

tion of the tongue common to all the nations of the earth. The Scottish professor, with his universal language, is not entirely imaginary.

It was a favorite theory of the philosophic Leibnitz that the invention and application of such a language was far from being an impossibility. He admitted that its formation and arrangement would be attended with some difficulty, but he maintained that once it had been framed, it could, with comparative ease, be acquired by others. He died, however, before he was able to lay the outlines of his scheme before the world. Prof. Max Mueller is inclined to think that he had got the hint of his idea from Bishop Wilkins who, towards the close of the 17th century, published his essay "towards a real character and a philosophical language," but soon perceived that the plan of the English churchman was susceptible of considerable improvement. Of the bishop's work, Prof. Mueller says:—"Now, though it has been the fashion to sneer at Bishop Wilkins and his universal language, his work seems to me, as far as I can judge, to offer the best solution that has yet been offered of a problem which, if of no practical importance, is of great interest from a merely scientific point of view; and though it is impossible to give an intelligible account of the bishop's scheme without entering into particulars which will take up some of our time it will help us, I believe, towards a better understanding of real languages if we can acquire a clear idea of what an artificial language would be and how it would differ from living speech. The primary object of the bishop was not to invent a spoken language, though he arrives at that in the end, but to contrive a system of writing or representing our thoughts that should be universally intelligible." We have, for instance, the professor goes on to show, the arithmetical and astronomical signs—the figures, + and — (plus and minus), the signs for the sun, moon, the earth, Jupiter, and the other planets, and Bishop Wilkins thought that if, in