

attenuated and coiled one within another, their tails, tongues and top-knots forming long, narrow ribbons, irregularly interlaced; 4th, a series of diagonal lines, forming various kinds of Chinese-like patterns. These ornaments are generally introduced into small compartments, a number of which are arranged so as to form the large initial letters and borders, or tessellated pages, with which the finest MSS. are decorated."

"Especially deserving of notice (continues Professor Westwood) is the extreme delicacy and wonderful precision, united with an extraordinary minuteness of detail, with which many of these ancient MSS. were ornamented. I have examined with a magnifying-glass the pages of the Gospels of Lindisfarne and the *Book of Kells*, for hours together, without ever detecting a false line or an irregular interlacement; and when it is considered that many of these details consists of spiral lines, and are so minute as to be impossible to have been executed without a pair of compasses, it really seems a problem not only with what eyes, but also with what instruments they could have been executed. One instance of the minuteness of these details will suffice to give an idea of this peculiarity. I have counted in a small space, measuring scarcely three quarters of an inch, by less than half an inch in width, in the *Book of Armagh*, 'not fewer than one hundred and fifty-eight (158) interlacements of a slender ribbon pattern, formed of white lines edged by black ones upon a black ground.'" (Illustrated on Plates XXV. to XXIX.)

Mr. Gilbert, the learned editor of these fac-similes, concludes the publication of this first Volume by promising that in the next issue, now nearly ready, the series will be continued from the early part of the twelfth to the end of the thirteenth century. There are in my possession many other works, on historical and educational subjects, illustrating Irish type printing. The above will, however, show what has been done, and is now doing, for the preservation of the ancient language of Ireland—a language in which there is found an ancient and extensive literature, original and peculiar to herself—a language which is valuable for elucidating her own annals—a language which is the key for unlocking much that is occult in the ancient history of Europe. This language is still a living one, spoken by a large number of the inhabitants of Ireland. Chairs have been established in the Catholic University of Ireland and in many of the Irish Colleges for its cultivation.\* These, with the special efforts now making by "*The Society for the Preservation of the Irish Language*," will, it is to be hoped, successfully perpetuate and preserve a language, not only so ancient—so expressive—but so dearly cherished by the Irish people.

EDWARD MURPHY.

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\*A Gaelic Professorship has been founded in the University of Edinburgh through the exertions of Professor Blackie, to whom great credit is due.