

from Ireland or the west of England. In consequence the present generation very generally speak with an Irish accent, and some words or phrases will be found in use of Irish origin. Their coasts too, having been from a very early period frequented by fishermen of all nations, and their trade bringing them in contact with people of other tongues, we might expect foreign words to be introduced into their speech. The accessions to their vocabulary from these sources, however, are few, and their language remains almost entirely English. Even the peculiarities which strike a stranger, are often survivals of old forms which are wholly or partially obsolete elsewhere.*

I. I notice words which are genuinely English, but are now obsolete elsewhere or are only locally used:—

An atomy or a *natomy* a skeleton, applied to a person or creature extremely emaciated. "Poor John is reduced to *an atomy*." This is a contraction of the word anatomy, probably from a mistake of persons supposing the *a* or *an* to be the article. This use agrees with the original meaning of the word, which was not the act of dissecting, but the object or body to be dissected, and hence as the flesh was removed, the skeleton, a word which then denoted a *dried* body or mummy. (Greek, *skello*, to dry.)

Oh tell me, friar, tell me
In what part of this vile *anatomy*
Doth my name lodge? Tell me that I may sack
The hateful mansion.

—Shakespeare, *Romeo and Juliet*, III, 3.

Hence it came to denote a person extremely emaciated.

They brought one Pinch, a hungry lean faced villain,
A mere *anatomy*,
A living dead man.

—*Comedy of Errors*, V, 1.

Shakespeare also used the abridged form *atomy* in the same sense, which is exactly the Newfoundland meaning of the word.

"Thou starved bloodhound . . . thou *atomy*, thou."

—2 *Henry IV*, V, 4.

The same is given by Jamieson† as in use in Lowland Scotch.

* In these investigations I must especially acknowledge the assistance received from Judge Bennett of Harbor Grace, Newfoundland, who has not only furnished me with a number of words, but has carefully examined the whole list. I have also to acknowledge my obligations to an article by the Rev. Dr. Pilot of St. Johns, published in *Christmas Bells*, a paper issued in that city at Christmas. A few additional facts have been received from Mr. W. C. Earl, of the Western Union Telegraph Company, and others. For most of the quotations I am indebted to the *Encyclopædic Dictionary*.

† Scottish Dictionary.