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# **A Double Grammer, of English and Gaelic**

**Forbes John**

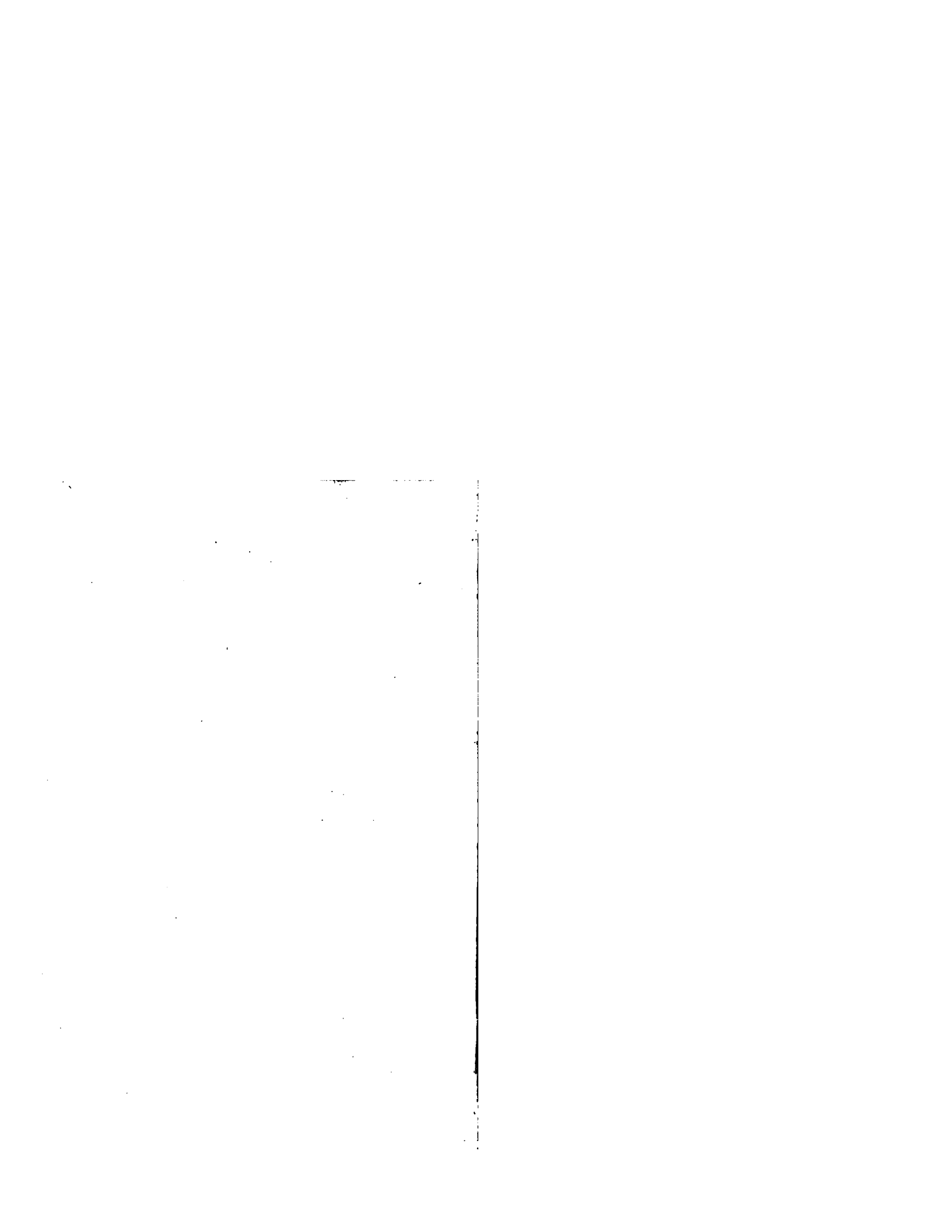
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**Title: A Double Grammer, of English and Gaelic**

**Author: Forbes John**

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A  
DOUBLE GRAMMAR,  
OF  
ENGLISH AND GAELIC,  
IN WHICH  
THE PRINCIPLES OF BOTH LANGUAGES  
ARE CLEARLY EXPLAINED;  
CONTAINING THE  
GRAMMATICAL TERMS, DEFINITIONS, AND RULES,  
WITH COPIOUS  
EXERCISES FOR PARSING AND CORRECTION,

*Conjointly and Severally Arranged in both Languages.*

ADAPTED TO THE IMPROVED MODE OF TUITION.

*For the Use of Schools and Private Students.*

By JOHN FORBES,

SCHOOLMASTER OF FORT-AUGUSTUS;

*Honorary Member of the Ossianic Society of Glasgow, and of the Gaelic Society of London, &c.*

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1843.

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GRÀMAR DÙBAILT,

BEURLA 'US GÀELIG,

ANNS AM

BHEIL STÉIDHEAN NA DÀ CHAINNT

MINICHTE GU SOILLEIR;

A' CO-GHIULAN

NAN AINMEAN, NAM BRIGHARDAN AGUS NAN

RIALTAN GRÀMARAIL,

LE CLEACHDAIDHEAN

LIONMHOR AIR PAIRTEACHADH AGUS CEARTACHADH,

*Ann an Ordugh Co-cheangailte agus Dealachte, anns an Dà Chainnt;*

FREAGARRACH RIS AN RIAN IONNSACHAIDH LEASAICHTE.

Airson Maith Sgoilean agus Sgoileatan Anarach.

LE IAIN FOIRBEIS,

MAIGHSTAR-SGOIDE CHILLE-CHUIMEIN;

*Bàll Urramach de Chomunn Oisrianach Ghlascho, agus de Chomunn na Gàelìg  
'an Lunainn, &c.*

DUNÉDIN:

UILLEAM BANACH 'S A CHUID. LEABHAR-REICEARAN  
DO'N BHAN-RIGH DHUBHARAICH; OLIBHER 'US BOID:  
GLASCHO, I. & P. CAIMBEUL: D. MAC-BHEATHAIN:  
ABAIRREAN, S. MAC-ILLEATHAIN: IONARNIS, S.  
GOBHA: IONARFEORAN, S. CEITEACH.

1843.

[*Pris Ceithir Taidain, ceangailte.*]

**Dedication.**

TO  
THE CONVENER,  
AND THE OTHER MEMBERS  
OF THE  
GENERAL ASSEMBLY'S EDUCATIONAL COMMITTEE  
OF  
THE CHURCH OF SCOTLAND,  
THIS WORK  
IS, WITH PERMISSION,  
RESPECTFULLY DEDICATED.

LE  
MOR-URRAM, THA 'N OBAIR SO,  
LE CEAD,  
IAR A CUR A-MACH, FO THEARMUNN,  
A' CHO-GHAIRMEIR, AGUS NAM BALL EILE  
DE  
CHO-BHUIDHEANN OILEANAIL ARD-CHO-THIONAIL  
EAGLAIS NA H-ALBA.

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## PREFACE.

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Manners with fortunes, humours turn with climes,  
Tenets with books, and principles with times.—POPE.

IN introducing the following work to the Public, the Author would briefly observe, that he was, from practical experience in teaching for several years, led to furnish the **DOUBLE GRAMMAR**, as an attempt to supply an educational want which had too long existed in the Highlands of Scotland,—that of a Grammar from which the natives might learn the structure of both English and Gaelic, or either, through the medium of the Gaelic itself, their vernacular language. Such a work has been long and eagerly desired by many in the Highlands.

In teaching the structure of any language, it will be readily admitted by every person in the least acquainted with the principles of tuition, that the only rational and successful method of conveying a proper knowledge of it to the learner, is through the medium of the language which he already in some measure understands; and pursuant to this principle, our country has been abundantly supplied with elementary books, in which the principles of foreign languages are explicitly unfolded in English, for the benefit of such as are capable of studying them through that important language.

Seeing, then, such ample provision made for facilitating the attainment of foreign or dead languages, such as *Greek* and *Latin*, &c., which, though not spoken by us, are highly cul-



tivated among us, and richly remunerate their being so: it certainly becomes equally imperative upon us to provide similar assistance for facilitating the acquirement of English or Gaelic Grammar to the people whose only language is the Gaelic,—a *living* and a *spoken language* of acknowledged excellence, by means of which alone, instruction can be communicated with profit to thousands of our fellow-countrymen.

It is a well known and an acknowledged fact, that many in the Highlands who can read and spell English fluently, can scarcely connect a single idea with the words read by them; being taught only the art of reading the language or sounding its vocables,—an essential object, certainly; but as the end of learning to read is to enable the reader to understand the meaning and purport of the subject perused, reading and meaning of words should go hand in hand; that is, the one should be taught along with the other; for a child is fully as capable of recollecting the meaning of a word as he is of recollecting its constituent letters and the sounds they produce. Therefore, as soon as he is able to enunciate a word or sentence properly, he should be next taught its meaning, otherwise his knowledge consists of (*to him*) a number of unmeaning sounds; being left to chance or his own isolated exertions for an acquaintance with the ideas conveyed by them.

In schools where the analytic system, or rather the practice of translating from English into Gaelic, and from Gaelic into English, is pursued, the case is different, for under this system the pupil picks up the meaning of a number of English words: so far well; but without a knowledge of their grammatical relations, he can never express his ideas by them with precision and confidence. For every one unacquainted with Grammar is, when he has a subject of importance to treat of, seized with fear of blundering, “whereas one who has an accurate knowledge of the structure and phraseology of the language he speaks, will seldom fail to utter his thoughts with superior confidence, energy, and effect.” Therefore, in pursuing the *translative* system, let the pupil, after

being well initiated into the art of reading both languages, be actively employed in acquiring a grammatical knowledge, along with the meaning of their vocables, and the result will be doubly profitable.

Though the inhabitants of the Highlands do now, for the most part, acquire the art of reading English and Gaelic to a competent degree, only a limited number ever becomes acquainted with the Grammar of the former, while that of the latter is entirely neglected. This sad neglect is to be much regretted, as a grammatical knowledge of the Gaelic\* would evidently conduce much to facilitate the art of reading and understanding it, and also English, perfectly; render the task more pleasant and valuable to the learner; at the same time preserve the purity of the language, and arm it against the inroads of numerous corruptions.

Among the few Gaelic Grammars hitherto published, we find none defining the principles of Grammar in both languages. In these the subject is generally treated of in a style of hard English, either too lofty or too prolix for the capacity of a Highland schoolboy, whose familiar language is the Gaelic, it being more suited to the capacity of the "learned." To place an English Grammar, defined in Latin or Gaelic, as a class-book in the hands of an Edinburgh boy understanding

\* In regard to the Gaelic it may be remarked, that its character is often misrepresented by those, and only those, who are entirely ignorant of its genius and excellent qualities, or imperfectly acquainted with its structure. Some inveigh against an exuberance of silent vowels and consonants constituting many of its words, though these are in most cases indispensably necessary to distinguish one word from another; pronouncing the task of learning the language insurmountable, but perhaps omitting to observe that similar or greater anomalies occur in English also; take, for instance, the ugly words *check, cough, knee, knight, phlegm, through, strength, &c.*; and in the French there is scarcely a word without a silent letter. The fact is, as known from experience, that a person equally unacquainted with both languages will, under proper tuition, find it fully as easy, if not easier, to read Gaelic as English; for according to SHAW, "the English and French are infinitely more difficult to read and pronounce, and have many more silent and mute letters than the Gaelic." But though our venerable language may have suffered at the hands of its degenerates or prejudiced vilifiers, it delights us to see, it can rank among its warm admirers and zealous cultivators, many of the greatest philologists, and of the most distinguished men for learning and exalted station in almost every part of Europe, as well as in the unsophisticated valleys of Caledonia.—See SHAW'S *Analysis of the Gaelic Language*, and M'LEAN'S *History of the Celtic, &c.*

English only, could not be more absurd than to place an English or Gaelic Grammar defined in English, as a class-book in the hands of a *Highland schoolboy* understanding Gaelic only. With these views, and under these urgent circumstances, the Author has been induced and strongly encouraged by many of his countrymen to provide this system, which is, in every point, sufficiently scientific and practical for the purpose of teaching the Grammar of both languages.

The Author has, in common with other compilers of school books, unscrupulously availed himself of the suggestions of his predecessors. To Dr Stewart and Mr Munro's Gaelic Grammars, and Dr Armstrong's Gaelic Dictionary, the best and most learned works known to him upon the subject, he has most to acknowledge in the Celtic department. The English department is in many points based upon the plan adopted by Dr M'Culloch in his English Grammar, a gentleman to whom the country is highly indebted for his excellent series of school books. But from this eminent grammarian the Author of this system has, on account of the design of his work, found it necessary to differ in many respects; and while he does not arrogate originality to himself, he has certainly aimed at a higher character than that of a mere compiler, in having produced a *Double System* of Grammar defining the principles of two languages, by terms and rules couched in a language in which, consistent with his knowledge, they had never appeared before; but which will be found to be as descriptive of the sense intended to be expressed by them, as their correspondents in other languages.

The subject of Orthography is reduced to a compendious size. The different sounds of the vowels in both languages, and the aspirated sounds of the Gaelic consonants, are briefly exemplified in the keys. A verbose exposition of the powers of each letter is intentionally avoided, because it is seldom attended to, as the learner must be pretty well versed in the art of reading from other books, ere he commences to study grammar systematically.

The most approved authors, chiefly the Gaelic version of the Bible, are strictly followed in the spelling of the Celtic words and phraseologies composing the work. In a few instances a bristly consonant or vowel, contributing nothing to sound or distinguish a word, but rendering it clumsy, is thrown out; such as *airis* for *aitiris*, *carran* for *carrann*, *oiche* for *oidhe*, &c. The improvement of the English language, by abridging many of its words in this manner, within the last two centuries, fully supports this innovation. "Who would expect to find *chirurgion* in our modern *surgeon*, or *eleemosynis* in *alms*, or *fantasy* in *fancy*?"

Under the head of Etymology, the parts of Speech are classified and inflected in their proper order. The English verb is followed in all its variations by its proper Gaelic; and when the Gaelic verb assumes a form peculiar to itself, it is so inflected. Progressive exercises on Parsing are also provided in both languages, and of such varied character, as to call the pupils' discriminative faculties into action, at every stage.

To the General Rules of Syntax, are subjoined such Special Rules as pertain to them, both followed by exercises sufficient to test the pupils' knowledge in regard to their import.

Prosody is also treated of, in both languages, to an extent sufficiently great to initiate the learner into the principles of that part of Grammar. Several other improvements have been introduced, such as models of letters and accounts, Latin and French phrases, and a Grammatical Vocabulary. These and many others will be better seen and understood upon a perusal of the work.

In short, every definition and rule is concisely expressed in plain and simple words, but sufficiently perspicuous throughout to convey their import to the understanding. Useless discussions upon dubious points are studiously avoided, as being more calculated to perplex and bewilder, than assist the learner. Viewing language as one of the great productions of nature, from which all principles and rules are deduced, it has been the Author's special object to exhibit the usages