; and in the forms—*dick*, *tick*, and *dicks*, they will be found throughout almost the whole of the versions, including *dick* in the versions of Massachusetts and Rhode Island. It is evidently the *deg* of the Welsh or British, and the *decem* and *deka* of the Latin and Greek. *Feigh* of the Manx version is, I think, a softened form of the same word.

I have now given you the history and connection of them as far as I thought needful to introduce the subject. Other particulars will be found in the various versions which I have here written down, and I am anxious, before sitting down, to touch upon the two points of whence and where they came. I think anyone who will take the trouble to compare them with the Welsh numerals will agree that they had their origin from Wales. We have many Welsh or British words in the proper names of High Furness. Whatever may be said about some of the derivations given by Evans, at any rate there is no doubt that Black Combe is from the Welsh—*cwm*; and Walney, pronounced Wauney in the dialect, is the Welsh *Waunau*, which signifies plains or downs. Pen, the name of the immense mass of rock on the banks of the Duddon in Seathwaite, is the Welsh *Pen* or *Head*, which appears in the Welsh names of *Pen-y-bont*, &c. Of course the sheepscoring numerals of Wales were just as likely to find their way to Furness as were those proper names, and, from internal evidence, we have just as much proof that the one is Welsh as the other. With regard to when or how they came, I cannot tell. You will find that wherever they have been found, either here or elsewhere, they have generally come orally from the oldest inhabitants; and on the other side the Atlantic they have been often obtained from the last squaw, or whatever may be the proper designation of the old women of the North American Indian

Indian tribes, and the numerals and the Indians seem in some cases to have died out together. And the numerals seem to be dying out in Lakeland in very much the same way. Some of the sheep farmers whom I have spoken to on the subject have been able to give me one or two of the numerals, and others, though they had heard them formerly, could not remember them so as to reproduce them.

Considerable discussion followed this paper, in which the Rev. Canon Simpson, Rev. T. Lees, Mr. Jackson, Mr. R. S. Ferguson, Mr. Browne, and Mr. Fell took part. As the subject was considered a very interesting one, it was moved by Canon Simpson that further discussion upon it should be postponed until the Society's meeting at Whitehaven in the Winter. See also, *The Athenæum*, volume for July to December, 1877, pp. 338, 371, 402, 433, 469, 629, and 662.
