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Title: The Slang Dictionary: Etymological, Historical and Anecdotal

Author: John Camden Hotten

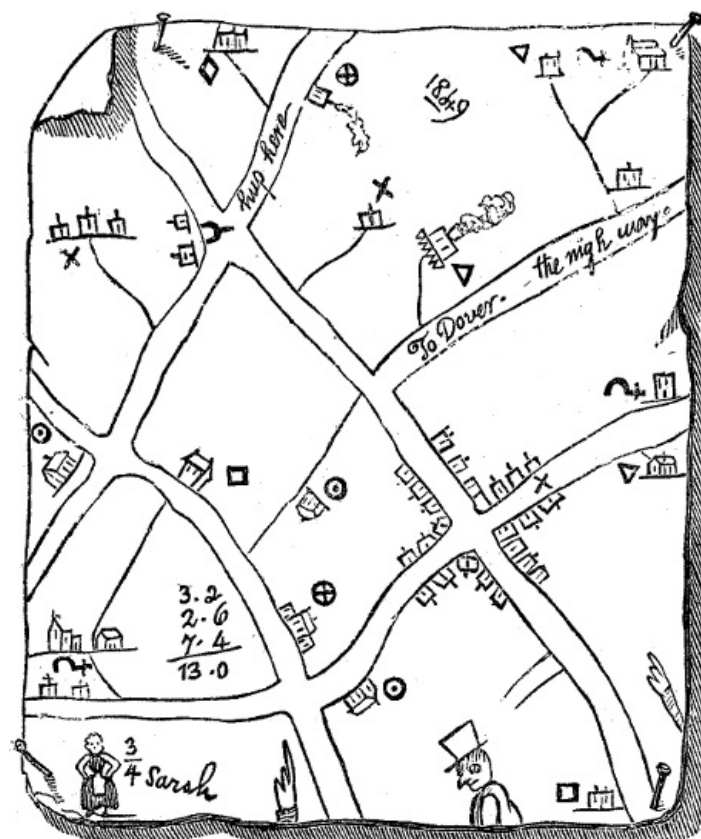
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*** START OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK THE SLANG DICTIONARY: ETYMOLOGICAL, HISTORICAL AND ANECDOTAL ***

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A CADGER'S MAP OF A BEGGING DISTRICT.

EXPLANATION OF THE HIEROGLYPHICS.

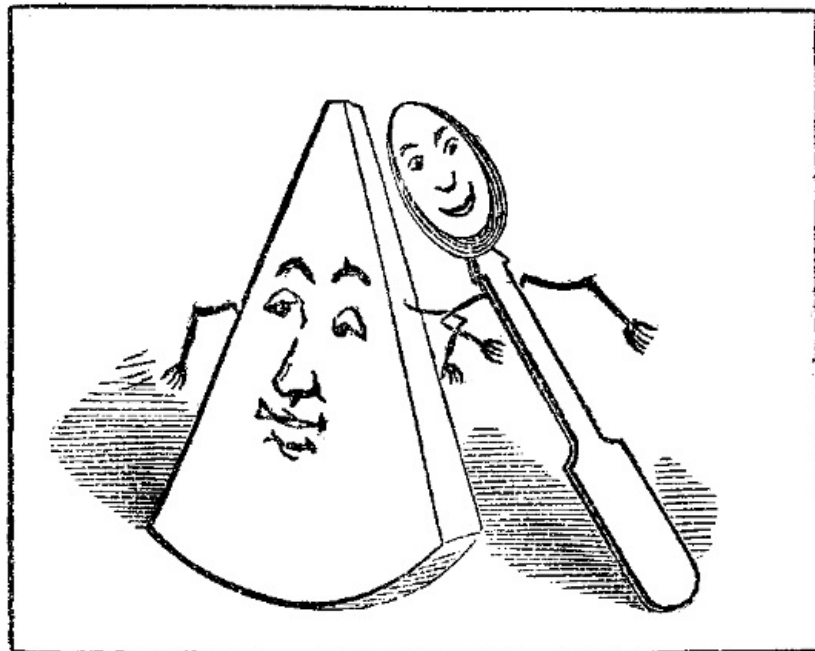
- X** No good; too poor, and know too much.
- ♀** Stop,—if you have what they want, they will buy. They are pretty "fly" (knowing).
- Y** Go in this direction, it is better than the other road. Nothing that way.
- ◇** Bone (good). Safe for a "cold tatur," if for nothing else. "Cheese your patter" (don't talk much) here.
- ▽** Cooper'd (spoilt) by too many tramps calling there.
- Gammy (unfavourable), likely to have you taken up. Mind the dog.
- ◎** Flummuxed (dangerous), sure of a month in "quod," prison.

⊕ **Religious**, but tidy on the whole.

THE
SLANG DICTIONARY

ETYMOLOGICAL

HISTORICAL AND ANECDOTAL



“THE WEDGE” AND THE “WOODEN SPOON.”

A NEW IMPRESSION

LONDON
CHATTO & WINDUS
1913

[iv]
[v]

PREFACE.

Slang, like everything else, changes much in the course of time; and though but fifteen years have elapsed since this Dictionary was first introduced to the public, alterations have since then been many and frequent in the subject of which it treats. The first issue of a work of this kind is, too, ever beset with difficulties, and the compiler was always aware that, though under the circumstances of its production the book was an undoubted success, it necessarily lacked many of the elements which would make that success lasting, and cause the “Slang Dictionary” to be regarded as an authority and a work of reference not merely among the uneducated, but among people of cultivated tastes and inquiring minds. For though the vulgar use of the word Slang applies to those words only which are used by the dangerous classes and the lowest grades of society, the term has in reality, and should have—as every one who has ever studied the subject knows—a much wider significance. Bearing this in mind, the original publisher of this Dictionary lost no opportunity of obtaining information of a useful kind, which could hardly find place in any other book of reference, with the intention of eventually bringing out an entirely new edition, in which all former errors should be corrected and all fresh meanings and new words find a place. His intention always was to give those words which are familiar to all conversant with our colloquialisms and locutions, but which have hitherto been connected with an unwritten tongue, a local habitation, and to produce a book which, in its way, would be as useful to students of philology, as well as to lovers of human nature in all its phases, as any standard work in the English language. The squeamishness which tries to ignore the existence of slang fails signally, for not only in the streets and the prisons, but at the bar, on the bench, in the pulpit, and in the Houses of Parliament, does slang make itself heard, and, as the shortest and safest means to an end, understood too.

[vi]

My predecessor, the original compiler, did not live to see his wish become an actual fact; and, failing him, it devolved upon me to undertake the task of revision and addition. How far this has been accomplished, the curious reader who is possessed of a copy of each edition can best judge

for himself by comparing any couple of pages he may select. Of my own share in the work I wish to say nothing, as I have mainly benefited by the labours of others; but I may say that, when I undertook the position of editor of what, with the smallest possible stretch of fancy, may now be called a new book, I had no idea that the alteration would be nearly so large or so manifest. However, as the work is now done, it will best speak for itself, and, as good wine needs no bush, I will leave it, in all hope of their tenderness, to those readers who are best qualified to say how the task has been consummated.

In conclusion, it is but fair for me to thank, as strongly as weak words will permit, those gentlemen who have in various ways assisted me. To two of them, who are well known in the world of literature, and who have not only aided me with advice, but have placed many new words and etymologies at my service, I am under particular obligation. With this I beg to subscribe myself, the reader's most obedient servant,

THE EDITOR.

December 20, 1873.

NOTE.—The reader will bear in mind that this is a Dictionary of *modern Slang*,—a list of colloquial words and phrases in *present* use,—whether of ancient or modern formation. Whenever *Ancient* is appended to a word, it means that the expression was in respectable use in or previous to the reign of Queen Elizabeth. *Old* or *Old English*, affixed to a word, signifies that it was in general use as a proper expression in or previous to the reign of Charles II. *Old Cant* indicates that the term was in use as a Cant word during or before the same reign.

The Publishers will be much obliged by the receipt of any cant, slang, or vulgar words not mentioned in the Dictionary. The probable origin, or etymology, of any fashionable or unfashionable vulgarism, will also be received with thanks.

[viii]
[ix]

CONTENTS.

	PAGE
THE HISTORY OF CANT, OR THE SECRET LANGUAGE OF VAGABONDS	1
ACCOUNT OF THE HIEROGLYPHICS USED BY VAGABONDS	27
A SHORT HISTORY OF SLANG, OR THE VULGAR LANGUAGE OF FAST LIFE	34
DICTIONARY OF MODERN SLANG, CANT, AND VULGAR WORDS	71
SOME ACCOUNT OF THE BACK SLANG	347
GLOSSARY OF THE BACK SLANG	353
SOME ACCOUNT OF THE RHYMING SLANG	358
GLOSSARY OF THE RHYMING SLANG	365
CENTRE SLANG	369
THE BIBLIOGRAPHY OF SLANG	371

[x]

"All ridiculous words make their first entry into a language by familiar phrases; I dare not answer for these that they will not in time be looked upon as a part of our tongue."—SPECTATOR.

"Rabble-charming words, which carry so much wild fire wrapt up in them."—SOUTH.

"Slang derivations are generally indirect, turning upon metaphor and fanciful allusions, and other than direct etymological connexion. Such allusions and fancies are essentially temporary or local; they rapidly pass out of the public mind: the word remains, while the key to its origin is lost."

"Many of these [slang] words and phrases are but serving their apprenticeship, and will eventually become the active strength of our language."—H. T. BUCKLE.

[1]

THE HISTORY OF CANT, OR THE SECRET LANGUAGE OF VAGABONDS.

Cant and Slang are universal and world-wide. By their means is often said in a sentence what would otherwise take an hour to express. Nearly every nation on the face of the globe, polite and barbarous, has its divisions and subdivisions of various ranks of society. These are necessarily of many kinds, stationary and wandering, civilized and uncivilized, respectable and disreputable,—those who have fixed abodes and avail themselves of the refinements of civilization, and those who go from place to place picking up a precarious livelihood by petty sales, begging, or theft. This peculiarity is to be observed amongst the heathen tribes of the southern hemisphere, as well as in the oldest and most refined countries of Europe. In South Africa, the naked and miserable

Hottentots are pestered by the still more abject *Sonquas*; and it may be some satisfaction for us to know that our old enemies at the Cape, the Kaffirs, are troubled with a tribe of rascals called *Fingoes*,—the former term, we are informed by travellers, signifying beggars, and the latter wanderers and outcasts. In South America, and among the islands of the Pacific, matters are pretty much the same. Sleek rascals, without much inclination towards honesty, fatten, or rather fasten, like the insects in the famous epigram, upon other rascals, who would be equally sleek and fat but for their vagabond dependents. Luckily for respectable persons, however, vagabonds, both at home and abroad, generally show certain outward peculiarities which distinguish them from the great mass of law-abiding people on whom they subsist. Observation shows that the wandering races are remarkable for an abnormal development of the bones of the face, as the jaws, cheek-bones, &c., for high-crowned, stubborn-shaped heads, quick, restless eyes,^[1] and hands nervously itching to be doing; for their love of gambling; for sensuality of all kinds; and for their use of a CANT language with which to conceal their designs and plunderings.

[2]

The secret jargon, or rude speech, of the vagabonds who hang upon the Hottentots is termed Cuze-cat. In Finland, the fellows who steal seal-skins, pick the pockets of bear-skin overcoats, and talk cant, are termed Lappes. In France, the secret language of highwaymen, housebreakers, and pickpockets, is named Argot. The brigands and more romantic rascals of Spain term their private tongue Germania,^[2] or Robbers' Language. Rothwälsch,^[3] or foreign-beggar-talk, is synonymous with cant and thieves' talk in Germany. The vulgar dialect of Malta, and the Scala towns of the Levant—imported into this country and incorporated with English cant—is known as the Lingua Franca, or bastard Italian. And the crowds of lazy beggars that infest the streets of Naples and Rome, as well as the brigands of Pompeii, use a secret language termed Gergo. In England, as we all know, it is called Cant—often improperly Slang.

Most nations, then, possess each a tongue, or series of tongues maybe, each based on the national language, by which not only thieves, beggars, and other outcasts communicate, but which is used more or less by all classes. There is hardly any community in this country, hardly any profession, but has its slang, and proficiency in this is the greatest desideratum of an aspirant to the pleasures of Society, or the honours of literature and art. The formation of these secret tongues varies, of course, with the circumstances surrounding the speakers. A writer in *Notes and Queries* has well remarked that “the investigation of the origin and principles of cant and slang language opens a curious field of inquiry, replete with considerable interest to the philologist and the philosopher. It affords a remarkable instance of lingual contrivance, which, without the introduction of much arbitrary matter, has developed a system of communicating ideas, having all the advantages of a foreign language.”

[3]

“The terms Cant and Canting were probably derived from chaunt and chaunting,—the whining tone, or modulation of voice adopted by beggars, with intent to coax, wheedle, or cajole by pretensions of wretchedness.”^[4] For the origin of the other application of the word Cant, pulpit hypocrisy, we are indebted to the *Spectator*—“Cant is by some people derived from one Andrew Cant, who, they say, was a Presbyterian minister in some illiterate part of Scotland, who, by exercise and use, had obtained the faculty, alias gift, of talking in the pulpit in such a dialect that 'tis said he was understood by none but his own congregation,—and not by all of them. Since Master Cant's time it has been understood in a larger sense, and signifies all exclamations, whinings, unusual tones, and, in fine, all praying and preaching like the unlearned of the Presbyterians.” This anecdote is curious, though it is but fair to assume that the preacher's name was taken from his practice, rather than that the practice was called after the preacher. As far as we are concerned, however, in the present inquiry, Cant was derived from chaunt, a beggar's whine; “chaunting” being the recognised term amongst beggars to this day for begging orations and street whinings; and “chaunter,” a street talker and tramp, is still the term used by strollers and patterers. This race is, however, nearly obsolete. The use of the word Cant, amongst beggars, must certainly have commenced at a very early date, for we find “To cante, to speake,” in Harman's list of Rogues' Words in the year 1566; and Harrison about the same time,^[5] in speaking of beggars and Gipsies, says, “they have devised a language among themselves which they name Canting, but others Pedlars' Frenche.”

[4]

Now, the word Cant in its old sense, and Slang^[6] in its modern application, although used by good writers and persons of education as synonyms, are in reality quite distinct and separate terms. Cant, apart from religious hypocrisy, refers to the old secret language of Gipsies, thieves, tramps, and beggars. Slang represents that evanescent language, ever changing with fashion and taste, which has principally come into vogue during the last seventy or eighty years, spoken by persons in every grade of life, rich and poor, honest and dishonest.^[7] Cant is old; Slang is always modern and ever changing. To illustrate the difference: a thief in Cant language would term a horse a “prancer” or a “prad;” while in Slang, a man of fashion would speak of it as a “bit of blood,” a “spanker,” or a “neat tit.” A handkerchief, too, would be a “billy,” a “fogle,” or a “Kent rag,” in the secret language of low characters; whilst amongst the modern folk who affect Slang, it would be called a “stook,” a “wipe,” a “fogle,” or a “clout.” Cant was formed for purposes of secrecy. Slang, though it has a tendency the same way, is still often indulged in from a mild desire to appear familiar with life, gaiety, town-humour, and the transient nicknames and street jokes of the day. Both Cant and Slang, we have before said, are often huddled together as synonyms; but they are most certainly distinct, and as such should be used.

[5]

To the Gipsies, beggars and thieves are in great measure indebted for their Cant language. It is supposed that the Gipsies originally landed in this country early in the reign of Henry VIII. They were at first treated as conjurors and magicians,—indeed, they were hailed by the populace with as much applause as a company of English performers usually receives on arriving in a distant

colony. They came here with all their old Eastern arts of palmistry and second-sight, with their factitious power of doubling money by incantation and burial,—shreds of pagan idolatry; and they brought with them, also, the dishonesty of the lower-caste Orientals, and the nomadic tastes they had acquired through centuries of wandering over nearly the whole of the then known globe. They possessed also a language quite distinct from anything that had been heard in England up till their advent; they claimed the title of Egyptians, and as such, when their thievish propensities became a public nuisance, were cautioned and proscribed in a royal proclamation by Henry VIII.

[8] The Gipsies were not long in the country before they found native imitators; and indeed the imitation is much more frequently found nowadays, in the ranks of the so-called Gipsies, than is the genuine article. Vagabondism is peculiarly catching, and the idle, the vagrant, and the criminal soon caught the idea from the Gipsies, and learned from them to tramp, sleep under hedges and trees, tell fortunes, and find lost property for a consideration—frequently, as the saying runs, having found it themselves before it was lost. They also learned the value and application of a secret tongue; indeed, with the Gipsies came in all the accompaniments of maunding and imposture, except thieving and begging, which were well known in this country, and perhaps in every other, long before visitors had an opportunity of teaching them.

Harman, in 1566, wrote a singular, not to say droll, book, entitled, *A Caveat for commen Cvrsetors, vulgarly called Vagabones, newly augmented and enlarged*, wherein the history and various descriptions of rogues and vagabonds are given, together with their canting tongue. This book, the earliest of the kind, gives the singular fact that within a dozen years after the landing of the Gipsies, companies of English vagrants were formed, places of meeting appointed, districts for plunder and begging operations marked out, and rules agreed to for their common management. In some cases Gipsies joined the English gangs; in others, English vagrants joined the Gipsies. The fellowship was found convenient and profitable, as both parties were aliens to the laws and customs of the country, living in a great measure in the open air, apart from the lawful public, and often meeting each other on the same by-path, or in the same retired valley; but seldom intermarrying or entirely adopting each other's habits. The common people, too, soon began to consider them as of one family,—all rogues, and from Egypt. This superstition must have been very firmly imbedded, for it is still current. The secret language spoken by the Gipsies, principally Hindoo, and extremely barbarous to English ears, was found incomprehensible and very difficult to learn. The Gipsies naturally found a similar difficulty with the English language. A rude, rough, and singular, but under the circumstances not unnatural, compromise was made, and a mixture of Gipsy, old English, newly-coined words, and cribbings from any foreign, and therefore secret, language, mixed and jumbled together, formed what has ever since been known as the Canting Language, or Pedlar's French; or, during the past century, St. Giles's Greek.

Such was the origin of Cant; and in illustration of its blending with the Gipsy or Cingari tongue, we are enabled to give the accompanying list of Gipsy, and often Hindoo, words, with, in many instances, their English representatives:—

<i>Gipsy.</i>	<i>English.</i>
Bamboozle , to perplex or mislead by hiding. <i>Modern Gipsy.</i>	Bamboozle , to delude, cheat, or make a fool of any one.
Bosh , rubbish, nonsense, offal. <i>Gipsy and Persian.</i>	Bosh , stupidity, foolishness.
Cheese , thing or article, "That's the CHEESE," or thing. <i>Gipsy and Hindoo.</i>	Cheese , or CHEESY, a first-rate or very good article.
Chive , the tongue. <i>Gipsy.</i>	Chive , or CHIVEY, a shout. To CHIVEY, to hunt down with shouts.
Cuta , a gold coin. <i>Danubian Gipsy.</i>	Couter , a sovereign, twenty shillings.
Dade , or DADI, a father. <i>Gipsy.</i>	Daddy , nursery term for father.(*)
Distarabin , a prison. <i>Gipsy.</i>	Sturabin , a prison.
Gad , or GADSI, a wife. <i>Gipsy.</i>	Gad , a female scold; a woman who tramps over the country with a beggar or hawker.
Gibberish , the language of Gipsies, synonymous with SLANG. <i>Gipsy.</i>	Gibberish , rapid and unmeaning speech.
Ischur , SCHUR, or CHUR, a thief. <i>Gipsy and Hindoo.</i>	Cur , a mean or dishonest man.(*)
Lab , a word. <i>Gipsy.</i>	Lobs , words.
Lowe , or LOWR, money. <i>Gipsy and Wallachian.</i>	Lowre , money. <i>Ancient Cant.</i>
Mami , a grandmother. <i>Gipsy.</i>	Mammy , or MAMMA, a mother, formerly sometimes used for grandmother.(*)
Mang , or MAUNG, to beg. <i>Gipsy and Hindoo.</i>	Maund , to beg.
Mort , a free woman,—one for common use amongst the male Gipsies, so appointed by Gipsy custom. <i>Gipsy.</i>	Mot , a prostitute.
Mu , the mouth. <i>Gipsy and Hindoo.</i>	Moo , or MUN, the mouth.
Mull , to spoil or destroy. <i>Gipsy.</i>	Mull , to spoil, or bungle.(*)
Pal , a brother. <i>Gipsy.</i>	Pal , a partner, or relation.
Pané , water. <i>Gipsy. Hindoo, PAWNEE.</i>	Parney , rain.
Rig , a performance. <i>Gipsy.</i>	Rig , a frolic, or "spree."
Romany , speech or language. <i>Spanish Gipsy.</i>	Romany , the Gipsy language.
Rome , or ROMM, a man. <i>Gipsy and Coptic.</i>	Rum , a good man, or thing. In the Robbers'

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Romee, a woman. *Gipsy*.
Slang, the language spoken by Gipsies. *Gipsy*.
Tawno, little. *Gipsy*.
Tschib, or **JIBB**, the tongue. *Gipsy and Hindoo*.

language of Spain (partly Gipsy), **RUM** signifies a harlot.
Rumy, a good woman or girl.
Slang, low, vulgar, unauthorized language.
Tanny, **TEENY**, little.
Jibb, the tongue; **JABBER**,^[9] quick-tongued, or fast talk.

[In those instances indicated by a (*), it is doubtful whether we are indebted to the Gipsies for the terms. Dad, in Welsh, also signifies a father. Cur is stated to be a mere term of reproach, like Dog, which in all European languages has been applied in an abusive sense. Objections may also be raised against Gad, Maund, and many other of these parallels. We have, however, no wish to present them as infallible; our idea is merely to call the reader's attention to the undoubted similarity between both the sound and the sense in most examples.]

Here, then, we have the remarkable fact of at least a few words of pure Gipsy origin going the round of Europe, passing into this country before the Reformation, and coming down to us through numerous generations purely by the mouths of the people. They have seldom been written or used in books, and it is simply as vulgarisms that they have reached us. Only a few are now Cant, and some are household words. The word jockey, as applied to a dealer or rider of horses, came from the Gipsy, and means in that language a whip. The word, used as a verb, is an instance of modern slang grown out of the ancient. Our standard dictionaries give, of course, none but conjectural etymologies. Another word, bamboozle, has been a sore difficulty with lexicographers. It is not in the old dictionaries, although it is extensively used in familiar or popular language for the last two centuries; and is, in fact, the very kind of word that such writers as Swift, Butler, L'Estrange, and Arbuthnot would pick out at once as a telling and most serviceable term. It is, as we have seen, from the Gipsy; and here we must state that it was Boucher who first drew attention to the fact, although in his remarks on the dusky tongue he has made an evident mistake by concluding it to be identical with its offspring, Cant. Other parallel instances, with but slight variations from the old Gipsy meanings, might be mentioned; but sufficient examples have been adduced to show that Marsden, a great Oriental scholar in the last century, when he declared before the Society of Antiquaries that the Cant of English thieves and beggars had nothing to do with the language spoken by the despised Gipsies, was in error. Had the Gipsy tongue been analysed and committed to writing three centuries ago, there is every probability that many scores of words now in common use could be at once traced to its source, having been adopted as our language has developed towards its present shape through many varied paths. Instances continually occur nowadays of street vulgarisms ascending to the drawing-rooms of respectable society. Who, then, can doubt that the Gipsy-vagabond alliance of three centuries ago has contributed its quota of common words to popular speech?

Thomas Moore, in a humorous little book, *Tom Crib's Memorial to Congress*, 1819, says, "The Gipsy language, with the exception of such terms as relate to their own peculiar customs, differs but little from the regular Flash or Cant language." But this was magnifying the importance of the alliance. Moore, we should think, knew nothing of the Gipsy tongue other than the few Cant words put into the mouths of the beggars in Beaumont and Fletcher's *Comedy of the Beggar's Bush*, and Ben Jonson's *Masque of the Gipsies Metamorphosed*,—hence his confounding Cant with Gipsy speech, and appealing to the Glossary of Cant for so-called "Gipsy" words at the end of the *Life of Bamfylde Moore Carew*, to bear him out in his assertion. Still his remark bears much truth, and proof of this would have been found long ago if any scholar had taken the trouble to examine the "barbarous jargon of Cant," and to have compared it with Gipsy speech. George Borrow, in his *Account of the Gipsies in Spain*, thus eloquently concludes his second volume; speaking of the connexion of the Gipsies with Europeans, he says:—"Yet from this temporary association were produced two results; European fraud became sharpened by coming into contact with Asiatic craft; whilst European tongues, by imperceptible degrees, became recruited with various words (some of them wonderfully expressive), many of which have long been stumbling-blocks to the philologist, who, whilst stigmatizing them as words of mere vulgar invention, or of unknown origin, has been far from dreaming that a little more research or reflection would have proved their affinity to the Slavonic, Persian, or Romaic, or perhaps to the mysterious object of his veneration, the Sanscrit, the sacred tongue of the palm-covered regions of Ind; words originally introduced into Europe by objects too miserable to occupy for a moment his lettered attention—the despised denizens of the tents of Roma." These words might with very little alteration be ascribed to the subject of which this volume is supposed—indeed hoped—to be a handbook.

But the Gipsies, their speech, their character—bad enough, as all the world testifies, but yet not devoid of redeeming qualities—their history, and their religious belief, have been totally disregarded, and their poor persons buffeted and jostled about until it is a wonder that any trace of origin or national speech remains. On the Continent they received better attention at the hands of learned men. Their language was taken down in writing and examined, their history was traced, and their extraordinary customs and practice of living in the open air, and eating raw, and often putrid meat, were explained. They ate reptiles and told fortunes because they had learnt to do so through their forefathers centuries back in Hindostan; and they devoured carrion because the Hindoo proverb—"That which God kills is better than that killed by man"^[10]—was still in their remembrance. This is the sort of proverb, we should imagine, that would hardly commend itself to any one who had not an unnatural and ghoul-like tendency anxious for full development. Grellman, a learned German, was their principal historian, and to him, and those

[9]

[10]

[11]

who have followed him, we are almost entirely indebted for the little we know of their language. The first European settlement of the Gipsies was in the provinces adjoining the Danube, Moldau and Theiss, where M. Cogalniceano, in his *Essai sur les Cigains de la Moldo-Valachie*, estimates them at 200,000. Not a few of our ancient and modern Cant and Slang terms are Wallachian and Greek words, picked up by these wanderers from the East, and added to their common stock.

Gipsy, then, started, and was partially merged into Cant; and the old story told by Harrison and others, that the first inventor of canting was hanged for his pains, would seem to be a humorous invention, for jargon as it is, it was doubtless of gradual formation, like all other languages or systems of speech. Most of the modern Gipsies know the old Cant words as well as their own tongue—or rather what remains of it. As Borrow says, "The dialect of the English Gipsies is mixed with English words."^[11] Those of the tribe who frequent fairs, and mix with English tramps, readily learn the new words, as they are adopted by what Harman calls "the fraternity of vagabonds." Indeed, the old Cant is a common language to the vagrants of many descriptions and every possible origin who are scattered over the British Isles.

English Cant has its mutabilities like every other system of speech, and is considerably altered since the first dictionary was compiled by Harman in 1566. A great many words are unknown in the present tramps' and thieves' vernacular. Some of them, however, still bear their old definitions, while others have adopted fresh meanings. "Abraham-man" is yet seen in our modern "sham Abraham," or "play the old soldier"—*i.e.*, to feign sickness or distress. "Autum" is still a church or chapel amongst Gipsies; and "beck," a constable, is our modern Cant and Slang "beak," once a policeman, but now a magistrate. "Bene," or "bone," stands for good in Seven Dials and the back streets of Westminster; and "bouse" is our modern "booze," to drink or fuddle. A "bousing ken" was the old Cant term for a public-house; and "boozing ken," in modern Cant, has precisely the same meaning. There is little doubt, though, that the pronunciations were always as they are now, so far at least as these two instances are concerned. "Cassan" is both old and modern Cant for cheese; the same may be said of "chattes," or "chatts," the gallows. "Cofe," or "cove," is still a vulgar synonym for a man. "Dudes" was Cant for clothes; we now say "duds." "Flag" is still a fourpenny-piece; and "fylche" means to rob. "Ken" is a house, and "lick" means to thrash; "prancer" is yet known amongst rogues as a horse; and to "prig," amongst high and low, is to steal. Three centuries ago, if one beggar said anything disagreeable to another, the person annoyed would say, "Stow you," or hold your peace; low people now say, "Stow it," equivalent to "Be quiet." There is, so far as the Slang goes, no actual difference in the use of these phrases, the variation being in the pronouns—in fact, in the direction. "Trine" is still to hang; "wyn" yet stands for a penny. And many other words, as will be seen in the Dictionary, still retain their ancient meaning.

As specimens of those words which have altered their original Cant signification, may be instanced "chete," now written cheat. "Chete" was in ancient Cant what *chop* is in the Canton-Chinese—an almost inseparable adjunct. Everything was termed a "chete," and qualified by a substantive-adjective, which showed what kind of a "chete" was meant; for instance, "crashing-chetes" were teeth; a "moffling-chete," was a napkin; a "topping-chete," was the gallows, and a "grunting-chete," was a pig. Cheat nowadays means to cozen or defraud, and lexicographers have tortured etymology for an original—but without success. *Escheats* and *escheatours* have been named, but with great doubts; indeed, Stevens, the learned commentator on Shakspeare, acknowledged that he "did not recollect to have met with the word cheat in our ancient writers."^[12] Cheat, to defraud, then, is no other than an old Cant term somewhat altered in its meaning,^[13] and as such it should be described in the next etymological dictionary. Another instance of a change in the meaning of the old Cant, but the retention of the word, is seen in "cly," formerly to take or steal, now a pocket; and with the remembrance of a certain class of low characters, a curious connexion between the two meanings is discovered. "Make" was a halfpenny: we now say "mag,"—"make" being modern Cant for getting money by any possible means, their apophthegm being—"Get money the best way you can, but *make* it somehow." "Milling" stood for stealing; it ultimately became a pugilistic term, and then faded into nothingness, "the cove wot loves a mill," being a thing of the past. "Nab" was a head,—low people now say "nob," the former meaning, in modern Cant, to steal or seize. "Pek" was meat,—we still say "peckish," when hungry. "Peckish" is though more likely to be derived from the action of birds when eating, as all slang has its origin in metaphor. "Prygges, dronken Tinkers or beastly people," as old Harman wrote, would scarcely be understood now; a "prig," in the 19th century, is a pickpocket or thief. He is also a mean, contemptible little "cuss," who is not, as a rule, found in low life, but who could be very well spared from that of the middle and upper classes. "Quier," or "queer," like cheat, was a very common prefix, and meant bad or wicked,—it now means odd, curious, or strange; but to the ancient Cant we are possibly indebted for the word, which etymologists should remember.^[14] "Rome," or "rum," formerly meant good, or of the first quality, and was extensively used like cheat and queer,—indeed as an adjective it was the opposite of the latter. "Rum" now means curious, and is synonymous with queer; thus,—"rummy old bloke," or a "queer old man." Here again we see the origin of an every-day word, scouted by lexicographers and snubbed by respectable persons, but still a word of frequent and popular use. "Yannam" meant bread; "pannum" is the word now. Other instances could be pointed out, but they will be observed in the Dictionary.

Several words are entirely obsolete. "Alybbeg" no longer means a bed, nor "askew" a cup. "Booget,"^[15] nowadays, would not be understood for a basket; neither would "gan" pass current for mouth. "Fullams" was the old Cant term for false or loaded dice, and although used by Shakspeare in this sense, is now unknown and obsolete. Indeed, as Moore somewhere remarks, the present Greeks of St. Giles's themselves would be thoroughly puzzled by many of the ancient

[12]

[13]

[14]

canting songs,—taking, for example, the first verse of an old favourite—

“Bing out, bien Morts, and toure and toure,
Bing out, bien Morts, and toure;
For all your duds are bing’d awast;
The bien cove hath the loure.”^[16]

But perhaps we cannot do better than present to the reader at once an entire copy of the first Canting Dictionary ever compiled. As before mentioned, it was the work of one Thomas Harman, who lived in the days of Queen Elizabeth. Some writers have remarked that Decker^[17] was the first to compile a dictionary of the vagabonds’ tongue; whilst Borrow^[18] and Moore stated that Richard Head performed that service in his *Life of an English Rogue*, published in the year 1680. All these statements are equally incorrect, for the first attempt was made more than a century before the latter work was issued. The quaint spelling and old-fashioned phraseology are preserved, and the initiated will quickly recognise many vulgar street words as old acquaintances dressed in antique garb.^[19]

[15]

Abraham-men be those that fayn themselves to have beene mad, and have bene kept either in Bethelem, or in some other pryson a good time.

Alybbeg, a bedde.

Askew, a cuppe.

Autem, a church.

Autem mortes, married women as chaste as a cove.

Baudye baskets bee women who goe with baskets and capcases on their armes, wherein they have laces, pinnes, nedles, whyte inkel, and round sylke gyrdels of all colours.

Beck [Beak, a magistrate], a constable.

Belly-chete, apron.

Bene, good. *Benar*, better.

Benship, very good.

Bleting chete, a calfe or sheepe.

Booget, a travelling tinker’s basket.

Borde, a shilling.

Boung, a purse. [*Friesic*, pong; *Wallachian*, punga.] The oldest form of this word is in Ulphilas, puggs; it exists also in the *Greek*, πογγη.

Bowse, drink.

Bowsing ken, an alehouse.

Bufe [Buffer, a man], a dogge.

Bynge a waste [Avast, get out of the way] go you hence.

Cackling chete, a coke [cock], or capon.

Cassan [Cassam], cheese.

Casters [Castor, a hat], a cloake.

Cateth, “the vpright Cofe *cateth* to the Roge” [probably a shortening or misprint of *Canteth*].

Chattes, the gallows.

Chete [see [what has been previously said](#) about this word.]

Cly [a pocket], to take, receive, or have.

Cofe [cove], a person.

Commission [mish], a shirt.

Counterfet cranke, these that do counterfet the Cranke be yong knaves and yonge harlots, that deeply dissemble the falling sickness.

Cranke [cranky, foolish], falling evil [or wasting sickness].

Crashing chetes, teeth.

Cuffen, a manne. [A *cuif* in Northumberland and Scotland signifies a lout or awkward fellow.]

Darkemans, the night.

Dell, a yonge wench.

Dewse a vyle, the country.

Dock, to deflower.

[16]

Doxes, harlots.

Drawers, hosen.

Dudes [or duds], clothes.

Fambles, handes.

Fambling chete, a ring on one's hand.

Flagg, a groat.

Frater, a beggar wyth a false paper.

Freshe water mariners, these kind of caterpillers counterfet great losses on the sea:—their shippes were drowned in the playne of Salisbury.

Fylche, to robbe: Fylch-man, a robber.

Gage, a quart pot.

Gan, a mouth.

Gentry cofe, a noble or gentle man.

Gentry cofes ken, a noble or gentle man's house.

Gentry mort, a noble or gentle woman.

Gerry, excrement.

Glasyers, eyes.

Glymmar, fyer.

Grannam, corne.

Grunting chete, a pygge.

Gyb, a writing.

Gyger [jigger], a dore.

Hearing chetes, eares.

Jarke, a seale.

Jarkeman, one who makes writings and sets seales for [counterfeit] licences and passports.

Ken, a house.

Kynchen co [or cove], a young boye trained up like a "Kynching Morte." [From the German diminutive, *Kindschen*.]

Kynching morte, is a little gyrlle, carried at their mother's backe in a slate, or sheete, who brings them up sauagely.

Lag, water.

Lag of dudes, a bucke [or basket] of clothes.

Lage, to washe.

Lap, butter mylke, or whey.

Lightmans, the day.

Lowing chete, a cowe.

Lowre, money. [From the Wallachian Gipsy word *LOWE*, coined money. See M. Cogalniceano's *Essai sur les Cigains de la Moldo-Valachie*.]

Lubbares,—"sturdy Lubbares," country bumpkins, or men of a low degree.

Lyb-beg, a bed.

Lycke [lick], to beate.

Lyp, to lie down.

Lypken, a house to lye in.

Make [mag], a halfpenny.

Margeri prater, a hen.

Milling, to steale [by sending a child in at a window].

Moffling chete, a napkin.

Mortes [mots], harlots.

Myll, to robbe.

Mynt, gold.

Nab [nob], a heade.

Nabchet, a hat or cap.

Nase, dronken.

Nosegent, a nunne.

Pallyard, a borne beggar [who counterfeits sickness, or incurable sores. They are mostly Welshmen, Harman says.]

Param, mylke.

Patrico, a priest.

Patricos kinchen, a pygge. [A satirical hit at the church, *PATRICO* meaning a parson or priest, and [KINCHEN](#) his little boy or girl.]

Pek, meat.

Poppelars, porrage.

Prat, a buttocke. [This word has its equivalent in modern slang.]

Pratling chete, a toung.

Prauncer, a horse.

Prigger of prauncers be horse-stealers, for to prigge signifieth in their language to steale, and a *PRAUNCER* is a horse, so being put together, the matter was playn. [Thus writes old Thomas Harman, who concludes his description of this order of "pryggers," by very quietly saying, "I had the best gelding stolen out of my pasture, that I had amongst others, whyle this book was first a-printing."]

Prygges, dronken tinkers, or beastly people.

Quacking chete, a drake or duck.

Quaromes, a body.

Quier [queer], badde. [See [ante](#).]

Quier cuffin, the justice of peace.

Quyer crampringes, boltes or fetters.

Quyer kyn, a pryson house.

Red shanke, a drake or ducke.

Roger, a goose.

Rome, goode [now curious, noted, or remarkable in any way. *Rum* is the modern orthography].

Rome house [rum booze], wyne. [A name probably applied by canters coming on it for the first time, and tasting it suddenly.]

Rome mort, the Queene [Elizabeth].

Rome vyle [Rum-ville], London.

Ruff peck, baken [short bread, common in old times at farm-houses].

Ruffmans, the wood or bushes.

Salomon, an alter or masse.

Skypper, a barne.

Slate, a sheete or shetes.

Smelling chete, a nose.

Smelling chete, a garden or orchard.

Snowt fayre [said of a woman who has a pretty face or is comely].

Stall [to initiate a beggar or rogue into the rights and privileges of the canting order. Harman relates that when an upright man, or initiated first-class rogue, "mete any beggar, whether he be sturdy or impotent, he will demand of him whether ever he was 'stalled to the roge,' or no. If he say he was, he will know of whom, and his name yt stalled him. And if he be not learnedly able to shew him the whole circumstance thereof, he will spoyle him of his money, either of his best garment, if it be worth any money, and haue him to the bowsing-ken: which is, to some typling house next adjoyninge, and layth there to gage the best thing that he hath for twenty pence or two shillings: this man obeyeth for feare of beatinge. Then dooth this upright man call for a gage of bowse, which is a quarte potte of drink, and powres the same vpon his peld pate, adding these words,—I, *G.P.*, do stalle thee, *W.T.*, to the Roge, and that from henceforth it shall be lawfull for thee to cant, that is, to aske or begge for thi liuing in al places."]

Stampers, shoes.

Stampes, legges.

Stauling ken, a house that will receyue stollen wares.

Stawlinge kens, tipping-houses.

Stow you [stow it], hold your peace.

Strike, to steale.

Strommell, strawe.

Swadder, OR PEDLER [a man who hawks goods].

The high pad, the highway.

The ruffian cly thee, the devil take thee.

Togemans [tog], cloake.

Togman, a coate.

To bowse, to drinke.

To cant, to speake.

To cly the gerke, to be whipped.

To couch a hogshead, to lie down and slepe.

To cut bene whyddes, to speake or give good words.

To cut benle, to speak gentle.

To cutte, to say.

To cutte quyer whyddes, to giue euil words or euil language.

To dup ye gyger [jigger], to open the dore.

To fylche, to robbe.

To heue a bough, to robbe or rifle a boweth [booth].

To maunde, to aske or require.

To mill a ken, to robbe a house.

Tonygle [coition].

To nyp a boung, [nip, to steal], to cut a purse.

To skower the cramprings, to weare boltes or fetters.

To stall, to make or ordain.

To the ruffian, to the Devil.

To towre, to see.

Tryning, hanging.

Tyb of the butery, a goose.

Walking morte, womene [who pass for widows].

Wapping [coition].

Whyddes, wordes.

Wyn, a penny. [A correspondent of *Notes and Queries* suggests the connexion of this word with the Welsh, GWYN, white—*i.e.*, the white silver penny. *See* other examples under [BLUNT](#), in the Dictionary; cf. also the Armorican, "GWENNEK," a penny.]

Yannam, bread.

Turning attention more to the Cant of modern times, in connexion with the old, it will be found that words have been drawn into the thieves' vocabulary from every conceivable source. Hard or infrequent words, vulgarly termed "crack-jaw," or "jaw-breakers," were very often used and considered as Cant terms. And here it should be mentioned that at the present day the most inconsistent and far-fetched terms are often used for secret purposes, when they are known to be caviare to the million. It is strange that such words as incongruous, insipid, interloper, intriguing, indecorum, forestall, equip, hush, grapple, &c., &c., were current Cant words a century and a half ago, if we are to judge by the Dictionary of Canting Words at the end of *Bacchus and Venus*, [20] 1737. It is but fair, however, to assume that the compiler of the dictionary was but trading on the demand for Cant phrases, and was humbugging his readers. The terms are inserted not as jokes or squibs, but as selections from the veritable pocket dictionaries of the Jack Sheppards and Dick Turpins of the day. If they were safely used as unknown and cabalistic terms amongst the commonalty, the fact would form a very curious illustration of the ignorance of our poor ancestors; but it would be unfair and, indeed, idiotic to assume this without much stronger proof than the book in question gives of itself.

Amongst those Cant words which have either altered their meanings, or have become extinct, may be cited lady, formerly the Cant for "a very crooked, deformed, and ill-shapen woman;" [21] and Harman, "a pair of stocks, or a constable." The former is a pleasant piece of sarcasm, whilst

the latter indicates a singular method of revenge, or else of satire. Harman was the first author who specially wrote against English vagabonds, and for his trouble his name, we are told, became synonymous with a pair of stocks, or a policeman of the olden time.

Apart from the Gipsy element, we find that Cant abounds in terms from foreign languages, and that it exhibits signs of a growth similar to that of most recognised and completely-formed tongues,—the gathering of words from foreign sources. In the reign of Elizabeth and of King James I., several Dutch, Flemish, and Spanish words were introduced by soldiers who had served in the Low Countries and sailors who had returned from the Spanish Main, who, like “mine ancient Pistol,” were fond of garnishing their speech with outlandish phrases. Many of these were soon picked up and adopted by vagabonds and tramps in their Cant language. The Anglo-Norman and the Anglo-Saxon, the Scotch, the French, the Italian, and even the classic languages of ancient Italy and Greece, besides the various provincial dialects of England, have contributed to its list of words. Indeed, as has been remarked, English Cant seems to be formed on the same basis as the Argot of the French and the Roth-Sprach of the Germans—partly metaphorical, and partly by the introduction of such corrupted foreign terms as are likely to be unknown to the society amid which the Cant speakers exist. Argot is the London thieves’ word for their secret language; it is, of course, from the French, but that matters not, so long as it is incomprehensible to the police and the mob. “Booze,” or “bouse,” is supposed to come from the Dutch *buysen*, though the word has been in use in England for some hundreds of years. “Domine,” a parson, is from the Spanish. “Donna and feeles,” a woman and children, is from the Latin; and “don,” a clever fellow, has been filched from the *Lingua Franca*, or bastard Italian, although it sounds like an odd mixture of Spanish and French; whilst “duds,” the vulgar term for clothes, may have been pilfered either from the Gaelic or the Dutch. “Feele,” a daughter, from the French; and “frow,” a girl or wife, from the German—are common tramps’ terms. So are “gent,” silver, from the French *argent*; and “vial,” a country town, also from the French. “Horrid-horn,” a fool, is believed to be from the Erse; and “gloak,” a man, from the Scotch. As stated before, the dictionary will supply numerous other instances. [21]

The Celtic languages have contributed many Cant and vulgar words to our popular vocabulary. These have come to us through the Gaelic and Irish languages, so closely allied in their material as to be merely dialects of a primitive common tongue. This element may arise from the Celtic portion of our population, which, from its position as slaves or servants to its ancient conquerors, has contributed so largely to the lowest class of the community, therefore to our Slang, provincial, or colloquial words; or it may be an importation from Irish immigrants, who have contributed their fair proportion to our criminal stock. [22]

There is one source, however, of secret street terms which in the first edition of this work was entirely overlooked,—indeed, it was unknown to the original compiler until pointed out by a correspondent,—the *Lingua Franca*, or bastard Italian, spoken at Genoa, Trieste, Malta, Constantinople, Smyrna, Alexandria, and all Mediterranean seaport towns. The ingredients of this imported Cant are, as its name denotes, many. Its foundation is Italian, with a mixture of modern Greek, German (from the Austrian ports), Spanish, Turkish, and French. It has been introduced to the notice of the London wandering tribes by the sailors, foreign and English, who trade to and from the Mediterranean seaports, but it must not be confounded with the mixture of Irish, English, and Italian spoken in neighbourhoods like Saffron Hill and Leather Lane, which are thronged with swarms of organ-grinders from all parts of Italy, and makers of images from Rome and Florence,—all of whom, in these dense thoroughfares, mingle with our lower orders. It would occupy too much space here to give a list of the words used in either of these Babel-like tongues, especially as the principal of them are noted in the dictionary.

“There are several Hebrew terms in our Cant language, obtained, it would appear, from the intercourse of the thieves with the Jew fences (receivers of stolen goods); many of the Cant terms, again, are Sanscrit, got from the Gipsies; many Latin, got by the beggars from the Catholic prayers before the Reformation; and many again, Italian, got from the wandering musicians and others; indeed, the showmen have but lately introduced a number of Italian phrases into their Cant language.” [22] The Hindostanee also contributes several words, and these have been introduced by the Lascar sailors, who come over here in the East Indiamen, and often lodge during their stay in the low tramps’ houses at the East-end of London. Speaking of the learned tongues, it may be mentioned that, precarious and abandoned as the vagabonds’ existence is, many persons of classical or refined education have from time to time joined the nomadic ranks,—occasionally from inclination, as in the popular instance of Bamfylde Moore Carew, but generally through indiscretions, which involve pecuniary difficulty and loss of character. [23] This will in some measure account for numerous classical and learned words figuring as Cant terms in the vulgar dictionary. [23]

In the early part of the last century, when highwaymen and footpads were plentiful, and when the dangerous classes were in larger proportion to the bulk of the population than they are now, a great many new words were added to the canting vocabulary, whilst several old terms fell into disuse. “Cant,” for instance, as applied to thieves’ talk, was supplanted by the word “flash.” In the North of England the Cant employed by tramps and thieves is known as “Gammy.” It is mainly from the old Gipsy corrupted. In the large towns of Ireland and Scotland this secret language is also spoken, with of course additions peculiar to each locality. All those words derived from “gammy” are inserted in the dictionary as from the North country. [24]

A singular feature, however, in vulgar language is the retention and the revival of sterling old English words, long since laid up in ancient manuscripts. Disraeli somewhere says, “The purest source of neology is in the revival of old words”—

and Dr. Latham remarks that “the thieves of London are the conservators of Anglo-Saxonisms.” A young gentleman from Belgravia, who had lost his watch or his pocket-handkerchief, would scarcely remark to his mamma that it had been “boned”—yet “bone,” in old times, meant, amongst high and low, to steal. And a young lady living in the precincts of dingy but aristocratic Mayfair, although enraptured with a Jenny Lind or a Ristori, would hardly think of turning back in the box to inform papa that she (Ristori or Lind) “made no ‘bones’ of it”—yet the phrase was most respectable and well-to-do before it met with a change of circumstances. Possibly fashion, in its journey from east to west, left certain phrases and metaphors behind, which being annexed by the newcomers, sank gradually in the social scale until they ultimately passed out of the written language altogether, and became “flash” or Slang. “A ‘crack’ article,” however first-rate, would have greatly displeased Dr. Johnson and Mr. Walker—yet both crack, in the sense of excellent, and crack up, to boast or praise, were not considered vulgarisms in the time of Henry VIII. The former term is used frequently nowadays, as a kind of polite and modified Slang—as a “crack” regiment, a “crack” shot, &c. “Dodge,” a cunning trick, is from the Anglo-Saxon; and ancient nobles used to “get each other’s ‘dander’ up” before appealing to their swords,—quite “flabbergasting” (also a respectable old word) the half-score of lookers-on with the thumps and cuts of their heavy weapons. “Gallivanting,” waiting upon the ladies, was as polite in expression as in action; whilst a clergyman at Paule’s Crosse thought nothing of bidding a noisy hearer “hold his ‘gab,’” or “shut up his ‘gob.’” But then the essence of preaching was to indulge in idiomatic phrases and colloquialisms—a practice now almost peculiar to itinerant “ranters.” “Gadding,” roaming about in an idle and vacant manner, was used in an old translation of the Bible; and “to do anything ‘gingerly’” was to do it with great care. Persons of modern affected tastes will be shocked to know that the great Lord Bacon spoke of the lower part of a man’s face as his “gills,” though the expression is not more objectionable than the generality of metaphor, and is considerably more respectable than many words admitted to the genteel—we use the word advisedly—vocabulary.

[25]

Shakspeare also used many words which are now counted dreadfully vulgar. “‘Clean’ gone,” in the sense of out of sight, or entirely away; “you took me all ‘a-mort,’” or confounded me; “it wont ‘fadge,’” or suit, are phrases taken at random from the great dramatist’s works. These phrases are the natural outcome of the poet’s truth to life in the characters he portrayed. A London costermonger, or inhabitant of the streets, instead of saying, “I’ll make him yield,” or “give in,” in a fight or contest, would say, “I’ll make him ‘buckle’ under.” Shakspeare in his *Henry the Fourth* (part ii. act i. scene 1), has the word; and Mr. Halliwell, one of the greatest and most industrious of living antiquaries, informs us that “the commentators do not supply another example.” If Shakspeare was not a pugilist, he certainly anticipated the terms of the prize-ring—or they were respectable words before the prize-ring was thought of—for he has “pay,” to beat or thrash, and “pepper,” with a similar meaning; also “fancy,” in the sense of pets and favourites,—pugilists are often termed “the ‘fancy.’” The origin of the term, as applied to them, has, however, never been satisfactorily decided, though Pierce Egan and others since his time have speculated ingeniously on the subject. The Cant word “prig,” from the Saxon *priccan*, to filch, is also Shakspearian; so, indeed, is “piece,” a contemptuous term for a young woman. Shakspeare was not the only vulgar dramatist of his time. Ben Jonson, Beaumont and Fletcher, Brome, and other play-writers, occasionally, and very naturally, put Cant words into the mouths of their low characters, or employed old words which have since degenerated into vulgarisms. “Crusty,” poor tempered; “two of a kidney,” two of a sort; “lark,” a piece of fun; “lug,” to pull; “bung,” to give or pass; “pickle,” a sad plight; “frump,” to mock, are a few specimens casually picked from the works of the old histrionic writers.

[26]

One old English mode of canting, simple enough, but affected only by the most miserable impostors, was the inserting a consonant betwixt each syllable; thus, taking *g*, “How do you do?” would be “How*g* dog you*g* dog?” The name very properly given to this disagreeable nonsense, we are informed by Grose, was gibberish.

Another slang has been manufactured by transposing the initial letters of words, so that a mutton chop becomes a *chutton mop*, and a pint of stout a *sñint of pout*; but it is satisfactory to know that it has gained no ground, as it is remarkable for nothing so much as poverty of resource on the part of its inventors. This is called “Marrowskying,” or “Medical Greek,” from its use by medical students at the hospitals. Albert Smith termed it the “Gower Street Dialect,” and referred to it occasionally in his best-known works.

The “Language of Ziph,” it may be noted, is another rude mode of disguising English, in use among the students at Winchester College. Some notices of this method of conveying secret information, with an extensive Glossary of the Words, Phrases, Customs, &c., peculiar to the College, may be found in Mr. Mansfield’s *School Life at Winchester College*. It is certainly too puerile a specimen of work to find place here.

[27]

ACCOUNT OF THE HIEROGLYPHICS USED BY VAGABONDS.

One of the most singular chapters in a history of vagabondism would certainly be “An Account of

the Hieroglyphic Signs used by Tramps and Thieves,” and it certainly would not be the least interesting. The reader may be startled to know that, in addition to a secret language, the wandering tribes of this country have private marks and symbols with which to score their successes, failures, and advice to succeeding beggars; in fact, there is no doubt that the country is really dotted over with beggars’ finger-posts and guide-stones. The subject was not long since brought under the attention of the Government by Mr. Rawlinson.^[24] “There is,” he says in his report, “a sort of blackguards’ literature, and the initiated understand each other by Slang [Cant] terms, by pantomimic signs, and by hieroglyphics. The vagrant’s mark may be seen in Havant, on corners of streets, on door-posts, on house-steps. Simple as these chalk-lines appear, they inform the succeeding vagrants of all they require to know; and a few white scratches may say, ‘Be importunate,’ or ‘Pass on.’”









Another very curious account was taken from a provincial newspaper, published in 1849, and forwarded to *Notes and Queries*,^[25] under the head of Mendicant Freemasonry. “Persons,” remarks the writer, “indiscreet enough to open their purses to the relief of the beggar tribe, would do well to take a readily-learned lesson as to the folly of that misguided benevolence which encourages and perpetuates vagabondism. Every door or passage is pregnant with instruction as to the error committed by the patron of beggars; as the beggar-marks show that a system of freemasonry is followed, by which a beggar knows whether it will be worth his while to call into a passage or knock at a door. Let any one examine the entrances to the passages in any town, and there he will find chalk marks, unintelligible to him, but significant enough to beggars. If a thousand towns are examined, the same marks will be found at every passage entrance. The passage mark is a cypher with a twisted tail; in some cases the tail projects into the passage, in others outwardly; thus seeming to indicate whether the houses down the passage are worth calling at or not. Almost every door has its marks; these are varied. In some cases there is a cross on the brickwork, in others a cypher; the figures **1**, **2**, **3** are also used. Every person may for himself test the accuracy of these statements by the examination of the brickwork near his own doorway—thus demonstrating that mendicity is a regular trade, carried out upon a system calculated to save time, and realize the largest profits.” These remarks refer mainly to provincial towns, London being looked upon as the tramps’ home, and therefore too “fly” or experienced to be duped by such means. The title it obtains, that of “the Start,” or first place in everything, is significant of this.

Provincial residents, who are more likely to view the foregoing extract with an eye of suspicion than are those who live in a position to constantly watch for and profit by evidences of the secret intercommunication indulged in by the dangerous classes, should note, in favour of the extract given, how significant is the practice of tramps and beggars calling in unfrequented localities, and how obvious it is that they are directed by a code of signals at once complete and imperious. It is bad for a tramp who is discovered disobeying secret orders. He is marked out and subjected to all kinds of annoyance by means of decoy hieroglyphs, until his life becomes a burden to him, and he is compelled to starve or—most horrible of alternatives—go to work.

The only other notice of the hieroglyphs of vagabonds worth remarking is in Mayhew’s *London Labour and the London Poor*.^[26] Mayhew obtained his information from two tramps, who stated that hawkers employ these signs as well as beggars. One tramp thus described the method of “working”^[27] a small town. “Two hawkers (‘pals’^[27]) go together, but separate when they enter a village, one taking one side of the road, and selling different things, and so as to inform each other as to the character of the people at whose houses they call, they chalk certain marks on their door-posts.” Another informant stated that “if a ‘patterer’^[27] has been ‘crabbed’” (that is, offended by refusal or exposure) “at any of the ‘cribs’” (houses), “he mostly chalks a signal at or near the door.” These hawkers were not of the ordinary, but of the tramp, class, who carried goods more as a blind to their real designs than for the purposes of sale. They, in fact, represented the worst kinds of the two classes. The law has comparatively recently improved these nondescript gentry off the face of the country, and the hawker of the present day is generally a man more sinned against than sinning.

Another use is also made of hieroglyphs. Charts of successful begging neighbourhoods are rudely drawn, and symbolical signs attached to each house to show whether benevolent or adverse.^[28] “In many cases there is over the kitchen mantelpiece” of a tramps’ lodging-house “a map of the district, dotted here and there with memorandums of failure or success.” A correct [facsimile](#) of one of these singular maps is given in this book. It was obtained from the patterers and tramps who supplied a great many words for this work, and who were employed by the original publisher in collecting Old Ballads, Christmas Carols, Dying Speeches, and Last Lamentations, as materials for a *History of Popular Literature*. The reader will, no doubt, be amused with the drawing. The locality depicted is near Maidstone, in Kent; and it was probably sketched by a wandering Screever^[29] in payment for a night’s lodging. The English practice of marking everything, and scratching names on public property, extends itself to the tribe of vagabonds. On the map, as may be seen in the left-hand corner, some Traveller^[29] has drawn a favourite or noted female, singularly nicknamed Three-quarter Sarah. What were the peculiar accomplishments of this lady to demand so uncommon a name, the reader will be at a loss to discover; but a patterer says it probably refers to a shuffling dance of that name, common in tramps’ lodging-houses, and in which “¾ Sarah” may have been a proficient. Above her, three beggars or hawkers have reckoned their day’s earnings, amounting to 13s., and on the right a tolerably correct sketch of a low hawker, or cadger, is drawn. “To Dover, the *nigh* way,” is the exact phraseology; and “hup here,” a fair specimen of the self-acquired education of the draughtsman. No key or explanation to the hieroglyphs was given in the original, because it would have been superfluous, when every inmate of the lodging-house knew the marks from his cradle—or rather his mother’s back.

Should there be no map, in most lodging-houses there is an old man who is guide to every "walk" in the vicinity, and who can tell on every round each house that is "good for a cold tatur." The hieroglyphs that are used are:—



-  **No good**; too poor, and know too much.
-  **Stop**,—If you have what they want, they will buy. They are pretty "fly" (knowing).
-  **Go in this direction**, it is better than the other road. Nothing that way.
-  **Bone** (good). Safe for a "cold tatur," if for nothing else. "Cheese your patter" (don't talk much) here.
-  **Cooper'd** (spoil), by too many tramps calling there.
-  **Gammy** (unfavourable), like to have you taken up. Mind the dog.
-  **Flummuxed** (dangerous), sure of a month in "quod" (prison).
-  **Religious**, but tidy on the whole.

Where did these signs come from? and when were they first used? are questions which have been asked again and again, and the answers have been many and various. Knowing the character of the Gipsies, and ascertaining from a tramp that they are well acquainted with the hieroglyphs, "and have been as long ago as ever he could remember," there is little fear of being wrong in ascribing the invention to them. How strange it would be if some modern Belzoni, or Champollion—say Mr. George Smith, for instance—discovered in these beggars' marks traces of ancient Egyptian or Hindoo sign-writing!

[32]

That the Gipsies were in the habit of leaving memorials of the road they had taken, and the successes that had befallen them, is upon record. In an old book, *The Triumph of Wit*, 1724, there is a passage which appears to have been copied from some older work, and it runs thus:—"The Gipsies set out twice a year, and scatter all over England, each parcel having their appointed stages, that they may not interfere, nor hinder each other; and for that purpose, when they set forward in the country, they stick up boughs in the way of divers kinds, according as it is agreed among them, that one company may know which way another is gone, and so take another road." The works of Hoyland and Borrow supply other instances.


It would be hardly fair to close this subject without drawing attention to the extraordinary statement that, actually on the threshold of the gibbet, the sign of the vagabond was to be met with! "The murderer's signal is even exhibited from the gallows; as a red handkerchief held in the hand of the felon about to be executed is a token that he dies without having betrayed any professional secrets."^[30] Private executions have of course rendered this custom obsolete, even if it ever existed.

Since the first editions of this work were published, the publishers have received from various parts of England numerous evidences of the still active use of beggars' marks and mendicant hieroglyphs. One gentleman writes from Great Yarmouth to say that, whilst residing in Norwich, he used frequently to see them on the houses and street corners in the suburbs. Another gentleman, a clergyman, states that he has so far made himself acquainted with the meanings of the signs employed, that by himself marking the characters  (gammy) and  (flummuxed) on the gate-posts of his parsonage, he enjoys a singular immunity from alms-seekers and cadgers on the tramp. This hint may not be lost on many other sufferers from importunate beggars, yet its publication may lead to the introduction of a new code.

[33]

In a popular constable's guide,^[31] giving the practice of justices in petty sessions, the following interesting paragraph is found, corroborating what has just been said on the hieroglyphs used by vagabonds:—

"Gipsies follow their brethren by numerous marks, such as strewing handfuls of grass in the daytime at a four lane or cross roads; the grass being strewn down the road the gang have taken; also, by a cross being made on the ground with a stick or knife—the longest end of the cross denotes the route taken. In the night-time a cleft stick is placed in the fence at the cross roads, with an arm pointing down the road their comrades have taken. The marks are always placed on the left-hand side, so that the stragglers can easily and readily find them."

From the cleft stick here alluded to, we learn the origin and use of , the third hieroglyph in the vagabond's private list. And the extract also proves that the "rule of the road" is the same with tramps as with that body which is morally less but physically more dangerous, the London drivers.

[34]

A SHORT HISTORY OF SLANG, OR THE VULGAR LANGUAGE OF FAST LIFE.

Slang is the language of street humour, of fast, high, and low life. Cant, as was stated in the [chapter](#) upon that subject, is the vulgar language of secrecy. It must be admitted, however, that within the past few years they have become almost indivisible. They are both universal and ancient, and appear to have been, with certain exceptions, the offspring of gay, vulgar, or worthless persons in every part of the world at every period of time. Indeed, if we are to believe implicitly the saying of the wise man, that "there is nothing new under the sun," the "bloods" of buried Nineveh, with their knotty and door-matty-looking beards, may have cracked Slang jokes on the steps of Sennacherib's palace; while the stocks and stones of ancient Egypt, and the bricks of venerable and used-up Babylon, may be covered with Slang hieroglyphs, which, being perfectly unknown to modern antiquaries, have long been stumbling-blocks to the philologist; so impossible is it at this day to say what was then authorized, or what vulgar, language. The only objection that can be raised to this idea is, that Slang was, so far as can be discovered, traditional, and unwritten, until the appearance of this volume, a state of things which accounts for its many changes, and the doubtful orthography of even its best known and most permanent forms. Slang is almost as old as speech, and must date from the congregating together of people in cities. It is the result of crowding, and excitement, and artificial life. We have traces of this as far as we can refer back. Martial, the epigrammatist, is full of Slang. When an uninvited guest accompanied his friend, the Slang of the day styled him his "umbra;" when a man was trussed, neck and heels, it called him jocosely "quadrupus." Slang is nowadays very often the only vehicle by which rodomontade may be avoided. It is often full of the most pungent satire, and is always to the point. Without point Slang has no *raison d'être*.

[35]

Old English Slang was coarser, and depended more upon downright vulgarity than our modern Slang. It was a jesting speech, or humorous indulgence for the thoughtless moment or the drunken hour, and it acted as a vent-peg for a fit of temper or irritability; but it did not interlard and permeate every description of conversation as now. It was confined to nicknames and improper subjects, and encroached but to a very small extent upon the domain of authorized speech. Indeed, it was exceedingly limited when compared with the vast territory of Slang in such general favour and complete circulation at the present day. Still, although not an extensive institution, as in our time, Slang certainly did exist in this country centuries ago, as we may see if we look down the page of any respectable History of England. Cromwell was familiarly called "Old Noll,"—in much the same way as Bonaparte was termed "Boney," and Wellington "Conkey" or "Nosey," only a few years ago.^[32] His Legislature, too, was spoken of in a high-flavoured way as the "Barebones" or "Rump" Parliament, and his followers were nicknamed "Roundheads," and the peculiar religious sects of his protectorate were styled "Puritans" and "Quakers."^[33] The Civil War pamphlets, and the satirical hits of the Cavaliers and the Commonwealth men, originated numerous Slang words and vulgar similes in full use at the present moment. Here is a field of inquiry for the Philological Society, indeed a territory, for there are thirty thousand of these partisan tracts. Later still, in the court of Charles II., the naughty ladies and the gay lords, with Rochester at their head, talked Slang; and very naughty Slang it was too. Fops in those days, when "over head and ears" in debt, and in continual fear of arrest, termed their enemies, the bailiffs, "Philistines"^[34] or "Moabites." At a later period, when collars were worn detached from shirts, in order to save the expense of washing—an object, it would seem, with needy "swells" in all ages—they obtained the name of "Jacobites." One-half of the coarse wit in Butler's *Hudibras* lurks in the vulgar words and phrases which he was so fond of employing. These Slang phrases contained the marrow of his arguments stripped of all superfluous matter, and they fell with ponderous weight and terrible effect upon his opponents. They were more homely and forcible than the mild and elegant sentences of Cowley, and the people, therefore, hurraed them, and pronounced Butler one of themselves,—or, as we should say, in a joyful moment, "a jolly good fellow." Orator Henley preached and prayed in Slang, and first charmed and then ruled the dirty mobs in Lincoln's Inn Fields by vulgarisms. Burly Grose mentions Henley, with the remark that we owe a great many Slang phrases to him, though even the worst Slang was refinement itself compared with many of Henley's most studied oratorical utterances, which proves that the most blackguard parts of a blackguard speech may be perfectly free from either Slang or Cant. Swift, and old Sir Roger L'Estrange, and Arbuthnot, were all fond of vulgar or Slang language; indeed, we may see from a Slang word used by the latter how curious is the gradual adoption of vulgar terms in our standard dictionaries. The worthy doctor, in order to annihilate (or, as we should say, with a fitting respect to the subject under consideration, to "smash") an opponent, thought proper on an occasion to use the word "cabbage," not in the ancient sense of a flatulent vegetable of the kitchen-garden, but in the at once Slang sense of purloining or cribbing. Johnson soon met with the word, looked at it, examined it, weighed it, and shook his head, but out of respect to a brother doctor inserted it in his dictionary, labelling it, however, prominently "Cant;" whilst Walker and Webster, years after, when all over England "to cabbage" was to pilfer, placed the term in their dictionaries as an ancient and very respectable word. Another Slang term, "gull," to cheat, or delude, sometimes varied to "gully," is stated to be connected with the Dean of St. Patrick's. "Gull," a dupe, or a fool, is often used by our old dramatists, and is generally believed to have given rise to the verb; but a curious little edition of *Bamfylde Moore Carew*, published in 1827, says that "to gull," or "gully," is derived from the well-known Gulliver, the hero of the famous Travels. It may be from the phrase, "You can't come Gulliver over me," in use while the popularity of the book was hot. How crammed with Slang are the dramatic works of the last century! The writers of the comedies and farces in those days must have lived in the streets, and written their plays in the public-houses, so filled are they with vulgarisms and unauthorized words. The popular phrases, "I owe you one," "That's one for his nob," and "Keep moving, dad," arose in this way.^[35] The second of these sayings was, doubtless, taken from the card-table, for at cribbage the player who holds the knave of the suit turned up counts "one for his nob," and the

[36]

[37]

dealer who turns up a knave counts "two for his heels." From a dramatic point of view, the use of these phrases is perfectly correct, as they were in constant use among the people supposed to be represented by the author's characters.

In Mrs. Centlivre's admirable comedy of *A Bold Stroke for a Wife*, we see the origin of that popular phrase, the real Simon Pure. Simon Pure is the Quaker name adopted by Colonel Feignwell as a trick to obtain the hand of Mistress Anne Lovely in marriage. The veritable Quaker, the "real Simon Pure," recommended by Aminadab Holdfast, of Bristol, as a fit sojourner with Obadiah Prim, arrives at last, to the discomfiture of the Colonel, who, to maintain his position and gain time, concocts a letter in which the real Quaker is spoken of as a housebreaker who had travelled in the "leather conveniency" from Bristol, and adopted the garb and name of the western Quaker in order to pass off as the "Real Simon Pure," but only for the purpose of robbing the house and cutting the throat of the perplexed Obadiah. The scene in which the two Simon Pures, the real and the counterfeit, meet, is one of the best in the comedy.

Tom Brown, of "facetious memory," as his friends were wont to say, and Ned Ward, who wrote humorous books, and when tired drew beer for his customers at his alehouse in Long Acre,^[36] were both great producers of Slang in the last century, and to them we owe many popular current phrases and household words.

Written Slang was checked, rather than advanced, by the pens of Addison, Johnson, and Goldsmith; although Bee, the bottle-holder and historiographer of the pugilistic band of brothers in the youthful days of flat-nosed Tom Cribb, has gravely stated that Johnson, when young and rakish, contributed to an early volume of the *Gentleman's Magazine* a few pages, by way of specimen, of a slang dictionary, the result, Mr. Bee says, "of his midnight ramblings!"^[37] This statement is not only improbable, but an investigation of the venerable magazine, though strict and searching, produces no evidence in corroboration of Mr. Bee. Goldsmith, even, certainly coined a few words as occasion required, although as a rule his pen was pure and graceful, and adverse to neologisms. The word "fudge," it has been stated, was first used by him in literary composition, although it probably originated with one Captain Fudge, a notorious fibber, nearly a century before. Street phrases, nicknames, and vulgar words were continually being added to the great stock of popular Slang up to the commencement of the present century, when it received numerous additions from pugilism, horse-racing, and "fast" life generally, which suddenly came into great public favour, and was at its height in the latter part of the reign of George III., and in the early days of the Regency. Slang in those days was generally termed "flash" language. It will thus be noted that the term "flash" has in turn represented both Cant and Slang; now the word Slang has become perfectly generic. So popular was "flash" with the "bloods" of high life, that it constituted the best paying literary capital for certain authors and dramatists. Pierce Egan issued *Boxiana*, and *Life in London*, six portly octavo volumes, crammed with Slang; and Moncrieff wrote the most popular farce of the day, *Tom and Jerry* (adapted from the latter work), which, to use newspaper Slang, "took the town by storm," and, with its then fashionable vulgarisms, made the fortune of the old Adelphi Theatre, and was without exception the most wonderful instance of a continuous theatrical run in ancient or modern times. This also was brimful of Slang. Other authors helped to popularize and extend Slang down to our own time, and it has now taken a somewhat different turn, dropping many of the Cant and old vulgar words, and assuming a certain quaint and fashionable phraseology—familiar, utilitarian, and jovial. There can be no doubt that common speech is greatly influenced by fashion, fresh manners, and that general change of ideas which steals over a people once in a generation. But before proceeding further into the region of Slang, it will be well to say something on the etymology of the word.

The word Slang is only mentioned by two lexicographers—Webster and Ogilvie.^[38] Johnson, Walker, and the older compilers of dictionaries give "slang" as the preterite of "sling," but not a word about Slang in the sense of low, vulgar, or unrecognised language. The origin of the word has often been asked for in literary journals and books, but only one man, until recently, ever hazarded an etymology—Jonathan Bee.^[39] With a recklessness peculiar to ignorance, Bee stated that Slang was derived from "the *slangs* or fetters worn by prisoners, having acquired that name from the manner in which they were worn, as they required a sling of string to keep them off the ground." Bee had just been nettled at Pierce Egan's producing a new edition of Grose's *Dictionary of the Vulgar Tongue*, and was determined to excel in a vulgar dictionary of his own, which should be more racy, more pugilistic, and more original. How far he succeeded in this latter particular, his ridiculous etymology of Slang will show. Slang is not an English word; it is the Gipsy term for their secret language, and its synonym is Gibberish—another word which was believed to have had no distinct origin.^[40] Grose—stout and burly Captain Grose—whom we may characterize as the greatest antiquary, joker, and porter-drinker of his day, was the first lexicographer to recognise the word "Slang." It occurs in his *Classical Dictionary of the Vulgar Tongue*, of 1785, with the statement that it implies "Cant or vulgar language." Grose was a great favourite with Burns, and so pleased him by his extensive powers of story-telling and grog-imbibing, that the companionable and humour-loving Scotch bard wrote for his fat friend—or, to use his own words, "the fine, fat, fodge wight"—the immortal poem of *Tam O' Shanter*.

It is not worth while troubling the reader with a long account of the transformation into an English term of the word Slang, as it is easily seen how we obtained it. Hucksters and beggars on tramp, or at fairs and races, associate and frequently join in any rough enterprise with the Gipsies. The word would be continually heard by them, and would in this manner soon become part of their vocabulary,^[41] and, when carried by "fast" or vulgar fashionables from the society of thieves and low characters to their own drawing-rooms, would as quickly become Slang, and the representative term for all vulgar language. Modern philologists give the word Slang as derived

[38]

[39]

[40]

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from the French *langue*. This is, at all events, as likely as any other derivative.

Any sudden excitement or peculiar circumstance is quite sufficient to originate and set going a score of Slang words. Nearly every election or public agitation throws out offshoots of excitement, or scintillations of humour in the shape of Slang terms—vulgar at first, but at length adopted, if possessing sufficient hold on the public mind, as semi-respectable from sheer force of habit. There is scarcely a condition or calling in life that does not possess its own peculiar Slang. The professions, legal and medical, have each familiar and unauthorized terms for peculiar circumstances and things, and it is quite certain that the clerical calling, or “the cloth”—in itself a Slang term given at a time when the laity were more distinguished by their gay dress from the clergy than they are now—is not entirely free from this peculiarity. Every workshop, warehouse, factory, and mill throughout the country has its Slang, and so have the public schools and the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge. Sea Slang constitutes the principal charm of a sailor’s “yarn;” and our soldiers have in turn their peculiar nicknames and terms for things and subjects, proper and improper. A writer in *Household Words* (No. 183) has gone so far as to remark, that a person “shall not read one single parliamentary debate, as reported in a first-class newspaper, without meeting scores of Slang words,” and “that from Mr. Speaker in his chair, to the Cabinet Ministers whispering behind it—from mover to seconder, from true blue Protectionist to extremest Radical—Mr. Barry’s New House echoes and re-echoes with Slang.” This statement is most worthy of notice, as showing how, with a very small sub-stratum of fact, a plausible, though not the less gigantic, mis-statement may be built up.

The universality of Slang is extraordinary. Let any person for a short time narrowly examine the conversation of his dearest and nearest friends, or even analyse his own supposed correct talk, and he shall be amazed at the numerous unauthorized, and what we can only call vulgar, words in constant use. One peculiarity of the growth of Slang is the finding of new meanings for old words. Take, for instance, the verbs “do,” “cut,” “go,” and “take,” and see how they are used to express fresh ideas, and then let us ask ourselves how is it possible for a Frenchman or German, be he never so well educated, to avoid continually blundering and floundering amongst our little words when trying to make himself understood in an ordinary conversation? He may have studied our language the required time, and have gone through the usual amount of “grinding,” and practised the common allotment of patience, but all to no purpose as far as accuracy is concerned. As, however, we do not make our language, nor for the matter of that our Slang, for the convenience or inconvenience of foreigners, we need not pursue this portion of the subject further. “Jabber” and “hoax” were Slang and Cant terms in Swift’s time; so, indeed, were “mob” and “sham.”^[42] Words directly from the Latin and Greek, framed in accordance with the rules which govern the construction of the language, are not Slang, but are good English, if not Saxon,—a term, by the way, which is as much misused as any unfortunate word that can be remembered just now. Sound contributes many Slang words—a source that etymologists frequently overlook. Nothing pleases an ignorant person so much as a high-sounding term, “full of fury.” How melodious and drum-like are those vulgar coruscations “rumbumptious,” “slantingdicular,” “splendiferous,” “rumbustious,” and “ferricadouzer.” What a “pull” the sharp-nosed lodging-house-keeper thinks she has over her victims if she can but hurl such testimonies of a liberal education at them when they are disputing her charges, and threatening to “absquatulate!” In the United States the vulgar-genteel even excel the poor “stuck-up” Cockneys in their formation of a native fashionable language. How charming to a refined ear are “abskize,” “catawampously,” “exflunctify,” “obscute,” “keslosh,” “kesouse,” “keswollop,” and “kewhollux!”^[43] It must not be forgotten, however, that a great many new “Americanisms” are perfectly unknown in America, and in this respect they resemble the manners and customs of our cousins as found in books, and in books only. Vulgar words representing action and brisk movement often owe their origin to sound, as has before been remarked. Mispronunciation, too, is another great source of vulgar or Slang words, and of this “ramshackle,” “shackly,” “nary-one” for neither or neither one, “ottomy” or “atomy” for anatomy, “rench” for rinse, are specimens. The commonalty dislike frequently-occurring words difficult of pronunciation, and so we have the street abridgments of “bimeby” for by-and-by, “caze” for because, “gin” for given, “hankercher” for handkerchief, “ruma tiz” for rheumatism, “backer” for tobacco, and many others, not perhaps Slang, but certainly, all vulgarisms. Whately, in his *Remains of Bishop Copleston*, has inserted a leaf from the bishop’s note-book on the popular corruption of names, mentioning, among others, “kickshaws,” as from the French *quelques choses*; “beefeater,” the grotesque guardian of royalty in a procession, and the envied devourer of enormous beefsteaks, as but a vulgar pronunciation of the French *buffetier*, and “George and Cannon,” the sign of a public-house, as nothing but a corruption (although so soon!) of the popular premier of the last generation, George Canning.^[44] Literature has its Slang terms; and the desire on the part of writers to say funny and startling things in a novel and curious way contributes many unauthorized words to the great stock of Slang.

Fashionable or Upper-class Slang is of several varieties. There is the Belgravian, military and naval, parliamentary, dandy, and the reunion and visiting Slang. English officers, civilians, and their families, who have resided long in India, have contributed many terms from the Hindostanee to our language. Several of these, such as “chit,” a letter, and “tiffin,” lunch, are fast losing their Slang character, and becoming regularly-recognised English words. “Jungle,” as a term for a forest or wilderness, is now an English phrase; a few years past, however, it was merely the Hindostanee “junkul.” This, being a perfectly legal transition, having no other recognised form, can hardly be characterized as Slang. The extension of trade in China, and the English settlement of Hong Kong, have introduced among us several examples of Canton jargon, that exceedingly curious Anglo-Chinese dialect spoken in the seaports of the Celestial Empire.

While these words have been carried as it were into the families of the upper and middle classes, persons in a humbler rank of life, through the sailors and soldiers and Lascar and Chinese beggars that haunt the metropolis, have also adopted many Anglo-Indian and Anglo-Chinese phrases. As this dictionary would have been incomplete without them, they are carefully recorded in its pages. Concerning the Slang of the fashionable world, it has been remarked that it is mostly imported from France; and that an unmeaning gibberish of Gallicisms runs through English fashionable conversation and fashionable novels, and accounts of fashionable parties in the fashionable newspapers. Yet, ludicrously enough, immediately the fashionable magnates of England seize on any French idiom, the French themselves not only universally abandon it to us, but positively repudiate it altogether from their idiomatic vocabulary. If you were to tell a well-bred Frenchman that such and such an aristocratic marriage was on the *tapis*, he would stare with astonishment, and look down on the carpet in the startled endeavour to find a marriage in so unusual a place. If you were to talk to him of the *beau monde*, he would imagine you meant the world which God made, not half-a-dozen streets and squares between Hyde Park Corner and Chelsea Bun House. The *thé dansant* would be completely inexplicable to him. If you were to point out to him the Dowager Lady Grimgriffin acting as *chaperon* to Lady Amanda Creamville, he would imagine you were referring to the *petit Chaperon rouge*—to little Red-Riding Hood. He might just understand what was meant by *vis-à-vis*, *entremets*, and some others of the flying horde of frivolous little foreign slangisms hovering about fashionable cookery and fashionable furniture; but three-fourths of them would seem to him as barbarous French provincialisms, or, at best, but as antiquated and obsolete expressions, picked out of the letters of Mademoiselle Scuderi, or the tales of Crebillon “the younger.” Servants, too, appropriate the scraps of French conversation which fall from their masters’ guests at the dinner table, and forthwith in the world of flunkeydom the word “know” is disused, and the lady’s-maid, in doubt on a particular point, asks John whether or no he “saveys” it?^[45] What, too, can be more abominable than that heartless piece of fashionable newspaper Slang, regularly employed when speaking of the successful courtship of young people in the aristocratic world:—

MARRIAGE IN HIGH LIFE.—We understand that a marriage is ARRANGED (!) betwixt the Lady, &c. &c., and the Honourable, &c. &c.

“Arranged!” Is that cold-blooded Smithfield or Mark Lane term for a sale or a purchase the proper word to express the hopeful, joyous, golden union of young and trustful hearts? Possibly, though, the word is often used with a due regard to facts, for marriages, especially amongst our upper classes, are not always “made in heaven.” Which is the proper way to pronounce the names of great people, and what the correct authority? Lord Cowper, we are often assured, is Lord *Cooper*—on this principle Lord Cowley would certainly be Lord *Cooley*—and Mr. Carew, we are told, should be Mr. *Carey*, Ponsonby should be *Punsunby*, Eyre should be *Aire*, Cholmondeley should be *Chumley*, St. John *Sinjen*, Beauchamp should be *Beachem*, Majoribanks *Marshbanks*, and Powell should always be *Poel*. The pronunciation of proper names has long been an anomaly in the conversation of the upper classes of this country. Hodge and Podge, the clodhoppers of Shakspeare’s time, talked in their mug-houses of the great Lords *Darbie*, *Barkelie*, and *Bartie*. In Pall Mall and May Fair these personages are spoken of in exactly the same manner at the present day, whilst in the City, and amongst the *middle* classes, we only hear of Derby, Berkeley, &c.,—the correct pronunciations, if the spelling is worth aught. It must not be forgotten, however, that the pronunciation of the upper classes, as regards the names of places just mentioned, is a relic of old times when the orthography was different. The middle-class man is satisfied to take matters the modern way, but even he, when he wishes to be thought a swell, alters his style. In fact, the old rule as to proper names being pronounced according to individual taste, is, and ever will be, of absolute necessity, not only as regards the upper and middle, but the lower classes. A costermonger is ignorant of such a place as Birmingham, but understands you in a moment if you talk of *Brummagem*. Why do not Pall Mall exquisites join with the costermongers in this pronunciation? It is the ancient one.^[46]

Parliamentary Slang, excepting a few peculiar terms connected with “the House” (scarcely Slang), is mainly composed of fashionable, literary, and learned Slang. When members get excited, and wish to be forcible, they are now and again, but not very often, found guilty of vulgarisms, and then may be not particular which of the street terms they select, providing it carries, as good old Dr. South said, plenty of “wildfire” in it. Lord Cairns when Sir Hugh, and a member of the Lower House, spoke of “that homely but expressive phrase, ‘dodge.’” Out of “the House,” several Slang terms are used in connexion with Parliament or members of Parliament. If Lord Palmerston was familiar by name to the tribes of the Caucasus and Asia Minor as a great foreign diplomatist, when the name of our Queen was unknown to the inhabitants of those parts—as was once stated in the *Times*—it is worthy of remark that, amongst the costers and the wild inhabitants of the streets, he was at that time better known as “Pam.” The cabmen on the “ranks” in Piccadilly have been often heard to call each other’s attention to the great leader of the Opposition in the following expressive manner—“Hollo, there! de yer see old ‘Dizzy’ doing a stump?” A “plumper” is a single vote at an election—not a “split-ticket;” and electors who had occupied a house, no matter how small, and boiled a pot in it, thus qualifying themselves for voting, used in the good old days to be termed “potwallopers.” A quiet “walk over” is a re-election without opposition and much cost; and is obtained from the sporting vocabulary, in which the term is not Slang. A “caucus” meeting refers to the private assembling of politicians before an election, when candidates are chosen, and measures of action agreed upon. The term comes from America, where caucus means a meeting simply. A “job,” in political phraseology, is a Government office or contract obtained by secret influence or favouritism; and is not a whit more objectionable in sound than is the nefarious proceeding offensive to the sense of those who pay

[46]

[47]

[48]

but do not participate. The *Times* once spoke of "the patriotic member of Parliament 'potted out' in a dusty little lodging somewhere about Bury Street." But then the *Times* was not always the mildly respectable high-class paper it now is, as a reference to the columns devoted by it to Macaulay's official career will alone determine. These, which appeared during the present reign, would be far below the lowest journalistic taste nowadays; yet they are in keeping with the rest of the political references made at that time by the now austere and high-principled "leading journal." The term "quockerwodger," although referring to a wooden toy figure which jerks its limbs about when pulled by a string, has been supplemented with a political meaning. A pseudo-politician, whose strings of action are pulled by somebody else, is often termed a "quockerwodger." From an early period politics and partyism have attracted unto themselves quaint Slang terms. Horace Walpole quotes a party nickname of February, 1742, as a Slang word of the day:—"The Tories declare against any further prosecution, if Tories there are, for now one hears of nothing but the 'broad-bottom;' it is the reigning Cant word, and means the taking all parties and people, indifferently, into the Ministry." Thus "broad-bottom" in those days was Slang for "coalition." The term "rat," too, in allusion to rats deserting vessels about to sink, has long been employed towards those turncoat politicians who change their party for interest. Who that occasionally passes near the Houses of Parliament has not often noticed stout or careful M.P.'s walk briskly through the Hall, and on the kerb-stone in front, with umbrella or walking-cane uplifted, shout to the cabmen on the rank, "Four-wheeler!" The term is both useful and expressive; but it is none the less Slang, though of a better kind than "growler," used to denominate the same kind of vehicle, or "shoful," the street term for a hansom cab.

[49]

Military Slang is on a par, and of a character, with dandy Slang. Inconvenient friends, or elderly and lecturing relatives, are pronounced "dreadful bores." This affectionate term, like most other Slang phrases which have their rise in a certain section of society, has spread and become of general application. Four-wheeled cabs are called "bounders;" and a member of the Four-in-hand Club, driving to Epsom on the Derby Day, would, using fashionable phraseology, speak of it as "tooling his drag down to the Derby." A vehicle, if not a "drag" (or dwag), is a "trap," or a "cask;" and if the "turn-out" happens to be in other than a trim condition, it is pronounced at once as not "down the road," unless the critic should prefer to characterize the equipage as "dickey." Your City swell would say it is not "up to the mark;" whilst the costermonger would call it a "wery snide affair." In the army a barrack or military station is known as a "lobster-box;" to "cram" for an examination is to "mug-up" (this same term is much in vogue among actors, who regard mugging-up as one of the fine arts of the profession); to reject from the examination is to "spin;" and that part of the barrack occupied by subalterns is frequently spoken of as the "rookery." In dandy or swell Slang, any celebrity, from the Poet-Laureate to the Pope of Rome, is a "swell,"—"the old swell" now occupies the place once held by the "gub'nor." Wrinkled-faced old professors, who hold dress and fashionable tailors in abhorrence, are called "awful swells,"—if they happen to be very learned or clever. In this upper-class Slang, a title is termed a "handle;" trousers, "inexpressibles," and bags, or "howling bags," when of a large pattern;—a superior appearance, or anything above the common cut, is styled "extensive;" a four-wheeled cab is called a "birdcage;" a dance, a "hop;" dining at another man's table, "sitting under his mahogany;" anything flashy or showy, "loud;" the peculiar make or cut of a coat, its "build;" full dress, "full fig;" wearing clothes which represent the very extreme of fashion, "dressing to death;" a dinner or supper party, a "spread;" a friend (or a "good fellow"), a "trump;" a difficulty, a "screw loose;" and everything that is unpleasant, "from bad sherry to a writ from a tailor," "jeuced infernal." The phrase, "to send a man to Coventry," or permit no person "in the set" to speak to him, although an ancient saying, must still be considered Slang.

[50]

The Universities of Oxford and Cambridge, and the great public schools, are the hotbeds of fashionable Slang. Growing boys and high-spirited young fellows detest restraint of all kinds, and prefer making a dash at life in a Slang phraseology of their own to all the set forms and syntactical rules of *Alma Mater*. Many of the most expressive words in a common chit-chat, or free-and-easy conversation, are old university vulgarisms. "Cut," in the sense of dropping an acquaintance, was originally a Cambridge form of speech; and "hoax," to deceive or ridicule, we are informed by Grose, was many years since an Oxford term. Among the words that fast society has borrowed from our great scholastic—not establishments (they are sacred to linendrapery and "gentlemanly assistants")—institutions, is found "crib," a house or apartments; "dead men," empty wine bottles; "drawing teeth,"^[47] wrenching off knockers,—an obsolete amusement; "fizzing," first-rate, or splendid; "governor," or "relieving-officer," the general term for a male parent; "plucked," defeated or turned back, now altered to "plough;" "quiz," to scrutinize, or a prying old fellow; and "row," a noisy disturbance. The Slang words in use at Oxford and Cambridge would alone fill a volume. As examples let us take "scout," which at Oxford refers to an undergraduate's valet, whilst the same menial at Cambridge is termed a "gyp,"—popularly derived by the Cantabs from the Greek, γύψ, a vulture; "skull," the head, or master, of a college; "battles," the Oxford term for rations, changed at Cambridge into "commons." The term "dickey," a half-shirt, it is said, originated with the students of Trinity College, Dublin, who at first styled it a "tommy," from the Greek τομή, a section,—the change from "tommy" to "dickey" requires no explanation. "Crib," a literal translation, is now universal; "grind" refers to "working up" for an examination, also to a walk or "constitutional;" "Hivite" is a student of St. Bee's (St. Bee's) College, Cumberland; to "japan," in this Slang speech, is to ordain; "mortar board" is a square college cap; "sim," a student of a Methodistical turn—in allusion to the Rev. Charles Simeon; "sloggers," at Cambridge, refers to the second division of race-boats, known at Oxford as "torpids;" "sport" is to show or exhibit; "trotter" is the jocose term for a tailor's man who goes round for orders; and "tufts" are privileged students who dine with the "dons," and are distinguished by golden tufts, or tassels, in their caps. Hence we get the world-wide Slang term

[51]

"tuft-hunter," one whose pride it is to be acquainted with scions of the nobility—a sycophantic race unfortunately not confined to any particular place or climate, nor peculiar to any age or either sex. There are many terms in use at Oxford not known at Cambridge; and such Slang names as "coach," "gulf," "harry-soph," "poker," or "post-mortem," common enough at Cambridge, are seldom or never heard at the great sister University. For numerous other examples of college Slang the reader is referred to the Dictionary.

[52]

Religious Slang, strange as the compound may appear, exists with other descriptions of vulgar speech at the present day. *Punch*, in one of those half-humorous, half-serious articles, once so characteristic of the wits engaged on that paper, who were, as a rule, fond of lecturing any national abuse or popular folly, remarked—"Slang has long since penetrated into the Forum, and now we meet it in the Senate, and even the pulpit itself is no longer free from its intrusion." There is no wish here, for one moment, to infer that the practice is general. On the contrary, and in justice to the clergy, it must be said that the principal disseminators of pure English throughout the country are the ministers of our Established Church. Yet it cannot be denied that a great deal of Slang phraseology and expressive vulgarity have gradually crept into the very pulpits which should give forth as pure speech as doctrine. This is an error which, however, has only to be noticed, to be cured.

Dean Conybeare, in his able "Essay on Church Parties,"^[48] has noticed this addition of Slang to our pulpit speech. As stated in his Essay, the practice appears to confine itself mainly to the exaggerated forms of the High and Low Church—the Tractarians and the "Recordites."^[49] By way of illustration, the Dean cites the evening parties, or social meetings, common amongst the wealthier lay members of the Recordite churches, where the principal topics discussed—one or more favourite clergymen being present in a quasi-official manner—are "the merits and demerits of different preachers, the approaching restoration of the Jews, the date of the Millennium, the progress of the 'Tractarian heresy,' and the anticipated 'perversion' of High Church neighbours." These subjects are canvassed in a dialect differing considerably from English, as the word is generally understood. The terms "faithful," "tainted," "acceptable," "decided," "legal," and many others, are used in a sense different from that given to any of them by the lexicographers. We hear that Mr. A. has been more "owned" than Mr. B.; and that Mr. C. has more "seals"^[50] than Mr. D. Again, the word "gracious" is invested with a meaning as extensive as that attached by young ladies to nice. Thus, we hear of a "gracious sermon," a "gracious meeting," a "gracious child," and even a "gracious whipping." The word "dark" has also a new and peculiar usage. It is applied to every person, book, or place not impregnated with Recordite principles. A ludicrous misunderstanding resulting from this phraseology is on record (this is not a joke). "What did you mean," said A. to B., "by telling me that — was such a very 'dark' village? I rode over there to-day, and found the street particularly broad and cheerful, and there is not a tree in the place." "The gospel is not preached there," was B's. laconic reply. The conclusion of one of these singular evening parties is generally marked by an "exposition"—an unseasonable sermon of nearly one hour's duration, circumscribed by no text, and delivered from the table by one of the clerical visitors with a view to "improve the occasion." This same term, "improve the occasion," is of Slang slangy, and is so mouthed by Stigginses and Chadbands, and their followers, that it has become peculiarly objectionable to persons of broad views. In the Essay to which reference has been made, the religious Slang terms for the two great divisions of the Established Church receive some explanation. The old-fashioned High Church party—rich and "stagnant," noted for its "sluggish mediocrity, hatred of zeal, dread of innovation, abuse of Dissent, blundering and languid utterance"—is called the "high and dry;" whilst the opposing division, known as the Low Church—equally stagnant with the former, but poorer, and more lazily inclined (from absence of education) towards Dissent—receives the nickname of the "low and slow." These terms are among persons learned in the distinctions shortened, in ordinary conversation, to the "dry" and the "slow." The Broad Church, or moderate division, is often spoken of as the "broad and shallow."

[53]

[54]

What can be more objectionable than the irreverent and offensive manner in which many Dissenting ministers continually pronounce the names of the Deity—God and Lord? God, instead of pronouncing in the plain and beautiful simple old English way, "G-o-d," they drawl out into "Gorde" or "Gaude;" and Lord, instead of speaking in the proper way, they desecrate into "Loard" or "Loerd,"—lingering on the *u*, or the *r*, as the case may be, until an honest hearer feels disgusted, and almost inclined to run the gauntlet of beadles and deacons, and pull the vulgar preacher from his pulpit. This is, though a Christian impulse, hardly in accordance with our modern times and tolerant habits. Many young preachers strive hard to acquire this peculiar pronunciation, in imitation of the older ministers. What, then, can more properly be called Slang, or, indeed, the most objectionable of Slang, than this studious endeavour to pronounce the most sacred names in a uniformly vulgar and unbecoming manner? If the old-fashioned preacher whistled Cant through his nose, the modern vulgar reverend whines Slang from the more natural organ. These vagaries of speech will, perhaps, by an apologist, be termed "pulpit peculiarities," and the writer may be impugned for having dared to intermeddle with a subject that is or should be removed from his criticisms. Honesty of purpose and evident truthfulness of remark will, however, overcome the most virulent opposition. The terms used by the mob towards the Church, however illiberal and satirically vulgar, are fairly within the province of an inquiry such as the present. A clergyman, in vulgar language, is spoken of as a "choker," a "cushion-thumper," a "dominie," an "earwig," a "gospel-grinder," a "grey-coat parson;" a "spouter," a "white-choker," or a "warming-pan rector," if he only holds the living *pro tempore*. If he is a lessee of the great tithes, "one in ten;" or if spoken of by an Anglo-Indian, a "rook." If a Tractarian, his outer garment is rudely spoken of as a "pygostole," or "M. B. (mark of the beast) coat." His profession

[55]

is termed "the cloth" (this item of Slang has been already referred to), and his practice is called "tub-thumping." This latter term has of late years been almost peculiarly confined to itinerant preachers. Should he belong to the Dissenting body, he is probably styled a "pantiler," or a "psalm smiter," or perhaps, a "swaddler."^[51] His chapel, too, is spoken of as a "schism shop." A Roman Catholic is coarsely named a "brisket-beater."

Particular as lawyers generally are about the meanings of words, they have not prevented an unauthorized phraseology from arising, which may be termed legal Slang. So forcibly did this truth impress a late writer, that he wrote in a popular journal, "You may hear Slang every day in term from barristers in their robes, at every mess-table, at every bar-mess, at every college commons, and in every club dining-room." Swift, in his *Art of Polite Conversation* (p. 15), published a century and a half ago, states that "vardi" was the Slang in his time for "verdict." A few of the most common and well-known terms used out of doors, with reference to legal matters, are "cook," to hash or make up a balance-sheet; "dipped," mortgaged; "dun" (from a famous writ or process-server named Dunn), to solicit payment; "fullied," to be "fully committed for trial;" "land shark," a sailor's definition of a lawyer; "limb of the law," a milder term for the same "professional;" "monkey with a long tail," a mortgage; "mouthpiece," the thief's term for his counsel; "to run through the ring," to take advantage of the Insolvency Act; "smash," to become bankrupt; "snipe," an attorney with a long bill; and "whitewash," to take the benefit of the Insolvent Act. Comparatively recent legislation has rendered many of these terms obsolete, and "in liquidation" is now the most ominous sound a creditor can hear. Lawyers, from their connexion with the police courts, and transactions with persons in every grade of society, have ample opportunities for acquiring street Slang, of which, in cross-questioning and wrangling, they frequently avail themselves.

[56]

It has been said there exists a literary Slang, or the Slang of Criticism—dramatic, artistic, and scientific. This is composed of such words as "aesthetic," "transcendental," "the harmonies," "the unities," a "myth;" such phrases as "an exquisite *morceau* on the big drum," a "scholarlike rendering of John the Baptist's great toe," "keeping harmony," "middle distance," "aërial perspective," "delicate handling," "nervous chiaroscuro," and the like. It is easy to find fault with this system of doing work, whilst it is not easy to discover another at once so easily understood by educated readers, and so satisfactory to artists themselves. Discretion must, of course, always be used, in fact always is used by the best writers, with regard to the quantity of technical Slang an article will hold comfortably. Overdone mannerism is always a mistake, and generally defeats its own end. Properly used, these technicalities are allowable as the generous inflections and bendings of a bountiful language, for the purpose of expressing fresh phases of thought, and ideas not yet provided with representative words.^[52] *Punch* often employs a Slang term to give point to a joke, or humour to a line of satire. In his best day he gave an original etymology of the schoolboy-ism "slog." "Slog," said the classical and then clever *Punch*, is derived from the Greek word "slogo," to baste, to wallop, to slaughter. To show his partiality to the subject, he once amused his readers with two columns on Slang and Sanscrit, from which the following is taken:—

[57]

"The allegory which pervades the conversation of all Eastern nations is the foundation of Western Slang; and the increased number of students of the Oriental languages, especially since Sanscrit and Arabic have been made subjects for the Indian Civil Service examinations, may have contributed to supply the English language with a large portion of its new dialect. While, however, the spirit of allegory comes from the East, there is so great a difference between the brevity of Western expression and the more cumbrous diction of the Oriental, that the origin of a phrase becomes difficult to trace. Thus, for instance, whilst the Turkish merchant might address his friend somewhat as follows—"That which seems good to my father is to his servant as the perfumed breath of the west wind in the calm night of the Arabian summer;" the Western negotiator observes more briefly, 'all serene!'"^[53]

But the vulgar term, "brick," *Punch* remarks in illustration,

"must be allowed to be an exception, its Greek derivation being universally admitted, corresponding so exactly as it does in its rectangular form and compactness to the perfection of manhood, according to the views of Plato and Simonides; but any deviation from the simple expression, in which locality is indicated—as, for instance, 'a genuine Bath'—decidedly breathes the Oriental spirit."

It is singular that what *Punch* says unwittingly and in humour respecting the Slang expression "bosh," should be quite true. "Bosh," remarks *Punch*, after speaking of it as belonging to the stock of words pilfered from the Turks, "is one whose innate force and beauty the slangographer is reluctantly compelled to admit. It is the only word which seems a proper appellation for a great deal which we are obliged to hear and to read every day of our life." "Bosh," nonsense or stupidity, is derived from the Gipsy and the Persian. The universality of Slang is proved by its continual use in the pages of *Punch*. Who ever thinks, unless belonging to a past generation, of asking a friend to explain the stray vulgar words employed by the *London Charivari*? Some of the jokes, though, might nowadays be accompanied by explanatory notes, in similar style to that adopted by youthful artists who write "a man," "a horse," &c., when rather uncertain as to whether or not their efforts will meet with due appreciation.

[58]

The *Athenæum*, the *Saturday Review*, and other kindred "weeklies," often indulge in Slang words when force of expression or a little humour is desired, or when the various writers wish to say something which is better said in Slang, or so-called vulgar speech, than in the authorized

language. Bartlett, the compiler of the *Dictionary of Americanisms*, continually cites the *Athenæum* as using Slang and vulgar expressions; but the magazine the American refers to is not the literary journal of the present day,—it was a smaller, and now defunct, “weekly.” The present possessor of the classic title is, though, by no means behindhand in its devotion to colloquialisms. Many other highly respectable journals often use Slang words and phrases. The *Times* (or, in Slang, the “Thunderer”) frequently employs unauthorized terms; and, following a “leader”^[54] of the purest and most eloquent composition, may sometimes be seen another “article”^[54] on a totally different subject, containing, perhaps, a score or more of exceedingly questionable words. Among the words and phrases which may be included under the head of Literary Slang are, “balaam,” matter kept constantly in type about monstrous productions of nature, to fill up spaces in newspapers; “balaam-box,” the term given in *Blackwood* to the repository for rejected articles; and “slate,” to pelt with abuse, or “cut up” in a review. “He’s the fellow to slate a piece” is often said of dramatic critics, especially of those who through youth, inexperience, and the process of unnatural selection which causes them to be critics, imagine that to abuse all that is above their comprehension is to properly exercise the critical faculty. This is, however, dangerous ground. The Slang names given to newspapers are curious;—thus, the *Morning Advertiser* is known as the “Tap-tub,” the “Tizer,” and was until recently the “Gin and Gospel Gazette.” The *Morning Post* has obtained the suggestive sobriquet of “Jeames;” whilst the *Morning Herald* was long caricatured as “Mrs. Harris,” and the *Standard* as “Mrs. Gamp.”^[55]

[59]

The *Stage*, of course, has its Slang—“both before and behind the curtain,” as a journalist remarks. The stage-manager is familiarly termed “daddy;” and an actor by profession, or a “professional,” is called a “pro.” It is amusing at times to hear a young actor—who struts about padded with copies of all newspapers that have mentioned his name—talking, in a mixed company, of the stage as *the* profession. This is after all but natural, for to him “all the world’s a stage.” A man who is occasionally hired at a trifling remuneration to come upon the stage as one of a crowd, or when a number of actors are wanted to give effect, is named a “supe,”—an abbreviation of “supernumerary.” A “surf” is a third-rate actor, who frequently pursues another calling; and the band, or orchestra between the pit and the stage, is generally spoken of as the “menagerie.” A “ben” is a benefit; and “sal” is the Slang abbreviation of “salary.” Should no money be forthcoming on the Saturday night, it is said that the “ghost doesn’t walk;” or else the statement goes abroad that there is “no treasury,” as though the coffers themselves had departed. The travelling or provincial theatricals, who perform in any large room that can be rented in a country village, are called “barn-stormers.” A “length” is forty-two lines of any dramatic composition; and a “run” is the continuous term of a piece’s performance. A “saddle” is the additional charge made by a manager to an actor or actress upon his or her benefit night. To “mug up” is to paint one’s face, or arrange the person, to represent a particular character; to “corpse,” or to “stick,” is to balk, or put the other actors out in their parts by forgetting yours. A performance is spoken of as either a “gooser” or a “screamer,” should it be a failure or a great success;—if the latter, it is not infrequently termed a “hit.” To “goose” a performance is to hiss it; and continued “goosing” generally ends, or did end before managers refused to accept the verdict of audiences, in the play or the players being “damned.” To “star it” is to perform as the centre of attraction, with your name in large type, and none but subordinates and indifferent actors in the same performance. The expressive term “clap-trap,” high-sounding nonsense, is nothing but an ancient theatrical term, and signified a “trap” to catch a “clap” by way of applause. “Up amongst the ‘gods,’” refers to being among the spectators in the gallery,—termed in French Slang “paradis.”

[60]

There exists, too, in the great territory of vulgar speech what may not inappropriately be termed Civic Slang. It consists of mercantile and Stock Exchange terms, and the Slang of good living and wealth. A turkey hung with sausages is facetiously styled an “alderman in chains,”—a term which has spread from the City and become general; and a half-crown, perhaps from its rotundity, is often termed an “alderman.” A “bear” is a speculator on the Exchange; and a “bull,” although of an opposite order, follows a like profession. There is something very humorous and applicable in the Slang term “lame duck,” a defaulter in stock-jobbing speculations. The allusion to his “waddling out of the Alley,” as they say, is excellent. “Breaking shins,” in City Slang, is borrowing money; a rotten or unsound scheme is spoken of as “fishy;” “rigging the market” means playing tricks with it; and “stag” was a common term during the railway mania for a speculator without capital, a seller of “scrip” in “Diddlesex Junction” and other equally safe lines. At Tattersall’s a “monkey” is 500*l.*, and in the City a “plum” is 100,000*l.*, and a “marygold” is one million sterling. But before proceeding further in a sketch of the different kinds of Slang, it may be as well to speak here of the extraordinary number of Cant and Slang terms in use to represent money—from farthings to bank-notes the value of fortunes. Her Majesty’s coin, collectively or in the piece, is known by more than one hundred and thirty distinct Slang words, from the humble “brown” (a halfpenny) to “flimsies,” or “long-tailed ones” (bank-notes).

[61]

“Money,” it has been well remarked, “the bare, simple word itself, has a sonorous, significant ring in its sound,” and might have sufficed, one would have imagined, for all ordinary purposes, excepting, of course, those demanded by direct reference to specific sums. But a vulgar or “fast” society has thought differently; and so we have the Slang synonyms—“beans,” “blunt” (*i.e.*, specie,—not soft or rags, bank-notes), “brads,” “brass,” “bustle,” “coppers” (copper money, or mixed pence), “chink,” “chinkers,” “chips,” “corks,” “dibbs,” “dinarly,” “dimmock,” “dust,” “feathers,” “gent” (silver,—from argent), “haddock” (a purse of money), “horse nails,” “huckster,” “loaver,” “lour” (the oldest Cant term for money), “mopusses,” “needful,” “nobbings” (money collected in a hat by street-performers), “ochre” (gold), “pewter,” “palm oil,” “pieces,” “posh,” “queen’s pictures,” “quids,” “rags” (bank-notes), “ready,” or “ready gilt,” “redge” (gold), “rhino,”

[62]

“rowdy,” “shiners” (sovereigns), “skin” (a purse of money), “stiff” (checks, or bills of acceptance), “stuff,” “stumpy,” “tin” (silver), “wedge” (silver), and “yellow-boys” (sovereigns);—just forty-three vulgar equivalents for the simple word money. So attentive is Slang speech to financial matters, that there are seven terms for bad, or “bogus,” coin (as our friends the Americans call it): a “case” is a counterfeit five-shilling piece; “half a case” represents half that sum; “grays” are halfpence made specially for unfair gambling purposes; “queer-soft” is counterfeit or lead coin; “schofel” refers to coated or spurious coin; “sheen” is bad money of any description; and “sinkers” bears the same and not inappropriate meaning. “Snide” is now the generic term for all bad money, whether coined or in notes; and “snide-pitching” or “schoful-tossing” is the term in use among the professors of that pursuit for what is more generally known as “smashing.” “Flying the kite,” or obtaining money on bills and promissory-notes, is closely connected with the allegorical expression of “raising the wind,” which is a well-known phrase for procuring money by immediate sale, pledging, or by a forced loan. In winter or in summer any elderly gentleman who may have prospered in life is pronounced “warm;” whilst an equivalent is immediately at hand in the phrase “his pockets are well lined,” or “he is well breeched.” Each separate piece of money has its own Slang term, and often half a score of synonyms. To begin with that extremely humble coin, a farthing: first we have “fadge,” then “fiddler;” then “gig,” and lastly “quarterteen.” A halfpenny is a “brown” or a “madzer (pronounced ‘medzer’) saltee” (Cant), or a “mag,” or a “posh,” or a “rap,”—whence the popular phrase, “I don’t care a rap.” The useful and universal penny has for Slang equivalents a “copper,” a “saltee” (Cant), and a “winn.” Twopence is a “deuce,” and threepence is either “thrums” or “thrups.” “Thrums” has a special peculiarity; for while “thrums-buskin” represents threepence-halfpenny, the term “buskin” is not used in connexion with any other number of pence. Fourpence, or a groat, may in vulgar speech be termed a “bit,” a “flag,” or a “joey.” Sixpence is well represented in street talk, and some of the slangisms are very comical—for instance, “bandy,” “bender,” “cripple,” and “downer;” then we have “buck,” “fye-b’ck,” “half a hog,” “kick” (thus “two and a ‘kick,’” or 2s. 6d.), “lord of the manor,” [56] “pig,” “pot” (the price of a pot of ale—thus half-a-crown is a “five ‘pot’ piece”), “snid,” “sprat,” “sow’s baby,” “tanner,” “tester,” “tizzy,”—seventeen vulgar words to one coin. Sevenpence being an uncommon amount has only one Slang synonym, “setter.” The same remark applies to eightpence and ninepence, the former being only represented by “otter,” and the latter by the Cant phrase “nobba-saltee.” Tenpence is “dacha-saltee,” and elevenpence “dacha-one,”—both Cant expressions. It is noticeable that coined pieces, and sums which from their smallness or otherwise are mostly in use, receive a commensurate amount of attention from promoters of Slang. One shilling boasts eleven Slang equivalents; thus we have “beong,” “bob,” “breaky-leg,” “deener,” “gen” (from the back Slang), “hog,” “levy,” “peg,” “stag,” “teviss,” and “twelver.” One shilling and sixpence is a “kye,” now and then an “eighteener.” It is noticeable that so far the florin has escaped, and only receives the shilling titles with the required numeral adjective prefixed. Half-a-crown is known as an “alderman,” “half a bull,” “half a wheel,” “half a tusheroon,” and a “madza (medzer) caroon;” whilst a crown piece, or five shillings, may be called either a “bull,” a “caroon,” a “cartwheel,” or a “coachwheel,” or, more generally than either, a “wheel” or a “tusheroon.” The word “dollar” is in general use among costermongers and their customers, and signifies exactly five shillings. Any term representing this amount “takes in two,” and represents the half-crown by the addition of the usual prefix. The next advance in Slang money is ten shillings, or half-a-sovereign, which may be either pronounced as “half a bean,” “half a couter,” “a madza poona,” “half a quid,” or “half a thick ‘un.” A sovereign, or twenty shillings, is a “bean,” “canary,” “couter,” “foont,” “goldfinch,” “James” (from Jacobus), “poona,” “portrait,” “quid,” “thick-un,” or “yellow-boy.” Guineas are nearly obsolete, yet the terms “neds” and “half neds” are still in use. Bank-notes are “flimsies,” “long-tailed ones,” or “soft.” A “fin,” or a “finnuf,” is a five-pound note. Twenty-five pounds is a “pony,” and a hundred a “century.” One hundred pounds (or any other “round sum”), quietly handed over as payment for services performed, is curiously termed “a ‘cool’ hundred.” Thus ends, with several necessary omissions, this long list of Slang terms for the coins of the realm which, for copiousness, it is not too much to say, is not equalled by any other vulgar or unauthorized language in Europe.

[63]

[64]

The antiquity of many of these Slang names is remarkable. “Winn” was the vulgar term for a penny in the days of Queen Elizabeth; and “tester,” a sixpence (formerly a shilling), was the correct name in the days of Henry VIII. The reader, too, will have remarked the frequency of animals’ names as Slang terms for money. Little, as a modern writer has remarked, do the persons using these phrases know of their remote and somewhat classical origin, which may, indeed, be traced to a period anterior to that when monarchs monopolized the surface of coined money with their own images and superscriptions. They are identical with the very name of money among the early Romans, which was *pecunia*, from *pecus*, a flock. The collections of coin-dealers amply show that the figure of a “hog” was anciently placed on a small silver coin; and that that of a “bull” decorated larger ones of the same metal. These coins were frequently deeply crossed on the reverse; this was for the convenience of easily breaking them into two or more pieces, should the bargain for which they were employed require it, and the parties making it had no smaller change handy to complete the transaction. Thus we find that the “half bull” of the itinerant street-seller, or “traveller,” so far from being a phrase of modern invention, as is generally supposed, is in point of fact referable to an era extremely remote. This remark will safely apply to most descriptions of money; and it must not be forgotten that farthing is but a corruption of fourthing, or, literally, fourth part of a penny. The representative coin of the realm was often in olden times made to break up,—but this by the way. It is a reminder, however, that the word “smash,” as used by the classes that speak Slang from motives other than those of affectation, has nothing whatever to do with base coin, as is generally supposed. It simply means to give change. Thus:—“Can you smash a thick ‘un for me?” means simply, “Can you give me

[65]

change for a sovereign?" We learn from Erizzo, in his *Discorso*, a further illustration of the proverb "that there is nothing new under the sun;" for he says that the Roman boys at the time of Hadrian tossed up their coppers and cried, "Head or ship;" of which tradition our "heads or tails," and "man or woman," or "a tanner I heads 'em," is certainly a less refined version. We thence gather, however, that the prow of a vessel would appear to have been the more ordinary device of the reverse of the brass coin of that ancient period. There are many other Cant words directly from a classic source, as will be seen in the dictionary.

Shopkeepers' Slang is perhaps the most offensive of all Slang, though this is not intended to imply that shopkeepers are perhaps the most offensive of people. This kind of Slang is not a casual eyesore, as newspaper Slang, neither is it an occasional discomfort to the ear, as in the case of some vulgar byword of the street; but it is a perpetual nuisance, and stares you in the face on tradesmen's invoices, on labels in the shop-windows, and placards on the hoardings, in posters against the house next to your own—if it happen to be empty for a few weeks—and in bills thrust into your hand, as you peaceably walk through the streets. Under your door, and down your area, Slang handbills are dropped by some "pushing" tradesman; and for the thousandth time you are called upon to learn that an "alarming sacrifice" is taking place in the next street; that prices are "down again;" that, in consequence of some other tradesman not "driving a roaring trade," being in fact, "sold up," and for the time being a resident in "Burdon's Hotel" (Whitecross-Street Prison), the "pushing" tradesman wishes to sell out at "awfully low prices," to "the kind patrons, and numerous customers," &c. &c., "that have on every occasion," &c. &c. These are, though, very venial offenders compared with those ghouls, the advertising undertakers, who employ boys, loaded with ghastly little books, to follow up the parish doctor, and leave their horrible wares wherever he calls. But what can be expected of ignorant undertakers when a London newspaper of large circulation actually takes out the death records from the *Times*, and sends a circular to each address therein, informing the bereaved persons that the "—" charges so much per line for similar notices, and that its circulation is most extensive? Surely the typical "death-hunter," hardened though he may be, is hardly down to that level. In shopkeeping Slang any occupation or calling is termed a "line,"—thus, the "building line." A tailor usurps to himself a good deal of Slang. Amongst operatives he is called a "snip," a "steel-bar driver," a "cabbage contractor," or a "goose persuader;" by the world, a "ninth part of a man;" and by the young collegian, or "fast" man, a "sufferer." If he takes army contracts, it is "sank work;" if he is a "slop" tailor, he is a "springer up," and his garments are "blown together." Perquisites with him are "spiffs," and remnants of cloth "peaking, or cabbage." The per-centage he allows to his assistants (or "counter jumpers") on the sale of old-fashioned articles is termed "tinge." If he pays his workmen in goods, or gives them tickets upon other tradesmen, with whom he shares the profit, he is soon known as a "tommy master." If his business succeeds, it "takes;" if neglected, it becomes "shaky," and "goes to pot;" if he is deceived by a debtor (a by no means unusual circumstance), he is "let in," or, as it is sometimes varied, "taken in." It need scarcely be remarked that any credit he may give is termed "tick."

Operatives' or workmen's Slang, in quality, is but slightly removed from tradesmen's Slang. When belonging to the same shop or factory, they "graft" there, and are "brother chips." Among printers the favourite term is "comps,"—not compositors, though the same contraction is used for that word,—but companions, whether so in actual fact, or as members of the same "companionship." A companionship is the number of men engaged on any one work, and this is in turn reduced to "ship:" sometimes it is a "stab ship," *i.e.*, paid by the week, therefore on the establishment; sometimes it is "on the piece," and anyhow it is an extremely critical organization, so perhaps it would be better to broaden the subject. Workmen generally dine at "slap-bang shops," and are often paid at "tommy shops." At the nearest "pub," or public-house, they generally have a "score chalked up" against them, which has to be "wiped off" regularly on the Saturday night. This is often known as a "light." When credit is bad the "light" is said to be out. When out of work, they describe themselves as being "out of collar." They term each other "flints" and "dungs," if they are "society" or "non-society" men. Their salary is a "screw," and to be discharged is to "get the sack," varied by the expression "get the bullet," the connexion of which with discharge is obvious, as the small lecturers—those at the Polytechnic for instance—say, to the meanest capacity. When they quit work, they "knock off;" and when out of employ, they ask if any "hands" are, or any assistance is, wanted. "Fat" is the vulgar synonym for perquisites; "elbow grease" signifies labour; and "Saint Monday" is the favourite day of the week. Names of animals figure plentifully in the workman's vocabulary; thus we have "goose," a tailor's smoothing-iron; "sheep's-foot," an iron hammer; "sow," a receptacle for molten iron, whilst the metal poured from it is termed "pig." Many of the Slang terms for money may have originally come from the workshop, thus—"brads," from the ironmonger; "chips," from the carpenter; "dust," from the goldsmith; "feathers," from the upholsterer; "horse-nails," from the farrier; "haddock," from the fishmonger; and "tanner and skin" from the leather-dresser.

If society, as has been remarked, is a sham, from the vulgar foundation of commonalty to the crowning summit of royalty, then do we perceive the justness of the remark in that most peculiar of peculiarities, the Slang of makeshifts for oaths, and sham exclamations for passion and temper. These apologies for feeling are an addition to our vernacular, and though some argue that they are a disgrace, for the reason that no man should pretend to swear or curse who does not do so, it is some satisfaction to know that they serve the purpose of reducing the stock of national profanity. "You be blowed," or "I'll be blowed if," &c., is an exclamation often heard in the streets. "Blazes," or "like blazes," came probably from the army, unless, indeed, it came from the original metaphor, afterwards corrupted, to serve all turns, "to smoke like blazes." "Blast," too, although in general vulgar use, may have had an engineering or military origin, and the

phrase, "I wish I may be shot, if," smacks much of powder. "Blow me tight" is a very windy and common exclamation. The same may be said of "strike me lucky," "never trust me," and "so help me Davy;" the latter being evidently derived from the truer old phrase, "I'll take my Davy on't"—*i.e.*, my affidavit, "Davy," and sometimes "Alfred Davy," being a corruption of that word. "By Golly," "Gol darn it," and "so help"—generally pronounced "selp" or "swelp"—"me Bob," are evident shams for profane oaths. "Tarnation" is but a softening of damnation; and "od," whether used in "od drat it," or "od's blood," is but an apology for the name of the Deity. "Marry," a term of asseveration in common use, was originally, in Popish times, a mode of swearing by the Virgin Mary;—so also "marrow-bones," for the knees. "I'll bring him down upon his marrow-bones,"—*i.e.*, I'll make him bend his knees as he does to the Virgin Mary. The Irish phrase, "Bad scan to yer!" is equivalent to wishing a person bad food. "I'm sniggered if you will," and "I'm jiggered," are other mild forms of swearing among men fearful of committing an open profanity, yet slyly nibbling at the sin. Maybe, some day one of these adventurers will meet with the object of his desires, and then when fairly "jiggered," whatever it may ultimately turn out to be, it is to be hoped he will prove a fearful example to all persons with the will, but not the pluck, to swear fierce oaths. Both "deuce" and "dickens" are vulgar old synonyms for the devil; and "zounds" is an abbreviation of "God's wounds,"—a very ancient oath.

[69]

In a casual survey of the territory of Slang, it is curious to observe how well represented are the familiar wants and failings of life. First, there is money, with one hundred and odd Slang terms and synonyms; then comes drink, from small beer to champagne; and next as a very natural sequence, intoxication, and fuddlement generally, with some half a hundred vulgar terms, graduating the scale of drunkenness, from a slight inebriation to the soaky state which leads to the gutter, sometimes to the stretcher, the station-house, the fine, and, most terrible of all, the "caution." The Slang synonyms for mild intoxication are certainly very choice,—they are "beery," "bemused," "boozy," "bosky," "buffy," "corned," "foggy," "fou," "fresh," "hazy," "elevated," "kisky," "lushy," "moony," "muggy," "muzzy," "on," "screwed," "stewed," "tight," and "winey." A higher or more intense state of beastliness is represented by the expressions, "podgy," "beargered," "blued," "cut," "primed," "lumpy," "ploughed," "muddled," "obfuscated," "swipey," "three sheets in the wind," and "top-heavy." But the climax of fuddlement is only obtained when the "disguised" individual "can't see a hole in a ladder," or when he is all "mops and brooms," or "off his nut," or with his "main-brace well spliced," or with the "sun in his eyes," or when he has "lapped the gutter," and got the "gravel rash," or is on the "ran-tan," or on the "ree-raw," or when "sewed up," and regularly "scammered,"—then, and not till then, is he entitled, in vulgar society, to the title of "lushington," or recommended to "put in the pin," *i.e.*, the linch-pin, to keep his legs steady.

[70]

[71]

THE SLANG DICTIONARY.

A 1, first-rate, the very best; "she's a prime girl, she is; she is A 1."—*Sam Slick*. The highest classification of ships at Lloyd's; common term in the United States; also at Liverpool and other English seaports. Another, even more intensive form is "first-class, letter A, No. 1." Some people choose to say A I, for no reason, however, beyond that of being different from others.

Abigail, a lady's-maid; perhaps obtained from old comedies. Used in an uncomplimentary sense. Some think the term is derived from Abigail Hill (Mrs. Masham), lady-in-waiting to Queen Anne, and a typical ABIGAIL in the way of intrigue.

About Right, "to do the thing ABOUT RIGHT," *i.e.*, to do it properly, soundly, correctly; "he guv it 'im ABOUT RIGHT," *i.e.*, he beat him severely.

Abraham-man, a vagabond, such as were driven to beg about the country after the dissolution of the monasteries.—See **BESS O' BEDLAM**, *infra*. They are well described under the title of *Bedlam Beggars*.—*Shakspeare's K. Lear*, ii. 3.

"And these, what name or title e'er they bear,
Jarkman, or Patrico, Cranke, or Clapper-dudgeon,
Frater, or ABRAM-MAN; I speak to all
That stand in fair election for the title
Of king of beggars."—*Beaumont and Fletcher's Begg. Bush*. II. 1.

It appears to have been the practice in former days to allow certain inmates of Bethlehem Hospital to have fixed days "to go begging:" hence impostors were said to "SHAM ABRAHAM" (the Abraham Ward in Bedlam having for its inmates these mendicant lunatics) when they pretended they were licensed beggars in behalf of the hospital.

Abraham-sham, OR SHAM ABRAHAM, to feign sickness or distress. From ABRAM-MAN, the *ancient Cant* term for a begging impostor, or one who pretended to have been mad.—*Burton's Anatomy of Melancholy*, vol. i. p. 360. When Abraham Newland was Cashier to the Bank of England, and signed their notes, it was sung:—

"I have heard people say
That SHAM ABRAHAM you may,
But you mustn't SHAM ABRAHAM Newland."

Absquatulate, to run away, or abscond; a hybrid *American* expression, from the Latin *ab*, and “squat” to settle.

Acres, a coward. From Bob Acres, in Sheridan’s *Rivals*.

Adam’s Ale, water.—*English*. The *Scotch* term is ADAM’S WINE.

Added to the List, a euphuism current among sporting writers implying that a horse has been gelded. As, “Sabinus has been ADDED TO THE LIST.” Another form of expression in reference to this matter is that “the knife has been brought into requisition.” “ADDED TO THE LIST” is simply a contraction for “added to the list of geldings in training.”

Addlepat, a foolish fellow, a dullard.

Admiral of the Red, a person whose very red face evinces a fondness for strong potatoes.

Affygraphy. “It fits to an AFFYGRAPHY,” *i.e.*, to a nicety—to a *T*.

Afternoon Farmer, one who wastes his best opportunity, and drives off the large end of his work to the little end of his time.

Against the Grain, in opposition to the wish. “It went AGAINST THE GRAIN to do it, but I knew I must,” is a common expression.

Aggerawators (corruption of *Aggravators*), the greasy locks of hair in vogue among costermongers and other street folk, worn twisted from the temple back towards the ear. They are also, from a supposed resemblance in form, termed NEWGATE KNOCKERS, and sometimes NUMBER SIXES. This style of adorning the head is, however, fast dying out, and the everyday costermonger or street thief has his hair cut like any one else. The yearly militia drill may have had a good deal to do with this alteration.

Akeybo, a slang phrase used in the following manner:—“He beats AKEYBO, and AKEYBO beat the devil.”

Albertopolis, a facetious appellation given by the Londoners to the Kensington Gore district. Now obsolete.

Alderman, a half-crown—possibly from its rotundity. Also a long pipe.

Alderman, a turkey; “ALDERMAN IN CHAINS,” a turkey hung with sausages.

All of a Hugh! all on one side; falling with a thump; the word HUGH being pronounced with a grunt.—*Suffolk*.

All my Eye, a remark of incredulity made in reference to an improbable story; condensation of “ALL MY EYE AND BETTY MARTIN,” a vulgar phrase constructed from the commencement of a Roman Catholic prayer to St. Martin, “Oh, mihi, beate Martine,” which in common with many another fell into discredit and ridicule after the Reformation.

All out, by far;—“he was ALL OUT the best of the lot.” *Old*—frequently used by Burton in his *Anatomy of Melancholy*.

All-overish, neither sick nor well; the premonitory symptoms of illness. Also the feeling which comes over a man at a critical moment, say just when he is about to “pop the question.” Sometimes this is called, “feeling all over alike, and touching nowhere.”

All-rounder, a shirt collar going all round the neck and meeting in front. Once fashionable, but little worn now.

All Serene, an ejaculation of acquiescence. Some years back a popular street cry. With or without application to actual fact, the words ALL SERENE were bawled from morning to night without any reference to the serenity of the unfortunate hearers.—*See* [SERENE](#).

Alls, tap-droppings, refuse spirits sold at a cheap rate in gin-palaces.

All There, in strict fashion, first-rate, “up to the mark;” a vulgar person would speak of a handsome, well-dressed woman as being ALL THERE. An artisan would use the same phrase to express the capabilities of a skillful fellow-workman. Sometimes ALL THE WAY THERE. Always used as a term of encomium.

All to Pieces, utterly, excessively; “he beat him ALL TO PIECES,” *i.e.*, excelled or surpassed him exceedingly. Also a term much in use among sporting men and expressing want of form, or decadence. A boat’s crew are said to “go ALL TO PIECES” when they through distress lose their regularity. A woman is vulgarly said to “fall to pieces,” or “tumble to pieces,” when she is confined.

All to Smash, or “GONE ALL TO PIECES,” bankrupt, ruined.

Almighty Dollar, an *American* expression representing the manner in which money is worshipped. Modernly introduced by Washington Irving in 1837. The *idea* of this phrase is, however, far older than the time of *Irving*. *Ben Jonson’s Epistle to Elizabeth, Countess of Rutland*, commences thus—

“Whilst that for which all virtue now is sold,
And almost every vice, *almightie gold*.”

It seems almost obvious that the term must have been applied, not to dollars certainly, but to

money, long before the time of Irving.

American Tweezers, an instrument used by an hotel-sneak which nips the wards end of a key, and enables him to open a door from the opposite side to that on which it has been locked.

Andrew Millar, a ship of war.—*Sea*.

Ain't, the vulgar abbreviation of “am not,” “are not,” or “is not.”

Anointed, *i.e.*, eminent; used to express great rascality in any one; “an ANOINTED scoundrel,” king among scoundrels.—*Irish*.

Anointing, a good beating. A case for the application of salve.

Anonyma, a lady of the *demi-monde*, or worse; a “pretty horsebreaker.” INCOGNITA was the term at first. Product of the squeamishness of the age which tries to thrust away fact by the use of fine words.

Antiscriptural, oaths, foul language. Anything unfit for ordinary society conversation.

Apartments to Let, a term used in reference to one who has a somewhat empty head. As, “He’s got APARTMENTS TO LET.”

Apostle’s Grove, the London district known as St. John’s Wood. Also called GROVE OF THE EVANGELIST.

Apostles, THE TWELVE, the last twelve names on the Poll, or “Ordinary Degree” List at the Cambridge Examinations, when it was arranged in order of merit, and not alphabetically, and in classes, as at present; so called from their being *post alios*, after the others.—*See POLL*. The last of all was called ST. PAUL (or Saint Poll), as being the least of the apostles, and “not meet to be called an apostle” (*see* 1 Cor. xv. 9). As in the “Honour” list (*see GULE*), students who had failed only slightly in one or more subjects were occasionally allowed their degrees, and these were termed *ELEGANT EXTRACTS*.—*Camb. Univ. Slang*.

Apple-pie Bed, a trick played at schools on new comers, or on any boy disliked by the rest. One of the sheets is removed, and the other is doubled in the middle, so that both edges are brought to the top, and look as if both sheets were there; but the unhappy occupant is prevented getting more than half-way down, and he has to remake his bed as best he can. This trick is sometimes played by children of a larger growth.

Apple-Cart, the human structure, so far as the phrases with which it is connected are concerned. As “I’ll upset your APPLE-CART,” “down with his APPLE-CART.”

Apple-pie Order, in exact or very nice order.

Appro, contraction of approbation, a word much in use among jewellers. Most of the extensive show of chains, watches, and trinkets in a shop window is obtained “ON APPRO,” *i.e.*, “on sale or return.”

Area Sneak, a thief who commits depredations upon kitchens and cellars.

Argol-bargol, to bandy words.—*Scotch*.

Article, derisive term for a weak or insignificant specimen of humanity.

Atomy, a diminutive or deformed person. FROM ANATOMY, OR ATOM.

Attack, to carve, or commence operations; “ATTACK that beef, and oblige!”

Attic, the head; “queer in the ATTIC,” intoxicated or weak-minded. Sometimes ATTIC is varied by “upper story.”

Attic Salt, wit, humour, pleasantry. Partly a reference to a suggestive portion of Grecian literature, and partly a sly hit at the well-known poverty of many writers.

Auctioneer, to “tip him the AUCTIONEER,” is to knock a man down. Tom Sayers’s right hand was known to pugilistic fame as the AUCTIONEER.

Audit Ale, extra strong ale supposed to be drunk when the accounts are audited.—*Camb. Univ*.

Auld-Reekie, an affectionate term for the old town of Edinburgh. Derived from its dingy appearance.

Aunt Sally, a favourite figure on racecourses and at fairs, consisting of a wooden head mounted on a stick, firmly fixed in the ground; in the nose of which, or rather where the nose should be, a tobacco-pipe is inserted. The fun consists in standing at a distance and demolishing AUNT SALLY’S pipe-clay projection with short bludgeons, very similar to the halves of broom-handles. The Duke of Beaufort is a “crack hand” at smashing pipe noses; and his performances some years ago on Brighton racecourse, which brought the game into notoriety, are yet fresh in remembrance. AUNT SALLY has, however, had her day, and once again the inevitable “three shies a penny!” is chief among our outdoor amusements.

Avast, a sailor’s phrase for stop, shut up, go away,—apparently connected with the *old Cant*, BYNGE A WASTE; or from the *Italian*, BASTA, hold! enough.

Awake, or FLY, knowing, thoroughly understanding. “I’m awake,” *i.e.*, I know all. The phrase WIDE-AWAKE carries a similar meaning in ordinary conversation, but has a more general reference.

Awful, a senseless expletive, used to intensify a description of anything good or bad; “what an

AWFUL fine woman!" "awfully jolly," "awfully sorry," &c. The phrase is not confined to any section of society.

Ax, to ask. Sometimes pronounced arks.

Babes, the lowest order of **KNOCK-OUTS** (which *see*), who are prevailed upon not to give opposing biddings at auctions, in consideration of their receiving a small sum (from one shilling to half-a-crown), and a certain quantity of beer. They can, however, even after this agreement, be secured on the other side for a little longer price. There is no honour among thieves—at all events not among auction thieves—nowadays.

Back, to support by means of money, on the turf or otherwise.—*See* **LAY**.

Back, “to get one’s **BACK UP**,” to annoy or enrage. Probably from the action of a cat when preparing to give battle to an enemy.

Back-end, that portion of the year which commences with October. This phrase is peculiar to the turf, and has its origin in the fact that October was actually, and is now nearly, the finishing portion of the racing season. Towards **BACK-END** the punters and “little men” generally begin to look forward with anxiety to their winter prospects, and “going for the gloves” is not only a frequent phrase, but a frequently recurring practice.

Back Out, to retreat from a difficulty; reverse of **GO AHEAD**. Metaphor borrowed from the stables.

Back Slang It, to go out the back way. Equivalent to “Sling your hook out of the back-door,” *i.e.*, get away quickly.

Backslums, the byeways and disreputable portions of a town.

Back-Hander, a blow on the face with the back of the hand, a back-handed tip. Also a drink out of turn, as when a greedy person delays the decanter to get a second glass. Anything done slyly or secretly is said to be done in a back-handed manner.

Backer, one who places his money on a particular man or animal; a supporter of one side in a contest. The great body of betting men is divided into **BOOKMAKERS** and **BACKERS**.

[76]

Back Jump, a back window.—*Prison term*.

Bacon, the body, “to save one’s **BACON**,” to escape.

Bad, “to go to the bad,” to deteriorate in character, to be ruined. *Virgil* has an almost similar phrase, *in pejus ruere*, which means, by the way, to go to the worse.

Bad, hard, difficult. Word in use among sporting men who say, “He will be **BAD** to beat,” when they mean that the man or horse to whom they refer will about win.

Bad Egg, a scoundrel or rascal.

Badger, to tease, to annoy by “chaffing.” Suggestive of drawing a badger.

Bad Lot, a term derived from auctioneering slang, and now generally used to describe a man or woman of indifferent morals.

Badminton, blood,—properly a peculiar kind of claret-cup invented at the Duke of Beaufort’s seat of that name. **BADMINTON** proper is made of claret, sugar, spice, cucumber peel, and ice, and was sometimes used by the patrons of the Prize Ring as a synonym for blood.

Bad Words, words not always bad of themselves but unpleasant to “ears polite,” from their vulgar associations.

Baffaty, calico. Term used in the drapery trade.

Bag, to seize or steal, equivalent to “collar.”

Bagman, a commercial traveller. This word is used more in reference to the old style of commercial travellers than to the present.

Bags, trousers. Trousers of an extensive pattern, or exaggerated fashion, have sometimes been termed **HOWLING-BAGS**, but only when the style has been very “loud.” The word is probably an abbreviation of bumbags. “To have the **BAGS** off,” to be of age and one’s own master, to have plenty of money. **BAGS OF MYSTERY** is another phrase in frequent use, and refers to sausages and saveloys. **BAG OF TRICKS**, refers to the whole of a means towards a result. “That’s the whole bag of tricks.”

Baked, seasoned, “he’s only **HALF-BAKED**,” *i.e.*, soft, inexperienced.

Baker’s Dozen, thirteen. Originally the London bakers supplied the retailers, *i.e.*, chandlers’ shopkeepers and itinerants, with thirteen loaves to the dozen, so as to make up what is known as the overweight, the surplus number, called the *inbread*, being thrown in for fear of incurring a penalty for short weight. To “give a man a **BAKER’S DOZEN**,” in a slang sense, sometimes means to give him an extra good beating or pummelling.

Balaam, printers’ slang for matter kept in type about monstrous productions of nature, &c., to fill up spaces in newspapers that would otherwise be vacant. The term **BALAAM-BOX** has often been used as the name of a depository for rejected articles. Evidently from Scripture, and referring to the “speech of an ass.”

Bald-Faced Stag, a term of derision applied to a person with a bald head. Also, still more coarsely, “**BLADDER-OF-LARD**.”

[77]

Bale up, an Australian term equivalent to our “Shell out.” A demand for instantaneous payment.

Ballambangjang. The Straits of **BALLAMBANGJANG**, though unnoticed by geographers, are

frequently mentioned in sailors' yarns as being so narrow, and the rocks on each side so crowded with trees inhabited by monkeys, that the ship's yards cannot be squared, on account of the monkey's tails getting jammed into, and choking up, the brace blocks.—*Sea*.

Ballast, money. A rich man is said to be well-ballasted. If not proud and over-bearing he is said to carry his ballast well.

Balmy, weak-minded or idiotic (not insane).

Balmy, sleep; "have a dose of the BALMY."

Bamboozle, to deceive, make fun of, or cheat a person; abbreviated to *BAM*, which is sometimes used also as a substantive—a deception, a sham, a "sell." *Swift* says *BAMBOOZLE* was invented by a nobleman in the reign of Charles II.; but this is very likely an error. The probability is that a nobleman then first *used* it in polite society. The term is derived from the *Gipsies*.

Bandannah, originally a peculiar kind of silk pocket-handkerchief, now slang used to denote all sorts of "stooks," "wipes," and "fogles," and in fact the generic term for a kerchief, whether neck or pocket.

Banded, hungry. From the habit hungry folks have of tying themselves tight round the middle.

Bandy, or *CRIPPLE*, a sixpence, so called from this coin being generally bent or crooked; old term for flimsy or bad cloth, temp. Q. Elizabeth.

Bang, to excel or surpass; *BANGING*, great or thumping.

Bang-up, first-rate, in the best possible style.

Bank, to put in a place of safety. "BANK the rag," *i.e.*, secure the note. Also "to bank" is to go shares.

Bank, the total amount possessed by any one, "How's the BANK?" "Not very strong; about one and a buck."

Bantling, a child; stated in *Bacchus and Venus*, 1737, and by *Grose*, to be a cant term. This is hardly slang now-a-days, and modern etymologists give its origin as that of bands or swaddling clothes.

Banyan-Day, a day on which no meat is served out for rations; probably derived from the *BANIANS*, a Hindoo caste, who abstain from animal food. Quite as probably from the sanitary arrangements which have in hot climates counselled the eating of *BANYANS* and other fruits in preference to meat on certain days.—*Sea*.

Bar, OR *BARRING*, excepting; in common use in the betting-ring; "Two to one bar one," *i.e.*, two to one against any horse with the exception of one. The Irish use of *BARRIN'* is very similar, and the WORDS *BAR* and *BARRING* may now be regarded as general.

[78]

Barber's Cat, a half-starved sickly-looking person. Term used in connexion with an expression too coarse to print.

Barber's Clerk, an overdressed shopboy who apes the manners of, and tries to pass himself off as, a gentleman; a term of reproach applied not to an artisan but to one of those who, being below, assume airs of superiority over, handicraftsmen.

Barge, a term used among printers (compositors) to denote a case in which there is an undue proportion of some letters and a corresponding shortness of those which are most valuable.

Bark, an Irish person of either sex. From this term, much in use among the London lower orders, but for which no etymology can be found, Ireland is now and then playfully called *Barkshire*.

Barker, a man employed to cry at the doors of "gaffs," shows, and puffing shops, to entice people inside. Among touting photographers he is called a doorsman.

Barking-Iron, OR *BARKER*, a pistol. Term used by footpads and thieves generally.

Barnacles, spectacles; possibly a corruption of *binoculi*; but derived by some from the barnacle (*Lepas Anatifera*), a kind of conical shell adhering to ships' bottoms. Hence a marine term for goggles, which they resemble in shape, and for which they are used by sailors in case of ophthalmic derangement.

Barney, an unfair race of any kind: a sell or cross. Also a lark, jollification, or outing. The word *BARNEY* is sometimes applied to a swindle unconnected with the sporting world.

Barn Stormers, theatrical performers who travel the country and act in barns, selecting short and tragic pieces to suit the rustic taste.

Barrikin, jargon, speech, or discourse; "We can't tumble to that *BARRIKIN*," *i.e.*, we don't understand what he says. "Cheese your *BARRIKIN*," shut up. *Miege* calls it "a sort of stuff;" *Old French*, *BARACAN*.

Bash, to beat, thrash; "*BASHING* a dona," beating a woman; originally a provincial word, applied to the practice of beating walnut trees, when in bud, with long poles, to increase their productiveness. Hence the West country proverb—

"A woman, a whelp, and a walnut tree,
The more you *BASH* 'em, the better they be."

The word **BASH**, among thieves, signifies to flog with the cat or birch. The worst that can happen to a brutal ruffian is to receive “a **BASHING** in, and a **BASHING** out,”—a flogging at the commencement and another at the close of his term of enforced virtue.

Baste, to beat, properly to pour gravy on roasting meat to keep it from burning, and add to its flavour. Also a sewing term.

Bastile, the workhouse. General name for “the Union” amongst the lower orders of the *North*. Formerly used to denote a prison, or “lock-up;” but its abbreviated form, **STEEL**, is now the favourite expression with the dangerous classes, some of whom have never heard of **BASTILE**, familiar as they are with “steel.”

[79]

Bat, “on his own **BAT**,” on his own account. Evident modification of the cricket term, “off his own bat,” though not connected therewith.—See [HOOK](#).

Bat, to take an innings at cricket. To “carry out one’s **BAT**” is to be last in, *i.e.*, to be “not out.” A man’s individual score is said to be made “off his own **BAT**.”

Bat, pace at walking or running. As, “He went off at a good **BAT**.”

Bats, a pair of bad boots.

Battells, the weekly bills at Oxford. Probably originally wooden tallies, and so a diminutive of bâton.—*University*.

Batter, wear and tear; “can’t stand the **BATTER**,” *i.e.*, not equal to the task; “on the **BATTER**,” “on the streets,” “on the town,” or given up to roystering and debauchery.

Batty, wages, perquisites. Derived from **BATTA**, an extra pay given to soldiers while serving in *India*.

Batty-Fang, to beat; **BATTY-FANGING**, a beating; also **BATTER-FANG**. Used metaphorically as early as 1630.

“So *batter-fanged* and belabour’d with tongue mettle, that he was weary of his life.”—*Taylor’s Works*.

Beach-Comber, a fellow who prowls about the sea-shore to plunder wrecks, and pick up waifs and strays of any kind.—*Sea*.

Beak, originally a magistrate, judge, or policeman; now a magistrate only; “to baffle the **BEAK**,” to get remanded. *Ancient Cant*, **BECK**. *Saxon*, **BEAG**, a necklace or gold collar—emblem of authority. Sir John Fielding was called the **BLIND-BEAK** in the last century. Maybe connected with the Italian **BECCO**, which means a (bird’s) *beak*, and also a *blockhead*.—See [WALKER](#).

Beaker-Hunter, OR **BEAK-HUNTER**, a stealer of poultry.

Beans, money; “a haddock of **BEANS**,” a purse of money; formerly, **BEAN** meant a guinea; *French*, **BIENS**, property.

Bear, one who contracts to deliver or sell a certain quantity of stock in the public funds on a forthcoming day at a stated place, but who does not possess it, trusting to a decline in public securities to enable him to fulfil the agreement and realize a profit.—See [BULL](#). Both words are slang terms on the Stock Exchange, and are frequently used in the business columns of newspapers.

“He who sells that of which he is not possessed is proverbially said to sell the skin before he has caught the **BEAR**. It was the practice of stock-jobbers, in the year 1720, to enter into a contract for transferring South Sea stock at a future time for a certain price; but he who contracted to sell had frequently no stock to transfer, nor did he who bought intend to receive any in consequence of his bargain; the seller was, therefore, called a **BEAR**, in allusion to the proverb, and the buyer a **BULL**, perhaps only as a similar distinction. The contract was merely a wager, to be determined by the rise or fall of stock; if it rose, the seller paid the difference to the buyer, proportioned to the sum determined by the same computation to the seller.”—*Dr. Warton on Pope*.

[80]

These arrangements are nowadays called “time bargains,” and are as fairly (or unfairly) gambling as any transactions at the Victoria Club or Tattersall’s, or any of the doings which call for the intervention of the police and the protestations of pompous City magistrates, who, during their terms of office, try to be virtuous and make their names immortal. Certainly **BULLING** and **BEARING** are as productive of bankruptcy and misery as are [BACKING](#) and [LAYING](#).

Be-argered, drunk. (The word is divided here simply to convey the pronunciation.)

Bear-Leader, a tutor in a private family. In the old days of the “grand tour” the term was much more in use and of course more significant than it is now.

Bear-up and **Bearer-up**.—See [BONNET](#).

Beat, the allotted range traversed by a policeman on duty.

Beat, OR **BEAT-HOLLOW**, to surpass or excel; also “**BEAT** into fits,” and “**BEAT** badly.”

Beat, “**DEAD-BEAT**,” wholly worn out, done up.

Beater-Cases, boots. *Nearly obsolete*. **TROTTER CASES** is the term nowadays.

Beaver, old street term for a hat; GOSS is the modern word, BEAVER, except in the country, having fallen into disuse.

Bebee, a lady.—*Anglo-Indian*.

Be-Blowed, a derisive instruction never carried into effect, as, "YOU BE-BLOWED." Used similarly to the old "Go to." See [BLOW ME](#).

Bed-Fagot, a contemptuous term for a woman; generally applied to a prostitute.—See [FAGOT](#).

Bed-Post, "in the twinkling of a BED-POST," in a moment, or very quickly. Originally BED-STAFF, a stick placed vertically in the frame of a bed to keep the bedding in its place, and used sometimes as a defensive weapon.

Bee, "to have a BEE in one's bonnet," *i.e.*, to be not exactly sane; to have a craze in one particular direction. Several otherwise sensible and excellent M.P.'s are distinguished by the "BEE in his bonnet" each carries.

Beef-Headed, stupid, fat-headed, dull.

Beefy, unduly thick or fat, commonly said of women's ankles; also rich, juicy, plenteous. To take the whole pool at loo, or to have any particular run of luck at cards generally is said by players to be "very BEEFY."

Beeline, the straightest possible line of route to a given point. When a bee is well laden, it makes a straight flight for home. Originally an Americanism, but now general.

Beery, intoxicated, or fuddled with beer.

Beeswax, poor, soft cheese. Sometimes called "sweaty-toe cheese."

Beeswing, the film which forms on the sides of bottles which contain good old port wine. This breaks up into small pieces in the process of decanting, and looks like BEES' WINGS. Hence the term.

Beetle-Crusher, OR SQUASHER, a large flat foot. The expression was made popular by being once used by Leech.

Beetle-Sticker, an entomologist.

Beggars' Velvet, downy particles which accumulate under furniture from the negligence of housemaids. Otherwise called SLUTS'-WOOL.

Belcher, a blue bird's-eye handkerchief.—See [BILLY](#).

Bell, a song. Tramps' term. Simply diminutive of BELLOW.

Bellows, the lungs. BELLOWSER, a blow in the "wind," or pit of the stomach, taking one's breath away.

Bellowsed, OR LAGGED, transported.

Bellows to Mend, a person out of breath; especially a pugilist is said to be "BELLOWS TO MEND" when winded. With the P.R., the word has fallen into desuetude.

Belly-Timber, food, or "grub."

Belly-Vengeance, small sour beer, apt to cause gastralgia.

Bemuse, to fuddle one's self with drink, "BEMUSING himself with beer," &c.

Ben, a benefit.—*Theatrical*.

Ben Cull, a friend, or "pal." Expression used by thieves.

Bend, "that's above my bend," *i.e.*, beyond my power, too expensive or too difficult for me to perform.

Bender, a sixpence. Probably from its liability to bend. In the days when the term was most in use sixpences were not kept in the excellent state of preservation peculiar to the currency of the present day.

Bender, the arm; "over the BENDER," synonymous with "over the left."—See [OVER](#).

Bendigo, a rough fur cap worn in the midland counties, called after a noted pugilist of that name. "Hard Punchers" are caps worn by London roughs and formerly by men in training. They are a modification of the common Scotch cap, and have peaks.

Bene, good.—*Ancient Cant*; BENAR was the comparative.—See [BONE](#). *Latin*.

Benedick, a married man. *Shakspeare*.

Benjamin, coat. Formerly termed a JOSEPH, in allusion, perhaps, to Joseph's coat of many colours.—See [UPPER-BENJAMIN](#).

Ben Joltram, brown bread and skimmed milk; a Norfolk term for a ploughboy's breakfast.

Benjy, a waistcoat, diminutive of BENJAMIN.

Beong, a shilling.—See [SALTEE](#).—*Lingua Franca*.

Bess-o'-Bedlam, a lunatic vagrant.—*Norfolk*.

Best, to get the better or BEST of a man in any way—not necessarily to cheat—to have the best of a bargain. **BESTED**, taken in, or defrauded, in reality worsted. **BESTER**, a low betting cheat, a fraudulent bookmaker.

Better, more; “how far is it to town?” “Oh, **BETTER** ’n a mile.”—*Saxon and Old English*, now a vulgarism.

Betting Round, laying fairly and equally against nearly all the horses in a race so that no great risk can be run. Commonly called getting round. See [BOOK](#), and **BOOKMAKING**.

Betty, a skeleton key, or picklock.—*Old Prison Cant*.

B Flats, bugs.—*Compare* [F SHARPS](#).

Bible-Carrier, a person who sells songs without singing them.—*Seven Dials*.

Biddy, a general name applied to Irish stallwomen and milkmaids, in the same manner that Mike is given to the labouring men. A big red-faced Irish servant girl is known as a Bridget.

Big, “to look **BIG**,” to assume an inflated air or manner; “to talk **BIG**,” *i.e.*, boastingly.

Big-Bird, TO GET THE, *i.e.*, to be hissed, as actors occasionally are by the “gods.” **BIG-BIRD** is simply a metaphor for goose.—*Theat. Slang*.

Big House, OR LARGE HOUSE, the workhouse,—a phrase used by the very poor.

Big-wig, a person in authority or office. Exchangeable with “**GREAT GUN**.”

Bilbo, a sword; abbrev. of “**BILBAO** blade.” Spanish swords were anciently very celebrated, especially those of Toledo, Bilbao, &c.

Bilk, a cheat, or a swindler. Formerly in general use, now confined to the streets, where it is common, and mostly used in reference to prostitutes. *Gothic*, **BILAICAN**.

Bilk, to defraud, or obtain goods, &c., without paying for them; “to **BILK** the schoolmaster,” to get information or experience without paying for it.

Billingsgate (when applied to speech), foul and coarse language. Many years since people used to visit Thames Street to hear the Billingsgate fishwomen abuse each other. The anecdote of Dr. Johnson and the Billingsgate virago is well known.

Billingsgate Pheasant, a red herring or bloater. This is also called a “two-eyed steak.”

Billy, a silk pocket-handkerchief.—*Scotch*.—See [WIPE](#).

✱ A list of slang terms descriptive of the various patterns of handkerchiefs, pocket and neck, is here subjoined:—

BELCHER, darkish blue ground, large round white spots, with a spot in the centre of darker blue than the ground. This was adopted by Jem Belcher, the pugilist, as his “colours,” and soon became popular amongst “the fancy.”

BIRD’S-EYE WIPE, a handkerchief of any colour, containing white spots. The blue bird’s-eye is similar to the Belcher except in the centre. Sometimes a **BIRD’S-EYE WIPE** has a white ground and blue spots.

BLOOD-RED FANCY, red.

BLUE BILLY, blue ground, generally with white figures.

CREAM FANCY, any pattern on a white ground.

KING’S MAN, yellow pattern on a green ground.

RANDAL’S MAN, green, with white spots; named after the favourite colours of Jack Randal, pugilist.

WATER’S MAN, sky coloured.

YELLOW FANCY, yellow, with white spots.

YELLOW MAN, all yellow.

Billy, a policeman’s staff. Also stolen metal of any kind. **BILLY-HUNTING** is buying old metal. A **BILLY-FENCER** is a marine-store dealer.

Billy-Barlow, a street clown; sometimes termed a **JIM CROW**, OR **SALTIMBANCO**,—so called from the hero of a slang song. Billy was a real person, semi-idiotic, and though in dirt and rags, fancied himself a swell of the first water. Occasionally he came out with real witticisms. He was a well-known street character about the East-end of London, and died in Whitechapel Workhouse.

Billy-Cock, a soft felt hat of the Jim Crow or “wide-awake” description.

Bingo, brandy.—*Old Cant*.

Bingy, a term largely used in the butter trade to denote bad, ropy butter; nearly equivalent to **VINNIED**.

Bird-Cage, a four-wheeled cab.

Birthday Suit, the suit in which Adam and Eve first saw each other, and “were not ashamed.”

Bishop, a warm drink composed of materials similar to those used in the manufacture of “flip”

and "purl."

Bit, fourpence; in America a 12½ cent piece is called a BIT, and a defaced 20 cent piece is termed a LONG BIT. A BIT is the smallest coin in Jamaica, equal to 6d. BIT usually means the smallest silver coin in circulation; also a piece of money of any kind. Charles Bannister, the witty singer and actor, one day meeting a Bow Street runner with a man in custody, asked what the prisoner had done; and being told that he had stolen a bridle, and had been detected in the act of selling it, said, "Ah, then, he wanted to touch the BIT."

Bitch, tea; "a BITCH party," a tea-drinking. Probably because undergraduates consider tea only fit for old women.—*Oxford*.

Bite, a cheat; "a Yorkshire BITE," a cheating fellow from that county. The term BITE is also applied to a hard bargainer.—*North*; also *old slang*—used by *Pope*. Swift says it originated with a nobleman in his day. [84]

Bite, to cheat; "to be BITTEN," to be taken in or imposed upon. Originally a Gipsy term. CROSS-BITER, for a cheat, continually occurs in writers of the sixteenth century. Bailey has CROSS-BITE, a disappointment, probably the primary sense; and BITE is very probably a contraction of this.

Bit-Faker, OR TURNER OUT, a coiner of bad money.

Bit-of-Stuff, overdressed man; a man with full confidence in his appearance and abilities; a young woman, who is also called a BIT OF MUSLIN.

Bitter, diminutive of bitter beer; "to do a BITTER," to drink beer.—Originally *Oxford*, but now general.

Bittock, a distance of very undecided length. If a North countryman be asked the distance to a place, he will most probably reply, "a mile and a BITTOCK." The latter may be considered any distance from one hundred yards to ten miles.

Bivvy, OR GATTER, beer; "shant of BIVVY," a pot or quart of beer. In Suffolk the afternoon refreshment of reapers is called BEVER. It is also an old English term.

"He is none of those same ordinary eaters, that will devour three breakfasts, and as many dinners, without any prejudice to their BEVERS, drinkings, or suppers."—*Beaumont and Fletcher's Woman Hater*, i. 3.

Both words are probably from the *Italian*, BEVERE, BERE. *Latin*, BIBERE. *English*, BEVERAGE.

Biz, contraction of the word business; a phrase much used in America in writing as well as in conversation.

B. K. S. Military officers in *mufti*, when out on a spree, and not wishing their profession to be known, speak of their barracks as the B. K. S.

Black and White, handwriting or print. "Let's have it in BLACK AND WHITE," is often said with regard to an agreement when it is to the advantage of one or both that it should be written.

Black-a-vised, having a very dark complexion.

Blackberry-Swagger, a person who hawks tapes, boot-laces, &c.

Blackbirding, slave-catching. Term most applied nowadays to the Polynesian coolie traffic.

Black Diamonds, coals; talented persons of dingy or unpolished exterior; rough jewels.

Blackguard, a low or dirty fellow; a rough or a hulking fellow, capable of any meanness or cowardice.

"A cant word amongst the vulgar, by which is implied a dirty fellow of the meanest kind, Dr. Johnson says, and he cites only the modern authority of Swift. But the introduction of this word into our language belongs not to the vulgar, and is more than a century prior to the time of Swift. Mr. Malone agrees with me in exhibiting the two first of the following examples:—The *black-guard* is evidently designed to imply a fit attendant on the devil. Mr. Gifford, however, in his late edition of Ben Jonson's works, assigns an origin of the name different from what the old examples which I have cited seem to countenance. It has been formed, he says, from those 'mean and dirty dependants, in great houses, who were selected to carry coals to the kitchen, halls, &c. To this smutty regiment, who attended the progresses, and rode in the carts with the pots and kettles, which, with every other article of furniture, were then moved from palace to palace, the people, in derision, gave the name of *black guards*; a term since become sufficiently familiar, and never properly explained.'"—*Todd's Johnson's Dictionary*. [85]

Blackguard as an adjective is very powerful.

Blackleg, a rascal, swindler, or card cheat. The derivation of this term was solemnly argued before the full Court of Queen's Bench upon a motion for a new trial for libel, but was not decided by the learned tribunal. Probably it is from the custom of sporting and turf men wearing black *top-boots*. Hence BLACKLEG came to be the phrase for a professional sporting man, and thence for a professional sporting cheat. The word is now in its worst sense diminished to "leg."

Black Maria, the sombre van in which prisoners are conveyed from the police court to prison.

Black Monday, the Monday on which boys return to school after the holidays. Also a low term

for the Monday on which an execution took place.

Black Sheep, a “bad lot,” “*mauvais sujet*,” sometimes “scabby sheep;” also a workman who refuses to join in a strike.

Black Strap, port wine; especially that which is thick and sweet.

Blackwork, undertaking. The waiters met at public dinners are often employed during the day as mutes, etc. Omnibus and cab drivers regard **BLACKWORK** as a *dernier ressort*.

Bladder-of-Lard, a coarse, satirical nickname for a bald-headed person. From similarity of appearance.

Blade, a man—in ancient times the term for a soldier; “knowing **BLADE**,” a wide-awake, sharp, or cunning man.

Blarney, flattery, powers of persuasion. A castle in the county of Cork. It is said that whoever kisses a certain stone in this castle will be able to persuade others of whatever he or she pleases. The name of the castle is derived from **BLADH**, a blossom, *i.e.*, the flowery or fertile demesne. **BLADH** is also flattery; hence the connexion. A more than ordinarily persuasive Irishman is said to have “kissed the **BLARNEY** stone.”

Blast, to curse. Originally a *Military* expression.

Blaze, to leave trace purposely of one’s way in a forest or unknown path by marking trees or other objects.

Blazes, a low synonym for the infernal regions, and now almost for anything. “Like **BLAZES**” is a phrase of intensification applied without any reference to the original meaning. Also applied to the brilliant habiliments of flunkeys, since the episode of Sam Weller and the “swarry.”

Bleed, to victimize, or extract money from a person, to sponge on, to make suffer vindictively.

Blest, a VOW; “BLEST if I’ll do it,” *i.e.*, I am determined not to do it; euphemism for **CURST**.

[86]

Blether, to bother, to annoy, to pester. “A **BLETHERING** old nuisance” is a common expression for a garrulous old person.

Blew, or **BLOW**, to inform, or peach, to lose or spend money.

Blewed, a man who has lost or spent all his money is said to have **BLEWED** it. Also used in cases of robbery from the person, as, “He’s **BLEWED** his red ‘un,” *i.e.*, he’s been eased of his watch.

Blewed, got rid of, disposed of, spent.

Blind, a pretence, or make-believe.

Blind-Half-Hundred, the Fiftieth Regiment of Foot; so called through their great sufferings from ophthalmia when serving in Egypt.

Blind-Hookey, a game at cards which has no recommendation beyond the rapidity with which money can be won and lost at it; called also **WILFUL MURDER**.

Blind-Man’s-Holiday, night, darkness. Sometimes applied to the period “between the lights.”

Blind Monkeys, an imaginary collection at the Zoological Gardens, which are supposed to receive care and attention from persons fitted by nature for such office and for little else. An idle and useless person is often told that he is only fit to lead the **BLIND MONKEYS** to evacuate. Another form this elegant conversation takes, is for one man to tell another that he knows of a suitable situation for him. “How much a week? and what to do?” are natural questions, and then comes the scathing and sarcastic reply, “Five bob a week at the doctor’s—you’re to stand behind the door and make the patients sick. They wont want no physic when they sees your mug.”

Blinker, a blackened eye.—*Norwich*. Also a hard blow in the eye. **BLINKERS**, spectacles.

Blink-Fencer, a person who sells spectacles.

Bloated Aristocrat, a street term for any decently dressed person. From the persistent abuse lavished on a “bloated and parasitical aristocracy” by Hyde Park demagogues and a certain unpleasant portion of the weekly press.

Bloater.—See **MILD**.

Blob (from **BLAB**), to talk. Beggars are of two kinds—those who **SCREEVE** (introducing themselves with a **FAKEMENT**, or false document) and those who **BLOB**, or state their case in their own truly “unvarnished” language.

Block, the head. “To **BLOCK** a hat,” is to knock a man’s hat down over his eyes.—See **BONNET**. Also a street obstruction.

Block Ornaments, the small dark-coloured and sometimes stinking pieces of meat which used to be exposed on the cheap butchers’ blocks or counters; matters of interest to all the sharp-visaged women in poor neighbourhoods. Since the great rise in the price of meat there has been little necessity for butchers to make block ornaments of their odds and ends. They are bespoke beforehand.

[87]

Blake, a man; “the **BLOKE** with the jasey,” the man with the wig, *i.e.*, the Judge. *Gipsy* and *Hindoo*, **LOKE**. *North*, **BLOACHER**, any large animal.

Blood, a fast or high-mettled man. Nearly obsolete, but much used in George the Fourth’s time.

Blood-money, the money that used to be paid to any one who by information or evidence led to a conviction for a capital offence. Nowadays applied to all sums received by informers.

Blood-Red Fancy, a particular kind of handkerchief sometimes worn by pugilists and frequenters of prize fights.—See [BILLY](#) and [COLOUR](#).

Bloody, an expletive used, without reference to meaning, as an adjective and an adverb, simply for intensification.

Bloody Jemmy, an uncooked sheep's head.—See [SANGUINARY JAMES](#). Also [MOUNTAIN PECKER](#).

Blow, to expose, or inform; "BLOW the gaff," to inform against a person.

"As for that," says Will, "I could tell it well enough, if I had it, but I must not be seen anywhere among my old acquaintances, for I am BLOWN, and they will all betray me."—*History of Colonel Jack*, 1723.

The expression would seem to have arisen from the belief that a flower might be blighted if "BLOWN upon" by a foul wind or a corrupted breath. See the condition of the flowers on a dinner-table by the time the company rise. In *America*, "to BLOW" is slang for to lie in a boasting manner, to brag or "gas" unduly.

Blow a Cloud, to smoke a cigar or pipe—a phrase used two centuries ago. Most likely in use as long as tobacco here—an almost evident conclusion.

Blow Me, OR BLOW ME TIGHT, a vow, a ridiculous and unmeaning ejaculation, inferring an appeal to the ejaculator; "I'm BLOWED if you will" is a common expression among the lower orders; "BLOW ME UP" was the term a century ago.—See *Parker's Adventures*, 1781.—The expression BE-BLOWED is now more general. Thomas Hood used to tell a story:—

"I was once asked to contribute to a new journal, not exactly gratuitously, but at a very small advance upon nothing—and avowedly because the work had been planned according to that estimate. However, I accepted the terms conditionally—that is to say, provided the principle could be properly carried out. Accordingly, I wrote to my butcher, baker, and other tradesmen, informing them that it was necessary, for the sake of cheap literature and the interest of the reading public, that they should furnish me with their several commodities at a very trifling percentage above cost price. It will be sufficient to quote the answer of the butcher:—'Sir,—Respectin' your note, Cheap literater BE BLOWED! Butchers must live as well as other pepel—and if so be you or the readin' publick wants to have meat at prime cost, you must buy your own beastesses, and kill yourselves.—I remane, etc.

"JOHN STOKES."

Blow Out, OR TUCK IN, a feast. Sometimes the expression is, "BLOW OUT your bags." A BLOW OUT is often called a tightener.

[88]

Blow Up, to make a noise, or scold; formerly a cant expression used among thieves, now a recognised and respectable phrase. BLOWING UP, a jobation, a scolding.

Blowen, originally a showy or flaunting female, now a prostitute only. In *Wilts*, a BLOWEN is a blossom. *Germ.* BLÜHEN, to bloom. In *German*, also, BUHLEN is to court, and BUHLE, a sweetheart.

"O du blühende Mädchen, viel schöne Willkomm!"—*German Song*.

Possibly, however, the street term BLOWEN may mean one whose reputation has been BLOWN UPON or damaged.

Blower, a girl; a contemptuous name in opposition to [JOMER](#).—*Gipsy*.

Blowsey, a word applied to a rough wench, or coarse woman.

Bludger, a low thief, who does not hesitate to use violence, literally one who will use a bludgeon.

Blue, said of talk that is smutty or indecent. Probably from the French, "Bibliothèque Bleu." When the conversation has assumed an entirely opposite character, it is then said to be BROWN or Quakerish.

Blue, a policeman; otherwise [BLUE BOTTLE](#). From the colour of his uniform.

Blue, OR BLEW, to pawn or pledge. Actually to get rid of.

Blue, confounded or surprised; "to look BLUE," to look astonished, annoyed, or disappointed.

Blue Bellies, a term applied by the Confederate soldiers during the civil war in America to the Federals, the name being suggested by the skyblue gaberdines worn by the Northern soldiers. On the other hand, the "filthy BLUE BELLIES," as the full title ran, dubbed the Confederates "Greybacks," the epithet cutting both ways, as the Southern soldiers not only wore grey uniforms, but "greyback" is American as well as English for a louse.

Blue Billy, the handkerchief (blue ground with white spots) sometimes worn and used as a colour at prize-fights. Also, the refuse ammoniacal lime from gas factories.

Blue Blanket, a rough overcoat made of coarse pilot cloth.

Blue Bottle, a policeman. This well-known slang term for a London constable is used by *Shakspeare*. In Part ii. of *King Henry IV.*, act v. scene 4, Doll Tearsheet calls the beadle, who is dragging her in, a "thin man in a censer, a BLUE-BOTTLE rogue." This may at first seem singular, but

the reason is obvious. The beadles of Bridewell whose duty it was to whip the women prisoners were clad in blue.

Blue Butter, mercurial ointment used for the destruction of parasites.

Blued, or BLEWED, tipsy, or drunk. Now given way to SLEWED.

Blue Devils, the apparitions supposed to be seen by habitual drunkards. Form of *del. trem.*

Blue Moon, an unlimited period. "Once in a blue moon."

Blue Murders. Probably from desperate or alarming cries. A term used more to describe cries of terror or alarm than for any other purpose. As, "I heard her calling BLUE MURDERS."—MORBLEU.

Blue-Pigeon-Flyer, sometimes a journeyman plumber, glazier, or other workman, who, when repairing houses, strips off the lead, and makes away with it. This performance is, though, by no means confined to workmen. An empty house is often entered and the whole of the roof in its vicinity stripped, the only notice given to the folks below being received by them on the occasion of a heavy downfall of rain. The term FLYER has, indeed, of late years been more peculiarly applied to the man who steals the lead in pursuance of his vocation as a thief, than to him who takes it because it comes in the way of his work.

Blue Ruin, gin.

Blues, a fit of despondency.—*See* BLUE DEVILS.

Blues, the police. Sometimes called the Royal Regiment of Foot-guards BLUE.

Bluey, lead.—German, BLEI. Most likely, though, from the colour, as the term is of the very lowest slang.

Bluff, an excuse; also the game at cards known as euchre in America.

Bluff, to turn aside, stop, or excuse.

Blunt, money. It has been said that this term is from the *French* BLOND, sandy or golden colour, and that a parallel may be found in BROWN or BROWNS, the slang for half-pence. Far-fetched as this etymology seems, it may be correct, as it is borne out by the analogy of similar expressions. Cf. BLANQUILLO, a word used in Morocco and Southern Spain for a small Moorish coin. The "asper" (ἄσπρον) of Constantinople is called by the Turks AKCHEH, *i.e.*, "little white."

Blurt Out, to speak from impulse, and without reflection, to let out suddenly.—*Shakspeare.*

B.N.C., for Brasenose, initials of Brazen Nose College. In spite of the nose over the gate the probability is the real name was Brasinium. It is still famous for its beer.—*University.*

Board-of-Green-Cloth, a facetious synonym for a card or billiard table.

Boat, originally to transport; the term is now applied to penal servitude. To "get the BOAT," or to "be BOATED," is to be sentenced to a long term of imprisonment equivalent to transportation under the old system.

Bob, a shilling. Formerly BOBSTICK, which may have been the original. BOB-A-NOB, a shilling a-head.

Bob, "s'help me BOB," a street oath, equivalent to "so help me God." Other words are used in street language for a similarly evasive purpose, *i.e.*, CAT, GREENS, TATUR, &c., all equally ridiculous. Ignorant people have a singular habit of saying "so help *my*," instead of "*me*," whatever the following words may be. This shows how little they think of the meanings of the phrases most in use among them. The words "so help" are almost invariably pronounced "swelp."

Bobbery, a squabble, tumult.—*Anglo-Indian.*

Bobbish, very well, clever, spruce. "How are you doing?" "Oh! pretty BOBBISH."—*Old.*

Bobby, a policeman: both BOBBY and PEELER were nicknames given to the new police, in allusion to the Christian name and surname of the late *Sir Robert Peel*, who was the prime mover in effecting their introduction and improvement. The term BOBBY is, however, older than the introduction of the new police. The official square-keeper, who is always armed with a cane to drive away idle and disorderly urchins, has, time out of mind, been called by the said urchins, "BOBBY the headle."

Bodkin, any one sitting between two others in a carriage, is said "to ride BODKIN." Amongst sporting men, applied to a person who takes his turn between the sheets on alternate nights, when the hotel has twice as many visitors as it can comfortably lodge; as, for instance, during a race-week.

Body-Snatcher, a bailiff or runner: SNATCH, the trick by which the bailiff captures the delinquent. These terms are now almost obsolete, so far as the pursuits mentioned are concerned.

Bog, or BOG-HOUSE, a privy, as distinguished from a water-closet. Originally printers' slang, but now very common, and not applied to any particular form of *cabinet d'aisance*. "To BOG" is to ease oneself by evacuation.

Bog-Oranges, potatoes. A phrase perhaps derived from the term "Irish fruit," which, by some strange peculiarity has been applied to potatoes; for even the most ignorant Cockney could hardly believe that potatoes grow in a bog. As, however, the majority of the lower classes of London do believe that potatoes were indigenous to, and were first brought from the soil of Ireland, which is also in some parts supposed to be capable of growing nothing else, they may

even believe that potatoes are actually BOG-ORANGES.

Bog-Trotter, satirical name for an Irishman.—*Miege. Camden*, however, speaking of the “debateable land” on the borders of England and Scotland, says, “both these dales breed notable BOG-TROTTERS.”

Bogus, an American term for anything pretending to be that which it is not—such as BOGUS degrees, BOGUS titles, &c.

Boilers, OF BROMPTON BOILERS, a name originally given to the New Kensington Museum and School of Art, in allusion to the peculiar form of the buildings, and the fact of their being mainly composed of, and covered with, sheet iron. This has been changed since the extensive alterations in the building, or rather pile of buildings, and the words are now the property of the Bethnal Green Museum.—*See* [PEPPER-BOXES](#).

Boko, the nose. Originally pugilistic slang, but now general.

Bolt, to run away, decamp, or abscond. Also to swallow without chewing. To eat greedily.

Bolus, an apothecary. Origin evident.

Bombay Ducks; in the East India Company’s army the Bombay regiments were so designated. The name is now given to a dried fish (*bummelow*), much eaten by natives and Europeans in Western India.—*Anglo-Indian*.

Bone, to steal or appropriate what does not belong to you. BONED, seized, apprehended.—*Old*.

Bone, good, excellent. \blacklozenge , the vagabonds’ hieroglyphic for BONE, or good, chalked by them on houses and street corners as a hint to succeeding beggars.—*French*, BON.

Bone-Grubber, a person who hunts dust-holes, gutters, and all likely spots for refuse bones, which he sells at the rag-shops, or to the bone-grinders. The term was also applied to a resurrectionist. Cobbett was therefore called “a BONE GRUBBER,” because he brought the remains of Tom Paine from America.

Bone-Picker, a footman.

Bones, to rattle the BONES, to play at dice: also called St. Hugh’s BONES.

Bones, “he made no BONES of it,” he did not hesitate, *i.e.*, undertook and finished the work without difficulty, “found no BONES in the jelly.”—*Ancient, vide Cotgrave*.

Boniface, landlord of a tavern or inn.

Bonnet, OR BONNETER, a gambling cheat. Sometimes called a “bearer-up.” The BONNET plays as though he were a member of the general public, and by his good luck, or by the force of his example, induces others to venture their stakes. Bonneting is often done in much better society than that to be found in the ordinary gaming rooms. A man who persuades another to buy an article on which he receives commission or per-centage is said to BONNET or bear-up for the seller. Also, a pretence, or make-believe, a sham bidder at auctions, one who metaphorically blinds or BONNETS others.

Bonnet, to strike a man’s cap or hat over his eyes. Also to “bear-up” for another.

Booby-Trap, a favourite amusement of boys at school. It consists in placing a pitcher of water on the top of a door set ajar for the purpose; the person whom they wish to drench is then made to pass through the door, and receives the pitcher and its contents on his unlucky head. Books are sometimes used.

Book, an arrangement of bets against certain horses marked in a pocket-book made for that purpose. “Making a BOOK upon it,” is a common phrase to denote that a man is prepared to lay the odds against the horses in a race. “That does not suit my BOOK,” *i.e.*, does not accord with my other arrangements. The principle of making a BOOK, or betting round, as it is sometimes termed, is to lay a previously-determined sum against every horse in the race, or as many horses as possible; and should the bookmaker “get round,” *i.e.*, succeed in laying against as many horses as will more than balance the odds laid, he is certain to be a winner. The BOOKMAKER is distinguished from the backer by its being his particular business to bet against horses, or to lay, while the backer, who is also often a professional gambler, stands by the chance of a horse, or the chances of a set of horses about which he supposes himself to be possessed of special information. A bookmaker rarely backs horses for his own particular fancy—he may indeed put a sovereign or a fiver on an animal about which he has been told something, but as a rule if he specially fancies a horse, the bookmaker lets him “run for the BOOK,” *i.e.*, does not lay against him. When a bookmaker backs a horse in the course of his regular business, it is because he has laid too much against him, and finds it convenient to share the danger with other bookmakers.

Booked, caught, fixed, disposed of.—Term in *Book-keeping*.

Bookmaker’s Pocket, a breast-pocket made inside the waistcoat, for notes of large amount.

Books, a pack of cards. Term used by professional card-players.—*See* [DEVIL’S BOOKS](#).

Boom, “to top one’s BOOM off,” to be off or start in a certain direction.—*Sea*.

Boom-Passenger, a sailor’s slang term for a convict on board ship. Derived from the circumstance that prisoners on board convict ships were chained to, or were made to crawl along or stand on the booms for exercise or punishment.

[91]

[92]

Boon-Companion, a comrade in a drinking bout. BOON evidently corruption of BON.

Booze, drink. *Ancient Cant*, BOWSE. BOOZE, or SUCK-CASA, a public-house.

Booze, to drink, or more properly, to use another slang term, to "lush," viz., to drink continually, until drunk, or nearly so. The term is an old one. *Harman*, in Queen Elizabeth's days, speaks of "BOUSING (or boozing) and belly-cheere." *Massinger* also speaks of BOUSE. The term was good English in the fourteenth century, and came from the *Dutch*, BUYZEN, to tipple.

Boozing-Ken, a beer-shop, a low public-house.—*Ancient*.

Boozy, intoxicated or fuddled.

Bore, a troublesome friend or acquaintance, perhaps so called from his unvaried and pertinacious pushing; a nuisance; anything which wearies or annoys. The *Gradus ad Cantabrigiam* suggests the derivation of BORE from the *Greek* Βάρος, a burden. *Shakspeare* uses it, *King Henry VIII.*, i. 1—

"—at this instant
He BORES me with some trick."

Grose speaks of this word as being much in fashion about the year 1780-81, and states that it vanished of a sudden without leaving a trace behind. That this was not so, the constant use of the word nowadays will prove. The late Prince Consort spoke as follows on the subject of BORES in his address to the British Association, at Aberdeen, September 14, 1859—

"I will not weary you by further examples, with which most of you are better acquainted than I am myself, but merely express my satisfaction that there should exist bodies of men who will bring the well-considered and understood wants of science before the public and the Government, who will even hand round the begging-box, and expose themselves to refusals and rebuffs, to which all beggars are liable, with the certainty besides of being considered great BORES. Please to recollect that this species of BORE is a most useful animal, well adapted for the ends for which nature intended him. He alone, by constantly returning to the charge, and repeating the same truths and the same requests, succeeds in awakening attention to the cause which he advocates, and obtains that hearing which is granted him at last for self-protection, as the minor evil compared to his importunity, but which is requisite to make his cause understood."

Bore (*Pugilistic*), to press a man to the ropes of the ring by superior weight. In the world of athletics to BORE is to push an opponent out of his course. This is a most heinous crime among rowers, as it very often prevents a man having the full use of the tide, or compels him to foul, in which case the decision of the race is left to individual judgment, at times, of necessity, erroneous.

Bosh, nonsense, stupidity.—*Gipsy* and *Persian*. Also pure *Turkish*, BOSH LAKERDI, empty talk. The term was used in this country as early as 1760, and may be found in the *Student*, vol. ii. p. 217. It has been suggested, with what reason the reader must judge for himself, that this colloquial expression is from the *German* BOSH, or BOSSCH, answering to our word "swipes."

Bosh, a fiddle. This is a *Gipsy* term, and so the exclamations "Bosh!" and "Fiddle-de-dee!" may have some remote connexion.

Bosh-Faker, a violin player. Term principally used by itinerants.

Bos-Ken, a farmhouse. *Ancient*.—See [KEN](#).

Bosky, inebriated. Not much in use now.

Bosman, a farmer: "faking a BOSMAN on the main toby," robbing a farmer on the highway. BOSS, a master.—*American*. Both terms from the *Dutch*, BOSCH-MAN, one who lives in the woods; otherwise *Boschjeman*, or *Bushman*.

Boss-Eyed, said of a person with one eye, or rather with one eye injured, a person with an obliquity of vision. In this sense sometimes varied by the term "swivel-eyed."

Bostruchyzer, a small kind of comb for curling the whiskers.—*Oxford University*.

Botany Bay, Worcester Coll. Oxon., so called from its remote situation.

Bother, trouble or annoyance. Any one oppressed with business cares is said to be BOTHERED. "Don't BOTHER," is a common expression. BLOTHER, an old word, signifying to chatter idly.

Botheration! trouble, annoyance; "BOTHERATION to it!" "confound it!" or "deuce take it!"—an exclamation when irritated.

Bottle-Holder, originally a term in prize ring parlance for the second who took charge of the water-bottle, which was an essential feature in all pugilistic arrangements. This second used to hold the combatant on his knee between the rounds, while the other or principal second sponged, instructed, and advised; an abettor; also the bridegroom's man at a wedding. Slang term for Lord Palmerston, derived from a speech he made some years ago when foreign secretary, in which he described himself as acting the part of a judicious BOTTLE-HOLDER among the foreign powers.

Bottom, stamina in a horse or man. Power to stand fatigue; endurance to receive a good beating and still fight on. "A fellow of pluck, sound wind, and good BOTTOM is fit to fight anything." This

was an old axiom among prize fighters. Pierce Egan was very fond of the word.

Bottom, spirit placed in a glass before aerated water is poured in. As, "a soda and a BOTTOM of brandy," "soda and dark BOTTOM," is American for soda and brown brandy.

"BOTTOMED well with brandy."—*Bon Gaultier Ballads*.

Botts, the colic or bellyache.—*Stable Slang*. Burns uses it. See *Death and Dr. Hornbook*.

Botty, conceited, swaggering.—*Stable*. An infant's posteriors.—*Nursery*.

Bounce, impudence, cheek. A showy swindler, a bully.

Bounce, to boast, cheat, or bully.—*Old Cant*. Also to lie.

Bounceable, prone to bouncing or boasting.

Bouncer, a person who steals whilst bargaining with a tradesman, a swindler, or a lie of more than ordinary dimensions.

Bounder, a four-wheeled cab. Because of its jumping motion over the stones. Also a University term for a [TRAP](#), which generally has a very rough time of it on the country roads.

Bow-Catcher, or KISS-CURL, a small curl which a few years back used to be, and probably will be again some day, twisted on the cheeks or temples of young—and often old—girls, adhering to the face as if gummed or pasted. Evidently a corruption of BEAU-CATCHER. In old times this was called a lovelock, when it was the mark at which all the Puritan and ranting preachers levelled their pulpit pop-guns, loaded with sharp and virulent abuse. Hall and Prynne looked upon all women as strumpets who dared to let the hair depart from a straight line upon their cheeks. The French prettily termed these adornments *accroche-cœurs*, whilst in the United States they were plainly and unpleasantly called "spit-curls." Bartlett says: "Spit-curl, a detached lock of hair curled upon the temple; probably from having been at first plastered into shape by the saliva." It is now understood that the mucilage of quince seed is used by the ladies for this purpose. When men twist the hair on each side of their faces into ropes they are sometimes called "bell-ropes," as being wherewith to *draw the belles*. Whether BELL-ROPES or BOW-CATCHERS, it is singular they should form part of a prisoner's adornment, and that a jaunty little kiss-curl should, of all things in the world, ornament a jail dock; yet such was formerly the case. Hunt, "the accomplice after the fact and King's evidence against" the murderer of Weare, on his trial appeared at the bar with a highly pomatumed love-lock sticking tight to his forehead. In the days of the Civil Wars, the very last thing a Cavalier would part with was his love-lock.

[95]

Bowdlerization, a term used in literary circles to signify undue strictness of treatment caused by over-modesty in editing a classic. To BOWDLERIZE is to emasculate through squeamishness. From the name (Bowdler) of one of Shakspeare's "purifiers."

Bowlas, round tarts made of sugar, apple, and bread, sold in the streets, especially at the East-end of London.

Bowles, shoes.

Bowl Out, to put out of the game, to remove out of one's way, to detect.—Originally a *Cricketing term*, but now general.

Box-Harry, a term with bagmen or commercial travellers, implying dinner and tea at one meal; also dining with "[Duke Humphrey](#)," *i.e.*, going without—which *see*.

Box the Compass, to repeat the thirty-two points of the compass either in succession or irregularly. The method used at sea to teach boys the points of the mariner's compass.—*Sea*.

Boy, a hump on a man's back. In low circles it is usual to speak of a humpbacked man as two persons—"him and his BOY," and from this much coarse fun and personality are at times evolved.

Bracelets, handcuffs.

Brace up, to pawn stolen goods.

Brads, money. Properly a small kind of nails used by cobblers.—*Compare* [HORSE NAILS](#).

Brain-Pan, the skull, and BRAIN-CANISTER, the head. Both pugilistic and exchangeable terms.

Bramble-Gelder, a derisive appellation for an agriculturist.—*Suffolk*.

Brandy Pawnee, brandy and water.—*Anglo-Indian*.

Brandy Smash, one of the 365 American drinks, made of brandy and crushed ice.

Bran-New, quite new. Properly *Brent*, BRAND or *Fire new*, *i.e.*, fresh from the anvil, or fresh with the manufacturer's brand upon it.

Brass, money. "Tin" is also used, and so are most forms of metal.

Brass, impudence. In 1803 some artillerymen stationed at Norwich were directed to prove some brass ordnance belonging to the city. To the report delivered to the corporation was appended this note:—"N.B.—It is customary for the corporal to have the old metal when any of the pieces burst." *Answer*.—"The corporation is of opinion that the corporal does not want BRASS."

Brass-Knocker, broken victuals. Used by tramps and cadgers.

Brat, a child of either sex. Generally used in an offensive sense.

[96]

Brazen-Faced, impudent, shameless. From [BRASS](#). Such a person is sometimes said "to have rubbed his face with a brass candlestick."

Brazil, a hard red wood; "HARD AS BRAZIL," a common expression. *Quarles* in his *Emblems* says—

"Thou know'st my brittle temper's prone to break.
Are my bones BRAZIL or my flesh of oak?"

Bread-Bags, a nickname given in the army and navy to any one connected with the victualling department, as a purser or purveyor in the Commissariat.

Bread Basket, DUMPLING-DEPOT, VICTUALLING-OFFICE, &c., were terms which in the old pugilistic days were given by the "Fancy" to the digestive organs. Blows in this region were called "porridge disturbers," and other fancy names, which were supposed to rob them of their hardness—to those who did not receive them.

Break-Down, a noisy dance, almost violent enough to break the floor down; a jovial, social gathering, a "flare up;" in Ireland, a wedding—*American* so far as the dance is concerned.

Break One's Back, a figurative expression, implying bankruptcy, or the crippling of a person's means.

"A story is current of a fashionable author answering a late and rather violent knock at his door one evening. A coal-heaver wanted to know if the gentleman would like a cheap ton of coals; he was sorry for troubling him so late, but 'the party as had a-ordered the two ton and a-half couldn't be found,' although he had driven his 'waggon for six blessed hours up and down the neighbourhood. Five-and-twenty is the price, but yer shall have them for 20s.' Our author was not to be tempted, he had heard of the trick before; so bidding the man go away from his house, he shut the door. The man, however, lingered there, expatiating on the quality of his coals—'Acterly givin' 'em away, and the gent wont have 'em,' said he, addressing the neighbourhood in a loud voice: and the last that was heard of him was his anything but sweet voice whistling through the keyhole, 'Will eighteen bob BREAK YER BACK?'"

Break Shins, to borrow money. Probably from an older slang phrase, "kick," to ask for drink-money.

Break the Ice, to make a commencement, to plunge *in medias res*.

Break Up, the conclusion of a performance of any kind—originally a school term.

Breaky-Leg, strong drink; "he's been to Bungay fair, and broke both his legs," *i.e.*, got drunk. In the ancient Egyptian language the determinative character in the hieroglyphic verb "to be drank," has the significant form of the leg of a man being amputated. "Tangle Leg" is the name given to New England rum.



Breeched, OR TO HAVE THE BAGS OFF, to have plenty of money; "to be well BREECHED," to be in good circumstances. Also among schoolboys to be well flogged.

Breeches, "to wear the BREECHES," said of a wife who usurps the husband's prerogative. Equivalent to the remark that "the grey mare is the better horse."

Breeching, a flogging. Term in use among boys at several private schools.

Brief, probably identical with BRIEF, a shortened card used for cheating purposes; thus described in an old book of games of about 1720—

"Take a pack of cards and open them, then take out all the honours ... and cut a little from the edges of the rest all alike, so as to make the honours broader than the rest, so that when your adversary cuts to you, you are certain of an honour. When you cut to your adversary cut at the ends, and then it is a chance if you cut him an honour, because the cards at the ends are all of a length. Thus you may make briefs end-ways as well as sideways."

Modern card-players of a certain kind have considerably improved on this.

Brecks, breeches.—*Scotch*, now common.

Brick, a "jolly good fellow;" "a regular BRICK," a staunch fellow. About the highest compliment that in one word can be paid one man. Said to be derived from an expression of Aristotle's—*τετραγωνος ἀνηρ*.

Bridge, a cheating trick at cards, by which any particular card is cut by previously curving it by the pressure of the hand. Used in France as well as in England, and termed in the *Parisian Argot* FAIRE LE PONT.

Brief, a pawnbroker's duplicate; a raffle card, or a ticket of any kind.

Briefs, cards constructed on a cheating principle. See [BRIDGE](#), [CONCAVES and CONVEXES](#), [LONGS](#), and [SHORTS](#), REFLECTORS, &c. From the *German*, BRIEFE, which Baron Heineken says was the name given to the cards manufactured at Ulm. BRIEF is also the synonym for a card in the German *Rothwälsch* dialect, and BRIEFEN to play at cards. "Item—beware of the Joners, (gamblers,) who practice Beseffery with the BRIEF, (cheating at cards,) who deal falsely and cut one for the other, cheat with

Boglein and spies, pick one BRIEF from the ground, and another from a cupboard," &c.—*Liber Vagatorum*, ed. by Martin Luther, in 1529. English translation, by J. C. Hotten, 1860, p. 47. See [BREEF](#).

Brim, a violent irascible woman, as inflammable and unpleasant as brimstone, from which the word is contracted.

Briney, the sea. A "dip in the BRINEY" once a year is a great attraction to Cockney excursionists. A story is told of one excursionist saying to another, as they stripped in a double machine, "Why, 'Arry, what dirty feet you've got!" "'Ave I; well yer see I wasn't down last year."

Bring-up, OR BRING-TO, to stop suddenly, as a team of horses or a vessel. To BRING-UP also means to feed, clothe, and educate a child. To BRING-UP by hand is to bring up a newly-born child or animal without assistance from the natural fount.

Brisket-Beater, a Roman Catholic.

Broad and Shallow, an epithet applied to the so-called "Broad Church," in contradistinction to the "High" and "Low" Churches. See [HIGH and DRY](#).

Broad-Brim, originally applied to a Quaker only, but now used in reference to all quiet, sedate, respectable old men.

Broad-Cooper, a person employed by brewers to negotiate with publicans.

Broad-Faking, playing at cards. Generally used to denote "work" of the three-card and kindred descriptions.

Broad-Fencer, a "k'rect card" seller at races.

Broads, cards. BROADSMAN, a card-sharper. See [BROAD-FAKING](#).

Broadway Swell, a New York term for a great dandy, Broadway being the principal promenade in the "Empire City."

Broady, cloth. Evidently a corruption of broadcloth. BROADY workers are men who go round selling vile shoddy stuff under the pretence that it is excellent material, which has been "got on the cross," *i.e.* stolen.

Brolly, an umbrella. Term used at both Oxford and Cambridge Universities.

Brosier, a bankrupt.—*Cheshire*. BROSIER-MY-DAME, school term, implying a clearing of the housekeeper's larder of provisions, in revenge for stinginess.—*Eton*.

Brother-Chip, originally fellow carpenter. Almost general now as brother tradesman of any kind. Also, BROTHER-WHIP, a fellow coachman; and BROTHER-BLADE, of the same occupation or calling—originally a fellow-soldier.

Brother-Smut, a term of familiarity. "Ditto, BROTHER SMUT," *tu quoque*.

Broth of a Boy, an Irish term for a jolly good fellow.

Brown, a halfpenny.—See [BLUNT](#).

Brown, "to do BROWN," to do well or completely, "doing it BROWN," prolonging the frolic, or exceeding sober bounds; "done BROWN," taken in, deceived, or surprised.

Brown Bess, the old Government regulation musket; a musket with a browned barrel; also BLACK BESS. A suggestion has been made that BESS may be from the *German* BUSCHE, or BOSCHE, a barrel. It is much more likely, however, that the phrase is derived from the fact that "the soldier is wedded to his weapon."

Brown-papermen, low gamblers.

Brown Study, a reverie. Very common even in educated society, but hardly admissible in writing, and therefore considered a vulgarism. It is derived, by a writer in *Notes and Queries*, from BROW STUDY, and he cites the old German BRAUN, or AUG-BRAUN, an eye-brow.—*Ben Jonson*.

Brown Talk, conversation of an exceedingly proper character, Quakerish. Compare [BLUE](#).

Brown to, to understand, to comprehend.

Bruiser, a fighting man, a pugilist. *Shakspeare* uses the word BRUISING in a similar sense.

Brum, a counterfeit coin. *Nearly obsolete*. Corruption of *Brummagem*, for meaning of which see [Introductory Chapter](#).

Brush, a fox's tail, a house-painter. Also a scrimmage.

Brush, OR BRUSH-OFF, to run away, or move on quickly.—*Old Cant*.

Bub, drink of any kind.—See [GRUB](#). *Middleton*, the dramatist, mentions BUBBER, a great drinker.

Bub, a teat, woman's breast, plural BUBBIES; no doubt from BIBE. See *ante*.

Bubble, to over-reach, deceive, to tempt by means of false promises.—*Old*. (*Acta Regia*, ii. 248, 1726.)

Bubble-and-Squeak, a dish composed of pieces of cold roast or boiled meat and greens, afterwards fried, which have thus first BUBBLED in the *pot*, and then SQUEAKED or hissed in the *pan*.

Bubble-Company, a swindling association.

Buckled, to be married. Also to be taken in custody. Both uses of the word common and exchangeable among the London lower classes.

Bubbley-Jock, a turkey, or silly boasting fellow; a prig.—*Scottish*. In the north of England the bird is called a BOBBLE-COCK. Both names, no doubt, from its cry, which is supposed by imaginative persons to consist of the two words exactly.

Buck, a gay or smart man; an unlicensed cabman; also a large marble used by schoolboys.

Buck, sixpence. The word is rarely used by itself, but generally denotes the sixpence attached to shillings in reference to cost, as, “three and a BUCK,” three shillings and sixpence. Probably a corruption of [Eyebuck](#).

Buckhorse, a smart blow or box on the ear; derived from the name of a celebrated “bruiser” of that name. Buckhorse was a man who either possessed or professed insensibility to pain, and who would for a small sum allow anyone to strike him with the utmost force on the side of the face.

Buckle, to bend; “I can’t BUCKLE to that.” I don’t understand it; to yield or give in to a person. *Shakspeare* uses the word in the latter sense, *Henry IV.*, i. 1; and *Halliwell* says that “the commentators do not supply another example.”

Buckle-Beggar, a [COUPLE-BEGGAR](#), which *see*.

Buckle-to, to bend to one’s work, to begin at once, and with great energy—from buckling-to one’s armour before a combat, or fastening on a bundle.

Buckley, “Who struck BUCKLEY?” a common phrase used to irritate Irishmen. The story is that an Englishman having struck an Irishman named Buckley, the latter made a great outcry, and one of his friends rushed forth screaming, “Who struck Buckley?” “I did,” said the Englishman, preparing for the apparently inevitable combat. “Then,” said the ferocious Hibernian, after a careful investigation of the other’s thews and sinews, “then, sarve him right.”

Buckra, a white man. The original of this term is a “flogging man,” from the Hebrew, and the application of it to the whites by the West Indian negroes is, therefore, rather interesting. They probably first learned it from a missionary. [100]

Buckshish, BUCKSHEESH OR BACKSHEESH, a present of money. Over all India, and the East generally, the natives lose no opportunity of asking for BUCKSHISH. The usage is such a complete nuisance that the word is sometimes answered by a blow; this is termed BAMBOO BUCKSHISH. BUCKSHISH has taken up a very firm residence in Europe—may, in fact, on a much larger scale than that of Asia, be said to have always had an existence here. BUCKSHISH is a very important item in the revenues of officials who hold positions of considerable importance, as well as in those of their humbler brethren. During the recent visit of the Shah of Persia, that potentate discovered that BUCKSHISH was by no means peculiar to the East.

Budge, to move, to “make tracks.”

Budge, strong drink; BUDGY, drunk; BUDGING-KEN, a public-house; “Cove of the BUDGING-KEN,” the landlord. Probably a corruption of BOOZE. Probably also, on the *lucus a non lucendo* principle, because its use made one incapable of budging.

Buff, the bare skin; “stripped to the BUFF.”

Buff, to swear to, or accuse; generally used in reference to a wrongful accusation, as, “Oh, BUFF it on to him.” *Old* word for boasting, 1582.

Buffer, a navy term for a boatswain’s mate, one of whose duties it is—or was—to administer the “[cat](#).”

Buffer, a familiar expression for a jolly acquaintance, probably from the *French* BOUFFARD, a fool or clown; a “jolly old BUFFER,” said of a good-humoured or liberal old man. In 1737, a BUFFER was a “rogue that killed good sound horses for the sake of their skins, by running a long wire into them.”—*Bacchus and Venus*. The term was once applied to those who took false oaths for a consideration; but though the word has fallen into disuse there is no particular reason for imagining that the practice has.

Buffer, a woman employed in a Sheffield warehouse to give the final polish to goods previously to their being plated.

Buffer, a dog. Dogs’ skins were formerly in great request—hence the term BUFF, meaning in old English *to skin*. It is still used in the ring, BUFFED meaning stripped naked, though the term BUFF, as applied to the skin, is most likely due to its resemblance to the leather so called. “Stripped to the BUFF,” cannot have any reference to dog skinning, though it may have originally referred to the BUFF jerkins worn under defensive armour. In Irish cant, BUFFER is a *boxer*. The BUFFER of a railway-carriage doubtless received its very appropriate name from the old pugilistic application of this term.

Buffle-Head, a stupid or obtuse person.—*Miege. German*, BUFFELHAUPT, buffalo-headed. Occurs in *Plautus’ Comedies made English*, 1694.

Bufs, the Third Regiment of Foot in the British army. From their facings. [101]

Buffy, intoxicated.

Buggy, a gig, or light chaise. Common term in America and in India, as well as in England.

Bug-Hunter, a low wretch who plunders drunken men.

Bug-Walk, a coarse term for a bed.

Build, applied in fashionable slang to the make or style of dress, &c. "It's a tidy BUILD, who made it?" A tailor is sometimes called a "trousers' BUILDER."

Bulger, large; synonymous with [BUSTER](#).

Bulky, a constable.—*North*.

Bull, one who agrees to purchase stock at a future day, at a stated price, but who simply speculates for a rise in public securities to render the transaction a profitable one. Should stocks fall, the BULL is then called upon to pay the difference. See [BEAR](#), who is the opposite of a BULL, the former selling, the latter purchasing—the one operating for a *fall*, the other for a *rise*.

Bull, a crown-piece, formerly BULL'S EYE. See [WORK](#).

Bull, term amongst prisoners for the meat served to them in jail. Also very frequently used instead of the word beef. The costermonger often speaks of his dinner, when he has beef, as a "bit o' BULL," without any reference to its being either tough or tender, but he never speaks of mutton as "sheep."

Bull-Beef, a term of contempt; "as ugly as BULL-BEEF," "go to the billy-fencer, and sell yourself for BULL-BEEF." Sometimes used to indicate full size of anything. "There was he, as big as BULL-BEEF."

Bulldogs, the runners who accompany the proctor in his perambulations, and give chase to runaways.—*University*.

Bullet, to discharge from a situation. To shake the BULLET at anyone, is to threaten him with "the sack," but not to give him actual notice to leave. To get the BULLET is to get notice, while to get the instant BULLET is to be discharged upon the spot. The use of the term is most probably derived from a fancied connexion between it and the word discharge.

Bullfinch, a hunting term for a large, thick, quickset hedge, difficult alike to "top" or burst through. Probably a corruption of BULL-FENCE, a fence made to prevent cattle straying either in or out.

Bull the Cask, to pour hot water into an empty rum puncheon, and let it stand until it extracts the spirit from the wood. The mixture is drunk by sailors in default of something stronger.—*Sea*.

Bully, a braggart; in the language of the streets, a man of the most degraded morals, who protects fallen females, and lives off their miserable earnings.—*Shakspeare*, in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, uses the word in its old form, as a term of endearment. This epithet is often applied in a commendable sense among the vulgar; thus—a good fellow or a good horse will be termed "a BULLY fellow," "a BULLY horse;" and "a BULLY woman" signifies a right, good motherly old soul. Among Americans, "BULLY for you," is a commendatory phrase, and "that's BULLY" is a highly eulogistic term.

[102]

Bullyrag, to abuse or scold vehemently; to swindle one out of money by intimidation and sheer abuse.

Bum, the part on which we sit.—*Shakspeare*. BUMBAGS, trousers; *Gael*. BUN, a base or bottom; *Welsh*, BON, the lowest or worst part of anything.

Bum-Bailiff, a sheriff's-officer—a term, some say, derived from the proximity which this gentleman generally maintains to his victims. Blackstone says it is a corruption of "bound bailiff." A BUM-BAILIFF was generally called "bummy."

Bumble, to muffle. BUMBLE-FOOTED, club-footed, or awkward in the gait.

Bumble, a beadle. Adopted from *Dickens's* character in *Oliver Twist*. This and "BUMBLEDOM" are now common.

Bumble-Puppy, a game played in public-houses on a large stone, placed in a slanting direction, on the lower end of which holes are excavated, and numbered like the holes in a bagatelle-table. The player rolls a stone ball, or marble, from the higher end, and according to the number of the hole it falls into the game is counted. It is undoubtedly the very ancient game of *Troule-in-madame*.

Bumbles, coverings for the eyes of horses that shy in harness.

Bumbrusher, an usher at a school.

Bumclink, in the Midland counties the inferior beer brewed for haymakers and harvest labourers. Derivation obvious.

Bum-Curtain, an old name for academical gowns when they were worn scant and short, especially those of the students of St. John's College.—*Camb. Univ.* Any ragged or short academical gown.

Bummarees, a term given to a class of speculating salesmen at Billingsgate market, not recognised as such by the trade, but who get a living by buying large quantities of fish from the salesmen and re-selling them to smaller buyers. The word has been used in the statutes and bye-laws of the market for upwards of 200 years. It has been variously derived. Some persons think it may be from the *French* BONNE MARÉE, good fresh fish! "Marée signifie toute sorte de poisson de mer qui n'est pas sale; bonne marée—*marée fraîche*, vendeur de marée."—*Dict. de l'Acad. Franc.*

The BUMMAREES are accused of many trade tricks. One of them is to blow up codfish with a pipe until they look double their actual size. Of course when the fish come to table they are flabby, sunken, and half dwindled away. In Norwich, to BUMMAREE one is to run up a score at a public-house just open, and is equivalent to "running into debt with one." One of the advertisements issued by Hy. Robinson's "Office," over against Threadneedle Street, was this:—

"Touching Advice from the OFFICE, you are desired to give and take notice as followeth:—

"OF Monies to be taken up, or delivered on *Botto-maria*, commonly called *Bomarie*.

"OF money to be put out or taken upon interest," &c.

—*The Publick Intelligencer*, numb. 17, 25th June, 1660.

Bummer, literally one who sits or idles about; a loafer; one who sponges upon his acquaintances. In California, men who profess to be journalists, and so obtain free dinners and drinks, are called "literary BUMMERS." Although the term is not much in use in this country, the profession of bumming, both literary and otherwise, is freely practised.

Bumper, according to Johnson from "bump," but probably from *French* BON PÈRE, the fixed toast in monastic life of old, now used for "full measure." A match at quoits, bowls, &c., may end in a "BUMPER game," if the play and score be all on one side. BUMPER is used in sporting and theatrical circles to denote a benefit which is one in reality as well as in name.

Bumptious, arrogant, self-sufficient. One on very good terms with himself is said to be BUMPTIOUS.

Bunce, costermongers' perquisites; the money obtained by giving light weight, &c.; costermongers' goods sold by boys on commission. In fact anything which is clear profit or gain is said to be "all BUNCE." Probably a corruption of *bonus*; [BONE](#), or BONER, being the slang for good. BUNCE, *Grose* gives as the cant word for money.

Bunch-of-Fives, the hand, or fist.

Bundle, "to BUNDLE a person off," *i.e.*, to pack him off, send him flying.

Bundling, men and women sleeping together, where the divisions of the house will not permit of better or more decent accommodation, with all their clothes on. BUNDLING was originally courting done in bed, the lovers being tied or bundled up to prevent undue familiarities. The practice still obtains in some parts of Wales.

Bung, the landlord of a public-house. Much in use among sporting men.

Bung, to give, pass, hand over, drink, or to perform almost any action. BUNG up, to close up, as the eyes.—*Pugilistic*. "BUNG over the rag," hand over the money.—*Old*, used by *Beaumont* and *Fletcher*, and *Shakspeare*. Also, to deceive one by a lie, to [CRAM](#), which *see*.

Bunk, to decamp. "BUNK it!" *i.e.*, be off.

Bunker, beer.

Bunkum, an American importation, denoting false sentiments in speaking, pretended enthusiasm, &c. The expression arose from a speech made by a North Carolina senator named Buncombe.

Bunter, a prostitute, a street-walking female thief.

Burdon's Hotel, Whitecross Street Prison, of which the Governor was a Mr. Burdon. Almost every prison has a nickname of this kind, either from the name of the Governor, or from some local circumstance. The Queen's Bench has also an immense number of names—[SPIKE PARK](#), &c.; and every Chief-Justice stands godfather to it.

Burerk, a lady, a showily-dressed woman.

Burke, to kill, to murder, secretly and without noise, by means of strangulation. From Burke, the notorious Edinburgh murderer, who, with an accomplice named Hare, used to decoy people into the den he inhabited, kill them, and sell their bodies for dissection. The wretches having been apprehended and tried, Burke was executed, while Hare, having turned king's evidence, was released. Bishop and Williams were their London imitators. The term BURKE is now usually applied to any project that is quietly stopped or stifled—as "the question has been BURKED." A book suppressed before publication is said to be BURKED.

Burra, great; as BURRA SAIB, a great man; BURRA KHANAIL, a great dinner.—*Anglo-Indian*.

Bury a Moll, to run away from a mistress.

Bus, or BUSS, an abbreviation of "omnibus," a public carriage. Also, a kiss, abbreviation of *Fr.* BAISER. A Mr. Shillibeer started the first BUS in London. A shillibeer is now a hearse and mourning coach all in one, used by the very poorest mourners and shabbiest undertakers.

Why is Temple Bar like a lady's veil? Because it wants to be removed to make way for the BUSSES.

Bus, business (of which it is a contraction) or action on the stage, so written, but pronounced BIZ.—*Theatrical*. *See* [BIZ](#).

Business, the action which accompanies dialogue. "His BUSINESS was good." Generally applied to byplay.—*Theatrical*.

Busk, to sell obscene songs and books at the bars and in the tap-rooms of public-houses. Sometimes it implies selling other articles. Also to “work” public-houses and certain spots as an itinerant musician or vocalist.

Busker, a man who sings or performs in a public-house; an itinerant.

Bust, or BURST, to tell tales, to SPLIT, to inform. BUSTING, informing against accomplices when in custody.

Buster (BURSTER), a small new loaf; “twopenny BUSTER,” a twopenny loaf. “A penn’orth o’ BEES-WAX (cheese) and a penny BUSTER,” a common snack at beershops. A halfpenny loaf is called a “starver.”

Buster, an extra size; “what a BUSTER,” *i.e.*, what a large one; “in for a BUSTER,” determined on an extensive frolic or spree. *Scotch*, BUSTUOUS; *Icelandic*, BOSTRA.

Bustle, money; “to draw the BUSTLE.”

Busy-Sack, a carpet-bag.

Butcha, a Hindoo word in use among Englishmen for the young of any animal. In England we ask after the children; in India the health of the BUTCHAS is tenderly inquired for.

Butcher, the king in playing-cards. When card-playing in public houses was common, the kings were called butchers, the queens bitches, and the knaves jacks. The latter term is now in general use. [105]

Butcher’s Mourning, a white hat with a black mourning hatband. Probably because, under any circumstances, a butcher would rather not wear a black hat. White hats and black bands have, however, become genteel ever since the late Prince Consort patronized them, though they retain a deal of the old sporting leaven.

Butter, or BATTER, praise or flattery. To BUTTER, to flatter, cajole. Same as “soft soap” and “soft sawder.” Soft words generally. Maybe from the old proverb, “Fine words butter no parsneps.”

Butter-Fingered, apt to let things fall; greasy or slippery-fingered.

Button, a decoy, sham purchaser, &c. At any mock or sham auction seedy specimens may be seen. Probably from the connexion of buttons with Brummagem, which is often used as a synonym for a sham.—See [BONNET](#).

Buttoner, a man who entices another to play.

Buttons, a page,—from the rows of gilt buttons which adorn his jacket.

Buttons, “not to have all one’s BUTTONS;” to be deficient in intellect. To “make BUTTONS” means for some occult reason to look sorry and sad. “He was making BUTTONS,” *i.e.*, he was looking sorrowful. Perhaps because button-making is a sorry occupation.

Butty, a word used in the mining districts to denote a kind of overseer. Also used by the Royal Marines in the sense of comrade; a policeman’s assistant, one of the staff in a *mêlée*.

Buz, to share equally the last of a bottle of wine, when there is not enough for a full glass to each of the party.

Buz, a well-known public-house game, played as follows:—“The chairman commences saying “one,” the next on the left hand “two,” the next “three,” and so on to *seven*, when “BUZ” must be said. Every seven and multiple of 7, as 14, 17, 21, 27, 28, &c., must not be mentioned, but “BUZ” instead. Whoever breaks the rule pays a fine, which is thrown on the table, and the accumulation expended in drink for the company. See “SNOOKS and WALKER” for more complicated varieties of a similar game. These “parlour pastimes” are often not only funny, but positively ingenious. But the Licensing Act and a zealous police are fast clearing them all out.

Buz, to pick pockets; BUZZING or BUZ-FAKING, robbing.

Buz-Blake, a pickpocket who principally confines his attention to purses and loose cash. *Grose* gives BUZ-GLOAK, an ancient cant word. GLOAK was old cant for a man. BUZ-NAPPER, a young pickpocket.

Buz-man, an informer; from BUZ, to whisper, but more generally a thief.

Buz-napper’s Academy, a school in which young thieves were trained. Figures were dressed up, and experienced tutors stood in various difficult attitudes for the boys to practise upon. When clever enough they were sent on the streets. Dickens gives full particulars of this old style of business in *Oliver Twist*. [106]

Buzzer, a pickpocket. *Grose* gives BUZ-COVE and, as above mentioned, [BUZ-GLOAK](#).

Byblow, an illegitimate child.

By George, an exclamation similar to BY JOVE. The term is older than is frequently imagined—vide *Bacchus and Venus* (p. 117), 1737. “Fore (or by) GEORGE, I’d knock him down.” Originally in reference to Saint George, the patron saint of England, or possibly to the House of Hanover.

By Golly, an ejaculation, or oath; a compromise for “by God.” BY GUM is another oblique oath. In the United States, small boys are permitted by their guardians to say GOL DARN anything, but they are on no account allowed to commit the profanity of G—d d—n anything. A manner of “sailing close to the wind” which is objectionable to the honest mind. A specimen ejaculation and moral

waste-pipe for interior passion or wrath is seen in the exclamation—BY THE EVER-LIVING JUMPING-MOSES—a harmless and ridiculous phrase, that from its length is supposed to expend a considerable quantity of fiery anger.

By Jingo, an oath or exclamation having no particular meaning, and no positive etymology, though it is believed by some that JINGO is derived from the Basque *jenco*, the devil.

Cab, in statutory language, “a hackney carriage drawn by one horse.” Abbreviated from the *French* CABRIOLET; originally meaning “a light low chaise.” The wags of Paris playing upon the word (quasi *cabri au lait*) used to call a superior turn-out of the kind a *cabri au crème*. Our abbreviation, which certainly smacks of slang, has been stamped with the authority of the Legislature, and has been honoured by universal custom.

Cab, to stick together, to muck, or tumble up—*Devonshire*.

Cabbage, pieces of cloth said to be purloined by tailors. Any small profits in the way of material.

Cabbage, to pilfer or purloin. Termed by *Johnson* a “cant word,” but adopted by later lexicographers as a respectable term. Said to have been first used in the above sense by *Arbuthnot*.

Cabbage-Head, a soft-headed person.

Cabby, popular name for the driver of a cab. This title has almost supplanted the more ancient one of jarvey.

Caboose, the galley or cook-house of a ship; a term used by tramps to indicate a kitchen.

Cackle-Tub, a pulpit.

Cackling-Cove, an actor. Also called a MUMMERY-COVE.—*Theatrical*.

Cad, OF CADGER (from which it is shortened), a mean or vulgar fellow; a beggar; one who would rather live on other people than work for himself; a man who tries to worm something out of another, either money or information. *Johnson* uses the word, and gives *huckster* as the meaning, in which sense it was originally used. Apparently from CAGER, OF GAGER, the *old Cant* term for a man. The exclusives at the English Universities apply the term CAD to all non-members. It has also been suggested that the word may be a contraction of the *French* CADET.

[107]

Cad, an omnibus conductor. Of late years the term has been generically applied to the objectionable class immortalized by Thackeray under the title of snob. A great deal of caddism is, however, perpetrated by those who profess to have the greatest horror of it—the upper classes—a fact which goes far to prove that it is impossible to fairly ascribe a distinctive feature to any grade of society.

Cadge, to beg in an artful, wheedling manner.—*North*. In Scotland to CADGE is to wander, to go astray. See under [CODGER](#).

Cadging, begging, generally with an eye to pilfering when an opportunity occurs. To be “on the cadge” is almost synonymous with “on the make.”

Cag, to irritate, affront, anger. Schoolboy slang.

Cage, a minor kind of prison. A country lock-up which contained no offices.

Cagmag, bad food, scraps, odds and ends; or that which no one could relish. *Grose* give CAGG MAGGS, old and tough Lincolnshire geese, sent to London to feast the poor cockneys. *Gael*, *French*, and *Welsh*, CAC, and MAGN. A correspondent at Trinity College, Dublin, considers this as originally a University slang term for a *bad cook*, κακὸς μάγειρος. There is also a *Latin* word used by Pliny, MAGMA, denoting dregs or dross.

Cake, a “flat;” a soft or doughy person, a fool.

Cakey-Pannum-Fencer, OF PANNUM-FENCER, a man who sells street pastry.

Calaboose, a prison.—*Sea* slang, from the Spanish.

Calculate, a word much in use among the inhabitants of the Western States U.S., as “I CALCULATE you are a stranger here.” New Englanders use the word “guess” instead of CALCULATE, while the Virginians prefer to say “reckon.”

Caleb Quotem, a parish clerk; a jack of all trades. From a character in *The Wags of Windsor*.

California, OR CALIFORNIANS, money. Term generally applied to gold only. Derivation very obvious.

Call, a notice of rehearsal, or any other occasion requiring the company’s presence, posted up in a theatre. “We’re CALLED for eleven to-morrow morning.”

Call-a-Go, in street “patter,” is to leave off trying to sell anything and to remove to another spot, to desist. Also to give in, yield, at any game or business. Probably from the “GO” call in cribbage.

Cameronians, THE, the Twenty-sixth Regiment of Foot in the British Army.

Camesa, shirt or chemise.—*Span*. See its abbreviated form, [MISH](#), from the *ancient Cant*, COMMISSION. Probably re-introduced by the remains of De Lacy Evans’s Spanish Legion on their return. See Somerville’s account of the Span. Leg., for the curious facility with which the lower classes in England adopt foreign words as slang and cant terms. *Italian*, CAMICIA. This latter is the more likely etymology, as anyone who visits the various quarters where Irish, Italians, and a mongrel mixture of half-a-dozen races congregate and pig together, will admit.

[108]

Camister, a preacher, clergyman, or master.

Canary, a sovereign. From the colour. Very old slang indeed.

Canister, the head.—*Pugilistic*.

Canister-Cap, a hat.

Cannibals, the training boats for the Cambridge freshmen, *i.e.*, "CANNOT-PULLS." The term is applied both to boats and rowers.—See [SLOGGERS](#). Torpids is the usual term for the races in which these men and machines figure.

Cannikin, a small can, similar to [PANNIKIN](#). "And let the CANNIKIN clink."

Cant, a blow or toss; "a CANT over the kisser," a blow on the mouth; "a CANT over the buttock," a throw or toss in wrestling.

Cantab, a student at Cambridge.

Cantankerous, litigious, bad-tempered. An American corruption probably of contentious. A reviewer of an early edition of this book derives it from the *Anglo-Norman* CONTEK, litigation or strife. Others have suggested "cankerous" as the origin. *Bailey* has CONTEKE, contention as a Spenserian word, and there is the *O.E.* CONTEKORS, quarrelsome persons.

Cant of Togs, a gift of clothes.

Canvaseens, sailors' canvas trousers.

Cap, a false cover to a tossing coin. The term and the instrument are both nearly obsolete. See [COVER-DOWN](#).

Cap, "to set her CAP." A woman is said to set her CAP at a man when she makes overt love to him.

Cap, to outdo or add to, as in capping jokes.

Cape Cod Turkey, salt fish.

Caper-Merchant, a dancing-master. Sometimes a hop-merchant.

Capers, dancing, frolicking; "to cut CAPER-SAUCE," *i.e.*, to dance upon nothing—be hanged. Old thieves' talk.

Capper-Clawing, female encounter, where caps are torn and nails freely used. Sometimes it is pronounced CLAPPER-CLAW. The word occurs in *Shakspeare, Troilus and Cressida*, act v. sc. 4.

Caravan, a railway train, especially a train expressly chartered to convey people to a prize fight.

Caravansera, a railway station. In pugilistic phraseology a tip for the starting point might have been given thus. "The SCRATCH must be TOED at sharp five, so the CARAVAN will start at four from the CARAVANSERA."

Carboy, a general term in most parts of the world for a very large glass or earthenware bottle.

[109]

Card, a character. "A queer CARD," *i.e.*, an odd fish.

Cardinal, a lady's red cloak. A cloak with this name was in fashion in the year 1760. It received its title from its similarity in shape to one of the vestments of a cardinal. Also mulled red wine.

Cardwell's Men, officers promoted in pursuance of the new system of non-purchase.

Carney, soft hypocritical language. Also, to flatter, wheedle, or insinuate oneself.—*Prov.*

Carnish, meat, from the *Ital.* CARNE, flesh; a *Lingua Franca* importation; CARNISH-KEN, a thieves' eating-house; "cove of the CARNISH-KEN," the keeper thereof.—*North Country Cant.*

Caroon, five shillings. *French*, COURONNE; *Gipsy*, COURNA; *Spanish*, CORONA.

Carp, "upon the CARPET," any subject or matter that is uppermost for discussion or conversation. Frequently quoted as *sur le tapis*, or more generally "on the *tapis*," but it does not seem to be at all known in France. Also servants' slang. When a domestic is summoned by the master or mistress to receive a warning or reprimand, he or she is said to be CARPETED. The corresponding term in commercial establishments is a [WIGGING](#).

Carp-Knight, an habitu  of drawing-rooms, a "ladies' man."

Carrier-Pigeon, a swindler, one who formerly used to cheat lottery-office keepers. Now used among betting men to describe one who runs from place to place with "commissions."

Carriwitchet, a hoaxing, puzzling question, not admitting of a satisfactory answer, as—"How far is it from the first of July to London Bridge?" "If a bushel of apples cost ten shillings, how long will it take for an oyster to eat its way through a barrel of soap?"

Carrot. "Take a CARROT!" a vulgar insulting phrase.

Carrots, the coarse and satirical term for red hair. An epigram gives an illustration of the use of this term:—

"Why scorn red hair? The Greeks, we know,
(I note it here in charity)
Had taste in beauty, and with them
The graces were all Χάρται!"

Of late years CARROTY hair in all its shades has been voted beautiful, *i.e.*, fashionable.

Carry Corn, to bear success well and equally. It is said of a man who breaks down under a sudden access of wealth—as successful horse-racing men and unexpected legatees often do—or who becomes affected and intolerant, that "he doesn't CARRY CORN well."

Carry me Out! an exclamation of pretended astonishment on hearing news too good to be true, or a story too marvellous to be believed. Sometimes varied by "Let me die," *i.e.*, I can't survive that. Profanely derived from the *Nunc dimittis* (Luke xi. 29). The Irish say, "CARRY ME OUT, and bury me decently."

Carry-on, to joke a person to excess, to CARRY ON a "spree" too far; "how we CARRIED ON, to be sure!" *i.e.*, what fun we had. *Nautical term*—from carrying on sail.

Carts, a pair of shoes. In Norfolk the carapace of a crab is called a *crab cart*; hence CARTS would be synonymous with [CRAB SHELLS](#), which *see*.

Cart-wheel, a five-shilling piece. Generally condensed to "WHEEL."

Ca-sa, a writ of *capias ad satisfaciendam*.—*Legal slang*.

Casa, or CASE, a house, respectable or otherwise. Probably from the Italian *CASA*.—*Old Cant*. The Dutch use the word *KAST* in a vulgar sense for a house, *i.e.*, *MOTTEKAST*, a brothel. CASE sometimes means a water-closet, but is in general applied to a "house of accommodation." *CASA* is generally pronounced *carzey*.

Cascade, to vomit.

Case. Some years ago the term CASE was applied generally to persons or things; "what a CASE he is," *i.e.*, what a curious person; "a rum CASE that," or "you are a CASE," both synonymous with the phrase "odd fish," common half a century ago. This would seem to have been originally a "case" for the police-court; drunkenness, &c. Among young ladies at boarding-schools a CASE means a love-affair. CASE now means any unfortunate matter. "I'm afraid it's a CASE with him."

Case, a bad CROWN-piece. HALF-A-CASE, a counterfeit half-crown. There are two sources, either of which may have contributed this slang term. CASER is the Hebrew word for a crown; and silver coin is frequently counterfeited by coating or CASING pewter or iron imitations with silver. Possibly from its being "a CASE" with the unfortunate owner.

Cask, fashionable slang for a brougham, or other private carriage. Not very general. "PILLBOX" is the more usual term.

Cassam, cheese—not CAFFAN, which Egan, in his edition of *Grose*, has ridiculously inserted.—*Ancient Cant*. *Latin*, CASEUS. *Gael.* and *Irish*, CAISE.

Cast, to assist by lightening labour. Men in small boats who want to be towed behind steamers or sailing vessels, say "Give us a CAST." Also used by waggoners and others, who sometimes vary the performance by asking, when stuck on a hill, for a pound, possibly a pound of flesh, horse or human.

Cast up Accounts, to vomit.—*Old*.

Castor, a hat. Mostly used in pugilistic circles. Indeed many hangers-on of the P.R. have considered that the term arose from the custom of casting the hat into the ring, before entering oneself. CASTOR was the *Latin* name for the animal now known as the BEAVER; and, strange to add, BEAVER was the slang for CASTOR, or hat, many years ago, before gossamer came into fashion.

Cat, a lady's muff; "to free a CAT," *i.e.*, steal a muff.

[111]

Cat, to vomit like a cat. Perhaps from CATARACT; but *see* [SHOOT THE CAT](#).

Cat—CAT O' NINE TAILS, a whip with that number of lashes used to punish refractory sailors.—*Sea*. The "cat" is now a recognised term for the punishment whip.

Catamaran, a disagreeable old woman.—*Thackeray*.

Cat and Kitten Sneaking, stealing pint and quart pots and small pewter spirit measures from public-houses.

Cataract, once a black satin scarf arranged for the display of jewellery, much in vogue among "commercial gents." Now quite out of date.

Catchbet, a bet made for the purpose of entrapping the unwary by means of a paltry subterfuge. *See* [CHERRY COLOUR](#).

Catch-'em-Alive, a humane trap; also a small-tooth comb. A piece of paper smeared with a sweet sticky substance which is spread about where flies most abound, and in this sense not particularly humane. The CATCH-'EM-ALIVE trap for rats and other such animals is humane compared with the gin trap.

Catch-penny, any temporary contrivance to obtain money from the public; penny shows, or cheap exhibitions. Also descriptions of murders which have never taken place.

Catchy (similar formation to [touchy](#)), inclined to take an undue advantage.

Caterwauling, applied derisively to inharmonious singing; also love-making, from the noise of cats similarly engaged.

Catever, a queer, or singular affair; anything poor, or very bad. From the *Lingua Franca*, and *Italian*, CATTIVO, bad. Variously spelled by the lower orders.—*See* KERTEVER.

Cat-faced, a vulgar and very common expression of contempt in the North of England.

Catgut-Scraper, a fiddler.

Cat-in-the-Pan, a traitor, a turncoat—derived by some from the *Greek*, καταπαν, altogether; or—and more likely—from *cake in pan*, a pan-cake, which is frequently turned from side to side.

Cat-lap, a contemptuous expression for weak drink. Anything a cat will drink is very innocuous.

Cats and Dogs. It is said to rain cats and dogs when a shower is exceptionally heavy. Probably in ridicule of the remarkable showers which used to find their way into the papers during the “silly season.”

Cat’s-meat, a coarse term for the lungs—the “lights” or lungs of animals being usually sold to feed cats.

Cat’s-paw, a dupe or tool. From the old story of the monkey who used the cat’s-paw to remove his roast chestnuts from the fire. A sea term, meaning light and occasional breezes occurring in calm weather.

Cat’s-water, “old Tom,” or gin.

Cattle, a term of contempt applied to the mob, or to a lot of lazy, helpless servants.

Caucus, a private meeting held for the purpose of concerting measures, agreeing upon candidates for office before an election, &c. This is an American term, and a corruption of CAULKER’S MEETING, being derived from an association of the shipping interest at Boston, previous to the War of Independence, who were very active in getting up opposition to England.—See *Pickering’s Vocabulary*.

[112]

Caulk, to take a surreptitious nap; sleep generally, from the ordinary meaning of the term; stopping leaks, repairing damages, so as to come out as good as new.—*Sea term*.

Caulker, a dram. The term “caulker” is usually applied to a stiff glass of grog—preferably brandy—finishing the potations of the evening. See [WHITEWASH](#).

Caulker, a too marvellous story, a lie. CHOKER has the same sense.

Caution, anything out of the common way. “He’s a CAUTION,” is said of an obdurate or argumentative man. The phrase is also used in many ways in reference to places and things.

Cavaulting, a vulgar phrase equivalent to “horsing.” The *Italian* CAVALLINO, signifies a rake or debauchee.—*Lingua Franca*, CAVOLTA. From this comes the Americanism “cavorting,” running or riding round in a heedless or purposeless manner.

Cave, or CAVE IN, to submit, shut up.—*American*. Metaphor taken from the sinking of an abandoned mining shaft.

Chaff, to gammon, joke, quiz, or praise ironically. Originally “to queer” represented our modern word “CHAFF.” CHAFF-bone, the jaw-bone.—*Yorkshire*. CHAFF, jesting. In *Anglo-Saxon*, CEAFL is chaff; and CEAFL, bill, beak, or jaw. In the *Ancren Riwele*, A.D. 1221, CEAFL is used in the sense of idle discourse.

Chaffer, the mouth; “moisten your CHAFFER,” *i.e.*, take something to drink.

Chal, old Romany term for a man; CHIE was the name for a woman.

Chalk out, or CHALK DOWN, to mark out a line of conduct or action; to make a rule or order. Phrase derived from the *Workshop*.

Chalk up, to credit, make entry in account books of indebtedness; “I can’t pay you now, but you can CHALK IT UP,” *i.e.*, charge me with the article in your day-book. From the old practice of chalking one’s score for drink behind the bar-doors of public-houses.

Chalks, “to walk one’s CHALKS,” to move off, or run away. An ordeal for drunkenness used on board ship, to see whether the suspected person can walk on a chalked line without overstepping it on either side.

Chalks, degrees, marks; so called from being made by a piece of chalk; “to beat by long CHALKS,” *i.e.*, to be superior by many degrees. “Making CHALKS” is a term connected with the punishment of boys on board ship, and in the Naval School at Greenwich. Two chalk lines are drawn wide apart on the deck or floor, and the boy to be punished places a foot on each of these lines, and stoops, thereby presenting a convenient portion of his person to the boatswain or master.

[113]

Chance the Ducks, an expression signifying come what may. “I’ll do it, and CHANCE THE DUCKS.”

Chancery, a pugilistic phrase for difficulties; “to get a man’s head into CHANCERY,” *i.e.*, to get an opponent’s head firmly under one’s arm, where it can be pommelled with immense power, and without any possibility of immediate extrication. From the helplessness of a suitor in Chancery. This opportunity was of very rare occurrence when the combatants were at all evenly matched.

Change, small money. The overplus returned after paying for a thing in a round sum. Hence a slang expression used when a person receives a “settler” in the shape of either a repartee or a blow—“Take your CHANGE out of that!”

Chap, a fellow, a boy; “a low CHAP,” a low fellow—abbreviation of CHAPMAN, a huckster. Used by *Byron* in his *Critical Remarks*.

Chapel, a printers’ assembly, held for the purpose of discussing differences between employer and workmen, trade regulations, or other matters. The term is scarcely slang, but some “comps” ask its insertion in this work.

Chapel. An undergrad is expected to attend seven out of the fourteen services in chapel each week, and to let four or five be morning chapels. Occasionally a Don—the Dean as a rule—will “CHAPEL” him, that is, order him to attend to worship his Creator twice daily. The Bible clerk “pricks the list,” *i.e.*, marks down the names of all present.—*Univ.*

Chapel-of-ease. *French*, CABINET D’AISANCE, a house of office.

Chariot-buzzing, picking pockets in an omnibus.

Charley, a watchman, a beadle. Almost obsolete now.

Charley-pitcher, a low, cheating gambler.

Charlies, a woman’s breasts. Also called dairies and bubbies.

Chats, lice, or body vermin. *Prov.*, any small things of the same kind.

Chatter-basket, common term for a prattling child amongst nurses.

Chatter-box, an incessant talker or chatterer.

Chatty, a filthy person, one whose clothes are not free from vermin; CHATTY DOSS, a lousy bed. A CHATTY DOSSER OR a CRUMMY DOSSER is a filthy tramp or houseless wanderer.

Chaunt, to sing the contents of any paper in the streets. CANT, as applied to vulgar language, may have been derived from CHAUNT.

Chaunt, “to CHAUNT the play,” to explain the tricks and manœuvres of thieves.

Chaunter-culls, a singular body of men who used to haunt certain well-known public-houses, and write satirical or libellous ballads on any person, or body of persons, for a consideration. *7s. 6d.* was the usual fee, and in three hours the ballad might be heard in St. Paul’s Churchyard, or other public spot. Strange as it may appear, there are actually two men in London at the present day who gain their living in this way. Very recently they were singing before the establishment of a fashionable tailor in Regent Street; and not long since they were bawling their doggrel rhymes outside the mansion of a Norfolk M.P., in Belgravia.^[57]

[114]

Chaunters, those street sellers of ballads, last copies of verses, and other broadsheets, who sang or bawled the contents of their papers. They often termed themselves PAPER WORKERS. Cheap evening papers and private executions have together combined to improve these folks’ occupations off the face of the earth. *See* [HORSE-CHAUNTERS](#).

Chaw, to chew; CHAW UP, to get the better of one, finish him up; CHAWED UP, utterly done for.

Chaw-bacon, a rustic. Derived from the popular idea that a countryman lives entirely on bread and fat bacon. A country clown, a joskin, a yokel, a clodcrusher. These terms are all exchangeable.

Chaw over, to repeat one’s words with a view to ridicule.

Cheap, “doing it on the CHEAP,” living economically, or keeping up a showy appearance with very little means.

Cheap Jacks, or JOHNS, oratorical hucksters and patterers of hardware, who put an article up at a high price, and then cheapen it by degrees, indulging all the time in volleys of coarse wit, until it becomes to all appearance a bargain, and as such it is bought by one of the crowd. The popular idea is that the inverse method of auctioneering saves them paying for the auction licence.—*See* [DUTCH AUCTION](#).

Checks, counters used in games at cards. In the Pacific States of America a man who is dead is said to have handed (or passed) in his checks. The gamblers there are responsible for many of the colloquialisms current.

Chee-Chee, this word is used in a rather offensive manner to denote Eurasians,^[58] or children by an English father and native mother. It takes its origin in a very common expression of half-caste females, “CHEE-CHEE,” equivalent to our Oh, fie!—Nonsense!—For shame!—*Anglo-Indian*.

Cheek, share or portion; “where’s my CHEEK?” where is my allowance? “All to his own CHEEK,” all to himself.

Cheek, impudence, assurance; CHEEKY, saucy or forward.

[115]

Cheek, to irritate by impudence, to accuse.

Cheek by Jowl, side by side—said often of persons in such close confabulation that their faces almost touch.

Cheese, anything good, first-rate in quality, genuine, pleasant, or advantageous, is termed the CHEESE. The *London Guide*, 1818, says it was from some young fellows translating “c’est une autre CHOSE” into “that is another CHEESE.” But the expression CHEESE may be found in the Gipsy vocabulary, and in the Hindostanee and Persian languages. In the last CHIZ means a thing—that is the thing, *i.e.*, the CHEESE.

Cheese, or CHEESE IT (evidently a corruption of *cease*), leave off, or have done; “CHEESE your barrikin,” hold your noise. Term very common.

Cheesecutter, a prominent and aquiline nose. Also a large square peak to a cap. Caps fitted with square peaks are called cheesecutter caps.

Cheesemongers, once a popular name for the First Lifeguards. Until the Peninsular War the First Lifeguards, from their almost exclusive service at home, were nicknamed CHEESEMONGERS. This term then fell into desuetude; but at Waterloo the commanding officer of the regiment had not forgotten it, and when leading his men to the charge, called out, "Come on, you damned CHEESEMONGERS!" an invitation complied with so readily, that the title was restored, with the difference that it was no longer a word of reproach.

Cheesy, fine or showy. The opposite of "dusty."

Cherry-bums, OR **CHERUBIMS**, a nickname given to the 11th Hussars, from their crimson trousers.

Cherry-colour, either red or black, as you wish; a term used in a cheating trick at cards. When the cards are being dealt, a knowing one offers to bet that he will tell the colour of the turn-up card. "Done!" says Mr. Green. The sum being named, Mr. Sharp affirms that it will be CHERRY-COLOUR; and as cherries are either black or red, he wins, leaving his victim a wiser man, it is to be hoped, and not a *better* for the future. It may be as well for the habitually unfortunate to know that wagers of this kind are not recoverable even according to the sporting code, which disacknowledges all kinds of catch-bets.

Cherry-merry, a present of money. **CHERRY-MERRY-BAMBOO**, a beating.—*Anglo-Indian*.

Cherubs, or still more vulgarly, **CHERUBIMS**, the chorister boys who chaunt in the services at the abbeys and cathedrals. Possibly because in some places their heads alone are visible.

Cheshire Cat, to grin like a CHESHIRE CAT, to display the teeth and gums when laughing. Formerly the phrase was "to grin like a CHESHIRE CAT eating cheese." A hardly satisfactory explanation has been given of this phrase—that Cheshire is a county palatine, and the cats, when they think of it, are so tickled with the notion that they can't help grinning.^[59]

[116]

Chicken, a term applied to anything young, small, or insignificant; **CHICKEN STAKES**, small paltry stakes; "she's no CHICKEN," said of an old maid.

Chicken-hearted, cowardly, fearful. With about the amount of pluck a chicken in a fright might be supposed to possess.

Chi-ike, to hail in a rough though friendly manner; to support by means of vociferation.

Chi-ike, a hail; a good loud word of hearty praise; term used by the costermongers, who assist the sale of each other's goods by a little friendly, although noisy, commendation.

Children's Shoes (to make), to be made nought of.—*See* [SHOES](#).

Chill, to warm, as beer. This at first seems like reversing the order of things, but it is only a contraction of "take the CHILL off."

Chimney-Sweep, the aperient mixture commonly called a *black draught*.

Chin-chin, a salutation, a compliment.—*Anglo-Chinese*.

Chink, OR **CHINKERS**, money.—*Ancient*. Derivation obvious.

Chin-wag, officious impertinence.

Chip of the Old Block, a child which physically or morally resembles its father. [BROTHER CHIP](#), one of the same trade or profession. Originally brother carpenter, now general.

Chips, money; also a nickname for a carpenter.—*Sea*.

Chirp, to give information, to "peach."

Chisel, to cheat, to take a slice off anything. Hence the old conundrum: "Why is a carpenter like a swindler?—Because he chisels a deal."

Chit, a letter; corruption of a *Hindoo* word.—*Anglo-Indian*.

Chitterlings, the shirt frills once fashionable and worn still by ancient beaux; properly the *entrails of a pig*, to which they are supposed to bear some resemblance. *Belgian* SCHYTERLINGH.

Chivalry, coition. Probably a corruption from the *Lingua Franca*. Perhaps from CHEVAULCHER.

Chive, OR **CHIVEY**, a shout, a halloo, or cheer; loud tongued. Probably from CHEVY-CHASE, a boy's game, in which the word CHEVY is bawled aloud. Dickens uses the word CHIVEY in *Bleak House* rather freely, but there it is from the other phase of CHEVY-CHASE which follows.

Chive, a knife; also used as a verb, to knife. In all these cases the word is pronounced as though written CHIV OR CHIVVY.

Chive-Fencer, a street hawker of cutlery.

Chivey, to chase round, or hunt about. Apparently from [CHEVY-CHASE](#).—*See* above.

Choakee, OR **CHOKEY**, the black hole.—*Military Anglo-Indian*. Chokey is also very vulgar slang for prison.

[117]

Chock-Full, full till the scale comes down with a shock. Originally CHOKE-FULL, and used in reference to theatres and places of amusement.

Choke Off, to get rid of. Bulldogs can only be made to loose their hold by choking them.^[60] Suggestively to get rid of a man by saying something to him which "sticks in his gizzard."

Choker, a cravat, a neckerchief. **WHITE-CHOKER**, the white neckerchief worn by mutes at a funeral,

waiters at a tavern, and gentlemen in evening costume. Clergymen and Exeter Hallites are frequently termed WHITE-CHOKERS.

Choker, or WIND-STOPPER, a garotter.

Chonkeys, a kind of mincemeat, baked in a crust, and sold in the streets.

Choops, a corruption of CHOOPRAHO, keep silence.—*Anglo-Indian*.

Chootah, small, insignificant.—*Anglo-Indian*.

Chop, in the Canton jargon of *Anglo-Chinese*, this word has several significations. It means an official seal, a permit, a boat load of teas. FIRST CHOP signifies first quality; and CHOP-CHOP, to make haste.

Chop, to exchange, to “swop.” To CHOP and change, to be as variable as the wind.

Chops, properly CHAPS, the mouth, or cheeks; “down in the CHOPS,” or “down in the mouth,” *i.e.*, sad or melancholy.

Chouse, to cheat out of one’s share or portion. *Hackluyt*, CHAUS; *Massinger*, CHIAUS. From the *Turkish*, in which language it signifies an interpreter. *Gifford* gives a curious story as to its origin:

—
“In the year 1609 there was attached to the Turkish embassy in England an Interpreter, or CHIAOUS, who, by cunning, aided by his official position, managed to cheat the Turkish and Persian merchants, then in London, out of the large sum of £4000, then deemed an enormous amount. From the notoriety which attended the fraud, and the magnitude of the swindle, any one who cheated or defrauded was said to *chiaous*, or *chause*, or CHOUSE; to do, that is, as this *Chiaous* had done.”—*See Trench, Eng. Past and Present*.

CHIAUS, according to *Sandys (Travels, p. 48)*, is “one who goes on embassies, executes commandments,” &c. The particular *Chiaus* in question is alluded to in *Ben Jonson’s Alchymist*, 1610.

“*D.* What do you think of me?

That I am a CHIAUS?

Face. What’s that?

D. The Turk [who] was here.

As one would say, do you think I am a Turk?”

Chout, an entertainment.—*East-end of London*.

Chovey, a shop.—*Costermonger*.

Chow-Chow, a mixture, food of any kind. Also chit-chat and gossip.—*Anglo-Chinese*.

Chowdar, a fool.—*Anglo-Chinese*.

[118]

Christening, erasing the name of the maker, the number, or any other mark, from a stolen watch, and inserting a fictitious one in its place.

Chubby, round-faced, plump. Probably from the same derivative as CHUB, which means literally a fish with a big head.

Chuck, bread or meat; in fact, anything to eat. Also a particular kind of beefsteak.

Chuck, a schoolboy’s treat.—*Westminster School*. Provision for an entertainment. Hard CHUCK is sea biscuit.

Chuck, to throw or pitch.

Chuck a Jolly, to bear up or bonnet, as when a costermonger praises the inferior article his mate or partner is trying to sell. *See CHI-IKE*.

Chuck a Stall, to attract a person’s attention while a confederate picks his pockets, or otherwise robs him.

Chuck in, to challenge—from the pugilistic custom of throwing a hat into the ring; a modern version of “throwing down the gauntlet.” This term seems to have gone out of fashion with the custom which gave rise to it.

Chuckle-head, much the same as “buffle head,” “cabbage head,” “chowder head,” “cod’s head,”—all signifying that large abnormal form of skull generally supposed to accompany stupidity and weakness of intellect; as the Scotch proverb, “muckle head and little wit.”—Originally Devonshire, but now general.

Chucks! Schoolboy’s signal on the master’s approach.

Chuck up, to surrender, give in—from the custom of throwing up the sponge at a prize-fight in token of yielding. This is very often corrupted into “jack up.”

Chuff it, *i.e.*, be off, or take it away, in answer to a street seller who is importuning you to purchase. *Halliwell* mentions CHUFF as a “term of reproach,” surly, &c.

Chull, make haste. An abbreviation of the *Hindostanee* CHULLO, signifying “go along.” CHULL is very commonly used to accelerate the motions of a servant, driver, or palanquin-bearer.

Chum, an intimate acquaintance. A recognised term, but in such frequent use with slangists that it almost demands a place here. Stated to be from the *Anglo-Saxon*, CUMA, a guest.

Chum, to occupy a joint lodging with another person. *Latin*, CUM.

Chumming-up, an old custom amongst prisoners before the present regulations were in vogue, and before imprisonment for debt was abolished; when a fresh man was admitted to their number, rough music was made with pokers, tongs, sticks, and saucepans. For this ovation the initiated prisoner had to pay, or “fork over,” half-a-crown—or submit to a loss of coat and waistcoat.

Chummy, a chimney-sweep—probably connected with *chimney*; also a low-crowned felt hat. Sometimes, but rarely, a sweep is called a clergyman—from his colour.

[119]

Chump, the head or face. Also one end of a loin of mutton. A half-idiotic or daft person is said to be off his chump.

Chunk, a thick or dumpy piece of any substance, as a CHUNK of bread or meat.—*Kentish*.

Church a yack (or watch), to take the works of a watch from its original case, and put them into another one, to avoid detection.—*See* [CHRISTEN](#).

Churchwarden, a long pipe, “a yard of clay;” probably so called from the dignity which seems to hedge the smoker of a churchwarden, and the responsibility attached to its use. Sometimes called an Alderman.

Cinder, any liquor used in connexion with soda-water, as to “take a soda with a CINDER in it.” The cinder may be sherry, brandy, or any other liquor.

Circumbendibus, a roundabout way, a long-winded story.

Clack-box, a garrulous person, so called from the rattle formerly used by vagrants to make a rattling noise and attract attention.—*Norfolk*.

✱ A common proverb in this county is, “your tongue goes like A BAKER’S CLAP-DISH,” which is evidently a modern corruption of the beggars’ CLAP OR CLACK-DISH mentioned in *Measure for Measure*. It was a wooden dish with a movable cover.

Claggum, boiled treacle in a hardened state, hardbake.—*See* [CLIGGY](#).

Clam, or clem, to starve.—*North*.

Clap, to place; “do you think you can CLAP your hand on him?” *i.e.*, find him out. CLAP is also a well-known form of a contagious disease.

Clapper, the tongue. Said of an over-talkative person, to be hung in the middle and to sound with both ends.

Clap-trap, high-sounding nonsense. An ancient theatrical term for a “TRAP to catch a CLAP by way of applause from the spectators at a play.”—*Bailey’s Dictionary*.

Claret, blood.—*Pugilistic*. Otherwise [Badminton](#)—which *see*.

Clashy, a low fellow, a labourer.—*Anglo-Indian*.

Class, the highest quality or combination of highest qualities among athletes. “He’s not CLASS enough,” *i.e.*, not good enough. “There’s a deal of CLASS about him,” *i.e.*, a deal of quality. The term as used this way obtains to a certain extent among turfites.

Clawhammer coat, an American term for a tail-coat used in evening costume. Also known as a steel-pen coat.

Clean, quite, or entirely; “CLEAN gone,” entirely out of sight, or away.—*Old*, see Cotgrave and Shakspeare. CLEAN CONTRARY, quite different, opposite.

Clean out, to ruin, or make bankrupt any one; to take all he has got, by purchase, chicane, or force. De Quincey, in his article on Richard Bentley, speaking of the lawsuit between that great scholar and Dr. Colbatch, remarks that the latter “must have been pretty well CLEANED OUT.” The term is very general.

[120]

Click, a knock or blow. CLICK-HANDED, left-handed.—*Cornish*. A term in Cumberland and Westmoreland wrestling for a peculiar kind of throw, as “an inside CLICK,” or “an outside CLICK.”

Click, to snatch, to pull away something that belongs to another.

Clicker, a female touter at a bonnet shop. In Northamptonshire, the cutter out in a shoemaking establishment. In the *Dictionary of the Terms, Ancient and Modern, of the Canting Crew*, Lond. n. d. (but prior to 1700), the CLICKER is described as “the shoemaker’s journeyman or servant, that cutts out all the work, and stands at or walks before the door, and saies—‘What d’ye lack, sir? what d’ye buy, madam?’” In a printing-office, a man who makes up the pages, and who takes work and receives money for himself and companions.

Clift, to steal.

Cliggy, or CLIDGY, sticky.—*Anglo-Saxon*, CLÆG, clay.—*See* [CLAGGUM](#).

Clinch (to get the), to be locked up in jail.

Clincher, that which rivets or confirms an argument, an incontrovertible position. Also a lie which cannot be surpassed, a stopper-up, said to be derived as follows:—Two notorious liars were

backed to outlie each other. "I drove a nail through the moon once," said the first. "Right," said the other; "I recollect the circumstance well, for I went round to the back part of the moon and *clinched* it"—hence CLINCHER.

Cling-rig, stealing tankards from public-houses, &c.

Clipper, a fine fast-sailing vessel. Applied also as a term of encomium to a handsome woman.

Clipping, excellent, very good. CLIPPER, anything showy or first-rate.

Clock, a watch. Watches are also distinguished by the terms "red clock," a gold watch, and "white clock," a silver watch. Generally modified into "red'un" and "white'un."

Clock, "to know what's o'CLOCK," to be "up, down, fly and awake," to know everything about everything—a definition of knowingness in general.—See [TIME O' DAY](#).

Clod-hopper, a country clown.

Cloud, TO BE UNDER A, to be in difficulties, disgrace or disrepute; in fact, to be in shady circumstances.

Clout, or RAG, a cotton pocket-handkerchief.—*Old Cant*. Now "*clouts*" means a woman's underclothes, from the waist downwards, *i.e.*, petticoats when they are on the person; but the term is extended to mean the whole unworn wardrobe. Probably St. Giles's satire, having reference to the fact that few women there possess a second gown.

Clout, an intentional heavy blow.

Clover, happiness, luck, a delightful position—from the supposed extra enjoyment which attends cattle when they suddenly find their quarters changed from a barren field to a meadow of clover. Among betting men he who has arranged his wagerings so satisfactorily before an event that he cannot possibly lose, and may win a good deal, is said to be in clover, a phrase which is sometimes varied by the remark that "he stands on velvet." Any one who is provided for, so that he can look forward to a term of ease and enjoyment for the rest of his life, is also said to be in clover. [121]

Club, in manœuvring troops, so to blunder in giving the word of command that the soldiers get into a position from which they cannot extricate themselves by ordinary tactical means. Young officers frequently "CLUB" their men, and get consequently "wiggled" by the inspecting general.

Clump, to strike, to beat.—*Prov*.

Cly, a pocket.—*Old Cant* for to steal. A correspondent derives this word from the *Old English*, CLEVES, claws; *Anglo-Saxon*, CLEA. This pronunciation is still retained in Norfolk; thus, to CLY would mean to pounce upon, to snatch.—See [FRISK](#). *Gael.*, CLIAH (pronounced CLEE), a basket.

Cly-faker, a pickpocket.

Coach, a private tutor. Originally University, but now general. Any man who now trains or teaches another, or others, is called a coach. To coach is to instruct as regards either physical or mental acquirements. A private tutor is sometimes termed a RURAL COACH when he is not connected with a college. At Rugby a flogging is termed a "coaching."

Coach-wheel, or TUSHEROON, a crown-piece, or five shillings.

Coal, money; "post the COAL," put down the money. The phrase was used by Mr. Buckstone at the Theatrical Fund Dinner of 1863. From this is derived the theatrical term COALING, profitable, very good, which an actor will use if his part is full of good and telling speeches—thus, "my part is full of COALING lines." This term was used in the sporting world long anterior to Mr. Buckstone's speech. See COAL.

Coals, "to haul (or pull) over the COALS," to take to task, to scold. Supposed by Jamieson to refer to the ordeal by fire. To "take one's coals in," is a term used by sailors to express their having caught the venereal disease. It means that they have gotten that which will keep them hot for a good many months.

Cobbing, a punishment inflicted by sailors and soldiers among themselves. See Grose and Captain Marryat's novels. A hand-saw is the general instrument of punishment.

Cock, a familiar term of address; "jolly old COCK," a jovial fellow, "how are you, old COCK?" Frequently rendered nowadays, COCK-E-E, a vulgar street salutation—probably a corruption of COCK-EYE. The latter is frequently heard as a shout or street cry after a man or boy.

Cock, a smoking term; "COCKING a Broseley," *i.e.*, smoking a pipe. Broseley in Shropshire is famous for "churchwardens." A "COCK" is an apocryphal story, generally, of a murder or elopement bawled about the streets by the Seven Dials' "patterers." [122]

Cock, a pugilistic term for a man who is knocked out of time. "Knocked him a reg'lar COCK." Sometimes used to signify knocked out of shape, as, "Knocked him A-COCK," probably connected with "cocked-hat shape." A horse who has been backed by the public, but who does not run, or, running, does not persevere.

Cock, "to COCK your eye," to shut or wink one eye, to make "sheep's-eyes."

Cock-a-hoop, in high spirits. Possibly the idea is from the fact that, if a cock wins a fight, he will mount on anything near, and crow lustily and jubilantly. It is noticeable that under these circumstances a cock always gets off the ground-level if he can.

Cockalorum, or COCKYLORUM, amplification of cock or cocky.

Cock and bull story, a long, rambling anecdote.—See Peroration to *Tristram Shandy*.

Cock-and-hen-club, a free and easy gathering, or “sing-song,” where females are admitted as well as males.

Cock-and-pinch, the old-fashioned beaver hat, affected by “swells” and “sporting gents” forty years ago—COCKED back and front, and PINCHED up at the sides.

Cock-a-wax, an amplification of the simple term COCK, sometimes “Lad of WAX,” originally applied to a cobbler, but now general.

Cocked-hat-club, the principal clique amongst the members of the Society of Antiquaries, who virtually decide whether any person proposed shall be admitted or not. The term comes from the “cocked-hat” placed before the president at the sittings. There was another cocked-hat club in London not many years back, which had nothing peculiar about it beyond the fact that every member wore during club sittings, a “fore-and-aft” cocked-hat. Otherwise the proceedings were of the most ordinary kind.

Cocked-hat-shaped, shapeless: Anything which has been altered beyond recognition, or any man who has been put completely *hors de combat*, is said to have been knocked into a COCKED-HAT.

Cocker, “It is all right, according to Cocker,” meaning that everything has been done in accordance with the present system of figures. The phrase refers to the celebrated writing-master of Charles II.’s time, whose *Arithmetic, Dictionary, &c.*, were long the standard authorities. The *Arithmetic* was first published in 1677-8, and, though it reached more than sixty editions, is considered a very scarce book. Professor de Morgan says that the main goodness of Cocker’s *Tutor* consists in his adopting the abbreviated system of division; and suggests that it became a proverbial representative of arithmetic from Murphy’s farce of *The Apprentice*, 1756, in which the strong point of the old merchant, Wingate, is his extreme reverence for Cocker and his arithmetic. A curious fact may here be mentioned in connexion with this saying. It has been stated, and very well proved, that many words popular in Shakspeare’s time, and now obsolete in this country, are still in every-day use in the older English settlements of North America. The original compiler of this work was surprised, when travelling through Western Canada, to find that, instead of the renowned Cocker, the people appealed to another and more learned authority. “According to Gunter,” is a phrase in continual Transatlantic use. This scientific worthy invented the sector in 1606; and in 1623, about the time of the great Puritan exodus to North America, he brought out his famous *Rule of Proportion*. This was popularly known as Gunter’s Proportion, or *Gunter’s Line*, and the term soon became a vulgar standard of appeal in cases of doubt or dispute.

[123]

Cock-eye, a term of opprobrium often applied to one that squints.

Cockles, “to rejoice the COCKLES of one’s heart,” a vulgar phrase implying great pleasure. Also, to “warm one’s COCKLES,” said of any hot, well-spiced drink, taken in cold weather. COCKLES altogether seem to be an imaginary portion—of great importance—in the internal economy of the human frame.

Cockney, a native of London. Originally, a spoilt or effeminate boy, derived from COCKERING, or foolishly petting a person, rendering him of soft and luxurious manners. Halliwell states, in his admirable essay upon the word, that “some writers trace the word with much probability to the imaginary land of COCKAYGNE, the lubber land of the olden times.” Grose gives Minsheu’s absurd but comical derivation:—A citizen of London being in the country, and hearing a horse neigh, exclaimed, “Lord! how that horse laughs!” A bystander informed him that the noise was called neighing. The next morning when the cock crowed, the citizen, to show that he had not forgotten what was told him, cried out, “Do you hear how the COCK NEIGHS?”—See [MARE’S NEST](#).

Cock of the walk, a master spirit, head of a party. Places where poultry are fed are called WALKS, and the barn door cocks invariably fight for the supremacy till one has obtained it. At schools where this phrase was originally much used, it has been diminished to “COCK” only.

Cock one’s toes, to die. Otherwise “turn-up one’s toes.”

Cock-robin shop, a small printing-office, where cheap and nasty work is done and low wages are paid.

Cocks, fictitious narratives, in verse or prose, of murders, fires, and terrible accidents, sold in the streets as true accounts. The man who hawks them, a patterer, often changes the scene of the awful event to suit the taste of the neighbourhood he is trying to delude. Possibly a corruption of *cook*, a cooked statement, or maybe “the story of a cock and a bull” may have had something to do with the term. Improvements in newspapers, especially in those published in the evening, and increased scepticism on the part of the public, have destroyed this branch of a once-flourishing business.

Cockshy, a game at fairs and races, where trinkets are set upon sticks, and for one penny three throws at them are accorded, the thrower keeping whatever he knocks off. From the ancient game of throwing or “shying” at live cocks. Any prominent person abused in the newspapers is said to be a common COCKSHY.

[124]

Cocksure, certain.

Cocky, pert, saucy.

Cocoa-nut, the head. A pugilistic term. Also, when anything is explained to a man for the first time, it is not unusual for him to say, "Ah, that accounts for the milk in the cocoa-nut"—a remark which has its origin in a clever but not very moral story.

Cocum, shrewdness, ability, luck; "Jack's got COCUM, he's safe to get on, he is,"—viz., he starts under favourable circumstances; "to fight COCUM" is to be wily and cautious. Allied perhaps to the Scottish KEEK, *German*, GUCKEN, to peep or pry into.

Cod, to hoax, to take a "rise" out of one. Used as a noun, a fool.

Coddam, a public-house game, much affected by medical students and cabmen, generally three on each side. The game is "simplicity itself," but requires a great amount of low cunning and peculiar mental ingenuity. It consists in guessing in which of the six hands displayed on the table, a small piece of marked money lies hid. If the guesser "brings it home," his side takes the "piece," and the centre man "works" it. If the guess is wrong, a chalk is taken to the holders, who again secrete the coin. Great fun is to be obtained from this game when it is properly played.

Codds, the "poor brethren" of the Charter House. In *The Newcomes*, Thackeray writes, "The Cistercian lads call these old gentlemen CODDS; I know not wherefore." A probable abbreviation of CODGER.

Codger, OR COGER, an old man; "a rum old CODGER," a curious old fellow. CODGER is sometimes used as synonymous with CADGER, and then signifies a person who gets his living in a questionable manner. "COGERS," the name of a debating society, formerly held in Shoe Lane, Fleet Street, and still in existence. The term is probably a corruption of COGITATORS.

Coffee-Shop, a watercloset, or house of office.

Cog, to cheat at dice.—*Shakspeare*. Also, to agree with, as one cog-wheel does with another, to crib from another's book, as schoolboys often do. This is called "cogging over."

Cogged, loaded like false dice. Any one who has been hocused or cheated is sometimes said to have been COGGED.

Coin, "to post the COIN"—sometimes "post the coal"—a sporting phrase meaning to make a deposit of money for a match of any kind.

Cold blood, a house licensed for the sale of beer "NOT to be drunk on the premises."

Cold coffee, misfortune; sometimes varied to COLD GRUEL. An unpleasant return for a proffered kindness is sometimes called COLD COFFEE.—*Sea*.

Cold coffee, an Oxford synonym for a "[sell](#)," which *see*.

Cold cook, an undertaker. Cold cook's shop, an undertaker's.

Cold meat, a corpse. COLD-MEAT BOX, a coffin.

Cold meat train, the last train at night by which officers can reach Aldershot per South Western Railway. So called because by this train corpses are often conveyed on account of the Necropolis Company to Woking.

Cold shoulder, "to show or give any one the COLD SHOULDER" is to "cut" in a modified form, to assume a distant manner towards anybody, to evince a desire to cease acquaintanceship. Sometimes termed "COLD SHOULDER of mutton."

Colfabias, a Latinized Irish phrase signifying the closet of decency, applied as a slang term to a place of resort in Trinity College, Dublin.

Collar, "out of COLLAR," *i.e.*, out of place, no work. Probably a variation of the metaphorical expressions, "in, or out of harness," *i.e.*, in or out of work—the horse being in collar when harnessed for his work. COLLAR work is any very hard work, from the expression among drivers. Any uphill journey is said to be all "COLLAR work" for the horses.

Collar, to seize, to lay hold of. Thieves' slang, *i.e.*, to steal.

Collar and elbow, a term for a peculiar style of wrestling—the Cornwall and Devon style.

Collections, the College examinations at the end of each term, when undergraduates wear white ties and bands, and are trotted through the subjects of the term's lecture. These are the occasions when the dons administer reproof or advice on the conduct of each individual undergrad.—*Oxford University*.

Collogue, to conspire, talk mysteriously together in low tones, plot mischief. Connected with "colloquy" or "colleague." Maybe mixture of both.

Colly-wobbles, the stomach-ache, a person's bowels,—supposed by many to be the seat of feeling and nutrition.—*Devonshire*.

Colour, complexion, tint; "I've not seen the COLOUR of his money," *i.e.*, he has never paid me any. In fortune-telling by cards, a *diamond colour* is the fairest; *heart-colour*, fair, but not so fair as the last; *club colour*, rather dark; *spade colour*, an extremely swarthy complexion.

Colour, a handkerchief worn by each of the supporters of a professional athlete on the day of a match, so as to distinguish them from the partizans of the other side. The professional chooses his colours, and his backers, and as many of the general public as can be persuaded to do so, take one each to wear on the eventful day, the understanding being that the man is to be paid,

say, a guinea if he wins, and nothing if he loses. Some of these handkerchiefs used to be, in the palmy days of pugilism and professional rowing on the Thames, very fine specimens of work; but as their purveyors expected to be paid whether they won or lost, and as the price was generally about four times the intrinsic value, colours are rather shyly dealt with now. The custom is, however, a very ancient one, and such men as Tom Sayers, Tom King, Harry Kelley, and Bob Chambers have, even in these degenerate days, received very large sums for their winning colours.

Colt, a murderous weapon, formed by slinging a small shot to the end of a rather stiff piece of rope. It is the original of the misnamed "life-preserver."

Colt, a person who sits as jurymen for the first time. In Cork an operative baker who does not belong to the union.

Colt, a professional cricketer during his first season. From the best colts in the annual match are selected new county players.

Colt, to fine a new jurymen a sum to be spent in drink, by way of "wetting" his office; to make a person free of a new place, which is done by his standing treat, and submitting to be struck on the sole of the foot with a piece of board.

Colt's tooth, elderly persons of juvenile tastes are said to have a COLT'S TOOTH, *i.e.*, a desire to shed their teeth once more, to see life over again.

Comb-cut, mortified, disgraced, "down on one's luck."—*See* [CUT](#).

Come, a slang verb used in many phrases; "Aint he COMING IT?" *i.e.*, is he not proceeding at a great rate? "Don't COME TRICKS here," "don't COME THE OLD SOLDIER over me," *i.e.*, we are aware of your practices, and "twig" your manoeuvre. COMING IT STRONG, exaggerating, going ahead, the opposite of "drawing it mild." COMING IT also means informing or disclosing. Also, in pugilistic phraseology, to COME IT means to show fear; and in this respect, as well as in that of giving information, the expression "COME IT" is best known to the lower and most dangerous classes.

Come down, to pay down.

Commemoration, the end of Lent term at Oxford, when honorary degrees are conferred and certain prizes given, and when men have friends "up."

Commission, a shirt.—*Ancient Cant. Italian, CAMICIA.*

"As from our beds, we doe oft cast our eyes,
Cleane linnen yeelds a shirt before we rise,
Which is a garment *shifting* in condition;
And in the *canting tongue* is a COMMISSION.
In weale or woe, in joy or dangerous drifts,
A *shirt* will put a man unto his *shifts*."

—*Taylor's Works*, 1630.

For further particulars, *see* [CAMESA](#).

Commister, a chaplain or clergyman.—Originally *Old Cant*.

Common sewer, a DRAIN,—vulgar equivalent for a drink.

Commons, the allowance of anything sent out of the buttery or kitchen. "A COMMONS of bread," or "of cheese," for instance.—*University*. SHORT COMMONS (derived from the University slang term), a scanty meal, a scarcity.

Competition wallah, one who entered the Indian Civil Service by passing a competitive examination.—*Anglo-Indian*.

Compo, a sailor's term for his monthly advance of wages.

Comprador, a purveyor, an agent.—*Originally Spanish, now Anglo-Chinese.*

Concaves and convexes, a pack of cards contrived for cheating, by cutting all the cards from the two to the seven concave, and all from the eight to the king convex. Then by cutting the pack breadthwise a convex card is cut, and by cutting it lengthwise a concave is secured.



—*See* [LONGS AND SHORTS](#).

Conjee, a kind of gruel made of rice.—*Anglo-Indian*.

Conk, a nose. Possibly from the *Latin*, CONCHA, a shell. *Greek*, κόγχη—hence anything hollow. Somewhat of a parallel may be found in the *Latin*, TESTA, an earthenware pot, a shell, and in later *Latin*, a skull; from whence the *French* TESTE, or TÊTE, head. CONKY, having a projecting or remarkable nose. The first Duke of Wellington was frequently termed "Old CONKY" in satirical papers and caricatures.

Connaught Rangers, the Eighty-eighth Regiment of Foot in the British Army.

Conshun's price, fair terms, without extortion. Probably conscience price.—*Anglo-Chinese*.

Constable, "to overrun the CONSTABLE," to exceed one's income, or get deep in debt. The origin of this phrase is unknown, but its use is very general.

Constitutional, a walk, or other exercise taken for the benefit of the health.

Consumah, a butler.—*Anglo-Indian*.

Contango, among stockbrokers and jobbers, is a certain sum paid for accommodating a buyer or seller, by carrying the engagement to pay money or deliver shares over to the next account day.

Continuations, coverings for the legs, whether trousers or breeches. A word belonging to the same squeamish, affected family as unmentionables, inexpressibles, &c.

Convey, to steal; "CONVEY, the wise it call."

Conveyancer, a pickpocket. Shakspeare uses the cant expression CONVEYER, a thief. The same term is also French slang.

Cooley, the Australian bush-call, now not unfrequently heard in the streets of London.

Cook, a term well known in the Bankruptcy Courts, in reference to accounts that have been meddled with, or COOKED, by the bankrupt; also to form a balance-sheet from general trade inferences; stated by a correspondent to have been first used in reference to the celebrated alteration of the accounts of the Eastern Counties Railway, by George Hudson, the Railway King. Any unfair statements of accounts or reports are now said to be COOKED.

Cook, in artistic circles, to dodge up a picture. Artists say that a picture will not COOK when it is excellent and unconventional, and beyond specious imitation.

Cook one's goose, to kill or ruin a person.—*North*.

Cooler, a glass of porter as a wind up, after drinking spirits and water. This form of drinking is sometimes called "putting the beggar on the gentleman."

[128]

Coolie, a soldier, in allusion to the Hindoo COOLIES, or day labourers.

Coon, abbreviation of racoon.—*American*. A GONE COON—*ditto*, one in an awful fix, past praying for. This expression is said to have originated in the first American war with a spy, who dressed himself in a racoon skin, and ensconced himself in a tree. An English rifleman taking him for a veritable coon, levelled his piece at him, upon which he exclaimed, "Don't shoot, I'll come down of myself, I know I'm a GONE COON." The Yankees say the Britisher was so "flummuxed," that he flung down his rifle and "made tracks" for home. The phrase is pretty general in England. [There is one difficulty about this story—How big was the man who dressed himself in a racoon skin?]

Cooper, "stout half-and-half," *i.e.*, half stout and half porter. Derived from the coopers at breweries being allowed so much stout and so much porter a day, which they take mixed.

Cooper, to destroy, spoil, settle, or finish. COOPERED, spoilt, "done up," synonymous with the Americanism caved in, fallen in, ruined. The vagabonds' hieroglyph ▽, chalked by them on gate posts and houses, signifies that the place has been spoilt by too many tramps calling there.

Cooper, to forge, or imitate in writing; "COOPER a monniker," to forge a signature.

Cooter, "a sovereign."—*See* COUTER. Gipsy, CUTA.

Cop, to seize or lay hold of anything unpleasant; used in a similar sense to *catch* in the phrase "to COP (or catch) a beating." "To get COPT," is to be taken by the police. Probable contraction of Lat. *capere*.

Cop, beware, take care. A contraction of COPRADOR.—*Anglo-Indian*.

Coper, properly HORSE-COUPER, a Scotch horse-dealer,—used to denote a dishonest one. COPING, like jockeying, is suggestive of all kinds of trickery.

Copper, a policeman, *i.e.*, one who COPS, which *see*.

Copper, a halfpenny. COPPERS, mixed pence.

Coppernote, a nose which is supposed to show a partiality on its owner's part for strong drink. Synonymous with "jolly nose." Grog-blossoms are the jewels often set in a jolly nose.

Copus, a Cambridge drink, consisting of ale combined with spices, and varied by spirits, wines, &c. Corruption of HIPPOCRAS.

Corduroy roads, an American term for the rough roads made by simply laying logs along a clearing.

Corinthianism, a term derived from the classics, much in vogue some years ago, implying pugilism, high life, "sprees," roystering, &c.—Shakspeare, 1 *Hen. IV.* ii. 4. The immorality of *Corinth* was proverbial in Greece. Κορινθιαίεσθαι, to *Corinthianize*, indulge in the company of courtezans, was a Greek slang expression. Hence the proverb—

[129]

Οὐ παντὸς ἀνδρὸς εἰς Κόρινθον ἔσθ' ὁ πλοῦς;

and *Horace*, Epist. lib. 1, xvii. 36—

"Non cuivis hommi contingit adire Corinthum,"

in allusion to the spoliation practised by the "hetærae" on those who visited them. Pierce Egan, in his *Life in London*, is responsible for a deal of the modern use of this word; and after him *Bell's Life*, as the oracle of Corinthian sport, was not idle.

Cork, a broken man, a bankrupt. Probably intended to refer to his lightness, as being without

“ballast.”

Cork, “to draw a CORK,” to give a bloody nose.—*Pugilistic*.

Corkage, money charged when persons at an hotel provide their own wine—sixpence being charged for each “cork” drawn.

Corked, said of wine which tastes of cork, from being badly decanted, or which has lost flavour from various other obvious causes.

Corker, “that’s a CORKER,” *i.e.*, that settles the question, or closes the discussion.

Corks, a butler. Derivation very obvious.

Corks, money; “how are you off for CORKS?” a sailors’ term of a very expressive kind, denoting the means of “keeping afloat.”

Corned, drunk or intoxicated. Possibly from soaking or pickling oneself like CORNED beef.

Corner, “the CORNER,” Tattersall’s famous horse repository and betting rooms, so called from the fact of its situation, which was at Hyde Park Corner. Though Tattersall’s has been removed some distance, to Albert Gate, it is still known to the older habitués of the Subscription Room as “the CORNER.”

Cornered, hemmed in a corner, placed in a position from which there is no escape.

Corner-man, the end singer of a corps of Ethiopian or nigger minstrels. There are two corner men, one generally plays the bones and the other the tambourine. Corner-men are the grotesques of a minstrel company.

Corn in Egypt, a popular expression which means a plentiful supply of materials for a dinner, &c., or a good supply of money. Its origin is of course Biblical.

Corporation, the protuberant front of an obese person. Probably from the old announcements which used to be made, and are made now in some towns where improvements are made by the municipal authorities, “Widened at the expense of the CORPORATION.”

Corpse, to stick fast in the dialogue; to confuse, or put out the actors by making a mistake.—*Theatrical*.

Cosh, a neddy, a life-preserver; any short, loaded bludgeon.

Cossack, a policeman.

Costard, the head. A very old word, generally used in connexion with “cracked.”

Coster, the short and slang rendering of “costermonger,” or “costardmonger,” who was originally an apple-seller. COSTERING, *i.e.*, costermongering, acting as a costermonger would.

Costermonger, a street seller of fish, fruit, vegetables, poultry, &c. The London costermongers number more than 30,000. They form a distinct class, occupying whole neighbourhoods, and were at one time cut off from the rest of metropolitan society by their low habits, general improvidence, pugnacity, love of gambling, total want of education, disregard for lawful marriage ceremonies, and their use of a peculiar slang language. They have changed a good deal of this, though, now. COSTERMONGER *aliter* COSTARDMONGER, *i.e.*, an apple-seller. In Nares’s *Glossary* (Ed. H. & W.) they are said to have been frequently Irish. So, Ben Jonson—

“Her father was an Irish COSTAR-MONGER.”

Alchym., iv. x.

“In England, sir, troth I ever laugh when I think on ‘t,
---Why, sir, there all the COSTER-MONGERS are Irish.”

2 P. Hen. IV., O. Pl., iii. 375.

Their noisy manners are alluded to in Beaumont and Fletcher’s *Scornful Lady*, iv. I.

“And then he’ll rail like a rude COSTER-MONGER
That school-boys had couzened of his apples,
As loud and senseless.”

Cotton, to like, adhere to, or agree with any person; “to COTTON on to a man,” to attach yourself to him, or fancy him, literally, to stick to him as cotton would. *Vide* Bartlett, who claims it as an Americanism, and Halliwell, who terms it an archaism; also *Bacchus and Venus*, 1737.

“Her heart’s as hard as taxes, and as bad;
She does not even COTTON to her dad.”

Halliday and Lawrance, Kenilworth Burlesque.

Cotton Lord, a Manchester manufacturer.

Cottonopolis, Manchester. A term much in use among the reporters of the sporting press engaged in that locality.

Council-of-ten, the toes of a man who turns his feet inward.

Counter, to hit back, to exchange blows. A CROSS COUNTER is a blow with the right hand given in exchange for one with the left, the counterer preferring to strike rather than to “stop” the blow.

—*Pugilistic*.

Counter-jumper, a shopman, a draper's assistant.

Country-captain, a spatch-cocked fowl, sprinkled with curry-powder. A favourite breakfast dish with the captains of country-ships.—*Indian*.

Country-ship, a ship belonging to the East Indies, and trading from port to port in that country.

County-crop (*i.e.*, COUNTY-PRISON CROP), haircut close and round, as if guided by a basin—an indication of having been in prison. Since short hair has become fashionable the expression has fallen somewhat into disuse. In the times when long hair was worn, a man with his hair cut as described was said to have had it done with a knife and fork.

Couple-beggar, a degraded person, who officiated as a clergyman in performing marriages in the Fleet Prison. [131]

Couter, a sovereign. HALF-A-COUTER, half-a-sovereign. From the Danubian-gipsy word CUTA, a gold coin.

Cove, or COVEY, a boy or man of any age or station. A term generally preceded by an expressive adjective, thus a "flash COVE," a "rum COVE," a "downy COVE," &c. The feminine, COVESS, was once popular, but it has fallen into disuse. Originally ancient cant (temp. Henry VII.), COFE, or CUFFIN, altered in Decker's time to COVE. See *Witts' Recreations*, 1654: "there's a gentry-COVE here," *i.e.*, a gentleman. Probably connected with CUIF, which, in the North of England, signifies a lout or awkward fellow. Amongst Negroes, CUFFEE.

Coventry, "to send a man to COVENTRY," not to speak to or notice him. Coventry was one of those towns in which the privilege of practising most trades was anciently confined to certain privileged persons, as the freemen, &c. Hence a stranger stood little chance of custom, or countenance, and "to send a man to COVENTRY" came to be equivalent to putting him out of the pale of society.

Cover-down, a tossing coin with a false cover, enabling either head or tail to be shown, according as the cover is left on or taken off. The cover is more generally called a CAP. This style of cheating is now obsolete. A man who cannot manage to cheat at tossing without machinery is a sorry rogue.

Cowan, a sneak, an inquisitive or prying person. *Greek*, κύων, a dog. Term given by Freemasons to all uninitiated persons. Used in Anderson's *Constitutions*, edit. 1769, p. 97. If derived from κύων, its use was probably suggested by such passages in the N. T. as Matt. vii. 6, and Phil. iii. 2. The Moslems apply dog in a similar manner. It is probably Oriental. Other authorities say it is from COWAN, or KIRWAN, a Scottish word signifying a man who builds rough stone walls without mortar—a man who, though he builds, is not a practical mason.

Cow-cow, to be very angry, to scold or reprimand violently.—*Anglo-Chinese*.

Cow-hocked, clumsy about the ankles; with large or awkward feet.

Cow-lick, the term given to the lock of hair which costermongers and tramps usually twist forward from the ear; a large greasy curl upon the cheek, seemingly licked into shape. These locks are also called NUMBER SIXES, from their usual shape. The opposite of [NEWGATE-KNOCKER](#), which *see*.

Cow's grease, butter.

Coxy-loxy, good-tempered, drunk.—*Norfolk*.

Crab, a disagreeable old person. Name of a wild and sour fruit.

Crab, "to catch a CRAB," to fall backwards by missing a stroke in rowing. From the crab-like or sprawling appearance of the man when in the bottom of the boat.

Crab, to offend, or insult; to expose or defeat a robbery, to inform against. CRAB, in the sense of "to offend," is *Old English*. [132]

"If I think one thing and speak another,
I will both CRAB Christ and our Ladie His mother."

Packman's Paternoster.

Crabs, in dicing, a pair of aces.

Crabshells, or TROTTER-CASES, shoes.—*See* [CARTS](#).

Crack, the favourite horse in a race. Steeplechase and hunting CRACKS have been made the subjects of well-known pictures, and "the gallops of the CRACKS" is a prominent line in the sporting papers.

Crack, first-rate, excellent; "a CRACK HAND," an adept; a "CRACK article," a good one. "A CRACK regiment," a fashionable one.—*Old*.

Crack, dry firewood.—*Modern Gipsy*.

Crack, "in a CRACK (of the finger and thumb)," in a moment.

Crack, to break into a house; "CRACK A CRIB," to commit burglary.

Crack a bottle, to drink. Shakspeare uses CRUSH in the same slang sense.

Cracked up, penniless or ruined.

Cracking a crust, rubbing along in the world. CRACKING A TIDY CRUST, means doing very well. This is a very common expression among the lower orders.

Crackle, or CRACKLING, the scored rind on a roast leg or loin of pork; hence applied to the velvet bars on the gowns of the students at St. John's College, Cambridge, long called "Hogs," and the covered bridge which connects one of the courts with the grounds, Isthmus of Suez (SUES, *Lat.* SUS, a swine).

Cracksman, a burglar, *i.e.*, the man who [CRACKS](#).

Crack up, to boast or praise.—*Ancient English*.

Cram, to lie or deceive, implying to fill up or CRAM a person with false stories; to impart or acquire learning quickly, to "grind" or prepare for an examination.

Crammer, one skilled in rapidly preparing others for an examination. One in the habit of telling lies.

Crammer, a lie.

Cranky, foolish, idiotic, rickety, capricious (not confined to persons). *Ancient cant*, CRANKE, simulated sickness. *German*, KRANK, sickly. A CRANK OF CRANKY vessel is one which pitches very much.

Crap, to ease oneself by evacuation.

Crapping case, or KEN, the water-closet. Generally called CRAPPING-CASTLE.

Crawler, a mean, contemptible, sycophantic fellow. Also a cab which is driven slowly along while its driver looks out for a fare. Crawling is by recent statute a punishable offence.

Crawly mawly, in an ailing, weakly, or sickly state.

Craw thumper, a Roman Catholic. Compare [BRISKET-BEATER](#).

Cream of the valley, gin; as opposed to or distinguished from "mountain dew," whisky.

[133]

Crib, house, public or otherwise; lodgings, apartments; a situation. Very general in the latter sense.

Crib, to steal or purloin; to appropriate small things.

Crib, a literal translation of a classic author.—*University*.

Crib biter, an inveterate grumbler; properly said of a horse which has this habit, a sign of its bad digestion.

Cribbage-faced, marked with the small-pox, full of holes like a cribbage-board. Otherwise crumpet-face.

Crikey, profane exclamation of astonishment; "Oh, CRIKEY, you don't say so!" corruption of "O Christ!" Sometimes varied by "O crimes!"

Cripple, a bent sixpence.

Cripple, an awkward or clumsy person. Also one of dull wits.

Croak, to die—from the gurgling sound a person makes when the breath of life is departing.

Croaker, one who takes a desponding view of everything, a misanthrope; an alarmist. From the croaking of a raven.—*Ben Jonson*.

Croaker, a beggar.

Croaker, a dying person beyond hope; a corpse. The latter is generally called a "stiff'un."

Croaks, last dying speeches, and murderers' confessions.

Crocodiles' tears, the tears of a hypocrite. An ancient phrase, introduced into this country by Mandeville, or other early English traveller, who believed that the crocodile made a weeping noise to attract travellers, and then devoured them. See Shakspeare's use of the term in *Othello*.

Crocus, or CROAKUS, a quack or travelling doctor; CROCUS-CHOVEY, a chemist's shop.

Crone, a termagant or malicious old woman. CRONY, an intimate friend.

Crooked, a term used among dog-stealers and the "fancy" generally, to denote anything stolen. "Got on the CROOK" is exchangeable with "Got on the cross," CROOK and cross generally being synonymous.

Crooky, to hang on to, to lead, to walk arm-in-arm; to court or pay addresses to a girl.

Cropped, hanged. Sometimes topped. "May I be topped."

Cropper, a heavy fall, a decided failure. Term originally used in the hunting-field, but now general, and not at all confined to physical matters.

Cropper, "to go a CROPPER," or "to come a CROPPER," *i.e.*, to fail badly.

Croppie, a person who has had his hair cut, or CROPPED, in prison. Formerly those who had been

CROPPED (*i.e.*, had their ears cut off and their noses slit) by the public executioner were called CROPPIES, then the Puritans received the reversion of the title.

Crop up, to turn up in the course of conversation. "It CROPPED UP while we were speaking."

[134]

Cross, a deception—two persons pretending hostility or indifference to each other, being all the while in concert for the purpose of deceiving a third. In the sporting world a CROSS is an arrangement made between two men that one shall win without reference to relative merits. This is sometimes done with the backer's consent for the public benefit, at other times a backer is himself the sufferer, the men having "put some one in to lay," according to instructions.—See [DOUBLE CROSS](#).

Cross, a general term amongst thieves expressive of their plundering profession, the opposite of square. "To get anything on the CROSS" is to obtain it surreptitiously. "CROSS-FANNING in a crowd," robbing persons of their scarf-pins, so called from the peculiar position of the arms. This style of thieving is not confined to the conveying of scarf-pins. CROSSMAN, a thief, or one who lives by dishonest practices.

Cross.—For not paying his term bills to the bursar (treasurer), or for cutting chapels, or lectures, or other offences, the undergrad can be "CROSSED" at the buttery, or kitchen, or both, *i.e.*, a CROSS is put against his name by the Don, who wishes to see him, or to punish him. Of course it is easy to get one's buttery commons out in some one else's name, and to order dinner in from the confectioner's. The porter is supposed to allow no dinners to be sent in, but, between his winking and a little disguise, it is possible. As another instance, a barrel of beer will not be admitted; but if it is in a hamper it will pass!—*Oxford University*.

Cross-buttock, an unexpected fling down or repulse; from a peculiar throw practised by wrestlers.

Cross cove and molisher, a man and woman who live by thieving.

Cross-crib, a house frequented by thieves.

Crossed, prohibited from taking food from the buttery.—*University*.

Crow, or COCK-CROW, to exult over another's abasement, as a fighting-cock does over his vanquished adversary.

Crow, "a regular CROW," a success, a stroke of luck,—equivalent to a [FLUKE](#).

Crow, one who watches whilst another commits a theft, a confederate in a robbery. The CROW looks to see that the way is clear, whilst the SNEAK, his partner, commits the depredation.

Crow, "I have a CROW to pick with you," *i.e.*, an explanation to demand, a disagreeable matter to settle. Sometimes the article picked is supposed to be a bone.

Crowsfeet, wrinkles which gather in the corners of the eyes of old or dissipated people.

Crug, food. Christ's Hospital boys apply it only to bread.

Crumbs, "to pick up one's CRUMBS," to begin to have an appetite after an illness; to improve in health, circumstances, &c., after a loss thereof.

Crummy, fat, plump.—*North*. In London street slang, lousy.

Crummy-doss, a lousy or filthy bed.

[135]

Crumpet-face, a face pitted with small-pox marks.

Crunch, to crush. Perhaps from the sound of teeth grinding against each other.

Crush, to run or decamp rapidly. CRUSH DOWN SIDES, run to a place of safety, or the appointed rendezvous.—*North Country Cant*.

Crusher, a policeman.

Crushing, excellent, first-rate.

Crusty, ill-tempered, petulant, morose.—*Old*, said to be a corruption of the *Anglo-Norman* CORUSEUX.

Cub, a mannerless uncouth lout.—See [UNLICKED](#).

Cubitopolis, an appellation, originally given by Londoners to the Warwick and Eccleston Square districts. From the name of the builders.

Cue, properly the last word spoken by one actor, it being the CUE for the other to reply. "Very often an actor knows nothing of a piece beyond his own lines and the CUES."

Cull, a man or boy.—*Old Cant*. RUM CULL, the manager of a theatre.

Cullet, broken glass. *French*, CUEILLETTE, a gathering or collection.

Culling, OR CULING, stealing from the carriages at racecourses.

Cully gorgor, a companion, a brother actor.—*Theatrical*. See [GORGER](#).

Culver-headed, weak and stupid.

Cummer, a gossip or acquaintance.

Cumshaw, a present or bribe.—*Anglo-Chinese*.

Cupboard-headed, an expressive designation of one whose head is both wooden and hollow.—*Norfolk*.

Cupboard-love, affection arising from interested motives.

“A CUPBOARD LOVE is seldom true;
A love sincere is found in few.”—*Poor Robin*.

Cupboard is the fount-spring of the love supposed to exist among policemen for the cooks upon their beats.

Cup-tosser, a person who professes to tell fortunes by examining the grounds in tea or coffee cups. A cup or goblet, however, is the old mystic symbol of a juggler. *French*, JOUEUR DE GOBELET.

Cure, an odd person; a contemptuous term, abridged from CURIOSITY, which was formerly the favourite expression. The word cure, as originally applied, was London street slang, and was, as just stated, an abbreviation of curiosity, or, more correctly, of curious or queer fellow. Of late years it has, however, been used to denote a funny, humorous person, who can give and receive chaff.

Curios, a corruption of “curiosities;” any articles of vertu brought from abroad. Used by naval and military travellers and others.

Currency, persons born in Australia are there termed CURRENCY, while natives of England are termed STERLING. The allusion is to the difference between colonial and imperial moneys, which it may be as well to remark have no difference so far as actual value is concerned.

[136]

Curse, anything worthless. Corruption of the *Old English* word KERSE, a small sour wild cherry; *French*, CERISE; *German*, KIRSCH. *Vision of Piers Ploughman*:—

“Wisdom and witt nowe is *not worth* a KERSE,
But if it be carded with cootis as clothers
Kembe their woole.”

The expression “not worth a CURSE,” used frequently nowadays, is therefore not properly profane, though it is frequently intensified by a profane expletive. Horne Tooke says from KERSE, or CRESS. The expression “not worth a tinker’s CURSE,” may or may not have arisen from misapplication of the word’s origin, though as now used it certainly means curse in its usual sense. Tinkers do curse, unfortunately, and it will take a good deal of school-board work to educate them out of it, as well as a fair amount of time. The phrase “not worth a tinker’s damn,” is evidently a variation of this, unless indeed it should be spelt “dam,” and used as a reference to the general worthlessness of the wives and mothers of tinkers. This latter is merely offered to those who are speculative in such matters, and is not advanced as an opinion.

Curse of Scotland, the Nine of Diamonds. Various hypotheses have been set up as to this appellation—that it was the card on which the “Butcher Duke” wrote a cruel order with respect to the rebels after the battle of Culloden; that the diamonds are the nine lozenges in the arms of Dalrymple, Earl of Stair, detested for his share in the Massacre of Glencoe; that it is a corruption of Cross of Scotland, the nine diamonds being arranged somewhat after the fashion of a St. Andrew’s Cross. The first supposition is evidently erroneous, for in Dr. Houston’s *Memoirs of his own Lifetime*, 1747, p. 92, the Jacobite ladies are stated to have nicknamed the Nine of Diamonds “the Justice Clerk,” after the rebellion of 1715, in allusion to the Lord Justice-Clerk Ormiston, who, for his severity in suppressing it, was called the Curse of Scotland. Gules a cross of lozenges were also the arms of Colonel Packer, who attended Charles I. on the scaffold, and commanded in Scotland afterwards with great severity.—*See* Chatto on the *Origin and History of Playing Cards*, p. 267. The most probable explanation is, that in the game of Pope Joan the nine of diamonds is the POPE, of whom the Scotch have an especial horror.

Curtail, to cut off. Originally a Cant word—vide *Hudibras*, and *Bacchus and Venus*, 1737. Evidently derived from the French *court tailler*.

Cushion, to hide or conceal.

Cushion-smiter, polite rendering of tub-thumper, a clergyman, a preacher.

Cushmawaunee, never mind. Sailors and soldiers who have been in India frequently say—

“CUSHMAWAUNEE,
If we cannot get arrack,
We must drink pawnee.”

Anglo-Indian.

Customer, synonymous with CHAF, a fellow; “a rum CUSTOMER,” *i.e.*, a man likely to turn the tables on any one who attacked him, and therefore better be let alone, or very warily proceeded with; an “odd fish,” or curious person.—*Shakspeare*.

[137]

Customhouse-officer, an aperient pill.

Cut, to run away, move off quickly; to cease doing anything; CUT AND RUN, to quit work, or occupation, and start off at once—*Sea* phrase, “CUT the cable and RUN before the wind;” to CUT DIDOES, synonymous with to CUT CAPERS; CUT A DASH, make a show; CUT A CAPER, to dance or show off in a strange manner; CUT A FIGURE, to make either a good or bad appearance; CUT IT, desist, be quiet,

go away, leave what you are doing and run; CUT IT SHORT, cease being prolix, "make short work" of what you have in hand; CUT OUT, to excel, thus in affairs of gallantry one Adonis is said to CUT the other out in the affections of the wished-for lady—*Sea* phrase, from CUTTING out a ship from the enemy's port. CUT THAT! be quiet, or stop; CUT OUT OF, done out of; CUT OF ONE'S JIB, the expression or cast of his countenance [see [JIB](#)]; TO CUT ONE'S COMB, to take down a conceited person, from the practice of cutting the combs of capons [see [COMB CUT](#)]; CUT AND COME AGAIN, plenty, if one cut does not suffice, plenty remains to come at again; CUT UP, to mortify, to criticise severely, or expose; CUT UP SHINES, to play tricks; CUT ONE'S STICK, to be off quickly, *i.e.*, to be in readiness for a journey, further elaborated into AMPUTATE YOUR MAHOGANY [see [STICK](#)]; CUT IT FAT, to exaggerate or show off in an extensive manner; to CUT UP FAT, or CUT UP WELL, to die, leaving a large property; CUT UNDER, to undersell; CUT YOUR LUCKY, to run off; CUT ONE'S CART, to expose unfair tricks; CUT AN ACQUAINTANCE, to cease friendly intercourse with him; "CUT UP ROUGH," to become obstreperous and dangerous; to have "CUT ONE'S EYE-TEETH," *i.e.*, to be wide awake, knowing; to DRAW CUTS, to cast lots with papers of unequal lengths.

Cut, to take cards from a pack, with a view to decide by comparison which persons shall be partners, or which players shall deal. Not less than four cards must be picked up by the cutter, and the bottom one is the CUT. When cutting for a "turn-up," the residuum is called the CUT.

Cut, in theatrical language, means to strike out portions of a dramatic piece, so as to render it shorter for representation. A late treasurer of one of the so-called Patent Theatres when asked his opinion of a new play, always gave utterance to the brief but safe piece of criticism, "Wants cutting."

Cut, tipsy.—*Old*.

Cut, to compete in business; "a CUTTING trade," one conducted on competitive principles, where the profits are very closely shaved.

Cut-throat, a butcher, a cattle-slaughterer; a ruffian.

Cute, sharp, cunning. Abbreviation of ACUTE.

Cutter, a ruffian, a cut-purse. Of Robin Hood it was said—

"So being outlaw'd (as 'tis told),
He with a crew went forth
Of lusty CUTTERS, bold and strong,
And robbed in the north."

CUTTER, a swashbuckler—*balaffreux taillebras, fendeur de naseaux*.—*Cotgrave*.

"He's out of cash, and thou know'st by CUTTER'S LAW,
We are bound to relieve one another."

Match at Midn., O. Pl., vii. 553.

This ancient cant word now survives in the phrase, "to swear like a CUTTER."

Cutting-shop, a place where cheap rough goods are sold.

Cutty-pipe, a short clay pipe. *Scotch*, CUTTY, short.

Cutty-sark, a short chemise.—*Scotch*. A scantily-draped lady is so called by Burns.

"Weel done, CUTTY-SARK!
And in an instant all was dark."

Dab, or DABSTER, an expert person. Most probably derived from the Latin *adeptus*.

Dab, street term for small flat fish of any kind.—*Old*.

Dacha-saltee, tenpence. Probably from the *Lingua Franca*. *Modern Greek*, δέκα; *Italian*, DIECI SOLDI, tenpence; *Gipsy*, DIK, ten. So also DACHA-ONE (oney), *i.e.*, dieci uno, elevenpence.—*See* [SALTEE](#).

Daddle, the hand; “tip us your DADDLE,” *i.e.*, shake hands.

Daddy, a stage manager.—*Theatrical*. Also the person who gives away the bride at a wedding.

Daddy; at mock raffles, lotteries, &c., the DADDY is an accomplice, most commonly the getter-up of the swindle, and in all cases the person that has been previously selected to win the prize.

Daddy, the old man in charge—generally an aged pauper—at casual wards. Most people will remember “kind old DADDY.”

Daffy, gin. A term with monthly nurses, who are always extolling the virtues of Daffy’s Elixir, and who occasionally comfort themselves with a stronger medicine under Daffy’s name. Of late years the term has been altered to “soothing syrup.”

Dags, feat or performance; “I’ll do your DAGS,” *i.e.*, I will do something that you cannot do. Corruption of DARINGS.

Dairies, a woman’s breasts, which are also called [CHARLIES](#).

Daisy-cutter, a horse that trots or gallops without lifting its feet much from the ground.

Daisy-kicker, the name ostlers at large inns used to give each other, now nearly obsolete. DAISY-KICKER, or GROGHAM, was likewise the cant term for a horse. The DAISY-KICKERS were sad rogues in the old posting days; frequently the landlords rented the stables to them, as the only plan to make them return a profit.

Damage, in the sense of recompense; “what’s the DAMAGE?” *i.e.*, what is to pay? or actually, what is the DAMAGE to my pocket? [139]

Damper, a shop till; to DRAW A DAMPER, *i.e.*, rob a till. A till is more modernly called a “lob,” and stealing from tills is known as “lob-sneaking.”

Dancer, or dancing-master, a thief who prowls about the roofs of houses, and effects an entrance by attic windows, &c. Called also a “garreter.”

Dance upon nothing, to be hanged.

Dander, passion or temper; “to get one’s DANDER up,” to rouse his passion.—*Old*, but now much used in America.

Dando, a great eater, who cheats at hotels, eating shops, oyster-cellars, &c., from a person of that name who lived many years ago, and who was an enormous oyster-eater. According to the stories related of him, Dando would visit an oyster-room, devour an almost fabulous quantity of bivalves, with porter and bread and butter to match, and then calmly state that he had no money.

Dandy, a fop, or fashionable nondescript. This word, in the sense of a fop, is of modern origin. Egan says it was first used in 1820, and Bee in 1816. Johnson does not mention it, although it is to be found in all late dictionaries. DANDIES wore stays, studied a feminine style, and tried to undo their manhood by all manner of affectations which were not actually immoral. Lord Petersham headed them. At the present day dandies of this stamp have almost entirely disappeared, but the new school of muscular Christians is not altogether faultless. The feminine of DANDY was DANDIZETTE, but the term only lived for a short season.

Dandy, a small glass of whisky.—*Irish*. “Dimidium cyathi vero apud Metropolitanos Hibernicos dicitur DANDY.”—*Father Tom and the Pope*, in *Blackwood’s Magazine* for May 1838.

Dandy, a boatman.—*Anglo-Indian*.

Dandypratt, a funny little fellow, a mannikin; originally a half-farthing of the time of Henry VII.

Danna, human ordure; DANNA DRAG, a nightman’s or dustman’s cart; hence [DUNNA-KEN](#), which *see*.

Darbies, handcuffs.—*Old Cant*.—*See* [JOHNNY DARBIES](#). Sir Walter Scott mentions these, in the sense of fetters, in his *Peveril of the Peak*—

“‘Hark ye! Jem Clink will fetch you the DARBIES.’ ‘Derby!’ interrupted Julian, ‘has the Earl or Countess’”—

Had Sir Walter known of any connexion between them and this family he would undoubtedly have mentioned it. The mistake of Julian is corrected in the next paragraph. It is said that handcuffs were, when used to keep two prisoners together, called DARBIES and JOANS—a term which would soon be shortened as a natural consequence.

Darble, the devil. *French*, DIABLE.

Dark, “keep it DARK,” *i.e.*, secret. A DARK horse is, in racing phraseology, a horse of whom nothing positive is known, but who is generally supposed to have claims to the consideration of all interested, whether bookmakers or backers. [140]

Darky, twilight; also a negro. DARKMANS, the night.

Darn, vulgar corruption of DAMN.—*American*.

Dash, to jot down suddenly. "Things I have DASHED off at a moment's notice."

Dash, fire, vigour, manliness. Literary and artistic work is often said to be full of DASH.

Dash, an ejaculation, as "DASH my wig!" "DASH my buttons!" A relic of the attempts made, when cursing was fashionable, to be in the mode without using "bad words."

Dashing, showy, fast.

Daub, in low language, an artist. Also a badly painted picture.

David's sow, "as drunk as DAVID'S SOW," *i.e.*, beastly drunk. *See* origin of the phrase in Grose's *Dictionary*.

Davy, "on my DAVY," on my affidavit, of which it is a vulgar corruption. Latterly DAVY has become synonymous in street language with the name of the Deity; "so help me DAVY," generally rendered, "swelp my DAVY." Slang version of the conclusion of the oath usually exacted of witnesses.

Davy's locker, or DAVY JONES'S LOCKER, the sea, the common receptacle for all things thrown overboard;—a nautical phrase for death, is "gone to DAVY JONES'S LOCKER," which there means the other world.—*See* [DUFFY](#).

Dawdle, to loiter, or fritter away time.

Dawk, the post.—*Anglo-Indian*.

Daylights, eyes; "to darken his DAYLIGHTS," to give a person black eyes. Also the spaces left in glasses between the liquor and the brim,—not allowed when bumpers are drunk. The toast-master in such cases cries "no DAYLIGHTS or heeltaps!"

Daze, to confound or bewilder; an ancient form of dazzle used by Spenser, Drayton, &c. This is more obsolete English than slang, though its use nowadays might fairly bring it within the latter category.

Dead-against, decidedly opposed to.

Dead-alive, stupid, dull.

Dead-amiss, said of a horse that from illness is utterly unable to run for a prize.

Dead-beat, utterly exhausted, utterly "done up."

Dead-heat, when two horses run home so exactly equal that the judge cannot place one before the other; consequently, a DEAD-HEAT is a heat which counts for nothing, so far as the even runners are concerned, as it has to be run over again. When a race between dead-heaters has been unusually severe, or when the stake is sufficiently good to bear division, it is usual to let one of the animals walk over the course so as to make a deciding heat, and to divide the money. In such case all bets are divided. Sometimes, however, when no arrangement can be made, an owner will withdraw his horse, in which case the animal that walks over wins the whole of the stake, and his backers the whole of their money. Where the course is short and the money of small amount, the DEAD-HEAT is run off, the second essay being called the decider, though on certain occasions even the decider has resulted in a DEAD-HEAT.—*See* [NECK AND NECK](#).

[141]

Dead-horse, "to draw the DEAD-HORSE;" DEAD-HORSE work—working for wages already paid; also any thankless or unassisted service.

Dead-letter, an action of no value or weight; an article, owing to some mistake in its production, rendered utterly valueless,—often applied to any instrument in writing, which by some apparently trivial omission, becomes useless. At the general and large district post-offices, there is a department for letters which have been erroneously addressed, or for which, from many and various causes, there are no receivers. These are called DEAD-LETTERS, and the office in connexion with them is known as the DEAD-LETTER office.

Dead-lock, a permanent standstill, an inextricable entanglement.

Dead-lurk, entering a dwelling-house during divine service.

Dead-man, a baker. Properly speaking, it is an extra loaf smuggled into the basket by the man who carries it out, to the loss of the master. Sometimes the DEAD-MAN is charged to a customer, though never delivered. Among London thieves and low people generally a "dead'un" is a half-quartern loaf.

Dead-men, the term for wine bottles after they are emptied of their contents.—*Old*.—*See* [MARINES](#).

Dead-men's shoes, property which cannot be claimed until after decease of present holder. "To wait for a pair of DEAD-MEN'S SHOES," is considered a wearisome affair. It is used by Fletcher:—

"And 'tis a general shrift, that most men use,
But yet 'tis tedious waiting DEAD MEN'S SHOES."

Fletcher's Poems, p. 256.

Dead-set, a pointed and persistent attack on a person.

Dead'un, a horse which will not run or will not try in a race, and against which money may be betted with safety.—*See* [SAFE UN](#).

Deaner, a shilling. FROM DENIER.

Death, "to dress to DEATH," *i.e.*, to the very extreme of fashion, perhaps so as to be killing.

Death-hunter, a running patterer, who vends last dying speeches and confessions. More modernly the term is supposed to mean an undertaker, or any one engaged in or concerned with burials.

Deck, a pack of cards. Used by Shakspeare, 3 *K. Hen. VI.*, v. 1. Probably because of DECKING or arranging the table for a game at cards. General in the United States.

Dee, a pocket-book; term used by tramps.—*Gipsy*. DEE (properly D), a detective policeman. "The DEES are about, so look out."

Delicate, a false subscription-book carried by a [LURKER](#).

[142]

Demirep (OR DEMIRIP), a courtesan. Contraction of DEMI-REPUTATION, which is, in turn, a contraction for *demi-monde* reputation.

Derby-dog, a masterless animal, who is sure to appear as soon as the Epsom course is cleared for the great race of the season. No year passes without a dog running between the two dense lines of spectators and searching in vain for an outlet, and he is almost as eagerly looked for as are the "preliminary canters." It is said that when no DERBY-DOG appears on the course between Tattenham Corner and the judge's box, just before the start, a dead-heat will take place between all the placed horses.

Derrick, an apparatus for raising sunken ships, &c. The term is curiously derived from a hangman of that name frequently mentioned in Old Plays, as in the *Bellman of London*, 1616.

"He rides circuit with the devil, and DERRICK must be his host, and Tyborne the inn at which he will light."

The term is now almost general for all cranes used in loading ships, or doing similar work of a heavy nature.

Despatchers, false dice with two sets of numbers, and, of course, no low pips. So called because they bring the matter to a speedy issue. Great skill in palming is necessary for their successful use.

Deuce, the devil.—*Old*. Stated by *Junius* and others to be from DEUS or ZEUS.

Deuce, twopence; DEUCE at cards or dice, one with two pips or spots.

Devil, among barristers, to get up the facts of a case for a leader; to arrange everything in the most comprehensive form, so that the Q.C. or Serjeant can absorb the question without much trouble. DEVILLING is juniors' work, but much depends on it, and on the ability with which it is done.

Devil, a printer's youngest apprentice, an errand-boy in a printing-office.

Devil dodger, a clergyman; also a person who goes sometimes to church and sometimes to meeting.

Devil-may-care, reckless, rash.

Devil's bed-posts, the four of clubs. Otherwise Old Gentleman's BED-POSTS.

Devil's books, a pack of playing-cards; a phrase of Presbyterian origin.—See [FOUR KINGS](#).

Devil's delight, a noise or row of any description. Generally used thus:—"They kicked up the DEVIL'S DELIGHT."

Devil's dung, the fetid drug assafoetida.

Devil's dust, a term used in the manufacturing districts of Yorkshire to denote shreds of old cloth torn up to re-manufacture; also called SHODDY. Mr. Ferrand, in his speech in the House, March 4, 1842, produced a piece of cloth made chiefly from DEVIL'S DUST, and tore it into shreds to prove its worthlessness.—See *Hansard's Parliamentary Debates*, third series, vol. lxi. p. 140.

Devil-scolder, a clergyman.

[143]

Devil's livery, black and yellow. From the mourning and quarantine uses of the colours.

Devil's teeth, OR DEVIL'S BONES, dice.

Devotional habits, horses weak in the knees, and apt to stumble and fall, are said to have these.—*Stable*.

Dew-beaters, feet; "hold out YOUR DEW-BEATERS till I take off the darbies."—*Peeveril of the Peak*. Forby says the word is used in Norfolk for heavy shoes to resist wet.

Dew-drink, a morning draught, such as is served out to labourers in harvest time before commencing work.

Dewskitch, a good thrashing, perhaps from catching one's due.

Dibbs, money; so called from the huckle bones of sheep, which have been used from the earliest times for gambling purposes when money was not obtainable—in one particular game being thrown up five at a time and caught on the back of the hand like halfpence.

Dick, a riding whip; gold-headed DICK, one so ornamented.

Dick, abbreviation of "Dictionary," but often euphemistically rendered "Richard,"—fine language, long words. A man who uses fine words without much judgment is said to have "swallowed the DICK."

Dickens, synonymous with devil; "what the DICKENS are you after?" what the devil are you doing? Used by Shakspeare in the *Merry Wives of Windsor*. In many old stories his Satanic Majesty is called the DICKENS, and by no other name, while in some others the word is spelt "diconce."

Dickey, bad, sorry, or foolish; food or lodging is pronounced DICKEY when of a poor description; "very DICKEY", very inferior; "it's all DICKEY with him," *i.e.*, all over with him.

Dickey, formerly the cant for a worn-out shirt, but nowadays used for a front or half-shirt. DICKEY was originally "tommy" (from the Greek, τομή, a section), a name which was formerly used in Trinity College, Dublin. The students are said to have invented the term, and love of change and circumlocution soon changed it to DICKEY, in which dress it is supposed to have been imported into England.

Dickey, a donkey.—*Norfolk*.

Dickey Sam, a native of Liverpool.

Dicking; "look! the bulky is DICKING," *i.e.*, the constable has his eye on you.—*North Country Cant*.

Diddle, old cant word for geneva, or gin.

Diddle, to cheat, or defraud.—*Old*. In *German*, DUDELN is to play on the bagpipe; and the ideas of piping and cheating seem to have been much connected. "Do you think I am easier played on than a pipe?" occurs in *Hamlet*.

Diddler, or JEREMY DIDDLE, an artful swindler. A diddler is generally one who borrows money without any intention of ever repaying it; the sort of man who, having asked for half-a-crown and received only a shilling, would consider that eighteenpence was owing to him.—From *Raising the Wind*.

[144]

Diddling, cheating or swindling. Borrowing money without any intention of repaying it. Edgar Allan Poe wrote a very amusing article once on DIDDLE, which he seemed to regard as a rather high art.

Didoes, pranks or capers; "to cut up DIDOES," to make pranks.

Dig, a hard blow. Generally in pugilistic circles applied to a straight "left-hander," delivered under the guard on the "mark."

Diggers, spurs; also the spades on cards.

Diggings, lodgings, apartments, residence; an expression probably imported from California, or Australia, with reference to the gold diggings. It is very common nowadays for a man moving in very decent society to call his abode or his office, or anyplace to which he frequently resorts, his "DIGGINGS."

Dilly, originally a coach, from *diligence*. Now a night-cart.

Dilly-dally, to trifle.

Dimber, neat or pretty.—*Worcestershire*, but old cant.

Dimber-damber, very pretty; a clever rogue who excels his fellows; chief of a gang. *Old Cant* in the latter sense.

Dimmock, money; "how are you off for DIMMOCK?" diminutive of DIME, a small foreign silver coin, in the United States 10 cents.

Dinarly, money; "NANTEE DINARLY," I have no money, corrupted from the *Lingua Franca*, "NIENTE DINARO," not a penny. *Turkish*, DINARI; *Spanish*, DINERO; *Latin*, DENARIUS.

Dine out, to go without dinner. "I DINED OUT to-day," would express the same among the very lower classes that "dining with Duke Humphrey" expresses among the middle and upper.

Ding, to strike; to throw away, or get rid of anything; to pass to a confederate by throwing. *Old*, used in old plays.

"The butcher's axe (like great Alcides' bat)
Dings deadly downe ten thousand thousand flat."

Taylor's Works, 1630.

Dingy, a small boat. Generally the smallest boat carried by a ship. The *g* in this is pronounced hard.

Dipped, mortgaged.

Dirt, TO EAT, an expression derived from the East, nearly the same as "to eat humble (*Umble*) pie," to put up with a mortification or insult.

Dirty Half-hundred, a nickname given to the 50th Regiment on account of their tattered and soiled appearance during the Peninsular War. A term to be proud of, as it implies much work and little reward.

Disguised, intoxicated. A very old term is that of "DISGUISED in drink."

"Some say drinking does DISGUISE men."—*Old Song*.

"The saylers and the shipmen all,
Through foul excesse of wine,
Were so DISGUISED that at the sea
They shew'd themselves like swine."

Thos. Deloney's Strange Histories, p. 14.

Dish, to stop, to do away with, to suppress; DISHED, done for, floored, beaten, or silenced. To "do brown" and to "DISH," both verbs with very similar meanings, have an evident connexion so far as origin is concerned, and most likely were both first used in the kitchen as synonymous with "done for." The late Lord Derby made the word "DISH" famous by his latest public act, that of "DISHING the Whigs."

[145]

Dithers, nervous or cold shiverings; "it gave me the DITHERS."

Dittoes, A SUIT OF, coat, waistcoat, and trousers of the same material.—*Tailor's term*.

Ditty-bag, the bag or huswife in which sailors keep needles, thread, buttons, &c., for mending their clothes.

Diver, a pickpocket. Also applied to fingers, no doubt from a similar reason. To DIVE is to pick pockets.

Do, this useful and industrious verb has for many years done service as a slang term. To DO a person is to cheat him. Sometimes another tense is employed, such as "I DONE him," meaning, I cheated or "paid him out;" this is only used in the lowest grades of society. DONE BROWN, cheated thoroughly, befooled; DONE OVER, upset, cheated, knocked down, ruined. Among thieves DONE OVER means that a man's pockets have been all quietly searched; the term also means among low people seduced; DONE UP, used up, finished, or quieted. DONE also means convicted, or sentenced; so does DONE-FOR. To DO a person in pugilism is to beat him. Humphreys, who fought Mendoza, a Jew, wrote this laconic note to his supporter—"I have DONE the Jew, and am in good health.—Rich. Humphreys." Tourists use the expression, "I have DONE France and Italy," meaning I have been through those countries.

Dobie, an Indian washerman; and though women wash clothes in this country, Anglo-Indians speak of a washerwoman as a DOBIE.

Doctor, to adulterate or drug liquor; to poison, to hocus; also to falsify accounts. A publican who sells bad liquors is said to keep the DOCTOR in his cellars. On board ship the cook is always termed "the DOCTOR."—*See COOK*.

Doddy, a term applied in Norfolk to any person of low stature. Sometimes HODMANDOD and "HODDY-DODDY, all head and no body." DODMAN in the same dialect denotes a garden snail.

Dodge, a cunning trick. "DODGE, that homely but expressive phrase."—Sir Hugh Cairns on the Reform Bill, 2nd March, 1859. *Anglo-Saxon*, DEOGIAN, to colour, to conceal. The TIDY DODGE, as it is called by street-folk, consists in dressing up a family clean and tidy, and parading in the streets to excite compassion and obtain alms.

Dodger, a dram. In Kent, a DODGER signifies a nightcap; which name is often given to the last dram at night.

Dodger, a tricky person, or one who, to use the popular phrase, "knows too much." Also one who knows all phases of London life, and profits by such knowledge.

Dogberry, a foolish constable.—*Shakspeare*.

[146]

Dog cheap, OR DOG-FOOLISH, very or singularly cheap, or foolish. Latham, in his *English Language*, says:—"This has nothing to do with dogs. The first syllable is god=*good*, transposed, and the second, the ch--p, is chapman, merchant: compare EASTCHEAP."—*Old term*.

Doggery, nonsense, transparent attempts to cheat.

Dog gone, a form of mild swearing used by boys.

Dog in a blanket, a kind of pudding, made of preserved fruit spread on thin dough, and then rolled up and boiled. This pudding is also called "rolly-polly" and "stocking."

Dog in the manger, a scurvy, ill-conditioned, selfish fellow. From the fable of that title.

Dog Latin, barbarous Latin, such as was formerly used by lawyers in their pleadings. Now applied to medical Latin.

Dogs, TO GO TO THE, to be commercially or socially ruined. Originally a stable term applied to old or worthless horses, sold to feed hounds.

Dog's body, a kind of pease pudding.—*Sea*.

Dog's ears, the curled corners of the leaves of books, which have been carelessly treated. The use of this term is so common that it is hardly to be considered slang.

Dog's nose, gin and beer, so called from the mixture being *cold*, like a dog's nose.

Dog stealer, a DOG DEALER. There is sometimes less difference between the two trades than between "d" and "st."

Doing time, working out a sentence in prison. "He's done time," is a slang phrase used in reference to a man who is known to have been in gaol.

Doldrums, difficulties, low spirits, dumps.—*Sea*.

Dollop, a lump or portion.—*Norfolk. Anglo-Saxon*, DALE, *dole*.

Dollop, to *dole up*, to give up a share.—*Ibid*.

Dolly, a very mild gambling contrivance, generally used in sweetmeat and other child's-ware shops, until stopped by the authorities a few years back, and consisting of a round board and the figure of an old man or "DOLLY," down which was a spiral hole. A marble dropped "down the DOLLY," would stop in one of the small holes or pits (numbered) on the board. The bet was decided according as the marble stopped on a high or low figure. See [DOLLY-SHOP](#).

Dollymop, a tawdrily-dressed maid-servant, a semi-professional street-walker.

Dolly shop, an illegal pawnshop,—where goods, or stolen property, not good enough for the pawnbroker, are received, and charged at so much per day. If not redeemed the third day the goods are forfeited. Originally these shops were rag shops as well, and were represented by the *black doll*, the usual sign of a rag shop. Twenty years ago, a DOLLY SHOP was, among boys, a small sweetstuff and fruit shop where a hollow wooden figure, of the kind described above, was kept. A wager was made, and the customer got double quantity for his money, or nothing. A paternal legislature, and a police system worthy of the task, have long since wiped this blot from a nation's face. The amount at stake was generally a halfpenny, sometimes less.

[147]

Dominie, a parson, or master at a grammar school.

Domino, a common ejaculation of soldiers and sailors when they receive the last lash of a flogging. The allusion may be understood from the game of dominoes. A DOMINO means either a blow, or the last of a series of things, whether pleasant or otherwise, so the ejaculation savours somewhat of wit.

Dominoes, the teeth.

Don, a clever fellow, the opposite of a muff; a person of distinction in his line or walk. At the English Universities, the Masters and Fellows are the DONS. DON is also used as an adjective, "a DON hand at a knife and fork," *i.e.*, a first-rate feeder at a dinner-table.

Dona and feeles, a woman and children. *Italian or Lingua Franca*, DONNE E FIGLIE. The word DONA is usually pronounced DONER.

Done! the expression used when a bet is accepted. To be DONE, is to be considerably worsted. —See also [DO](#).

Done up, an equivalent expression to "dead beat."

Donkey, "tuppence more and up goes the DONKEY," a vulgar street phrase for extracting as much money as possible before performing any task. The phrase had its origin with a travelling showman, the finale of whose performance was the hoisting of a DONKEY on a pole or ladder; but this consummation was never arrived at unless the required amount was first paid up, and "tuppence more" was generally the sum demanded.

Donkey, in printers' slang, means a compositor. In the days before steam machinery was invented, the men who worked at press—the pressmen—were so dirty and drunken a body that they earned the name of pigs. In revenge, and for no reason that can be discovered, they christened the compositors DONKEYS.

Don Pedro, a game at cards. It is a compound of All Fours, and the Irish game variously termed All Fives, Five and Ten, Fifteen, Forty-five, &c. It was probably invented by the mixed English and Irish rabble who fought in Portugal in 1832-3.

Dookin, fortune-telling. *Gipsy*, DUKKERIN.

Dose, three months' imprisonment with hard labour.

Doss, a bed. Probably from DOZE, though quite as likely from DORSE, the back. Least likely of all, as any one who knows aught about the surrounding circumstances of those who use the term will admit, is it from the Norman, DOSSEL, a hanging or bed canopy, from which some have professed to derive it.

Doss, to sleep, formerly spelt DORSE. *Gael.*, DOSAL, slumber. In the old pugilistic days a man knocked down, or out of time, was said to be "sent to DORSE," but whether because he was senseless, or because he lay on his back, is not known, though most likely the latter.

Dossing-ken, a lodging-house.

[148]

Dot and go one, a lame or limping man.

Do the high, to walk up and down High Street on Sunday evenings, especially just after Church. —*Oxford University*.

Double, "to tip (or give) the DOUBLE," to run away from any person; to double back, turn short round upon one's pursuers, and so escape, as a hare does.—*Sporting*.

Double cross, a CROSS in which a man who has engaged to lose breaks his engagement, and "goes straight" at the last moment. This proceeding is called "doubling" or "putting the double

on," and is often productive of much excitement in athletic circles.—See [CROSS](#).

Double lines, ship casualties. So called at Lloyd's from the manner of entering in books kept for the purpose.

Double-shuffle, a low, shuffling, noisy dance, common amongst costermongers. Sometimes called "cellar flap," from its being danced by the impecunious on the cellar-flaps of public-houses, outside which they must perforce remain.

Doublet, a spurious diamond, made up of two smaller stones for pawning or duffing purposes. These articles are cleverly manufactured and excellently set, and a practised eye can alone detect the imposition.—See [MOSKENEER](#).

Double up, to pair off, or "chum" with another man; to beat severely, so as to leave the sufferer "all of a heap."

Doughy, a sufficiently obvious nickname for a baker.

Douse, to put out; "DOUSE that glim," put out that candle. In Norfolk this expression is DOUT, which is clearly for DO OUT. Sometimes DOUSE means to rinse; and sometimes to throw water, clean or dirty, over any one, is to "DOUSE it."

Dovercourt, a noisy assemblage; "all talkers and no hearers, like DOVERCOURT." At Dovercourt, in Essex, a court is annually held; and as the members principally consist of rude fishermen, the irregularity noticed in the proverbial saying frequently prevails. Bramston in his *Art of Politics* says:—

"Those who would captivate the well-bred throng,
Should not too often speak, nor speak too long;
Church, nor church matters, ever turn to sport,
Nor make St. Stephen's Chapel DOVER COURT."

This would seem to be more properly applied to a Court of Dover people, a DOVER COURT, not a DOVERCOURT COURT.

Dove-tart, a pigeon pie. A snake tart is an eel pie.

Dowd, a woman's nightcap.—*Devonshire*: also an American term; possibly from DOWDY, a slatternly woman.

Dowlas, a linendraper. DOWLAS is a sort of towelling.

Down, to be aware of, or awake to, any move—in this meaning, exchangeable with UP; "DOWN upon one's luck," unfortunate; "DOWN in the mouth," disconsolate; "to be DOWN on one," to treat him harshly or suspiciously, to pounce upon him, or detect his tricks.

Downer, a sixpence; apparently the Gipsy word, TAWNO, "little one," in course of metamorphosis into the more usual "tanner."

[149]

Downs, Tothill Fields' Prison.

Down the road, stylish, showy, after the fashion.

Down to the ground, an American rendering of the word entirely; as, "that suits me DOWN TO THE GROUND."

Downy, knowing or cunning; "a DOWNY COVE," a knowing or experienced sharper. Literally, a DOWNY person is one who is "DOWN to every move on the board." In Norfolk, however, it means low-spirited, *i.e.*, DOWN in the mouth.

Dowry, a lot, a great deal; "DOWRY of parny," lot of rain or water.—See [PARNY](#). Probably from the Gipsy.

Dowers, men who profess to tell fortunes, and who, by the use of the divining rod, pretend to be able to discover treasure-trove.—*Cornish*.

Doxy, the female companion of a tramp or beggar. In the West of England, the women frequently call their little girls DOXIES, in a familiar or endearing sense. *Orthodoxy* has been described as being a man's own DOXY, and *heterodoxy* another man's DOXY.—*Ancient Cant*.

Drab, a vulgar or low woman.—*Shakspeare*.

Drab, poison.—*Romany*.

Draft on Aldgate Pump, an old mercantile phrase for a fictitious banknote or fraudulent bill.

Drag, a cart of any kind, term generally used to denote any particularly well-appointed turnout, drawn by a pair or four horses, especially at race meetings.

Drag, feminine attire worn by men. A recent notorious impersonation case led to the publication of the word in that sense.

Drag, a street, or road; BACK-DRAG, back street.

Drag, OR THREE MOON, three months in prison.

Drag, THE, a favourite pursuit with fast-hunting sets; as, THE DRAG can be trailed over very stiff country.

Dragging, robbing carts, &c., by means of a light trap which follows behind laden vehicles. Cabs are sometimes eased of trunks in this way, though it is hard to say whether with or without the complicity of the cabmen.

Dragging time, the evening of a country fair day, when the young fellows begin pulling the wenches about.

Draggletail, a dirty, dissipated woman; a prostitute of the lowest class.

Drain, a drink; "to do a DRAIN," to take a friendly drink—"do a wet;" sometimes called a "common sewer."

Draw, used in several senses:—1, of a theatre, new piece or exhibition, when it attracts the public and succeeds; 2, to induce—as, "DRAW him on;" 3, of pocket-picking—as, "DRAW his wipe," "DRAW his ticker." In sporting parlance it is used with an ellipsis of "trigger," "I DREW on it as it rose." In America to "DRAW on a man" is to produce knife or pistol, and to use it as well. Where lethal weapons are used in the States, no man raises his weapon till he means to use it, and a celebrated American writer has recently given a dissertation on the relative advantages of cocking and firing a pistol by an almost simultaneous action as it is raised, and of cocking as the instrument is raised, and of then dropping the muzzle slightly as the trigger is pulled. The former way is more speedy, the latter more effective. "Come, DRAW it mild!" *i.e.*, don't exaggerate; opposite of "come it strong," from the phraseology of the bar (of a "public"), where customers desire the beer to be "drawn mild."

[150]

Draw-boy, a cunning device used by puffing tradesmen. A really good article is advertised or ticketed and exposed for sale in the shop window at a very low price, with a view of drawing in customers to purchase other and inferior articles at high prices. These gentry have fortunately found to their cost, on one or two occasions, by means of magisterial decisions, that DRAW-BOYS have drawn for their owners something other than profit.

Drawers, formerly the ancient cant name for very long stockings.

Drawing teeth, wrenching off knockers.—*Medical Student slang.*

Drawlatch, a loiterer.

Draw off, to throw back the body to give impetus to a blow; "he DREW OFF, and delivered on the left drum."—*Pugilistic.* A sailor would say, "he hauled off and slipped in."

Draw the long bow, to tell extravagant stories, to exaggerate overmuch; same as "throw the hatchet." From the extremely wonderful stories which used to be told of the Norman archers, and more subsequently of Indians' skill with the tomahawk.

Dress a hat, TO, to rob in a manner very difficult of detection. The business is managed by two or more servants or shopmen of different employers, exchanging their master's goods; as, for instance, a shoemaker's shopman receives shirts or other articles from a hosier's, in return for a pair of boots. Another very ingenious method may be witnessed about eleven o'clock in the forenoon in any of the suburban districts of London. A butcher's boy, with a bit of steak filched from his master's shop, or from a customer, falls in with a neighbouring baker's man, who has a loaf obtained in a similar manner. Their mutual friend, the potboy, in full expectation of their visit, has the tap-room fire bright and clear, and not only cooks the steak, but again, by means of collusion, this time with the barman or barmaid, "stands a shant of gatter" as his share. So a capital luncheon is improvised for the three, without the necessity of paying for it; and this practical communistic operation is styled DRESSING A HAT. Most likely from the fact that a hat receives the attention of three or four people before it is properly fit for wear.

Dripping, a cook.

Drive, a term used by tradesmen in speaking of business; "he's DRIVING a roaring trade," *i.e.*, a very good one; hence, to succeed in a bargain, "I DROVE a good bargain," *i.e.*, got the best end of it. To "LET DRIVE at one," to strike out. A man snoring hard is said to be "DRIVING his pigs to market."

Drive at, to aim at; "what is he DRIVING AT?" "what does he intend to imply?" a phrase often used when a circuitous line of argument is adopted by a barrister, or a strange set of questions asked, the purport of which is not very evident.

[151]

Driz, lace. In a low lodging-house this singular autograph inscription appeared over the mantelpiece. "Scotch Mary, with DRIZ [lace], bound to Dover and back, please God." It is a common thing for ignorant or superstitious people to make some mark or sign before going on a journey, and then to wonder whether it will be there when they return.

Driz-fencer, a person who sells lace.

Drop, "to DROP an acquaintance," to relinquish a connexion, is very polite slang. DROPPING is distinguished from cutting by being done gradually and almost imperceptibly, whereas cutting has outward and visible signs which may be unpleasantly resented. To "DROP money" at any form of speculation or gambling, is to lose it.

Drop, to quit, go off, or turn aside; "DROP the main Toby," go off the main road.

Drop, "to DROP a man," to knock him down; "to DROP into a person," to give him a thrashing. See [SLIP](#) and [WALK](#). "To DROP on a man," to accuse or rebuke him suddenly.

Drop it, synonymous with "cut it" or "cheese it." Probably from the signal given in the good old hanging days by the culprit, who used generally to drop a handkerchief when he was ready for

the cart to be moved from under him.

Drum, a house, a lodging, a street; HAZARD-DRUM, a gambling-house; FLASH-DRUM, a house of ill-fame.

Drum, the ear.—*Pugilistic*. An example of slang synecdoche.

Drum, as applied to the road, is doubtless from the Wallachian gipsy word “DRUMRI,” derived from the *Greek*, δρόμος.

Drum, old slang for a ball or rout; afterwards called a hop.

Drummer, a robber who first makes his victims insensible by drugs or violence, and then plunders them.

Drumsticks, legs; DRUMSTICK CASES, trousers. The leg of a fowl is generally called a DRUMSTICK.

Dryasdust, an antiquary. From Scott.

Dry lodging, sleeping and sitting accommodation only, without board. This is lodging-house keepers' slang, and is generally used in reference to rooms let to lodgers who take their meals at their clubs, or in the City, according to their social positions.

Dry nurse, when an inferior officer on board ship carries on the duty, on account of the captain's ignorance of seamanship, the junior officer is said to DRY-NURSE his captain. Majors and adjutants in the army also not infrequently DRY-NURSE the colonels of their regiments in a similar manner. The sergeant who coaches very young officers, is called a “wet nurse.” The abolition of purchase has, however, considerably modified all this.

D.T., a popular abbreviation of delirium tremens; sometimes written and pronounced *del. trem.* D.T. also often represents the *Daily Telegraph*.

Dub, to pay or give; “DUB UP,” pay up.

Dubash, a general agent.—*Anglo-Indian*.

Dubber, the mouth or tongue; “mum your DUBBER,” hold your tongue.

Dubsman, or [SCREW](#), a turnkey.—*Old Cant*.

Ducats, money.—*Theatrical Slang*.

Duck, a bundle of bits of the “stickings” of beef sold for food to the London poor.—See [FAGGOT](#).

Ducket, a ticket of any kind. Generally applied to pawnbroker's duplicates and raffle cards. Probably from DOCKET.

Ducks, trousers. *Sea* term. The expression most in use on land is “white DUCKS,” *i.e.*, white pantaloons or trousers.

Ducks and Drakes, “to make DUCKS AND DRAKES of one's money,” to throw it away childishly—derived from children “shying” flat stones on the surface of a pool, which they call DUCKS AND DRAKES, according to the number of skips they make.

Dudder, or DUDSMAN, a person who formerly travelled the country as a pedlar, selling gown-pieces, silk waistcoats, &c., to countrymen. In selling a waistcoat-piece, which cost him perhaps five shillings, for thirty shillings or two pounds, he would show great fear of the revenue officer, and beg the purchasing clothopper to kneel down in a puddle of water, crook his arm, and swear that it might never become straight if he told an exciseman, or even his own wife. The term and practice are nearly obsolete. In Liverpool, however, and at the East-end of London, men dressed up as sailors, with pretended silk handkerchiefs and cigars “only just smuggled from the Indies,” are still to be plentifully found.

Dudeen, or DUDHEEN, a short tobacco-pipe. Common term in Ireland and the Irish quarters of London.

Duds, clothes, or personal property. *Gaelic*, DUD; *Ancient Cant*; also *Dutch*.

Duff, to cheat, to sell spurious goods, often under pretence of their being stolen or smuggled.

Duff, pudding; vulgar pronunciation of dough.—*Sea*.

Duffer, a hawker of “Brummagem” or sham jewellery, or of shams of any kind, a fool, a worthless person. DUFFER was formerly synonymous with DUDDER, and was a general term given to pedlars. It is mentioned in the *Frauds of London* (1760) as a word in frequent use in the last century to express cheats of all kinds.

Duffer, anything of no merit. A term applied by artists to a picture below mediocrity, and by dealers in jewellery to any spurious article. It is now general in its application to a worthless fellow.

Duffing, false, counterfeit, worthless.

Duffy, a term for a ghost or spirit among the West Indian negroes. In all probability the DAVY JONES of sailors, and a contraction thereof originally.

Duke, gin, a term amongst livery servants.

Duke Humphrey. “To dine with DUKE HUMPHREY” is a euphuism for dining not at all. Many reasons have been given for the saying, and the one most worthy of credence is this:—Some visitors were inspecting the abbey where the remains of Humphrey Duke of Gloucester lie, and

one of them was unfortunately shut in, and remained there *solus* while his companions were feasting at a neighbouring hostelry. He was afterwards said to have dined with DUKE HUMPHREY, and the saying eventually passed into a proverb.

Dukes, or DOOKS, the hands, originally modification of the rhyming slang, "Duke of Yorks," forks = fingers, hands—a long way round, but quite true. The word is in very common use among low folk. "Put up your DOOKS" is a kind invitation to fight.

Dukey, or DOOKEY, a [penny gaff](#), which *see*.

Dumbfound, to perplex, to beat soundly till not able to speak. Originally a cant word. Johnson cites the *Spectator* for the earliest use. *Scotch*, DUMBFOUNDER.

Dummacker, a knowing or acute person.

Dummies, empty bottles, and drawers in an apothecary's shop, labelled so as to give the idea of an extensive stock. Chandlers' shop keepers and small general dealers use dummies largely, half-tubs of butter, bladders of lard, hams, cheeses, &c., being specially manufactured for them. Dummies in libraries generally take the form of "Hume and Smollett's History of England" and other works not likely to tempt the general reader.

Dummy, a deaf-and-dumb person; a clumsy, awkward fellow; any one unusually thick-witted.

Dummy, in three-handed whist the person who holds two hands plays DUMMY.

Dummy, a pocket-book. In this word the derivation is obvious, being connected with DUMB, *i.e.*, that which makes no sound. As a thieves' term for a pocket-book, it is peculiarly applicable, for the contents of pocket-books, bank-notes and papers, make no noise, while the money in a purse may betray its presence by chinking.

Dump fencer, a man who sells buttons.

Dumpish, sullen or gloomy.

Dumpy, short and stout.

Dun, to solicit payment.—*Old Cant*, from the French DONNEZ, give; or from JOE DIN, or DUN, a famous bailiff; or simply a corruption of DIN, from the *Anglo-Saxon* DUNAN, to clamour.

Dunderhead, a blockhead.

Dundreary, an empty swell.

Dung, an operative who works for an employer who does not give full or "society" wages.

Dungaree, low, common, coarse, vulgar.—*Anglo-Indian*. DUNGAREE is the name of a disreputable suburb of Bombay, and also of a coarse blue cloth worn by sailors.

"As smart a young fellow as ever you'd see,
In jacket and trousers of blue DUNGAREE."

[154]

Dunkhorned, sneaking, shabby. DUNKHORN in Norfolk is the short, blunt horn of a beast, and the adjective is applied to a cuckold who has not spirit to resist his disgrace.

Dunnage, baggage, clothes. Also, a sea term for wood or loose faggots laid at the bottom of ships, upon which is placed the cargo.

Dunnyken, originally DANNAKEN, a watercloset.—From [DANNA](#) and [KEN](#), which *see*.

Durrynacking, offering lace or any other article as an introduction to fortune-telling; generally practised by women.

Dust, money; "down with the DUST," put down the money.—*Ancient*. Dean Swift once took for his text, "He who giveth to the poor lendeth to the Lord." His sermon was short. "Now, my brethren," said he, "if you are satisfied with the security, down with the DUST."

Dust, a disturbance, or noise, "to raise a DUST," to make a row.

Dust, to beat; "DUST one's jacket," *i.e.*, give him a beating.

Dust-hole, Sidney Sussex College at Cambridge.—*Univ. Slang*.

Dust-hole, the Queen's Theatre, Tottenham Court Road, was so called until comparatively recently, when it was entirely renovated and renamed, and now, as the Prince of Wales's, it is one of the most fortunate and fashionable theatres in London.

Dustoorie, commission, douceur, bribe.—*Anglo-Indian*.

Dusty, a phrase used in answering a question where one expects approbation. "What do you think of this?" "Well, it's not so DUSTY," *i.e.*, not so bad; sometimes varied to "none so DUSTY."

Dutch, or DOUBLE DUTCH, gibberish, or any foreign tongue. "To talk DOUBLE DUTCH backwards on a Sunday" is a humorous locution for extraordinary linguistic facility.

Dutch auction, a method of selling goods, adopted by "CHEAP JOHNS," to evade the penalties for selling without a licence. The article is offered all round at a high price, which is then dropped until it is taken. DUTCH AUCTIONS need not be illegitimate transactions, and their economy (as likewise that of puffing) will be found minutely explained in Sugden (Lord St. Leonards) "On Vendors and Purchasers."

Dutch concert, where each performer plays a different tune. Sometimes called a DUTCH MEDLEY when vocal efforts only are used.

Dutch consolation, “thank God it is no worse.” “It might have been worse,” said a man whom the devil was carrying to hell. “How?” asked a neighbour. “Well, he’s carrying me—he might have made me carry him.”

Dutch courage, false courage, generally excited by drink—pot-valour.

Dutch feast, where the host gets drunk before his guest.

Dutch uncle, a personage often introduced in conversation, but exceedingly difficult to describe; “I’ll talk to him like a DUTCH UNCLE!” conveys the notion of anything but a desirable relation.

Earl of Cork, the ace of diamonds.—*Hibernicism*.

“‘What do you mean by the Earl of Cork?’ asked Mr. Squander. ‘The ace of diamonds, your honour. It’s the worst ace, and the poorest card in the pack, and is called the EARL OF CORK, because he’s the poorest nobleman in Ireland.’”—*Carleton’s Traits and Stories of the Irish Peasantry*.

Early, “to get up EARLY,” to prepare for a difficult task. “You’ll have to get up very EARLY in the morning to beat that.” Early rising and ability seem also closely connected by certain modifications of this expression. Possibly the belief is that a man who rises early for early rising’s sake deserves to be clever. Perhaps the greatest enjoyment a day labourer—whose work commences at six in the winter mornings, and who may have to rise at half-past four and trudge off—can have, is a “quiet snooze” after the usual time of rising. The early rising in “the steel” is the chief terror of that institution in the minds of habitual criminals.

Earwig, a clergyman, also one who prompts another maliciously and privately.

Earwiggling, a private conversation; a rebuke in private; an attempt to defame another unfairly, and without chance of appeal; a **WIGGING** is more public.

Ease, to rob; “EASING a bloke,” robbing a man.

Eat his head off. A horse who is kept idle in the stable is said to EAT HIS HEAD OFF. Of late the phrase has been applied to servants who have little to do but constantly “dip their noses in the manger.”

Eavesdropper, a listener. The name is derived from the punishment which, according to Oliver, was directed in the Lectures, at the revival of Masonry in 1717, to be inflicted on a detected Cowan [g. v.], and which was

“To be placed under the eaves of the house in rainy weather, till the water runs in at his shoulders and out at his heels.”—*Mackey’s Lexicon of Freemasonry*.

Efter, a thief who frequents theatres.

Egg, OR EGG ON, to excite, stimulate, or provoke one person to quarrel with another, &c. From the Anglo-Saxon *eggian*; or possibly a corruption of *EDGE*, OR *EDGE ON*, or even from *agere*, to drive.—*Ancient*.

Egg-flip, OR EGG-HOT, a drink made after the manner of purl and bishop, with beer, eggs, and spirits made hot and sweetened.

Elbow, “to shake one’s ELBOW,” to play with dice; “to crook one’s ELBOW,” to drink.

Elbow grease, labour, or industry. Anything that is rusty, or in household work dirty or dingy, is said to require ELBOW GREASE.

Elegant extracts, a Cambridge University title for those students who having failed only slightly in some one subject, and being “plucked” accordingly, were allowed their degrees. This applied to the “**Poll**” list, as the “**Gulf**” did to the “Honours.”

Elephant, “to have seen the ELEPHANT,” to be “up to the latest move,” or “down to the last new trick;” to be knowing, and not “green,” &c. Possibly a metaphor taken from the travelling menageries, where the ELEPHANT is the finale of the exhibition.—Originally an Americanism. Bartlett gives conflicting examples. General now, however. A modification of this is “having seen the king.” When a man becomes aware that he has been cheated or imposed on, and does not mean to stand it any longer, he is said to have seen the king, *i.e.*, to have seen his adversary’s best card, and to be prepared for it.

Elevated, intoxicated. ELEVATION is the name of a drug-mixture much used in the fen-counties for keeping up the spirits and preventing ague. It consists mainly of opium.

Enemy, time, a clock, the ruthless enemy and tell-tale of idleness and of mankind generally; “what says the ENEMY?” *i.e.*, how goes the time?

Essex lion, a calf. A calf is probably the only lively animal to be seen in a journey through Essex.

Essex stile, a ditch. A jocular allusion to the peculiarities of the “low county.”

Evaporate, to go, or run away.

Everlasting shoes, the feet. The barefooted children about the Seven Dials, and other low quarters of London, are said to wear EVERLASTING SHOES and stockings. Another expression in connexion with this want is, “the shoes and stockings their mothers gave them.”

Everlasting staircase, the treadmill. Sometimes, but very rarely now called “Colonel Chesterton’s EVERLASTING STAIRCASE,” from the gallant inventor or improver. Also known as “the STEPPER.”

Exasperate, to over-aspirate the letter H, or to aspirate it whenever it commences a word, as is commonly done by under-educated people who wish to show off their breeding. EXASPERATION does not refer to an omission of the aspirate.

Exes, expenses. “Just enough to clear our exes.”

Extensive, frequently applied in a slang sense to a person’s appearance or talk; “rather EXTENSIVE that!” intimating that the person alluded to is showing off, or “cutting it fat.”

Extracted, placed on the list of "[ELEGANT EXTRACTS](#)."—*Camb. Univ.*

Eye teeth, supposed evidences of sharpness. A man is said to have, or have not, cut his EYE TEETH, according to possession or want of shrewdness.

Eye water, gin. Term principally used by printers.

Face, credit at a public-house, impudence, confidence, brass; thus a BRAZEN-FACE. "To run one's FACE," is to obtain credit in a bounceable manner. "He's got some FACE," *i.e.*, he has got lots of impudence.

Face entry, the entrée to a theatre. From the FACE being known, as distinguished from free-list entry.

Facer, a blow on the face. In Ireland, a dram.

Facer, a tumbler of whisky-punch. Possibly from the suffusion of blood to the face caused by it.

Fad, a hobby, a favourite pursuit.

Fadge, a farthing.

Fadge, a flat loaf.—*North*.

Fadge, to suit or fit; "it wont FADGE," it will not do. Used by Shakspeare, but now heard only in the streets.

Fadger, a glazier's frame. Otherwise called a "frail," perhaps in reference to the fragile nature of its contents.

Fag, a schoolboy who performs a servant's offices to a superior schoolmate. From FAG, to become weary or tired out. *Low German*, FAKK, wearied.

Fag, to beat.

Faggot, a bundle of bits of the "stickings" (hence probably its name) sold for food to the London poor. It is sometimes called a duck. In appearance it resembles a Scotch "haggis," without, however, being nearly so good as that fragrant article. Probably the FAG-END of a thing, the inferior or remaining part, the refuse.

Faggot, a term of opprobrium used by low people to children and women; "you little FAGGOT, you!" FAGGOT was originally a term of contempt for a dry shrivelled old woman, whose bones were like a bundle of sticks, only fit to burn.—Compare the French expression for a heretic, *sentir le fagot*.

Faggot briefs, bundles of worthless papers tied up with red tape, carried by unemployed barristers in the back rows of the courts to simulate briefs.

Faggot vote, a phrase which belongs to the slang of politics, and which was applied to a class of votes, by no means extinct even now, though not so common as in the days preceding the first Reform Bill, when constituencies were smaller, and individual votes were consequently more valuable. FAGGOT VOTES were thus created:—A large landowner who was blessed with, say, seven sons and seven brothers, and had also on his estate fourteen labourers' cottages worth about a shilling a week each, would go through the form of sale of one cottage to each son and each brother, it being perfectly understood that the title-deeds would be returned when the occasion for their use was at an end. And thus the squire would command fifteen votes instead of one. In a famous election for the West Riding of Yorkshire during the third decade of the present century, which cost upwards of half a million sterling, and ruined the successful candidate, it was said that six hundred FAGGOT VOTES were created by three noble lords. The origin of the term has been variously explained. One ingenious writer has suggested that as a FAGGOT may be split into a bundle of sticks, so was one estate thus split into a bundle of votes. It is, however, more reasonable to suppose that it was derived from the old word "FAGGOT," which was used to describe a "nominal soldier," one, that is, whose name appeared on the muster-roll, and for whom the colonel drew pay, but who was never to be found in the ranks. The connexion is evident enough.

Fake, in the sporting world, means to hocus or poison. Fake is also a mixture supposed to be used for purposes of "making safe."

Fake, to cheat, or swindle; to do anything; to go on, or continue; to make or construct; to steal or rob,—a verb variously used. FAKED, done, or done for; "FAKE away, there's no down;" go on, there is nobody looking. From the *Latin* FACERE.

Fakement, a false begging petition, any act of robbery, swindling, or deception. FAKEMENT is a word of most general application among the lower classes. Any things strange, and most things not strange, are called FAKEMENTS, particularly if there is anything peculiar or artistic in their production.

Fakement Charley, the owner's private mark. FAKER, is one who makes or FAKES anything. To "fake a cly," is to pick a pocket.

Fal-lals, trumpery ornaments, gewgaws. Forby suggests as a derivation the *Latin* PHALERÆ, horse trappings.

Fambles, OR FAMMS, the hands.—*Ancient Cant. German*, FANGEN.

Family men, OR PEOPLE, thieves, or burglars.

Fan, a waistcoat.—*Houndsditch term*.

Fancy, the favourite sports, pets, or pastime of a person, the ton of low life. Pugilists are sometimes termed the FANCY. Shakspeare uses the word in the sense of a favourite or pet; and the paramour of a prostitute is still called her FANCY MAN.

Fancy bloak, a fancy or sporting man.

[157]

[158]

Fanning, a beating. FANNING is also stealing; CROSS-FANNING is stealing with the arms crossed so as to distract attention, as in stealing breast-pins, &c.

Fanqui, a European, literally foreign devil.—*Anglo-Chinese*.

Fantail, a dustman's or coalheaver's hat. So called from the shape.

Farm, to contract, after the manner of those who engage to feed and lodge children belonging to the parish, at so much a head; a fruitful cause of starvation and misery. *See Oliver Twist*. The baby farmings, unconnected with the parishes in which they occurred, which ultimately resulted in the trial and execution of Margaret Waters, on the 11th October, 1870, have caused the word FARM AS applied to any dealings with children, parish or private, to be one of obloquy and reproach.

Farmer. In Suffolk this term is applied to the eldest son of the occupier of the farm. In London it is used derisively of a countryman, and denotes a farm-labourer or clodpole. Both senses are different from the proper meaning.

Fast, gay, spreeish, unsteady, thoughtless,—an Americanism that has of late ascended from the streets to the drawing-room. The word has certainly now a distinct meaning, which it had not thirty years ago. QUICK is the synonym for FAST, but a QUICK MAN would not convey the meaning of a FAST MAN,—a person who, by late hours, gaiety, and continual rounds of pleasure, lives too fast, and wears himself out. In polite society a FAST young lady is one who affects mannish habits, or makes herself conspicuous by some unfeminine accomplishment,—talks slang, drives about in London, smokes cigarettes, is knowing in dogs, horses, &c. An amusing anecdote is told of a fast young lady, the daughter of a right reverend prelate, who was an adept in horseflesh. Being desirous of ascertaining the opinion of a candidate for ordination, who had the look of a bird of the same feather, as to the merits of some cattle just brought to her father's palace for her to select from, she was assured by him they were utterly unfit for a lady's use. With a knowing look at the horses' points, she gave her decision in these choice words, "Well, I agree with you; they *are* a rum lot, as the devil said of the ten commandments." Charles Dickens once said that "fast," when applied to a young man, was only another word for loose, as he understood the term; and a fast girl has been defined as a woman who has lost her respect for men, and for whom men have lost their respect.

[159]

Fast, embarrassed, wanting money, tied up. Sometimes synonymous with "hard up."—*Yorkshire*.

Fast and loose, to play FAST AND LOOSE with a man, is to treat him as a fast friend in the days while he is useful, and to cast him loose when he is no longer necessary; also, to equivocate or vacillate. In old days it was the name of a vulgar pastime. *See PRICK THE GARTER*.

Fat, a printer's term signifying the void spaces on a page, for which he is paid at the same rate as for full or unbroken pages. Occasionally called "grease," and applied variously, but always as showing some undue or uncommon amount of advantage.

Fat, rich, abundant, &c.; "a FAT lot;" "to cut it FAT," to exaggerate, to show off in an extensive or grand manner, to assume undue importance; "cut up FAT," see under CUT. As a theatrical term, a part with plenty of FAT in it is one which affords the actor an opportunity of effective display.

Father, or FENCE, a buyer of stolen property.

Favourite, the horse that has the lowest odds laid against it in the betting list. When the FAVOURITE wins, the public or backers of horses generally are the gainers. When an outsider wins, the ring, that is to say, the persons who make a business of laying against the chances of horses, are the gainers.

Fawney, a finger ring. *Irish*, FAINEE, a ring.

Fawney bouncing, selling rings for a pretended wager. This practice is founded upon the old tale of a gentleman laying a wager that if he were to offer "real gold sovereigns" at a penny a-piece at the foot of London Bridge, the English public would be too incredulous to buy. The story states that the gentleman stationed himself with sovereigns on a tea-tray, and sold only two within the hour, thus winning the bet. This tale the FAWNEY BOUNCERS tell the public, only offering brass, double-gilt rings, instead of sovereigns.

Fawney rig, the ring-dropping trick. A few years ago this practice was very common. A fellow purposely dropped a ring, or a pocket-book with some little articles of jewellery, &c., in it, and when he saw any person pick it up, ran to claim half. The ring found, the question of how the booty was to be divided had then to be decided. The sharper says, "If you will give me eight or nine shillings for my share, the things are yours." This the "flat" thinks very fair. The ring of course is valueless, and the swallower of the bait discovers the trick too late. For another way of doing this trick, see RING-DROPPING.

[160]

Feathers, money, wealth; "in full FEATHER," rich. FEATHERS is also a term applied to dress; "in full FEATHER," means very often in full costume. It also means, at times, in high spirits.

Feed, a meal, generally a dinner. Originally stable slang, now pretty general.

Feele, a daughter, or child.—Corrupted *French*.

Fellow-commoner, uncomplimentary epithet used at Cambridge for an empty bottle.

Felt, a hat.—*Old term*, in use in the sixteenth century.

Fence, a purchaser or receiver of stolen goods; also, the shop or warehouse of a FENCER.—*Old*

Cant.

Fen-ningingales, toads and frogs, from their continued croaking at night.

Feringee, a European—that is, a Frank.—*Anglo-Indian*.

Ferricadouzer, a knock-down blow, a good thrashing. Probably derived, through the *Lingua Franca*, from the *Italian*, “far’ cader’ douser,” to knock down. “Far’ cader’ morto,” is to knock down dead.

Few, used to signify the reverse, thus:—“Don’t you call this considerably jolly?” “I believe you, my bo-o-oy, A FEW.” Sometimes the reply is, “just a FEW.” Another expression of the same kind is **RATHER**, which *see*.

Fib, to beat or strike.—*Old Cant.*

Fib, to lie, to romance.

Fibbing, a series of blows delivered quickly, and at a short distance.—*Pugilistic*.

Fiddle, a sharper, “a street mugger.” In America, a swindle or an imposture.

Fiddle, “to play second FIDDLE,” to act subordinately, or follow the lead of another. From the orchestral practice.

Fiddle-face, a person with a wizened countenance.

Fiddle-faddle, twaddle, or trifling discourse.—*Old Cant.*

Fiddler, a sharper, a cheat; also a careless, negligent, or dilatory person. On board some ocean steamers the FIDDLER is the capstan-house, the only place on board where passengers are permitted to smoke. The term FIDDLER is easily traceable to the fact that, while the seamen are working the capstan-bars, a man sometimes plays on the fiddle to cheer them at their toil.

Fiddler, a sixpence. Fiddler’s money is small money; generally from the old custom of each couple at a dance paying the fiddler sixpence.

Fiddler, OR FADGE, a farthing.

Fiddlers’ green, the place where sailors expect to go when they die. It is a place of fiddling, dancing, rum, and tobacco, and is undoubtedly the “Land of Cocaigne,” mentioned in mediæval manuscripts. A story is told of a drunken sailor who heard a street preacher threatening all listeners with eternal damnation, and who went up and asked where he (the sailor) was going after death. “To hell, of course,” replied the preacher. “No, you lubberly son of a sea-cook!” shouted the seaman, knocking the itinerant down; “I’m going to FIDDLER’S GREEN; and if you say I’m not, I’ll throttle you.” Under compulsion, the preacher admitted the existence of FIDDLER’S GREEN, *pro tempore*.

Fiddles, transverse pieces of wood used on shipboard to protect the dishes at table during stormy weather. Swing tables obviate the use of FIDDLES.

Fiddle-sticks! an exclamation signifying nonsense. Sometimes “Fiddle-de-dee.”

Fiddling, doing any odd jobs in the streets, holding horses, carrying parcels, &c., for a living. Among the middle classes, FIDDLING means idling away time, or trifling, and amongst sharpers it means gambling.

Fid-fad, a game similar to chequers, or drafts, played in the West of England.

Field, the whole of the runners in a race of any kind. “A FIELD of fourteen runners was placed in care of the starter.” In betting phraseology the FIELD represents the bulk of the horses, as opposed to the favourite. “The FIELD for a pony,” means that the offerer will lay 25*l.* against the favourite, preferring the chances of a winner turning up amongst the others. “Ten to one on the FIELD,” means that the price named can be obtained about any horse in the race, that being the lowest figure or favourite’s price. Laying against favourites is called FIELDING, and bookmakers are often known as FIELDERS.

Field, “to look out,” at cricket. In the outings of an eleven the FIELDERS are those who stand away from the wickets with a view to checking the progress of the ball. FIELDING is a great essential to cricket, and to be “a good FIELD” is no slight honour. Also to lay against favourites in the betting.

Field-lane duck, a baked sheep’s head. Field Lane was a low London thoroughfare leading from the foot of Holborn Hill to the purlieu of Clerkenwell. It was formerly the market for stolen pocket-handkerchiefs. Holborn Viaduct improved all but a small portion of Field Lane off the face of the earth. There is but the smallest vestige of this famous (or infamous) thoroughfare left. The neighbourhood has received an upheaval within the past few years, and from one end the pedestrian must descend to the remains of Field Lane by means of a flight of steps.

Fieri-facias. A red-faced man is often jocularly said to have been served with a writ of FIERI-FACIAS.

Fi-fa, a writ of Fieri-Facias.—*Legal*.

Fi-fi, Thackeray’s term for Paul de Kock’s novels, and similar modern French literature.

Fig, “in full FIG,” *i.e.*, full-dress costume, “extensively got up.” Possibly an allusion to the dress assumed by our first parents after they were naked and not ashamed, or else an abbreviation of figure, in the references to plates in books of fashions.

[161]

[162]

Fig, "to FIG a horse," to play improper tricks with one in order to make him lively. The FIG is a piece of wet ginger placed under a horse's tail for the purpose of making him appear lively, and enhance his price.

Figaro, a barber; from *Le Nozze di Figaro*.

Fig-leaf, a small apron worn by ladies.

Figure, "to cut a good or bad FIGURE," to make good or indifferent appearance; "what's the FIGURE?" how much is to pay? FIGURE-HEAD, a person's face.—*Sea term*.

Filch, to steal, or purloin. Originally a cant word, derived from the FILCHES, or hooks, thieves used to carry, to hook clothes, or any portable articles from open windows.—*Vide Decker*. It was considered a cant or gipsy term up to the beginning of the last century. Harman has "FYLCHE, to robbe." Probably from "FILICHI," Romany for a handkerchief.

File, a deep or artful man, a jocose name for a cunning person. Originally a term for a pickpocket, when to FILE was to cheat or rob. FILE, an artful man, was used in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. To deal with an artful man is sometimes said to be like biting a FILE.

Filibuster, an American adventurer, who, if successful, helps to extend the boundaries of the United States, becomes a General, and receives high honours, but who remains a FILIBUSTER, and is despised as such, if he fails. The Texan, Nicaraguan, and kindred expeditions were of a FILIBUSTERING order.

Fillibrush, to flatter, praise ironically.

Fimble-famble, a lame, prevaricating excuse.—*Scandinavian*.

Fin, a hand; "come, tip us your FIN," viz., let us shake hands.—*Sea*.

Finder, one who FINDS bacon and meat at the market before they are lost, *i.e.*, steals them.

Finnuf, a five-pound note. DOUBLE FINNUF, a ten-pound note.—*German*, FUNF, five.

Fire-eater, a quarrelsome man, a braggadocio or turbulent person who is always ready to fight.

Firkytoodle, to cuddle or fondle.

First flight, the first lot to finish in a foot or horse race, in a fox hunt, &c.

Fish, a person; "a queer FISH," "a loose FISH." Term never used except in doubtful cases, as those quoted.

Fishfag, originally a Billingsgate fishwife; now any scolding, vixenish, foul-mouthed woman.

Fishy, doubtful, unsound, rotten; used to denote a suspicion of a "screw being loose," or "something rotten in the state of Denmark," in referring to any proposed speculation.

Fit, an Americanism denoting the preterite of the verb to fight. A Yankee once came upon the words *nihil fit*, and he immediately wrote off to the editor of the paper to which he subscribed to know "Who was Nihil, who he fit, what amount he fit for, and if he won."

Five fingers, the five of trumps, at the game of Five-cards, or Don.

Fives, "bunch of FIVES," the fist.

Fix, a predicament, or dilemma; "an awful FIX," a terrible position; "to FIX one's flint for him," *i.e.*, to "settle his hash," to "put a spoke in his wheel."

Fixings, an Americanism, equivalent to our word "[trimmings](#)," which *see*.

Fiz, champagne; any sparkling wine.

Fizzing, first-rate, very good, excellent; synonymous with "stunning."

Flabbergast, OR FLABBERGHAST, to astonish, or strike with wonder; literally, to strike aghast.—*Old*.

Flag, a groat, or 4*d.*—*Ancient Cant*.

Flag, an apron. People who wear their aprons when not at work, are called "flag-flashers."

Flag of distress, any overt sign of poverty; the end of a person's shirt when it protrudes through his trousers.

Flam, nonsense, blarney, a lie, humbug. "A regular FLAM," a tale devoid of truth.

Flame, a sweetheart.

Flannel, OR HOT FLANNEL, the old term for gin and beer, drunk hot, with nutmeg, sugar, &c.; a play on the old name "lambswool." Also called "flip." There is an anecdote told of Goldsmith helping to drink a quart of FLANNEL in a night-house, in company with George Parker, Ned Shuter, and a demure, grave-looking gentleman, who continually introduced the words "crap," "stretch," "scrag," and "swing." Upon the Doctor asking who this strange person might be, and being told his profession, he rushed from the place in a frenzy, exclaiming, "Good God! and have I been sitting all this while with a hangman!"

Flap, lead used for the coverings of roofs.

Flapper, OR FLIPPER, the hand.

Flare up, a jovial social gathering, a "breakdown," a "row."

Flash, showy, smart, knowing; a word with various meanings. A person is said to be dressed FLASH when his garb is showy, and after a fashion, but without taste. A person is said to be FLASH when he apes the appearance or manners of his betters, or when he is trying to be superior to his friends and relations. FLASH also means "fast," roguish, and sometimes infers counterfeit or deceptive—and this, perhaps, is its general signification. As it is used by those who best understand it nowadays, the word means that which is not what it appears to be—anything spurious, as jewellery and shoddy clothes. "FLASH, my young friend, or slang, as others call it, is the classical language of the Holy Land; in other words, St. Giles's Greek."—*Tom and Jerry*, by Moncreiff. Vulgar language was first termed FLASH in the year 1718, by Hitchin, author of "*The Regulator of Thieves, &c., with account of flash words.*" "FLASH" is sometimes exchangeable with "fancy."

[164]

"My FLASH man's in quod,
And I'm the gal that's willin,
So I'll turn out to-night,
And earn an honest shillin'.

"Tooral, looral la,
What are wealth's possessions?
Bless the man we love,
And blow the b—— Sessions."—*Lyra Flagitiosa*.

Flash it, show it—said when any bargain is offered.

Flash o' lightning, the gold band on an officer's cap.—*Sea*. Also in street slang, a glass of gin.

Flat, a fool, a silly or "soft" person; the opposite of "sharp." The terms appear to be shortenings for "sharp-witted" and "flat-witted." Or, maybe, from musical notes.

Flat-feet, the battalion companies in the Foot Guards.

Flats, playing cards; sometimes called "broads." Also the storeys of large houses, built on the "independent" principle, each flat having its separate and peculiar offices, street-door, &c.

Flatty, a rustic, or uninitiated person.

Flatty-ken, a public-house the landlord of which is ignorant of the practices of the thieves and tramps who frequent it.

Flay the fox, to vomit. Now replaced by the more popular "shoot the cat."

Flemish account.—*Old*. Still used by sailors for a tangled and unsatisfactory account or reckoning.

Flesh and blood, brandy and port in equal quantities.

Flesh bag, a shirt. American humourists call a white shirt a "clean biled rag." In the mining camps, and rough parts generally, a white shirt is called a "biled shirt" to distinguish it from the usual woollen garment, which cannot be boiled.

Flick, OF OLD FLICK, a comical old chap or fellow. Term of endearment among low people.

Flick, OR FLIG, to whip by striking, and drawing the lash back at the same time, which causes a stinging blow. A flicking is often administered by schoolboys with a damp towel or pocket-handkerchief.

Flies, trickery, nonsense. "There are no FLIES about me, sir." Softening of lies.

Flim-flam, idle story.—*Beaumont and Fletcher*.

Flimp, to hustle, or rob.

Flimsy, a bank-note. Bank of Elegance notes are sometimes called soft flimsies. In this particular case two good terms make a bad one, as both "soft" and "flimsies" used separately refer to good notes.

Flimsy, the thin prepared copying-paper used by newspaper reporters and "penny-a-liners" for making several copies at once, which enables them to supply different papers with the same article without loss of time.

[165]

Flint, an operative who works for a "society" master, *i.e.*, for full wages.

Flip, corruption of FILLIP, a light blow. Also a hot drink. *See* FLANNEL.

Flip-flap, a peculiar rollicking dance indulged in by costermongers when merry or excited—better described, perhaps, as the "double-shuffle" danced with an air of extreme *abandon*. Also, a kind of somersault, in which the performer throws himself over on his hands and feet alternately.

Flipper, the hand; "give us your FLIPPER," give me your hand.—*Sea*. Metaphor taken from the flipper or paddle of a turtle.

Floater, a small suet dumpling put into soup.—*Whitechapel*.

Floating academy, the hulks.

Flog, to whip. Cited both by Grose and the author of *Bacchus and Venus* as a cant word. Many efforts have been made to ascertain the earliest use; Richardson cites Lord Chesterfield. From

Flagellum. "Flawged," for whipped, occurs in "The Presbyterian Lash, or Nockhoff's Maid Whipt," published in 1663. Nockhoff was the anagram for the name of the Rev. Zachary Crofton, who had scandalized the town by subjecting his servant-maid to the discipline of the nursery. There is a good story on the proper orthography of the convertible term for castigation related in a newspaper of 1841. A county magistrate, who had sentenced a boy to be birched, wrote in his warrant that the boy was to be "floged." The scrupulous gaoler hesitated to inflict the punishment, and sent back the warrant to the justice for amendment, who thereupon drew his pen through "floged," and ordered the boy to be "wiped."

Flogger, a whip.—*Almost obsolete*. FLOGGER is still the term applied to a number of strips of cloth attached to a handle, and used in theatrical painting rooms to beat off the dust of the charcoal used in sketching a scene.

Flogster, one addicted to flogging. William IV., who was accused of unduly and excessively punishing the sailors whom he commanded when in the navy, was nicknamed in the newspapers "Prince William Henry FLOGSTER."

Floor, to knock down.—*Pugilistic*.

Floored, when a picture is hung on the lowest row at the Exhibition of the Royal Academy, it is, in artistic slang, said to be FLOORED, in contradistinction to "[skyed](#)," which *see*.

Floorer, a blow sufficiently strong to knock a man down, or bring him to the floor. Often used in reference to sudden and unpleasant news.

Flop, to plump; "to go FLOP down," to fall suddenly, with violence and noise.

Flowery, lodging, or house entertainment; "square the omee for the FLOWERY," pay the master for the lodging.—*Lingua Franca*.

Flue-faker, a chimney-sweep.


Fluff it, a term of disapprobation, implying "take it away, I don't want it."

Fluff, railway ticket clerks' slang for short change given by them. The profits thus accruing are called "fluffings," and the practice is known as "fluffing."

Fluke, at billiards, playing for one thing and getting another. Hence, generally what one gets accidentally, as an unexpected advantage, "more by luck than judgment."

Flummery, flattery, gammon, genteel nonsense. In American ships a peculiar kind of light sweet pudding.

Flummux, to perplex or hinder.

Flummuxed, done up, sure of a month in quod, or prison. In mendicant freemasonry, the sign chalked by rogues and tramps upon a gate-post or house corner, to express to succeeding vagabonds that it is unsafe for them to call there, is known as , or FLUMMUXED, which signifies that the only thing they would be likely to get upon applying for relief would be a "month in quod."—*See* [QUOD](#).

Flunkey, a footman or other man-servant.

Flunkeyism, blind worship of rank, birth, or riches, or of all three; toadyism.

Flush, the opposite of "hard up," in possession of money, not poverty-stricken.—*Shakspeare*.

Flush, to whip; "FLUSHED on the horse," to be privately whipped in gaol; to deluge with water, as in "FLUSHING the sewers;" to come upon suddenly and completely,—"I came FLUSH upon him."

Flush, a term in cribbage, signifying a hand of cards composed entirely of one suit.

Flutter, to try hard in defence or pursuit of an object. "I'll have a FLUTTER for it," means I'll have a good try for it. Also to toss for anything. Probably from the spinning of the coin.

Fly, knowing, wide-awake, fully understanding another's meaning.

Fly, TO BE ON THE, to be out for a day's drink or pleasure.

Fly, to lift, toss, or raise; "FLY the mags," *i.e.*, toss up the halfpence; "to FLY a window," *i.e.*, to lift one for the purpose of stealing.

Fly-boys, men employed to clear the printed copies from the Hoe machines, on which daily papers are "worked." So called to distinguish them from the "machine boys," a superior grade of labourers who "lay on" the sheets.

Flying mare, a throw in wrestling.

Flying mess, "to be in FLYING MESS" is a soldier's phrase for being hungry and having to mess where he can.

Flying stationer, a paper-worker, hawked of penny ballads; "Printed for the Flying Stationers" is the *imprimatur* on hundreds of penny histories and sheet songs of the last and present centuries.

Flymy, knowing, cunning, roguish.—*Seven Dials and Low Life*.

Fly the kite, OR RAISE THE WIND, to obtain money on bills, whether good or bad, probably in allusion to tossing paper about as children do kites.

Fly the kite, to evacuate from a window,—term used in padding-kens, or low lodging-houses.

Fobbed, old slang for robbed. From *FOB*, the ancient breeches-pocket for the watch.

Fogey, or *OLD FOGY*, a dullard, an old-fashioned or singular person. Grose says it is a nickname for an invalid soldier, from the French *fougueux*, fierce or fiery, but it has lost this signification now.

Fogger, old word for a huckster.

Fogger, a farm servant who feeds cattle. Probably a corruption of fodderer.

Foggy, tipsy.

Fogle, a silk handkerchief,—not a clout, which is of cotton. It has been hinted that this may have come from the German *Vogel*, a bird, from the bird's-eye spots on some handkerchiefs, but a more probable derivation is the Italian slang (*Fourbesque*), *FOGLIA*, a pocket, or purse; or from the French Argot, *FOUILLE*, also a pocket.

Fogus, tobacco.—*Ancient Cant*. *FOGO*, old word for stench.

Follow-me-lads, curls hanging over a lady's shoulder.

Foont, a sovereign, or 20s. Probably a corruption of vingt.

Footing, "to pay FOOTING." See [SHOE](#).

Forakers, the closet of decency, or house of office. Term used by the boys at Winchester School. Very likely from "four acres," the original necessary having been in all likelihood a field behind the school.

Force the voucher, a term in use among sporting tricksters, who advertise to send certain winners, and on receipt of letters enclose vouchers similar to those sent out by respectable commission agents, but with double or treble the current odds marked thereon, in reference to the horse named. A plausible letter is sent with the voucher, and the victim is informed that on account of early investments made by the firm, which has of course a high-sounding title, the extra odds can be laid by them, and a remittance to the amount named, or part of it, is requested. Of course the firm "dries up" when claims become heavy, and, with a new name and new address, appears in the next week's advertising columns. *FORCING THE VOUCHER* was a fine game when it was first started, but it was soon overdone, as it required no particular ingenuity, and offered special immunities, theft of this kind being rather favoured than otherwise by the authorities. Certainly the law that punishes honest betting men seems powerless with regard to these plunderers, otherwise we should hardly be treated as often as we are to the spectacle of one man being fined for honest dealing, while another escapes simply because he is not a betting man, but a welcher.

Fork out, to bring out one's money, to pay the bill, to "stand for" or treat a friend; to hand over what does not belong to you—old cant term for picking pockets, and very curious in its origin. In the early part of the last century, a little book was published on purloining, and of course it had to give the latest modes. *FORKING* was the newest mode, and it consisted in thrusting the fingers stiff and open into the pocket, and then quickly closing them and extracting any article thus caught.

[168]

Forks, or *GRAPPLING-IRONS*, fingers. Costermongers and other clumsy feeders have a proverb which seems to justify their taking bones and choice morsels in their hands during the progress of a meal. It is, "Fingers were the first *FORKS*;" sometimes varied to "Fingers were made before *FORKS*."

Form, condition, training. "In good *FORM*" or "in bad *FORM*" refers to a man's or horse's state of being in the sporting world. *FORM* has also had a moral significance of late years, and with the qualifying adjectives attached as occasion requires, is extensively used in general conversation. As, "It was bad *FORM* of Brown to do that." "That article was bad *FORM*." In the latter cases the word "in" rarely appears.

Forty foot, a derisive appellation for a very short person.

Forty guts, vulgar term for a fat man.

Forty-twa, the common place of retirement on a well-known French plan at Edinburgh, so called from its accommodating that number of persons at once.

Forty winks, a short sleep or nap.

Fou, rather more than slightly intoxicated.—*Scotch*.

"We are na' *FOU*, we are na' *FOU*."

Foul, to jostle or bore unfairly in a race. See [BORE](#). To touch any foreign substance during a race—particularly a boat-race—is to *FOUL* it.

Foul, a touch, no matter how slight, of bodies or machinery in a race of any kind. *FOULS* in boat-racing are often inevitable, and are not always the result of boring or any other malicious practice.

Foul riding, riding which after a horse-race is made the subject of complaint, such as refusing to let a competitor pass, boring him against the rails, &c. Some jockeys are great adepts at this work, and are invaluable to a confederacy as a means, not so much of attaining victory themselves, as of preventing its attainment in others. Of course unless proof of jostling can be given, or evidence of malicious intent shown, jockeyship of this kind is not considered foul riding.

Four-and-nine, OR FOUR-AND-NINEPENNY GOSS, a cheap hat, so called from 4s. 9d., the price at which a once noted advertising hat-maker sold his hats—

“Whene’er to slumber you incline,
Take a short nap at 4 and 9.”

Four-eyes, a man or woman who habitually wears spectacles.

Four kings, HISTORY OF THE, an old name for a pack of playing cards. See Sir Thomas Urquhart’s *Translation of Rabelais*. In *Argot*, LIVRE DES QUATRE ROIS.

Fourth, OR FOURTH COURT, the court appropriated to the waterclosets at Cambridge; from its really being No. 4 at Trinity College. A man leaving his room to go to the FOURTH COURT, writes on his door, in algebraic notation, GONE⁴, which expresses the Cambridge slang phrase, “gone to the FOURTH.”

[169]

Fourth estate, the complete body of journalists of all descriptions. This term is much in use among “liners.”

Fox, to cheat or rob.—*Eton College*. In London to watch closely and narrowly.

Foxed, a term used by print and book collectors to denote the brown spotted appearance produced by damp on paper.

Foxing, when one actor criticises another’s performance.—*Theatrical*. Also in street slang FOXING means watching slyly.

Fox’s Sleep, OR FOXING, a purposely assumed indifference to what is going on. A fox, as well as a weasel, is said to sleep with one eye open.

Foxy, rank, tainted, from the odour of the animal.—*Lincolnshire*.

Foxy, said also of a red-haired person.

Fraping, a beating. *French*, FRAPPER.

Free-and-easy, a club held at a low public-house, the members of which meet in the tap-room or parlour for the purpose of drinking, smoking, and hearing each other sing. These gatherings are generally called harmonic meetings by the landlord, but FREE-AND-EASY best indicates the character of the proceedings.

Free fight, a fight conducted on the Irishman’s principle—“Sure, wherever you see a head, hit it.” The term is, however, American, so the practice may be considered fairly general.

Freeman’s quay, “drinking at FREEMAN’S QUAY,” *i.e.*, at another’s cost. This quay was formerly a celebrated wharf near London Bridge, and the saying arose from the beer which was given gratis to porters and carmen who went there on business.

French cream, brandy.

French gout, a certain disease, which is also known as “ladies’ fever.”

French leave, TO TAKE, to leave or depart slyly, without saying anything; or obtaining permission.

Fresh, said of a person slightly intoxicated.

Freshman, a University man during his first year. The official appellation for the students until they have passed the Previous or First Cambridge Examination, otherwise called the [Smalls](#) or [Little Go](#), is Junior Sophs or Sophisters. After this they are Senior Sophs until their last term, when they are Questionists, or preparing “*ad respondendum quæstioni*.” At Oxford the title FRESHMAN lasts for the first term.

Friday-face, a gloomy-looking man. Most likely from FRIDAY being a day of meagre fare among Catholics and High Church Protestants.

Frisk, to search; FRISKED, searched by a constable or other officer.

Frisk a cly, to empty a pocket.

[170]

Frog, a policeman. Because, by a popular delusion, he is supposed to pounce suddenly on delinquents.

Frog’s march, the manner in which four or more policemen carry a drunken or turbulent man to the station-house. The victim is held face downwards, one constable being at each shoulder, while the others hold on above the knees. Often there is another active and intelligent officer who beats time to the march on the recalcitrant hero’s posteriors.

Frontispiece, the face.

Frow, a girl, OR wife. *German*, FRAU; *Dutch*, VROUW.

Frummagemmed, annihilated, strangled, garrotted, or spoilt.—*Old Cant*.

Frump, a slatternly woman, a gossip.—*Ancient*. In modern slang it is the feminine of FOGEY, and means a prim old lady, who is generally termed “a regular old FRUMP.”

Frump, to mock or insult.—*Beaumont and Fletcher*.

F sharps, fleas. Compare [B FLATS](#).

Fudge, nonsense, stupidity. Todd and Richardson only trace the word to Goldsmith. Disraeli, however, gives the origin to a Captain Fudge, a great fibber, who told monstrous stories, which made his crew say in answer to any improbability, "You FUDGE it!"—*See Remarks on the Navy*, 1700. At page 87 of a collection of some papers of William Crouch (8vo, 1712), the Quaker, we find a mention of this Captain. Degory Marshall informed Crouch that—

"In the year 1664 we were sentenced for banishment to Jamaica by Judges Hyde and Twisden, and our number was 55. We were put on board the ship *Black Eagle*; the master's name was FUDGE, by some called LYING FUDGE."

Some persons believe that the word comes from the *Gaelic*, FFUG, deception.

Fuggies, hot rolls.—*School*.

Full against, opposed to. As, "I'm FULL AGAINST him," I decidedly object to, or dislike him, or I am opposed to him. The term originated with the bookmakers; who, when they have laid all their money against a certain horse, put a mark against his name, and reply to all inquiries, "FULL AGAINST him." This grew to "FULL AGAINST his winning," and was thus taken, when shortened, to express feeling the reverse of friendly.

Fullams, false dice, which always turn up high.—*Shakspeare*.

Full blast, a term evidently borrowed from the technology of the engine-room, and now frequently used to express the heyday or apogee of anything. As, "By the middle of the day matters were in FULL BLAST, and proceedings generally were very satisfactory."

Full feather, good condition, high spirits. Also any one gaily dressed is said to be in FULL FEATHER.

Full fig, full costume, male or female uniform or evening dress.

Full of beans, arrogant, purseproud. A person whom sudden prosperity has made offensive and conceited, is said to be too "FULL OF BEANS." Originally stable slang. [171]

Fully, "to be FULLIED," to be committed for trial. Term in general use among thieves. Possibly from the reports which, in the slang of the penny-a-liner, say "the prisoner was FULLY committed for trial." The magistrates often say FULLY committed also, whatever that may mean.

Funk, trepidation, nervousness, cowardice. To FUNK, to be afraid or nervous.

Funk, to smoke out, or terrify.

Funking the cobbler, a bold schoolboy trick, performed with assafoetida and cotton stuffed into a hollow tube or cow's horn. The cotton being lighted, the smoke is blown in through the keyhole of a door, or the crannies of a cobbler's stall. A funny song, much in vogue some years back, gave all the agonies of a drunken cobbler, who believed the devil had come for him, with all sorts of accessories, till

"He was told by a shout
That 'twas only some boys who'd been FUNKING him out."

Funny, a rowing boat with both ends pointed and out of the water.

Funny-bone, the extremity of the elbow—or rather, the muscle which passes round it between the two bones, a blow on which causes painful tingling in the fingers. Facetiously derived, from its being the extremity of the *humerus* (humorous).

Fye-buck, a sixpence.—*Nearly obsolete*.

Gab, GABBER OR GABBLE, talk; "gift of the GAB," loquacity, or natural talent for speech-making.—*Anglo-Norman*; GAB is also found in the *Danish* and *Old Norse*.

Gaby, a simpleton, a country bumpkin. Probably from gape.

Gad, a trapesing slatternly woman.—*Gipsy. Anglo-Saxon*, GÆDELING.

Gadding the hoof, going without shoes. GADDING, roaming about, although used in an old translation of the Bible, is now only heard amongst the lower orders.

Gaff, a penny play-house, in which talking is not permitted on the stage. See [PENNY GAFF](#).

Gaffer, a master, or employer; term used by "navvies," and general in Lancashire and North of England. Early English for an old man. See "[BLOW THE GAFF](#)."

Gaffing, tossing halfpence, or counters.—*North*, where it means tossing up three halfpennies. One man tosses, and another calls. Sometimes the coins are tossed from a stick, and the tosser keeps those which fall heads uppermost.

Gag, a lie; "a GAG he told to the beak."—*Thieves' Cant*.

Gag, language introduced by an actor into his part. In certain pieces this is allowed by custom, and these are called GAG-PIECES. *The Critic, or a Tragedy Rehearsed*, is chief among these. Many actors, however, take French leave in this respect with most pieces.—*Theatrical slang*.

MR. ROBSON AT BELFAST.—We (*Northern Whig*) suspected a little bit of what is professionally termed GAG in Mr. Robson's *Daddy Hardacre* last night. He had occasion to say that one of the characters in the piece "understands me well enough," to which he added—"I wish some other people did the same," with an expressive glance at the pit; which we interpreted as having special reference to those appreciative persons in the audience whom we have already mentioned, who think it absolutely needful to roar with laughter at every sentence Mr. Robson utters, without the least regard to whether it be humorous or pathetic—only because Mr. Robson has fame as a comic actor.

When another Robson shall arise, no one will object to his GAGGING a little. The public could afford that to such a man in these days of "creations."

Gag, to hoax, "take a rise" out of one; to "cod."

Gage, a small quantity of anything; as "a GAGE of tobacco," meaning a pipeful; "a GAGE of gin," a glassful. GAGE was, in the last century, a chamber utensil.

Galeny, old cant term for a fowl of any kind; now a respectable word in the West of England, signifying a Guinea fowl.—*Vide* Grose. *Latin*, GALLINA.

Gallant show, an exhibition in which black figures are shown on a white sheet to accompanying dialogue. Generally given at night by "Punch and Judy" men.

Gallimaufry, a kind of stew, made up of scraps of various kinds. Sea term, and probably meaning the galley scraps.

Gallipot, an apothecary.

Gallivant, to wait upon the ladies.—*Old*.

Gallows, or GALLUS, very, or exceedingly—an unpleasant exclamation; "GALLOWS poor," very poor. Term originally applied to anything bad enough to deserve hanging.

Gallows bird, an incorrigible thief; often applied to denote a ruffian-like appearance.

Gallowses, in the North of England a pair of braces.

Gally-yarn, a sailor's term for a hoaxing story. He expresses disbelief by saying only "G. Y."

Galoot.—See [GEELOOT](#).

Galore, abundance. *Irish*, GO LEOR, in plenty.

Gamb, a leg. Still used as an heraldic term, as well as by thieves, who probably get it from the *Lingua Franca*. *Italian*, GAMBA; *French*, JAMBE, a leg.

Game, a term variously applied; "are you GAME?" have you courage enough? "what's your little GAME?" what are you going to do? "come, none of your GAMES," be quiet, don't annoy me; "on the GAME," out thieving. To "play the GAME" is among sporting men to do a thing thoroughly and properly.

Game leg, a lame or wounded leg.

Gameness, pluck, endurance, courage generally.

Gammon, deceit, humbug, a false and ridiculous story. *Anglo-Saxon*, GAMEN, game, sport.

Gammon, to hoax, to deceive merrily, to laugh at a person, to tell an untrue but plausible story, to make game of, or, in the provincial dialect, to make GAME on;—"who's thou makin' thy GAM' on?" *i.e.*, of whom are you making a fool?—*Yorkshire*.

Gammy, bad, unfavourable, poor tempered. Those householders who are known enemies to the street folk and tramps are pronounced by them to be GAMMY. GAMMY sometimes means forged, as "GAMMY-MONNIKER," a forged signature; GAMMY STUFF, spurious medicine; GAMMY LOWR, counterfeit

coin. *Hants*, GAMY, dirty. The hieroglyphic used by beggars and cadgers to intimate to those of the tribe coming after that things are not very favourable is known as ☐, or GAMMY. *Gaelic, Welsh, and Irish*, CAM (GAM), crooked.

Gammy-vial (Ville), a town where the police will not let persons hawk.

Gander Month, the period when the monthly nurse is in the ascendant, and the husband has to shift for himself. Probably from the open choice he has during that period.

Ganger, the person who superintends the work of a gang, or a number of navigators.

Gape, to stare about in an astonished manner. "GAPING about like a country bumpkin." Sometimes pronounced GARP. There is no reference in the use of this phrase by Cockneys to GAPE in its correct sense.

Gape-seed, something to look at, cause for astonishment; a lazy fellow, unmindful of his work, is said to be "looking for GAPE-SEED." Rustics are said to find plenty of "GAPE-SEED" in London streets.

Gar, euphuistic rendering of the title of the Deity; "be GAR, you don't say so!"—*Franco-English*.

Garden, among tradesmen signifies Covent GARDEN Market; among theatrical performers, Covent GARDEN Theatre.

Gardener, an awkward coachman; an insinuation that he is both coachman and gardener, and understands the latter branch of service better than the first; "get on, GARDENER," is a most insulting expression from a cabby to a real coachman. Men who in small families do the coach, garden, and general work, are sometimes called "teakettle grooms," or "teakettle coachmen."

Gargle, medical-student slang for drinkables.

Garnish, the douceur or fee which, before the time of Howard the philanthropist, was openly exacted by the keepers of gaols from their unfortunate prisoners for extra comforts. The practice of garnishing is by no means so defunct as some folk seem to think, and its influence may often be traced by those who wish.

Garnish, footing money.—*Yorkshire*.

Garreter, a thief who crawls over the tops of houses, and enters garret-windows. Called also a "dancer," or "dancing-master," from the light and airy nature of his occupation.

[174]

Garrotte, a system of robbery with violence much practised on dark winter nights by ruffians who during summer infest racecourses and fairs. Their victims are generally weak men and delicate women. From the Spanish GARROTTE, because the practice generally commences with a throttling attack. Procedure is, however, various, these gentlemen being possessed of much ingenuity in the way of torture. "The cat" has within the past year or so done much to modify this offensive state of things, but the sympathetic appeals of certain tenderhearted M.P.'s and other philanthropists, who are not themselves likely to be garrotted, on behalf of the garrotters, will probably before long result in a withdrawal of the *lex talionis*, and a natural resumption of the garrotte system, with new adornments.

Garrotting, a mode of cheating practised amongst card-sharpers, by concealing certain cards at the back of the neck.

Gas, to give off superfluous conceit, to bounce or brag; "his game is GAS." "To give a person GAS," is to scold him or give him a good beating. Synonymous with "to give him Jessie."

Gassy, or GASEOUS, liable to "flare up" at any offence.

Gate, THE, Billingsgate. Sometimes Newgate, according to the occupation and condition of the speaker. In the same way Paternoster Row is by publishers known as "the Row."

Gate, to order an undergrad not to pass beyond the college GATE. As a rule, the GATE begins after hall, but in extreme cases the offender is GATED for the whole day.—*University*.

Gate-race, among pedestrians a mock race, got up not so much for the best runner to win, as for the money taken from spectators, at the gate. This sort of business is not peculiar to pedestrians; there are such things as gate-money meetings at horse-racing.

Gatter, beer; "shant of GATTER," a pot of beer. A curious slang street melody, known in Seven Dials as *Bet the Coaley's Daughter*, thus mentions the word in a favourite verse:—

"But when I strove my flame to tell,
Says she, 'Come, stow that patter,
If you're a cove wot likes a gal,
Vy don't you stand some GATTER?'
In course I instantly complied—
Two brimming quarts of porter,
With sev'ral goes of gin beside,
Drain'd Bet the Coaley's daughter."

Gaudy, the annual dinner of the Fellows of a College, in memory of founders and benefactors. FROM GAUDEAMUS.—*Oxford University*.

Gawfs, cheap red-skinned apples, a favourite fruit with costermongers, who rub them well with a piece of cloth, and find ready purchasers.

Gawky, a lanky, or awkward person; a fool. *Saxon*, GEAK; *Scotch*, GOWK.

Gay, loose, dissipated; "GAY woman," a kept mistress or prostitute. Many people will remember Leech's celebrated caricature of two wretched females on an equally wretched night, and the question asked by one woman of the other, "How long have you been GAY?"

Gay tyke boy, a dog-fancier.

Gee, to agree with, or be congenial to a person.

Geeloot, or GALOOT, a recruit, or awkward soldier. A clumsy person, also a term of contempt in America.

Gen, a shilling. See [back-slang article](#).

Gent, a contraction of "gentleman,"—in more senses than one. A dressy, showy, foppish man, with a little mind, who vulgarizes the prevailing fashion.

Gent, silver. From the *French*, ARGENT.

Gentleman of four outs; in Ireland when a vulgar, blustering fellow asserts that he is a gentleman, the retort generally is, "Yes, a GENTLEMAN OF FOUR OUTS"—that is, without wit, without money, without credit, and without manners.

Gentleman of three ins,—that is, in debt, in danger, and in poverty.

Geordie, general term in Northumberland and Durham for a pitman, or coal-miner. From the *Greek*, GEORGE meaning one who works the earth, originally a cultivator; the term has been in use more than a century.

German Duck, a sheep's-head stewed with onions; a favourite dish among the German sugar-bakers in the East-end of London.

German Ducks, bugs.—*Yorkshire*.

Get up, a person's appearance or general arrangements. Probably derived from the decorations of a play.

"There's so much GETTING UP to please the town,
It takes a precious deal of coming down."

Planché's Mr. Buckstone's Ascent of Parnassus.

Ghost, "the GHOST doesn't walk," a theatrical term which implies that there is no money about, and that there will be no "treasury."

Gibberish, unmeaning jargon; the language of the gipsies, synonymous with SLANG, another Gipsy word. Somner says, "*French*, GABBER; *Dutch*, GABBEREN; and our OWN GAB, GABBER; hence also, I take it, our GIBBERISH, a kind of canting language used by a sort of rogues we vulgarly call gipsies, a gibble-gabble understood only among themselves." See [Introduction](#). The GIBBERISH of schoolboys is formed by placing a consonant between each syllable of a word, and is called the GIBBERISH of the letter inserted. Thus, if F were the letter, it would be termed the F GIBBERISH; if L, the L GIBBERISH—as in the sentence, "How do you do?—*Howl dol youl dol?*" A GIBBERISH is sometimes formed by adding *vis* to each word, in which the previous sentence would be—"Howvis dovis youvis dovis?" These things are worthy of schoolboys, as they are in ability far below the rhyming, the back, or the centre slang, each of which is constructed by people possessing no claim to literary excellence whatever. Schoolboys in France form a GIBBERISH, in a somewhat similar manner, by elongating their words two syllables, in the first of which an *r*, in the second a *g*, predominates. Thus the words *vous êtes un fou* are spoken, *vousdregue esdregue undregue foudregue*. Fast persons in Paris, of both sexes, frequently adopt terminations of this kind, from some popular song, actor, exhibition, or political event. In 1830, the favourite termination was *mar*, saying *épicemar* for *épicier*, *cafémar* for *café*. In 1823, when the diorama created a sensation in Paris, the people spoke in *rama* (*on parlait en rama*.) In Balzac's beautiful tale, *Le Père Goriot*, the young painter at the boarding-house dinner-table mystifies the landlady by saying, "What a beautiful *soupeaurama!*" To which the old woman replies, to the great laughter of the company, "I beg your pardon, sir, it is *une soupe à choux*." These adaptations can hardly be called slang, or we shall have everybody making a slang of his own, and refusing to believe in any one's else—a sort of secondhand edition of the Tower of Babel.

Gib-face, a heavy, ugly face; GIB is properly the lower lip of a horse; "to hang one's GIB," to pout the lower lip, to be angry or sullen.

Gibus, an opera hat. From the inventor of the crush hat.

Giffle-gaffle, or GIBBLE-GABBLE, nonsense. See [CHAFF](#). *Icelandic*, GAFLA.

Gig, a farthing. Formerly GRIG.

Gig, fun, frolic, a spree. *Old French*, GIGUE, a jig, a romp.

"In search of lark, or some delicious GIG,
The mind delights on, when 'tis in prime twig."

Randall's Diary, 1820.

"No heirs have I,' said mournful Matt;

But Tom, still fond of GIG,
Cried out, 'No hairs? don't fret at that,
When you can buy a wig.'"

Gig lamps, spectacles; also a person who wears spectacles is often called GIG-LAMPS. Connexion obvious. This term has been in use probably as long as GIG-LAMPS themselves—if GIG-LAMPS were invented after spectacles.

Gill, or JILL, a homely woman; "Jack and Gill," &c.

Gills, the lower part of the face.—*Bacon*. "To grease one's GILLS," "to have a good feed," or make a hearty meal. A man suffering from the effects of a previous night's debauch, is said to "look queer about the GILLS."

Gills, overlarge shirt collars.

Gilt, money. *German*, GELD; *Dutch*, GELT.

Gimcrack, a bijou, a slim piece of mechanism. Old slang for "a spruce wench."—*New Bailey*. Any things which are gaudy and easily breakable, are known now as GIMCRACKS.

Ginger, a showy, fast horse—as if he had been figged with GINGER under his tail; a red-haired man. Term commonly used in depreciation of a person's appearance.

Ginger hackled, having flaxen, light yellow hair. Term originally used to describe a certain colour or colours in game-cocks.—*See HACKLE*.

[177]

Gingerly, to do anything with great care.—*Cotgrave*.

Gingham, an umbrella. Term very common in London.

Gingumbob, a bauble.

Gin-spinner, a distiller, or rectifier of gin.

Give, to strike, to scold; "I'll GIVE it to you," *i.e.*, I will thrash you. To lead to, in the sense of directions. Thus, in one of the Christmas numbers of *All the Year Round* we are told that "a side portal and a passage, dark at noon, GAVE upon Paradise Alley." This usage of the word, from the French idiomatic use of *donner*, is becoming by no means uncommon.

Give in, to admit oneself defeated, to "throw up the sponge," or "strike one's flag."

Give it mouth, a rude request to an actor or orator, which means, speak up. Low folk can fancy nothing higher in the way of encomium on an actor than, "He's the cove to GIVE IT MOUTH—rather!"

Gladstone, cheap claret. GLADSTONE reduced the duty on French wines.

Glasgow magistrate, a salt herring. When George IV. visited Scotland, a wag placed some salt herrings on the iron guard of the carriage belonging to a well-known GLASGOW MAGISTRATE, who made one of a deputation to receive his Majesty.

Glaze, glass; generally applied to windows. To "star the GLAZE" is to break a window.

Glib, a tongue; "slacken your GLIB," *i.e.*, "loosen your tongue."

Glim, a light, a lamp; "dowse the GLIM," put out the candle. *Sea and Old Cant*. GLIMS, spectacles. *Gaelic*, GLINN, light. *German* (provincial), GLIMM, a spark.

Glim lurk, a begging paper, giving a circumstantial account of a dreadful fire—which never happened.

Gloak, a man. Term much used in old thieves' cant.

Glum, sulky, stem; "to look GLUM," to appear annoyed or disconcerted.

Glump, to sulk.

Glumpish, of a stubborn, sulky temper.

Go, a GO of gin, a quartern of that liquor. (This word, as applied to a measure of liquor, is stated to have arisen from the following circumstance:—Two well-known actors once met at the bar of a tavern to have a "wet" together. "One more glass and then we'll GO," was repeated so often on either hand, that in the end GO was out of the question with both of them, and so the word passed into a saying.) Go is also synonymous with circumstance or occurrence; "a rummy GO," and "a great GO," signify curious and remarkable occurrences; "all the GO," when anything creates unusual interest, "no GO," no good; "here's a pretty GO!" here's a trouble; GO, a term in the game of cribbage; "to GO the jump," to enter a house by the window.—*See LITTLE GO*; also *CALL-A-GO*.

[178]

"Gemmen (says he), you all well know
The joy there is whene'er we meet;
It's what I call the primest GO,
And rightly named, 'tis—'quite a treat,'"

Jack Randall's Diary, 1820.

Go along, a fool, a cully, one of the most contemptuous terms in a thieves' vocabulary.

Gob or GOBBET, a portion. Generally applied to meat by schoolboys.

Gob, the mouth, as in pugilistic slang "a spank on the GOB, drawing the gravy." Also mucus, or saliva. Sometimes used for GAB, talk—

"There was a man called Job,
Dwelt in the land of Uz;
He had a good gift of the GOB;
The same case happen us."

ZACH. BOYD.

Gaelic—GAB and GOB, a mouth. See [GAB](#).

God bless the Duke Of Argyle! a Scottish insinuation made when one shrugs his shoulders, of its being caused by parasites or cutaneous affections.—See [SCOTCH FIDDLE](#), [SCOTCH GREYS](#). It is said to have been originally the thankful exclamation of the Glasgow folk, at finding a certain row of iron posts, erected by his grace in that city to mark the division of his property, very convenient to rub against. Some say the posts were put up purposely for the benefit of the good folk of Glasgow, who were at the time suffering from the "Scotch fiddle." This is, however, but a Southern scandal.

Gods, the people in the upper gallery of a theatre; "up amongst the GODS," a seat amongst the persons in the gallery—so named from the high position of that part, and the blue sky generally painted on the ceiling of the theatre; termed by the French, "paradis."

Gods, the quadrats used by printers in throwing on the imposing stone, similar to the movement in casting dice.—*Printers' term*.

Go due north, to become bankrupt, to go to Whitecross Street.—*Nearly obsolete*.

Go for the gloves, to lay against a horse on the chance of its losing, without having the wherewithal to pay if it wins. Probably from the custom of ladies who bet GLOVES, and expect, as the racing men say, to "stand them to nothing," *i.e.*, to be paid if they win, but not to pay if they lose. This is a last resource of the bankrupt turfite; and the big handicaps at the end of the year, the Cesarewitch and Cambridgeshire, offer both temptation and opportunity to those who can only hope to recoup themselves for their previous losses by "GLOVING IT" successfully. When, in the sporting papers it is stated that a settling at Tattersall's was more than usually unsatisfactory, it may be fairly assumed that the GLOVES have not been won by those who most desired them.

Go in, to enter for, to apply oneself in pursuit of. Men at the Universities are said to GO IN for honours, aquatics, or whatever their chief desire or employment may be. The expression is now general.

Go it, a term of encouragement, implying, "keep it up!" Sometimes amplified to "GO IT, ye cripples;" said to have been a facetious rendering of the last line of Virgil's *Eclogues*—

"Ite domum saturæ, venit Hesperus, ite capellæ;"

or, "GO IT, ye cripples, crutches are cheap."

Goldbacked uns, body lice. Sometimes called greybacked uns.

Goldfinches, sovereigns. Similar to [Canaries](#).

Gold-mine, any profitable investment, from a fried-fish shop to a remunerative speculation involving millions.

Golgotha, a hat, "place of a skull." Hence the "Don's gallery," at St. Mary's, Cambridge, and that part of the theatre at Oxford where the heads of houses sit.

Gol-mol, noise, commotion.—*Anglo-Indian*.

Golopshus, splendid, delicious, luscious.—*Norwich*.

Gonnof, an expert thief, a master of his craft; one of the greatest compliments a London pickpocket can pay another is to say, "he's a reglar GONNOF."—See [GUN](#). The word GONNOF is very old. During Kett's rebellion in Norfolk, in the reign of Edward VI., a song was sung by the insurgents in which the term occurs—

"The country GNOFFES, Hob, Dick, and Hick,
With clubbes and clouted shoon,
Shall fill up Dussyn dale
With slaughter'd bodies soone."

Good people, the name given by country folk, evidently from fear of offending by any less decided term, to fairies, brownies, pixies, &c. Mothers often say to querulous children, "I wish the GOOD PEOPLE would run away with you."

Goods, in the sporting world, men or horses. A horse or man of exceptionable quality is called "good GOODS," and a backer will speak of either as being in his opinion "best GOODS," as compared with others in the race.

Good time, an expressive phrase, which means all earthly bliss to the American mind. The finest reminiscence a Yankee can have is that of a GOOD TIME, wherever it may have been spent. No moderate amount of happiness is ever recorded in the register which denotes how often its

possessor has "had a GOOD TIME."

Good woman, a not uncommon public-house sign, representing a woman without a head,—the ungallant allusion is that she cannot scold. Maybe, the publican does not think that it means also that she cannot drink. The Honest Lawyer, another sign, is depicted in the same manner.

Goose, a tailor's pressing iron. Originally a slang term, but now in most dictionaries.

Goose; "Paddy's GOOSE," *i.e.*, the White Swan, a celebrated public-house in Ratcliff Highway.

Goose, "to cook his GOOSE," to kill him; the same as "to give him his gruel," or "settle his hash." [180]

Goose, "to get the GOOSE," "to be GOOSED," signifies to be hissed while on the stage. The big-bird, the terror of actors. See [BIG BIRD](#).—*Theatrical*.

Goose, to ruin, or spoil; to hiss a play.—*Theatrical*. To be "sound on the GOOSE" is in America to be orthodox in one's political creed.

Gooseberry, to "play up old GOOSEBERRY" with any one, to defeat or silence a person in a quick or summary manner.

Gooseberry-pickers, sharp children, who are ostensibly placed in charge of their elder sisters, when the latter go out shopping, but who are in reality a check on any chance of flirtation.

Goosecap, a simpleton, a booby, or noodle.—*Devonshire*.

Gooser, a settler, or finishing blow.

Go over, in clerical slang, signifies to join the Church of Rome.

Gorge, to eat in a ravenous manner. "Rotten GORGERS" are those hungry lads who hang about Covent Garden Market, and devour the discarded fruit.

Gorger, a swell, a well-dressed, or gorgeous man—probably derived from the latter adjective. Sometimes used to denote an employer, or principal, as the manager of a theatre.

Gormed, a Norfolk corruption of a profane oath. So used by Mr. Peggotty in *David Copperfield*.

Gospel grinder, a City missionary, or tract-distributor.

Gospel Shop, an irreverent term for a church or chapel of any denomination. Mostly in use among sailors.

Goss, a hat—from the gossamer silk of which modern hats are made.

Goss, "to give a man GOSS," to requite an injury, to beat, or kill. This is an Americanism, and is applied variously. A steamboat captain on the Mississippi, determined to pass his rival, called out, so the story goes, to the fireman, "Give her GOSS and let her rip, as I mean to pass that boat, or bust."

Goth, an uncultivated person. One who is ignorant of the ways of society.

Go the whole pile, to put all one's bank on a solitary chance. An Americanism which had its origin in the PILES of gold dust used as circulating medium by gambling miners.

Gourock ham, a salt herring. GOUROCK, on the Clyde, about twenty-five miles from Glasgow, was formerly a great fishing village.—*Scotch*.

Government sign-post, the gallows. This is necessarily almost obsolete.

Governor, a father, a master or superior person, an elder; "which way, GUV'NER, to Cheapside?"

Gowler, a dog.—*North Country Cant. Query*, GROWLER.

Gownsmen, a student at one of the universities, as distinguished from a TOWNSMAN. [181]

Grab, to clutch, or seize; GRABBED, caught, apprehended.

Grace-card, the six of hearts, so termed in Ireland. A Kilkenny gentleman, named GRACE, being solicited, with promises of royal favour, to espouse the cause of William III., gave the following answer, written on the back of the six of hearts, to an emissary of Marshal Schomberg's, who had been commissioned to make the proposal to him:—"Tell your master I despise his offer; and that honour and conscience are dearer to a gentleman than all the wealth and titles a prince can bestow." This would have been a much better story had James II. been a better King, and had he not earned for himself, even among Catholic Irishmen, a disgraceful name, through his craven conduct at the Battle of the Boyne.

Graft, work; "where are you GRAFTING?" *i.e.*, where do you work? "What GRAFT are you at?" what are you doing? Perhaps derived from gardening phraseology; or a variation of *craft*.

Granny, a knot which will not hold, from its being wrongly and clumsily tied.—*Sea*.

Granny, to know, or recognise; "do ye GRANNY the bloke?" do you know the man?

Grappling irons, fingers.—*Sea*.

Grass, "gone to GRASS," dead,—a coarse allusion to burial; absconded, or disappeared suddenly; also, gone to waste; it is said of wasted limbs that they have "gone to GRASS;" "oh, go to GRASS," a common answer to a troublesome or inquisitive person,—possibly a corruption of "go to GRACE," meaning, of course, a directly opposite fate.

Grass, to knock down. Also to throw in a wrestling-match. "He GRASSED his man with a heavy

righthander," or "He brought his man to GRASS by means of a swinging hipe."

Grass-comber, a country fellow, a haymaker.

Grasshopper, a waiter at a tea-garden.

Grass widow, an unmarried mother; a deserted mistress. In the United States, during the gold fever in California, it was common for an adventurer to put both his wife (termed in his absence a GRASS-WIDOW) and his children to school during his absence. Also a married woman, resident in England, whose husband is in India or the colonies.

Gravel, to confound, to bother; "I'm GRAVELLED," *i.e.*, perplexed or confused.—*Old*. Also, to prostrate, to beat to the ground.

Gravel-rash, a scratched face,—telling its tale of a drunken fall. A person subject to this is called a GRAVEL-GRINDER.

Gravesend sweetmeats, shrimps. GRAVESEND TWINS are solid particles of sewage.

Gray, a halfpenny, with either two "heads" or two "tails"—both sides alike. They are used for cheating the unwary at "Tommy Dodd," or pitch and toss. They are often "rung in" with a victim's own money, so that the caller of "heads" or "tails" cannot lose. Thus if A has to call, he or a confederate manages to mix the selected GRAYS with B's tossing halfpence. There are various and almost obvious uses for them.

[182]

Gray-coat parson, a lay impropiator, or lessee of great tithes.

Gray mare, a wife who "wears the breeches." From an old story in which the point is to show that the "GRAY MARE," the wife's choice, "is the better horse," and by parity of reasoning that the wife is superior to the husband.

Grays, or SCOTCH GRAYS, lice. These pretty little things are called by many names, among others by those of GRAY-BACKS, and GOLD-BACKED UNS, which are popular among those who have most interest in the matter.

Grease spot, a minute remnant, humorously the only distinguishable remains of an antagonist after a terrific contest.

Greasing, bribing. Sometimes called "GREASING the palm" of a man's hand.

Grecian bend, modern milliner slang for an exaggerated bustle, the effect of which is generally assisted by unnaturally high-heeled boots.

Greek, a wide-awake fellow, a sharper.

Greek kalends, an expression signifying an indefinite period; never. Term used in making promises never intended to be carried out. The Greeks had no KALENDS.

Greeks, the low Irish. St. Giles's GREEK, slang or cant language. Cotgrave gives merrie GREEK as a definition for a roystering fellow, a drunkard. The GREEKS have always been regarded as a jolly, luxurious race; so much so, that the Latins employed the verb *Græcari* (lit. to play the GREEK) to designate fine living and free potations, a sense in which Horace frequently uses it; while Shakspeare often mentions the merry GREEKS; and "as merry as a grig" (or GREEK) was long a favourite allusion in old English authors. It is said by some that grig is in this sense intended to represent the small eel of that name which from its lively movements is supposed to be always merry; while others incline to the belief that the cricket, which is also in some parts of the provinces known as a grig, is meant. Readers may take their choice.

Green, ignorant, not wide-awake, inexperienced.—*Shakspeare*. "Do you see any GREEN in my eye?" ironical question in a dispute.

Greenbacks, the paper money issued in the United States during the war. The term was at first applied only to the notes for small amounts, which were backed with green, but eventually the one word represented all descriptions of what is now known in America as "currency."

Green-horn, a fresh, simple, or uninitiated person.

Greenlander, an inexperienced person, a spoon. Sometimes an Irishman.

Greenwich goose, a pensioner of the Naval Hospital.

Griddler, a person who sings in the streets without a printed copy of the words.—*Seven Dials*.

[183]

Gridiron, a County Court summons. Originally a summons to the Court of Westminster only; from the GRIDIRON arms. The Grafton Club is nearly always known as the GRID OR GRIDIRON, that instrument being brought into requisition whenever possible in the cuisine.

Gridiron and dough boys, the flag of the United States, in allusion to the stars and stripes.—*Sea*.

Grief, "to come to GRIEF," to meet with an accident, to be ruined.

Griffin, in India, a newly-arrived cadet; general for an inexperienced youngster.

Grind, "to take a GRIND," *i.e.*, a walk, or constitutional. The daily grind is a term representing employment containing much routine. At Oxford college sports are called sometimes the GRIND.

Grind, to work up for an examination, to cram by oneself, or with a private tutor.

Grinder, private tutor, a coach.—*University*.

Grinder, a tooth.

Grindoff, a miller. From *The Miller and his Men*.

Gripes, the stomach-ache. See [TRIPES](#).

Grist to the mill, money to the pocket, food to the family; anything which is supposed to add to a man's immediate prospects, to his income, or to his benefit in any way, is said to "bring GRIST TO THE MILL."

Grizzle, to fret or cry continuously.

Grog blossoms, pimples on the face, caused by hard drinking. Of such a person it is often said, "He bears his blushing honours thick upon him."

Grog-fight, a drinking party.—*Military*.

Groggy, tipsy; when a prize-fighter becomes "weak on his pins," and nearly beaten, he is said to be GROGGY. The same term is applied to horses that are overworked and unsteady. From similarity of appearance to the peculiarity of gait consequent on imbibing too much GROG.

Grove of the Evangelist, a facetious name for St. John's Wood.

Growler, a four-wheeled cab. It is generally supposed that drivers of these vehicles take a less favourable view of life than do their Hansom brethren.

Grub and bub, victuals and drink of any kind,—GRUB signifying food, and BUB, drink.

Grubbing ken, or SPINIKIN, a workhouse; a cook-shop.

Grubby, musty, or old-fashioned.—*Devonshire*.

Gruel, "to give a person his GRUEL," to kill him. An expression in all probability derived from the report of a trial for poisoning, or from the easiest manner of administering a dose of poison. In the old days a similar phrase was "to drug a posset." Compare "[to settle his hash](#)," and "[cook his goose](#)."

[184]

Guardevine, a cellaret.—*Scotch*.

Guinea pigs, habitual directors of public companies; special jurymen; and engineer officers doing civil duty at the War Office, and paid a GUINEA per diem.

Guinea to a goose, a sporting phrase, meaning long odds in favour of, or against, anything under notice. In the City this state of things is represented by the phrase, Lombard Street to a China orange. There are also other colloquialisms on this subject, but their power is, as a rule, mainly dependent upon their indecency.

Gulfed, originally a Cambridge term, denoting that a man is unable to enter for the classical examination from having failed in the mathematical. These men's names appeared in the list of "Degrees Allowed." The name GULF for this list is said to have arisen from the boast of a former "wooden spoon." "I would have you to know there is a great GULF between *me* and the captain of the poll." Candidates for classical honours were compelled to go in for both examinations. From the alteration of the arrangements, the term as thus applied is now obsolete. The expression is common now in Oxford as descriptive of a man who goes in for honours, and only gets a pass. An Honorary Fourth is when a candidate who only tries for a pass does so well that he is raised to the honours' list.

Gull, to cheat, to deceive; also one easily cheated. From the easy manner in which the bird of that name is deceived.

Gullyfluff, the waste—coagulated dust, crumbs, and hair—which accumulates imperceptibly in the pockets of schoolboys.

Gully rakers, cattle thieves in Australia, the cattle being stolen out of almost inaccessible valleys, there termed GULLIES.

Gulpin, a weak, credulous fellow, who will GULP down anything.

Gummy, thick, fat—generally applied to a woman's ankles, or to a man whose flabby person betokens him a drunkard.

Gumption, or RUMGUMPTION, comprehension, capacity. From GAUM, to comprehend; "I canna gauge it, and I canna GAUM it," as a Yorkshire exciseman said of a hedgehog.

Gun, a magsman or street thief. Diminutive of gonnuf or gunnof. A GUN's practice is known as GUNOVING.

Gunner's daughter, a term facetiously applied to the method of punishing boys in the Royal Navy by tying them securely to the breech of a cannon, so as to present the proper part convenient for the cat, and flogging them. This is called "marrying" or "kissing" the GUNNER'S DAUGHTER.

Gup, gossip.—*Anglo-Indian*.

Gurrawaun, a coachman, a native Indian corruption of the English word coachman. For another curious corruption of a similar kind, see [SIMPKIN](#).—*Anglo-Indian*.

Gusher, one overflowing with sentiment, a rhapsodizer. Romance-reading young ladies are generally described as GUSHING, and of late years the word CUSH has done duty as representing the

[185]

newspaper work necessary for a continuance of the "largest circulation."

Gut scraper, a fiddler.

Gutter blood, a low or vulgar man.—*Scotch*.

Gutter lane, the throat. Probably from GUTTUR.

Guttle, *see* [GUZZLE](#).

Guy, a fright, a dowdy, an ill-dressed person. Derived from the effigy of Guy Fawkes carried about by boys on Nov. 5. "Hollo, boys, another GUY!"

Guy, to get away. Same as [HEDGE](#) in street phraseology, which *see*.

Guzzle, to eat or drink to excess; to eat loudly, hastily, and clumsily.

Gyp, an undergraduate's servant at Cambridge. Popularly derived by Cantabs from the *Greek*, GYPS, (γύψ), a vulture, from the dishonest rapacity peculiar to GYPS. At Oxford servants are called scouts.

Hackle, pluck; "to show HACKLE," to be willing to fight. HACKLES are the long feathers on the back of a cock's neck, which he erects when angry,—hence the metaphor.

Hackslaver, to stammer in one's speech, like a dunce at his lesson.

Haddock, a purse.—See [BEANS](#).

Hair of the dog, a "modest quencher," taken the morning following a debauch. Originally a "HAIR OF THE DOG that bit you." This is very old, and seems to show that homœopathy is by no means new, so far as topers, at all events, are concerned.

Half-a-bean, half-a-sovereign.

Half-a-bull, two shillings and sixpence.

Half-a-couter, half-a-sovereign.

Half-a-hog, sixpence; sometimes termed HALF-A-GRUNTER.

Half-and-half, a mixture of ale and porter, much affected by medical students; occasionally Latinized into "dimidium dimidiumque." Cooper is HALF-AND-HALF, made of stout and porter. The term of HALF-AND-HALF is also applied to the issue of marriages between gipsies and "white people."

Half-a-stretch, six months in prison.

Half-a-tusheroon, half-a-crown.

Half-baked, soft, doughy, half-witted, silly. [HALF-ROCKED](#) has a similar meaning.

Half-foolish, ridiculous; means often wholly foolish.

Half Jack. See [JACKS](#).

Half-mourning, to have a black eye from a blow. As distinguished from "whole-mourning," two black eyes.

Half-rocked, silly, half-witted. Derived from a vulgar idea that in the Westcountry children are nursed in a peculiar manner, which in afterlife affects their wits. They are said to be nursed bottom upwards, so as to sleep without much rocking. If this is inconsequent it is the fault of the saying and not of the dictionary. Compare [HALF-BAKED](#).

[186]

Half-seas-over, reeling drunk.—*Sea*. Used by Swift.

Hall, THE, Leadenhall Market, among folk who get their livings there, in the same way as "The Garden" refers to Covent Garden.

Hand, a workman or helper, a person. "A cool HAND," explained by Sir Thomas Overbury to be "one who accounts bashfulness the wickedest thing in the world, and therefore studies impudence."

Hander, a second, or assistant. At some schools blows on the hand administered with a cane are so called.

Handicap, an arrangement by which, in any description of sport, every competitor in a race is supposed to have a chance of winning equal to the chances of his opponents. HANDICAPPING, in horse-racing signifies the adjudgment of various weights to horses differing in age, power, and speed, so as to place them as much as possible on an equality. At other sports this equalization is managed by means of starts.

The old game of HANDICAP (hand i' the cap) is a very different affair; and, as it is now almost obsolete, being only played by gentlemen in Ireland, after hunting and racing dinners, when the wine has circulated pretty freely, merits a description here. It is played by three persons, in the following manner:—A wishes to obtain some article belonging to B, say a horse; and offers to "challenge" his watch against it. B agrees; and C is chosen as HANDICAPPER to "make the award"—that is, to name the sum of money that the owner of the article of lesser value shall give with it, in exchange for the more valuable one. The three parties, A, B, and C, put down a certain stake each, and then the HANDICAPPER makes his award. If A and B are both satisfied with the award, the exchange is made between the horse and watch, and the HANDICAPPER wins, and takes up the stakes. Or if neither be satisfied with the award, the HANDICAPPER takes the stakes; but if A be satisfied and B not, or *vice versâ*, the party who declares himself satisfied gets the stakes. It is consequently the object of the HANDICAPPER to make such award as will cause the challenger and challenged to be of the same mind; and considerable ingenuity is required and exhibited on his part. The challenge having been made, as stated, between A's watch and B's horse, each party puts his HAND into a CAP or hat [or into his pocket] while C makes the award, which he purposely does in as rapid and complex a manner as possible. Thus, after humorously exaggerating the various excellences of the articles, he may say—"The owner of the superior gold lever watch shall give to the owner of the beautiful thoroughbred bay horse, called Flyaway, the watch and fifteen half-crowns, seven crowns, eighteen half-guineas, one hundred and forty groats, thirteen sovereigns, fifty-nine pence, seventeen shillings and sixty-three farthings. Draw, gentlemen!" A and B must instantly then draw out and open their hands. If money appears in both, they are agreed, and the award stands good; if money be in neither hand, they are also agreed, but the award is rejected. If money be only in one hand, they are not agreed, the award is off, and the stakes go as already stated. Very frequently, neither A nor B is sufficiently quick in his mental calculation to follow the HANDICAPPER, and not knowing on the instant the total of the various sums in the award, prefers being "off," and, therefore, "draws" no money. As in this event the

[187]

HANDICAPPER gets the stakes, the reason for the complex nature of his award is obvious.

When HANDICAPPING has once commenced in a convivial party, it is considered unsportsmanlike to refuse a challenge. So when the small hours draw on, and the fun becomes fast and furious, coats, boots, waistcoats, even shirts are challenged, HANDICAPPED, and exchanged, amidst an almost indescribable scene of good humoured joviality and stentorian laughter. This is the true HANDICAP. The application of the term to horse-racing has arisen from one or more persons being chosen to make the award between persons, who put down equal sums of money, on entering horses unequal in power and speed for the same race. So that the HANDICAP has ultimately come to be regarded as an arrangement of a purely business-like nature, by which means affairs, no matter how much they may differ in degree, may be arranged satisfactorily by all parties. The use of the word is spreading rapidly, and it has already a sense beyond that of mere sporting.

Handicap, to make even, as a Roland for an Oliver. Not long since in a pedestrian enclosure, a pugilist who had been specially retained on one side struck a member of the other party, who not being a fighting-man received the blow with apparent contentment. The injured person had, however, determined on being revenged, and about an hour afterwards he knocked the professional down with a big stick, using the words at the same time, "that HANDICAPS us" (that makes us even). The word is often used thus also: A man finding himself inferior to another at fisticuffs will, seizing a weapon, exclaim, "I'll HANDICAP you," *i.e.*, I'll bring you to my level (or "level myself up") with this.

Handle, a nose; the title appended to a person's name; also a term in boxing, "to HANDLE one's fists," to use them against an adversary.

Handling, a method of concealing certain cards in the palm of the hand, or in fashionable long wristbands; one of the many modes of cheating practised by sharpers.

Hand-me-downs, second-hand clothes. See [REACH-ME-DOWNS](#).

Hand-saw, OR CHIVE FENCER, a man who sells razors and knives in the streets.

Handseller, OR CHEAP JACK, a street or open-air seller, a man who carries goods to his customers, instead of waiting for his customers to visit him.

Hanging, in difficulties. A man who is in great straits, and who is, therefore, prepared to do anything desperate to retrieve his fortunes, is said, among sporting men, to be "a man HANGING," *i.e.*, a man to whom any change must be for the better.

Hangman's wages, thirteence halfpenny.—*Old. 17th century.*

"Sfoot, what a witty rogue was this to leave this fair thirteence halfpenny, and this old halter," intimating aptly—

"Had the hangman met us there, by these presages
Here had been his work, and here his wages."

Match at Midnight.

The clothes of the culprit were also the hangman's wages. See one of Lord Bacon's aphorisms, beginning "A cursed page."

Hang out, to reside,—in allusion to the ancient custom of hanging out signs.

Hang up, to rob with violence, to garrotte. Most likely from throttling associations in connexion with the practice of garrotting.

Hannah, "that's the man as married HANNAH," a Salopian phrase to express a matter begun or ended satisfactorily. Meaning actually, "that's the thing."

Hansel, OR HANDSEL, the lucky money, or first money taken in the morning by a pedlar.—*Cocker's Dictionary*, 1724. "Legs of mutton (street term for sheep's trotters, or feet) two for a penny; who'll give me a HANSEL? who'll give me a HANSEL?" Hence, earnest money, first-fruits, &c. In Norfolk, HANSELLING a thing is using it for the first time, as wearing a new coat, taking seisin of it, as it were. Danish, HANDSEL; *Anglo-Saxon*, HANDSELEN.

Ha'porth o' coppers, Habeas Corpus.—*Legal slang.*

Ha'porth o' liveliness, the music at a low concert, or theatre. Also a dilatory person.

Happy-go-lucky, careless, indifferent as to the favours or reverses of fortune.

Haramzadeh, a very general Indian term of contempt, signifying base-born.—*Anglo-Indian.*

Hard lines, hardship, difficulty. Soldiers' term for hard duty on the lines in front of the enemy. LINES was formerly synonymous with *Lot*, see Ps. xvi. 6.—*Bible version*—"The LINES are fallen unto me in pleasant places;" *Prayer-Book do.*—"The LOT is fallen unto me in a fair ground."

Hard mouthed un, any one difficult to deal with, a sharp bargainer, an obstinate person. Derivation obvious.

Hard tack, ship biscuits. This is a term used by sailors to distinguish their ordinary sea-bread from that obtained on shore, which is called soft TACK, or soft tommy. HARD TACK is also a phrase used by the London lower classes to signify coarse or insufficient food.

Hard-up, a cigar-end finder, who collects the refuse pieces of smoked cigars from the gutter, and having dried them, smokes them, or sells them as tobacco to the very poor. See [TOPPER](#).

Hard-up, in distress, poverty-stricken.—*Sea*.

Hardy, a stone.—*North*.

Harebrained, reckless, unthinking.

Harry, or OLD HARRY, (*i.e.*, Old Hairy?) the Devil; “to play OLD HARRY with one,” *i.e.*, ruin or annoy him.

Harry-soph, (ἐρίσοφος, very wise indeed), a student of law or physic at Cambridge who, being of the same standing as the students in arts in his year, is allowed to wear a full-sleeved gown when they assume their B.A. gowns, though he does not obtain his actual degree so soon. An undergraduate in his last year is a Senior Soph, in his last term a Questionist.

Harum-scarum, wild, dissipated, reckless; four horses driven in a line. This is also called [SUICIDE](#). See [TANDEM](#), [RANDEM](#), [UNICORN](#), &c.

Hash, a mess, confusion; “a pretty HASH he made of it;” to HASH UP, to jumble together without order or regularity. The term also occurs in the phrase “to settle his HASH,” which is equivalent to “give him his gruel,” or “cook his goose,” *i.e.*, to kill him.

Hatchet, “to throw the HATCHET,” to tell lies. Same as “to draw the long bow.”

Hatchet, “to sling the HATCHET,” to skulk.—*Sea*.

Hawbuck, a vulgar, ignorant, country fellow, but one remove from the clodpole.

Hawse holes, the apertures in a ship’s bows through which the cables pass; “he has crept in through the HAWSE-HOLES,” said of an officer who has risen from the grade of an ordinary seaman, whose original position in the vessel was forward—before the mast.—*Navy*.

Hay bag, a woman.

Haymarket Hectors, bullies who, in the interest of prostitutes, affect the neighbourhood of Leicester Square and the Haymarket.

Haze, to confuse and annoy a subordinate by contradictory, unnecessary, and perplexing orders.

Hazy, intoxicated, also dull and stupid.

Head-beetler, the bully of the workshop, who lords it over his fellow-workmen by reason of superior strength, skill in fighting, &c. Sometimes applied to the foreman.

Header, a plunge head foremost into water, or a fall in the same posture from accident. Nowadays a theatrical expression for any supposedly daring jump of hero or heroine in sensational dramas.

Head or tail, “I can’t make HEAD OR TAIL of it,” *i.e.*, cannot make it out. Originally a gambling phrase.

Head-rails, the teeth.—*Sea*.

Head-serag, a master, overseer, or other important personage; from SERANG, a boatswain.—*Bengalee*, and *Sea*.

Heap, “a HEAP of people,” a crowd; “struck all of a HEAP,” suddenly astonished.

Heat, a bout, or turn, in horse or foot racing. By means of heats the field is gradually reduced.

Heavy dragoons, bugs, in contradistinction from fleas, which are “light infantry.”—*Oxford University*.

Heavy wet, malt liquor—because the more a man drinks of it, the heavier and more stupid he becomes.

Hedge, to get away from any dangerous spot. “We saw the slop coming, and HEDGED at once.”

Hedge, to secure oneself from loss over one bet by making others. HEDGING, as a system of betting, is entirely dependent upon what happens in the market after a horse has been backed. From information, or good judgment, a backer selects, say, three horses, A, B, and C, whom he thinks likely to advance in the betting, and takes 50 to 1—say £1000 to £20—against each of them. As the race-day approaches the horse A may fall out of the betting, from accident or other cause, and have to be written off as a dead loss of £20. But the other two horses, as anticipated, improve in public favour, and the backer, who now becomes a HEDGER, succeeds in laying 5 to 1—say £500 to £100—against B, and 2 to 1—say 500 to £250—against C. The account then stands thus:—A is a certain loss of £20; but if B wins, the HEDGER will receive £1000 and pay £500; balance in favour, £500. If B loses, the HEDGER will receive £100 and pay £20; balance in favour, £80. If C wins, the hedger will receive £1000 and pay £500; balance in favour, £500. If C loses, the HEDGER will receive £250 and pay £20; balance in favour, £230. Deducting, then, the loss of £20 on A, the HEDGER’S winnings will be considerable; and he cannot lose, providing his information or judgment lead to the required result. It must be borne in mind that very often a man who feels inclined to go in for a HEDGING speculation, may back half a dozen horses, not one of which sees a short price or goes to the post; besides which it must never be forgotten, that, however well turf speculations may look on paper, they are subject to the contingency of the bets being honourably paid on settling-day—the Monday after a race—when unfortunately there are often more “receivers” than “payers” at the clubs. However, turf transactions are among professionals conducted at least as honourably as are any other business matters; and it is only

the fledgling swell, to whom the Legislature gives special opportunities of losing his money, who is generally *non est* when paytime comes. "The Druid" in *Post and Paddock* has remarked:—

"The term HEDGING has been quite superseded by "laying off;" and we had, in fact, quite forgotten it till we saw it stated in the papers lately, by a clergyman, who did not answer a question on doctrine as the Bishop of Exeter exactly liked, that his lordship addressed him to this effect: 'You are HEDGING, sir; you are HEDGING!'"

Usually correct as "The Druid" was, he seems to have fallen into an error here, as HEDGING, and "laying off," have been exchangeable terms, as far as the oldest turfite can say. It should be remembered that HEDGING is generally done with the man who has originally laid the odds; for as a natural consequence, when the backer finds it convenient to hedge, the layer finds it equally so to back the horse back,—the first loss being considered always the best by bookmakers who *are* bookmakers. Besides which, the layer has generally a lot of "dead money"—money to the good over horses he has laid against, which have since been struck out—and this he profitably expends in backing certain horses back for the purpose of levelling up the book.

[191]

Hedge-popping, shooting small birds about the hedges, as boys do; unsportsmanlike kind of shooting.

Heel-tap, the small quantity of wine or other beverage left in the bottom of a glass, considered as a sign that the liquor is not liked, and therefore unfriendly and unsocial to the host and the company. See [DAY-LIGHT](#).

Heigh-ho! a cant term for stolen yarn, from the expression used to apprise the dishonest shopkeeper that the speaker had stolen yarn to sell.—*Norwich Cant*.

Hell, a fashionable gambling-house. Small places of this kind are called "silver hells." Reason obvious.

Hell and Tommy, utter destruction.

Helter-skelter, anyhow, without regard to order or precedence.

Hempen cravat, the hangman's noose.

Hen and Chickens, large and small pewter pots.

Hen-pecked, said of one whose wife "wears the breeches." From the action of the hen in paired cage-birds.

Herring-pond, the sea; "to be sent across the HERRING-POND," to be transported.

Hiding, a thrashing. Webster gives this word, but not its root, HIDE, to beat, to flay by whipping. Most likely from the part attacked. The threat of thrashing is sometimes conveyed thus:—"I'll tan (or dress) your HIDE."

Higgledy-piggledy, confusedly, all together,—as pigs lie.

High and dry, an epithet applied to the *soi-disant* "orthodox" clergy of the last century, for whom, while ill-paid curates did the work, the comforts of the Establishment were its greatest charms.

"Wherein are various ranks, and due degrees,
The Bench for honour, and the Stall for ease."

Though often confounded with, they are utterly dissimilar to, the modern High Church or Anglo-Catholic party, who now receive the title at times; while their opponents receive the corresponding appellation of "Low and Slow," and the so-called "Broad Church" is defined with equal felicity as the "Broad and Shallow." Humourists have divided these three portions of one Church into Attitudinarians, Platitudinarians, and Latitudinarians.

High Church, term used in contradistinction from "Low Church."

Highfalutin', showy, affected, tinselled, affecting certain pompous or fashionable airs, stuck up; "come, none of yer HIGHFALUTIN' games," *i.e.*, you must not show off or imitate the swell here.—*American* slang, now common in Liverpool and the East-end of London. From the *Dutch*, VERLOOTEN. Used generally now in the sense of fustian, high-sounding, unmeaning eloquence, bombast.

High-flier, anything above the common order. Apt students, fast coaches, and special trains are sufficient instances of the extreme openness of the qualification.

[192]

High-fly, "ON THE HIGH-FLY," on the genteel or letter-bearing begging system.

High-flyer, a genteel beggar or swindler. A begging-letter impostor.

High-flyer, a large swing, in frames, at fairs and races. The first fast coaches were called high-flyers on account of their desperate speed.

High jinks, "ON THE HIGH JINKS," taking up an arrogant position, assuming an undue superiority. Scott explains this game in *Guy Mannerings*. Nowadays HIGH JINKS is often used to mean a jollification.

High-lows, laced boots reaching a trifle higher than ankle-jacks.

High-strikes, corruption of *Hysterics*.

Hipped, bored, offended, crossed, low-spirited, &c. This may have been originally hypped, and have had some connexion with hypochondriacal affections.

Hitched, an Americanism for married. From the word *HITCH*, used in America in the sense of to harness.

Hittite, a facetious sporting term for a prize-fighter. Derived from the Bible.

Hivite, a student of St. Begh's College, Cumberland, which is pronounced and generally written St. Bee's. Literally, Hive-ite.

Hoax, to deceive, or ridicule,—Grose says this was originally a University cant word. Corruption of *HOCUS*, to cheat.

Hob and nob, to act in concert with another; to lay "heads together;" to touch glasses in drinking; to fraternize in a convivial meeting or merry-making. Originally meaning "foot and head,"—the touching of the top of one glass with the bottom of another, and then reversing the order. Nowadays it means simply to clink glasses together as a salutation before imbibing.

Hobbadehoy, a youth who has ceased to regard himself as a boy, and is not yet regarded as a man.

Hobble, trouble of any kind. A man is said to be in a *HOBBLE* when he has offended the proprieties in any way, "from pitch and toss to manslaughter."

Hobbled, committed for trial; properly said of animals fed by the wayside, with their forelegs fastened together. Hence people who gather burdens about them are said to get into *HOBBLES*.

Hob Collingwood, according to Brockett, a north country term for the four of hearts, considered an unlucky card.

Hobson's choice, "this or none." Hobson was a carrier at Cambridge, and also a letter-out of horses for hire; and is said to have always compelled his customers to take the horse that stood in the stall next the stable-door or none at all. He was a benefactor to the town, and Hobson's Conduit still stands as a memorial of him.

Hock-dockies, shoes.

Hocks, the feet and ankles; *CURBY HOCKS*, round or clumsy feet and ankles. Term originating with horsemen.

[193]

Hocus, to drug a person for purposes of robbery. The potion generally consists of snuff and beer among rogues of the lowest class, and is by them called "snuffing a bloke;" or sometimes, when the drug is administered to a woman for purposes other than those of robbery, "snuffing a blowen."

Hocus pocus, gipsy words of magic, similar to the modern "presto fly." The gipsies pronounce "*Habeas Corpus*," *HAWCUS PACCUS* (see Crabb's *Gipsies' Advocate*, p. 18); can this have anything to do with the origin of *HOCUS POCUS*? Turner gives *UCHUS BOCHUS*, an old demon. Pegge, however, states that it is a burlesque rendering of the words of the Roman Catholic Church service at the delivery of the host, *HOC EST CORPUS*, which the early Protestants considered as a species of conjuring, and ridiculed accordingly.

Hodge, a countryman or provincial clown. Most country districts in England have one or more families in the name of *HODGE*; indeed, *GILES* and *HODGE* appear to be the favourite hobnail nomenclature. *HODGE* is said to be simply an abbreviation of Roger.

Hog, a shilling.—*Old Cant*.

Hog, "to go the whole *HOG*;" "the whole *HOG* or none," to do anything with a person's entire strength, not "by halves;" realized by the phrase "in for a penny in for a pound." Bartlett claims this to be a pure American phrase; whilst Ker, of course, gives it a Dutch origin.—*Old*. "To go the whole *HOG*" is frequently altered by those people who believe there is wit in circumlocution, into "the entire animal," or "the complete swine!"

Hoga, do. "That wont *HOGA*," *i.e.*, that wont do, is one of the very commonest of the Anglo-Indian slang phrases.

Hogmagundy, the process by which the population is increased.

"There's many a job that day begun
That ends in Hogmagundy."—*Burns*.

Hogmany night, New Year's Eve, when presents are solicited by the young folk.—*Scotch*.

Hogo, a tremendous stench. From *haut goût*. Now often pronounced *FOGO*.

Hoisting, shoplifting.

Hold hard, an exclamation made when a sudden stoppage is desired. Originally an expression used in riding or driving, now general.

Hollow, "to beat *HOLLOW*," to excel.

Holy Joe, a sea-term for a parson.

Holy Land, a very old term for the Seven Dials,—where St. Giles's Greek is spoken.

Homo, a man. *Lingua Franca*; but see [OMEE](#), the more usual Cockney pronunciation.

Hondey, a Manchester name for an omnibus, and the abbreviation of HONDEYBUSH, the original Lancashire pronunciation of the word.

Honest Shilling, a shilling earned by a process actually immoral, but not positively illegal. The money earned by a prostitute is said to be honest, as distinguished from that obtained by a thief. Probably from the story of the converted burglar, who determined to sin no more himself, and who lectured against dishonesty, but sent his wife out regularly every evening with instructions to earn an HONEST SHILLING. [194]

Honey blobs, a Scotch term for large ripe, yellow gooseberries.

Honour bright, an asseveration which means literally, "by my honour, which is bright and unsullied." It is often still further curtailed to "HONOUR!" only.

Hook, an expression at Oxford, implying doubt, either connected with [Hookey Walker](#), or with a note of interrogation (?) "Yes, with a HOOK at the end of it!" *i.e.*, with some reservation, generally that of doubt, by the speaker.

Hook, to steal or rob. See the following.

Hook or by crook, by fair means or foul—in allusion to the hook with which footpads used to steal from open windows, &c., and from which HOOK, to take or steal, has been derived. Mentioned in *Hudibras* as a cant term.

Hook it, "get out of the way," or "be off about your business;" generally varied by "take your HOOK." "To HOOK it," to run away, to decamp; "on one's own HOOK," dependent upon one's own exertions. Originally connected with the preceding, but now perfectly "on its own HOOK."

Hookey walker! ejaculation of incredulity, usually shortened to [WALKER!](#)—which see.

Hooks, "dropped off the HOOKS," said of a deceased person—possibly derived from the ancient practice of suspending on hooks the quarters of a traitor or felon sentenced by the old law to be hung, drawn, and quartered, which dropped off the hooks as they decayed.

Hook um snivey (formerly "HOOK and SNIVEY"), a low expression, meaning to cheat by feigning sickness or other means. Also a piece of thick iron wire crooked at one end, and fastened into a wooden handle, for the purpose of undoing from the outside the wooden bolt of a door. Sometimes used as an irrelevant answer by street boys. As, "who did that?"—"HOOK UM SNIVEY"—actually no one.

Hop, a dance.—*Fashionable slang*.

Hop merchant, a dancing master.

Hop o' my thumb, an undersized person. From the story of that name. Portion of a set of phrases established for the benefit of the small, in which Tomtit, Little Breeches, Daniel Lambert, Sixfoot, Twentystun, &c., play a prominent part.

Hopping Giles, a cripple. St. Ægidius or Giles, himself similarly afflicted, was the patron saint of lazars and cripples. The ancient lazar houses were dedicated to him.

Hoppo, custom-house officer, or custom-house. Almost anything connected with custom-house business.—*Anglo-Chinese*.

Hop the twig, to run away; also, a flippant expression meaning to die. Many similar phrases are used by the thoughtless and jocose, as "laying down one's knife and fork," "pegging out," from the game of cribbage, and "snuffing it." A new form of this phraseology is to say that a man has "given up" or "given in." [195]

Hornswoggle, nonsense, humbug. Believed to be of American origin.

Horrors, the low spirits, or "blue devils," which follow intoxication. Incipient *del. trem*.

Horse, contraction of Horsemonger-Lane Gaol, also a slang term for a five-pound note.

Horse, to flog. From the old wooden horse or flogging-stool.

Horsebreaker. See [PRETTY HORSEBREAKER](#).

Horse chaunter, a dealer who takes worthless horses to country fairs and disposes of them by artifice. He is generally an unprincipled fellow, and will put in a glass eye, fill a beast with shot, plug him with ginger, or in fact do anything so that he sells to advantage. See [COPER](#).

Horse marine, an awkward person. In ancient times the "jollies," or Royal Marines, were the butts of the sailors, from their ignorance of seamanship. "Tell that to the MARINES, the blue jackets wont believe it!" was a common rejoinder to a "stiff yarn." A HORSE MARINE (an impossibility) was used to denote one more awkward even than an ordinary "jolly." Nowadays the MARINES are deservedly appreciated as one of the finest regiments in the service.

Horse nails. At the game of cribbage, when a player finds it his policy to keep his antagonist back, rather than push himself forward, and plays accordingly, he is sometimes said "to feed his opponent on HORSE NAILS."

Horse nails, money.—*Compare* [BRADS](#).

Horse's nightcap, a halter; "to die in a HORSE'S NIGHTCAP," to be hanged.

Horsey, like a groom or jockey. Applied also to persons who affect the turf in dress or conversation.

Hot coppers, the feverish sensations experienced in the morning by those who have been drunk over-night.

Hot tiger, an Oxford mixture of hot-spiced ale and sherry.

House of Commons, a humorous term for the closet of decency.

Houses; "safe as HOUSES," an expression to satisfy a doubting person; "Oh! it's as safe as HOUSES," *i.e.*, perfectly safe, apparently in allusion to the paying character of house property as an investment. It is said the phrase originated when the railway bubbles began to burst, and when people began to turn their attention to the more ancient forms of speculation, which though slow were sure.

Housewarming, the first friendly gathering in a new or freshly-occupied house.

How-came-you-so? intoxicated.

How much? A facetious way of asking for an explanation of any difficult or pedantic expression. "Why don't you cook your potatoes in an anhydrohepsaterion?" A waggish listener might be excused for asking, "An anhydro—HOW MUCH!"

How's your poor feet? an idiotic street cry with no meaning, much in vogue a few years back.

Hoxter, an inside pocket.—*Old English*, OXTER. Probably the low slang word HUXTER, money, is derived from this. OXTER is, among the Irish, an armpit.

Hubble bubble, the Indian pipe termed a hookah is thus designated, from the noise it makes when being smoked.

Huey, a town or village.—*Tramps' term*.

Huff, a dodge or trick; "don't try that HUFF on me," or "that HUFF wont do." Also a term in the game of draughts,—the penalty for failing to take an opponent's piece when an opportunity occurs.

Huff, to vex, to offend; a poor temper. HUFFY, easily offended. HUFFED, annoyed, offended. Some folk are tersely and truly described as easily HUFFED.

Hugger-mugger, underhand, sneaking. Also, "in a state of HUGGER-MUGGER" means to be muddled.

Hulk, to hang about in hopes of an invitation. See [MOOCH](#).

Hulky, extra-sized.—*Shropshire*. From this and from hulk we probably get our adjective HULKING, as applied to the great lazy ruffians who infest low neighbourhoods.

Hum and haw, to hesitate, or raise objections.—*Old English*.

Humble pie, to "eat HUMBLE PIE," to knock under, to be submissive. The UMBLES, or entrails, and other unprime parts of a deer, were anciently made into a dish for servants, while their masters feasted off the haunch.

Hum-box, a pulpit. This is a very old term.

Humbug, an imposition, or a person who imposes upon others. A very expressive but slang word, synonymous at one time with HUM AND HAW. Lexicographers for a long time objected to the adoption of this term. Richardson uses it frequently to express the meaning of other words, but, strange to say, omits it in the alphabetical arrangement as unworthy of recognition! In the first edition of this work, 1785 was given as the earliest date at which the word could be found in a printed book. Since then HUMBUG has been traced half a century further back, on the title-page of a singular old jest-book—"The Universal Jester; or a pocket companion for the Wits: being a choice collection of merry conceits, facetious drolleries, &c., clenchers, closers, closures, bon-mots, and HUMBUGS," by Ferdinando Killigrew. London, about 1735-40.

The notorious Orator Henley was known to the mob as ORATOR HUMBUG. The fact may be learned from an illustration in that exceedingly curious little collection of *Caricatures*, published in 1757, many of which were sketched by Lord Bolingbroke—Horace Walpole filling in the names and explanations. Halliwell describes HUMBUG as "a person who hums," and cites Dean Milles's MS., which was written about 1760. In the last century, the game now known as double-dummy was termed HUMBUG. Lookup, a notorious gambler, was struck down by apoplexy when playing at this game. On the circumstance being reported to Foote, the wit said—"Ah, I always thought he would be HUMBUGGED out of the world at last!" It has been stated that the word is a corruption of *Hamburgh*, from which town so many false bulletins and reports came during the war in the last century. "Oh, that is *Hamburgh* [or HUMBUG]," was the answer to any fresh piece of news which smacked of improbability. Grose mentions it in his Dictionary, 1785; and in a little printed squib, published in 1808, entitled *Bath Characters*, by T. Goosequill, HUMBUG is thus mentioned in a comical couplet on the title-page:—

"Wee Thre Bath Deities bee,
HUMBUG, Follie, and Varietee."

Gradually from this time the word began to assume a place in periodical literature, and in novels written by not over-precise authors. In the preface to a flat, and most likely unprofitable poem, entitled, *The Reign of HUMBUG, a Satire*, 8vo, 1836, the author thus apologizes for the use of the

[196]

[197]

word:—"I have used the term HUMBUB to designate this principle [wretched sophistry of life generally], considering that, it is now adopted into our language as much as the words dunce, jockey, cheat, swindler, &c., which were formerly only colloquial terms." A correspondent, who in a number of *Adversaria* ingeniously traced bombast to the inflated Doctor Paracelsus Bombast, considers that HUMBUB may, in like manner, be derived from Homberg, the distinguished chemist of the court of the Duke of Orleans, who, according to the following passage from Bishop Berkeley's *Siris*, was an ardent and successful seeker after the philosopher's stone!

"§194.—Of this there cannot be a better proof than the experiment of Monsieur Homberg, who made gold of mercury by introducing light into its pores, but at such trouble and expense that, I suppose, nobody will try the experiment for profit. By this injunction of light and mercury, both bodies became fixed, and produced a third different to either, to wit, real gold. For the truth of which fact I refer to the memoirs of the French Academy of Sciences."—*Berkeley's Works*, vol ii. p. 366 (Wright's edition).

Another derivation suggested is that of AMBAGE, a Latin word adopted into the English language *temp.* Charles I. (see May's translation of Lucan's *Pharsalia*), and meaning conduct the reverse of straightforward. Again, in the (burlesque) *Loves of Hero and Leander* (date 1642), we find "MUMBUB, quoth he, 'twas known of yore," a cant expression, no doubt, commanding a person to "shut up," or hold his tongue, and evidently derived from the game of *mum-budget* or *silence*, upon which Halliwell (*Dict. Arch.*) has descanted.

AMBAGE is also used in the sense of "circumlocution." "Without any long studie or tedious AMBAGE."—*Puttenham, Art of Poesie*.

"Umh! y' are full of AMBAGE."—*Decker's Whore of Babylon*, 1607.

"Thus from her cell Cumæan Sibyl sings
Ambiguous AMBAGES, the cloyster rings
With the shrill sound thereof, in most dark strains."

Vicar's Virgil, 1632.

[198]

De Quincey thus discourses upon the word:—

"The word HUMBUB, for instance, rests upon a rich and comprehensive basis; it cannot be rendered adequately either by German or by Greek, the two richest of human languages; and without this expressive word we should all be disarmed for one great case, continually recurrent, of social enormity. A vast mass of villany, that cannot otherwise be reached by legal penalties, or brought within the rhetoric of scorn, would go at large with absolute impunity were it not through the stern Rhadamanthean aid of this virtuous and inexorable word."—*Article on "Language."*

The original collater of these notes purchased the collection of essays known as the *Connoisseur* at the sale of Thackeray's library. At the end of vol. i. he found a memorandum in the great humourist's handwriting—"p. 108, 'HUMBUB,' a new-coined expression." On referring to that page (in the 3rd edition, 1757) this paragraph was noted:—

"The same conduct of keeping close to their ranks was observed at table, where the ladies seated themselves together. Their conversation was here also confined wholly to themselves, and seemed like the mysteries of the *Bona Dea*, in which men were forbidden to have any share. It was a continued laugh and whisper from the beginning to the end of dinner. A whole sentence was scarce ever spoken aloud. Single words, indeed, now and then broke forth; such as, odious, horrible, detestable, shocking, HUMBUB. This last new-coined expression, which is only to be found in the nonsensical vocabulary, sounds absurd and disagreeable whenever it is pronounced; but from the mouth of a lady it is 'shocking,' 'detestable,' 'horrible,' and 'odious.'"

The use of this term is almost universal; in California there is a town called Humbug Flat—a name which gives a significant hint of the acuteness of the first settler.

Humdrum, monotonous, tedious, tiresome, boring; "a society of gentlemen who used to meet near the Charter House, and at the King's Head, St. John's Street, Clerkenwell. They were characterized by less mystery and more pleasantry than the Freemasons."—*Bacchus and Venus*, 1737. In the West the term applies to a low cart.

Humming, strong as applied to drink. Extra strong ale is often characterized as "HUMMING October." Maybe from its effect on heads not quite so strong.

Hump, low spirits. A costermonger who was annoyed or distressed about anything would describe himself as having "the HUMP."

Hump, to botch, or spoil.

Hump up, "to have one's HUMP UP," to be cross or ill-tempered—like a cat with its back set up. See [BACK](#) and [MONKEY](#).

Humpty-dumpty, short and thick; all of a heap; all together, like an egg.

"HUMPTY-DUMPTY sat on a wall."

Also a hunchback. HUMPTY is an abbreviated form of the expression.

Hunch, to shove, or jostle.

Hunks, a miserly fellow, a curmudgeon.

Hunky, an American term which means good, jolly, &c. As, "a HUNKY boy," a good jovial fellow; and "everything went off HUNKY."

Hunter pitching, the game of cockshies—three throws a penny.—*See* [COCKSHY](#).

Hurdy-gurdy, a droning musical instrument shaped like a large fiddle, and turned by a crank, used by Savoyards and other itinerant foreign musicians in England, now nearly superseded by the hand-organ. From the peculiar noise made by the instrument, which in Italy is called "viola."

[199]

Hurkaru, a messenger.—*Anglo-Indian*.

Husbands' boat, the Saturday afternoon packet to Margate during the summer season. So called for obvious reasons. The passengers by this boat come in for an unusual share of attention from the cads peculiar to this watering-place.

Husbands' tea, very weak tea. *See* [WATER BEWITCHED](#).

Hush-money, a sum given to quash a prosecution or stay evidence. Money given to any one for the purpose of quieting him.

Hush-shop, OR CRIB, a shop where beer and spirits are sold "on the quiet"—no licence being paid.

Huxter, money. Term much in use among costermongers and low sharpers. Probably from OXTER or [HOXTER](#).

Hyps, OR HYPO, the blue devils. From HYPOCHONDRIASIS.—*Swift*.

Hy-yaw! an interjectional exclamation of astonishment.—*Anglo-Chinese*.

Ikey, a Jew "fence." Corruption of Isaac, a common Hebrew name.

Imperence, servant-girl currency for impudence or impertinence. "Now, then, Mr. IMPERENCE, leave off now, do," seems, however, to have faded away with Greenwich, Bartlemy, and kindred fairs.

Improve the occasion, a slang term much in use among Chadbands and Stigginses, who never lose an opportunity of IMPROVING the condition of either pockets or stomachs at the expense of the credulous.

In, "to be IN with a person," to be even with, or up to him; also, to be on intimate terms, or in partnership, with him.

Inexpressibles, UNUTTERABLES, UNMENTIONABLES, UNWHISPERABLES, OR SIT UPONS, trousers, the nether garments. All affected terms, having their origin in a most unpleasant squeamishness.

Infantry, nursery term for children; LIGHT INFANTRY, fleas.

In for it, in trouble or difficulty of any kind. As, "You're IN FOR IT, I wouldn't stand in your shoes for a trifle."

In for patter, waiting for trial, referring to the speeches of counsel, the statements of witnesses, the summing up of the judge, &c.,—the fuss of which the prisoner sets down as "all so much PATTERN."

Innings, earnings, good fortune; "he's had a long INNINGS," *i.e.*, a good run of luck, with plenty of cash flowing in. From the distinction between INNINGS and outings at cricket and kindred games.

Inside lining, dinner, &c.

Interesting, "to be in an INTERESTING situation," applied to females when *enceinte*.

Interview, to inspect privately with a view to obtaining information which shall be afterwards published. Both the verb and its use have their origin with our Transatlantic cousins, and "interviewing" by means of special reporters, who question most minutely, is of frequent occurrence,—of occurrence whenever opportunity offers. Should a man be found guilty of murder, or start as a candidate for the Presidency, he will be INTERVIEWED by "our special correspondent," and there are already signs of this objectionable form of newspaper work finding its way here. Should a visitor of importance arrive in New York, the conversation which passes, or is supposed to pass, between him and the reporter will be found minutely described, with an elaborate introduction. It is but fair to Americans, however, to say that the gentleman to whom the credit, or discredit, of the invention of this system belongs was a native of Great Britain, who invented many other startling Americanisms during his residence in New York.

[200]

Into, "hold my hat, Jim, I'll be INTO him," *i.e.*, I will fight him. In this sense equivalent to pitch INTO, or slip INTO.

Invite, an invitation—a corruption used by stuck-up people of mushroom origin. Often used, also, by people who know better, from their desire for slang of any kind.

Ipsal dixal, Cockney corruption of *ipse dixit*—said of one's simple uncorroborated assertion.

Irish American, an Irishman who has been for some time resident in the States; sometimes a man born in America of Irish parents. The Irish American body is a power in the United States, and is the fount-spring as well as the maintaining power of all Fenianism.

Irish apricots, potatoes.

Irish Cockney, a child born of Irish parents in any part of the southern counties of England. It is a singular fact that Irishmen born profess great abhorrence of IRISH COCKNEYS, while the latter despise all Irish, and use the word as one of reproach. IRISH COCKNEYS were originally only Cockneys born of an Irish strain, but the term has proved very elastic, and threatens soon to mean any English-born person whose descent is Hibernian. Liverpool will, however, always prove an exception to the rule, as the name "Liverpool Irishmen" is given to those who would in any southern part be called Cockneys.

Irish theatre, the temporary prison, guard-room, or lock-up in a barracks. The fond fancy of the soldier supplies it with other figurative appellations, as "the mill," "the jigger," "the house that Jack built." In Edinburgh Castle it is termed "the dryroom."

Irons in the fire, a man is said to have too many IRONS IN THE FIRE when he turns his attention to too many occupations or enterprises at once.

Isthmus of Suez, the covered bridge at St. John's College, Cambridge, which connects the college with its grounds on the other side of the river.—See [CRACKLE](#).

Ivories, teeth; "a box of IVORIES," a set of teeth, the mouth; "wash your IVORIES," *i.e.*, "drink." The word is also used to denote dice.

Jabber, to talk, or chatter. A cant word in Swift's time. Probably from [GIBBER](#).

Jack, the knave of trumps, at the game of all-fours.

Jack-at-a-pinch, one whose assistance is only sought on an emergency. Jack-in-the-water, an attendant at the watermen's stairs on the river and sea-port towns, who does not mind wetting his feet for a customer's convenience, in consideration of a *douceur*.

Jacked-up, ruined, done for. To JACK-UP is to leave off doing anything suddenly. See [CHUCK-UP](#).

Jacket, the skin of a potato which has not been pared before cooking. In Ireland potatoes are generally served "with their JACKETS on."

Jacketing, a thrashing. Similar term to leathering, cowhiding, &c.

Jackey, gin. *Seven Dials* originally. Nearly general now.

Jack-in-the-box, a small but powerful kind of screw, used by burglars to break open safes.

Jack Ketch, the public hangman.—See [KETCH](#).

Jack Nasty-face, a sailor.—*Sea*. NASTY-FACE is a term applied often in London streets to an ugly or unpleasant-looking person.

Jacks, AND HALF-JACKS, card counters, resembling in size and appearance sovereigns and half-sovereigns, for which they are occasionally passed to simple persons. In large gambling establishments the "heaps of gold" are frequently composed of JACKS. JACKS are not, as they are sometimes supposed to be, counterfeit coins; they are simply little medals, and so "magsmen" and "street muggers" carry them with less concern than they would feel were their pockets loaded with spurious money.

Jack Sprat, a diminutive boy or man.

Jack Tar, a sailor.

Jacob, a ladder. Grose says, from Jacob's dream.—*Old Cant*.

Jacob's ladder, a longitudinal flaw in the leg of a ballet-girl's tights.

Jagger, a gentleman. *German*, JAGER, a sportsman.

Jail-bird, a prisoner, one who has been in jail.

James, a sovereign, or twenty shillings. From JACOBUS, the James II. guinea.

Jannock, sociable, fair dealing.—*Norfolk*. Generally now [JONNICK](#), which see.

Japan, to ordain. Having evident reference to the black clothes which follow ordination.—*University*.

Jark, a "safe-conduct" pass.—*Oxford*. Old cant for a seal.

Jarvey, the driver of a hackney-coach; "JARVEY's upper Benjamin," a coachman's overcoat, with many capes. An ingenious etymology has been found for JARVEY, thus:—JARVEY, vernacular for Geoffrey, which was often written Geo. (gee-ho), hence JARVEY. This is open to considerable objection, as George is shortened in similar manner to that shown above. Still it is worthy of record, independently of its ingenuity, being as exact as many accepted derivations.

Jaw, speech, or talk; "hold your JAW," don't speak any more; "what are you JAWING about?" *i.e.*, what are you making a noise about?

Jaw, to talk without cessation, to scold vehemently.

Jawbone, credit.

"We have a few persons whose pockets are to let—men who have more complaints than dollars—individuals who, in digger's parlance, live on JAWBONE (credit), and are always to be found at saloons; a class of men who, when they are here, wish themselves yonder, and when yonder, wish themselves back."—*Times Correspondent, San Francisco, Oct. 21, 1862*.

Jaw-breaker, a hard or excessively long word. Also, in pugilistic sense, a hard blow on the side of the face.

Jaw-twister, a hard or many-syllabled word. Elaboration of preceding.

Jazey, a wig. A corruption of JERSEY, the name for flax prepared in a peculiar manner, of which common wigs were formerly made; "the cove with the JAZEY," *i.e.*, the judge.

Jeames (a generic for "flunkeys"), the *Morning Post* newspaper—the organ of Belgravia and the "Haristocracy."

Jehu, old slang term for a coachman, or one fond of driving.—*Biblical*.

Jeminy O! a vulgar expression of surprise.

Jemmy, a sheep's-head.—See [SANGUINARY JAMES](#).

Jemmy, a short crowbar, which generally takes to pieces, for the convenience of housebreakers.

Jemmy ducks, the man whose business it is to look after the poultry on board a ship.—*Sea*.

Jemmy Jessamy, a dandy.

Jemmy-John, a jar for holding liquor; probably a corruption of demi-gallon, by means of DEMI-JOHN.

Jeremiad, a lament; derived, of course, from the Book of Lamentations, written by the Prophet Jeremiah.

Jeremy Diddler, an adept at raising the wind, *i.e.*, at borrowing, especially at borrowing with no intention of repaying. *See* the farce of *Raising the Wind*.

Jericho, an improper quarter of Oxford. A lady visitor once writing her name down in the visitors' book at the Bodleian or elsewhere, for a joke put down her residence as "Jericho," to the no small disgust of her undergraduate friend.—*University*.

Jerry, a chamber utensil; abbreviation of JEROBOAM.—*Swift*.

Jerry, a watch. "JERRY nicking" or "JERRY sneaking" is watch-stealing, which is a distinct form of street robbery, and requires both courage and dexterity; for it is done, as the thieves say, "right afore a bloke's face."

Jerry, to jibe or chaff cruelly. Development of jeer.

Jerry-go-nimble, the diarrhœa. Derivation apparent.

Jerry Lynch, a pig's head pickled. Term usually applied to the long Irish heads which are sent over here for sale in the poorer districts of London, and which are vastly different from the heads of "dairy-fed" porkers.

Jerry shop, a beer-house. Contraction of "Tom and Jerry."

Jerry Sneak, a hen-pecked husband,—a character in the *Mayor of Garret*. Also, a stealer of watches.

[203]

Jerusalem pony, a donkey.

Jessie, "to give a person JESSIE," to beat him soundly. *See* GAS.

Jew fencer, a Jew street salesman.

Jew's eye, a popular simile for anything valuable. Probably a corruption of the *Italian*, GIOJE; *French*, JOAILLE, a jewel. In ancient times, when a king was short of cash, he generally issued orders for so many JEWS' EYES, or equivalent sums of money. The Jews preferred paying the ransom, although often very heavy. It is notorious that in this country the order often went forth to draw Jews' teeth in the event of their refusing to contribute so much to the Exchequer. A probable idea is, that as a Jew's teeth brought in so much money, the value of a JEW'S EYE must be something fabulous. Possibly, also, from the *lex talionis* so strongly believed in by Jews,—an eye for an eye, and nothing less. The term is used by Shakspeare.

Jezebel, a showily-dressed woman of suspected character; derived, of course, from 2 Kings ix. 30, but applied in this sense from the time of the Puritans. Also, a hot-tempered female.

Jib, a first-year man.—*Dublin University*.

Jib, OR JIBBER, a horse that starts or shrinks. Shakspeare uses it in the sense of a worn-out horse.

Jib, the face, or a person's expression; "the cut of his JIB," *i.e.*, his peculiar appearance. That sail of a ship, which in position and shape, corresponds to the nose on a person's face.—*Sea*. A vessel is often known by the cut of the JIB sail; hence the popular phrase, "to know a man by the cut of his JIB."

Jibb, the tongue.—*Gipsy* and *Hindoo*. (Tramps' term.) Thence extended to mean language.

Jiffy, "in a JIFFY," in a moment.

Jigger, a door; "dub the JIGGER," shut the door. *Ancient cant*, GYGER. In billiards, the bridge or rest is often termed the JIGGER. Also, the curtain of a theatre. JIGGER has many meanings, the word being applied to any small mechanical contrivance. Printers use the word for a little machine which guides the eye when copy is minute.

Jigger, a secret still for the manufacture of illicit spirits.

Jigger, "I'm JIGGERED if you will," a common form of mild swearing. *See* SNIGGER.

Jigger-dubber, a term applied to a gaoler or turnkey.

Jiggot o' mutton, a leg of mutton. From *Fr.* GIGOT.

Jilt, a crowbar or house-breaking implement.

Jingo, "by JINGO," a common form of oath, said to be a corruption of St. GINGOULPH. *Vide* Halliwell.

Jo, Scotticism for a man or lover. As "John Anderson, my JO, John."

Job, "a JOB lot," otherwise called a "sporting lot," any miscellaneous goods purchased at a cheap rate, or to be sold a bargain. Frequently used to conceal the fact of their being stolen, or otherwise dishonestly obtained.

[204]

Job, a short piece of work, a prospect of employment. Johnson describes JOB as a low word, without etymology. It is, and was, however, a cant word; and a JOB, two centuries ago, was an arranged robbery. Even at the present day it is mainly confined to the streets, in the sense of employment for a short time. Amongst undertakers a JOB signifies a funeral; "to do a JOB," conduct

any one's funeral; "by the JOB," *i.e.*, piece-work, as opposed to time-work. A JOB in political phraseology is a Government office or contract, obtained by secret influence or favouritism. Any unfair arrangement is now called a JOB.

Job, a sudden blow, as "a JOB in the eye." Also used as a verb, "I'll JOB this here knife in your ribs."

Jobation, a chiding, a reprimand, a trial of the hearer's patience.

Jobbery, the arrangement of jobs, or unfair business proceedings.

Job's comfort, reproof instead of consolation.

Job's comforter, one who brings news of additional misfortunes. Both these words are of Biblical origin.

Job's turkey, "as poor as JOB'S TURKEY," as thin and as badly fed as that ill-conditioned and imaginary bird.

Jocteleg, a shut-up knife. Corruption of Jacques de Liège, a famous cutler.

Joe, a too marvellous tale, a lie, or a stale joke. Abbreviated from JOE MILLER. The full name is occasionally used, as in the phrase "I don't see the JOE MILLER of it," *i.e.*, I don't perceive the wit you intend, or I don't see the fun of doing it,—whatever may have been the request.

Joey, a fourpenny piece. The term is derived (like BOBBY from Sir Robert Peel) from Joseph Hume. The explanation is thus given in Hawkins's *History of the Silver Coinage of England*:—

"These pieces are said to have owed their existence to the pressing instance of Mr. Hume, from whence they, for some time, bore the nickname of JOEYS. As they were very convenient to pay short cab fares, the hon. M.P. was extremely unpopular with the drivers, who frequently received only a groat where otherwise they would have received a sixpence without any demand for change."

The term, therefore, was originated by the London cabmen, who have invented many other popular phrases. Fancy offering a modern hansom cabman a JOEY!

Jog-trot, a slow but regular trot, or pace.

Jogul, to play up, at cards or other game. *Spanish*, JUGAR.

John Blunt, a straightforward, honest, outspoken man.

Johnny, half-a-glass of whisky.—*Irish*.

Johnny Darbies, a nickname for policemen, an evident corruption of the *French* GENSDARMES. Also, a term applied to handcuffs.—*See* [DARBIES](#).

Johnny Raw, a newly-enlisted soldier.

John Orderly, the signal to shorten the performance at a show. Whenever the master, who remains on the platform outside to take the money and regulate the performance, desires to refill the booth, he pokes his head inside and shouts, "Is JOHN ORDERLY there?" The actors instantly cut the piece short, the curtain falls, and the spectators are bundled out at the back, to make room for the fresh audience. According to tradition, JOHN ORDERLY was a noted showman, who taught this move to the no less noted Richardson. This is like the old story of the publican who used to call out to his waiter, "A pot of ale, Robert," when he wished his customers to be served with the best; but "A pot of ale, Bob," when they had been drinking long enough not to distinguish good stuff from the bad the latter order meant. One day after calling for Bob many times, he reluctantly, at the request of a visitor, tasted the ale, and found it was the best. Rushing out immediately afterwards, and calling for Bob with all his voice, he was answered by his wife, who said, "Why, Bob's been out these three hours."

John Thomas, a generic for "flunkeys,"—more especially footmen with large calves and fine bushy whiskers.

Jolly, a Royal Marine.—*See* [HORSE MARINE](#).

Jolly, a word of praise, or favourable notice; "chuck Harry a JOLLY, Bill," *i.e.*, go and praise up his goods, or buy of him, and speak well of the article, that the crowd standing around his stall may think it a good opportunity for laying out their money. This is called JOLLYING. "Chuck a JOLLY," lit. translated, is, throw "a shout" or "good word."

Jolly, to abuse or vituperate, sometimes to "bear up" or "bonnet." To JOLLY a man often means to give him a piece of one's mind. To JOLLY "for" any one is another phase of the business mentioned in the foregoing paragraph.

Jomer, a sweetheart, or favourite girl. *See* [BLOWER](#).

Jonnick, right, correct, proper. Said of a person or thing.

Jordan, a chamberpot. To throw the contents of a chamberpot over any one is to christen him.

Jorum, a capacious vessel from which food is eaten, as broth or stew.

Joskin, a countryman.

Jossop, the syrup or juice in a fruit pie or pudding. Also, sauce or gravy.—*School*.

Jow, be off, be gone immediately. If the word Jehanum be added, it forms a peremptory order to go to a place unmentionable to ears polite.—*Anglo-Indian*. Our phrase, "Go to Jericho," is

probably a modification of the Jehanum business.

Judas, a deceitful person; **JUDAS-HAIRED**, red-haired, deceitful. It is generally believed that **JUDAS ISCARIOT** was red-haired. Painters seem to have accepted this idea, with modifications as to the exact amount of colour.

Jug, a prison of any kind. Contraction of "stone jug."

Julep, one of a set of drinks peculiar to America. Generally prepared with mint, and called a **MINT-JULEP**. Originally **JULEP** was a pleasant liquid, in which nauseous medicines were taken. Its literal meaning is rosewater, and it is derived from the Arabic.

[206]

Jump, to seize, or rob; to "JUMP a man," to pounce upon him, and either rob or maltreat him; "to JUMP a house," to rob it.

Jumped-up, conceited, arrogant, setting full value on oneself.

Jump-up-behind, to endorse an accommodation-bill.

Juniper, gin. Derivation obvious.

Junk, salt beef.— See [OLD HORSE](#).

Juwaub, literally, in Hindostanee, an answer; but in Anglo-Indian slang signifying a refusal. If an officer asks for leave and is refused, he is said to be **JUWAUBED**; if a gentleman unsuccessfully proposes for the hand of a lady, he is said to have got the **JUWAUB**.—*Anglo-Indian*.

Karibat, food, literally rice and curry; the staple dish of both natives and Europeans in India.—*Anglo-Indian*.

Keel-hauling, a good thrashing or mauling, rough treatment,—from the old nautical custom of punishing offenders by throwing them overboard with a rope attached, and hauling them up from under the ship's keel. See full description of this barbarous practice in Marryat's *Snarleyyow*.

Keep a pig, an Oxford University phrase, which means to have a lodger. A man whose rooms contain two bedchambers has sometimes, when his college is full, to allow the use of one of them to a Freshman, who is called under these circumstances a PIG. The original occupier is then said TO KEEP A PIG.

Keep it up, to prolong a debauch, or the occasion of a rejoicing,—a metaphor drawn from the game of shuttlecock. People suffering from the effects of drink are said to have been KEEPING IT UP.—*Grose*.

Kelter, coin, money. Probably from GELT.

Ken, a house.—*Ancient cant*. KHAN, *Gipsy* and *Oriental*.

✱ All slang and cant words which end in KEN, such as [SPIELKEN](#), [SPINKEN](#), or [BOOZINGKEN](#), refer to houses, and are mainly of Gipsy origin.

Kennedy, a poker; to “give KENNEDY” is to strike or kill with a poker. A St. Giles's term, so given from a man of that name being killed by a poker.

Kent rag, or CLOUT, a cotton handkerchief.

Kervorten, a Cockneyism for QUARTERN or quarter-pint measure. “KERVORTEN and three houts,” a quartern of liquor and glasses, each holding a third of the quantity.

Ketch, or JACK KETCH, the popular name for a public hangman; derived from a person of that name who officiated in the reign of Charles II.—*See Macaulay's History of England*.

Kettle of fish, a mess or muddle of any kind. As, “Here's a pretty KETTLE OF FISH!”

Key of the street, an imaginary instrument said to be possessed by any one locked out of doors.

Kibosh, nonsense, stuff, humbug; “it's all KIBOSH,” *i.e.*, palaver or nonsense; to “put on the KIBOSH,” to run down, slander, degrade, &c. To put the KIBOSH on anything is, latterly, to put an effectual end or stop to it.

[207]

Kick, a moment; “I'll be there in a KICK,” *i.e.*, in a moment.

Kick, a pocket; *Gaelic*, CUACH, a bowl, a nest; *Scotch*, QUAIGH.

Kick, a sixpence; “two and a KICK,” two shillings and sixpence.

Kick the bucket, to die.—*Norfolk*. According to Forby, a metaphor taken from the descent of a well or mine, which is of course absurd. The Rev. E. S. Taylor supplies the following note from his MS. additions to the work of the East-Anglian lexicographer:—

“The allusion is to the way in which a slaughtered pig is hung up—viz., by passing the ends of a bent piece of wood behind the tendons of the hind legs, and so suspending it to a hook in a beam above. This piece of wood is locally termed a BUCKET, and so by a coarse metaphor the phrase came to signify to die.”

Another correspondent says the real signification of this phrase is to commit suicide by hanging, from a method planned and carried out by an ostler at an inn on the Great North Road. Standing on a bucket, he tied himself up to a beam in the stable; he then KICKED THE BUCKET away from under his feet, and in a few seconds was dead. The natives of the West Indies have converted the expression into “kickeraboo.”

Kick over the traces, to be over-extravagant. Any one who has come to grief by fast living is said to have KICKED OVER THE TRACES.

Kick up, a noise or disturbance.

Kick up, “to KICK UP a row,” to create a tumult.

Kickeraboo, dead. A West Indian negro's phrase. See [KICK THE BUCKET](#), of which phrase it is a corruption.

Kickseys, or KICKSIES, trousers.

Kickshaws, trifles; made, or French dishes—not English or substantial. Anything of a fancy description now. Corruption of the *French* QUELQUES CHOSSES.

Kicksy, troublesome, disagreeable. *German*, KECK, bold.

Kid, an infant, or child. From the German *kind*; or possibly from the name for the young of a goat. Also, a shallow dish in which sailors receive their portions of food.

Kid, to joke, to quiz, to hoax anybody. “No KID, now?” is a question often asked by a man who thinks he is being hoaxed.

Kidden, or KIDKEN, a low lodging-house for boys.

Kiddier, a pork-butcher.

Kiddily, fashionably or showily; “KIDDILY togg'd,” showily dressed.

Kiddleywink, a small shop where are retailed the commodities of a village store. Originally KIDDLE-A-WINK, from the offer made, with a wink, to give you something out of the kettle or kiddle. In the west country an alehouse. Also, a woman of unsteady habits.

Kiddy, a man, or boy. Formerly a low thief.

Kiddyish, frolicsome, jovial.

“Think, on the KIDDYISH spree we had on such a day.”
Randall's Diary, 1820.

Kidment, humbug, coarse chaff or jocularity.

Kidnapper, originally one who stole children. Now applied without reference to the age or sex of those stolen. From “kid,” a child, and “nab” (corrupted to “nap”), to steal, or seize.

Kidney, “of that KIDNEY,” of such a stamp; “strange KIDNEY,” odd humour; “two of a KIDNEY,” two persons of a sort, or as like as two peas, *i.e.*, resembling each other like two kidneys in a bunch. — *Old*. “Attempt to put their hair out of KIDNEY.” — *Terræ Filius, 1763.*

Kid-on, to entice or incite a person to the perpetration of an act.

Kidsman, one who trains boys to thief and pick pockets successfully.

Kilkenny cat, a popular simile for a voracious or desperate animal or person, from the story of the two cats in that county, who are said to have fought and bitten each other until a small portion of the tail of one of them alone remained.

Killing, bewitching, fascinating. The term is akin to the phrase “dressing to death.”

Kilt, an Irishism for badly beaten, but by no means equivalent with killed.

Kimbo, or A-KIMBO, holding the arms in a bent position from the body, and resting the hands upon the hips, in a bullying attitude. Said to be from A SCHIMBO, bandy-legged, crooked, *Italian*; but more probably from KIMBAW, the old cant for beating or bullying. *See Grose. Celtic, CAM, crooked.*

Kimmer, a gossip, an acquaintance, same as CUMMER. — *Scotch.*

“What’s a’ the steer, KIMMER?”

Kinchin, a child. — *Old Cant.* From the *German* diminutive, KINDCHEN, a baby.

Kinchin cove, a man who robs children; a little man. — *Ancient Cant.*

Kincob, uniform, fine clothes, richly embroidered dresses. Really, cloth of gold or silver. — *Anglo-Indian.*

Kingsman, a handkerchief with yellow patterns upon a green ground, the favourite coloured neckerchief of the costermongers. The women sometimes wear KINGSMAN kerchiefs thrown over their shoulders. A coster will often imagine his caste, or position, is at stake, if his KINGSMAN is not of the most approved pattern. When he fights, his KINGSMAN is tied around his waist as a belt. This partiality for a peculiar-coloured neckcloth is part of the fondness for gaudy colours which at all times and in all countries has been shown by the uncultivated. A strange similarity of taste for certain colours exists amongst the Hindoos, Gipsies, and London lower classes. Red and yellow (or orange) are the great favourites, and in these hues the Hindoo selects his turban and his robe; the gipsy his breeches, and his wife her shawl or gown; and the costermonger, his plush waistcoat and favourite KINGSMAN. Among either class, when a fight takes place, the greatest regard is paid to the favourite coloured article of dress. The Hindoo lays aside his turban, the gipsy folds up his fancy breeches or coat, whilst the pugilistic costermonger of Covent Garden or Billingsgate removes his favourite neckerchief to a part of his body, by the rules of the “ring,” comparatively out of danger.

King’s pictures (now, of course, QUEEN’S PICTURES), money.

Kisky, drunk, fuddled.

Kiss-curl, a small curl twisted on the temple. *See* [BOWCATCHER](#).

Kisser, the mouth. — *Pugilistic term.*

Kissing-crust, the soft crust which marks where one loaf has been broken from another.

Kiss-me-quick, the name given to the very small bonnets which have of late years become fashionable.

Kit, a person’s baggage. Also, a collection of anything, “the whole KIT of ‘em,” the entire lot. *Anglo-Saxon, KYTH. — North.*

Kite, — *see* [FLY THE KITE](#).

Kitmegur, an under-butler, a footman. — *Anglo-Indian.*

Kitna, how much? — *Anglo-Indian.*

Knacker, an old horse; a horse-slaughterer. Originally *Gloucestershire*, but now general.

Knap, *i.q.*, NAP, to break. — *Old English*, but nearly obsolete. *See Ps.* xlvi. 9 (Prayer-book version), “He breaketh the bow, and KNAPPETH the spear in sunder;” probably sibilated into “snap.”

Knap, to receive, to take. Generally applied to the receipt of punishments; “oh, my! wont he just

KNAP it when he gets home!"

Knap, to steal.—*Prison Cant*.

Knapping-jigger, a turnpike gate; "to dub at the KNAPPING-JIGGER," to pay money at the turnpike.

Knark, a hard-hearted or savage person. The word is now usually spelt NARK, and is applied to the lowest class of informers.

Knife, "to KNIFE a person," to stab; an un-English custom, but a very common expression.

Knife-board, the seat running along the roof of an omnibus.

"On 'busses' KNIFEBOARDS stretch'd,
The City clerks all tongue-protruded lay."

A Summer Idyll, by Arthur Smith.

Knife it, "cut it," cease, stop, don't proceed.

Knight, a common and ironical prefix to a man's calling—thus, "KNIGHT of the whip," a coachman; "KNIGHT of the thimble," a tailor.

Knobstick, a non-society workman. One who takes work under price.

Knock about the bub, to hand or pass about the drink. BUB is a very old cant term for drink.

Knock-down, OR KNOCK-ME-DOWN, strong ale.

Knocked-up, tired, jaded, used up, done for. In the United States, amongst females, the phrase is equivalent to being *enceinte*, so that Englishmen often unconsciously commit themselves when amongst our Yankee cousins.

Knock-'em-downs, the game of skittles.

[210]

Knocker, "up to the KNOCKER," means finely or showily dressed, in the height of fashion; proficient, equal to the task.

Knocker-face, an ugly face, *i.e.*, like an old-fashioned door-knocker.

Knock-in, the game of loo.

Knocking-in, coming into college after time. A habit of KNOCKING-IN late generally leads to some unpleasantness.—*Oxford University*.

Knocking-out. All visitors, on leaving a college after time, have to state in whose rooms they have been, that his gate-bill may be scored up for them. When a rackets party takes place, the visitors, or "out college men," are generally supplied with a list of the names of the quietest men in college, so that the whereabouts of the party may not be betrayed.—*Oxford University*.

Knock-it-down, to show, in the "free and easy" style, approval of a song or toast, by hammering with pot or glass on the table.

Knock off, to give over, or abandon. A saying used by workmen in reference to dinner or other meal times, for upwards of two centuries.

Knock out, in racing parlance, to drive out of the quotations; as a KNOCKED-OUT favourite. Also to make bankrupt; as a KNOCKED-OUT backer or bookmaker. When a man cannot meet his engagements on the turf, he is said to be KNOCKED OUT.

Knock-outs, OR KNOCK-INS, disreputable persons who visit auction rooms and unite to purchase the articles at their own prices. One of their number is instructed to buy for the rest, and after a few small bids as blinds to the auctioneer and bystanders, the lot is knocked down to the KNOCK-OUT bidders, at a nominal price—the competition to result from an auction being thus frustrated and set aside. At the conclusion of the sale the goods are paid for, and carried to a neighbouring public-house, where they are re-sold or KNOCKED-OUT among the confederates, and the difference between the first purchase and the second—or tap-room KNOCK-OUT—is divided amongst the gang. As generally happens with ill-gotten gains, the money soon finds its way to the landlord's pocket, and the KNOCK-OUT is rewarded with a red nose and a bloated face. Cunning tradesmen join the KNOCK-OUTS when an opportunity for money-making presents itself. The lowest description of KNOCK-OUTS, fellows with more tongue than capital, are termed BABES. Within the past few years a few respectable auctioneers, assisted much by one or two just and admirable magisterial decisions, have succeeded in considerably limiting the efforts of the KNOCK-OUT fraternity.

Knock-under, to submit.

Knowing, sharp, shrewd, artful; "a KNOWING codger," or "a KNOWING blade," one who can take you in, or cheat you, in any transaction you may have with him. It implies also deep cunning and foresight, and generally signifies dishonesty.

"Who, on a spree with black-eyed Sal, his blowen,
So swell, so prime, so nutty, and so KNOWING?"—*Don Juan*.

KNOW, in this sense, enters into several slang phrases. "I KNOW something," expresses that I am not to be taken in by any shallow device. "He KNOWS a thing or two," *i.e.*, he is a cunning fellow.

[211]

Knowledge-box, the head.—*Pugilistic*.

Knuckle, to fight with fists, to pommel.

Knuckle-duster, a large, heavy, or over-gaudy ring; a ring which attracts attention from its size.

Knuckle-duster, an iron or brass instrument which covers the knuckles so as to protect them from injury when striking a blow, adding force to it at the same time. Sometimes a KNUCKLE-DUSTER has knobs or points projecting, so as to mutilate and disfigure the person struck. This brutal invention is American, but has been made familiar here.

Knuckle to, OR KNUCKLE UNDER, to yield or submit.

Knuller, old term for a chimney-sweep, who solicited jobs by ringing a bell. From the *Saxon*, CNYLLAN, to knell, or sound a bell. See [QUERIER](#).

Kootee, a house.—*Anglo-Indian*.

Kotoo, to bow down before, to cringe, to flatter. From a Chinese ceremony.

Kubber, news.—*Anglo-Indian*.

Kudos, praise; KUDIZED, praised. *Greek*, κῦδος.—*University*.

Kye, eighteenpence.

Kypsey, a basket. A term generally used by gipsies.

La! a euphuistic rendering of LORD! common amongst females and very precise persons; imagined by many to be a corruption of LOOK! but this is a mistake. Sometimes pronounced LAW, or LAWKS.

Lac, one hundred thousand.—*Anglo-Indian*.

Laced, strengthened with ardent spirits. Tea or coffee in which brandy is poured is said to be LACED.

Lacing, a beating. From the phrase, "I'll lace your jacket."—*L'Estrange*. Perhaps to give a beating with a lace or lash. Perhaps, also, a figurative phrase for ornamenting the article in question with stripes.

Ladder, "can't see a hole in a LADDER," said of any one who is intoxicated. It was once said that a man was never properly drunk until he could not lie down without holding, could not see a hole through a LADDER, or went to the pump to light his pipe.

Ladies' mile, that part of Hyde Park where the feminine beauty, rank, and fashion most do congregate during the airing hours of the London season.

Lag, a returned transport, or ticket-of-leave convict.

Lag, to void urine.—*Ancient Cant*. In modern slang to transport, as regards bearing witness, and not in reference to the action of judge or jury.

Lagged, imprisoned, apprehended, or transported for a crime. From the Old Norse, LAGDA, "laid,"—laid by the leg.

[212]

Lagger, a sailor. Also, one who gives evidence; an informer.

Lagging gage, a chamber-pot.—*Ancient Cant*.

Lambasting, a beating. Perhaps LUMB-BASTING, from the lumbar-regions.

Lamb's wool, spiced ale, of which the butler at Brasenose every Shrove Tuesday supplies as much as is required at Hall, with a copy of verses on the subject, generally written by a Brasenose man. One of these poems began:—

Antiquum et vetus est { Ale Æn Nas } dicere laudes.
alienas }

Oxford University.

LAMB'S WOOL is also a hot drink, well known to the community for centuries. Supposed by some to be derived from Lammas, at which time it was drunk, and by others to be derived from the similarity between the foam of the drink and the white wool obtained from lambs.

Lame duck, a stockjobber who speculates beyond his capital, and cannot pay his losses. Upon retiring from the Exchange he is said to "waddle out of the Alley."

Lamming, a beating.—*Old English*, LAM; used by Beaumont and Fletcher. Not as Sir Walter Scott supposed, from one Dr. Lamb, but from the *Old Norse*, LAM, the hand; also, *Gaelic*.

Lammy, a blanket.

Land-lubber, sea term for "a landsman." See [LOAFER](#).

Land-shark, a sailor's definition of a lawyer.

Lane, a familiar term for Drury Lane Theatre, just as Covent Garden Theatre is constantly spoken of as "the Garden."

Lap, liquor, drink. LAP is the term invariably used in the ballet girls' dressing-room for gin.

Lap, one circuit of a pedestrian enclosure. In running a race of any distance one man is said to LAP another when he is one entire circuit in front.

Lap. LAP THE GUTTER, to get beastly and helplessly drunk. LAP means to drink. LAP THE GATTER, to drink up the beer; a "rare LAPPER," a hard drinker.

Lark, a frolic, a joke; "let's have a jolly good LARK," let us have a piece of fun.—*Anglo-Saxon*, LAC, sport; but more probably from the nautical term SKYLARKING, *i.e.*, mounting to the highest yards and sliding down the ropes for amusement, which is allowed on certain occasions.

Lark, to sport boisterously, to show a disposition for "going on the spree."

Larrence, an imaginary being, supposed by the Scottish peasantry to have power over indolent persons. Hence laziness is often called LARRENCE.

Larrup, to beat or thrash.

Larruping, a good beating or hiding.—*Irish*.

[213]

Lashins, large quantities; as, "LASHINS of whisky." An Irishism in common use.

Latchpan, the lower lip—properly a dripping-pan; "to hang one's LATCHPAN," to pout, be sulky.—*Norfolk*.

Lavender, "to be laid up in LAVENDER;" to be in pawn; to be out of the way for an especial purpose. From the practice among housewives of placing LAVENDER in drawers in which linen and clothes are to be kept for any period.

Law, "to give LAW to an animal" is a sporting term signifying to give the hare or stag a chance of

escaping, by not setting on the hounds till the quarry has run some distance. Also, used for giving any one a chance of succeeding in a difficult undertaking by allowing him so much grace or preliminary notice.

Lay, a pursuit or practice, a dodge. Term in this sense much used by thieves.

Lay, in wagering, to bet against a man or animal. Betterers are divided in racing slang into layers and takers; they are otherwise known as bookmakers and backers.

Lay, some, a piece. "Tip me a LAY of pannum," *i.e.*, give me a slice of bread.—*North*.

Lay, to watch; "on the LAY," on the look-out.—*Shakspeare*.

Lay down the knife and fork, to die. Compare PEGGING-OUT, [HOPPING THE TWIG](#), and similar flippancies.

Lead, OF FRIENDLY LEAD, a gathering at a low public-house, for the purpose of assisting some one who is "in trouble" (in these cases trouble always means imprisonment), who has just "come out of trouble," or who is in want of a "mouthpiece." A LEAD is different from a raffle, inasmuch as no article is put up or thrown for, but in the course of the evening some friend of the troubled one LEADS OFF by putting a certain sum in a plate, and the remainder of the party follow the LEAD with whatever they can spare. Sometimes people pay as they enter the room, but this does not alter the title or character of the meeting. In every other respect a LEAD is similar to a raffle; songs, dances, drinking, and a general desire to increase the bastardy averages being the most conspicuous features of the entertainment. Irish LEADS and raffles are characterized by less vice and more quarrelling than those of the lower orders of English people.

Leary, flash, knowing, artful, sly.

Leary bloke, a clever or artful person.

Leather, to beat or thrash. Probably from allusion to the skin, which is often called LEATHER. Some think the term is from the LEATHER belts worn by soldiers, which are often used as weapons in street rows. Most likely from there being "nothing like LEATHER" with which to administer a thrashing.

Leathern conveniency, a carriage. A Quaker being reprimanded by the Society of Friends for keeping a carriage, "contrary to the ancient testimonies," said, "it is not a carriage I keep, but merely a LEATHERN-CONVENIENCY." See under [SIMON PURE](#), in the Introduction.

[214]

Leaving shop, or [DOLLY SHOP](#), an unlicensed house where goods are taken into pawn at exorbitant rates of interest.

Led captain, a fashionable spunger, a "swell" who by artifice ingratiates himself into the favours of the master of the house, and lives at his table. Probably from the fact that a real captain leads, but that a sham one is led—to the dinner-table.

Leer, empty.—*Oxfordshire*. Pure *German*, as is nearly so the next word.

Leer, print, newspaper. *German*, LEHREN, to instruct; hence *Old English*, LERE, "spelt in the LEER." See [SPELL](#).—*Old Cant*.

Leg, a part of a game. In some old games there are so many LEGS to the chalk, and so many chinks to the game. Sometimes the LEGS are called chinks, and the chinks LEGS—one word is as good as another, provided an agreement is made beforehand.

Leg, OF BLACKLEG, a disreputable sporting character and racecourse *habitué*; that is, one who is disreputable among sporting men.

Leg-and-leg, the state of a game when each player has won a LEG. In Ireland a LEG is termed a horse, LEG-AND-LEG being there termed "horse-and-horse."

Leg bail, the bail or security given by absence. To give LEG BAIL is to run away.

Leg it, to run; "to give a LEG," to assist, as when one mounts a horse; "making a LEG," a countryman's bow,—projecting the LEG from behind as a balance to the head bent forward.—*Shakspeare*.

Leg-of-mutton, humorous street term for a sheep's trotter, or foot.

Leg of mutton fist, a large, muscular or bony hand.

Length, forty-two lines of a dramatic composition.—*Theatrical*.

Length, six months' imprisonment. See [STRETCH](#).

Let alone, an expression which signifies "much less" as used in comparative statement or argument. "I cannot afford five shillings, LET ALONE five pounds." Barham, in one of the Ingoldsby Legends, says:—

"I have not had, this livelong day, one drop to cheer my heart,
Nor brown to buy a bit of bread with—LET ALONE a tart."

Let drive, to strike at, or attack with vigour.

Let in, to cheat or victimize. "He let me in heavily."

Let on, to give an intimation of having some knowledge of a subject. Ramsay employs the phrase

in the *Gentle Shepherd*. Common in Scotland.

Let the cat out, OR LET THE CAT OUT OF THE BAG, a common phrase, which implies that a secret is to be or has been let out.

Letty, a bed. *Italian*, LETTO.—*Lingua Franca*.

Levanter, a card-sharper, or defaulting gambler. It was formerly the custom to give out to the creditors, when a person was in pecuniary difficulties, and it was convenient for him to keep away, that he was gone to the East, or the LEVANT; hence, when one loses a bet, and decamps without settling, he is said to LEVANT. The LEVANT was also a notorious place for queer customers, who would do anything rather than pay. Its reputation is not particularly odorous even now.

[215]

Levy, a shilling.—*Liverpool*. Among labourers a LEVY is a sum obtained before it is due, something to keep a man going till Saturday-night comes, or his task is finished.

Liberty, ground let in parts of Yorkshire for shooting purposes.

Lick, a blow; LICKING, a beating; "to put in big LICKS," a curious and common phrase, meaning that great exertions are being made.—*Dryden*; *North*.

Lick, to excel, or overcome; "if you ain't sharp, he'll LICK you," *i.e.*, be finished first. Signifies, also, to whip, chastise, or conquer. *Ancient cant*, LYCKE. *Welsh*, LLACHIO, to strike.

Lickspittle, a coarse but singularly expressive term for a parasite, who puts up with indignities for the sake of advantages.

Lifer, a convict who is sentenced to imprisonment for life.

Lift, to steal, pick pockets; "there's a clock been LIFTED," said when a watch has been stolen. The word is as old as the Border forays, and is used by Shakspeare. SHOPLIFTER is a recognised term. *Old Gothic*, LLIFAN, to steal; *Lower Rhenish*, LÖFTEN.

Lig, a lie, a falsehood.—*Lancashire*. In old ballads the word "lie" is often spelt "LIG." In old Saxon, LIG is to lie, but to lie as in a bed.

Light, credit, trust; "to get a LIGHT at a house" is to get credit. When a man's credit is stopped, his LIGHT is said to be put out. LIGHT also means life. "I'll put your LIGHT out" is a murderous threat.

Light Bob, a light infantry soldier.—*Military*.

Light Feeder, a silver spoon.

Lightning, gin; "flash o' LIGHTNING," a glass of gin.

Lights, a worthless piece of meat; applied metaphorically to a fool, a soft or stupid person.

Lights, the eyes. Also, the lungs; animals' lungs are always so called.

Lil, a book, generally a pocket-book.—*Gipsy*.

Lily Benjamin, a great white coat. See [BENJAMIN](#).

Limb, a troublesome or precocious child.

Limb of the law, a lawyer, or clerk articed to that profession.

Limbo, a prison, from LIMBUS OF LIMBUS PATRUM, a mediæval theological term for purgatory. The Catholic Church teaches that LIMBO was that part of hell where holy people who died before the Redemption were kept.

Line, a hoax, a fool-trap; as, "to get him in a LINE," *i.e.*, to get some sport out of him.

Line, calling, trade, profession; "what LINE are you in?" "the building LINE."

Liner, a casual reporter, paid by the line. Diminutive of "penny-a-liner."

[216]

Lingo, talk, or language. Slang is termed LINGO amongst the lower orders. *Italian*, LINGUA.—*Lingua Franca*.

Lint-scraper, a young surgeon. Thackeray, in *Lovel the Widower*, uses the phrase, and gives, also, the words "Æsculapius," "Pestle-grinder," and "Vaccinator," for the same character.

Lionesses, ladies visiting an Oxford man, especially at "Commemoration," which is the chief time for receiving feminine visitors at the University.

Lion-hunter, one who hunts up, and has a devout veneration for, small celebrities. Mrs. Leo Hunter, in *Pickwick*, is a splendid specimen of this unpleasant creature.

Lionize, to make much of any visitor with small or moderate claims to distinction; to conduct a stranger round the principal objects of attraction in a place; to act as cicerone.

Lions, notabilities, either persons or sights worthy of inspection; an expression dating from the times when the royal lions at the Tower, before the existence of Zoological Gardens and travelling menageries, were a London wonder, to visit which country cousins and strangers of eminence were constantly taken. Visitors taken round at Cambridge to see the sights are, or were, called LIONS. The origin of the Tower collection was the three leopards sent by the Emperor Frederic to Henry III., as a living illustration of the royal arms of England. In the roll of John de Cravebeadell, constable of the Tower (*B. M. Top. Collections*, iii. p. 153), is a charge of 3*d.* per day "in support of the leopard of our lord the king." Edward III., when Prince of Wales, appears to have taken great interest in the animals; and after he became king, there was not only the old

leopard, but "one lion, one lioness, and two cat-lions," says Stowe, "in the said Tower, committed to the custody of Robert, son of John Bowre." The menagerie was only abolished in 1834; and the practice was to allow any person to enter gratis who brought with him a little dog to be thrown to the lions!—*Dr. Doran's Princes of Wales*.

Lip, talk, bounce, impudence; "come, none o' yer LIP!"

Lip, to sing; "LIP us a chant," sing a song.

Liquor, or LIQUOR UP, to drink drams.—*Americanism*. In LIQUOR, tipsy, or drunk.

Little go, the old term for the examination now called [SMALLS](#).

Little snakes-man, a little thief, who is generally passed through a small aperture to open a door and let in the rest of the gang.

Liverpool Irishman, any man born in Liverpool of Irish parents. See [IRISH COCKNEY](#).

Liverpudlian, a native of Liverpool.

Live-stock, vermin of the insect kind, especially of that more than usually unpleasant kind found on tramps, &c.

[217]

Loafer, a lazy vagabond. Generally considered an Americanism. LOPER, or LOAFER, however, was in general use as a cant term in the early part of the last century. LANDLOPER was a vagabond who begged in the attire of a sailor; and the sea-phrase, [LAND-LUBBER](#), was doubtless synonymous.

Loaver, money. See [LOUR](#).—*Lingua Franca*.

Lob, a till, or money-drawer.

Lob-sneaking, stealing money from tills; occasionally stealing tills and all.

Lobb, the head.—*Pugilistic*.

Loblolly, gruel.—*Old*: used by Markham as a sea-term for grit gruel, or hasty pudding.

Loblolly boy, a derisive term for a surgeon's mate in the navy.

"LOB-LOLLY-BOY is a person who on board of a man-of-war attends the surgeon and his mates, and one who knows just as much of the business of a seaman as the author of this poem."—*The Patent, a Poem*, 4to, 1776.

Lobs! schoolboys' signal on the master's approach. Also, an assistant watcher, an under gamekeeper.

Lobs, words, talk.—*Gipsy*.

Lobscouse, a dish made of potatoes, meat, and biscuits, boiled together.

Lobster, a soldier. A policeman, from the colour of his coat, is styled an unboiled, or raw LOBSTER.

Lobster-box, a barrack, or military station.

Loggerheads, "to come to [LOGGERHEADS](#)," to come to blows.

Logie, theatrical jewellery, made mostly of tin.

Loll, to lie about lazily. "He would LOLL upon the handle of the door," said of an incorrigibly lazy fellow.

Lolly, the head. See [LOBB](#).—*Pugilistic*.

London ordinary, the beach at Brighton, where the "eight-hours-at-the-sea-side" excursionists dine in the open-air.

Long-bow. See [DRAW THE LONG BOW](#).

Long firm, a gang of swindlers who obtain goods by false pretences. They generally advertise or answer advertisements. The word LONG is supposed to be from a playful allusion made by one of the firm to the length of their credit.

Long-ghost, a tall, thin, awkward person. Sometimes called "lamp-post."

Long-headed, far-seeing, clever, calculating.

Long-hundred, a Billingsgate expression for 120 fresh herrings, or other small fish, the long-hundred being six score.

Long-odds, the odds which denote that the man or animal laid against has, or is supposed to have, little or no chance.

Long-shore butcher, a coast-guardsmen.—*Sea*. All people who get their livings by the side of the Thames below bridge are called LONG-SHORE folk.

Long-tailed beggar, a cat. The tale that hangs thereby runs thus:—A boy, during his first very short voyage to sea, had become so entirely a seaman, that on his return he had forgotten the name of the cat, and was obliged, pointing to puss, to ask his mother "what she called that 'ere LONG-TAILED BEGGAR?" Accordingly, sailors, when they hear a freshwater tar discoursing too largely on nautical matters, are very apt to say, "But how, mate, about that 'ere LONG-TAILED BEGGAR?"

[218]

Long-tailed-one, a bank-note or "flimsy" for a large amount.

Long-tails, among shooters, are pheasants; among coursers and dog-fanciers they are greyhounds.

Longs, the latrine at Brasenose, so called because built by LADY LONG.—*Oxford University*.

Longs-and-shorts, cards made for cheating.

Looking-glass, a facetious synonym for a *pot de chambre*. This is very old. The term arose from the fact that in ancient times this utensil was the object of very frequent examination by the medical fraternity. There is an old story of a lady who called at an inn, and called for a LOOKING-GLASS to arrange her hair, and who was presented with a chamber utensil.

Loony, a silly fellow, a natural. Corruption of LOONEY TICK (lunatic). Sometimes corrupted to LOOBY.

Loose. See [ON THE LOOSE](#).

Loose-box, a brougham or other vehicle kept for the use of a *dame de compagnie*. A more vulgar appellation is "mot-cart," the contemptuous sobriquet applied by the envious mob to a one-horse covered carriage.

Loose-box, a stable in which a horse is not tethered, but remains loose.

Loot, swag or plunder; also used as a verb. The word came much into vogue during the latest Chinese campaign.

Lope, this old form of leap is often heard in the streets. To LOPE is also to steal. *German*, LAUFEN.

Lop-sided, uneven, one side larger than the other. See *Jacob Faithful*.

Lord, a humpbacked man. See [MY LORD](#).

Lord, "drunk as a LORD," a common saying, probably referring to the facilities a man of fortune has for such a gratification; perhaps a sly sarcasm at the supposed habits of the aristocracy. This phrase had its origin in the old hard drinking days, when it was almost compulsory on a man of fashion to get drunk regularly after dinner.

Lord-mayor's-fool, an imaginary personage who likes everything that is good, and plenty of it.

Lothario, a "gay" deceiver; generally a heartless, brainless villain.

Loud, flashy, showy, as applied to dress or manner. See [BAGS](#).

Lour, or LOWR, money; "gammy LOWR," bad money. From the Wallachian Gipsy word, LOWE, coined money. Possibly connected with the French, LOUER, to hire.—*Ancient Cant* and *Gipsy*.

Louse-trap, a small-tooth comb.—*Old Cant*. See [CATCH-'EM-ALIVE](#).

Love, at billiards, rackets, and many other games, nothing: five points to none would be "five LOVE,"—a LOVE game being when one player does not score at all. The term is also used at whist, "six LOVE," "four LOVE," when one side has marked up six, four, or any other number, and the other none. A writer in the *Gentleman's Magazine* for July, 1780, derives it either from LUFF, an old Scotch word for the hand, or from the *Dutch*, LOEF, the LOOF, weather-gauge (*Sewell's Dutch Dictionary*, 4to, 1754); but it more probably, from the sense of the following, denotes something done without reciprocity.

Love, "to do a thing for LOVE," *i.e.*, for nothing. A man is said to marry for LOVE when he gets nothing with his wife; and an Irishman, with the bitterest animosity against his antagonist, will fight him for LOVE, *i.e.*, for the mere satisfaction of beating him, and not for a stake.

Loveage, tap droppings, a mixture of stale spirits, sweetened and sold to habitual dram-drinkers, principally females. Called also "alls."

Low-water, but little money in pocket, when the finances are at a low ebb.

Lubber, a clown, or fool.—*Ancient Cant*, LUBBARE. Among seamen an awkward fellow, a landsman.

Lubber's hole, an aperture in the maintop of a ship, by which a timid climber may avoid the difficulties of the "futtock shrouds;" hence as a sea-term the LUBBER'S HOLE represents any cowardly way of evading duty.

Luck, "down on one's LUCK," wanting money, or in difficulty.

Lucky, "to cut one's LUCKY," to go away quickly. See [STRIKE](#).

Ludlam's dog. An indolent, inactive person is often said to be "as lazy as LUDLAM'S DOG, which leaned its head against the wall to bark." Sailors say "as lazy as Joe the Marine, who laid down his musket to sneeze."

Lug, "my togs are in LUG," *i.e.*, in pawn.

Lug, to pull, or slake thirst.—*Old*.

Lug chovey, a pawnbroker's shop.

Luke, nothing.—*North Country Cant*.

Lully, a shirt.

Lully prigger, a rogue who steals wet clothes hung on lines to dry.

Lumber, to pawn or pledge. Probably from LOMBARD.

Lumbered, pawned; sometimes imprisoned.

Lummy, jolly, first-rate.

Lump, anything exceptionally large, "as a LUMP of a man," "a great LUMP of a fellow," &c.

Lump, the workhouse; also called the Pan.

Lump it, to dislike it; "if you don't like it, you may LUMP IT;" sometimes varied to, "if you don't like it, you may do the other thing." Probably from the fact that, in bulk or in lump, the good has to be taken with the bad. What you don't like must be reckoned with the LUMP. To LUMP IT is also to take off at a draught, as medicine or a dram. "He LUMPED IT down at once."

[220]

Lump the lighter, to be transported.

Lump work, work contracted for, or taken by the LUMP.

Lumper, a contractor. On the river more especially a person who contracts to deliver a ship laden with timber.

Lumper, a low thief who haunts wharves and docks, and robs vessels, also a person who sells old goods as new.

Lumpy, intoxicated. Also used to signify *enceinte*.

Lunan, a girl.—*Gipsy*.

Lurch, a term at the game of cribbage. A is said to LURCH B when the former attains the end, or sixty-first hole, of the board before the latter has pegged his thirty-first hole; or, in more familiar words, before B has turned the corner. A LURCH sometimes, and then only by agreement, counts as a double game or rub.

Lurk, a sham, swindle, or representation of feigned distress. An imposition of any kind is a LURK.

Lurker, an impostor who travels the country with false certificates of fires, shipwrecks, &c. Also, termed a [SILVER BEGGAR](#), which *see*.

Lush, intoxicating drinks of all kinds, but generally used for beer. It is generally allowed, as has been stated, that LUSH and its derivatives claim Lushington, the brewer, as sponsor.

Lush, to drink, or get drunk.

Lush-crib, a public-house.

Lushington, a drunkard, or one who continually soaks himself with lush. Some years since there was a LUSHINGTON CLUB in Bow Street, Covent Garden.

Lushy, intoxicated. Johnson says, "opposite to pale," so red with drink. He must, however, have been wrong, as the foregoing derivation shows.

Lylo, come hither.—*Anglo-Chinese*.

Lynch-law, summary punishment. From an American judge famous for hanging first and trying afterwards.

Mab, a cab, or hackney-coach.

Mace, to sponge, swindle, or beg, in a polite way: "give it him (a shopkeeper) on the MACE," *i.e.*, obtain goods on credit and never pay for them; also termed "striking the MACE."

Mace, to welsh, to obtain money without any expectation of being able to pay or intention of paying.

Maceman, OF MACER, a welcher, magsman, or general swindler; a "street-mugger."

Madza, half. *Italian*, MEZZA. This word enters into combination with various cant phrases, mainly taken from the *Lingua Franca*, as MADZA CAROON, half-a-crown, two-and-sixpence; MADZA SALTEE, a halfpenny [*see* SALTEE]; MADZA POONA, half-a-sovereign; MADZA ROUND THE BULL, half a pound of steak, &c. This word is, in street phraseology, invariably pronounced MEDZER. [221]

Mag, a halfpenny.—*Ancient Cant*, MAKE. MEGS were formerly guineas.—*B. M. Carew*. MAKE, the old form, is still used by schoolboys in Scotland. "Not a blessed MAG!" would be the phrase of a cadger down on his luck to express his penniless state.

Mag, literary and printers' slang for magazine.

Mag, to talk; hence MAGPIE. To MAG in thieves' slang is to talk well and persuasively.

Maggoty, fanciful, fidgety. Whims and fancies were formerly termed MAGGOTS, from the popular belief that a maggot in the brain was the cause of any odd notion or caprice a person might exhibit. Deer are sometimes found to have maggots in their brains, which, perhaps, accounts for the origin of the term.

Magsman, a street swindler, who watches for countrymen and "gullible" persons, and persuades them out of their possessions. MAGSMEN are wonderful actors. Their work is done in broad daylight, without any stage accessories; and often a wink, a look, or a slip of the tongue would betray their confederacy. Their ability and perseverance are truly worthy of a better cause. MAGSMEN are very often men of superior education. Those who "work" the tidal trains and boats are often faultlessly dressed and highly accomplished.

Mahcheen, a merchant. Chinese pronunciation of the English word.—*Anglo-Chinese*.

Mahogany, "to have one's feet under another man's MAHOGANY," to sit at his table, be supported on other than one's own resources; "amputate your MAHOGANY," *i.e.*, go away, elaboration of "cut your stick."

Mahogany flat, a bug.

Mail, to post a letter; "this screeve is mailed by a sure hand."

Main-toby, the highway, or the main road. *See* TOBY.

Make, any one is said to be "on the MAKE" who asks too high a price for his goods, or endeavours in any way to overreach.

Make, to steal, a successful theft or swindle. A man on the look-out for swindling opportunities is said to be "on the MAKE."

Make tracks, an Americanism synonymous with skedaddle; to make oneself scarce.

Make-up, personal appearance.—*Theatrical*.

Makings, materials. A man is often said to have the MAKINGS of a good politician (or whatever he may aspire to be) in him, if they were but properly applied.

Malapropism, an ignorant, vulgar misapplication of language, so named from Mrs. Malaprop, a character in Sheridan's famous comedy of the *Rivals*. Mrs. Partington afterwards succeeded to the mantle of Mrs. Malaprop; but the phrase Partingtonism is as yet uncoined, for the simple reason that Mrs. Malaprop was the original, Mrs. Partington the imitation. [222]

Malley, a gardener.—*Anglo-Indian*.

Manablins, broken victuals.

Man a-hanging, a man in difficulties. *See* HANGING.

Mandozy, a term of endearment among East-end Jews; probably from the valiant fighter named Mendoza.

Mang, to talk.—*Scotch*.

Man-handle, to use a person roughly, as to take him prisoner, turn him out of a room, or give him a beating.

Man in the moon, the gentleman who is supposed to find the "pieces" to pay election expenditure and electors' expenses, so long as the latter vote his way. *See* ELECTION INQUIRIES.

Marbles, furniture, movables; "money and MARBLES," cash and personal effects.

Marchioness, a little, dirty, old-fashioned maid-of-all-work; a title now in regular use, but derived from the remarkable character in the *Old Curiosity Shop*.

Mare's nest, a supposed discovery of marvels, which turn out no marvels at all; from a story similar to that about the cock neighing. Three Cockneys, out ruralizing, had determined to find out something about nests. Accordingly, when they ultimately came upon a dunghheap, they

judged by the signs therein that it must be a MARE'S NEST, especially as they could see the mare close handy. An old preacher in Cornwall up to very lately employed a different simile, as, "It's like a cow calving up in a tree."

Marine, or MARINE RECRUIT, an empty bottle. This expression having once been used in the presence of an officer of marines, he was at first inclined to take it as an insult, until some one adroitly appeased his wrath by remarking that no offence could be meant, as all that it could possibly imply was, "one who had done his duty, and was ready to do it again."

Mark, to make one's MARK is to achieve a success literary, artistic, or otherwise. Men of eminence are said to leave their MARKS on the earth's surface. An American poet has described this ambitious, albeit somewhat rare, proceeding as leaving "footprints on the sands of time."

Marketeer, a betting man who devotes himself, by means of special information, to the study of favourites, and the diseases incident to that condition of equine life. The MARKETEEER is the principal agent in all milking and knocking-out arrangements.

Market-horse, a horse simply kept in the betting-lists for the purpose of being betted against.

Marplot, an officious bungler, who spoils everything he interferes with.

Marriage lines, a marriage certificate.—*Provincial*.

Marrow, a mate, a fellow-workman, a pitman who works in a "shift" with another.—*Northumberland and Durham*.

[223]

Marrow-bones, the knees; "I'll bring him down upon his MARROW BONES," *i.e.*, I'll make him bend his knees as he does to the Virgin Mary. Supposed to be from Mary Bones, an objectionable term used by the first Protestants in reference to the supposed adoration of the Virgin Mary by Catholics.

Marrowskying. See [MEDICAL GREEK](#).

Marry, a very old term of asseveration, originally (in Popish times) a mode of swearing by the Virgin Mary; *q.d.*, by Mary.

Martingale, a gambling term, which means the doubling of a stake every time you lose; so that when you win once you win back all that you have lost. So called from the fact that, as in all fair games you must win once, you have a safe hold of fortune. The difficulty is to obtain a bank large enough to do this effectively, or having the bank to find any one who will follow you far enough, in a fair game.

Mary Ann, the title of the dea ex machinâ evolved from trades-unionism at Sheffield, to the utter destruction of recalcitrant grinders. She is supposed to do all the "blow-ups," steal all the bands, and otherwise terrorize over victims of the union.

Marygold, one million sterling. See [PLUM](#).

Maskee, never mind, no consequence.—*Anglo-Chinese*.

Massacre of the innocents, when the leader of the House of Commons goes through the doleful operation of devoting to extinction a number of useful measures at the end of the session, for want of time to pass them. *Vide Times*, 20th July, 1859: Mr. C. Foster, on altering the time of the legislative sessions.—*Parliamentary Slang*.

Master of the Mint, a gardener.

Master of the Rolls, a baker.

Mate, the term a coster or low person applies to a friend, partner, or companion; "me and my MATE did so and so," is a common phrase with a low Londoner. Originally a *sea term*.

Matey, a labourer in one of Her Majesty's dockyards. Common elaboration of the word MATE.

Maudlin, Magdalen College, Oxford. This is the old English pronunciation of the word.

Mauley, a fist, that with which one strikes as with a mall.—*Pugilistic*.

Mauley, a signature, from MAULEY, a fist; "put your fist to it," is sometimes said by a tradesman when desiring a fellow-trader to put his signature to a bill or note.

Maund, to beg; "MAUNDERING on the fly," begging of people in the streets.—*Old Cant*. MAUNG, to beg, is a term in use amongst the gipsies, and may also be found in the Hindoo vocabulary. MAUND, however, is pure Anglo-Saxon, from MAND, a basket. Compare BEG, which is derived from BAG—a curious parallel.

Maw, the mouth; "hold your MAW," cease talking.

[224]

Mawworm, a hypocrite of the most unpleasant kind. From Bickerstaff's play of *The Hypocrite*. Originally a MAWORM was a worm in the stomach, the thread worm.

Max, gin; MAX upon tick, gin obtained upon credit.

Mazarine, the platform beneath the stage in large theatres. Probably corruption of *Italian*, MEZZANINO.

M. B. coat, (*i.e.*, Mark of the Beast,) a name given to the long surtout worn by some of the clergy,—a modern Puritan form of abuse, said to have been accidentally disclosed to a High Church customer by a tailor's orders to his foreman.

Mealy-mouthed, soft-spoken, plausible, deceitful. A specious liar is said to be MEALY-MOUTHED.

Mean white, a term of contempt among negroes, in the old slavery days, for white men without landed property. A white man in the Southern States had no *locus standi* unless he possessed property, and the blackest of niggers would have felt insulted at any "poor white trash" claiming to be "a man and brother."

Measley, mean, miserable-looking, "seedy;" "what a MEASLEY-looking man!" *i.e.*, what a wretched, unhappy fellow.

Medical Greek, the slang used by medical students at the hospitals. At the London University they have a way of disguising English, described by Albert Smith as the Gower Street Dialect, which consists in transposing the initials of words, *e.g.*, "poke a smipe"—smoke a pipe; "flutter-by"—butterfly, &c. This disagreeable nonsense, which has not even the recommendation of a little ability in its composition, is often termed Marrowskying. See [GREEK](#), [ST. GILES'S GREEK](#), or the "*Ægidiac*" dialect, Language of [ZIPH](#), &c.

Meisensang, a missionary, Chinese pronunciation of the English word.—*Anglo-Chinese*.

Menagerie, the orchestra of a theatre.—*Theatrical*.

Menavelings, odd money remaining after the daily accounts are made up at a railway booking-office,—usually divided among the clerks. See [OVERS](#) and [SHORTS](#).

Men of Kent, men born in that portion of the "garden of England" which lies east of the Medway, as distinguished from Kentish men born the other side. The MEN OF KENT are entitled to the benefit of the old laws of the county, that of gavelkind particularly.

Merkin, a term usually applied to a woman's privities. Originally false hair for those parts.

Merry Dun of Dover, a large ship figuring in sailors' yarns. She was so large that when passing through the Straits of Dover her flying jib-boom knocked down Calais steeple; while, at the same time, the fly of her ensign swept a flock of sheep off Dover cliffs. She was so lofty that a boy who attempted to go to her mast-head found himself a grey old man when he reached the deck again. This yarn is founded on a story in the Scandinavian mythology. There is also a legend among sailors of the gallant Thunderbomb, which had "ninety-nine decks and no bottom."

[225]

Mesopotamia, a name given to Eaton Square and neighbourhood when first built. This part was also called Cubitopolis.—*Fashionable slang*.

Mess, to interfere unduly. Costermongers refer to police supervision as MESSING. Among sailors, a dead man is said to have lost the number of his MESS.

Metallician, a racing bookmaker. Bookmakers use metallic books and pencils.

Middy, abbreviation of midshipman.—*Naval*.

Midge net, a lady's veil.

Mike, an Irish hodman, or general labourer.

Mike, to loiter; or "lazy about." The term probably originated in St. Giles's, which is thronged with Irish labourers, who rarely or never labour (MIKE being so common a term with them as to become a generic appellation for Irishmen), and who loiter and lean against the public-houses in the "Dials." It has been said that the term is Old English, MICHE, to skulk, to loiter; Old Norse, MAK, leisure, idleness.

"Shall the blessed sun of heaven prove a MICHER?"

Shakspeare's Hen. IV., ii. 4.

Whatever may have been its origin, there can be now no doubt that the word is supposed to have particular reference to the habits of the Irish MIKES, or labourers, though now and again it is borrowed in the interests of others.

Mild, second-rate, inferior. See [DRAW IT MILD](#). Also feeble, inefficient, as "a MILD attempt." Weak young men who keep bulldogs, and dress in a "loud" stable style, from a belief that it is very becoming, are sometimes called "MILD bloaters."

Milk, a term used in connexion with racing; when a horse is entered in a race for which his owner does not intend him to run, or at all events in which he does not intend him to win, and bets against him, the animal is said to "be MILKED." MILKING, is keeping a horse a favourite, at short odds, for a race in which he has no chance whatever, or in which he will not be allowed to try, for the purpose of laying against him.

Milky ones, white linen rags.

Mill, a fight, or set to. *Ancient Cant*, MYLL, to rob. Probably from the special opportunities afforded to pickpockets when the ring was a "national institution."

Mill, to fight or beat.

Mill, the old Insolvent Debtors' Court. "To go through the MILL" was equivalent to being "whitewashed."

Mill, the tread-MILL.

Miller. To drown the MILLER is to put too much water in anything. The phrase was originally "to

drown the MILLER'S thumb," or go over the specified mark, *i.e.*, the thumb-mark, in adding water to ardent spirits.

Miller. "To give the MILLER" is to engage a person in conversation of an apparently friendly character, when all at once the bystanders surround and pelt him with flour, grease, and filth of various kinds, flour predominating. This mode of punishing spies, informers, and other obnoxious individuals, is used by cabmen, omnibus conductors, *et hoc genus omne*. Eggs are useful missiles in an engagement of this description. If rotten eggs are not obtainable, ordinary ones will do.

Miller. This word is frequently called out when a person relates a stale joke. See [JOE](#).

Milvader, to beat.

Mish, a shirt, or chemise. From [COMMISSION](#), the ancient cant for a shirt, afterwards shortened to K'MISH OR SMISH, and then to MISH. *French*, CHEMISE; *Italian*, CAMICIA.

"With his SNOWY CAMESE and his shaggy capote."—*Byron*.

Mitey, a cheesemonger.

Mitten. "To get the MITTEN" is, in Canadian slang, to be jilted.

Mittens, the boxing gloves.

Mizzle, a frequentative form of MIST in both senses; as applied to weather, it is used by John Gadbury in his *Ephemeris* in 1695—MISTY and MIZZLING—to come down as mist; while the other sense may be expressed as to fade away like a mist.

Mizzle, to run away, or decamp; to disappear as in a mist. From MIZZLE, a drizzling rain; a Scotch mist.

"And then one MIZZLING Michaelmas night,
The Count he MIZZLED too."—*Hood*.

Mizzler, or RUM-MIZZLER, a person who is clever at effecting an escape, or getting out of a difficulty.

Moab, a name applied to the turban-shaped hat which was some few years back fashionable among ladies, and ladylike swells of the other sex. From the Scripture phrase, "MOAB is my washpot" (Ps. lx. 8), which latter article the hat in question was supposed to resemble.—*University*.

Mob. Swift informs us, in his *Art of Polite Conversation*, that MOB was, in his time, the slang abbreviation of "mobility," just as NOB is of "nobility," at the present day. See [SCHOOL](#).

"It is perhaps this humour of speaking no more words than we needs must which has so miserably curtailed some of our words, that in familiar writings and conversation they often lose all but their first syllables, as in MOB., red., pos., incog., and the like."—*Addison's Spectator*.

Mob, a thief's immediate companions, as,—*"our own MOB;"* MOBSMAN, a dressy swindler or pickpocket.

Mob, to hustle, crowd round, and annoy, necessarily the action of a large party against a smaller one, or an individual. Mobbing is generally a concomitant of street robbery.

Mobility, the populace; or, according to Burke, the "great unwashed." Johnson calls it a cant term, although Swift notices it as a proper expression.

Mockered, holey, marked unpleasantly. A ragged handkerchief and a blotched or pitted face are both said to be MOCKERED.

Modest quencher, a glass of spirits and water. Dick Swiveller was fond of a MODEST QUENCHER.

Moey, the mouth.—*Gipsy* and *Hindoo*. Shakspeare has MOE, to make mouths.

Mofussilite, an inhabitant of an up-country district.—*Anglo-Indian*.

Moisten your chaffer, a slang phrase equivalent to "take something to drink." Also "moisten your clay," originally applied to smokers, now general, and supposed to have reference to the human clay.

Moke, a donkey.—*Gipsy*, but now general to all the lower orders. A "coster" and his "moke" are almost inseparable terms. Probably derived originally from the Arabic *al mocreve*, a carrier.

Moko, a name given by sportsmen to pheasants killed by mistake during September, before the pheasant-shooting comes in. They pull out their tails, and roundly assert that they are no pheasants at all, but MOKOS.

Moll, a girl; nickname for Mary.—*Old Cant*.

Molled, followed, or accompanied by a woman. When a costermonger sees a friend walking with a woman he does not know, he says on the first opportunity afterwards, "I see yer the other night when yer WAS MOLLED up and too proud to speak."

Mollisher, a low girl or woman; generally a female cohabiting with a man who gets his living by thieving.

Mollsack, a reticule, or market basket.

Moll Thomson's mark, that is, M. T.—empty; as, "Take away this bottle, it has MOLL THOMSON'S MARK on it." See [M. T.](#)

Moll-tooler, a female pickpocket.

Mollycoddle, an effeminate man; one who "coddles" amongst the women, or does their work.

Mollygrubs, or MULLIGRUBS, stomach ache, or sorrow—which to the costermonger is much the same, as he believes, like the ancients, that the viscera is the seat of all feeling. Costermongers are not alone, even in the present day, in this belief.

Molrowing, "out on the spree," in company with so-called "gay women." In allusion to the amatory serenadings of the London cats. Another form of this is, "out on the tiles."

Mondayish, or Mondayfied, disinclined for work. "St. Monday" is a great institution among artizans and small tradesmen.

Monk, a term of contempt; probably an abbreviation of MONKEY.

Monkey, spirit or ill temper; "to get one's MONKEY up," to rouse his passion. A man is said to have his MONKEY up or the MONKEY on his back, when he is "riled," or out of temper; this is old, and was probably in allusion originally to the evil spirit which was supposed to be always present with a man; also under similar circumstances a man is said to have his back or hump up.

Monkey, the instrument which drives a rocket.—*Army.*

[228]

Monkey, 500*l.*--*Sporting Slang.*

Monkey, the vessel in which a mess receives its full allowance of grog.—*Sea.*

Monkey-board, the place or step attached to an omnibus, on which the conductor stands.

Monkey-boat, a peculiar, long, narrow, canal boat.

Monkey with a long tail, a mortgage.—*Legal.*

Monkey's allowance, to get blows instead of alms, more kicks than halfpence.

Monkery, the country, or rural districts. Originally an old word for a quiet or monastic life.—*Hall.*

Monniker, a person's name or signature.

Month of Sundays, an indefinite period, a long time.

Mooch, to sponge; to obtrude oneself upon friends just when they are about to sit down to dinner, or other lucky time—of course quite accidentally. Compare [HULK](#). To slink away, and allow your friend to pay for the entertainment. In Wiltshire, TO MOOCH is to shuffle. See the following.

Mooching, or ON THE MOOCH, on the look-out for any articles or circumstances which may be turned to a profitable account; watching in the streets for odd jobs, horses to hold, &c.; also scraps of food, drinks, old clothes, &c.

Moon, a month; generally used to express the length of time a person has been sentenced by the magistrate; thus "one MOON" is one month of four weeks. A calendar month is known as a "callingder" or long MOON. A "lunar MOON," ridiculous as the phrase may seem, is of constant use among those who affect slang of this description.

Mooney, intoxicated, a name for a silly fellow.

Mooning, loitering, wandering about in a purposeless manner.

Moonlight, or MOONSHINE, smuggled spirits. From the night-work of smugglers.

Moon-raker, a native of Wiltshire; because it is said that some men of that county, seeing the reflection of the moon in a pond, took it to be a cheese, and endeavoured to pull it out with a rake.

Moonshee, a learned man, professor, or teacher.—*Anglo-Indian.*

Moonshine, palaver, deception, humbug.

Mop, a hiring place (or fair) for servants. Steps are often "about to be taken" to put down these assemblies, which have been proved to be greatly detrimental to the morality of the poor. They are supposed to contribute largely to the bastardy percentages.

Mop, an habitual drunkard. Also a period of intoxication. "To be on the MOP" is to be on the drink from day to day—to be perpetually "stale drunk."

[229]

Mop up, to drink, or empty a glass.—*Old Sea term.*

Mops and brooms, intoxicated. Supposed by an imaginative person to be the appearance presented by the world to a very drunken man. Possibly the term was first used to express sea-sickness.

Mopusses, money; "MOPUSSES ran taper," money ran short.

Moral, a forthcoming result which appears certain—originally MORAL certainty. This is racing slang, as, "The race is a MORAL for Cremorne." These MORALS are often, however, of very uncertain tenure.

More-ish. When there is scarcely enough of an eatable or drinkable, it is said to taste MORE-ISH; as, "This wine is very good, but it has a slight MORE-ISH flavour."

Morris, to decamp, be off. Probably from the ancient MORESCO, of MORRIS-DANCE. *See Shakspeare.*

Mortar-board, a square college cap.

Mortgage-deed, a pawnbroker's duplicate.

Moskeneer, to pawn with a view to obtaining more than the actual value of an article. There are, in various parts of the country, men who make MOSKENEERING a profession—that is, they buy jewellery which, though fairly good, is not so good as it seems, and pawn it as opportunity occurs. It is notorious that some men can obtain a much larger sum on a given article than others can; though the smallest of these professionals generally manage to get good livings, which does not say much for the judgment of those constant inspectors of personal property—pawnbrokers' assistants.

Mot, a girl of indifferent character. Formerly, *Mort. Dutch*, MOTT-KAST, a harlotry. MOT-CART, *see* [LOOSE-BOX](#).

Mouchey, a Jew.

Mouldy, grey-headed. Servants wearing hair-powder are usually termed MOULDY-PATES by street boys.

Mouldy-grubs, travelling showmen, mountebanks who perform in the open air without tent or covering. Doing this is called MOULDY-GRUBBING.

Mount, a saddle-horse. According to quality, "a good MOUNT," or "a bad MOUNT."

Mount, in theatrical parlance, to prepare for production on the stage. "The piece was excellently MOUNTED."

Mounter, a false swearer. Derived from the borrowed clothes men used to MOUNT, or dress in, when going to swear for a consideration.

Mountain-dew, whisky, advertised as from the Highlands.

Mountain-pecker, a sheep's head. *See* [JEMMY](#).

Mourning, "a full suit of MOURNING," two black eyes; HALF-MOURNING, one black eye.

Mouse, a black eye. By a façon de parler, any one with "a MOUSE" is supposed to have been to Blackwall. [230]

Mouth-almighty, a noisy, talkative person.

Mouthpiece, a lawyer, or counsel. Thieves and their associates always speak of a counsel as a MOUTHPIECE.

Move, a "dodge," or cunning trick; "up to a MOVE or two," acquainted with tricks. Probably derived from the game of chess.

M.P., member of the police, one of the slang titles of the Force.

Mrs. Grundy, the representative of the censorious world, "What will MRS. GRUNDY say?" Originally a character in the comedy of *Speed the Plough*.

Mrs. Harris and **Mrs. Gamp**, nicknames of the *Morning Herald* and *Standard* newspapers, while united under the proprietorship of Mr. Baldwin. MRS. GAMP, a monthly nurse, was a character in Charles Dickens's popular novel of *Martin Chuzzlewit*, who continually quoted an imaginary MRS. HARRIS in attestation of the superiority of her qualifications, and the infallibility of her opinions; and thus afforded a parallel to the two newspapers, which appealed to each other as independent authorities, being all the while the production of the same editorial staff. *See* [introductory article](#).

Mrs. Jones, the house of office, a water-closet.

M.T., railway slang used by porters and pointsmen for empties, or empty carriages. *See* [MOLL THOMSON'S MARK](#).

Much of a muchness, alike, very much the same thing.

Muck, to beat, or excel. "It's no use, his luck's dead in; he'd MUCK a thousand;" "he MUCKED me clean out," &c. To RUN A MUCK, OR GO A MUCKER, to rush headlong into certain ruin. From a certain religious frenzy, or intoxication caused by bhang, which is common among the Malays, and which now and again causes an enthusiast, kreese in hand, to dash into a crowd and devote every one he meets to death until he is himself killed, or falls from exhaustion.—*Malay*, AMOK, slaughter.

Muckender, OR MUCKENGER, a pocket-handkerchief.—*Old. Cf.* [SNOTTINGER](#). The original name of the "Neckinger" in Bermondsey was "the Devil's Neck-handkerchief." There is still a Neckinger Road and Messrs. Bevington and Sons' tannery in Bermondsey bears the name of the Neckinger Mills.

Mucker, TO GO A, to go to grief, to ruin one's prospects.—*Oxford Univ.*

Muck-out, to clean out; often applied to one utterly ruining an adversary in gambling.

Muck-snipe, one who has been "MUCKED OUT," or beggared, at gambling. *See* [MUCK](#).

Mud-crusher, a word of contempt, used by the cavalry in reference to the infantry.

Mudfog, "The British Association for the Advancement of Science." Term first used by Charles

Dickens in *Bentley's Miscellany*, about 1836.

Mud-lark, a man or woman who, with clothes tucked above the knee, grovels through the mud on the banks of the Thames, when the tide is low, for silver or pewter spoons, old bottles, pieces of iron, coal, or any articles of the least value, deposited by the retiring tide, either from passing ships or the sewers. Occasionally applied to those men who cleanse the sewers, and who wear great boots and sou'-wester hats. Those who are employed in banks and counting-houses, in collecting and other out-door duties, have also this appellation.

Mud-student, a farming pupil. The name given to the students at the Agricultural College, Cirencester.

Muff, a silly or weak-minded person, a duffer; MUFF has been defined to be "a soft thing that holds a lady's hand without squeezing it."

Muffin-cap, a cap similar to that worn by a charity-boy.

Muffin-face, a white, soft, delicate, or whiskerless face.

Muffin-worry, an old lady's tea party.

Mufti, the civilian dress of a naval or military officer when off duty.—*Anglo-Indian*. From an Eastern word signifying a clergyman or priest.

Mug, the mouth, or face.—*Old*.

"'GOBLET AND MUG.'—Toppers should bear in mind that what they quaff from the goblet afterwards appears in the MUG."

Mug, to strike in the face, or fight. Also, to rob or swindle. *Gaelic*, MUIG, to suffocate, oppress; *Irish*, MUGAIM, to kill, destroy.

Mug, "to MUG oneself," to get tipsy.

Mugging, a thrashing,—synonymous with "slogging," both terms of the "ring," and frequently used by fighting men.

Muggy, drunk. Also, as applied to weather, stifling, oppressive.

Mug-up, to paint one's face, or dress specially with a view to impersonation.—*Theatrical*. To "cram" for an examination.—*Army*.

Mull, "to make a MULL of it," to spoil anything, or make a fool of oneself.

Mulligrubs. *Vide* [MOLLYGRUBS](#).

Mullingar heifer, a girl with thick ankles.—*Irish*. The story goes that a traveller, passing through Mullingar, was so struck with this local peculiarity in the women, that he determined to accost the next one he met. "May I ask," said he, "if you wear hay in your shoes?" "Faith an' I do," said the girl; "and what then?" "Because," says the traveller, "that accounts for the calves of your legs coming down to feed on it."

Multee kertever, very bad. *Italian*, MOLTO CATTIVO. Generally used with the affix of bloke when referring to a man. Phrase much used by circus riders.

Mum, "to keep MUM," to hold one's peace. Hence "MUM's the word,"—a phrase which implies to all hearers that the matter to which it refers must remain secret.

Mummer, a performer at a travelling theatre.—*Ancient*. Rustic performers at Christmas in the West of England.

Mump, to beg. In Lincolnshire, Boxing-day is known as MUMPING DAY.

Mumper, a beggar. A collector of holiday tribute.

Mumps, the miserables. To feel MUMPISH is to be heavy, dull, and stupid.

Mundungus, trashy, coarse tobacco. Sometimes used to represent the half-soddened, half-calcined residuum at the bottom of an all-but-smoked-out pipe, which, when knocked out, is vulgarly called the [TOPPER](#), *q. v.* *Spanish*, MONDONGO, black pudding.

Mungarly, bread, food. MUNG is an old word for mixed food, but MUNGARLY is doubtless derived from the *Lingua Franca*, MANGIAR, to eat. *See* the following.

Mungarly casa, a baker's shop; evidently a corruption of a *Lingua Franca* phrase for an eating-house. The well-known "Nix Mangiare" stairs at Malta derive their name from the endless beggars who lie there and shout, "Nix mangiare," *i. e.*, "Nothing to eat," to excite the compassion of the English who land there,—an expression which exhibits remarkably the mongrel composition of the *Lingua Franca*, MANGIARE being Italian, and *Nix* (*German*, NICHTS), an evident importation from Trieste, or other Austrian seaport.

Munging, or MOUNGING, whining, begging, muttering.—*North*.

Muns, the mouth. *German*, MUND.—*Old Cant*.

Murerk, the mistress of the house. *See* [BURERK](#).

Murkarker, a monkey,—vulgar Cockney pronunciation of MACAUICO, a species of monkey. Jacko Macauco, or Maccacco, as he was mostly called, was the name of a famous fighting monkey, who used nearly fifty years ago to display his prowess at the Westminster pit, where, after having

killed many dogs, he was at last "chewed up" by a bull terrier.

Murphy, a potato. Probably from the Irish national liking for potatoes, MURPHY being a surname common amongst the Irish. MURPHIES (edible) are sometimes called DONOVANS.

Murphy, "in the arms of MURPHY," *i.e.*, fast asleep. Corruption of MORPHEUS.

Mush, an umbrella. Contraction of MUSHROOM.

Mush (or MUSHROOM) **faker**, an itinerant mender of umbrellas.

Mushroom, a hat, shaped like the fungus from which it takes its name, often worn by demure ladies.

Muslin, a woman or girl; "he picked up a bit of MUSLIN."

Musta, or MUSTER, a pattern, one of a sort. Anglo-Indian term used in describing the make or pattern of anything. A sample of any kind of merchandize. This word is very generally used in commercial transactions all over the world.

Mutton, a contemptuous term for a woman of bad character; sometimes varied to LACED MUTTON. The expression was used as a cant term for a "wild duck" in the reign of James I. As a slang term it was employed by Ben Jonson in his masque of *Neptune's Triumph*, which was written for display at Court on Twelfth Night, 1623; "a fine LACED MUTTON or two," are the words applied to wantons. Shakspeare has the term. In that class of English society which does not lay any claim to refinement, a fond lover is often spoken of as being "fond of his MUTTON," which, by the way, in this place does not mean the woman so much as something else.

[233]

Mutton chops, a sheep's-head. A man who has dined off sheep's-head dignifies his meal by calling it MUTTON CHOPS (chaps).

Mutton-fist, an uncomplimentary title for any one having a large and muscular, bony, or coarse hand.

Mutton-walk, the saloon at Drury Lane Theatre. A vulgar appellation applied to this place early in the last century, still in use in the neighbourhood of Covent Garden, which was formerly the great resort for the gay and giddy of both sexes.

Muzzle, the mouth.

Muzzle, to fight or thrash; to throttle or garrotte.

Muzzler, a blow in the mouth; a dram of spirits.

Muzzy, intoxicated.

My aunt, AUNT JONES, or MRS. JONES, the closet of decency, or house of office.

My lord, a nickname given to a hunchback.

My tulip, a term of endearment used by the lower orders to persons and animals; "Kim up, MY TULIP," as the coster said to his donkey when thrashing him with an ash stick."

My uncle, the pawnbroker,—generally used when any person questions the whereabouts of a domestic article. "Oh! only at MY UNCLE'S" is the reply. "Up the spout" has the same meaning. It is worthy of remark that the French call this useful relative "ma tante," my aunt.

Nab, to catch, to seize; “NAB the rust,” to take offence.—*Ancient*, fourteenth century. See [NAP](#).

Nab the rust, to take offence.

Nabob, an Eastern prince, a retired Indian official,—hence a slang term for a capitalist. From Nawaub.

Nabs, self; my NABS, myself; his NABS, himself.—*North Country Cant*.

Nag, to persistently talk in a scolding manner, after the manner of Mrs. Caudle. NAGGING is supposed to be persistent, persevering, passionless scolding.

Nail, to steal, or capture; “paid on the NAIL,” *i.e.*, paid ready money; NAILED, taken up, or caught,—probably in allusion to the practice of NAILING bad money to the counter. We say, “as dead as a door-NAIL;” most possibly because of “apt alliteration.” Shakspeare has the expression in *Henry IV.*—

“*Falstaff*. What! is the old king dead?

Pistol. AS NAIL in door.”

Dickens, in that marvellous little book, *A Christmas Carol*, says:—

“Old Marley was as dead as a DOOR-NAIL.

“Mind! I don’t mean to say that I know of my own knowledge what there is particularly dead about a DOOR-NAIL. I might have been inclined myself to regard a COFFIN-NAIL as the deadeest piece of ironmongery in the trade. But the wisdom of our ancestors is in the simile: and my unhallowed hands shall not disturb it, or the country’s done for. You will, therefore, permit me to repeat, emphatically, that Marley was as dead as a DOOR-NAIL.”

Nail in one’s coffin, a dram, “a drop o’ summat’ short,” a jocular, but disrespectful phrase, used by the lower orders to each other at the moment of lifting a glass of spirits to their lips. “Well, good luck! here’s another NAIL IN MY COFFIN.” This is probably in ridicule of teetotal or temperance preachers, and the arguments adduced by them. Another phrase with old toppers is “shedding a tear,” also “wiping an eye.”

Namby-pamby, particular, over-nice, effeminate. This was possibly of Pope’s invention, and first applied by him to the affected short-lined verses addressed by Ambrose Phillips to Lord Carteret’s infant children. See *Johnson’s Life of Pope*.

Nammus, or NAMOUS, to be off, to get away; “let’s NAMMUS, somebody’s coming.” See [VAMOS](#).

Nanny-shop, a disreputable house.

Nantee, not any, or “I have none.” NANTEE also means “shut up!” or “leave off!” *Italian*, NIENTE, nothing. See [DINARLY](#).—*Lingua Franca*.

Nantee palaver, no conversation, *i.e.*, hold your tongue. Very often in this sense also shortened to NANTEE only. Originally *Lingua Franca*, but now general.

Nap, or NAB, to take, steal, or receive; “you’ll NAP it,” *i.e.*, you will catch a beating.—*North*; also *Old Cant*.

Nap, to break, or rap with a hammer. See [KNAP](#).—*North*.

Nap, or NAPPER, a hat. From “nab,” a hat, cap, or head.—*Old Cant*.

Nap nix, a person who works at his trade, and occasionally goes on the stage to act minor parts without receiving any pay. The derivation is obvious. See [NAP](#) and [NIX](#), *i.e.*, NICHTS.

Nap one’s bib, to cry, shed tears, or carry one’s point.

Nap the regulars, to divide the booty.

Nap the teaze, to be privately whipped in prison.

Nark, a person in the pay of the police; a common informer; one who gets his living by laying traps for publicans, &c. Sometimes called a “nose.”

Nark, to watch, or look after; “NARK the titter,” watch the girl.

Narp, a shirt.—*Scotch*.

Narrow, mean, sordid.—*Scotch*. In common slang, dull of comprehension, as distinguished from wide awake.

Nasty, ill-tempered, cross-grained. “He was very NASTY,” *i.e.*, he was ill-humoured.

Nation, or TARNATION, very, or exceedingly. Corruption of damnation.

Natty, pretty, neat, tidy.—*Old*.

Natural, an idiot, a simpleton. Sometimes HALF-NATURAL.

Navy, an excavator employed in making railways, canals, &c. Originally slang, but now a recognised term. Short for navigator, a term humorously applied to excavators when their chief work was that of cutting and banking canals, making dykes to rivers, &c.

N. C., “enough said,” being the initials of NUF CED. A certain theatrical manager spells, it is said, in this style.

Near, mean and stingy.

Nearby, a person in authority over another; master, parent, or foreman.—*North*.

Neat, unmixed with water. "Two half goes of gin, one NEAT, the other cold," meaning one as drawn, the other diluted with cold water. The Americans use the word "straight" instead of NEAT: "I'll take mine straight."

Neck, to swallow. Neck-oil, drink of any kind.

Neck and crop, entirely, completely; "he chuck'd him NECK AND CROP out of window."

Neck and neck. Horses run NECK AND NECK in a race when they are so perfectly equal that one cannot be said to be before the other.

Neck or nothing, desperate. Originally a steeplechase phrase.

Neck beef, a synonym for coarseness. "As coarse as neck ends of beef."

Neckinger, a cravat. See [MUCKENGER](#).

Ned, a guinea. HALF-NED, half-a-guinea.

Neddy, a considerable quantity, as "a NEDDY of fruit," "a NEDDY of fish," &c.—*Irish slang*.

Neddy, a donkey. On Sunday, when a costermonger, if at all well to do, takes his family out for an airing in his "shallow," the donkey is called "Eddard."

Neddy, a life preserver. Possibly contraction of Kennedy, the name of the first man, it is said in St. Giles's, who had his head broken by a poker.

Ned Stokes, the four of spades.—*North Hants*. See *Gentleman's Magazine* for 1791, p. 141.

Needful, money, cash; the "one thing NEEDFUL" for the accomplishment of most pet designs.

Needle, to annoy. To "cop the NEEDLE" is to become vexed or annoyed.

Needy mizzler, a shabby person; a tramp who runs away without paying for his lodging.

Never trust me, an ordinary phrase with low Londoners, and common in Shakspeare's time, *vide Twelfth Night*. It is generally used instead of an oath, calling vengeance on the asseverator, if such-and-such does not come to pass.

Newgate fringe, or FRILL, the collar of beard worn under the chin; so called from its occupying the position of the rope when Jack Ketch operates. Another name for it is a TYBURN COLLAR.

Newgate Knocker, the term given to the lock of hair which costermongers and thieves usually twist back towards the ear. The shape is supposed to resemble the knocker on the prisoners' door at Newgate—a resemblance that carries a rather unpleasant suggestion to the wearer. Sometimes termed a COBBLER'S KNOT, OR COW-LICK.

Newmarket, in tossing, when the game is "two out of three," that is, when he who gains the first two tosses wins. When the first toss is decisive, the game is termed "sudden death."

Nibble, to take, or steal. NIBBLER, a petty thief.

Nib-cove, a gentleman. NIBSOMEST CRIBS, best or gentlemen's houses.—*Beggar's Cant*.

Nib-like, gentlemanly.

Nibs, self. His NIBS, means any one who may be referred to. As, "I told his NIBS," or "stag his NIBS." "Your NIBS," yourself.

Nick, or OLD NICK, the devil.—*Scandinavian*, KNICKAR, one of the names of Odin, as the destroying or evil principle.

Nick, to hit the mark; "he's NICKED it," *i.e.*, won his point. Also to steal. To be "out on the NICK," is to be out thieving. Sometimes described as being "on the pinch."

Nick-nack, a trifle.—Originally *Cant*.

Niggling, trifling, or idling; taking short steps in walking.—*North*.

Nightcap, a glass of "warm with" taken the last thing at night.

Night-hunter, a poacher.—*North*. Also a London prostitute. Sometimes in the latter capacity varied to night-hawk.

Nil, half; half profits, &c.

Nilly-willy, *i.e.*, NILL YE, WILL YE, whether you will or no; a familiar version of the *Latin*, NOLENS VOLENS. Generally written now, WILLY-NILLY.

Nimming, stealing. *Old English*, NIM, to take. Motherwell, the Scotch poet, thought the old word NIM (to snatch or pick up) was derived from *nam, nam*, the tiny words or cries of an infant, when eating anything which pleases its little palate. A negro proverb has the word:—

"Buckra man NAM crab,
Cram NAM buckra man."

Or, in the buckra man's language—

“White man eat [or steal] the crab,
And then crab eat the white man.”

Shakspeare evidently had the word NIM in his head when he portrayed Nym.

Nincompoop, a fool, a hen-pecked husband, a “Jerry Sneak.”—Corruption of *non compos mentis*.

Nine corns, a pipeful of tobacco.

[237]

Ninepence, “nice as NINEPENCE,” all right, right to a nicety. A correspondent says:—“This most undoubtedly should be NINE-PINS. For at the game of that name, in fairness to both parties, the nine pins must always be set up with great accuracy. There is no nicety in NINEPENCE!” Evidently this correspondent does not know how nice it is to have ninepence, after being without money. At all events the phrase *is* “nice as NINEPENCE.”

Nines, “dressed up to the NINES,” in a showy or *recherché* manner. Up to the NINES, up to the dodges and “wrinkles” of life.

Nine Shillings, cool audacity; most probably derived from the *French*, NONCHALANCE.

Ning-nang, horse-coupers’ term for a worthless thoroughbred.

Ninnyhammer, a foolish, ignorant person. Generally shortened to NINNY. NINNY is also short for nincompoop.

Nip, to steal, to take up quickly. See [NAP](#) and [NIB](#).

Nipcheese, a purser.—*Old Sea Slang*.

Nipper, a sharp lad. Originally a superior grade among cut-purses.

Nix, nothing. *German*, NICHTS. See [MUNGARLY](#).

Nix! the signal word of schoolboys and workpeople to each other that the master, or other person in authority, is approaching.

Nix my dolly, once a very popular slang song, beginning—

“In a box of a stone jug I was born,
Of a hempen widow all forlorn;
And my old dad, as I’ve heard say,
Was a famous merchant in capers gay;
NIX MY DOLLY, pals, fake away!”

“Capers” of course here refers to the mode of the old gentleman’s decease.

Niz-priz, a writ of nisi-prius.—*Legal*.

Nizzie, a fool, a coxcomb.—*Old Cant*, *vide Triumph of Wit*.

Nob, the head.—*Pugilistic*; “bob a NOB,” a shilling a head. *Ancient Cant*, NEB. NOB is an early English word, and is used in the romance of *Kynge Alinaunder* (thirteenth century) for a head; originally, no doubt, the same as *knob*.

Nob, a person of high position, a “swell,” a NOBLEMAN,—of which word it may be an abbreviation, or of NOBILIS. See [SNOB](#).

Nob. When the knave of trumps is held at the game of cribbage, the holder counts “one for his NOB.”

Nobba, nine. *Italian*, NOVE; *Spanish*, NOVA,—the *b* and *v* being interchangeable, as in *sabe* and *savvey*. Slang introduced by the “organ-grinders” from Italy.

Nobba saltee, ninepence. *Lingua Franca*, NOVE SOLDI.

Nobbing cheat, the gallows.—*Old Cant*.

Nobbing, collecting money; “what NOBBINGS?” *i.e.*, how much have you got or collected from the crowd? This term is much used by “buskers.”

[238]

Nobble, to cheat, to overreach; to discover. In the racing world, to “NOBBLE” a horse, is to “get at,” and lame or poison him.

Nobbler, a blow on the NOB, a finishing stroke; “that’s a NOBBLER for him,” *i.e.*, a settler.—*Pugilistic*.

Nobbler, a confederate of thimble-riggers and card-sharpers, who plays earnestly, as if a stranger to the “rig,” and thus draws unsuspecting persons into a game. The same as a “bonnet” or “bearer-up.” In the North of England, a low, cunning lawyer.

Nobby, or NOBBISH, fine or showy; NOBBILY, showily. See [SNOB](#) for derivation.

No flies, an emphatic addition made to an assertion for the purpose of giving it weight. It really means “no error” or “no mistake.” Both of them popular; as, “A jolly fine girl, and NO FLIES!”

No-fly, artful, designing. Term much used among printers, who shorten it to “N.F.”

Noli-me-tangere, the Scotch fiddle, or other contagious disease.

Non-com, a non-commissioned officer in the army.

No odds, no matter, of no consequence.—*Latimer's Sermon before Edward VI.*

Nooning, an interval for rest and refreshment, taken at midday by travellers in hot countries.

Norfolk-Howards, bugs; a person named Ephraim Bug some few years back advertised, that for the future he would call himself by the more aristocratic appellation of NORFOLK HOWARD.

North, cunning. The inhabitants of Yorkshire and the Northern counties are supposed, like the canny Scots, to get the better of other people in dealing; hence the phrase, "He's too far NORTH for me," *i.e.*, too cunning for me to deal with.

North country compliment, to give or offer anything that is not wanted by either giver or receiver is to pass a NORTH COUNTRY COMPLIMENT.

Norwicher, more than one's share; said of a person who leaves less than half the contents of a tankard for his companion. In what way the term originated, or why Norwich was selected before any other city is not known. Most likely from the slanders which the inhabitants of one town are always inventing about their neighbours.

Nose, a thief who turns informer; a paid spy; generally called a policeman's NOSE; "on the NOSE," on the look-out.

Nose, to give information to the police, to turn approver.

Nose, "to pay through the NOSE," to pay an extravagant price.

Nose-bag, a visitor at a watering-place, or house of refreshment, who carries his own victuals. Term applied by waiters.

Nose 'em, or FOGUS, tobacco. NOSE 'EM is but a contraction of the [rhyming slang](#), which *see*.

Nose-ender, a straight blow delivered full on the nasal promontory.

[239]

Nose in the manger, TO PUT ONE'S, to sit down to eat. To "put on the nose-bag" is to eat hurriedly, or to eat while continuing at work.

Nose out of joint, TO PUT ONE'S; to supplant, supersede, or mortify a person by excelling him.

Noser, a hard blow, leading to a bloody or contused nose.—*Pugilistic.*

Notional, imaginative, full of ideas. Used in America to express a wife's imaginations with regard to her husband's doings.

Nouse, comprehension, perception.—*Old*, apparently from the *Greek*, νοῦς. *Gaelic* and *Irish*, NOS, knowledge, perception.

Nowhere, horses not placed in a race—that are neither first, second, nor third—are said to be NOWHERE, especially when this lack of position happens to favourites.

Number of his mess, when a man dies in the army or navy, he is said to "lose the NUMBER OF HIS MESS."

Nurse, a curious term applied to competition in omnibuses. Two omnibuses are placed on the road to NURSE, or take care of, each opposition "bus," one before, the other behind. Of course the central or NURSED bus has very little chance, unless it happens to be a favourite with the public. Recent legislation and tramways have done much to do away with NURSING. NURSE also means to cheat or swindle; trustees are sometimes said to NURSE property, *i.e.*, gradually eat it up themselves.

Nut, the head, in pugilistic slang. Used as an exclamation at a fight, it means to strike on the head. In tossing it is a direction to hide the head; to be "off one's NUT," to be crazed or idiotic.

Nut-cut, roguish, mischievous. A good-natured term of reproach.—*Anglo-Indian.*

Nuts, to be NUTS on anything or person is to be pleased with or fond of it or him; a self-satisfied man is said to be NUTS on himself. NUTTED, taken in by a man who professed to be NUTS on you.

Nux, the "plant," or object in view. "Stoll up to the NUX?" "Do you fully comprehend what is wanted?"—*North Country Cant.*

Oaf, a lumbering, awkward fellow.

Oak, the outer door of college rooms; to “sport one’s OAK,” to be “not at home” to visitors. See [SPORT](#).—*University*.

Oar, “to put in an OAR,” to interfere.

“I put my OAR in no man’s boat.”—*Thackeray*.

Oat, an atom. Probable corruption of iota, or perhaps from the small size of an oat. “I never got an OAT of it,” I never received the smallest portion.

Oat-stealer, an ostler.

Obfuscated, intoxicated.

Obliquitous, oblivious of distinction between right and wrong.—*American*.

Obstropolous, Cockney corruption of obstreperous.

Ochre, money, generally applied to gold, for a very obvious reason.

O’clock, “like ONE O’CLOCK,” a favourite comparison with the lower orders, implying briskness; otherwise “like winkin’.” “To know what’s o’clock” is to be wide-awake, sharp, and experienced.

Odd man out, a street or public-house game at tossing. The number of players is three or more. Each tosses up a coin, and if two come down head, and one comes tail, or *vice versâ*, the ODD MAN loses or wins, as may have been agreed upon. Frequently used to victimize a “flat.” If all be alike, then the toss goes for nothing, and the coppers are again “skied.” It is easy for two men to arrange matters beforehand at this game, and so swindle a third.

Odd man, a man who trains in company with a boat’s crew, so that in the event of any one falling ill the seat will be fairly occupied.

Odds, a phrase equivalent to “consequence;” “what’s the ODDS?” *i.e.*, what is the expected result? “It’s no ODDS,” *i.e.*, of no consequence. ODDS, in sporting phraseology, refers to the proportions or differences of a bet. One bookmaker will lay ODDS of “six to one” against such a horse winning; whilst another, more speculative, or in the receipt of a first-rate “tip” (information about the horse in question) will lay “eight,” or even “ten to one.”

Od rot it (*Colman’s Broad Grins*), DRAT IT, OD’S BLOOD, and all other exclamations commencing with OD, are nothing but softened or suppressed oaths. OD is a corruption of GOD, and DRAT of ROT.

Off and on, vacillating; “an OFF AND ON kind of a chap,” one who is always undecided.

Off at the head, crazy.—*Oxfordshire*.

Off one’s chump. To be crazy is to be OFF ONE’S CHUMP; this is varied by the word CHUMPY. A mild kind of lunatic is also said to be “off his head,” which means of course exactly the same as the first phrase.

Off one’s feed. To be unable to eat is to be OFF ONE’S FEED. Originally stable slang.

Off the horn, a term used in reference to very hard steak, which is fancifully said to be OFF THE HORN.

Office, “to give the OFFICE,” to give a hint dishonestly to a confederate, thereby enabling him to win a game or bet, the profits being shared. Also in sporting phraseology to give any information worth having.

Offish, distant, not familiar. Corruption of STAND-OFFISH.

Ogle, to look, or reconnoitre.

Ogles, eyes.—*Old Cant. French*, œIL.

Oil of palms, OF PALM OIL, money.

Ointment, medical student slang for butter.

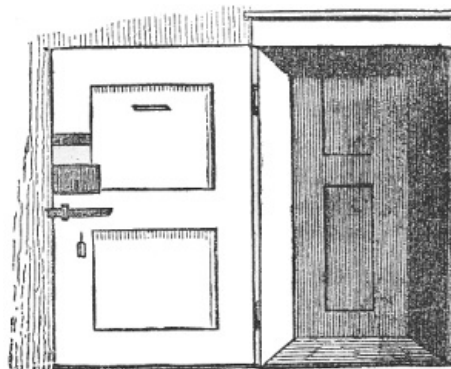
O. K., a matter to be O. K. (OLL KORRECT, *i.e.*, all correct), must be on the “square,” and perfectly in order. This is an Americanism, and is derived from the initials O. K., said to have been marked on a document by an official to signify that all was right and proper.

Old boots, a simile as general in its application as it is irrelevant. “Like OLD BOOTS” means like anything. “As cheeky as OLD BOOTS;” “As quick as OLD BOOTS,” seem a little more reasonable, new boots being somewhat unfavourable to speedy locomotion.

Old dog, a knowing blade, an experienced person. Butler uses the phrase, *Hudibras*, part ii. canto iii. 208, where it was said of Sidrophel, “And was OLD DOG at physiology.” An Irish proverb says, “OLD DOG for hard road,” meaning that it requires an experienced person to execute a difficult undertaking.

Old gentleman, the devil. Also a card almost imperceptibly longer than the rest of the pack, used by sharpers for the purpose of cheating.

Old gooseberry (see [GOOSEBERRY](#)), OLD HARRY (*Old Hairy*), OLD SCRATCH, all synonyms for the devil.



A “Sporting Door,” or “Oak.”

Old gown, smuggled tea.

Old horse, salt junk, or beef.—*Sea*.

Old hoss, a term of endearment, originally an Americanism, but now in common use here among friends.

Old Lady in Threadneedle Street, the Bank of England.

Old man, in American merchant ships, the master. The phrase is becoming common in English ships.

Old salt, a thorough sailor.

Old Tom, extra strong gin; sometimes termed CAT'S WATER. Various reasons are given for the use of the words OLD TOM. The distillers have the sign of a tom cat on their illuminated placards. The origin of the phrase is, however, in the fact that the managing clerk of a once celebrated "gin-spinning" firm, who was known as OLD TOM, used to keep a special bottle of extra good stuff with which to regale customers when they settled their accounts. To get a drink of OLD TOM'S was then a great favour. Gradually the title became popular as representing very good strong gin.

Oliver, the moon; "OLIVER don't widdle," *i.e.*, the moon does not shine. *Nearly obsolete*.

Ollapod, a country apothecary. From George Coleman's comedy of *The Poor Gentleman*.

Omee, a master or landlord; "the OMEE of the carsey's a nark on the pitch," the master of the house will not let us perform. *Italian*, UOMO, a man; "UOMO DELLA CASA," the master of the house. *Latin*, HOMO.—*Lingua Franca*.

Omnium gatherum, an indiscriminate collection of articles; a numerous and by no means select assemblage.

[242]

On, "to be ON," in public-house or vulgar parlance, is synonymous with getting "tight" or tipsy; "it's St. Monday with him, I see he's ON again," *i.e.*, drunk as usual, or on the road to it. "I'm ON" also expresses a person's acceptance of an offered bet. To GET ON a horse or a man is to make bets on it or him. "Try it ON," a defiant challenge to a person.

On the fly, getting one's living by thieving or other illegitimate means; the phrase is applied to men the same as "on the loose" is to women. ON THE FLY also means on the drink.

On the loose, obtaining a living by prostitution; in reality, on the streets. The term is applied to females only, excepting in the case of "sprees," when men carousing are sometimes said to be ON THE LOOSE.

On the nose, on the watch or look-out. See [NOSE](#).

On the shelf, transported. With old maids it has another and very different meaning.

On the tiles, out all night "on the spree," or carousing,—in allusion to the London cats on their amatory excursions. See [CATERWAULING](#).

One-er, that which stands for ONE, a blow that requires no repeating. In *The Old Curiosity Shop*, the "Marchioness" tells Dick Swiveller that "her missus is a ONE-ER"—there a variation of "stunner."

One in ten, a parson. In allusion to the tithing system.

Onion, a watch-seal.

O. P. Publishers' reply to an inquiry for a book or paper that is OUT OF PRINT.

Open the ball, to commence anything.

Oracle, "to work the ORACLE," to plan, manœuvre, to succeed by a wily stratagem.

Orate, an Americanism, which means, to speak in public, or make an oration.

Organ-grinder, an itinerant who is supposed to "GRIND" music out of a barrel-organ.

Originator, an inventor of plans for the formation of joint-stock companies. The originator submits his schemes to the promoter, who accepts or rejects them.

Otter, eightpence. *Italian*, OTTO, eight.—*Lingua Franca*.

Ottomy, a thin man, a skeleton, a dwarf. Vulgar pronunciation of ANATOMY. Shakspeare has ATOMY.

Out, a dram glass. These glasses are two-OUT (half-quartern), three-OUT, and four-OUT. An *habitué* of a gin-shop, desirous of treating a brace of friends, calls for "a quartern of gin and three OUTS," by which he means three glasses which will exactly contain the quartern. Really, the word glasses is understood. The man actually means, and one or more three-OUT glasses.

Out, in round games, where several play, and there can be but one loser, the winners in succession STAND OUT, while the others PLAY OFF.

[243]

Out and out, prime, excellent, of the first quality; beyond measure. OUT-AND-OUTER, one who is of an OUT-AND-OUT description, "up" to anything.

An ancient MS. has this couplet, which shows the antiquity of the phrase:—

"The Kyng was good alle aboute,
And she was wycked OUTE AND OUTE."

Outcry, an auction.—*Anglo-Indian*.

Outing, a day's holiday. The Oxford and Cambridge boatrace, the Derby, and other events of a like character, are each said to be simply excuses to the Cockneys for a day's OUTING.

Out of collar, out of place,—in allusion to servants. When in place, the term is IN COLLAR. Most likely from "head in the COLLAR," said of horses when hard at work.

Out on the loose, "on the spree," in search of adventures. See [ON THE LOOSE](#).

Out on the pickaroon. PICARONE is Spanish for a thief, but this phrase does not necessarily mean anything dishonest, but is often used to mean readiness for anything in the way of excitement. It also means to be in search of anything profitable, without much care as to honesty or otherwise.

Outsider, a person who does not habitually bet, or is not admitted to the "ring," a duffer or good-for-nothing fellow. Also, a horse whose name does not appear among the "favourites."—*Sporting*.

Over! OR OVER THE LEFT, *i.e.*, the left shoulder—a common exclamation of disbelief in what is being narrated,—sometimes implying that the results of a proposed plan will be OVER THE LEFT, *i.e.*, in the wrong direction, loss instead of gain.

Over, generally used in connexion with come, as, "He came it rather strong OVER me," *i.e.*, tried to intimidate or compel me. The same phrase would also be used to imply that an excess of flattery or praise was being employed for a similar purpose, but that the adulation was being "laid on a little too thick" to be considered genuine. Also used thus sometimes: "You mustn't come Shakspeare OVER me," *i.e.*, "you mustn't assume an air of immeasurable literary superiority OVER me." "You mustn't come Rothschild OVER me," &c.

Over, in cricket, four balls delivered from one end to another. After an OVER has been bowled, the fielders, wicket-keepers, &c., change ends, and the bowling goes on from the recent batting wicket. A MAIDEN-OVER is an OVER from which no runs are obtained. Four balls is the regulation number to an OVER in all important matches; but little clubs and practice elevens suit their own convenience.

Overs, the odd money remaining after the daily accounts are made up at a banking-house,—usually divided amongst the clerks. See [MENAVELINGS](#) and [SHORTS](#).

Owned, a slang expression used by the ultra-Evangelicals when a popular preacher makes many converts. The converts themselves are called his "seals."

P. P., an expression much in use among racing men, which means play or pay, *i.e.*, either go on with the arrangement or forfeit the money. The following is a law of the turf on the subject:—

The following races shall be considered “play or pay”:—The Derby and Oaks at Epsom, the St. Leger at Doncaster, the Two Thousand Guineas, the One Thousand Guineas, the Cesarewitch and Cambridgeshire, at Newmarket, the Ascot, Goodwood, and Doncaster Cups, and all handicaps above 200 sovs. value with two forfeits, the minor of which shall not be less than 5 sovs.; and the Committees of Tattersall’s, and of the Subscription Room at Newmarket, will take no cognisance of any disputes respecting “play or pay” bets on any other races, or of any bets made upon handicap races before the weights are published.

This is the exact law on the subject, but as a rule all bets on horse-racing are considered P. P. unless otherwise arranged. In all matches, though, whether turf, pedestrian, aquatic, or otherwise, a run is given for the money in ordinary betting transactions.

P’s and q’s, particular points, precise behaviour; “mind your P’s and Q’s,” be very careful. Originating, according to some, from the similarity of P’s and Q’s in the hornbook alphabet, and therefore the warning of an old dame to her pupils, or, according to others, of a French dancing-master to his pupils, to mind their *pieds* (feet) and *queues* (wigs) when bowing.

Pack, to go away; “now, then, *PACK* off there,” *i.e.*, be off, don’t stop here any longer.—*Old*. “Make speede to flee, be *PACKING* awaie.”—*Baret’s Alvearie*, 1580. Contraction of “*PACK* up and be off.” Sometimes the term “sent *PACKING*” is used to indicate a sudden discharge, as of a servant or mistress.

Packets, hoaxing lies. Sometimes used as an exclamation of incredulity.—*North*.

Pad, “to stand *PAD*,” to beg with a small piece of paper pinned on the breast, inscribed, “I am starving.”

Pad, the highway; also a tramp or itinerant musician.

Pad the hoof, to walk; “*PADDING THE HOOF*, on the high toby,” tramping or walking on the high road.

“Trudge, plod away o’ the *HOOF*.”—*Merry Wives*, i. 3.

Padding, the light articles in the monthly magazines, of which the serial stories are the main attraction. Publishers of magazines seem to think that if they get a serial story from a popular novelist they can pack any amount of rubbish into the remaining pages. This is not so in America, as magazines like the *Atlantic Monthly* and the *Overland Monthly* show.

Padding-ken, or *CRIB*, tramps’ and boys’ lodging-house.

Paddle, to go or run away.—*American*.

Paddy, *PAT*, or *PADDY WHACK*, an Irishman. A nickname of *PATRICK*.

“I’m *PADDY WHACK*, from Ballyhack,
Not long ago turn’d soldier;
In storm and sack, in front attack,
None other can be boulder.”—*Irish Song*.

Paddy’s goose, the sign of the White Swan, a noted flash public-house in the east of London, supposed to be Paddy’s idea of a *GOOSE*.

Paddy’s land, “ould Ireland.”

Padre, a clergyman. From the Portuguese.

Pal, a partner, acquaintance, friend, an accomplice. *Gipsy*, a brother.

Palampo, a quilt or bed-cover. Probably from *PALANPORE*, a town in India, renowned for its manufacture of chintz counterpanes.—*Anglo-Indian*.

Palaver, to ask, or talk—deceitfully or otherwise, as occasion requires; “*PALAV*ER to his nibs for a shant of bivvy,” ask the master for a pot of beer. *NANTEE PALAV*ER (pronounced *PERLARVER*), cease talking. In this sense used by tramps. Derived from the Portuguese.

Pall, to stop; “*PALL* that,” spoken authoritatively, means, cease what you are doing. From *PALL*, a small instrument which is used to stop the windlass or capstan at sea. When a man says, “I am *PALLED*,” he means he cannot or dare not say any more. A sailor, on receiving any extraordinary intelligence, will say, “You *PALL* me,” *i.e.*, you confound me. Most likely from the order frequently given on board ship, “Ease and *PALL*.”

Palm, to impose upon. “You can’t *PALM* that off upon me,” is said when an intending purchaser is suspicious of the quality of the article offered.

Palm oil, or *PALM SOAP*, money; also, a bribe.

Palmer, a swindler who used to visit shops under the pretence of collecting harp halfpence. To induce shopkeepers to search for them, he offered thirteence for one shilling’s-worth, when many persons were silly enough to empty a large quantity of copper on their counters. The *PALMER*, a proficient with his fingers, generally contrived to conceal some before he left the shop.

Palming, robbing shops by pairs—one thief bargaining with apparent intent to purchase, whilst

the other watches his opportunity to steal. The following anecdote will give an idea of their *modus operandi*. A man once entered a “ready-made” boot and shoe shop, and desired to be shown a pair of boots—his companion staying outside and amusing himself by looking in at the window. The one who required to be fresh shod was apparently of a humble and deferential turn, for he placed his hat on the floor directly he stepped into the shop. Boot after boot was tried on until at last a fit was obtained, when in rushed a man, snatched up the customer’s hat left near the door, and ran down the street as fast as his legs could carry him. Away went the customer after his hat, and Crispin, standing at the door, clapped his hands, and shouted, “Go it, you’ll catch him!”—little thinking that it was a concerted trick, and that neither his boots nor the customer would ever return. Instances of this kind of work frequently occur. PALMING sometimes refers to secreting money or rings in the hand, as well as to bribing. PALMING is also the generic term for all that kind of conjuring which depends on manual dexterity, and which is totally distinct from the mechanical-contrivance department.

[246]

Pam, the knave of clubs at the game of loo; or, in street phraseology, while the “Judicious Bottleholder” was alive, Lord Palmerston.

Pannikin, a small pan.

Pannum, food, bread.—*Lingua Franca*, PANNEN; *Latin*, PANIS; *Ancient Cant*, YANNAM.

Pannum-bound, said of a pauper or prisoner when his food is stopped. PANNUM-STRUCK, very hungry, starving.

Panny, a house—public or otherwise; “flash PANNY,” a public-house used by thieves; PANNY-MEN, housebreakers. PANNY, in thieves’ cant, also signifies a burglary.

Pantalettes, the drawers worn in America by little girls.

Pantile, a hat. The term PANTILE is properly applied to the mould into which the sugar is poured which is afterwards known as “loaf sugar.” Thus, PANTILE, from whence comes the phrase, “a sugar-loaf hat,” originally signified a tall, conical hat, in shape similar to that usually represented as the head-gear of a bandit. From PANTILE the more modern slang term TILE has been derived. Halliwell gives PANTILE SHOP, a meeting-house, from the steeple-crowned or PANTILE hats of its frequenters. PANTILE also means a flat cake with jam on it, given to boys at boarding-schools instead of pudding.

Pantiler, a Dissenting preacher. Probably from the practice of the Quakers, and many Dissenters, of not removing their hats in a place of worship; or from the sugar-loaf hats originally worn by Puritans. Another derivation is from the earthen tiles, technically PANTILES (tiles hollowed in the middle, as distinguished from “pintiles,” the older sort, which are flat, smaller, and pinned or nailed to the rafters), with which meeting-houses of Dissenters are usually covered; hence the meeting-house came to be called a PANTILE, and its frequenters PANTILERS.

Pants, American term for trousers. Here used to represent the long drawers worn underneath.

Panupetaston, a loose overcoat with wide sleeves, now out of fashion.—*Oxford University*.

Paper-maker, a rag-gatherer, or gutter-raker—similar to the chiffonnier of Paris. Also, a man who tramps through the country, and collects rags on the pretence that he is an agent to a paper mill.

Paper-Worker, a wandering vendor of street literature; one who sells ballads, dying speeches, and confessions, sometimes termed a “running stationer.”

Parachute, a parasol.

Paradise, French slang for the gallery of a theatre, “up amongst the [GODS](#),” which *see*.

[247]

Parish lantern, the moon.

Parish prig, OF PARISH BULL, a parson.—*Thieves’ cant*.

Parney, rain; “dowry of PARNEY,” a quantity of rain. *Anglo-Indian* slang from the *Hindoo*, PANI, water; *Gipsy*, PANE. Old Indian officers always call brandy-and-water “brandy PAWNEE.”

Parson, a signpost. Common term in the north, where they say that the PARSON points, but does not lead. This is given, as the lawyers say, “without prejudice.”

Parson Trulliber, a rude, vulgar, country clergyman, devoted to agricultural pursuits; the race is most probably now extinct. From the pig-feeding and pig-headed parson in *Joseph Andrews*.

Parson’s nose, the hind part of a goose—a savoury mouthful. Sometimes called the POPE’S NOSE.

Part, to pay, restore, or give up; “he’s a right un, he is; I know’d he’d PART,” *i.e.*, he is a liberal (or punctual) person, and pays his debts, or bestows gratuities. The term is in general use in sporting circles, and is very commonly employed when speaking of the settlement of bets after a race. It is probably derived from the very common reference to stingy people, who are described as not liking to PART with their money.

Parter, a free, liberal person. Sometimes called a “good PARTER.” Any one who looks twice at his money, or who doesn’t pay it at all, is called a “bad PARTER.”

Party, a person—term in very general use, similar in application to the German pronoun, MAN, a person, people; “where’s the PARTY as ‘ad a’ orter be lookin’ after this ‘ere ‘oss?” policeman’s inquiry of the wrong cabman; “old PARTY,” an elderly person. The term is said to have arisen in our

old justice courts, where, to save "his worship" and the clerk of the court any trouble in exercising their memories with the names of the different plaintiffs, defendants, and witnesses, the word *PARTY* was generally employed. Dean Alford remarked:—

"The word *PARTY* for a man is especially offensive. Strange to say, the use is not altogether modern. It occurs in the English version of the Apocryphal book of Tobit, vi. 7. 'If an evil spirit trouble any, one must make a smoke thereof before the man or the woman, and the *PARTY* shall be no more vexed.'"

In Shakspeare we find the term:—

"*Stephano*. How now shall this be compassed? Canst thou bring me to the *PARTY*?"—*Tempest*, iii. 2.

This is not the only instance of the word being used by the immortal bard. "I once heard," said the Dean just quoted, "a venerable dignitary pointed out by a railway porter as an old *PARTY* in a shovel." The last word is the vulgar term applied to the peculiar hat worn by clerical dignitaries.

Pash, to strike; now corrupted to **BASH**, which *see*.—*Shakspeare*.

Paste, to beat, to thrash vigorously.

Pasteboard, a visiting card; "to **PASTEBOARD** a person," to drop a card at an absent person's house.

Paste-horn, the nose. Shoemakers nickname any shopmate with a large nose "old *PASTE-HORN*," from the shape of the horn in which they keep their paste. [248]

Pasty, a bookbinder.

Patch. This old English term of reproach, long obsolete in polite language, may yet occasionally be heard in sentences like these:—"Why, he's not a *PATCH* upon him," *i.e.*, he is not to be compared with him; "one's not a *PATCH* on the other," &c. Shakspeare uses the word in the sense of a paltry fellow:—

"What a pied ninny's this? thou scurvy *PATCH*!"

In old English *PATCH* meant a fool, a wearer of patched clothes of motley.

Patent coats, the first coat, with the pockets inside the skirt, were so termed.

Patter, a speech or discourse, a pompous street oration, a judge's summing up, a trial. Ancient word for muttering. Probably from the *Latin*, *PATERNOSTER*, or Lord's Prayer. This was said, before the Reformation, in a "low voice" by the priest, until he came to "and lead us not into temptation," to which the choir responded, "but deliver us from evil." In the reformed Prayer Book this was altered, and the Lord's Prayer directed to be said "with a *loud voice*." Dr. Pusey takes this view of the derivation in his *Letter to the Bishop of London*, p. 78, 1851. Scott uses the word twice, in *Ivanhoe* and the *Bride of Lammermoor*.

Patter, to talk. *PATTER FLASH*, to speak the language of thieves, talk cant.

Patteran, a gipsy trail, made by throwing down a handful of grass occasionally, especially where they have turned off from the main road.

Patter-crib, a flash house.

Patterer, one of a race now nearly defunct, who cried last dying speeches, &c., in the streets. The term is also applied to those who help off their wares by long harangues in the public thoroughfares. These men, to use their own term, "are the aristocracy of the street sellers," and despise the costermongers for their ignorance, boasting that they live by their intellect, which, as they do not live wonderfully well, is no particularly wise boast.

Pattern, a common vulgar phrase for "patent."

Paul Pry, an inquisitive person. From the well-known comedy.

Paw, the hand. *PAW-CASES*, gloves. Boots are in some parts of Ireland called "gloves for the feet."

Pay, to beat a person, or "serve him out." Originally a nautical term, meaning to stop the seams of a vessel with pitch (*French*, *POIX*); "here's the d---l to *PAY*, and no pitch hot," said when any catastrophe occurs which there is no means of averting; "to *PAY* over face and eyes, as the cat did the monkey;" "to *PAY* through the nose," to give a ridiculous price,—an expressive phrase of which no one seems to know the origin. Shakspeare uses *PAY* in the sense of to beat or thrash. [249]

Pay, to deliver. "*PAY* that letter to Mr. So-and-so" is a very common direction to a Chinese servant.—*Anglo-Chinese*.

Pay-away, "go on with your story, or discourse." From the nautical phrase *PAY-AWAY*, meaning to allow a rope to run out of a vessel. When the hearer considers the story quite long enough, he, carrying out the same metaphor, exclaims "hold on."

Peach, an informer against omnibus conductors and drivers, one especially hired by the proprietors to count passengers and stoppages. The term is in frequent use amongst omnibus-men. This is about the only instance known of the verb being used as a substantive.

Peach, to inform against or betray. Webster states that the word "impeach" is now mostly used, and that *PEACH* is confined principally to the conversation of thieves and the lower orders. The word was originally "impeach," though it was never until lately used in the same way as its abridgment.

Peacock horse, amongst undertakers, is one with a showy tail and mane, which holds its head up well. **PEACOCKY** refers to an objectionable high action among racehorses.

Peaking, remnants of cloth. Term amongst drapers and cloth warehousemen.

Peaky, sickly, delicate.

Pec, a term used by the Eton boys for money, an abbreviation, of course, of the *Latin* **PECUNIA**.

Peck, food; "PECK and boose," meat and drink.—*Lincolnshire. Ancient Cant*, **PEK**, meat.

Peck, to eat voraciously. A hearty eater is generally called "a rare **PECKER**." Originally **PECK** was to eat delicately, "but we have changed all that now."

Peck-alley, the throat.

Pecker, "keep your **PECKER** up," *i.e.*, don't get down in the mouth,—literally, keep your beak or head well up, "never say die!"

Peckham, a facetious usage of the name of this district, implying a dinner; "all holiday at **PECKHAM**," *i.e.*, nothing to eat.

Peckish, hungry. *Old Cant*, **PECKIDGE**, meat.

Peel, to strip, or disrobe.—*Sporting*.

Peeler, a policeman; so called from Sir Robert Peel (*see* **BOBBY**); properly applied to the Irish Constabulary rather than the Metropolitan Police, the former force having been established by Sir Robert Peel.

Peepers, eyes; "painted **PEEPERS**," eyes bruised or blackened from a blow.—*Pugilistic*.

Peery, suspicious, or inquisitive.

Peg, brandy and soda-water. A **PEG** by which to pull oneself up again. Also, a shilling.—*Scotch*.

Peg, "to **PEG** away," to strike, run, or drive away; "**PEG** a hack," to drive a cab; "to take him down a **PEG** or two," to check an arrogant or conceited person,—possibly derived from the use of **PEG** tankards. *See* **PIN**.

[250]

Peg, to drink frequently; generally used in reference to devotees of "S. and B."

Peggery, people who constantly stimulate themselves by means of brandy and soda-water.

Pegtops, the loose trousers in fashion some years back, small at the ankle and swelling upwards, in imitation of the Zouave costume.

Penang-lawyer, a long cane, sometimes carried by a footman. **PENANG-LAWYERS** are also bludgeons which are carried by all classes in Singapore.

Pencil-fever, a supposititious disease among racehorses, the preliminary symptoms of which show that an animal has been pretty considerably "milked." **PENCIL-FEVER** sets in when, despite the efforts of the "marketees," a horse can no longer be kept at a short price in the lists, through his actual condition being discovered, and when every layer of odds is anxious to write his name down. This disorder is also called "milk-fever," "market-fever," and other suggestive names.

Penny-a-liner, a contributor of local news, accidents, fires, and scandals to a newspaper; a man not regularly "on the paper;" one who is popularly believed to be paid for each contribution at the rate of a penny a line, and whose interest is, therefore, that his articles should be stuffed with fine words and long sentences. This wonderful person, to whom so much is daily attributed, is now generally called a **LINER**.

Penny dreadfuls, an expressive term for those penny publications which depend more upon sensationalism than upon merit, artistic or literary, for success.

Penny gaff, a shop turned into a temporary theatre (admission one penny), at which dancing and singing take place every night. Sometimes rude pictures of the performers are arranged outside to give the front a gaudy and attractive look, and at night-time coloured lamps and transparencies are displayed to draw an audience. Zest is given to these entertainments by the fact that now and again the police make raids upon the houses, and carry off both actors and spectators. These places are also called "dukeys," for no reason that can be discovered. *See* **GAFF**.

Penny starver, a penny roll. *See* **BUSTER**.

Pen'orth, value for money; as, "I'll have my **PEN'ORTH**,"—given irrespective of the actual amount.

Pensioner, a man of the most degraded condition who lives off the miserable earnings of a prostitute. There is an unmentionable prefix to the word **PENSIONER**. *See* **PONCE**.

Pepper, to thrash, or strike.—*Pugilistic*, but used by Shakspeare.—*Eastern Counties*.

Pepper-boxes, the buildings of the Royal Academy and National Gallery in Trafalgar Square. The name was first given by a wag, in allusion to the cupolas erected by Wilkins, the architect, upon the roof, which, from their form and awkward appearance, at a distance suggest to the stranger the fact of their being enlarged **PEPPER-BOXES**. *See* **BOILERS**.

[251]

Perch, or **ROOST**, a resting-place; "I'm off to **PERCH**," *i.e.*, I am going to bed.

"Nor yet a single perch, for which my lucky stars to thank,
Except the *perch* I've taken on this damp rheumatic bank."

Perform, to carry out a design, generally a dishonest one. To "PERFORM on a flat" is to cozen a fool.

Perkin, beer. Dandy or affected shortening of the widely-known firm, Barclay and Perkins.

Perpendicular, a lunch taken standing-up at a tavern bar. It is usual to call it lunch, often as the PERPENDICULAR may take the place of dinner.

Persuaders, spurs.

Pesky, an intensitive expression, implying annoyance; as, "A PESKY, troublesome fellow." Corruption of PESTILENT; or, *Irish*, PEASGACH, rough, rugged. PESKY has now become more American than English. *Pesky Ike* is the name of a popular American drama.

Peter, a partridge.—*Poacher's term.*

Peter, a bundle, or valise. Also, a cash-box.

Peter, to run short, or give out.—*American.*

Peter Funk, an American term for a spurious auction or "knock-out."

Peter Grievous, a miserable, melancholy fellow; a croaker.

Petticoat, a woman.

Pewter, money, like "tin," used generally to signify silver; also a tankard. "Let me have my beer in the PEWTER," is a common request to waiters, made by "City" men, and others who affect habits of rude health. The pots for which rowing men contend are often called PEWTERS.

Philadelphia-lawyer, a Transatlantic limb of the law considered to be the very acme of acuteness. Sailors relate many stories of his artful abilities, none, however, short enough to find a place here. The phrase, "Enough to puzzle a PHILADELPHIA-LAWYER," means, enough to puzzle the sharpest man in the world.

Philander, to ramble on incoherently; to write discursively and weakly.

Philip, a policeman. The word is loudly given as a signal that the police are approaching.

Philiper, a thief's accomplice, one who stands by and looks out for the police while the others commit a robbery, and who calls out "Philip!" when any one approaches.

Philistine, a policeman. The German students call all townspeople not of their body "Philister," as ours say "cads." The departing student says, mournfully, in one of the Burschenlieder—

"Muss selber nun PHILISTER sein!"

i.e., "I must now myself PHILISTINE be!" Also, a man who is of a set opposed to one's own. Society is supposed to regard all outside its bounds as belonging to the PHILISTINE world. Bohemians regard all cleanly, orderly people who conform to conventionality as PHILISTINES.

Physog, or PHIZ, the face. Swift uses the latter word. Corruption of PHYSIOGNOMY.

Picaroon, a pirate or buccaneer originally; now an ordinary thief.

Piccadilly butchers, a satirical name applied by the crowd to the regiment of Horse Guards, known as the "Royal Blues," from their savage onslaught upon the crowd on the occasion of the arrest of Sir Francis Burdett at his house in Piccadilly, by order of the Speaker of the House of Commons. See [CHEESEMONGERS](#).

Piccadilly weepers, long carefully combed-out whiskers of the Dundreary fashion.

Pick, "to PICK oneself up," to recover after a beating or illness, sometimes varied to "PICK up one's crumbs;" "to PICK a man up," "to do," or cheat him.

Pickaninny, a young child is thus styled by the West Indian negroes. The word is now completely naturalized among sailors and water-side people in England.

Pickers, the hands.—*Shakspeare.*

Pickle, a miserable or comical position; "he is in a sad PICKLE," said of any one who has fallen into the gutter, or got besmeared. "A PICKLE herring," a comical fellow, a merry-andrew.—*Old*. Also, a mischievous boy; "what a PICKLE he is, to be sure!" Derived from his always getting into a PICKLE, or mess.

Pickles! gammon; also a jeering and insulting exclamation.

Pick-me-up, a revivifying drink taken after a debauch; a tonic.

Piece, a contemptuous term for a woman; a strumpet.—*Shakspeare*. Not always objectionable nowadays. A "barber's clerk" does not object to hear his sweetheart or wife called "a nice PIECE;" and gentlemen of the counter-jumping fraternity describe their "young ladies" as "nice PIECES of goods."

Pieman. In tossing, the man who cries is called the PIEMAN. In the old days when the itinerant PIEMAN'S duty was to toss or sell, and his call was, "Hot pies, toss or buy, toss or buy," he was always supposed to be entitled to the cry, the intending eater "skying the copper." An active and efficient police have, however, improved tossing—so far, at all events, as PIEMEN and poor people

are concerned—off the face of the earth, and gaming of all descriptions is now a luxury confined to the rich.

Pig, a mass of metal,—so called from its being poured in a fluid state from a [sow](#), which *see*.—*Workman's term*.

Pig, a policeman; an informer. The word is now almost exclusively applied by London thieves to a plain-clothes man, or a “nose.”

[253]

Pig, a pressman in a printing office. *See* [DONKEY](#).

Pig, or SOW'S BABY, a sixpence.

Pig, to live in a crowded, filthy manner. The lower orders of Irish are said to PIG together. A suggestive, if not elegant, expression.

Pig and Tinder-box, the vulgar rendering of the well-known tavern sign, “Elephant and Castle.”

Pigeon, a gullible or soft person. The *French* cant, or *Argot*, has the word PIGEON, dupe—“PECHON, PESCHON DE RUBY, apprenti gueux, enfant (sans doute dérobé)”. The vagabonds and brigands of Spain also used the word in their *Germania*, or robbers' language, PALOMO (PIGEON), ignorant, simple. In the sporting world sharps and flats are often called “rooks and PIGEONS” respectively—sometimes “spiders and flies.”

Pigeon, business, simply the Chinese pronunciation of the English word.—*Anglo-Chinese*.

Pigeon-English, the English spoken by the natives of Canton and other parts of China.

Pigeon-flying, or BLUEY CRACKING, breaking into empty houses and stealing lead.

Pigeon's milk, an imaginary fluid for which boys and simpletons are frequently sent on the 1st of April.

Pig-headed, obstinate.

Pig's eye, the ace of diamonds in cards.

Pig's whisper, a low or inaudible whisper; also a short space of time, synonymous with “cockstride,” *i.e.*, cock's tread.

Pike, a turnpike; “to bilk a PIKE,” to cheat the keeper of the toll-gate. Mr. Tony Weller makes many amusing remarks on PIKES and PIKE-keepers. Since the first edition of this work was published, PIKES and PIKE-keepers have departed from amongst us, so far as London and its immediate vicinity are concerned.

Pike, to run, to be off with speed.

Pike it, is said as a hasty and contemptuous, if not angry, dismissal, “if you don't like it, take a short stick and PIKE it.” This is but a form of the attempts at rhyming smartness common in London.

“Joe quickly his sand had sold, sir,
And Bess got a basket of rags;
Then up to St. Giles's they roll'd, sir;
To every bunter Bess brags.
Then unto the gin-shop they PIKE IT,
And Bess was admitted, we hear;
For none of the crew dare but like it,
As Joey, her kiddy, was there,”

The Sand-man's Wedding, a Cantata.

“'Twas not our fault, dear Jack; we saw the watch going into the house the moment we came there, and we thought it proper to PIKE OFF.”—*The Prison Breaker*, a Farce.

Pikey, a tramp or gipsy. A PIKEY-cart is in various parts of the country one of those habitable vehicles suggestive of a wandering life. Possibly the term has reference to one who constantly uses the PIKE, or turnpike road.

[254]

Pile, a sum of money; generally the whole of a man's private means. A term originally peculiar to Californian miners, in reference to their accumulated dust and nuggets. American gamblers speak of “putting all the PILE on” when they fancy anything very much. “To go the whole PILE” runs level with our sporting phrase, “To go a raker.”

Pill, a doctor.—*Military*. PILL-DRIVER, a peddling apothecary.

Pill, to blackball a man at a club. Sometimes a man who is blackballed is described as having received too much medicine.

Pill-box, a doctor's carriage.

Pin, “to put in the PIN,” to refrain from drinking. From the ancient peg tankard, which was furnished with a row of PINS, or pegs, to regulate the amount which each person was to drink. Drunken people are often requested to “put in the PIN,” from some remote connexion between their unsteadiness and that of a carriage wheel which has lost its lynch-PIN. The popular cry, “Put in the PIN,” can have no connexion with the drinking PIN or peg now, whatever it may originally

have had. A MERRY PIN, a roysterer. See [PEG](#).

Pinch, to steal or cheat; also, to catch, or apprehend.

Pinchbeck, inferior, deteriorated. Anything pretending to more than its proper value is said to be PINCHBECK.

“Where, in these PINCHBECK days, can we hope to find the old agricultural virtue in all its purity?”—*Framley Parsonage*.

PINCHBECK was an inferior metal, compounded of copper and zinc, to resemble gold. It was very fashionable in the last century, and derived its name from a Mr. PINCHBECK, a well-known London tradesman, who manufactured watches, buckles, and other articles out of it. PINCHBECK first obtained his notoriety by the invention of an ingenious candle-snuffers, which the author of *The Heroic Epistle to Sir William Chambers* made the vehicle of a facetious Ode that went through eight editions. The title of this *jeu d'esprit* ran thus:—

“*Ode to Mr. Pinchbeck, upon his Newly-invented Candle-Snuffers, by MALCOLM M'GREGOR, Esq., 1776.*”

“Illustrious PINCHBECK! condescend,
Thou well-beloved, and best king's friend,
These lyric lines to view;
Oh, may they prompt thee, ere too late,
To snuff the candle of the State,
That burns a little blue!”

PINCHBECK published a poetical reply, and the two pamphlets were for a long time the talk of the town.

Pink, the acme of perfection. The scarlet garb worn in the hunting-field.

Pink, to stab, or pierce. In the days of rapier-wearing a professed duellist was said to be “a regular PINKER and driller.”

Pinnel, or PENNEL,—corruption of penal servitude. As, “four-year PINNEL.”

Pinner-up, a seller of old songs, pinned against a wall or framed canvas. Formerly many of these street salesmen carried on their little “paper trade” in London. There are but one or two now left.

[255]

Pins, legs.

Pipe, to follow or dog a person; to watch, to notice.

Pipe, to shed tears, or bewail; “PIPE one's eye.”—*Sea term*.

“He first began to eye his pipe.
And then to PIPE his eye.”—*Hood*.

Metaphor from the boatswain's pipe, which calls to duty.

Pipe, “to put one's PIPE out,” to traverse his plans, “to take a rise” out of him. When any one meets with a rebuff or a sharp answer, he is often told to “put that in his PIPE and smoke it,” *i.e.*, to digest it carefully.

Piper, a person employed by an omnibus proprietor to act as a spy on the conductor.

Piper, a broken-winded hack horse.

Pipkin, the stomach,—properly, an earthen round-bottomed pot—*Norwich*.

Pips, the marks, no matter of what suit, on playing cards. The ace is often called “single PIP.”

Pit, a breast-pocket.

Pitch, a fixed locality where a patterer can hold forth to a gaping multitude for at least some few minutes continuously; “to do a PITCH in the drag,” to perform in the street. An itinerant is said to “make a PITCH” whenever he attempts to do any business.

Pitch, to utter base coin. Smashers are known to themselves and their friends, the rest of the dangerous classes, as “snide PITCHERS.” The confederacy is divided into makers, buyers, holders, and pitchers. The maker probably never sees the actual passers of base money, the buyer being generally the intercommunicating medium. The holder is generally a man who carries the bulk of the “snides,” and waits about; while the pitcher, often a woman—indeed, more often than not—runs the actual risk.

Pitch, to go to bed for less than the ordinary period. Journeymen bakers, and others whose work is disjointed, call any short interval of sleep a PITCH. Probably from the action.

Pitch into, to fight; “PITCH INTO him, Bill,” *i.e.*, give him a thrashing.

Pitch the fork, to tell a pitiful tale.

Pitch the nob, [PRICK THE GARTER](#), which *see*.

Place, to name the first three horses in a race. This is the duty of the judge, who sees nothing of the race but the finish. Sometimes an official will place more than the first three, but this in no way interferes with the meaning of the word as generally received. To run “nowhere” is to be

unplaced.

Place, first, second, or third position in a race. Sometimes a PLACE is called a "situation" or a "shop."

Plant, a dodge, a preconcerted swindle; a position in the street to sell from. All bearings-up, bonnetings, and such like arrangements, are the results of preconcerted schemes or PLANTS. [256]

Plant, to mark a person out for plunder or robbery; to conceal or hide money, &c.—*Old Cant*. In the sense of conceal, there is a similar word in *Argot*, PLANQUER.

Plant, a hidden store of money or variables. To "spring a PLANT" is to unearth another person's hoard.

Platform, a standpoint in an argument, a statement of political or general opinion. "Home rule's my PLATFORM!" Originally *American*, but now general.

Play, to strike for higher wages, to be out of work.—*North*.

Plebs, a term used to stigmatize a tradesman's son at Westminster School. *Latin*, PLEBS, the vulgar.

Plough. To be PLOUGHED is to fail to pass an examination. About twenty years ago "pluck," the word then used, began to be superseded by PLOUGH. It is said to have arisen from a man who could not supply the examiner with any quotation from Scripture, until at last he blurted out, "And the ploughers ploughed on my back, and made long furrows."—*University*.

Ploughed, drunk.

Pluck, the heart, liver, and lungs of an animal,—all that is PLUCKED away in connexion with the windpipe, from the chest of a sheep or hog.

Pluck, to turn back at a University examination. The supposed origin of PLUCK is, that when, on degree day, the proctor, after having read the name of a candidate for a degree, walks down the hall and back, it is to give any creditor the opportunity of plucking his sleeve, and informing him of the candidate's being in debt.

Pluck, courage, valour, stoutness. *See following*.

Plucked un, a stout or brave fellow; "he's a rare PLUCKED UN," *i.e.*, he dares face anything.

During the Crimean War and the Indian Mutiny PLUCKY, signifying courageous, became a favourite term even among ladies; and the term British PLUCK will probably live—slangy as is its origin—as long as the language into which it has been adopted, for the history of the deeds with which it is associated can never die, while, indeed, a history remains to this country. The word met with great disfavour at first from the "genteel," but of course they followed when aristocracy deigned to use it.

Plum, £100,000, usually applied to the dowry of a rich heiress, to a legacy, or to a sum made in business or by a lucky speculation.

Plum-cash, prime cost.—*Anglo-Chinese*.

Plummy, round, sleek, jolly, or fat; excellent, very good, first-rate.

Plumper, a single vote at an election, not a "split ticket."

Plunder, a common word in the horse trade to express profit. Also an American term for baggage, luggage. In Lower Canada the French packmen call luggage "butin." [257]

Plunger, a heavy cavalry-man.—*Military slang*.

Plutocracy, the wealthy classes. The Manchester merchants are often termed a millocracy, and words of a similar character are mobocracy and moneyocracy.

Pocket, to put up with. A man who does not resent an affront is said to POCKET it.

Pocket-pistol, a dram-flask.

Podgy, drunk; dumpy, short, and fat.

Pogram, a Dissenter, a fanatic, formalist, or humbug. So called from a well-known enthusiast of this name.

Poke, a bag, or sack; "to buy a pig in a POKE," to purchase anything without seeing it. POKE was originally a pocket. Shakspeare says—

"And then he pulled a dial from his POKE."

Poke. "Come, none of your POKING fun at me," *i.e.*, you must not laugh at me.

Poker. "By the holy POKER and the tumbling Tom!" an Irish oath.

Pokers, OR SILVER POKERS, the Bedels of the Vice-Chancellor, who carry silver maces, and accompany him through the streets. They are also officers of his court.—*University*.

"Around, around, all, all around.
On seats with velvet lined,
Sat Heads of Houses in a row,
And Deans and College Dons below,

Rime of the New-made Baccalere, 1841.

Poky, confined or cramped; "that corner is POKY and narrow." Housewives describe a small uncomfortable room as "a POKY hole." *Saxon*, POKE, a sack.

Policeman, a fly—more especially the kind known as "blue bottle." Also, among the dangerous classes, a man who is unworthy of confidence, a sneak or mean fellow.

Polish off, to finish off anything quickly—a dinner, for instance; also to finish off an adversary. —*Pugilistic.*

Poll, at Cambridge, the "ordinary degree" candidates for the B.A. Examination, who do not aspire to the "Honours" list. From the *Greek*, οἱ πολλοί, "the many."

Poll, to beat or distance, as in a race; to utterly vanquish in competition. Term much used by printers.

Poll, a female of unsteady character; "POLLED up," means living with a woman in a state of unmarried impropriety. Also, if a costermonger sees one of his friends walking with a strange woman, he will say to him on the earliest opportunity, "I saw yer when yer was POLLED up."

Poll, OF POLLING, one thief robbing another of part of the booty. In use in ancient times, *vide Hall's Union, 1548.*

Poll parrot, a talkative, gossiping woman. A term much used about Ratcliff Highway.

Polony, Cockney shortening and vulgar pronunciation of Bologna (sausage). The sausages which are sold under the name of POLONIES have, however, no nearer connexion with Bologna sausages than that of the word's derivation. [258]

Pompadours, the Fifty-sixth Regiment of Foot in the British army.

Ponce, a degraded man who lives upon a woman's prostitution. Low-class East-end thieves even will "draw the line" at PONCES, and object to their presence in the boozing-kens.

Pond, OF HERRING-POND, the sea; so called by those who were sent across it at the national expense.

Ponge, OF PONGELOW, beer, half-and-half; the term is also used as a verb, as in the Cockney phrase, "let's PONGELOW, shall we?"

Pony, twenty-five pounds.—*Sporting.*

Poona, a sovereign. Corruption of "pound;" or from the *Lingua Franca.*

Pop, to pawn or pledge; "to POP up the spout," to pledge at the pawnbroker's,—an allusion to the spout up which the brokers send the ticketed articles until such times as they shall be redeemed. The spout runs from the ground-floor to the wareroom at the top of the house. Ginger-beer is also known as POP.

Pop the question, to make an offer of marriage.

Pope's-eye, a peculiar little part in a leg of mutton, much esteemed by lovers of that joint.

Pope's nose, the extremity of the rump of a roast fowl, sometimes devilled as a dainty for epicures. Also known as "the parson's NOSE."

Pops, pocket-pistols.

Porterhouse steak, an American term for a steak which contains a small bone. In the States, tender-loin steaks are much eaten. These are from what we call the undercut of the sirloin.

Portrait, a sovereign. Modification of "Queen's picture."

Posa, a treasurer. A corruption of "purser," the name given to the treasurer in the large Anglo-Chinese mercantile establishments.—*Anglo-Chinese.*

Posh, a halfpenny, or trifling coin. Also a generic term for money.

Post, to pay down; "POST the pony" signifies to place the stakes played for on the table.

Post-horn, the nose. See [PASTE-HORN](#).

Post-mortem, at Cambridge, the second examination which men who have been "plucked" have to undergo.—*University.*

Posted up, well acquainted with the subject in question, "up to the mark,"—metaphor drawn from the counting-house.

Pot, a favourite in the betting for a race. Probably so called because it is usual to say that a heavily-backed horse carries "a POT of money." When a favourite is beaten the POT is said to be upset.

Pot, a sixpence, *i.e.*, the price of a POT or quart of half-and-half. A half-crown, in medical student slang, is a FIVE-POT piece.

Pot, TO GO TO POT, to die; from the classic custom of putting the ashes of the dead in an urn; also, to be ruined or broken up,—often applied to tradesmen who fail in business. "Go to POT!" *i.e.*, go and hang yourself, shut up and be quiet.—*L'Estrange.* "To put the POT on," to overcharge or exaggerate. "To go to POT" most probably means to go out of all shape, as metal in the melting- [259]

pot.

Pot, to finish; "don't POT me," term used at billiards, when a player holes his adversary's ball—generally considered shabby play. This word was much used by our soldiers in the Crimea in reference to shots from a hole or ambush. These were called POT-SHOTS. The term is still used to denote a shot taken sitting or at ease.

Pot-boiler, a picture hurriedly painted for the purpose of "keeping the POT BOILING."—*Artistic slang*.

Pot-faker, a hawker of crockery and general earthenware.

Pot-hat, a low-crowned hat, as distinguished from the soft wideawake and the stove-pipe.

Pot-hunter, a sportsman who shoots anything he comes across, having more regard to filling his bag than to the rules which regulate the sport. A man who fires at anything, regardless of the rules which govern true sportsmen.

Pot-hunter, a man who gives his time up to rowing or punting, or any sort of match in order to win the "pewters" which are given as prizes.—*University*. The term is now much used in aquatic and athletic circles; and is applied, in a derogatory sense, to men of good quality who enter themselves in small races they are almost sure to win, and thus deprive the juniors of small trophies which should be above the attention of champions, though valuable to beginners. Also an unwelcome guest, who manages to be just in time for dinner.

Pot-luck, just as it comes; to take POT-LUCK, *i.e.*, one's chance of a dinner, or of what there is for dinner. A hearty term, used to signify that whatever the pot contains the visitor is welcome to.

Pot-valiant, courageous through application to the bottle. Possessed of Dutch courage.

Pot-walloper, an elector in certain boroughs before the passing of the first Reform Bill, whose qualification consisted in being a housekeeper,—to establish which it was only necessary to boil a pot within the limits of the borough, by the aid of any temporary erection. This implied that he was able to provide for himself, and not necessitated to apply for parochial relief. Honiton, Tregoney, Ilchester, Old Sarum, &c., had this privilege before the passing of the first Reform Bill. Also, a scullion.

Potato-trap, the mouth.—Originally a Hibernicism.

Potheen, whisky made in an illicit still, once a favourite drink in Ireland, now almost unattainable. People resident in England who read of the charms of POTHEEN would be rather astonished if they were to taste it. It is real "fire-water" flavoured with peat-smoke.

Potted, OR POTTED OUT, cabined, confined, figurative of crammed into a garden-pot. Also applied to burial,—a horticultural allusion.

Potter, to meddle without much judgment. Application various. A gentleman may describe himself as "POTTERING about in his garden," and think the phrase pleasant. The gardener, who has to do the work all over again, may, however, use the word in quite a different sense.

[260]

Power, a large quantity; "a POWER of money."—*Irish* at first, but now general.

Pow-wow, a conference. Originally an Indian term.

Prad, a horse. PRAD-NAPPING was horse-stealing. Both these terms are old cant.

Prancer, a horse.—*Ancient Cant*. In modern slang an officer of cavalry.

Praties, potatoes.—*Irish*.

Precious, used, in a slang sense, like very or exceeding; "a PRECIOUS little of that," *i.e.*, a very little indeed; a PRECIOUS humbug, rascal, &c., *i.e.*, an eminent one.

Pretty horsebreakers, a phrase adopted some years back, in deference to common squeamishness, to denote the *demi-monde*, who dress so well and ride so daintily. Really, pretty heartbreakers.

Prial, a corruption of PAIR-ROYAL, a term at the game of cribbage, meaning three cards of a similar description. Often used metaphorically for three persons or things of a kind. DOUBLE-PRIAL, a corruption of DOUBLE PAIR-ROYAL, means four cards, persons, or things of a similar description.

Prick the garter, OR PITCH THE NOB, a gambling and cheating game common at fairs, and generally practised by thimble-riggers. It consists of a GARTER OR a piece of list doubled, and then folded up tight. The bet is made upon your asserting that you can, with a pin, PRICK the point at which the garter is doubled. The garter is then unfolded, and nine times out of ten you will find that you have been deceived, and that one of the false folds has been pricked. The owner of the GARTER holds the ends tightly with one hand, and there is little doubt that he can make the "flat" lose and the "bonnet" win at pleasure. This was, doubtless, originally a gipsy game, and we are informed by Brand that it was much practised by the gipsies in the time of Shakspeare. In those days it was termed PRICKING AT THE BELT, OR FAST AND LOOSE.

Prig, a thief. Used by Addison in the sense of a coxcomb.—*Ancient Cant*, probably from the *Saxon*, PRICC-AN, to filch, &c.—*Shakspeare*. PRIG, to steal or rob. PRIGGING, thieving. In Scotland the term PRIG is used in a different sense from what it is in England. In Glasgow, or at Aberdeen, "to PRIG a salmon" would be to cheapen it, or seek for an abatement in the price. A story is told of two Scotchmen, visitors to London, who got into sad trouble a few years ago by announcing their

intention of "PRIGGING a hat" which they had espied in a fashionable manufacturer's window, and which one of them thought he would like to possess.

Prig, a conceited, stuck-up, over-knowing person; one who appropriates or adopts a manner or costume not suited to him.

Priggish, conceited.

Primed, said of a person in that state of incipient intoxication that if he took more drink it would become evident. Also, crammed for an examination.

Pro, a professional.—*Theatrical*.

Pro, the proproctor, or second in command in the proctorial police. The two proctors generally appoint a certain number of proproctors each.—*Oxford University*.

Proctorized, TO BE, to be stopped by the Proctor, and told to call on him.—*University*.

Prog, meat, food, &c. Johnson calls it "a low word." He was fond of "prog," however.

Proof, the best ale at Magdalen College, Oxford.

Prop, a blow. AS, "a PROP on the nose,"—more street slang than pugilistic.

Prop, a scarf pin.

Prop-nailer, a man who "sneaks," or rather snatches, pins from gentlemen's scarves.

Proper, very, exceedingly, sometimes used ironically; "you are a PROPER nice fellow," meaning a great scamp. A "PROPER man" generally means a perfect man, as far as can be known.

Props, crutches.

Props, stage properties.—*Theatrical*.

Pros, a water-closet. Abbreviated form of πρὸς τινα τόπον. Some say, πρὸς του τόπον.—*Oxford University*.

Pross, to break in or instruct a stage-infatuated youth. Also, to sponge upon a comrade or stranger for drink. In this latter capacity the word is in connexion with prostitute, a PROSSER being considered a most degraded being, and the word being supposed by many to represent a man who lives on a woman's prostitution.

Psalm-smiter, a "Ranter," one who sings at a conventicle. See [BRISKET-BEATER](#).

Pub, OR PUBLIC, a public-house; "what PUB do you use?" *i.e.*, which inn or public-house do you frequent?

Public patterers, swell mobsmen who pretend to be Dissenting preachers, and harangue in the open air to attract a crowd for their confederates to rob.

Pucker, poor or bad temper, difficulty, *déshabillé*. PUCKER UP, to get in a bad temper.

Puckering, talking privately.

Puckerow, to seize, to take hold of. From the *Hindostanee*, PUCKERNA.—*Anglo-Indian*.

Pudding-snammer, one who robs a cook-shop.

Puff, to blow up, or swell with praise; declared by a writer in the *Weekly Register*, as far back as 1732, to be illegitimate.

"PUFF has become a cant word, signifying the applause set forth by writers, &c. to increase the reputation and sale of a book, and is an excellent stratagem to excite the curiosity of gentle readers."

Lord Bacon, however, used the word in a similar sense a century before. Sheridan also seems to have remembered the use of the word, *vide* Mr. PUFF.

Pug, a fighting man's idea of the contracted word to be produced from pugilist.

Pull, an advantage, or hold upon another; "I've the PULL over (or of) you," *i.e.*, you are in my power—perhaps an oblique allusion to the judicial sense. See the following.

Pull, to have one apprehended; "to be PULLED up," or more recently "to be PULLED" only, to be taken before a magistrate. The police are constantly "pulling" loitering, furiously driving, or drunken cabmen.

Pull, to drink; "come, take a PULL at it," *i.e.*, drink up.

Pull, to prevent a horse from winning, that is, so far as the rider's action is concerned.

Pullet, a young girl. Filly is an exchangeable term.

Pummel, to thrash,—from POMMEL.

Pump, to extract information by roundabout questioning.

Pundit, a person who assumes to be very grave and learned.—*Anglo-Indian*.

Punkah, a fan, usually a fan of very large size, worked with a string, and used to ventilate rooms.—*Anglo-Indian*.

Punt, to gamble; PUNTING-SHOP, a gambling-house. Common in ancient writers, but now disused.

The word seems confined to playing for "chicken stakes." PUNT means now in the sporting world to back horses for small stakes.

Punter, a small professional backer of horses.

Pup and ringer, *i.e.*, the "Dog and Bell," the sign of a flash public-house.

Purdah, a curtain.—*Anglo-Indian*.

Pure finders, street-collectors of dogs' dung.—*Humorous*.

Purl, to spill; PURLED is a hunting and steeplechasing term synonymous with "foaled," or "spilt" (thrown); "he'll get PURLED at the rails."

Purl, a mixture of hot ale and sugar, with wormwood infused in it, a favourite morning drink to produce an appetite; sometimes with gin and spice added:—

"Two penn'orth o' PURL—
Good 'early PURL,'
'Gin all the world
To put your hair into a curl,
When you feel yourself queer of a mornin'."

Purler, a heavy fall from a horse in the hunting or steeplechasing field.

Push, a robbery or swindle. "I'm in this PUSH," the notice given by one magsman to another that he means to "stand in."

Push, a crowd.—*Old Cant*.

Pussey-cats, corruption of Puseyites, a name constantly, but improperly, given to the Tractarian party in the Church, from the Oxford Regius Professor of Hebrew, who by no means approved of the Romanizing tendencies of some of its leaders. The name still sticks, however, to this day.

[263]

Put, a game at cards, once fashionable, but now played among thieves and costermongers only.

Put, an obsolete slang term representing the modern "bloke" or "cove." It was generally applied to elderly persons.

Put on, to promise another money or valuables in the event of an anticipated success. "You're ON a quid if Kaiser wins," might often have been heard before last St. Leger. Many hangers-on of the turf live almost entirely by what they are PUT ON, by bookmakers and backers for whom they do odd work.

Put that in your pipe and smoke it, said of a blow or repartee, and equivalent to take that and think over it, or digest it, or let it be a warning to you.

Put the pot on, to put too much money upon one horse.—*Sporting*.

Put up, to suggest, to incite, "he PUT me UP to it;" he prompted me to do it. PUT UP, to stop at an hotel or a tavern for entertainment.

Put up, to inspect or plan out with a view of robbery. To obtain full particulars with regard to a house and its occupants, so that danger shall be reduced to a minimum, and the chances of success enlarged.

Put upon, cheated, victimized, oppressed.

Putter up, a man who travels about for the purpose of obtaining information useful to professional burglars. A man of this description will assume many characters, sometimes ingratiating himself with the master of a house, sometimes with the servants, but all to one end, that of robbery. He rarely or never joins in the actual burglary, his work being simply to obtain full particulars as to how, when, and where, for which he receives his full share of the "swag."

Puttun, regiment.—*Anglo-Indian*.

Pyah, weak, useless, paltry. This word, much in use among sailors, is evidently derived from the Indian term PARIAH, signifying the lowest caste of Hindoos. Thus the Pariah dogs in India are termed PYAH dogs; and the Pariah descendants of the old Portuguese settlers are called PYAH Portuguese. Sailors term the natives of St. Helena—a wretched-looking set of individuals—PYAH Englishmen.

Pygostole, the least irreverent of names for the peculiar M. B. coats worn by Tractarian curates:

"It is true that the wicked make sport
Of our PYGOSTOLES, as we go by;
And one gownsman, in Trinity Court,
Went so far as to call me a 'Guy.'"

See [M.B.](#)

Pyjands, a kind of drawers or loose pantaloons.—*Anglo-Indian*.

Quad. See [QUOD](#).

Quaker, a lump of excrement.

Quality, gentry, the upper classes.

Quandary, described in the dictionaries as a "low word," may fittingly be given here. It illustrates, like "[hocus-pocus](#)," and other compound colloquialisms, the singular origin of slang expressions. QUANDARY, a dilemma, a doubt, a difficulty, is from the French, QU'EN DIRAI-JE? —*Skinner*.

Quartereen, a farthing.—*Gibraltar term. Italian*, QUATTRINO.

Quaver, a musician.

Quean, a strumpet. In Scotland, a lower-class woman. *Saxon*, CWEAN, a barren old cow.

Queen Bess, the Queen of Clubs,—perhaps because that queen, history says, was of a swarthy complexion.—*North Hants. See Gentleman's Magazine for 1791*, p. 141.

Queen's tobacco-pipe, the kiln in which all contraband tobacco seized by the Custom-house officers is burned.

Queer, an old cant word, once in continual use as a prefix, signifying base, roguish, or worthless,—the opposite of RUM, which signified good and genuine. QUEER, in all probability, is immediately derived from the cant language. It has been mooted that it came into use from a *quære* (?) being set before a man's name; but it is more than probable that it was brought into this country, by the gipsies, from Germany, where QUER signifies "cross" or "crooked." At all events it is believed to have been first used in England as a cant word.

Queer, "to QUEER a flat," to puzzle or confound a "gull," or silly fellow.

"Who in a row like Tom could lead the van,
Booze in the ken, or at the spellken hustle?
Who QUEER a flat," &c.—*Don Juan*, xi. 19.

Queer bail, worthless persons who for a consideration formerly stood bail for any one in court. Insolvent Jews generally performed this office, which gave rise to the term JEW-BAIL, otherwise STRAW BAIL.

Queer-bit-makers, coiners.

Queer cuffen, a justice of the peace, or magistrate,—a very ancient term, mentioned in the earliest slang dictionary. In this sense, as well as in that of the verb just given, the term is evidently derived from *quæro*, to inquire, to question. Quiz and *quis?* have also an undoubted connexion.

Queer-soft, bad notes.

Queer-street, "in QUEER STREET," in difficulty or in want.

Querier, a chimney-sweep who calls from house to house soliciting employment,—formerly termed [KNULLER](#), which see.

Qui-hi, an English resident at Calcutta.—*Anglo-Indian*.

Quick sticks, in a hurry, rapidly; "to cut QUICK STICKS," to start off hurriedly, or without more ado. See [CUT ONE'S STICK](#).

Quid, or THICK UN, a sovereign; "half a QUID," half a sovereign; QUIDS, money generally; "QUID for a QUOD," one good turn for another. The word is used by old French writers:—

"Des testamens qu'on dit le maistre
De mon fait n'aura QUID ne QUOD."

Grand testament de Villon.

Quid, a small piece of tobacco—one mouthful. *Quid est hoc?* asked one, tapping the swelled cheek of another; *Hoc est quid*, promptly replied the other, exhibiting at the same time a "chaw" of the weed. CUD is probably a corruption. Derivation, *O. F.*, or *Norman*, QUIDER, to ruminate.

Quid-nunc, an inquisitive person, always seeking for news. The words translated simply signify, "What now?"

Quiet, "on the QUIET," clandestinely, so as to avoid observation, "under the rose."

Quill-driver, a scrivener, a clerk,—satirical phrase similar to "steel bar driver," a tailor.

Quiller, a parasite, a person who sucks neatly through a quill. See [SUCK UP](#).

Quilt, to thrash, or beat.

Quisby, bankrupt, poverty-stricken. Amplification of [QUEER](#).

Quisi, roguish, low, obscene.—*Anglo-Chinese*.

Qui-tam, a solicitor. *He who, i.e.*, "he who, as much for himself as for the King," seeks a conviction, the penalty for which goes half to the informer and half to the Crown. The term would, therefore, with greater propriety, be applied to a spy than to a solicitor.

Quiz, a prying person, an odd fellow. Originally Oxford slang, but now general, and lately admitted into some dictionaries. See [QUEER CUFFEN](#).

Quiz, to pry, or joke; to hoax.

Quizzical, jocose, humorous.

Quizzing-glass, an eyeglass. This was applied to the old single eyeglass, which was not stuck in the eye, as now, but was held in the hand.

Quockerwodger, a wooden toy figure which, when pulled by a string, jerks its limbs about. The term is used in a slang sense, to signify a pseudo-politician, one whose strings of action are pulled by somebody else.

Quod, a prison, a lock-up; QUODDED, put in prison. QUOD is really a shortening of quadrangle; so to be QUODDED is to be within four walls. The expression is, however, seldom used now except to mean in prison. At Oxford, where it is spelt QUAD, the word has its original signification.

Quodger, a contraction, or corruption rather, of the *Latin* law phrase, QUO JURE? by what law? —*Legal*.

R. M. D., cash down, immediate payment. The initial letters of READY MONEY DOWN. Another version of this is P. Y. C. (pay your cash), often seen in the market quotations,—as, “Meat fetched 6s. 4d. a stone, P. Y. C., and 6s. 6d. for the account.”

Rabbit, when a person gets the worst of a bargain, he is said “to have bought the RABBIT.” From an old story about a man selling a cat to a foreigner for a rabbit.

[266]

Racket, a dodge, manœuvre, exhibition; a disturbance.

Rackety, wild or noisy.

Racks, the bones of a dead horse. Term used by horse-slaughterers.

Raclan, a married woman. Originally Gipsy, but now a term with English tramps.

Rafe, OR RALPH, a pawnbroker’s duplicate.—*Norwich*.

Raff, a dirty, dissipated fellow; RAFFISH, looking like a RAFF.

Rag, to divide or share; “let’s RAG IT,” or “GO RAGS,” *i.e.*, share it equally between us.—*Norwich*.

Rag, a bank-note.

Rag and Famish, the Army and Navy Club. From Ensign RAG and Captain FAMISH, imaginary characters, out of whom Leech some years back obtained much amusement.

Rag-shop, a bank.

Rag-splawger, a rich man.

Ragamuffin, an ill-clad vagabond, a tatterdemalion.

Rain napper, an umbrella.

Raise the wind, to obtain credit, or money,—generally by pawning or selling property, but not unusually by borrowing. Sometimes varied to WHISTLE UP THE BREEZE.

Raker, TO GO A, is, in racing parlance, to put more money than usual on a certain horse. “Going a RAKER” often leads to “coming a cropper.”

Ramp, to hustle, to rob with violence, to levy blackmail in a ferocious manner; to extort by means of threats. RAMPING is generally done in gangs.

Rampage, TO BE ON THE, on the drink, on the loose. Dickens, in *Great Expectations*, refers to Mrs. Jo as being on the RAMPAGE when she is worse tempered than usual.

Ramper, a ruffian of the most brutal description, who infests racecourses and similar places on welching expeditions during summer, and finds pleasure and profit in garrotte robberies during winter.

Ramshackle, queer, rickety, knocked about, as standing corn is after a high wind. Corrupted from RAM-SHATTER, or possibly from RANSACK.

Rancho, originally a Spanish-American word, signifying a hunting-lodge, or cattle-station, in a wood or desert far from the haunts of men. A hunting or fishing station in the Highlands or elsewhere. In Washington, with their accustomed ingenuity in corrupting words and meanings, the Americans use the appellation for a place of evil report. The word is generally pronounced RANCH NOW.

Randals-man. See [BILLY](#).

Randan, a boat impelled by three rowers, the midship man sculling, and the bowman and strokesman rowing with oars.

Random, three horses driven in line. See TANDEM, SUDDEN DEATH, [HARUM-SCARUM](#).

[267]

Randy, rampant, violent, warm.—*North*. RANDY-BEGGAR, a gipsy tinker.

Rank, to cheat. Modification of [RAMP](#).

Ranker, a commissioned officer in the army who has risen from the ranks. Usually employed in a disparaging sense. Purely military. Also, among street folk, a corruption of RANK DUFFER.

Ran-tan, “on the RAN-TAN,” drunk.

Rantipoll, a noisy rude girl, a madcap.

Rap, a halfpenny; frequently used generically for money, thus:—“I haven’t a RAP,” *i.e.*, I have no money whatever; “I don’t care a RAP,” &c. Originally a species of counterfeit coin used for small change in Ireland, against the use of which a proclamation was issued, 5th May, 1737. Small copper or base metal coins are still called RAPPEN in the Swiss cantons. Irish robbers were formerly termed RAPPAREES.

Rap, to utter rapidly and vehemently; “he RAPPED out a volley of oaths.”

Rapping, enormous; “a RAPPING big lie.”

Rapscallion, a low tattered wretch—not worth a [RAP](#).

Raree-show, a collection of curiosities.

Rat, a sneak, an informer, a turn-coat, one who changes his party for interest. The late Sir Robert Peel was called the RAT, OR THE TAMWORTH RATCATCHER, for altering his views on the Roman Catholic

question. From RATS deserting vessels about to sink. The term is often used amongst printers to denote one who works under price. Old cant for a clergyman.

Rat, TO SMELL A, to suspect something, to guess that there is something amiss.

Rather! a ridiculous street exclamation synonymous with yes; "Do you like fried chickens?" "RATHER!" "Are you going out of town?" "RATHER!" Very often pronounced "RAYTHER!"

Rattening, the punishment inflicted on non-unionists by Sheffield grinders, through the instrumentality of "Mary Ann." See Parliamentary Inquiry Report on the subject.

Rattlecap, an unsteady, volatile person. Generally applied to girls.

Rattler, a cab, coach, or cart.—*Old Cant.*

Rattletrap, the mouth. Anything shaky and mean, but pretentious and vulgar, is said to belong to the RATTLETRAP order of things.

Rattling, jolly, pleasant, well-appointed. "A RATTLING good spread" means an excellent repast, while a true friend is said to be a "RATTLING good fellow."

Raw, a tender point, or foible; "to touch a man upon the RAW," is to irritate one by alluding to, or joking him on, anything on which he is peculiarly susceptible or "thin-skinned." Originally stable slang.

"Liver and bacon, kidneys, ten pounds one!
He thinks me RAW. I think I'm rather DONE."

Phantom Barber.

[268]

Raw, uninitiated; a novice.—*Old.* Frequently JOHNNY RAW.

Reach me downs, OR HAND ME DOWNS, clothes bought at secondhand shops. From "REACH ME DOWN that, and let's see if it fits." In Houndsditch and other celebrated old clothes' marts, the goods are kept hanging on pegs so as to be well within view of intending buyers.

Reader, a pocket-book; "Touch him for his READER," *i.e.*, rob him of his pocket-book.

Ready, OR READY GILT (maybe GELT), money. Used by Arbuthnot—"Lord Strut was not very flush in READY."

Ready-reckoners, the Highland regiments of the British army.

Real jam, a sporting phrase, meaning anything exceptionally good. It is said to be REAL JAM for those who back a horse at a long price, when the animal wins, or comes to a short figure.

Recent incision, the busy thoroughfare on the Surrey side of the Thames, known to sober people as the New Cut. Even this latter name has now been changed—if indeed the place ever was so called properly. Although to the general public the street which runs from opposite Rowland Hill's Chapel to Westminster Bridge Road is known as the New Cut, its name to the Board of Works is Lower Marsh.

Redge, gold.

Red herring, a soldier. The terms are exchangeable, the fish being often called a "soldier."

Red lane, the throat.

Red liner, an officer of the Mendicity Society.

Red rag, the tongue.

Red un, a gold watch.

Redtape, official routine. A term which was much in vogue during the Crimean campaign, so famous for War Office blunderings.

Regulars, a thief's fair share of plunder.

Reliever, a coat worn in turn by any party of poor devils whose wardrobes are in pawn.

Relieving Officer, a significant term for a father.—*University.*

Renage, to revoke, a word used in Ireland at the game of five-card.

Rench, vulgar pronunciation of RINSE. "(W)RENCH your mouth out," said a fashionable dentist one day.

Re-raw, "on the RE-RAW," tipsy or drunk.

Resurrection pie, once a school but now a common phrase, used in reference to a pie supposed to be made of the scraps and leavings that have appeared before.

Ret, an abbreviation of the word REITERATION, used to denote the forme which, in a printing-office, backs or perfects paper already printed on one side.

Rhino, ready money.—*Old.*

"Some as I know,
Have parted with their ready RINO."

Rhinoceral, rich, wealthy, abounding in RHINO. At first sound it would seem as though it meant a man abounding in rhinoceroses.

Rib, a wife. Derivation, of course, Biblical.

Ribbon, gin, or other spirits. Modification of white satin.

Ribbons, the reins. "To handle the RIBBONS," to drive.

Ribroast, to beat till the ribs are sore.—*Old*; but still in use:—

"And he departs, not meanly boasting
Of his magnificent RIBROASTING."—*Hudibras*.

Rich, spicy; also used in the sense of "too much of a good thing;" "a RICH idea," one too absurd or unreasonable to be adopted.

Richard, a dictionary. See [DICK](#).

Ride, "to RIDE the high horse," or "RIDE roughshod over one," to be overbearing or oppressive; "to RIDE the black donkey," to be in an ill humour.

Rider, in a University examination, a problem or question appended to another, as directly arising from or dependent on it;—beginning to be generally used for any corollary or position which naturally arises from any previous statement or evidence.

Rider, a supplementary clause in a document.

Riff-raff, low, vulgar rabble.

Rig, or trick, "spree," or performance; "run a RIG," to play a trick.—See JOHN GILPIN. "RIG the market," in reality to play tricks with it,—a mercantile slang phrase often used in the newspapers.

Rigged, "well RIGGED," well dressed.—*Old Slang*, in use in 1736. See *Bailey's Dictionary*.—*Sea*.

Rigging, a process well known in connexion with sales by auction, by which articles are secured at prices considerably below their real value. See [KNOCK-OUTS](#). To RIG the market is to do similar business on a larger scale for the purpose of affecting the supplies, and thereby increasing the profits on an original purchase of the goods thus made scarce.

Right as ninepence, OR NICE AS NINEPENNY (possible corruption of NINE-PINS), quite right, exactly right, comfortable. See [NINEPENNY](#).

Right you are, a phrase implying entire acquiescence in what has been said or done. The expression is singularly frequent and general amongst the lower and middle classes of the metropolis.

Rights, "to have one to RIGHTS," to be even with him, to serve him out properly. "TO RIGHTS" is also an ejaculation signifying satisfaction of the highest order.

Rigmarole, a prolix story.

Rile, to offend, to render very cross, irritated, or vexed. Properly, to render liquor turbid.

Ring, to change; "RINGING castors," changing hats; "to RING the changes," in low life means to change bad money for good; in respectable society the phrase is sometimes employed to denote that the aggressor has been paid back in his own coin, as in practical joking, when the laugh is turned against the jester. The expression originally came from the belfry.

Ring, a generic term given to horse-racing and pugilism,—the latter was sometimes termed the PRIZE-RING. From the rings used for betting and fighting in, respectively.

Ring, formerly "to go through the RING," to take advantage of the Insolvency Act, or be "whitewashed." Now obsolete.

Ring, the open space in front of a racecourse stand, which is used for betting purposes. Betting men are nowadays known as members of the ring, especially if they are in the habit of attending race-meetings. RING, in America, is a combination of speculators whose object is to force the market for their own especial benefit without any regard to order or decency. We have similar arrangements here, but hitherto no one word has fairly described them.

Ringdropping, is a pursuit to which London "magsmen" and "street-muggers" are prone. A ring or other spurious article is supposed to be found just in front of a "soft-looking party," and he or she is tempted to buy it at less than half its supposed value.

Rip, a rake, "an old RIP," an old libertine, or a debauchee. Corruption of REPROBATE.

Rip, to go at a rare pace. This is an American term, and often means to burst up. "Let her RIP, I'm insured."

Ripper, a first-rate man or article.—*Provincial*.

Ripping, excellent, very good. Equivalent to "stunning."

Rise, "to take a RISE out of a person." A metaphor from fly-fishing, the silly fish RISING to be caught by an artificial fly; to mortify, outwit, or cheat him, by superior cunning.

"There is only one thing, unfortunately, of which Oxford men are economical, and that is, their University experience. They not only think it fair that Freshmen should go through their ordeal unaided, but many have a sweet satisfaction in their distresses, and even busy themselves in obtaining elevations, or, as it is vulgarly termed, in 'getting RISES out of them.'"—*Hints to Freshmen*, Oxford, 1843.

Rise, or raise, a Barney, to collect a mob; term used by patterers and "schwasse-box" (Punch and Judy) men.

Roarer, a broken-winded horse; or, in the more polite speech of the stable, "a high blower." ROARING, as applied to horses, is often termed "talking" by turf-men. It is often said delicately by sporting writers, when speaking of a broken-winded racehorse, that "he makes a noise."

Roaring trade, a very successful business.—*Shopkeepers' Slang*.

Roast, to expose a person to a running fire of jokes for the amusement and with the assistance of a whole company. A performance not indulged in by gentlemen. QUIZZING is done by a single person only.

Robin redbreast, the ancient Bow Street runner. So called from the colour of his waistcoat.

Rock-a-low, an overcoat. Corruption of the *French*, ROQUELAURE.

[271]

Rocked, "he's only HALF-ROCKED," *i.e.*, half-witted. See [HALF-ROCKED](#).

Rogue's yarn, a thread of red or blue worsted, worked into the ropes manufactured in the Government dockyards, to identify them if stolen. Also a blue thread worked into canvas, for the same purpose.

Roll of snow, a piece of linen, or bundle of underclothing.

Romany, a gipsy, or the gipsy language; the speech of the Roma or Zincali.—*Spanish Gipsy*. "Can you patter ROMANY?" *i.e.*, can you talk "black," or gipsy lingo?

Rook, a cheat, or tricky gambler; the opposite of "pigeon."

Rook, to cheat, to play "rook" to another's "pigeon."

Rook, a clergyman, not only from his black attire, but also, perhaps, from the old nursery favourite, the *History of Cock Robin*.

"I, says the ROOK,
With my little book,
I'll be the parson."

Rookery, a low neighbourhood inhabited by dirty Irish and thieves—as St. Giles's ROOKERY.—*Old*. In military slang that part of the barracks occupied by subalterns, often by no means a pattern of good order.

Rooky, rascally, rakish, scampish.

Roost, synonymous with [PERCH](#), which *see*.

Rooster, a cock, whether bantam, game, barndoor, or of any other kind. This is an Americanism which obtains full currency on the other side of the Atlantic, though its use would infer that hens do not roost. As the outcome of transpantine delicacy it must, however, be respected.

Rooter, anything good, or of a prime quality; "that is a ROOTER," *i.e.*, a first-rate one of the sort.

Rope, to lose a race of any kind purposely, to swindle one's backers or the public by means of a "cross" or pre-arranged race, in which the best man or best horse is made to ROPE, or run behind.

Roper, MISTRESS, "to marry MRS. ROPER" is to enlist in the Royal Marines.

Ropes, the ways of London lower life. "To know the ROPES," is to be conversant with the minutiae of metropolitan dodges, as regards both the streets and the sporting world.

Roping, the act of pulling or restraining a horse, by its rider, to prevent its winning a race—a trick not unfrequently practised on the turf. Also when a pedestrian or other athlete loses where he should have won, according to his backer's calculations, he is accused of ROPING.

Rose, "under the rose" (frequently used in its *Latin* form, *sub rosâ*), *i.e.*, under the obligation of silence and secrecy, of which the rose was anciently an emblem, perhaps, as Sir Thomas Browne remarks, from the closeness with which its petals are enfolded in the bud. The Rose of Venus was given, says the classic legend, to Harpocrates, the God of Silence, by Cupid, as a bribe to keep silent about the goddess's amours. It was commonly sculptured on the ceilings of banqueting rooms, as a sign that what was said in free conversation there was not afterwards to be divulged; and about 1526 was placed over the Roman confessionals as an emblem of secrecy. The White Rose was also an emblem of the Pretender, whose health, as king, his secret adherents used to drink "under the ROSE."

[272]

Rosin, beer or other drink given to musicians at a dancing party.

Rosin-the-bow, a fiddler. From a famous old song of that name.

Rot, nonsense, anything bad, disagreeable, or useless.

Rot-gut, bad, small beer. See [BUMCLINK](#). In America, cheap whisky.

Rough, bad; "ROUGH fish," bad or stinking fish.—*Billingsgate*.

Rough-it, to put up with chance entertainment, to take pot-luck and what accommodation "turns up," without sighing for better.

Roughs, coarse, or vulgar men. By many thought to be RUFF, corruption of RUFFIAN.

Rouleau, a packet of sovereigns.—*Gaming*.

Round, to tell tales, to [SPLIT](#), which *see*; "to ROUND on a man," to swear to him as being the person, &c. Synonymous with [BUFF](#), which *see*. Also to turn round upon and abuse or rate. Shakspeare has ROUNDING, whispering.

Round, "ROUND dealing," honest trading; "ROUND sum," a large sum. Synonymous also, in a slang sense, with [SQUARE](#), which *see*.

Round (in the language of the street), the beat or usual walk of a costermonger to sell his stock. A term used by street folk generally.

"Watchmen, sometimes they made their sallies,
And walk'd their ROUNDS through streets and allies."

Ned Ward's Vulgus Britannicus, 1710.

The word "beat" has, so far as our modern guardians are concerned, deposed "round."

Round robin, a petition, or paper of remonstrance, with the signatures written in a circle,—to prevent the first signer, or ringleader, from being discovered.

Round un, an unblushingly given and well-proportioned lie. Sometimes known as a "whacker."

Roundabout, a large swing with four compartments, each the size, and very much the shape, of the body of a cart, capable of seating six or eight boys and girls, erected in a high frame, and turned round by men at a windlass. Fairs and merry-makings generally abound with these swings. The frames take to pieces, and are carried in vans from fair to fair by miserable horses.

Roundem, a button.

Row, "the Row," *i.e.*, Paternoster Row. The notorious Holywell Street is now called by its denizens "Bookseller's Row."

Row, a noisy disturbance, tumult, or trouble. Originally Cambridge, now universal. Seventy years ago it was written ROUE, which would almost indicate a French origin, from *roué*, a profligate or disturber of the peace.—*Vide* George Parker's *Life's Painter*, 1789, p. 122. This is, however, very unlikely, as the derivation of the French word shows.

[273]

Rowdy, money. In America, a ruffian, a brawler, a "rough." Rowdyism is the state of being of New York roughs and loafers.

Rowdy-dow, low, vulgar "not the [CHEESE](#)," or thing.

Rub, a quarrel or impediment; "there's the RUB," *i.e.*, that is the difficulty.—*Shakspeare and L'Estrange*.

Rubbed out, dead,—a melancholy expression, of late frequently used in fashionable novels. RUBBED OUT is synonymous with [WIPED OUT](#), which *see*.

Rubber, a term at whist, &c., the best of three games.

Ruck, the undistinguished crowd; "to come in with the RUCK," to arrive at the winning-post among the thick of the unplaced horses.—*Racing term*.

Ruction, an Irish row. A faction fight.

Ruggy, fusty, frowsy.

Rule. "To run the RULE over," is, among thieves, to try all a person's pockets quietly, as done by themselves, or to search any one thoroughly, as at the police-station.

Rule the roast, to be at the head of affairs, to be "cock of the walk."

Rum, like its opposite, [QUEER](#), was formerly a much-used prefix, signifying fine, good, gallant, or valuable; perhaps in some way connected with ROME. Nowadays it means indifferent, bad, or questionable, and we often hear even persons in polite society use such a phrase as, "What a RUM fellow he is, to be sure," in speaking of a man of singular habits or appearance. The term, from its frequent use, long since claimed a place in our dictionaries; but, with the exception of Johnson, who says RUM, a cant word for a clergyman(!), no lexicographer has deigned to notice it.

"Thus RUMLY floor'd, the kind Acestes ran,
And pitying, raised from earth the game old man."

Virgil's Æneid, book v., Translation by Thomas Moore.

Rum cull, the manager of a theatre, generally the master of a travelling troop.

Rumbler, a four-wheeled cab. Not so common as [BOUNDER](#). *See* [GROWLER](#).

Rumbowling, anything inferior or adulterated.—*Sea*.

Rumbumptious, haughty, pugilistic.

Rumbustious, OR RUMBUSTICAL, pompous, haughty, boisterous, careless of the comfort of others.

Rumgumption, or GUMPTION, knowledge, capacity, capability,—hence, RUMGUMPTIOUS, knowing, wide-awake, forward, positive, pert, blunt.

Rum-mizzler, Seven Dials cant for a person who is clever at making his escape, or getting out of a difficulty.

Rump, to turn the back upon any one. A still more decided “cut direct” than the “cold shoulder.”

Rumpus, a noise, disturbance, a “row.”

[274]

Rum-slim, OR RUM SLING, rum punch.

Rumy, a good woman or girl.—*Gipsy Cant*. In the Continental *Gipsy*, ROMI, a woman, a wife, is the feminine of RO, a man.

Run (good or bad), the success or duration of a piece’s performance.—*Theatrical*.

Run, to comprehend, &c.; “I don’t RUN to it,” *i.e.*, I can’t do it, I don’t understand; also not money enough, as, “I should like to, but it wont RUN to it.”

Run, “to get the RUN upon any person,” to have the upper hand, or be able to laugh at him. RUN down, to abuse or backbite any one; to “lord it,” or “drive over” him. Originally stable slang.

Run for the money, TO HAVE A, to have a start given in with a bet. As 20 to 1 against Doncaster, with a RUN given. See [P.P.](#) To have a RUN FOR ONE’S MONEY is also to have a good determined struggle for anything.

Run-in, to lock up in the station-house. The police are very fond of threatening to RUN-IN any person to whom they may take exception, and, as recent revelations have shown, are by no means averse from putting their threats into execution.

Running patterer, a street seller who runs or moves briskly along, calling aloud his wares.

Running stationer, a hawker of books, ballads, dying speeches, and newspapers. Persons of this class formerly used to run with newspapers, blowing a horn, when they were sometimes termed FLYING STATIONERS. Nowadays, in the event of any political or social disturbance, the miserable relics of these peripatetic newsmen bawl the heads of the telegram or information in quiet London thoroughfares, to the disturbance of the residents. The race is very nearly extinct, the evening-paper boys having run them to earth.

Rush, to come upon suddenly, generally for the purpose of borrowing. To “give a man the RUSH,” is to sponge upon him all day, and then borrow money at the finish, or pursue some such similar mode of procedure.

Rush, “doing it on the RUSH,” running away, or making off.

Rust, “to nab the RUST,” to take offence. RUSTY, cross, ill-tempered, morose; not able to go through life like a person of easy and “polished” manners.

Rustication, the sending of an offender from the University for one term or more, thus hindering his qualifying for a degree.

Rusty guts, a blunt, rough, old fellow. Corruption of RUSTICUS.

Rye. Gipsy term for a young man. In the same parlance “rawnie” is a young woman.

Sack, to "get the SACK," to be discharged by an employer. Varied in the North of England to "get the BAG." In London it is sometimes spoken of as "getting the EMPTY." It is common now to speak of "getting the BULLET," an evident play on the word discharge.

Sad dog, a merry fellow, a joker, a "gay" or "fast" man.

[275]

Saddle, an additional charge made by the manager to a performer upon his benefit night.—*Theatrical*.

Safe, trusty, worthy of confidence. A SAFE card is a man who knows "what's o'clock." A SAFE man among betters is one who is sure to fulfil his engagements.

Safe un, a horse which will not run, or will not try, in a race. The bookmakers in London have the information sent them by the touts in their pay, and lay against the SAFE UN, who is also called a "stiff un," a "dead un," or a "shtumer," as often as they can, irrespective of the state of their books. Sometimes a SAFE UN will win, owing to the owner or trainer having, for various reasons, altered his mind. Such a result then goes to prove the "glorious uncertainty of the turf," a phrase in very common use among sporting writers whenever a favourite is beaten, or whenever a horse runs slow one day and loses, and very fast the next day and wins.

Sails, nickname for the sail-maker on board ship.

St. Martin's lace, imitation gold lace; stage tinsel.

Saint Monday, a holiday most religiously observed by journeymen shoemakers and other mechanics. An Irishman observed that this saint's anniversary happened every week. In some parts of the country Monday is termed Cobblers' Sunday.

Sal, a salary.—*Theatrical*.

Salaam, a compliment or salutation.—*Anglo-Indian*.

Salamander, a street acrobat and juggler who eats fire.

Saloop, SALEP, OR SALOP, a greasy-looking beverage, formerly sold on stalls at early morning, prepared from a powder made of the root of the *Orchis mascula*, or Red-handed Orchis. Coffee-stands have superseded SALOOP stalls; but, in addition to other writers, Charles Lamb, in one of his papers, has left some account of this drinkable, which he says was of all preparations the most grateful to the stomachs of young chimney-sweeps. The present generation has no knowledge of this drink, except that derived from books. The word "slops"—as applied to weak, warm drink—is very likely derived from the Cockney pronunciation of SALOOP.

Salt, a sailor.

Salt, "it's rather too SALT," said of an extravagant hotel bill. Also, a sort of black mail or tribute levied on visitors or travellers by the Eton boys, at their triennial festival called the "Montem," by ancient custom and privileges. It is now abolished. A periodical published at Eton many years ago for circulation amongst the boys was called "*The SALT-box*." When a person about to sell a business connexion makes fictitious entries in the books of accounts, to simulate that a much more profitable trade is carried on than there really is, he is said to SALT the books—SALTING and COOKING being somewhat similar operations. At the gold diggings of Australia, miners sometimes SALT an unproductive hole by sprinkling a few grains of gold-dust over it, and thus obtain a good price from a "green hand." Unpromising speculations are frequently thus SALTED to entrap the unwary, the wildest ideas being rendered palatable *cum grano salis*. And though old birds are not readily caught by chaff, the efficacy of SALT in bird-catching, so far as the young are concerned, is proverbial.

[276]

Salt-box, the condemned cell in Newgate.

Salt junk, navy salt beef. See [OLD HORSE](#).

Saltee, a penny. Pence, &c., are thus reckoned:—

ONEY SALTEE, a penny, from the <i>Italian</i> ,	UNO SOLDI.
DOOE SALTEE, twopence	DUE SOLDI.
TRAY SALTEE, threepence	TRE SOLDI.
QUARTERER SALTEE, fourpence	QUATTRO SOLDI.
CHINKER SALTEE, fivepence	CINQUE SOLDI.
SAY SALTEE, sixpence	SEI SOLDI.
SAY ONEY SALTEE, OR SETTER SALTEE, sevenpence	SETTE SOLDI.
SAY DOOE SALTEE, OR OTTER SALTEE, eightpence	OTTO SOLDI.
SAY TRAY SALTEE, OR NOBBA SALTEE, ninepence	NOVE SOLDI.
SAY QUARTERER SALTEE, OR DACHA SALTEE, tenpence	DIECI SOLDI.
SAY CHINKER SALTEE, OR DACHA ONEY SALTEE, elevenpence	DIECI UNO SOLDI, &c.
ONEY BEONG, one shilling.	
A BEONG SAY SALTEE, one shilling and sixpence.	

✱ This curious list of numerals in use among the London street folk is, strange as it may seem, derived from the *Lingua Franca*, or bastard *Italian*, of the Mediterranean seaports, of which other examples may be found in the pages of this Dictionary. SALTEE, the cant term used by the costermongers and others for a penny, is no other than the *Italian*, SOLDI (plural, SOLDI), and the numerals—as may be seen by the *Italian* equivalents—are a tolerably close imitation of the originals. After the number six, a curious variation occurs, which is peculiar to the London cant, seven being reckoned as SAY ONEY, *six-one*, SAY DOOE, *six-two* = 8, and so on. DACHA is perhaps from the Greek δέκα, ten, which, in the Constantinopolitan *Lingua Franca*, is likely enough to have been substituted for the *Italian*. MADZA is clearly the *Italian* MEZZA. The origin of BEONG has not yet been discovered, unless it be the *French* BIEN, the application of which to a shilling is not so evident; but amongst costermongers and other street folk it is quite immaterial what foreign tongue contributes to their secret language. Providing the terms are unknown to the police and the public generally, they care not a rush whether the polite French, the gay Spaniards, or the cloudy Germans help to swell their vocabulary. The numbers of low foreigners, however, dragging out a miserable existence in our crowded neighbourhoods, organ grinders and image sellers, foreign seamen from the vessels in the river, and our own connexion with Malta and the Ionian Isles, may explain, to a certain extent, the phenomenon of these Southern phrases in the mouths of costers and tramps. Professor Ascoli, in his *Studj Critici*, absurdly enough derives these words from the ancient commercial importance of Italian settlers in England, when they gave a name to Lombard Street!

[277]

Salve, praise, flattery, chaff.

Sam, *i.e.*, DICKY-SAM, a native of Liverpool.

Sam, to “stand SAM,” to pay for refreshment or drink, to stand paymaster for anything. An Americanism, originating in the letters U.S. on the knapsacks of the United States’ soldiers, which letters were jocularly said to be the initials of Uncle Sam (the Government), who pays for all. In use in this country as early as 1827.

Sammy, a stupid fellow.

Sampan, a small boat.—*Anglo-Chinese*.

Samshoo, a fiery, noxious spirit, distilled from rice. Spirits generally.—*Anglo-Chinese*.

Samson and Abel, a group of wrestlers in the centre of Brasenose quadrangle. Some said it represented Samson killing a Philistine; others Cain killing Abel. So the matter was compromised as above.—*Oxford University*.

Sandwich, a human advertising medium, placed between two boards strapped, one on his breast the other on his shoulders. A “toad in the hole” is the term applied to the same individual when his person is confined by a four-sided box. A gentleman with a lady on each arm is sometimes called a SANDWICH. The French phrase for this kind of SANDWICH, *l’âne à deux pannières*, is expressive.

Sanguinary James, a raw sheep’s-head. See BLOODY JEMMY.

Sank work, tailors’ phrase for soldiers’ clothes. Perhaps from the *Norman* SANC, blood,—in allusion either to the soldier’s calling, or the colour of his coat.

Sap, OR SAPSCULL, a poor green simpleton, with no heart for work.

Sappy, soft, foolish, namby-pamby, milk-and-watery. “It’s such a SAPPY book.”

Satin, gin; “a yard of SATIN,” a glass of gin. Term used by females on make-believe errands, when the real object of their departure from home is to replenish the private bottle. With servants the words “tape” and “ribbon” are more common, the purchase of these feminine requirements being the general excuse for asking to “run out for a little while.” See WHITE SATIN.

Saucebox, a pert young person. In low life it also signifies the mouth.

Save, to give part of one bet for part of another. A. and B. have backed different horses, and they agree that in the event of either one winning he shall give the other, say, £5. This is called “SAVING a fiver,” and generally is done when scratchings and knockings-out have left the field so that one of the two speculators must be a winner. The practice also obtains much in competitions decided in heats or rounds, in the course of which backers and layers comparing their prospects often “SAVE a bit” with each other. Saving is, therefore, a form of hedging.

[278]

Saveloy, a sausage of bread and chopped beef smoked, a minor kind of POLONY, which see.

Savvey, to know; “do you SAVVEY that?” *Spanish*, SABE. In the nigger and *Anglo-Chinese patois*, this is SABBY, “me no SABBY.” It is a general word among the lower classes all over the world. It also means acuteness or cleverness; as, “That fellow has plenty of SAVVEY.”

Saw, a term at whist. A SAW is established when two partners alternately trump a suit, played to each other for the express purpose.

Saw your timber, “be off!” equivalent to “cut your stick.” Occasionally varied, with mock refinement, to “amputate your mahogany.” See CUT.

Sawbones, a surgeon.

Sawney, OR SANDY, a Scotchman. Corruption of Alexander.

Sawney, a simpleton; a gaping, awkward lout.

Sawney, bacon. SAWNEY HUNTER, one who steals bacon.

Scab, a worthless person.—*Old*. Shakspeare uses “scald” in a similar sense.

Scab-raiser, a drummer in the army, so called from one of the duties formerly pertaining to that office, viz., inflicting corporal punishment on the soldiers.—*Military*.

Scabby neck, a native of Denmark.—*Sea*.

Scabby-sheep, epithet applied by the vulgar to a person who has been in questionable society, or under unholy influence, and become tainted. Also a mean disreputable fellow.

Scaldrum dodge, a dodge in use among begging impostors of burning the body with a mixture of acids and gunpowder, so as to suit the hues and complexions of any accident to be deplored by a confiding public.

Scaly, shabby, or mean. Perhaps anything which betokens the presence of the “Old Serpent,” or it may be a variation of “fishy.”

Scamander, to wander about without a settled purpose;—possibly in allusion to the winding course of the Homeric river of that name.

Scammered, drunk.

Scamp, a graceless fellow, a rascal; a wandering vagabond; scamping was formerly the cant term for plundering and thieving. A ROYAL-SCAMP was a highwayman, whilst a FOOT-SCAMP was an ordinary thief with nothing but his legs to trust to in case of an attempt at capture. Some have derived SCAMP from *qui ex campo exit*, one who leaves the field, a deserter.

Scamp, to give short measure or quantity; applied to dishonest contractors. Also to hurry through a task in a way which precludes the possibility of its being done well. Probably the same AS SKIMP and SCRIMP.

Scandal-water, tea; from old maids’ tea-parties being generally a focus for scandal.

Scaramouch, properly a tumbler, OR SALTIMBANCO. Also a disreputable fellow.

Scarborough-warning, a warning given too late to be taken advantage of. When a person is driven over, and then told to keep out of the way, he receives SCARBOROUGH-WARNING. Fuller says the proverb alludes to an event which happened at that place in 1557, when Thomas Stafford seized upon Scarborough Castle before the townsmen had the least notice of his approach.

Scarce, TO MAKE ONESELF; to be off; to decamp.

Scarlet fever, the desire felt by young ladies to flirt with officers in preference to civilians.

Scarlet-town, Reading, in Berkshire. As the name of this place is pronounced Redding, SCARLET-TOWN is probably a rude pun upon it.

Scarper, to run away; *Spanish*, ESCAPAR, to escape, make off; *Italian*, SCAPPARE. “SCARPER with the feeley of the donna of the carzey,” to run away with the daughter of the landlady of the house; almost pure *Italian*, “SCAPPARE COLLA FIGLIA DELLA DONNA DELLA CASA.”—*Seven Dials and Prison Cant*, from the *Lingua Franca*.

Schism-shop, a Dissenters’ meeting-house.—*University*.

Schofel, bad money. See [SHOFUL](#).

School, a knot of men or boys; generally a body of idlers or street gamblers. Also, two or more “patterers” working together in the streets.

Schroff, a banker, treasurer, or confidential clerk.—*Anglo-Indian*.

Schwassle box, the street arrangement for Punch and Judy. See [SWATCHEL-COVE](#).

Sconce, the head; judgment, sense.—*Dutch*.

Sconce, to fine. Used by Dons as well as undergrads. The Dons fined or SCONCED for small offences; *e.g.*, five shillings for wearing a coloured coat in hall at dinner-time. Among undergrads a pun, or an oath, or an indecent remark, was SCONCED by the head of the table. If the offender could, however, floor the tankard of beer which he was SCONCED, he could retort on his SCONCER to the extent of twice the amount he was SCONCED in.—*Oxford University*.

Score, a reckoning, “to run up a SCORE at a public-house,” to obtain credit there until pay-day, or a fixed time, when the debt must be “wiped off.” From the old practice of scoring a tippler’s indebtedness on the inside of a public-house door.

Scorf, to eat voraciously.

Scot, a quantity of anything, a lot, a share.—*Anglo-Saxon*, SCEAT, pronounced SHOT.

Scot, temper, or passion,—from the irascible temperament of the Scotch; “Oh! what a SCOT he was in,” *i.e.*, what temper he showed.

Scotch coffee, biscuits toasted and boiled in water. A gross calumny on the much-enduring Scotians; a supposed joke on their parsimony.—*Sea*.

Scotch fiddle, the itch; “to play the SCOTCH FIDDLE,” to work the index finger of the right hand like a fiddlestick between the index and middle finger of the left. This provokes a Scotchman in the

highest degree, as it implies that he is afflicted with the itch. It is supposed that a continuous oatmeal diet is productive of cutaneous affection.

Scotch greys, lice. Our northern neighbours were calumniously reported, in the "good old times" of ignorance and prejudice, to be peculiarly liable to cutaneous eruptions and parasites.

Scotches, the legs; also synonymous with notches.

Scout, a college valet, or waiter.—*Oxford*. See [gyp](#).

Scout, the male servant, who generally has a staircase under his charge, and waits on the men in each set of rooms. The female servant (not unfrequently his wife or daughter) is the bedmaker.—*University*.

Scrag, the neck.—*Old Cant*. *Scotch*, CRAIG. Still used by butchers. Hence, SCRAG, to hang by the neck, and SCRAGGING, an execution,—also *Old Cant*.

Scran, pieces of meat, broken victuals. Formerly the reckoning at a public-house. SCRANNING, or "out on the SCRAN," begging for broken victuals. Also, an Irish malediction of a mild sort, "Bad SCRAN to yer!" *i.e.*, bad food to you.

Scran-bag, a soldier's haversack.—*Military Slang*.

Scrap, to fight. Also used as a substantive. Prize-fighters are often known as SCRAPPERS.

Scrape, a difficulty; SCRAPE, low wit for a shave.

Scrape, cheap butter; also butter laid on bread in the thinnest possible manner, as though it had been laid on and scraped off again. "Bread and SCRAPE," the bread and butter issued to schoolboys,—so called from the manner in which the butter is laid on.

Scratch, an imaginary meeting-point in a fight, or verbal contest; "coming up to the SCRATCH," preparing to fight—literally approaching the line which used to be chalked on the ground to divide the ring. According to the rules of the prize ring, the toe should be placed at the SCRATCH, so the phrase often is "toeing the SCRATCH."

Scratch, "no great SCRATCH," of little worth.

Scratch, to strike a horse's name out of the list of runners in a particular race. "Tomboy was SCRATCHED for the Derby at 10 a.m. on Wednesday, from which period all bets made in reference to him are void." See [p.p.](#)—*Turf*. One of Boz's characters asks whether horses are "really made more lively by being SCRATCHED."

Scratch-race (on the turf), a race at which the horses run at catch weights, a race without restrictions. In boating, a race in which the crew are picked up anyhow. A SCRATCH crew is a crew of all sorts.

Screaming, first-rate, splendid. Believed to have been first used in the Adelphi play-bills; "a SCREAMING farce," one calculated to make the audience scream with laughter. Now a general expression.

Screed, an illogical or badly-written article or paper upon any subject.

Screeve, a letter, a begging petition.

Screeve, to write, or devise; "to SCREEVE a fakement," to concoct, or write, a begging letter, or other impostor's document. From the *Dutch*, SCHRYVEN; *German*, SCHREIBEN, to write.

Screever, a man who draws with coloured chalks on the pavement figures of our Saviour crowned with thorns, specimens of elaborate writing, thunderstorms, ships on fire, &c. The men who attend these pavement chalkings, and receive halfpence and sixpences from the admirers of street art, are not always the draughtsmen. The artist or SCREEVER draws, perhaps, in half-a-dozen places in the course of a morning, and rents the spots out to as many cadaverous-looking men, who, when any one looks hard at them, will commence to dabble clumsily with the short pieces of chalks they always keep at hand. There are impostors of this kind in higher walks of art.

Screw, an unsound or broken-down horse, that requires both whip and spur to get him along. So called from the screw-like manner in which his ribs generally show through the skin.

Screw, a mean or stingy person.

Screw, salary, or wages.

Screw, "to put on the SCREW," to limit one's credit, to be more exact and precise; "to put under the SCREW;" to compel, to coerce, to influence by strong pressure.

Screw, a small packet of tobacco. A "twist" of the "weed."

Screw, a key—skeleton, or otherwise.

Screw, a turnkey.

Screw loose. When friends become cold and distant towards each other, it is said there is a SCREW LOOSE betwixt them; the same phrase is also used when anything goes wrong with a person's credit or reputation.

Screwed, intoxicated or drunk.

Scrimmage, or SCRUMMAGE, a disturbance or row.—*Ancient*. Probably a corruption of SKIRMISH.

Scrimshaw. Anything made by sailors for themselves in their leisure hours at sea is termed SCRIMSHAW-WORK.

Scrouge, to crowd or squeeze.—*Wiltshire*.

Scruff, the back part of the neck seized by the adversary in an encounter. "I seized him by the SCRUFF of the neck, and chucked him out." Originally SCURF.

Scrumptious, nice, particular, beautiful.

Scufter, a policeman.—*North Country*.

Scull, or SKULL, the head, or master of a college.—*University*, but nearly obsolete; the gallery, however, in St. Mary's (the Oxford University church), where the "Heads of Houses" sit in solemn state, is still nicknamed the "Golgotha" by the undergraduates.

Scurf, a mean fellow. Literally a scurvy fellow.

Sea-connie, the steersman of an Indian ship. By the insurance laws he must be either a PYAH Portuguese, a European, or a Manilla man,—Lascars not being allowed to be helmsmen.

Sea-cook, "son of a SEA-COOK," an opprobrious phrase used on board ship, differing from "son of a gun," which is generally used admiringly or approvingly.

Seals, a religious slang term for converts. Also a Mormon term for wives. See OWNED.

[282]

See. Like "go" and "do," this useful verb has long been supplemented with a slang or unauthorized meaning. In street parlance, "to SEE" is to know or believe; "I don't SEE that," *i.e.*, "I don't put faith in what you offer, or I know what you say to be untrue."

See it out, to stay out late or early, and see the gas put out. Also to complete an undertaking.

See the king. See ELEPHANT.

Seedy, worn-out, poverty-stricken, used-up, shabby. Metaphorical expression from the appearance of flowers when off bloom and running to SEED; hence said of one who wears clothes until they crack and become shabby. "How seedy he looks," said of any man whose clothes are worn threadbare, with greasy facings, and hat brightened up by perspiration and continual polishing and wetting. When a man's coat begins to look worn-out and shabby he is said to look SEEDY and ready for cutting. This term has been in common use for nearly two centuries, and latterly has found its way into most dictionaries. Formerly slang, it is now a recognised word, and one of the most expressive in the English language. The French are always amused with it, they having no similar term.

"Oh, let my hat be e'er sae brown,
My coat be e'er sae SEEDY, O!
My whole turn-out scarce worth a crown,
Like gents well-bred, but needy, O!"

Fisher's Garland for 1835.

Seeley's pigs, blocks of iron in Government dockyards. Mr. Seeley, M.P., was the first to call attention in the House of Commons to the scandalous waste of pig-iron in the dockyards. Some of the yards were found to be half paved with blocks of metal, which were thence called "SEELEY'S PIGS."

Sell, a deception, or disappointment; also a lying joke.

Sell, to deceive, swindle, or play a practical joke upon a person. A sham is a SELL in street parlance. "SOLD again, and got the money," a patterer cries after having successfully deceived somebody. Shakspeare uses SELLING in a similar sense, *viz.*, blinding or deceiving.

Sensation, a quartern of gin.

Serene, all right; "it's all SERENE," a street phrase of very modern adoption, the burden of a song. SERENE, ALL SERENE! from the *Spanish* SERENO, equivalent to the English "all's well;" a countersign of sentinels, supposed to have been acquired by some filibusters who were imprisoned in Cuba, and liberated by the intercession of the British ambassador. The Sereno, the Spanish night watchman, cries out, with the hour, the state of the atmosphere. He was called the Sereno (clear), from his announcing the usual fine (sereno) night—quite different from the work of our old "Charlies," whose usual call was one of foul weather.

Serve out, to punish, or be revenged on any one.

Setter, sevenpence. *Italian*, SETTE. See SALTEE.—*Lingua Franca*.

Setter, a person employed by the vendor at an auction to run the bidding up; to bid against *bona-fide* bidders. Also the man who takes the box at hazard, and "sets a go."

[283]

Setting jewels, taking the best portions of a clever book not much known to the general public, and incorporating them quietly with a new work by a thoroughly original author. The credit of this term belongs to Mr. Charles Reade, who explained that the process is accountable for the presence of some writing by one Jonathan Swift, in a story published at Christmas, 1872, and called *The Wandering Heir*.

Settle, to kill, ruin, or effectually quiet a person.

Settled, transported, or sent to penal servitude for life; sometimes spoken of as WINDED-SETTLED.

Set-to, a sparring match, a fight; “a DEAD SET” is a determined opposition in argument, or in movement.

Sevendible, a very curious word, used only in the North of Ireland, to denote something particularly severe, strong, or sound. It is, no doubt, derived from sevendouble—that is, sevenfold—and is applied to linen cloth, a heavy beating, a harsh reprimand, &c.

Seven-pennorth, transportation for seven years.

Seven-sided animal, a one-eyed man, as he has an inside, outside, left side, right side, foreshide, backside, and blind side.

Seven-up, the game of all-fours, when played for seven chinks—that is, when seven points or chinks have to be made to win the game.

Sewed-up, done up, used up, intoxicated. *Dutch*, SEEUWT, sick.

Sewn-up, quite worn-out, or “dead beat.”

Shack, a “chevalier d’industrie.” A scamp, a blackguard.—*Nottingham*.

Shack-per-swaw, every one for himself,—a phrase in use amongst the lower orders at the East-end of London, derived apparently from the *French*, CHACUN POUR SOI.

Shackly, loose, rickety.—*Devonshire*.

Shady, an expression implying decadence. On “the SHADY side of forty” implies that a person is considerably older than forty. SHADY also means inferiority in other senses. A “shady trick” is either a shabby one, mean or trumpery, or else it is one contemptible from the want of ability displayed. The SHADY side of a question is, and fairly enough too, that which has no brightness to recommend it.

Shake, a disreputable man or woman.—*North*. In London a SHAKE is a prostitute.

Shake-down, an improvised bed.

Shake-lurk, a false paper carried by an impostor, giving an account of a “dreadful shipwreck.”

Shake the elbow, TO, a roundabout expression for dice-playing. To “crook the ELBOW” is an Americanism for “to drink.”

Shaker, a shirt.

Shakers, a Puritanical sect, almost peculiar to America, and not similar to our Quakers, as is generally believed. They have very strange notions on things in general, and especially on marriage and the connexion of the sexes.

Shakes, a bad bargain is said to be “no great SHAKES;” “pretty fair SHAKES” is anything good or favourable.—*Byron*. In America, a fair SHAKE is a fair trade or a good bargain.

Shakes, “in a brace of SHAKES,” *i.e.*, in an instant.

Shakester, or SHICKSTER, a female. Amongst costermongers this term is invariably applied to ladies, or the wives of tradesmen, and females generally, of the classes immediately above them. Amongst Jews the word signifies a woman of shady antecedents. Supposed to be derived from the *Hebrew*, SHIKTZA. It is generally pronounced “shickser.”

Shaky, said of a person of questionable health, integrity, or solvency; at the Universities, of one not likely to pass his examination.

Shaler, a girl. Corrupt form of *Gaelic*, CAILLE, a young woman.

Shalley-gonahey, a smock-frock.—*Cornish*.

Shallow, the peculiar barrow used by costermongers.

Shallow, a weak-minded country justice of the peace.—*Shakspeare*.

Shallow-cove, a begging rascal, who goes about the country half naked, with the most limited amount of rags upon his person, wearing neither shoes, stockings, nor hat.

Shallow-mot, a ragged woman,—the frequent companion of the SHALLOW-COVE.

Shallows, “to go on the SHALLOWS,” to go half naked.

Sham, contraction of champagne. In general use among the lower class of sporting men. Sometimes extended to SHAMMY.

Sham Abraham, to feign sickness. See [ABRAHAM](#).

Shandrydan, an old-fashioned or rickety conveyance of the “shay” order.

Shandy-gaff, ale and gingerbeer. Origin unknown, but use very common.

Shanks, legs.

Shanks’s mare, “to ride SHANK’S MARE,” to go on foot.

Shant, a pot or quart; “SHANT of bivvy,” a quart of beer.

Shanty, a rude, temporary habitation. The word is principally employed to designate the huts

inhabited by navigators, when constructing large lines of railway far distant from towns. It is derived from the *French* CHANTIER, used by the Canadians for a log hut, and has travelled from thence, by way of the United States, to England.

Shanty, a song. A term in use among sailors. From CHANTER.

Shapes, "to cut up" or "show SHAPES," to exhibit pranks, or flightiness.

Shark, a sharper, a swindler. Bow Street term in 1785, now in most dictionaries.—*Friesic* and *Danish*, SCHURK. See [LAND-SHARK](#).

Sharp, OR SHARPER, a cunning cheat, a rogue,—the opposite of FLAT.

Sharp, a similar expression to "[TWO PUN' TEN](#)" (which see), used by assistants in shops to signify that a customer of suspected honesty is amongst them. The shopman in this case would ask one of the assistants, in a voice loud enough to be generally heard, "Has Mr. SHARP come in yet?" "No," would probably be the reply; "but he is expected every minute." The signal is at once understood, and a general look-out kept upon the suspected party.

[285]

Sharp's-alley blood-worms, beef sausages and black puddings. Sharp's Alley was, until City improvements caused it to be destroyed, a noted slaughtering-place near Smithfield.

Shave, a false alarm, a hoax, a sell. This term was much in vogue in the Crimea during the Russian campaign,—that is, though much used by the military before then, the term did not, until that period, become known to the general public.

Shave, a narrow escape. At Cambridge, "just SHAVING through," or "making a SHAVE," is just escaping a "pluck" by coming out at the bottom of the list.

"My terms are anything but dear,
Then read with me, and never fear;
The examiners we're sure to queer,
And get through, if you make a SHAVE on't."

The Private Tutor.

Shave; "to SHAVE a customer," charge him more for an article than the marked price. Used in the drapery trade. When the master sees an opportunity of doing this, he strokes his chin, as a signal to his assistant who is serving the customer.

Shaver, a sharp fellow; there are young and old SHAVERS.—*Sea*.

Shebeen, an unlicensed place where spirituous liquors are illegally sold. A word almost peculiar to Ireland.

Shed a tear, to take a dram, or glass of neat spirits; jocular phrase used, with a sort of grim earnestness, by old toppers to each other. "Now then, old fellow, come and SHED A TEAR!" an invitation to take "summat short." The origin may have been that ardent spirits, taken neat by younger persons, usually bring water to their eyes. With confirmed drinkers, however, the phrase is used with an air of mingled humour and regret at their own position. A still more pathetic phrase is—"putting a [NAIL IN ONE'S COFFIN](#)," which see. The term SHED A TEAR is probably derived from "eye-water."

Sheen, bad money.—*Scotch*.

Sheeny, a Jew. This word is used by both Jew and Gentile at the East-end of London, and is not considered objectionable on either side.

Sheep's eyes, loving looks, "to make SHEEP'S EYES at a person," to cast amorous glances towards one on the sly.

"But he, the beast, was casting SHEEP'S EYES at her
Out of his bullock head."

Colman, Broad Grins.

Shelf, "on the SHELF," not yet disposed of; young ladies are said to be so situated when they cannot meet with husbands. "On the SHELF" also means pawned, or laid by in trust.

Shell out, to pay or count out money. Also a game played on a billiard table, a variation of pool.

Shepherd, to look after carefully, to place under police surveillance.

[286]

Shice, nothing; "to do anything for SHICE," to get no payment. The term was first used by the Jews in the last century. Grose gives the phrase CHICE-AM-A-TRICE, which has a synonymous meaning. *Spanish*, CHICO, little; *Anglo-Saxon*, CHICHE, niggardly; or perhaps connected with the *German*, SCHEISSEN.

Shicer, a mean man, a humbug, a "duffer,"—a worthless person, one who will not work. This is the worst term one Jew can use to another. At the diggings it means a hole which yields nothing.

Shickery, shabby, bad. From [SHAKY](#), SHAKERY.

Shickster, a lady. See [SHAKESTER](#).

Shickster-crabs, ladies' shoes.—*Tramps' term*.

Shigs, money, silver.—*East London*.

Shikaree, a hunter, a sportsman.—*Anglo-Indian*. An English sportsman who has seen many ups and downs in jungles of the East styles himself “an OLD SHIKAREE.”—*Anglo-Indian*. Also spelt SHEKARRY.

Shilly-shally, to trifle or fritter away time; to be irresolute. Corruption of “Shall I, shall I?”

Shin, an Americanism for walking. “I’m tired of SHINNING around.”

Shindy, a row, or noise. A SHINDY generally means a regular mêlée.

Shine, a row, or disturbance.

Shine, “to take the SHINE out of a person,” to surpass or excel him.

Shiners, sovereigns, or money.

Shiney rag, “to win the SHINEY RAG,” to be ruined,—said in gambling, when any one continues betting after “luck has set in against him.”

Shin-plaster, a bank-note. Originally an Americanism.

Shins. “To break one’s SHINS,” figurative expression meaning to borrow money.

Ship-shape, proper, in good order; sometimes the phrase is varied to “SHIP-SHAPE and Bristol fashion.”—*Sea*. The latter portion of the expression went out with Bristol’s fame as a seaport.

Shirty, ill-tempered, or cross. When one person makes another in an ill-humour he is said to have “got his SHIRT out.”

Shivering Jemmy, the name given by street-folk to any cadger who exposes himself, half naked, on a cold day, to obtain alms. The “game” is unpleasant, but was, before exposure of a different kind spoil it, exceedingly lucrative.

Shockhead, a head of long, unkempt, and rough hair.

Shoddy, old cloth worked up into new; made from soldiers’ and policemen’s coats. The old cloth is pulled to pieces, the yarn unravelled and carded over again. This produces shoddy, which is very short in the fibre, and from it are produced, on again twisting and weaving, cloth fabrics used for ladies’ mantles, &c. Also, a term of derision applied to workmen in woollen factories.—*Yorkshire*.

Shoddy, the plutocracy created out of bogus contracts during the civil war in the United States. The SHODDYITES enriched themselves at the expense of their country in the most shameless manner, having most likely studied under those contractors who should have supplied our soldiers with necessaries during the Crimean War.

[287]

Shoe, to free or initiate a person,—a practice common in most trades to a new-comer. The SHOEING consists in paying for beer, or other liquor, which is drunk by the older hands. The cans emptied, and the bill paid, the stranger is considered properly SHOD. SHOEING is a variation of “paying one’s footing.”

Shoe leather! a thief’s warning cry when he hears footsteps. This exclamation is used in the spirit which animated the friend who, when he suspected treachery towards Bruce at King Edward’s court, in 1306, sent him a purse and a pair of spurs, as a sign that he should use them in making his escape.

Shoes, “to die in one’s SHOES,” to be hanged. In the old hanging days a highwayman would often kick off his shoes when the rope was round his neck, so as—oh, vain and impotent attempt!—to defeat the prophecy that had foreshadowed his present position.

Shoes, children’s, to make, to suffer oneself to be made sport of, or depreciated. Commonly used in Norfolk.—*Cf.* Mrs. Behn’s comedy, *The Roundheads*.

Hews. “Who, pox! shall we stand MAKING CHILDREN’S SHOES all the year? No: let’s begin to settle the nation, I say, and go through-stitch with our work.”

Shoful, a Hansom cab. This favourite carriage was the invention of a Mr. Hansom, afterwards connected with the *Builder* newspaper. It has been asserted that the term SHOFUL was derived from “shovel,” the earliest slang term applied to Hansoms by other cab-drivers, who conceived their shape to be after the fashion of a scoop or shovel. A logical friend of the present Editor’s argues thus:—SHOFUL, full of show, *ergo*, beautiful—handsome—Hansom. This is clever, but it certainly never entered into the heads of those who gave the name of SHOFUL to the Hansom cabs.

Shoful, bad or counterfeit money. Perhaps, as some think, from the *Danish*, SKUFFE, to shove, to deceive, cheat; *Saxon*, SCUFAN,—whence the *English*, SHOVE. The term, however, is possibly one of the many street words from the *Hebrew* (through the low Jews); SHEPHEL, in that language, signifying a low or debased estate. *Chaldee*, SHAPHAL.—*See* Psalm CXXXvi. 23, “in our low estate.” A correspondent suggests a very probable derivation, from the *German*, SCHOFEL, trash, rubbish,—the *German* adjective, SCHOFELIG, being the nearest possible translation of our shabby. SHOFUL means anything mock, as SHOFUL jewellery. A SHOFUL is also a humbug, an impostor.

Shoful-pitcher, a passer of bad money. SHOFUL-PITCHING, passing bad money. “Snide-pitcher” and “Snide-pitching” are terms exchangeable with the preceding.

Shoful pullet, a “gay” or unsteady woman, especially a young woman.

Sholl, to bonnet one, or crush a person’s hat over his eyes.—*North*.

Shool, to saunter idly, to become a vagabond, to beg rather than work.—*Smollett's Roderick Random*, vol. i., p. 262.

Shool, Jews' term for their synagogue.

Shoot the cat, to vomit. From a story of a man being sick in the back yard, and suffocating a cat and all her kittens.

Shoot the moon, to remove furniture from a house in the night without paying the landlord.

Shop. In racing slang, to secure first, second, or third position in a race, is to get a *SHOP*. This is also known as a place, and as a situation. See [PLACE](#).

Shop, a house. "How are they all at your *SHOP*?" is a common question among small tradesmen.

Shop, the House of Commons. The only instance we have met with of the use of this word in literature occurs in Mr. Trollope's *Framley Parsonage*:—

"If we are merely to do as we are bid, and have no voice of our own, I don't see what's the good of our going to the *SHOP* at all," said Mr. Sowerby."

Shop, to discharge a shopman. In military slang, to *SHOP* an officer is to put him under arrest in the guard-room. In pugilistic slang, to punish a man severely is "to knock him all over the *SHOP*," *i.e.*, the ring, the place in which the work is done.

Shop-bouncer, OF *SHOP-LIFTER*, a person generally respectably attired, who, while being served with a small article at a shop, steals one of more value. Shakspeare has the word *LIFTER*, a thief.

Shop-walker, a person employed to walk up and down a shop, to hand seats to customers, and see that they are properly served. Contracted also to *WALKER*.

Shopping, purchasing at shops. Termed by Todd a slang word, but used by Cowper and Byron.

Shopy, to be full of nothing but one's own calling or profession; "to talk *SHOP*," to converse of nothing but professional subjects.

Short, when spirit is drunk without any admixture of water, it is said to be taken "*SHORT*;" "*summat SHORT*," a dram. A similar phrase is used at the counters of banks; upon presenting a cheque, the clerk asks, "How will you take it?" *i.e.*, in gold, or notes. If in notes, long or short? Should it be desired to receive it in notes for the largest possible amount, the answer is, *SHORT*. A conductor of an omnibus, or any other servant, is said to be *SHORT* when he does not give all the money he receives to his master.

Short, hard-up; a polite term for impecuniosity used in clubs and among military men.

Short commons, short allowance of food. See [COMMONS](#).

Shorter, one who makes a dishonest profit by reducing the coin of the realm by clipping and filing. From a crown-piece a *SHORTER* could gain 5d. Another way was by chemical means: a guinea laid in aquafortis would, in twelve hours, precipitate 9d.-worth of sediment; in twenty-four, 1s. 6d.-worth.—*Rommany Rye*.

Shot, from the modern sense of the word to *SHOOT*,—a guess, a random conjecture; "to make a bad *SHOT*," to expose one's ignorance by making a wrong guess, or random answer, without knowing whether it is right or wrong.

[289]

Shot, from the once general, but now provincial word, to *SHOOT*, to subscribe, contribute in fair proportion;—a share, from the *Anglo-Saxon* word, *SCEAT*; "to pay one's *SHOT*," *i.e.*, share of the reckoning, &c.

"Yet still while I have got
Enough to pay the *SHOT*
Of Boniface, both gruff and greedy O!"

Fisher's Garland for 1835.

Shot, "I wish I may be *SHOT*, if," &c., a common form of mild swearing.

Shot, a term used among horse chaunters. To *SHOT* a horse, is to give him a lot of small shot, which will for a short time effectually "open his pipes," and make him appear sound in wind.

Shot in the locker, money in pocket, resource of any kind in store.—*Navy*.

Shoulder, when a servant embezzles his master's money, he is said to *SHOULDER* his employer.

Shout, to pay for drink round. "It's my *SHOUT*," says he who pays. Possibly because the payer originally *SHOUTED* to the bar-keeper of an hotel to score the drink to him.—*Australian*, but now general.

Shove-halfpenny, a gambling pot-house pastime, played on a table. A very old game, originally called push-penny.

Shove in the mouth, a glass of spirits, which is taken off quickly and at once.

Shovel, a term applied by the vulgar crowd to the inelegant twisted hats worn by the dignitaries of the Church. Dean Alford says, "I once heard a venerable dignitary pointed out by a railway porter as "an old party in a *SHOVEL*."—*Queen's English*.

Shrimp, a diminutive person.—*Chaucer*.

Shturner, a horse against which money may be laid without risk. See [SAFE UN](#).

Shunt, to avoid, to turn aside from. From the railway term.

Shut of, or SHOT OF, *i.e.*, rid of. A very common expression amongst the London lower orders. One costermonger will say to another:—"Well, Ike, did yer get SHUT o' them there gawfs [apples]?" *i.e.*, did you sell them all?

Shut up! be quiet, don't make a noise; to stop short, to cease in a summary manner, to silence effectually. The following is from a literary paper:—"Only the other day we heard of a preacher who, speaking of the scene with the doctors in the Temple, remarked that the Divine disputant completely SHUT THEM UP!" SHUT UP, utterly exhausted, done for.

Shy, a throw. See the following:—

Shy, to fling; COCK-SHY, a game at fairs, consisting of throwing short sticks at trinkets or cocoanuts set upon other sticks,—both name and practice derived from the old game of throwing or SHYING at live cocks. This game is best known to the London public as "three shies a penny."

[290]

Shy. "To fight SHY of a person," to avoid his society either from dislike, fear, or other reason. SHY has also the sense of flighty, unsteady, untrustworthy.

Shy, to stop suddenly, or turn off, as a horse does when frightened.

Shyster, a duffer, a vagabond. Variation of "shicer."

Sices, or SIZES, a throw of sixes at dice.

Sick as a horse, a popular simile,—curious, because a horse never vomits.

Sickener, a dose too much of anything. Too much of even a good thing will make a man sick.

Side, an affirmative expression in the cant language of the northern towns. "Do you stoll the gammy?" (Do you understand cant?) "SIDE, cove" (yes, mate).

Side-boards, or STICK-UPS, shirt collars. Name applied some years ago, before the present style of collars came into fashion.

Sift, to embezzle small coins, those which might pass through a sieve—as threepennies and fourpennies—and which are, therefore, not likely to be missed.

Sight, "to take a SIGHT at a person," a vulgar action employed by boys and others to denote incredulity, or contempt for authority, by placing the thumb against the nose and extending the fingers, which are agitated in token of derision.

"The sacristan he says no word that indicates a doubt,
But he puts his finger to his nose, and spreads his fingers out."

Nell Cook.

Silly season, the period when nobody is supposed to be in London, when there are no parliamentary debates to publish, and when editors are at their wits'-ends to fill their papers with readable matter. All kinds of crazes on political and social subjects are then ventilated, gigantic gooseberries, monstrous births, and strange showers then become plentiful, columns are devoted to matters which would not at any other time receive consideration, and, so far as the newspapers are concerned, silliness is at a premium.

Silver beggar, or LURKER, a vagabond who travels through the country with "briefs" containing false statements of losses by fire, shipwrecks, accidents, &c. Forged documents are exhibited with signatures of magistrates and clergymen. Accompanying these are sham subscription books. The former, in beggar parlance, is termed "a sham," whilst the latter is denominated "a delicate."

Sim, one of a Methodistical turn in religion; a Low Churchman; originally a follower of the late Rev. Charles Simeon.—*Cambridge*.

Simon, a sixpenny-piece.

Simon, or SIMPLE SIMON, a credulous, gullible person. A character in a song, but now common.

Simon Pure, "the real SIMON PURE," the genuine article. Those who have witnessed Mr. Charles Mathews's performance in Mrs. Centlivre's admirable comedy of *A Bold Stroke for a Wife*, and the laughable coolness with which he, the false SIMON PURE, assuming the Quaker dress and character of the real one, elbows that worthy out of his expected entertainment, will at once perceive the origin of this phrase.—See act v. scene i.

[291]

Simpkin, or SIMKIN, champagne.—*Anglo-Indian*. Derived from the manner in which native servants pronounce champagne.

Simpson, water used in the dilution of milk. Term in use among cow-keepers. From this the parish pump has been called Mrs. SIMPSON.

Sing out, to call aloud.—*Sea*.

Sing small, to lessen one's boasting, and turn arrogance into humility.

Sing-song, a harmonic meeting at a pot-house, a free-and-easy.

Sinkers, bad money,—affording a man but little assistance in "keeping afloat."

Sinks, a throw of fives at dice. *French*, CINQ.

Si quis, a candidate for “orders.” From the notification commencing SI QUIS—if any one.

Sir Harry, a close stool.

Sir Reverence, a corruption of the old phrase, SAVE YOUR REVERENCE, a sort of apology for alluding to anything likely to shock one’s sense of decency. *Latin*, SALVĀ REVERENTIĀ. See Shakspeare’s *Romeo and Juliet*, act i. scene iv. From this it came to mean the thing itself—human ordure generally, but sometimes other indecencies.

Siserara, a hard blow.—*Suffolk*. Many derive this term from the story of Sisera in the Old Testament, but it is probably a corruption of CERTIORARI, a Chancery writ reciting a complaint of hard usage.

Sit under, a term employed in Dissenters’ meeting-houses, to denote attendance on the ministry of any particular preacher.

Sit upon, to overcome or rebuke, to express contempt for a man in a marked manner. Also, to chaff or “roast” a man consumedly.

Sit-upons, trousers. See [INEXPRESSIBLES](#).

Sivvy, “‘pon my SIVVY,” *i.e.*, upon my soul or honour. Corruption of “asseveration,” like DAVY, which is an abridgment of “affidavit.”

Sixes and sevens, articles in confusion are said to be all SIXES AND SEVENS. The Deity is mentioned in the *Towneley Mysteries* as He that “set all on seven,” *i.e.*, set or appointed everything in seven days. A similar phrase at this early date implied confusion and disorder, and from these, Halliwell thinks, has been derived the phrase “to be at SIXES AND SEVENS.” A Scotch correspondent, however, states that the phrase probably came from the workshop, and that amongst needle-makers, when the points and eyes are “heads and tails” (“heids and thraws”), or in confusion, they are said to be SIXES AND SEVENS, because those numbers are the sizes most generally used, and in the course of manufacture have frequently to be distinguished.

Sixty, “to go along like SIXTY,” *i.e.*, at a good rate, briskly.

[292]

Sixty-per-cent, a bill-discounter. From the rate of interest generally charged. If bill-discounters profess to do the business for less, they generally make up the level sixty by extras.

Six-water grog, a sea-term for the weakest grog possible—six portions of water to one of rum—hardly enough spirit to “swear by.”

Size, to order extras over and above the usual commons at the dinner in college halls. Soup, pastry, &c., are SIZINGS, and are paid for at a certain specified rate per SIZE, or portion, to the college cook. Peculiar to Cambridge. Minsheu says, “SIZE, a farthing which schollers in Cambridge have at the buttry, noted with the letter s.”

Sizers, OR SIZARS, certain poor scholars at Cambridge, annually elected, who got their dinners (including “sizings”) from what was left at the upper, or Fellows’ table, free, or nearly so. They paid rent of rooms, and some other fees, on a lower scale than the “Pensioners” or ordinary students, and were equal with the “battlers” and “servitors” at Oxford.

Sizings. See [SIZE](#).

Skedaddle, to go off in a hurry. The American war introduced this new and amusing word. A Northerner who retreated “retired upon his supports,” but a Southerner was said to SKEDADDLE. The *Times* remarked on the word, and Lord Hill wrote to prove that it was excellent Scotch. The Americans only misapply the word, which means, in Dumfries, “to spill”—milkmaids, for example, saying, “You are SKEDADDLING all that milk.” The Yankees therefore adopted the term, and altered the application.

Skid, a sovereign. Fashionable slang. Occasionally SKIV.

Skid, OR SKIDPAN, an instrument for locking the wheel of a coach when going down hill. It is often said that a talkative person might put the SKID on, with advantage to his listeners, if not to himself.

Skied, OR SKYED, thrown upwards, as “coppers” in tossing.

Skied. Artists say that a picture is SKIED when it is hung on the upper line at the Exhibition of the Royal Academy. See [FLOORED](#).

Skilligolee, prison gruel. Also sailors’ soup of many ingredients. The term is occasionally used in London workhouses.

Skilly, abbreviation of SKILLIGOLEE.

Skimmery, St. Mary Hall, Oxford.—*University*.

Skin, a purse. This term is mostly in use among thieves.

Skin, to abate, or lower the value of anything; “thin-SKINNED,” sensitive, touchy, liable to be “raw” on certain subjects.

Skin-the-lamb, a game at cards, a very expressive corruption of the term “lansquenet,” also a racing term. When a non-favourite wins a race, bookmakers are said to SKIN THE LAMB, under the supposition that they win all their bets, no person having backed the winner. This has been

corrupted into SKINNER.

Skinflint, an old and popular simile for a "close-fisted," stingy person. Sternberg, in his *Northamptonshire Glossary*, says the Eastern languages have the same expression. Abdul-Malek, one of the Ommeyade Khaliphs, noted for his extreme avarice, was surnamed Raschal-Hegiarah, literally, "the SKINNER of a FLINT."

Skinner, a term among bookmakers. "May we have a SKINNER," *i.e.*, may we [SKIN THE LAMB](#), which *see*.

Skipper, the master of a vessel. *Germ.*, SCHIFFER, from SCHIFF, a ship; sometimes used as synonymous with "governor."

Skipper, a barn.—*Ancient Cant*. From the *Welsh*, YSGUBOR, pronounced SCYBOR, or SCIBOR, the proper word in that language for a barn.

Skipper-birds, or KEYHOLE-WHISTLERS, persons who sleep in barns or outhouses from necessity or in preference to sleeping in lodging-houses.

Skipper-it, to sleep in the open air, or in a rough way.

Skit, a joke, a squib. Term generally used in reference to any pungent or pointed political allusion.

Skittles, a game similar to that of Ten Pins, which, when interdicted by the Government, was altered to Nine Pins, or SKITTLES. The pins are set up in an alley, and thrown (not bowled) at with a round piece of hard wood, shaped like a small flat cheese. The costers used to consider themselves the best players in London, but they have been frequently undeceived. SKITTLES has within the past few years received an awful blow—quite a floorer—from "the powers that be."

Skow-banker, a fellow who loiters about the premises of any one willing to support him, and who objects to the necessity of working for his living; a rogue, a rascal. Common in Melbourne, Australia.

Skrouge, to push or squeeze.—*North*.

Skull-thatcher, a straw-bonnet-maker,—sometimes called "a bonnet-BUILDER."

Skunk, a mean or paltry fellow, one whose name stinks.

Sky, a disagreeable person, an enemy.—*Westminster School*. The word derived its origin from a corruption of the last syllable of the word "VOLSCI:" Westminster boys being of course understood to be the Romans.

Sky, to toss up towards the SKY. Term used in tossing with halfpence; "It's all right, Jim SKIED the browns," *i.e.*, threw them up, a proof that there could have been no collusion or cheating.

Sky-blue, London milk much diluted with water, or from which the cream has been too closely skimmed.

"Hence, Suffolk dairy wives run mad for cream,
And leave their milk with nothing but the name;
Its name derision and reproach pursue,
And strangers tell of three-times-skimm'd—SKY-BLUE."

Bloomfield's Farmer's Boy.

The recent Adulteration Act has done away with SKY-BLUE, and made [Simpson](#) a relic of the past. SKY-BLUE formerly meant gin.

Sky-lark. *See under* [LARK](#).

Sky-parlour, the garret.

Sky-scraper, a tall man; "Are you cold up there, old SKY-SCRAPER?" Properly a sea-term. The light sails, which some adventurous skippers set above the royals in calm latitudes, are termed SKY-SCRAPERS and MOON-RAKERS.

Sky-wannocking, unsteady frolicking.—*Norfolk*.

Slab, thick, as gruel, porridge, &c.

Slack, "to hold on the SLACK," to skulk; a slack rope not requiring to be held.—*Sea*.

Slam, a term at the game of whist. When two partners gain the whole thirteen tricks, they win a SLAM, which is considered equal to a rubber.

Slam, to talk fluently. "He's the bloke to SLAM." From a term in use among birdsingers at the East-end, by which they denote a certain style of note in chaffinches.

Slammock, a slattern or awkward person.—*West*, and *Norfolk*.

Slang, low, vulgar, unwritten, or unauthorized language. *Gipsy*, SLANG, the secret language of the gipsies, synonymous with GIBBERISH, another gipsy word. The word is only to be found in the dictionaries of Webster and Ogilvie. It is given, however, by Grose, in his *Dictionary of the Vulgar Tongue*, 1785. SLANG, since it has been adopted as an English word, generally implies vulgar language not known or recognised as CANT; and latterly, when applied to speech, it has superseded the word FLASH. Latterly, however, SLANG has become the generic term for all

unauthorized language. The earliest instance of the use of the word that can be found, is the following:—

“Let proper nurses be assigned, to take care of these babes of grace, [young thieves].... The master who teaches them should be a man well versed in the cant language commonly called the *SLANG* patter, in which they should by all means excel.”—*Jonathan Wild's Advice to his Successor*. LONDON, *J. Scott*, 1758.

Slang, a travelling show.

Slang, to cheat, to abuse in foul language.

Slang, counterfeit or short weights and measures. A *SLANG* quart is a pint and a half. *SLANG* measures are lent out at 2d. per day to street salesmen. The term is used principally by costermongers.

Slang, a watch-chain. *SUPER* and *SLANG*, a watch and chain.

Slang, “out on the *SLANG*,” *i.e.*, to travel with a hawker’s licence.

Slang-whanger, a long-winded speaker.—*Parliamentary*.

Slangy, flashy, vulgar; loud in dress, manner, and conversation.

Slantingdicular, oblique, awry,—as opposed to *PERPENDICULAR*. Originally an Americanism, now a part of the vocabulary of London “high life below stairs.”

Slap, paint for the face, rouge.

Slap, exactly, precisely; “slap in the wind’s eye,” *i.e.*, exactly to windward.

Slap-bang, suddenly, violently. From the strike of a ball being felt before the report reaches the ear,—the *SLAP* first, the *BANG* afterwards.

Slap-bang-shops, originally low eating-houses where the ready-money was paid down with a *SLAP-BANG*.—*Grose*. A *SLAP-BANG-SHOP* is now a very pretentious eating-house.

Slap-dash, immediately, or quickly; at a great rate.

Slap-up, first-rate, excellent, very good.

Slasher, a powerful roysterer, a game and clever pugilist.

Slashers, the Twenty-eighth Regiment of Foot in the British army.

Slate, “he has a *SLATE* loose,” *i.e.*, he is slightly crazy.

Slate, to pelt with abuse, to beat, to “lick;” or, in the language of the reviewers, to “cut up.” Also, among bettors, to lay heavily against a particular man or animal in a race.

Slate, to knock the hat over one’s eyes, to bonnet.—*North*.

Slavey, a maid-servant.

Slawmineyeux, a Dutchman. Probably a corruption of the Dutch, *ja, mynheer*; or German, *ja, mein Herr*.—*Sea*.

Sleepless-hats, those of a napless character, better known as [WIDE-AWAKES](#).

Slender, a simple country gentleman.—*Shakspeare*.

Slewed, drunk, or intoxicated.—*Sea term*. When a vessel changes the tack, she, as it were, staggers, the sails flap, she gradually heels over, and the wind catching the waiting canvas, she glides off at another angle. The course pursued by an intoxicated, or *SLEWED*, man, is supposed to be analogous to that of the ship.

Slick, an Americanism, very prevalent in England since the publication of Judge Haliburton’s facetious stories, which means rapidly, effectually, utterly.

Slick, smooth, unctuous; abbreviation of sleek.

Sling, a drink peculiar to Americans, generally composed of gin, soda-water, ice, and slices of lemon. At some houses in London *GIN-SLINGS* may be obtained.

Sling, to pass from one person to another. To blow the nose with the naked fingers.

Sling your hook, a polite invitation to move-on. “Sling your Daniel” has the same meaning. The pronouns may be altered to suit the context.

Slip, “to give the *SLIP*,” to run away, or elude pursuit. Shakspeare has, “You gave me the counterfeit,” in *Romeo and Juliet*. Giving the *SLIP*, however, is a sea phrase, and refers to fastening an anchor and chain cable to a floating buoy, or water-cask, until a time arrives when it is convenient to return and take them on board. In fastening the cable, the home end is *SLIPPED* through the hawse-pipe. Weighing anchor is a noisy task, so that giving the *SLIP* infers leaving quietly.

Slip, or let *SLIP*; “to *SLIP* into a man,” to give him a sound beating, “to let *SLIP* at a cove,” to rush violently upon him, and assault with vigour.

Slipping, a trick of card-sharpers, in the performance of which, by dexterous manipulation, they place the cut card on the top, instead of at the bottom of the pack. It is the *faire sauter la coupe* of the French. In pugilistic parlance, “to *SLIP* a man,” is to “duck and get away” with great

dexterity.

Slips, the sides of the gallery in a theatre are generally so called.

Slog, to beat or baste, to fight. *German*, SCHLACHTEN; or perhaps from some connexion with the *Gaelic* SLOGAN. The pretended *Greek* derivation from σλόγω is humbug, there being no such word in the language.

Slogdollager, an Americanism, meaning the same as our [STOCKDOLLAGER](#), which *see*.

Sloggers, *i.e.*, SLOW-GOERS, the second division of race-boats at Cambridge. At Oxford they are called TORPIDS.—*University*. A hard hitter at cricket is termed a SLOGGER; so is a pugilist.

Slogging, a good beating.

Slop, a policeman. At first back slang, but now modified for general use.

Slop, cheap, or ready-made, as applied to clothing, is generally supposed to be a modern appropriation; but it was used in this sense in 1691, by Maydman, in his *Naval Speculations*; and by Chaucer two centuries before that. SLOPS properly signify sailors' working clothes, which are of a very cheap and inexpensive character.

Slope, to decamp, to run, or rather slip away. Some persons think it came originally from [LOPE](#), to make off; and that the *s* probably became affixed as a portion of the preceding word, as in the case of "Let's lope," let us run. It is purely an Americanism, and is possibly but an emendation of our own word elope. Lope, leap, and elope are kindred. A humorous correspondent says that Tennyson is decidedly partial to slang, and instances amongst other proofs a passage from the laureate's famous *Locksley Hall*:—

"Many a night, from yonder ivied casement, ere I went to rest,
Did I look on great Orion SLOPING slowly to the west."

Though this correspondent may not have intended it, his joke has given the key to the situation, and has shown how our cousins most probably came to use the word in its present sense. "The sun is SLOPING fast."

Slops, any weak, wet, and warm mixture. Hard drinkers regard all effeminate beverages as SLOPS.

Slops, chests or packages of tea; "he shook a slum of SLOPS," *i.e.*, stole a chest of tea. Also ready-made clothes—the substantive of SLOP.

Slops, liquid house-refuse.

Sloppshop, a tailor's shop where inferior work is done, and where cheap goods are sold.

Slour, to lock, or fasten.—*Prison Cant*.

Sloured, buttoned up; SLOURED HOXTER, an inside pocket buttoned up.

Slowcoach, a lumbering, dull person; one slow of comprehension.

Slowed, to be locked up (in prison).

Slubberdegullion, a paltry, dirty, sorry wretch.

"Quoth she, although thou hast deserved,
Base SLUBBERDEGULLION, to be served
As thou didst vow to deal with me,
If thou hadst got the victory"—

Hudibras.

Sluicery, a gin-shop or public-house.

Sluicing one's bolt, drinking.

Slum, a chest, or package. *See* [SLOPS](#).

Slum, a letter.—*Prison Cant*.

Slum, an insinuation, a discreditable innuendo.

Slum, gammon, "up to SLUM," wide awake, knowing.

"And this, without more SLUM began,
Over a flowing pot-house can,
To settle, without botheration,
The rigs of this here tip-top nation."

Jack Randall's Diary, 1820.

Slum, OR BACK SLUM, a dark retreat, a low neighbourhood; as Westminster and East-end SLUMS, favourite haunts for thieves.

Slum, to hide, to pass to a confederate.

Slum, to saunter about, with a suspicion, perhaps, of immoral pursuits.—*Cambridge University Slang*.

Slum the gorger, to cheat on the sly, to be an eye-servant. SLUM in this sense is old cant.

Slumgullion, any cheap, nasty, washy beverage. An Americanism best known in the Pacific States.

Slumming, passing bad money.

Slush, the grease obtained from boiling the salt pork eaten by seamen, and generally the cook's perquisite.

Slushy, a ship's cook.

Sluter, butter.—*North*.

Smack smooth, even, level with the surface, quickly.

Small-beer; "he doesn't think SMALL-BEER of himself," *i.e.*, he has a great opinion of his own importance. SMALL COALS is also used in the same sense.

Small hours, the early hours after midnight.

Small potatoes, a term of contempt. "He's very SMALL POTATOES," he's a nobody. Yet no one thinks of calling an important personage "large POTATOES."

Smalls, a University term for the first general examination of the student. It is used at Cambridge, but properly belongs to Oxford. The Cambridge term is "[little go](#)."

Smash, to become bankrupt, or worthless; "to go all to SMASH," to break, "go to the dogs," or fall in pieces.

Smash, to pass counterfeit money.

Smasher, one who passes bad coin, or forged notes.

Smashfeeder, a Britannia-metal spoon,—the best imitation shillings are made from this metal.

[298]

Smash-man-Geordie, a pitman's oath.—*Durham and Northumberland*. See [GEORDIE](#).

Smeller, the nose; "a blow on the SMELLER" is often to be found in pugilistic records. Otherwise a [NOSE-ENDER](#).

Smish, a shirt, or chemise.

Smithers, or SMITHEREENS; "all to SMITHEREENS," all to smash, SMITHER is a Lincolnshire word for a fragment.

Smock-face, a white delicate face,—a face without whiskers.

Smoke, London. From the peculiar dense cloud which overhangs London. The metropolis is by no means so smoky as Sheffield, Birmingham, &c.; yet country-people, when going to London, frequently say they are on their way to the SMOKE; and Londoners, when leaving for the country, say they are going out of the SMOKE.

Smoke, to detect, or penetrate an artifice. Originally used by London detectives, probably on account of their clouded intellects.

Smudge, to smear, obliterate, daub. Corruption of SMUTCH.

Smug, smuggling.—*Anglo-Chinese*.

Smug, extremely neat, after the fashion, in order.

Smug, sleek, comfortable. Term often applied to a seemingly pious humbug, more of the Chadband than the Stiggins.

Smuggings, snatchings, or purloinings,—shouted out by boys, when snatching the tops, or small play property, of other lads, and then running off at full speed.

"Tops are in; spin 'em agin.
Tops are out; SMUGGING's about."

Smut, a copper boiler. Also, the "blacks" from a furnace.

Smutty, obscene,—vulgar as applied to conversation. Variation of dirty.

Snack, a share or division of plunder. To "go SNACKS," to divide equally. Also, a light repast.—*Old Cant* and *Gipsy term*.

Snack, to quiz or chaff with regard to a particular weakness or recent transaction. As a substantive in this sense SNACK means an innuendo.

Snaffle, conversation on professional or private subjects which the rest of the company cannot appreciate. In *East Anglia*, to SNAFFLE is to talk foolishly.

Snaffled, arrested, "pulled up,"—so termed from a kind of horse's bit called a SNAFFLE.

Snaggle teeth, those that are uneven, and unpleasant looking.—*West*.

Snagging, angling after geese with a hook and line, the bait being a worm or snail. The goose swallows the bait, and is quietly landed and bagged. See Seymour's *Sketches*.

Snaggy, cross, crotchety, malicious.

Snam, to snatch, or rob from the person. Mostly used to describe that kind of theft which consists in picking up anything lying about, and making off with it rapidly.

Snaps, share, portion; any articles or circumstances out of which money may be made; "looking out for SNAPS," waiting for windfalls, or odd jobs.—*Old. Scotch*, CHITS, term also used for "coppers," or halfpence.

Snapps, spirits. *Dutch*, SCHNAPPS. The word, as originally pronounced, is used by East-end Jews to describe any kind of spirits, and the Gentiles get as near as they can.

Sneaksmen, a shoplifter; a petty, cowardly thief.

Sneeze-lurker, a thief who throws snuff in a person's face, and then robs him.

Sneezer, a snuff-box; a pocket-handkerchief.

Snell-fencer, a street salesman of needles. SNELLS are needles.

Snick-ersnee, a knife.—*Sea*. Thackeray uses the term in his humorous ballad of *Little Billee*.

Snicker, a drinking-cup. A HORN-SNICKER, a drinking-horn.

Snid, a sixpence.—*Scotch*.

Snide, bad, spurious, contemptible. As, "a SNIDE fellow," "SNIDE coin," &c. Also used as a substantive, as, "He's a SNIDE," though this seems but a contraction of SNIDE 'UN.

Snigger, to laugh in a covert manner. Also a mild form of swearing,—"I'm SNIGGERED if you will." Another form of this latter is [JIGGERED](#).

Sniggering, laughing to oneself.—*East*.

Snip, a tailor,—apparently from [SNIPES](#), a pair of scissors, or from the snipping sound made by scissors in cutting up anything.

Snipe, a long bill or account; also a term for attorneys,—a race with a remarkable propensity for long bills.

Snipes, "a pair of SNIPES," a pair of scissors. They are occasionally made in the form of a snipe.

Snitch, to give information to the police, to turn approver. SNITCHING is synonymous in thieves' slang with "nosing" and "peaching."

Snitchers, persons who turn Queen's evidence, or who tell tales. In *Scotland*, SNITCHERS signify handcuffs.

Snob, a low, vulgar, or affected person. Supposed to be from the nickname usually applied to a cobbler or maker of shoes; but believed by many in its later sense to be a contraction of the *Latin*, SINE OBOLO. Others go to work for an etymology thus:—They assume that NOBS, *i.e.*, *nobiles*, was appended in lists to the names of persons of gentle birth, whilst those who had not that distinction were marked down as S NOB, *i.e.*, *sine nobilitate*, without marks of gentility,—thus, by a simple transposition, quite reversing the meaning. Others, again, remark that, as at college sons of noblemen wrote after their names in the admission lists, *fil. nob.*, son of a lord, and hence all young noblemen were called NOBS, and what they did NOBBY, so those who imitated them would be called *quasi-nobs*, "like a nob," which by a process of contraction would be shortened to *si-nob*, and then SNOB, one who pretends to be what he is not, and apes his betters. The short and expressive terms which many think fitly represent the three great estates of the realm—NOB, SNOB, and MOB—were all originally slang words. The last has safely passed through the vulgar ordeal of the streets, and found respectable quarters in the standard dictionaries. For fuller particulars of the genus SNOB, in all its ramifications, the reader cannot do better than apply to the general works of that great master of the subject, William Makepeace Thackeray, though it may be as well to remark that the SNOB for whom the novelist had such an aversion is now very widely known as "cad."

Snobbish, stuck up, proud, make-believe.

Snob-Stick, a workman who refuses to join in strikes, or trade-unions. Amplification of [KNOB-STICK](#).

Snooks, an imaginary personage often brought forward as the answer to an idle question, or as the perpetrator of a senseless joke. Said to be simply a shortening or abbreviation of "Sevenoaks," the Kentish village.

Snooze, or SNOODGE (vulgar pronunciation), to sleep or doze.

Snooze-case, a pillow-slip.

Snorter, a blow on the nose. A hurry is sometimes called a "reg'lar SNORTER."

Snot, a term of reproach applied to persons by the vulgar when vexed or annoyed, meaning really a person of the vilest description and meanest capacity. In a Westminster school vocabulary for boys, published in the last century, the term is curiously applied. Its proper meaning is the glandular mucus discharged through the nose.

Snot, a small bream, a slimy kind of flat fish.—*Norwich*.

Snotter, or WIPE-HAULER, a pickpocket whose chief fancy is for gentlemen's pocket-handkerchiefs.—*North*.

Snottinger, a coarse word for a pocket-handkerchief. The German *Schnupftuch* is, however,

nearly as plain. A handkerchief was also anciently called a "muckinger" or "[muckender](#)," and from that a neckerchief was called a "neckinger."

Snow, wet linen, or linen hung out to dry.—*Old Cant*.

Snow-gatherer, or SNOW-DROPPER, a rogue who steals linen from hedges and drying-grounds.

Snuff, "up to SNUFF," knowing and sharp; "to take SNUFF," to be offended. Shakspeare uses SNUFF in the sense of anger, or passion.

Snuff it, to die. Term very common among the lower orders of London. A fanciful variation of "putting one's light out," and used simply in reference to the action of the person dying. Thus any one threatening to murder another says, "I'll put your light out," or any one committing suicide is said to "put his own light out;" but to "SNUFF IT" is always to die from disease or accident. To "lay down one's knife and fork," to "peg out," or "give up," are variations of this form of euphemism.

Snuffy, tipsy, drunk.

Snuggle, to lie closely and cosily.

Snyder, a tailor. *German*, SCHNEIDER.

Soaker, an habitual drunkard.

Soap, flattery. See [SOFT SOAP](#).

Sober-water, a jocular allusion to the uses of soda-water.

Social evil, a name for some years applied to our street-walking system, in consequence of the articles in the newspapers which treat on the evils of prostitution being so headed. A good story has been often told on this subject, which will bear repeating:—"A well-known divine and philanthropist was walking in a crowded street at night in order to distribute tracts to promising subjects. A young woman was walking up and down, and he accosted her. He pointed out to her the error of her ways, implored her to reform, and tendered her a tract with fervent entreaties to go home and read it. The girl stared at him for a moment or two in sheer bewilderment; at last it dawned on her what he meant, and for what he took her, and looking up in his face with simple amazement, she exclaimed, 'Lor' bless you, sir, I ain't a SOCIAL EVIL; I'm waitin' for the 'bus!'" The enthusiasm which was felt in this direction a few years back has received considerable modification, as it has been proved that the efforts of the promoters of midnight meetings and other arrangements of a similar nature, praiseworthy though they are, have little or no effect; and that the early-closing movement in the Haymarket has done more to stamp out the SOCIAL EVIL than years of preaching, even when accompanied by tea and buns, could ever have done.

Sock, the Eton College term for a treat, synonymous with "chuck" used at Westminster and other schools. Believed to be derived from the monkish word SOKE. An old writer speaks of a pious man "who did not SOKE for three days," meaning that he fasted. The word is still used by the boys of Heriot's Hospital School at Edinburgh, and signifies a sweetmeat; being derived from the same source as sugar, *suck*, SUCRE, &c.

Sock, credit. As, "He gets his goods on SOCK, while I pay ready."

Sock into him, *i.e.*, give him a good drubbing; "give him SOCK," *i.e.*, thrash him well.

Sockdolager. See [STOCKDOLLAGER](#).

Socket-money, money extorted by threats of exposure. To be applied to for SOCKET-MONEY is perhaps one of the most terrible inflictions that can befall a respectable man. SOCKETERS, as the applicants are called, should be punished with the utmost possible severity.

Sodom, a nickname for Wadham, due to the similarity of the sounds.—*Oxford University*.

Soft, foolish, inexperienced. A term for bank-notes.

Soft-horn, a simpleton; literally a donkey, whose ears, the substitutes of horns, are soft.

Soft-sawder, flattery easily laid on or received. Probably introduced by Sam Slick.

Soft-soap, or soft-sawder, flattery, ironical praise.

Soft-tack, bread.—*Sea*.

Soft-tommy, loaf-bread, in contradistinction to hard biscuit.

Soiled doves, the "Midnight Meeting" term for prostitutes and "gay" ladies generally.

Sold, "SOLD again! and got the money," gulled, deceived. *Vide* [SELL](#).

Sold up, or OUT, broken down, bankrupt.

Soldier, a red herring. Common term in seaport towns, where exchange is made, a soldier being called by the fishy title.

Something damp, a dram, a drink.

Son of a gun, a familiar term for a man. Sometimes applied eulogistically, never contemptuously. Generally said of an artful person, and perhaps, originally, son of a "[gun](#)," (or "[gonnof](#)"). In the army it is sometimes applied to an artilleryman.

Sonkey, a clumsy, awkward fellow.

Soor, an abusive term. *Hindostanee*, a pig.—*Anglo-Indian*.

[301]

[302]

Soot-bag, a reticule.

Sop, a soft or foolish man. Abbreviation of MILKSOP.

Soph (abbreviation of "sophister"), a title peculiar to the University of Cambridge. Undergraduates are junior SOPHS before passing their "Little Go," or first University examination, —senior SOPHS after that.

Sort, used in a slang sense thus—"That's your SORT," as a term of approbation. "Pitch it into him, that's your SORT," *i.e.*, that is the proper kind of plan to adopt.

So-so, not particularly reputable. "A very so-so sort of a person," a person whom it is no advantage to know. "It was very so-so" (said of a piece of work or an entertainment), it was neither good nor bad.

Sound, to pump, or draw information from a person in an artful manner.

Souper, an Irish Roman Catholic who pretends conversion—or perversion—so as to obtain a share of the soup and blankets provided for Protestants only by Christian missionaries. These recalcitrants are also called "swaddlers."

Sou'-wester, a hat with a projection behind. Much worn at sea in "dirty" weather. A hat similar to that of a dustman or coalheaver, which is called a "fantail."

Sov, contraction of sovereign; much used in sporting parlance to denote the amount of entrance money, forfeit, and added coin in connexion with a race. In the published conditions of a race the word sovs is almost invariably used in preference to pounds, though in reckoning the net value of a big stake, after its decision, the common £ is used.

Sow, the receptacle into which the liquid iron is poured in a gun-foundry. The melted metal poured from it is termed [PIG](#).

Sow's baby, a pig; sixpence.

Spanish, money. Probably a relic of buccaneering days.

"Save its synonyms SPANISH, blunt, stumpy, and rowdy."—*Barham*.

Spank, a smack, or hard slap.

Spank, to move along quickly; hence a fast horse or vessel is said to be "a SPANKER to go."

Spanking, large, fine, or strong; *e.g.*, a SPANKING pace, a SPANKING breeze, a SPANKING fellow.

Sparks, diamonds. Term much in use among the lower orders, and generally applied to stones in rings and pins.

Specklebellies, Dissenters. A term used in Worcester and the North, though the etymology seems unknown in either place.

Specks, damaged oranges.—*Costermonger's term*.

Speech, a tip or wrinkle on any subject. On the turf a man will wait before investing on a horse until he "gets the SPEECH," as to whether it is going to try, or whether it has a good chance. To "give the SPEECH," is to communicate any special information of a private nature.

Speel, to run away, make off; "SPEEL the drum," to go off with stolen property.—*North*.

Spell, a turn of work, an interval of time. "Take a SPELL at the capstern."—*Sea*. "He took a long SPELL at that tankard." "After a long SPELL."

Spell, "to SPELL for a thing," to hanker after it, to desire possession.

Spell, to advertise, to put into print. "SPELT in the leer," *i.e.*, advertised in the newspaper.

Spell, contracted from [SPELLKEN](#). "Precious rum squeeze at the SPELL," *i.e.*, a good evening's work at the theatre, might be the remark of a successful pickpocket.

Spellken, OR SPEELKEN, a playhouse. German, SPIELEN. See [KEN](#).—*Don Juan*.

Spick and span, applied to anything that is quite new and fresh.—*Hudibras*.

Spidireen, the name of an imaginary ship, sometimes mentioned by sailors. If a sailor be asked what ship he belongs to, and does not wish to tell, he will most probably reply—"The SPIDIREEN frigate, with nine decks, and ne'er a bottom." See [MERRY DUN OF DOVER](#).

Spierized, to have your hair cut and shampooed, from the shop of Spiers in High Street.—*Oxford University*.

Spiff, a well-dressed man, a "swell."

Spiffed, slightly intoxicated.—*Scotch Slang*.

Spiffs, the per-centages allowed by drapers to their young men when they effect a sale of old-fashioned or undesirable stock.

Spiffy, spruce, well-dressed, *tout à la mode*.

Spifflicate, to confound, silence, annihilate, or stifle. A corruption of the last word, or of "suffocate."

Spike Park, the Queen's Bench Prison. See [BURDON'S HOTEL](#).

Spill, to throw from a horse or chaise. See [PURL](#).

Spin, to reject from an examination.—*Army*.

Spindleshanks, a nickname for any one who has thin legs.

Spin-'em rounds, a street game consisting of a piece of brass, wood, or iron, balanced on a pin, and turned quickly round on a board, when the point, arrow-shaped, stops at a number, and decides the bet one way or the other. The contrivance very much resembles a sea compass, and was formerly the gambling accompaniment of London piemen. The apparatus then was placed on the tin lids of their pie-cans, and the bets were ostensibly for pies, but were frequently for "coppers," or for beer when two or three apprentices or porters happened to meet. An active and efficient police have, however, changed all that now.

Spiniken, St. Giles's Workhouse. "Lump," Marylebone Workhouse. "Pan," St. Pancras. "Pan" and "Lump" are now terms applied to all workhouses by tramps and costers.

Spinning-house, the place in Cambridge where street-walkers are locked up, if found out after a certain time at night.

Spirit, or *SPURT*, "to put on a *SPIRT*," to make an increased exertion for a brief space, to attain one's end; a nervous effort. Abbreviation or shortening of *SPIRIT*, or allusion to a *SPIRT* of water, which dies away as suddenly as it rises.

"So here for a man to run well for a *SPURT*, and then to give over ... is enough to annul all his former proceedings, and to make him in no better estate than if he had never set foot into the good waies of God."—*Gataker's Spirituall Watch*, 4to. 1619, p. 10.

Spitalfields' breakfast. At the East-end of London this is understood as consisting of a tight necktie and a short pipe. Amongst workmen it is usual to tighten the apron string when no dinner is at hand. Hunters and trappers always take in their belts when supplies are short. "An Irishman's dinner" is a low East-end term, and means a smoke and a visit to the urinal. Sometimes the phrase is, "I'll go out and count the railings," *i.e.*, the park or area railings, mental instead of maxillary exercise.

Spitfire, a passionate person.

Splash, complexion powder used by ladies to whiten their necks and faces. The finest rice flour, termed in France *poudre de riz*, is generally employed. See [SLAP](#).

Splendiferous, sumptuous, first-rate. *SPLENDACIOUS* sometimes used with similar meanings.

Splice, to marry; "and the two shall become one flesh."—*Sea*. Also, a wife.

Splice the main brace, to take a drink.—*Sea*.

Split, to inform against one's companions, to tell tales. "To *SPLIT* with a person," to cease acquaintanceship; to quarrel. Also to divide a bottle of aerated water; as, "two brandies and a soda *SPLIT*," in which case "to *SPLIT* with" a person has a very different meaning from that just given.

Split up, long in the legs. Among athletes, a man with good length of limb is said to be "well *SPLIT UP*."

Splodger, a lout, an awkward countryman.

Spoffy, a bustling busybody is said to be *SPOFFY*.

Sponge, "to throw up the *SPONGE*," to submit, to give over the struggle,—from the practice of throwing up the *SPONGE* used to cleanse a combatant's face at a prize-fight, as a signal that the side on which that particular *SPONGE* has been used has had enough—that the *SPONGE* is no longer required.

Spoon, synonymous with *SPOONEY*. A *SPOON* has been defined to be "a thing that touches a lady's lips without kissing them."

Spooney, a weak-minded and foolish person, effeminate or fond; "to be *SPOONEY* on a girl," to be foolishly attached to one.

Spoons, the condition of two persons who *SPOON* on each other, who are deeply in love. "I see, it's a case of *SPOONS* with them," is a common phrase when lovers are mentioned.

Spoons, a method of designating large sums of money, disclosed at the Bankruptcy Court during the examination of the great leather failures of Streatfield and Laurence in 1860-61. The origin of the phrase was stated to be the reply of the bankrupt Laurence to an offer of accommodating him with £5000,—"Oh, you are feeding me with a *TEA-SPOON*." Hence, £5000 came to be known in the firm as a *TEA-SPOON*; £10,000, a *DESSERT-SPOON*; £15,000, a *TABLE-SPOON*; and £20,000, as a *GRAVY-SPOON*. The public were amused at this *TEA-SPOON* phraseology, but were disgusted that such levity should cover a gigantic swindle of the kind. It came out in evidence, however, that it was not the ordinary slang of the discount world, but it may not improbably become so. To "take it with a *SPOON*," is to take anything in small quantities. The counsel for the defence in the Tichborne perjury case was reminded a short time back by one of the judges that he was using a *TEA-SPOON* instead of a shovel, to clear through the evidence.

Sport, to exhibit, to wear, &c.,—a word which is made to do duty in a variety of senses,

especially at the Universities.—*See* the *Gradus ad Cantabrigiam*. “To SPORT a new tile;” “to SPORT an *Ægrota*” (*i.e.*, a permission from the Dons to abstain from lectures, &c., on account of illness); “to SPORT one’s oak,” to shut the outer door and exclude the public,—especially duns and boring acquaintances. Common also in the Inns of Court. *See Notes and Queries*, 2nd series, vol. viii. p. 492, and *Gentleman’s Magazine*, December, 1794.

Sport, an American term for a gambler or turfite—more akin to our sporting man than to our sportsman.

Sporting door, the outer door of chambers, also called the *OAK*. *See* under *SPORT*.—*University*.

Spot, to mark, to recognise. Originally an Americanism, but now general. “I SPOTTED him (or it) at once.”

Spotted, to be known or marked by the police.

Spout, “up the SPOUT,” at the pawnbroker’s; SPOUTING, pawning. *See* *POP* for origin.

Spout, to preach, or make speeches; SPOUTER, a preacher or lecturer.

Sprat, sixpence.

Spread, butter. Term with workmen and schoolboys. *See* *SCRAPE*.

Spread, a lady’s shawl, an entertainment, a display of good things.

Spread, a meal. Sporting term for a dinner. A sporting man often challenges another to compete with him at any athletic pursuit or pastime, for so much wine and a SPREAD of large or small proportions.

Spree, a boisterous piece of merriment; “going on the SPREE,” starting out with intent to have a frolic. *French*, ESPRIT. In the *Dutch* language, SPREEUW is a jester.

Springer-up, a tailor who sells low-priced ready-made clothing, and gives starvation wages to the poor men and women who “make up” for him. The clothes are said to be SPRUNG-UP, or “blown together.”

Sprint race, a short-distance race, ran at the topmost speed throughout. SPRINT is in the North synonymous with SPURT, and hence the name.

Sprung, inebriated sufficiently to become boisterous.

Spry, active, strong, manly. Much used in America, but originally English.

Spuddy, a seller of bad potatoes. In lower life, a SPUD is a raw potato; and roasted SPUDS are those cooked in the cinders with their skins on.

Spun, when a man has failed in his examination at Woolwich, he is said to be SPUN; as at the Universities he is said to be “plucked” or “ploughed.”

Spunge, a mean, paltry fellow, sometimes called a SPUNGER.

Spunge, to live at another’s expense in a mean and paltry manner.

Spunging-house, the sheriff’s officer’s house, where prisoners, when arrested for debt, used to be taken. As extortionate charges were made there for accommodation, the name was far from inappropriate.

Spunk, spirit, fire, courage, mettle, good humour.

“In that snug room, where any man of SPUNK
Would find it a hard matter to get drunk.”

Peter Pindar, i. 245.

Common in America, and much used in some parts of Scotland.

Spunk-fencer, a lucifer-match seller.

Spunks, lucifer-matches.—*Herefordshire*; *Scotland*. SPUNK, says Urry, in his MS. notes to Ray, “is the excrescency of some tree, of which they make a sort of tinder to light their pipes with.”

Spurt.—*Old*. *See* *SPIRT*.

Squabby, flat, short and thick. From SQUAB, a sofa.

Square, honest; “on the SQUARE,” *i.e.*, fair and strictly honest; “to turn SQUARE,” to reform, and get one’s living in an honest manner,—the opposite of “cross.” The expression is, in all probability, derived from the well-known masonic emblem the SQUARE, the symbol of evenness and rectitude.

“You must keep within the compass, and act upon the square with all mankind, for your masonry is but a dead letter if you do not habitually perform its reiterated injunctions.”—*Oliver’s Lectures on Signs and Symbols*, p. 190.

Square, “to be SQUARE with a man,” to be even with him, or to be revenged; “to SQUARE up to a man,” to offer to fight him. Shakspeare uses SQUARE in the sense of to quarrel.

Square cove, an honest man, as distinguished from “cross cove.”

Square moll, an honest woman, one who does not “batter.”

Squaring his nibs, giving a policeman, or any official, money for an immoral or unlawful

purpose. The term [HIS NIBS](#) has no reference to any functionary, as the words mean simply "him," and may be applied to any one.

Square rigged, well dressed.—*Sea*.

Square up, to settle, to pay a debt.

Squarum, a cobbler's lapstone.

Squash, to crush; "to go SQUASH," to collapse.

Squeak, an escape. Generally used with regard to the avoidance of casualties. Among thieves, too, a prisoner acquitted after a hard trial is said to have had "a narrow SQUEAK for it."

Squeak on a person, to inform against, to peach.

Squeal, to inform, to peach. A North country variation of squeak; SQUEALER, an informer, also an illegitimate baby.

Squeeze, silk; also, by a very significant figure, a thief's term for the neck.

Squib, a *jeu d'esprit*, which, like the firework of that denomination, sparkles, bounces, stinks, and vanishes.—*Grose*. Generally used in reference to political and electioneering attacks of a smart kind, which sting for a moment and are then forgotten.

Squibs, paint-brushes.

Squiffy, slightly inebriated.

Squinny-eyed, said of one given to squinting.—*Shakspeare*.

Squirt, a doctor, or chemist.

Squish, common term among University men for marmalade.

Stab, "STAB yourself and pass the dagger," help yourself and pass the bottle.—*Theatrical Slang*.

Stab, "on the STAB," *i.e.*, paid by regular weekly wages on the "establishment," of which word STAB is an abridgment.—*Printer's term*.

Stab-rag, a regimental tailor.—*Military Slang*.

Stag, a shilling.

Stag, a term applied during the railway mania to a speculator without capital, who took "scrip" in proposed lines, got the shares up to a premium, and then sold out. Caricaturists represented the house of Hudson, "the Railway King," at Albert Gate, with a STAG on it, in allusion to this term.

Stag, to see, discover, or watch,—like a STAG at gaze; "STAG the push," look at the crowd. Also, to dun, or demand payment; to beg.

Stage-whisper, one loud enough to be heard. From the stage "asides."

Stagger, to surprise. "He quite STAGGERED me with the information."

Stagger, one who looks out, or watches.

Staggering-bob, an animal to whom the knife only just anticipates death from natural disease or accident,—said of meat on that account unfit for human food. Also a newly-born calf.

[308]

Stale drunk, unevaporated fumes of liquor. A man is said to be STALE DRUNK when he has been drunk overnight, and has doctored himself with stimulants a little too much in the morning—when he has tried too many of the "hairs of the dog that bit him." If this state of things is long continued, it is often called "same OLD DRUNK," from a well-known nigger story. The nigger was cautioned by his master for being too often drunk within a given period, when the "cullud pusson" replied, "Same old drunk, massa—same old drunk."

Stalking-horse, originally a horse covered with loose trappings, under which the mediæval sportsman concealed himself with his bow, so as to approach his game unobserved. Subsequently a canvas figure, made light, so as to be easily moved with one hand. Now used to represent any bugbear persistently paraded; any constant and unpleasant reference to the possible consequences of an act.

Stall, to lodge, or put up at a public-house. Also, to act a part.—*Theatrical*.

Stall, to frighten or discourage. In the days of dog-fighting and pugilism, a dog or man who had originally shown great pluck would, after a hard battle or two, show signs of cowardice. In such case he was said to have been STALLED by his previous encounters. A STALL is a spurious excuse or an imposition, a dodge, &c.

Stall-off, to put off by means of a device, to misdirect purposely.

Stall off, to blind, excuse, hide, to screen a robbery during the perpetration of it by an accomplice.

Stall your mug, go away; spoken sharply by any one who wishes to get rid of a troublesome or inconvenient person.

Stallsman, sometimes STALL, an accomplice.

Stampers, shoes.—*Ancient Cant*.

Stand, "to STAND treat," to pay for a friend's entertainment; to bear expense; to put up with treatment, good or ill, as, "Will you STAND that?" a question often asked when a man has been struck or insulted. Also in the sense of aggregate cost, as, "This house STOOD me in £1000;" *i.e.*, cost that sum; "to STAND pad," to beg on the kerb with a small piece of paper pinned on the breast, inscribed, "I am starving."

Stand in, to make one of a party in a bet or other speculation; to take a side in a dispute.

Standing, the position at a street corner, or on the kerb of a market street, regularly occupied by a costermonger, or street seller.

Standing patterers, men who take a stand on the kerb of a public thoroughfare, and deliver prepared speeches to effect a sale of any articles they have to vend. See [PATTERER](#).

Stangey, a tailor, a person under petticoat government,—derived from the custom of "riding the STANG," mentioned in *Hudibras*:—

"It is a custom used of course
Where the grey mare is the better horse."

Star, a common abbreviation of the name of the well-known STAR AND GARTER Inn at Richmond. Clever people, who delight in altering names, call this hostelry the "Gar and Starter."

Star it, to perform as the centre of attraction, with inferior subordinates to set off one's abilities. —*Theatrical*.

Star the glaze, to break a window. Among thieves it means to break the window or show-glass of a jeweller or other tradesman, take any valuable articles, and run away. Sometimes the glass is cut with a diamond, and a strip of leather fastened to the piece of glass cut out to keep it from falling in and making a noise. Another plan is to cut the sash.

Starchy, stuck-up, high-notioned, showily dressed, stiff and unbending in demeanour.

Stark-naked, originally STRIP-ME-NAKED, *vide Randall's Diary*, 1820, raw gin.

Start, "the START," London,—the great starting-point for beggars and tramps. This is a term also used by many of superior station to those mentioned.

Start, a proceeding of any kind; "a rum START," an odd circumstance; "to get the START of a person," to anticipate or overreach him.

Starvation, though now a recognised word, was originally slang. Its derivation is composite, and it was first introduced into the English language by Mr. Dundas, in a debate in the House of Commons on American affairs, in 1775. "I shall not," he said, "wait for the advent of STARVATION from Edinburgh to settle my judgment." From this he was always afterwards called STARVATION Dundas.—*Horace Walpole's Letters*.

Starve'em, Rob'em, and Cheat'em, the adjoining towns of Stroud, Rochester, and Chatham are so designated by soldiers and sailors; from some fancied peculiarities of the inhabitants.

Stash, to cease doing anything, to refrain, be quiet, leave off; "STASH it, there, you sir!" *i.e.*, be quiet, sir; to give over a lewd or intemperate course of life is to STASH it.

Stay, to exhibit powers of endurance at walking, running, rowing, &c.

Stayer, one likely to persevere, one not easily discouraged. It is usual for *laudatores temporis acti* connected with the turf to deplore the want of staying power which, according to their statements, characterizes the modern British racehorse; while others, connected and disconnected with sport, make similar remarks with reference to the modern British man. So far, however, both descriptions of old gentlemen have failed signally in endeavouring to make out a good case.

Steam-engine, potato-pie at Manchester is so termed.

Steel, the House of Correction in London, formerly named the Bastile, but since shortened to STEEL. See [BASTILE](#).

Steel-bar drivers, OR FLINGERS, journeymen tailors.

Stems, the legs.

Step it, to run away, or make off.

Stepper, the treadmill; the "everlasting staircase."

Stick, a derogatory expression for a person; "a rum, or odd, STICK," a curious man. More generally a "poor STICK."—*Provincial*.

Stick, "cut your STICK," be off, or go away; either simply equivalent to a recommendation to prepare a walking staff in readiness for a journey—in allusion to the Eastern custom of cutting a STICK before setting out—or from the ancient mode of reckoning by notches or tallies on a STICK. In Cornwall the peasantry tally sheaves of corn by cuts in a STICK, reckoning by the score. "Cut your STICK" in this sense may mean to make your mark and pass on—and so realize the meaning of the phrase, "in the nick (or notch) of time." Sir J. Emerson Tennent considers the phrase equivalent to "cutting the connexion," and suggests a possible origin in the prophet's breaking the staves of "Beauty" and "Bands,"—*vide* Zech. xi. 10, 14.

Stick, to cheat; "he got STUCK," he was taken in; "I'm STUCK," a common phrase to express that the speaker has spent or lost all his money, and can neither play nor pay any longer. STICK, to forget one's part in a performance.—*Theatrical*. STICK up, to place in an account; "STICK it up to me," *i.e.*, give me credit for it; STICK on, to overcharge or defraud; STICK up for, to defend a person, especially when slandered in his absence; STICK up to, to persevere in courting or attacking, whether in fisticuffs or argument; "to STICK in one's gizzard," to rankle in one's heart; "to STICK to a person," to adhere to one, to be his friend through adverse circumstances,—to "cotton" to him; "to STICK one's spoon in the wall," to die.

Stick-up, to keep any one waiting at an appointed place or time. To leave a friend or acquaintance to pay the whole or an undue share of a tavern bill.

Stick-ups, or GILLS, shirt collars.

Sticker, one not likely to be easily shaken off, a stayer.

Stickings, coarse, bruised, or damaged meat sold to sausage-makers and penny pie-shops.

Sticks, furniture, or household chattels; "pick up your STICKS and cut!" summary advice to a person to take himself and furniture away.

Sticky, wax.

Stiff, paper, a bill of acceptance, &c.; "how did you get it, STIFF or hard?" *i.e.*, did he pay you cash or give a bill? "To do a bit of STIFF," to accept a bill. See [KITE](#).

Stiff-fencer, a street-seller of writing paper.

Stiff un, a corpse. Term used by undertakers.

Stills, undertakers' slang term for STILL-BORN children. The fee paid by nurses and others for their disposal is usually 2s. 6d. A separate coffin is never given; the STILLS are quietly introduced into one containing an adult about to be buried. STILLS are allowed to accumulate at an undertaker's until they sometimes number as many as a dozen. Some little time back a very bulky coffin was opened, and found to contain a large quantity of small corpses packed carefully round a large corpse. This caused a little excitement, but nothing was done in the matter.

Stilton, "that's the STILTON," or "it's not the STILTON," *i.e.*, that is quite the thing, or that is not quite the thing;—affected rendering of "that is not the [CHEESE](#)," which *see*.

[311]

Stingo, strong liquor.—*Yorkshire*.

Stink, a disagreeable exposure. "To stir up a STINK" is to make a disclosure which is generally unpleasant in its effect.

Stinkomalee, a name given to the then New London University by Theodore Hook. Probably because some cow-houses and dunghills stood on the original site. Some question about Trincomalee was agitated at the same time. It is still applied by the students of the old Universities, who regard it with disfavour from its admitting all denominations.

Stipe, a stipendiary magistrate.—*Provincial*.

Stir, a prison, a lock-up; "in STIR," in gaol. *Anglo-Saxon*, STYR, correction, punishment.

Stir-up Sunday, the Sunday next before Advent, the collect for that day commencing with the words, "Stir up." Schoolboys, growing excited at the prospect of the vacation, irreverently commemorate it by stirring up—pushing and poking each other. "Crib-crust Monday" and "tug-button Tuesday" are distinguished by similar tricks; while on "pay-off Wednesday" they retaliate small grudges in a playful facetious way. Forby says good housewives in Norfolk consider themselves reminded by the name to mix the ingredients for their Christmas mince-pies.

Stock. "To STOCK cards" is to arrange cards in a certain manner for cheating purposes.

Stock, "to take STOCK of one," to scrutinize narrowly one whom you have reason to suspect, or one with whom you are likely to have business transactions; taken from the tradesmen's term for the annual examination and valuation of their stock of goods.

Stockdollager, a heavy blow, a "finisher." *Italian*, STOCADO, a fencing term. Also (in a general sense), a disastrous event.—*Americanism*.

Stodge, to surfeit, gorge, or clog with food. STODGE is in some places bread and milk.

Stoll, to understand.—*North Country Cant*.

Stomach, to bear with, to be partial to. Mostly used in a negative character,—as, "I can't STOMACH that."

Stone-jug, a prison.

"In a box of the stone-jug I was born."

Stook, a pocket-handkerchief. A STOOK-HAULER, or "buzzer," is a thief who takes pocket-handkerchiefs.

Story, a falsehood,—the soft synonym for a lie, allowed in family circles and boarding-schools. A Puritanism that came into fashion with the tirade against romances, all novels and stories being considered as dangerous and false.

Stot, a young bullock. In Northumberland the term STOT means to rebound.

[312]

Stotor, a heavy blow, a settler.—*Old Cant.*

Stow, to leave off, or have done; “STOW it, the gorgers’ leary.” Leave off, the person is looking. See [STASH](#), with which it is synonymous.—*Ancient Cant.*

Stow, to put away, to hide. A hungry man is said to STOW his food rapidly. He is also said to hide it.

Stow faking! leave off there, be quiet! FAKING means anything that may be going on.

Straight, an American phrase peculiar to dram-drinkers; similar to our word [NEAT](#), which see.

Strap, a barber. From *Roderick Random*.

Straw. Married ladies are said to be “in the STRAW” at their accouchements. The phrase is a coarse metaphor, and has reference to farmyard animals in a similar condition. It may have originally been suggested to the inquiring mind by the Nativity.

Strawing, “selling” straws in the streets (generally for a penny), and “giving” the purchaser a paper (indecent or political) or a gold (!) ring,—neither of which, the patterer states, he is allowed by Act of Parliament to sell.

Streak, to decamp, run away.—*Saxon*. In America the phrase is “to make STREAKS,” or “make [TRACKS](#).”

Streaky, irritated, ill-tempered. Said of a short-tempered man who has his good and bad times in STREAK.

Street-pitchers, negro minstrels, ballad-singers, long-song men, men “working a board” on which have been painted various exciting scenes in some terrible drama, the details of which the STREET PITCHER is bawling out, and selling in a little book or broadsheet (price one penny); or any persons who make a stand—*i.e.*, a pitch—in the streets, and sell articles or contribute entertainments for a living.

Stretch, a walk.—*University*.

Stretch, abbreviation of “STRETCH one’s neck,” to hang, to be executed as a malefactor. As, “The night before Larry was STRETCHED.”

Stretch, twelve months,—generally used to intimate the time any one has been sentenced by the judge or magistrate. One STRETCH is twelve months’ imprisonment, two STRETCH is two years, three STRETCH is three years, and so on.

Stretcher, a falsehood; one that requires a STRETCH of imagination or comprehension.

Stretcher, a contrivance with handles, used by the police to carry off persons who are violent or drunk.

Stretcher-fencer, one who sells braces.

Stretching match, an execution. Often called a “hanging match.”

Strike a jigger, to pick a lock, or break open a door.

Strike me lucky! an expression used by the lower orders when making a bargain, derived from the old custom of striking hands together, leaving in that of the seller a LUCK PENNY as an earnest that the bargain is concluded. In Ireland, at cattle markets, &c., a penny, or other small coin, is always given by the buyer to the seller to ratify the bargain.—*Hudibras*. Anciently this was called a “God’s penny.”

“With that he cast him a God’s penny.”—*Heir of Linne*.

The origin of the phrase being lost sight of, like that of many others, it is often used as a modification of “Strike me blind!” and is now and again corrupted into “Strike me silly!” A foolish variation of this is “Strike me up a gum-tree!”

Strills, cheating lies.—*North Country Cant.*

String, to hoax, to “get in a line.”

Stroke, the captain of a crew, the man who sets the pace, and is generally the leading spirit in the boat. The coxswain usually looks after University men when they are in training, so that they may not fall into excesses, the STROKE having quite enough to do to attend to his own training. Of late years University crews have placed themselves under the guidance and tuition of “coaches,” generally ex-University men of great ability and experience.

Strommel, straw.—*Ancient Cant*. Halliwell says that in Norfolk STRUMMEL is a name for hair.

Strong, “to come it STRONG.” See [COME](#).

Stuck, moneyless. See [STICK](#).

Stuck-up, purse-proud—a form of snobbishness very common in those who have risen in the world, especially among those who have risen rather suddenly. Albert Smith wrote some amusing papers on the *Natural History of STUCK-UP People*.

Stuff, money.

Stuff, to make false but plausible statements, to praise ironically, to make game of a person,—

literally, to STUFF or cram him with gammon or falsehood.

Stump, to go on foot.

Stump, to go about speechmaking on politics or other subjects. Originally an Americanism applied to the lowest class of candidates for legislative honours, probably because they stood on a STUMP to address their audiences. Maybe, also, because their utterances were short and pithy. This latter reason would, however, hardly apply to our representatives of the STUMP class, "the Leaguers," who are, as a rule, as long-winded as they are illogical.

Stump up, to give one's share, to pay the reckoning, to bring forth the money reluctantly.

Stumped, bowled out, done for, bankrupt, poverty-stricken. From the cricketing term.

Stumps, legs, or feet.

Stumpy, money.

Stun, to astonish.

Stunner, a first-rate person or article.

Stunners, feelings of great astonishment; "it put the STUNNERS on me," *i.e.*, it confounded me.

Stunning, first-rate, very good, really, astonishing. Costermongers call anything extra good, STUNNING. Sometimes amplified to STUNNING JOE BANKS! when the expression is supposed to be in its most intense form. Joe Banks was a noted character in the last generation. He was the proprietor of a public-house in Dyott Street, Seven Dials, and afterwards, on the demolition of the Rookery, of another in Cranbourn Alley. His houses became well-known from their being the resort of the worst characters, while at the same time the strictest decorum was always maintained in them. Joe Banks also acquired a remarkable notoriety by acting as a medium betwixt thieves and their victims. Upon the proper payment to Joe, a watch or a snuff-box would at any time be restored to its lawful owner—"no questions in any case being asked." The most daring depredators in London placed the fullest confidence in Joe, and it is believed (although the *Biographie Universelle* is quiet upon this point) that he never, in any instance, "sold" them. He was of the middle height, stout, and strongly made, and was always noted for a showy pin and a remarkably STUNNING neck-tie. It was this peculiarity in the costume of Mr. Banks, coupled with those true and tried qualities as a friend for which he was famous, that led his customers to proclaim him as STUNNING JOE BANKS! The Marquis of Douro, Colonel Chatterley, and men of their stamp, were accustomed to resort to a private-room at his house, when too late (or too early) to gain admittance to the clubs or more aristocratic establishments.

Sub, a subaltern officer in the army.

Sub, all.—*Anglo-Indian*.

Sub, to draw money in advance; a term in use among workmen generally, and those with casual employment in particular. Most likely from subsidize.

Sublime rascal, a lawyer.

Suck, a parasite, a flatterer of the "nobs."—*University*.

Suck, to pump, or draw information from a person.

Suck-casa, a public-house.—*Lingua Franca*.

Suck the mop, to be the victim of an omnibus nursing exploit. When an omnibus is being nursed, the driver of the hindmost vehicle keeps so close to his opponent that the horses get their heads almost into the doorway. The nursed omnibus is then said to SUCK THE MOP. Nursing is, thanks to tramways and the Metropolis Streets Act, almost a thing of the past. At the East-end, however, it still goes merrily on.

Suck the monkey, to rob a cask of liquor by inserting a straw through a gimlet-hole, and sucking a portion of the contents. Originally, as Captain Marryatt states, to SUCK THE MONKEY, was to suck rum from cocoa-nuts, which spirit had been inserted in place of the milk, for the private use of the sailors. See [TAP THE ADMIRAL](#).

Suck up, "to SUCK UP to a person," to insinuate oneself into his good graces.

Sudden death. In tossing, to be decided by the first call is to "GO SUDDEN DEATH," as distinguished from the longer forms of "best two out of three," and "first three." At the Universities a crumpet, or Sally Lunn, is so called.

Sufferer, a tailor; the loser at any game.

Sugar, money.

Suicide, four horses driven in a line. See [HARUM-SCARUM](#).

Sulky, a one-horse chaise, having only room for one person. Used nowadays only in trotting matches.

Sumsy, an action of *assumpsit*.—*Legal Slang*.

Sun in the eyes, too much drink. A person who is tipsy is said to have the SUN IN HIS EYES. He is also said to have been "standing too long in the SUN."

Supe, or super, abbreviation of SUPERNUMERARY.—*Theatrical*.

Super, a watch; SUPER-SCREWING, stealing watches.

Surat, an adulterated article of inferior quality. This word affords a remarkable instance of the manner in which slang phrases are coined. In the report of an action for libel in the *Times*, some few years back, it was stated "that, since the American civil war, it has been not unusual for manufacturers to mix American cotton with surat, and, the latter being an inferior article, the people in Lancashire have begun to apply the term SURAT to any article of inferior or adulterated quality. The plaintiffs were brewers, and the action was brought to recover special damages resulting from the publication of an advertisement in these words:—'All in want of beerhouses must beware of Beaumont and White, the SURAT brewers.'"

Surf, an actor who frequently pursues another calling.—*Theatrical*. SURF, or SERF, is also a term much in use among the lower orders to denote a crawling or sycophantic wretch.

Suspicion, a scarcely perceptible flavour; as, "There was just a SUSPICION of oil in the mixture." *French*, SOUPÇON.

Swab, an epaulet.—*Sea*.

Swack-up, a falsehood.

Swaddler, a Wesleyan Methodist; a name originally given to members of that body by the Irish mob; said to have originated with an ignorant Romanist, to whom the words of the English Bible were a novelty, and who, hearing one of John Wesley's preachers mention the swaddling clothes of the Holy Infant, in a sermon on Christmas-day at Dublin, shouted out in derision, "A SWADDLER! a SWADDLER!" as if the whole story were the preacher's invention.—*Southey's Life of Wesley*, vol. ii. p. 109. See [introductory article](#).

Swaddler, see [SOUPER](#).

Swaddy, or COOLIE, a soldier. The former was originally applied to a discharged soldier, and perhaps came from [SHODDY](#), which is made from soldiers' and policemen's worn-out coats. The term was one of opprobrium, and was probably the result of a long peace, for it became obsolete as soon as the Crimean War commenced.

[316]

Swag, a lot or plenty of anything, a portion or division of property. In Australia the term is used for the luggage carried by diggers. *Scotch*, SWEG, or SWACK; *German*, SWEIG, a flock. Old cant for a shop.

Swag-shop, a warehouse where "Brummagem" and general wares, fancy trinkets, plated goods, &c., are sold. Jews are the general proprietors; and the goods are very low-priced, trashy, and showy. SWAG-SHOPS were formerly plunder depôts.—*Old Cant*.

Swagsman, one who carries the booty after a burglary.

Swank, to boast or "gas" unduly.

Swankey, cheap or small beer. Any weak fermented beverage.

Swap, to exchange. Grose says it is Irish cant, but the term is now included in most dictionaries as an allowed vulgarism.

Swarry, a boiled leg of mutton and trimmings. Sam Weller's adventure with the Bath footmen originated the term. See [TRIMMINGS](#).

Swatchel-cove, the master of a Punch-and-Judy exhibition who "fakes the slum," and does the necessary squeak for the amusement of the bystanders. See [SCHWASSLE BOX](#). The orthography of many of these colloquial expressions differs. It was thought best to give the various renderings as collected.

Sweat, to extract money from a person, to "bleed." Also, to squander riches.—*Bulwer*.

Sweat, to violently shake up a lot of guineas or sovereigns in a leathern bag for the purpose of benefiting by the perspiration.

Sweater, common term for a "cutting" or "grinding" employer,—one who SWEATS his workpeople. A cheap tailor, who pays starvation wages.

Sweep, a contemptuous term for a low or shabby man.

Sweet, loving or fond; "how SWEET he was upon the moll," *i.e.*, what marked attention he paid the girl.

Sweetener, a person who runs up the prices of articles at an auction. See [JOLLYING](#), [BONNET](#), &c.

Swell, a man of importance; a person with a showy, jaunty exterior, "a rank SWELL," a very flashily dressed person, a man who by excessive dress apes a higher position than he actually occupies. Any one occupying a superior position in society is by the mob called a SWELL. Anything is said to be SWELL or SWELLISH that looks showy, or is many coloured, or is of a desirable quality. Dickens and Thackeray were termed great SWELLS in literature, and so are the first persons in the learned professions SWELLS in their way.

Swell hung in chains, said of a showy man in the habit of wearing much jewellery.

Swell street, the West-end of London.

Swig, a hearty drink.

Swig, to drink. *Saxon*, SWIGAN.

Swill, to drink inordinately. SWILL, hog-wash. From which the verb has possibly been derived.—*Norfolk*.

Swim, “a good SWIM,” a good run of luck, a long time out of the policeman’s clutches.—*Thieves’ term*. Among anglers “a good SWIM” is a good pitch for a part where fish are plentiful—that is, because a lot of fish keeping together are called a SWIM. Thus one who is in luck, is well connected, or is doing a good business, is said to be in a good SWIM.

Swindler, although a recognised word in standard dictionaries, commenced service as a slang term. It was used as such by the poor Londoners against the German Jews who set up in London about the year 1762, also by our soldiers in the German war about that time. SCHWINDELN, in *German*, signifies to cheat.

Swing. To have one’s SWING is to have a full turn at anything.

Swing, to be hanged; “if you don’t do what’s right, I’ll SWING for you,” *i.e.*, take your life,—a common threat in low neighbourhoods.

Swingeing, large, huge, powerful. As a SWINGEING blow, SWINGEING damages, &c.

Swipe, at cricket, to hit hard with a full swing of the bat. Most probably a condensation of “wipe swingeing” or “swinging wipe.”

Swipes, sour or small beer. SWIPE, to drink.—*Sea*.

Swipey (from SWIPES), intoxicated.

Swish, to flog, derived perhaps from the sound. Maybe, a corruption of SWITCH.

Swished, or SWITCHED, married.

Swivel-eye, a squinting eye.

Swizzle, small beer, drink.

Swot, mathematics; also, a mathematician; as a verb, to work hard for an examination, to be diligent in one’s studies.—*Army*.

This word originated at the great slang manufactory for the army, the Royal Military College, Sandhurst, in the broad Scotch pronunciation by Dr. Wallace, one of the Professors, of the word sweat. It has since become fashionable at the Universities.

Syce, a groom.—*Anglo-Indian*.

T, "to suit to a T," to fit to a nicety.—*Old*. Perhaps from the T-square of carpenters, by which the accuracy of work is tested.

Tabby party, a party consisting entirely of women, a tea and tattle gathering. In America, a gathering of men only is called a "stag party."

Tabooed, forbidden. This word, now very common, is derived from a custom of the South-Sea islanders, first noticed in *Cook's Voyages*.

Tack, a taste foreign to what was intended; a barrel may get a TACK upon it, either permanently mouldy, sour, or otherwise.

Tacked, tied down. When a man has another vanquished, or for certain reasons bound to his service, he is said to have "got him TACKED."

Tackle, clothes.—*Sea*. Also to encounter a person in argument.

Taffy (corruption of David), a Welshman. Compare Sawney (from Alexander), a Scotchman; Paddy (from Patrick), an Irishman; and Johnny (from John Bull), an Englishman.

[318]

Tag-rag-and-bobtail, a mixed crowd of low people, the lower orders generally.

Tail-block, a watch.—*Sea*.

Tail-buzzer, a thief who picks coat-pockets.

Tail-down, "to get the TAIL DOWN," generally means to lose courage. When a professional at any game loses heart in a match he is said to get his TAIL DOWN. "His TAIL was quite DOWN, and it was all over." The origin is obvious.

Take, to succeed, or be patronized. "Do you think the new opera will TAKE?" "No, because the same company TOOK so badly under the old management." "To TAKE on," to grieve; Shakspeare uses the word TAKING in this sense. To "TAKE up for any one," to protect or defend a person; "to TAKE off," to mimic; "to TAKE heart," to have courage; "to TAKE down a peg or two," to humiliate, or tame; "to TAKE up," to reprove; "to TAKE after," to resemble; "to TAKE in," to cheat or defraud, probably from the lower class lodging-house-keepers' advertisements, "Single men TAKEN in and done for,"—an engagement which is as frequently performed in a bad as a good sense; in reference to this performance, Scripture is often quoted: "I was a stranger and ye TOOK me in." "To TAKE the field," when said of a general, to commence operations against the enemy. When a racing man TAKES the field he stakes his money against the favourite, that is, he takes the chances of the field against the chance of one horse.

Take beef, to run away.

Take in, a cheating or swindling transaction,—sometimes termed "a dead TAKE IN." Shakspeare has TAKE IN in the sense of conquering. To be "had," or to be "spoken to," were formerly synonymous phrases with to be TAKEN IN.

Take it out, to obtain value for money, labour, &c. A rich man is said to "TAKE IT (*i.e.*, his money) OUT in fine footmen, fine feeding," &c. A poor man "TAKES IT (*i.e.*, his trouble) OUT in drink."

Talking, a stable term, of a milder kind, applied to those horses which are addicted to [ROARING](#). See the latter expression.

Talk shop, to intrude oneself or one's private business too freely into conversation. Any one who does this is said to be shoppy.

Tall, extensive, exaggerated,—generally applied to conversation, as "loud" is to dress, or personal appearance; "TALL talk that," *i.e.*, conversation too boastful or high-flown to be true. Among pedestrians a great rate of speed is spoken of as TALL.

Tally, five dozen bunches of turnips.—*Costermongers' term*.

Tally, "to live TALLY," to live in a state of unmarried impropriety; TALLY-WIFE, a woman who cohabits with a man to whom she is not married.

Tallyman, an accommodating salesman who takes payment by instalments to suit the convenience of the purchaser, but who is anything but accommodating when payments are irregular. TALLYMEN are the cause of much misfortune to the working classes, from their high and exorbitant rates, and the temptations they offer to weak-minded women, who purchase in haste and repent at leisure.

[319]

Tan, to beat or thrash; "I'll TAN your hide," *i.e.*, I'll give you a good beating.

Tan, an order to pull.—*Anglo-Indian*.

Tanner, a sixpence. Perhaps *Gipsy*, TAWNO, little, or *Latin*, TENER, slender.

Tanny, OF TEENY, little. *Gipsy*, TAWNO, little.

Tantrems, pranks, capers, frolicking; from the *Tarantula* dance. See account of the involuntary frenzy and motions caused by the bite of the tarantula in Italy.—*Penny Cyclopædia*.

Tantrums, ill-temper. "He's in his TANTRUMS this morning," is often said of a peevish, querulous man. They are not peculiar to the one sex, however.

Tap the Admiral, to suck liquor from a cask by means of a straw, said to have been done with the rum-cask in which Lord Nelson's body was brought to England, to such an extent as to leave

the gallant Admiral dry.

Tap-tub, the *Morning Advertiser*,—so called by vulgar people from the fact that this daily newspaper is the principal organ of the London brewers and publicans. Sometimes termed the *Gin and Gospel Gazette*, though this title is fast fading out since the paper has been in the hands of its present editor.

Tape, gin,—term with female servants. Also, a military term used in barracks when no spirits are allowed. See [RIBBON](#).

Taper, to give over gradually, to run short.

Taradiddle, a falsehood.

Tar-brush, a person whose complexion indicates a mixture of negro blood, is said to have had a lick of the TAR-BRUSH. Sometimes a man of this description is said to have been dipped in the black-pot, and he is often reminded that “another dip would have done it,” *i.e.*, another dip would have made a negro of him.

Tar-out, to punish, to serve out.

Tarpaulin, a sailor.

Tartar, a savage fellow, an “ugly customer.” To “catch a TARTAR,” is to discover somewhat unpleasantly that a person is by no means so mild or good-tempered as he or she at first appeared.

Tat-box, a dice-box.

Tater, “s’elp my TATER,” an evasion of a profane oath, sometimes varied by “s’elp my greens.”

Tatler, a watch; “nimming a TATLER,” stealing a watch.

Tats, dice.

Tats, old rags; milky TATS, white rags.

Tatterdemalion, a ragged fellow.

Tatting, gathering old rags.

Tattoo, a pony.—*Anglo-Indian*.

Taw, a large or principal marble; “I’ll be one on your TAW,” I will pay you out, or be even with you, —a simile taken from boys aiming always at winning the TAW when playing at marbles.

[320]

Tea-fight, an evening party, alias a “muffin-worry.”

Tea-spoon, five thousand pounds. See [SPOONS](#).

Teagueland, Ireland. From the national character of the name TEAGUE.

Teeth, “he has cut his eye TEETH,” *i.e.*, is old and ‘cute enough.

Teeth-drawing, wrenching off knockers. Medical students’ term.

Teddy Hall, St. Edmund Hall.—*Oxford University*.

Teetotaller, a total abstainer from alcoholic drinks. The origin of this term is not known. It is said to be from the expression of a fanatical and stuttering enthusiast in the cause of total abstinence. It has nothing to do with tea.

Teetotally, amplification of TOTALLY.

Te-he, to titter, “Upon this I TE-HE’D.”—*Madame d’Arblay*. As an interjection it is as old as Chaucer. See *Miller’s Tale*:—

“TE-HE, quod she, and clapt the window to.”

Tell on, to tell about, to talk of, to inform against. (This is formed by a simple misuse of the preposition.)

Ten commandments, a virago’s fingers, or nails. Often heard in a female street disturbance. “I’ll leave the TEN COMMANDMENTS marked on his chump,” shows that the term may be applied to either the fingers or the scratchings. It would be a strange hand, however, that, with the best opportunity, could made five marks simultaneously.

Tench, the Penitentiary, of which it is a contraction. See [STEEL](#).

Tenpence to the shilling, a vulgar phrase denoting a deficiency in intellect.

Testamur, the slip of paper on which the examiners testify (testari) to the fact that the candidate has satisfied their requirements.—*University*.

Tester, sixpence. FROM TESTONE, a shilling in the reign of Henry VIII., but a sixpence in the time of Queen Elizabeth.—*Shakspeare*. *French*, TESTE, OR TÊTE, the head of the monarch on the coin.

Teviss, a shilling. Costermongers’ and tramps’ term.

Thatch, the human hair. “He’s well THATCHED,” is said of a man with a good head of hair.

The Tavern, New Inn Hall.—*Oxford University*.

The thing, the style, the proper proportion. Application varied. A good appearance, a decent dinner, or a fair bottle of wine, is said to be “the THING,” sometimes “the correct THING.”

Thick, intimate, familiar. The Scotch use the word “chief” in this sense, as, “the two are very chief now.”

Thick; “to lay it on THICK,” to flatter unduly, to surfeit with praise or adulation.

Thick un, a sovereign; originally a crown piece, or five shillings.

Thimble, OR YACK, a watch.—*Prison Cant*.

Thimble-rig, a noted cheating game some years back, played at fairs and places of great public thronging, consisting of two or three thimbles rapidly and dexterously placed over a pea. The THIMBLE-RIGGER, suddenly ceasing, asks under which thimble the pea is to be found. Any one not a practised hand would lose nine times out of ten any bet he might happen to make with him. The pea is generally concealed under his nail. THIMBLE-RIGGING has of late years given way to “broad-working.”

Thimble-twisters, thieves who rob persons of their watches.

Thingumy, THINGUMBOB, expressions used for the name of a thing which cannot be recollected at the instant.

Thin-skinned, over-nice, petulant, apt to get a “[raw](#).” See that term.

Three-cornered scraper, a cocked hat.—*Sea*.

Three sheets in the wind, unsteady from drink.—*Sea*.

Three-up, a gambling game played by costers and others of like grade. Three halfpennies are thrown up by one man to the call of another. If they do not come all alike, the cry is void, and the calling and tossing are resumed. When the three coins are all alike they are said to “come off,” and then all bets are decided according to the success or failure of the caller. When two men toss, they play “up for up,” *i.e.*, they toss and cry alternately. When three or more join in, the gathering is named a school, and one man, who is called a pieman, cries to the halfpence of the others until he loses, when the winner of the toss becomes pieman in turn.

Through, finished. In America, where this word is most used in the sense now given, a guest who has had enough will, when asked to take more, say, “I’m THROUGH,” which is certainly preferable to the other Americanism, “crammed.”

Thrummer, a threepenny bit.

Thrums, threepence. Also, in Coventry, remnants and waste pieces of silk.

Thrups, threepence. See the preceding, which is more general.

Thud, the dull, dead sound made by the fall of a heavy body, or the striking of a bullet against any soft, fleshy substance.

Thumper, a magnificently constructed lie, a lie about which there is no stint of imaginative power.

Thumping, large, fine, or strong.

Thunderbomb, an imaginary ship of vast size. See [MERRY DUN OF DOVER](#).

Thunderer, the *Times* newspaper, sometimes termed “the THUNDERER of Printing House Square,” from the locality where it is printed.

Thundering, large, extra-sized.

Tibbing out, going out of bounds.—*Charterhouse*.

Tibby, the head. Street slang, with no known etymology. To drop on one’s TIBBY is to frighten or startle any one, to take one unawares.

Tib’s eve, “neither before Christmas nor after,” an indefinite period; like the Greek Kalends, TIB’S EVE has a future application; an indefinite period of past time is sometimes said to be “when Adam was an oakum-boy in Chatham Dockyard.” “The reign of Queen Dick” is another form of this kind of expression, and is used to indicate either past time or future.

Tick, credit, trust. Johnson says it is a corruption of “ticket,”—tradesmen’s bills being formerly written on tickets or cards. On TICK, therefore, is equivalent to on TICKET, or on trust. In use in 1668, and before, as follows:—

“No matter upon landing whether you have money or no—you may swim in twentie of their boats over the river upon TICKET.”—*Decker’s Gulls’ Hornbook*, 1609.

Ticker, a watch. Formerly cant, now street slang.

Ticket, “that’s the TICKET,” *i.e.*, that’s what is wanted, or what is best. Probable corruption of “that’s *etiquette*,” or, perhaps, from TICKET, a bill or invoice. This phrase is sometimes extended into “that’s the TICKET for soup,” in allusion to the card given to beggars for immediate relief at soup kitchens. See [TICK](#).

Tickle, to puzzle; “a reg’lar TICKLER” is a poser.

Tiddlywink, slim, puny; sometimes TILLYWINK.

Tidy, tolerably, or pretty well; "How did you get on to-day?"—"Oh, TIDY."—*Saxon*.

Tie, a dead heat. A game of any kind, in which the possibility exists, is said to end in a tie, if the markings are level on each side at the finish. In racing parlance, all level finishes are called dead-heats.

Tied up, given over, finished; also married, in allusion to the hymeneal knot, unless a jocose allusion be intended to the "halter" (altar). See [BUCKLED](#), term in use among costermongers and street folk generally.

Tiff, a pet, a fit of ill humour.

Tiffin, a breakfast, *déjeûner à la fourchette*.—*Anglo-Indian Slang*.

Tiffy, easily offended, apt to be annoyed.

Tiger, a parasite; also a term for a ferocious woman; a boy employed to wait on gentlemen—one who waits on ladies is a page.

Tiger, a superlative yell. "Three cheers, and the last in TIGERS."—*American*. To "fight the TIGER" is also American, and refers to gambling with professionals—dangerous pastime.

Tight, close, stingy; hard up, short of cash; TIGHT, spruce, strong, active; "a TIGHT lad," a smart, active young fellow; TIGHT, drunk, or nearly so, generally the result of "going on the loose;" "TIGHT-laced," puritanical, over-precise. Money is said to be TIGHT when the public, from want of confidence in the aspect of affairs, are not inclined to speculate.

Tightener, a dinner, or hearty meal. See [SPITALFIELDS' BREAKFAST](#).

Tike-, OR BUFFER-LURKING, dog-stealing.

Tile, a hat, a covering for the head.

"I'm a gent, I'm a gent,
In the Regent-Street style,—
Examine my costume,
And look at my TILE."—*Popular Song*.

Sometimes used in another sense, "having a TILE loose," *i.e.*, being slightly crazy. See [PANTILE](#).

Timber merchant, OR SPUNK FENCER, a lucifer-match seller.

Timber-toes, a wooden-legged man. Also at the East-end one who wears clogs, *i.e.*, wooden soled boots.

Time, cabman's slang for money. If they wish to express 9s. 9d. they say that "it is a quarter to ten;" if 3s. 6d., half-past three; if 11s. 9d. a quarter to twelve. Cab-drivers can hardly have originated a system which has been in existence as long as the adage, "Time is money." They have, however, the full use of the arrangement, which is perhaps the simplest on record.

Time, TO DO, to work out a sentence of imprisonment. Time is the generic term for all quantities of incarceration, whether short or long. Sometimes stir-time (imprisonment in the House of Correction) is distinguished from the more extended system of punishment which is called "pinnel (penal) time."

Time o' day, a dodge, the latest aspect of affairs; "that's your TIME O' DAY," *i.e.*, that's well done; to put a person up to the TIME O' DAY, OR let him know "what's o'clock," is to instruct him in the knowledge needful for him.

Tin, money,—generally applied to silver.

Tinge, the per-centage allowed by drapers and clothiers to their assistants upon the sale of old-fashioned articles. See [SPIFFS](#).

Tinkler, a bell. "Jerk the TINKLER," ring the bell. Refined or affected slangists sometimes say, "Agitate the communicator," which, though it represents "ring the bell," should more properly mean "pull the cord."

Tin-pot, "he plays a TIN-POT game," *i.e.*, a low, mean, or shabby game. In the *Contes d'Eutrapel*, a French officer at the siege of Chatillon is ridiculously spoken of as Captain TIN-POT—*Capitaine du Pot d'Etain*. TIN-POT, as generally used, means worthless. As applied to billiards and kindred games, it means pretentious and inferior play.

Tip, advice or information respecting anything, but mostly used in reference to horse-racing, so that the person TIPPED may know how to bet to the best advantage. The "straight TIP" is the TIP which comes direct from the owner or trainer of a horse. Of late years a "straight TIP" means a direct hint on any subject.

Tip, a douceur; "that's the TIP," *i.e.*, that's the proper thing to do. "To miss one's TIP," to fail in a scheme.—*Old Cant*.

Tip, to give, lend, or hand over anything to another person; "come, TIP up the tin," *i.e.*, hand up the money; "TIP the wink," to inform by winking; "TIP us your fin," *i.e.*, give me your hand; "TIP one's boom off," to make off, or depart. From the seafaring phrase.

Tip the double, to "bolt," or run away from any one.

Tip-top, first-rate, of the best kind.

Tip-topper, a “swell,” or dressy man, a “Gorger.”

Tipper, a kind of ale brewed at Brighton. Mrs. Gamp preferred the “Brighton TIPPER.”

Tipster, a “turf” agent who collects early and generally special information of the condition and racing capabilities of horses in the training districts, and posts the same to his subscribers to guide their betting.

“The racing TIPSTERS have much less patronage than formerly, before “Geoffry Greenhorn” laid a trap for them, and published the tips he received in *The Life*. Professor Ingledue, M.A., the mesmerist, is silent; and if their subscribers, ‘for whose interests I have collected my old and able staff, with many additional ones, who are already at work in the training districts,’ could only get a sight of the ‘old and able staff,’ they would find it consisting of a man and a boy, at work in the back room of a London public-house, and sending different winners for every race to their subscribers.”—*Post and Paddock*, by the “Druid.”

There are, however, whatever non-racing men may think, many “touts” whose information is valuable to even the “best informed” writers.

Tit, a favourite name for a horse.

“They scorned the coach, they scorned the rails,
Two spanking tits with streaming tails,
Them swiftly onward drew.”—*End of All Things*.

Tit for tat, an equivalent.

Titivate, to put in order, or dress up. Originally TIDY-VATE.

Titley, drink, generally applied to intoxicating beverages.

Titter, a girl; “nark the TITTER,” *i.e.*, look at the girl.—*Tramp’s term*.

Tizzy, a sixpence. Corruption of [TESTER](#).

Toad-in-the-hole, a kind of pudding, consisting of small pieces of meat immersed in batter, and baked. Also, a term applied to perambulating advertising mediums. See [SANDWICH](#).

Toasting-fork, a regulation sword, indicative of the general uselessness of that weapon.

Toby, the road. The highwayman or swell robber was in old days said to be on the high TOBY, from the high or main road, while those meaner fellows, the footpad and the cutpurse, were but “low TOBY-MEN,” from their frequenting the by-ways.

To-do (pronounced quickly, and as one word), a disturbance, trouble; “here’s a pretty TO-DO,” here is an unpleasant difficulty. This exactly tallies with the *French*, AFFAIRE (*à faire*).—See *Forby’s Vocabulary of East Anglia*.

To the nines, to the dodges of the day. “He’s up to the NINES,” means he’s up to everything. “Dressed to the NINES,” means dressed loudly, or, as it is more generally known now, “dressed to death.”

Toddle, to walk as a child.

Toe, to kick. “I’ll TOE your backside.” Common in London.

Toff, a dandy, a swell of rank. Corruption probably of TUFT. See [TOFT](#).

Toffer, a well-dressed “gay” woman. One who deals with TOFFS.

Tofficky, dressy, showy.

Toft, a showy individual, a swell, a person who, in a Yorkshireman’s vocabulary, would be termed “uppish.” See [TUFT](#).

Tog, a coat. *Latin*, TOGA.—*Ancient Cant*.

Tog, to dress, or equip with an outfit; “TOGGED out to the nines,” dressed in the first style.

Toggery, clothes, harness, domestic paraphernalia of any kind.

Togs, clothes; “Sunday TOGS,” best clothes. One of the oldest cant words—in use in the time of Henry VIII. See [CANT](#).

Toke, dry bread. Sometimes used to denote a lump of anything.

Toko for yam, a Roland for an Oliver. Possibly from a system of barter carried on between sailors and aborigines.

Tol-lol, or TOL-LOLLISH, tolerable, or tolerably.

Toll-shop, a Yorkshire correspondent gives this word as denoting in that county a prison, and also the following verse of a song, popular at fairs in the East Riding:—

“But if ivver he get out agean,
And can but raise a frind,
Oh! the divel may tak’ TOLL-SHOP,
At Beverley town-end!”

This is but a variation of the Scottish **TOLBOOTH**.

Tom, *e.g.*, "after **TOM**," after the hour at which Big **TOM** of Christchurch rings. At its last stroke the gates are closed, and undergrads entering after have to pay an increasing sum for each hour up to twelve. To be out after that involves an interview with the Master.—*Oxford University*.

Tom and Jerry shop, a low drinking shop. Probably some allusion to Pierce Egan's famous characters in his *Life in London*. Generally contracted to **JERRY SHOP**.

Tom Toppers, a waterman, from a popular song, entitled, *Overboard he vent*.

Tom Tug, a waterman. From the small stage-play. Also rhyming slang for a flat, or rather a "mug."

Tomboy, a hoyden, a rude romping girl.

Tombstone, a pawn-ticket—"In memory of" whatever has been pawned,—a well-known slang expression with those Londoners who are in the habit of following "my uncle."

Tomfoolery, nonsense; trashy, mild, and innocuous literature.

Tom-fool's colours, scarlet and yellow, the ancient motley. Occasionally, as a rhyme of quality suitable to the subject,

"Red and yellow,
TOM FOOL'S colour."

A proposition is said to be **TOM FOOL** when it is too ridiculous to be entertained or discussed.

Tom-tom, a street instrument, a kind of small drum beaten with the fingers, somewhat like the ancient tabor; a performer on this instrument. "Hark! 'tis the Indian drum."

[326]

Tommy, *See* **DICKEY**.

Tommy, bread,—food generally. Sometimes applied by workmen to the supply of food which they carry in a bag or handkerchief as their daily allowance. **TOMMY-BAG** is the term for the bag or handkerchief in which the "daily bread" is carried.

Tommy, truck, barter, the exchange of labour for goods, not money. Both term and practice, general among English operatives for half-a-century, are by a current fiction supposed to have been abolished by Act of Parliament.

Tommy Dodd, in tossing when the odd man either wins or loses, as per agreement. A phrase in frequent use in London. A music-hall song has been given with this title and on this subject.

Tommy-master, one who pays his workmen in goods, or gives them tickets upon tradesmen, with whom he shares the profit.

Tommy-shop, a shop where wages are paid to mechanics or others, who are expected to "take out" a portion of the money in goods. Also, a baker's shop.

Tongue, "to **TONGUE** a person," *i.e.*, to talk him down. **TONGUED**, talkative.

Tony Lumpkin, a young, clownish country fellow. From *She Stoops to Conquer*.

Tool, as "a poor **TOOL**," a bad hand at anything.

Tool, to drive a coach, or any other vehicle. To "handle the ribbons" in fine style.

Tool, a very little boy employed by burglars to enter at small apertures, and open doors for the larger thieves outside.

Tooler, a pickpocket. **MOLL-TOOLER**, a female pickpocket.

Tooley Street tailor, a self-conceited, vainglorious man. The "three tailors of Tooley Street" are said to have immortalized themselves by preparing a petition for Parliament—and some say, presenting it—with only their own signatures thereto, which commenced, "We, the people of England."

Tooth, "he has cut his eye **TOOTH**," *i.e.*, he is sharp enough, or old enough, to do so; "old in the **TOOTH**," far advanced in age,—said often of old maids. From the stable term for aged horses which have lost the distinguishing marks in their teeth.

Tootsies, feet, those of ladies and children in particular. In married life it is said the husband uses this expression for the first six months; after that he terms them "hoofs."

Top, the signal among tailors and sempstresses for snuffing the candle; one cries **TOP**, and all the others follow; he who last pronounces the word has to snuff the candle.

Top-dressing, in journalism, is the large-type introduction to a report, generally written by a man of higher literary attainments than the ordinary reporter who follows with the details.

Top-heavy, drunk.

[327]

Top-sawyer, the principal of a party, or profession. "A **TOP-SAWYER** signifies a man that is a master-genius in any profession. It is a piece of Norfolk slang, and took its rise from Norfolk being a great timber county, where the **TOP SAWYERS** get double the wages of those beneath them."—*Randall's Diary*, 1820.

Top up, a finishing drink. "He drank two bottles of claret and one of port, which he **TOPPED UP** with

half a bottle of brandy.”

Topped, hanged, or executed.

Topper, anything or person above the ordinary; a blow on the head. “Give him a TOPPER and chance it,” “Let him have a TOPPER for luck.”

Topper, the tobacco which is left in the bottom of a pipe-bowl—*lucus a non lucendo*; or the stump of a smoked cigar. TOPPER-HUNTERS are men who pick up cigar ends and odd pieces of stale tobacco, which they mix and chop up for home consumption or sale.

Topsy-turvy, the bottom upwards. Grose gives an ingenious etymology of this once cant term, viz., “top-side turf-ways,”—turf being always laid the wrong side upwards. This is so far ingenious that it creates a fact for the purpose of arguing from it. Turfs are laid with the grass part together during carriage; so, anyhow, the definition could be only half right. In fact, TOPSY-TURVY is but short for “top-side t’other way.”

To-rights, excellent, very well, or good.—*Low London slang*.

Tormentors, the large iron flesh-forks used by cooks at sea.

Torpids, the second-class race-boats at Oxford, answering to the Cambridge “sloggers.”

Toshers, men who steal copper from ships’ bottoms in the Thames.

Toss, a measure of sprats.—*Billingsgate*.

Tot, a small glass; a “TOT o’ whisky” is the smallest quantity sold.

Tot-up, to add together,—as columns of figures, *£ s. d.* From TOTAL-UP, through the vulgarity TOTTLE.

Totting, bone-picking, either peripatetically or at the dust-heaps. “TOT” is a bone, but chiffoniers and cinder-hunters generally are called TOT-PICKERS nowadays. TOTTING also has its votaries on the banks of the Thames, where all kinds of flotsam and jetsam, from coals to carrion, are known as TOTS.

Touch, a slang expression in common use in phrases which express the extent to which a person is interested or affected, “as a fourpenny TOUCH,” *i.e.*, a thing costing fourpence. See an example in Mr., afterwards Sir Erasmus, Philipps’s Diary, at Oxford, in 1720. “Sept. 22.—At night went to the ball at the Angel, a guinea TOUCH.” It is also used at Eton in the sense of a “tip,” or present of money; and is sometimes said of a woman to imply her worthlessness, as, “Only a half-crown TOUCH.”

Touch-and-go, an expression often applied to men with whom business arrangements should be of the lightest possible character. Thus, “He’s a TOUCH-AND-GO sort of fellow. Be careful of him.”

Toucher, “as near as a TOUCHER,” as near as possible without actually touching.—*Coaching term*. The old Jarveys, to show their skill, used to drive against things so closely as absolutely to touch, yet without injury. This they called a TOUCHER, OR TOUCH-AND-GO, which was hence applied to anything which was within an ace of ruin.

[328]

Touchy, peevish, irritable. Johnson terms it a low word.

Tout. In sporting phraseology a TOUT signifies an agent in the training districts, on the look-out for information as to the condition and capabilities of those horses entering for a coming race. TOUTS often get into trouble through entering private training-grounds. They, however, are very highly paid, some making 40*l.* or 50*l.* a week during the season. Now frequently called horse-watchers.

Tout, to look out, or watch.

Touter, a looker out, one who waits at railway stations and steamboat piers, and touts for customers; a hotel runner. Term in general use.

Touzle, to romp with or rumple.—*Scotch*.

Towel, to beat or whip. In old English phraseology a cudgel was termed an oaken TOWEL—whence, perhaps, the verb.

Towelling, a rubbing down with an oaken TOWEL, a beating.

Town and Gown. The fight which used to come off every 5th of November between the undergrads and the “cads.” The sides used to shout respectively “TOWN!” and “GOWN!” as war-cries.—*Oxford University*.

Town-lout, a derogatory title at Rugby School for those pupils who reside with their parents in the town, in contradistinction from those who live in the boarding-houses.

Tow-pows, grenadiers. From the bearskins, most likely, unless it was originally TALL-POWS, the grenadiers being the tallest men in the company.

Towzery gang, swindlers who hire sale-rooms, usually in the suburbs, for mock auction sales of cheap and worthless goods, and who advertise their ventures as “Alarming Sacrifices,” “Important Sales of Bankrupts’ Stock,” &c. The American name for a mock auctioneer is a “Peter Funk.”

Tracks, “to make TRACKS,” to run away. See [STREAK](#).

Tradesman, one who thoroughly understands his business, whatever it may be. No better compliment can be passed on an individual, whether his profession be housebreaking, prizefighting, or that of a handicraftsman, than the significant "He's a regular TRADESMAN."

Translator, a man who deals in old shoes or clothes, and refits them for cheap wear. These people generally live in or about Dudley Street, Seven Dials.

Translators, second-hand boots mended and polished, and sold at a low price.

Trap, a "fast" term for a carriage of any kind. TRAPS, goods and chattels of any kind, but especially luggage and personal effects; in Australia, "swag."

Trapesing, gadding or gossiping about in a slatternly way. Generally applied to girls and women in low neighbourhoods, who wander from public-house to public-house, and whose clothes are carelessly fastened, causing them to trail on the ground.

[329]

Traveller, name given by one tramp to another. "A TRAVELLER at her Majesty's expense," *i.e.*, a transported felon, a convict.

Tree, "up a TREE," in temporary difficulties,—out of the way. American expression, derived from racoon or bear-hunting. When Bruin is TREED, or is forced up a TREE by the dogs, it means that then the tug of war begins. See 'COON. Hence when an opponent is fairly run to bay, and can by no evasion get off, he is said to be TREED. These expressions originated with Colonel Crockett, of backwoods celebrity. In Scotland the phrase is "up a close," *i.e.*, up a passage with no outlet, a *cul-de-sac*, therefore suggestive of an unpleasant predicament.

Triangles, a slang term for *delirium tremens*, during a fit of which everything appears out of the square.

Trimnings, the necessary adjuncts to anything cooked, but specially applied to a boiled leg of mutton, as turnips, potatoes, bread, beer, salt, &c. Bets are frequently made for a leg of mutton and TRIMMINGS. Or one person will forfeit the mutton if another will "stand the TRIMMINGS." It is generally a supper feast, held in a public-house, and the rule is for the landlord to charge as TRIMMINGS everything, except the mutton, placed on the table previous to the removal of the cloth. A boiled leg o' mutton and TRIMMINGS will be always known as a "swarry" to admirers of Sam Weller.

Tripes, the bowels.

"Next morning Miss Dolly complained of her TRIPES,
Drinking cold water had given her gripes."

Trollies, or TROLLY-CARTS, term given by costermongers to a species of narrow carts, which can either be drawn by a donkey or driven by hand.

Trolling, sauntering or idling, hence TROLL and TROLLOCKS, an idle slut, a "[moll](#)," which *see*.

Trollop, a slatternly woman, a prostitute.

Trot, to "run up," to oppose, to bid against at an auction. Private buyers at auctions know from experience how general is the opposition against them from dealers, "knock-outs," and other habitués of sales, who regard the rooms as their own peculiar domain. "We TROTTED him up nicely, didn't we?" *i.e.*, we made him (the private buyer) pay dearly for what he bought.

Trot out, to draw out or exploit, to show off the abilities of a companion; sometimes to roast for the amusement and with the assistance of an assembled company.

Trotter, a tailor's man who goes round for orders.—*University*.

Trotter cases, shoes.

Trotters, feet. Sheep's TROTTERS, boiled sheep's feet, a favourite street delicacy.

Truck, a hat—from the cap on the extremity of a mast.—*Sea*.

Truck, to exchange or barter.

Trucks, trousers.

Trull, corruption of "troll" or "trollop," a dirty, slatternly woman, a prostitute of the lowest class.

[330]

Trump, a good fellow; "a regular TRUMP," a jolly or good-natured person—in allusion to a TRUMP card; "TRUMPS may turn up," *i.e.*, fortune may yet favour me.

Trunks, short trousers worn above hose or tights.—*Theatrical*.

Try it on, to make attempt, generally applied to an effort at imposition. An extortionate charge or a begging-letter is frequently described as "a regular TRY-ON."

Tub, the morning bath. To TUB has now become a regular verb, so far as colloquialism is concerned, though no one uses a TUB as the word was originally understood.

Tub-thumping, preaching or speech-making, from the old Puritan fashion of "holding forth" from a tub, or beer barrel, as a mark of their contempt for decorated pulpits.

Tubs, nickname for a buttermilk.

Tuck, a schoolboy's term for fruit, pastry, &c. TUCK IN, or TUCK OUT, a good meal.

Tuft-hunter, a hanger on to persons of quality or wealth—one who seeks the society of wealthy people. Originally University slang, but now general.

Tufts, at the University, noblemen, who pay high fees and are distinguished by golden TUFTS, or tassels, in their caps.

Tumble, to comprehend or understand. A coster was asked what he thought of *Macbeth*, and he replied, "The witches and the fighting was all very well, but the other moves I couldn't TUMBLE to exactly; few on us can TUMBLE to the jaw-breakers; they licks us, they do."

Tumble to pieces, to be safely delivered, as in childbirth.

Tune the old cow died of, an epithet for any ill-played or discordant piece of music. Originally the name of an old ballad, referred to by dramatists of Shakspeare's time.

Tuns, a name at Pembroke College, Oxford, for small silver cups, each containing half a pint. Sometimes a TUN had a handle with a whistle, which could not be blown till the cup was empty.

Turf, horse-racing, and betting thereon; "on the TURF," one who occupies himself with race-horse business; said also of a street-walker, or nymph of the *pavé*.

Turkey merchants, dealers in plundered or contraband silk. Poulterers are sometimes termed TURKEY MERCHANTS in remembrance of Horne Tooke's answer to the boys at Eton, who wished in an aristocratic way to know what *his* father was: "A TURKEY MERCHANT," replied Tooke—his father was a poulterer. TURKEY MERCHANT, also, was formerly slang for a driver of turkeys or geese to market.

Turnip, an old-fashioned watch, so called from its general appearance, if of silver. Also called "a frying-pan." Old-fashioned gold watches are called "warming-pans."

Turn it up, to quit, change, abscond, or abandon; "Ned has TURNED IT UP," *i.e.*, run away; "I intend TURNING IT UP," *i.e.*, leaving my present abode or employment, or altering my course of life.

[331]

Turn-out, personal show or appearance; a man with a showy carriage and horses is said to have a good TURN-OUT.

Turn-over, an apprentice who finishes with a second master the indentures he commenced with another, who has died or become bankrupt.

Turn up, a street fight; a sudden leaving, or making off. An unexpected slice of luck. Among sporting men bookmakers are said to have a TURN UP when an unbacked horse wins.

Turn up, to appear unexpectedly. Also to happen; "Let's wait, and see what will TURN UP."

Turn up, to make sick. People are said to be TURNED UP by sea-sickness, or when they are made ill by excessive smoking or drinking.

Turned over, remanded by the magistrate or judge for want of evidence.

Turned up, to be stopped and searched by the police. To be discharged from a police-court or sessions-house; to be acquitted.

Turnpike sailors, beggars who go about dressed as sailors. A sarcastic reference to the scene of their chief voyages.

Tusheroon, a crown piece, five shillings. Otherwise a bull or cartwheel.

Tussle, a row, struggle, fight, or argument.

Tussle, to struggle, or argue.

Twelve godfathers, a jury, because they give a name to the crime the prisoner before them has been guilty of, whether murder or manslaughter, felony or misdemeanor. Consequently it is a vulgar taunt to say, "You will be christened by TWELVE GODFATHERS some day before long."

Twelver, a shilling.

Twice-laid, a dish made out of cold fish and potatoes.—*Sea*. Compare [BUBBLE AND SOUEAK](#), and [RESURRECTION PIE](#).

Twig, style. Prime TWIG, in good order and high spirits.

Twig, to comprehend, as, "Do you TWIG?" Also, "Hop the TWIG," to decamp.

Twist, brandy and gin mixed.

Twist, capacity for eating, appetite; "He's got a capital TWIST."

Twitchety, nervous, fidgety.

Twitter, "all in a TWITTER," in a fright or fidgety state.

Two eighteener, an Americanism for a man or woman of the fastest kind—two minutes eighteen seconds, or close thereabouts, being the fastest time for a mile recorded in connexion with the Transatlantic national sport, trotting. "Two forty on a plank road," a once favourite expression with a similar meaning, derived from a feat of the famous trotting mare Flora Temple, has died out since trotting has become faster, and courses have been prepared on a different principle.

Two-eyed-steak, a red-herring or bloater. Otherwise "Billingsgate pheasant."

[332]

Two-handed, expert at fisticuffs. Ambidextrous generally.

Two-handed game, a game or proposal in which the chances are fairly even; as, "I'll punch your

head;" "Ah, that's a TWO-HANDED GAME—you'll get no good at that."

Two to one, the pawnbroker's sign of three balls. So called because it is supposed by calculating humourists to be TWO TO ONE against the redemption of a pledged article.

Two upon ten, or TWO PUN' TEN, an expression used by assistants to each other, in shops, when a customer of suspected honesty makes his appearance. The phrase refers to "two eyes upon ten fingers," shortened as a money term to TWO PUN' TEN. When a supposed thief is present, one shopman asks the other if that TWO PUN' (pound) TEN matter was ever settled. The man knows at once what is meant, and keeps a careful watch upon the person being served. If it is not convenient to speak, a piece of paper is handed to the same assistant, bearing the, to him, very significant amount of

£2: 10: 0

Compare [SHARP](#), [JOHN ORDERLY](#).

Twopenny, the head; "tuck in your TWOPENNY," bend down your head.

Twopenny-halfpenny, paltry, insignificant. A TWOPENNY-HALFPENNY fellow, a not uncommon expression of contempt.

Twopenny-hops, low dancing rooms, the price of admission to which was formerly twopence. The clog hornpipe, the pipe dance, flash jigs, and hornpipes in fetters, *à la* Jack Sheppard, were the favourite movements, all entered into with great spirit.

Twopenny rope, a lodging-house of the lowest kind, where tramps and cadgers sleep on sacking stretched by means of ropes. Sleeping at these places is called having "twopenn'orth of rope."

Tyburnia, the Portman and Grosvenor Square district. It is facetiously divided by the Londoners into "Tyburnia Felix," "Tyburnia Deserta," and "Tyburnia Snobbica." The old gallows at Tyburn stood near the N.E. corner of Hyde Park, at the angle formed by the Edgware Road and the top of Oxford Street. In 1778 this was two miles out of London.

Tyburn tippet, in the old hanging days, Jack Ketch's rope.

Tye, or TIE, a neckerchief. Proper hosiers' term now, but slang thirty years ago, and as early as 1718.

Tyke, a Yorkshireman. Term used by themselves, as well as by Southerners, in reference to them.

Typo, a printer.

Ugly, wicked, malicious, resentful.—*American*.

Ullages, the wine of all sorts left in the bottoms of glasses at a public dinner. This is emptied into a measure, and drunk behind the screen or in any convenient place by the waiters, which accounts for their stony glare and fishy appearance late in the evening. Maybe from *Lat.* ULLUS, any.

Unbleached American, Yankee term, since the war, for coloured natives of the United States.

Uncle, the pawnbroker. See [MY UNCLE](#).

Under a cloud, in difficulties. An evident reference to shady circumstances.

Under the rose. See [ROSE](#).

Understandings, the feet or boots. Men who wear exceptionally large or thick boots, are said to possess good UNDERSTANDINGS.

Understudy, to STUDY a part for the stage, not with the view of playing it at once, but so as to be ready in the event of anything happening to its present representative. Some actors of position, who suffer from delicate health, or mental weakness, have always other and inferior, but more robust, artists UNDERSTUDYING their parts.

Unfortunate, a modern euphuism for a prostitute, derived from Thomas Hood's beautiful poem of *The Bridge of Sighs*:—

“One more UNFORTUNATE,
Weary of breath,
Rashly importunate,
Gone to her death.”

It is almost needless to remark that the poet had no intention of using the word in any but its widest and most general sense.

Unicorn, a style of driving with two wheelers abreast and one leader—termed in the United States a “spike team.” “Tandem” is one wheeler and one leader. “Random,” three horses in line. “Manchester” means three horses abreast. See [HARUM-SCARUM](#).

Unlicked, ill-trained, uncouth, rude, and rough; an “UNLICKED cub” is a loutish youth who has never been taught manners; from the tradition that a bear's cub, when brought into the world, has no shape or symmetry until its dam licks it into form with her tongue. Possibly said of a boy who has been petted, *i.e.*, who has been insufficiently thrashed or licked. Case of spared rod and spoiled child.

Unparliamentary, OR UNSCRIPTURAL, language, words unfit for use in ordinary conversation.

Unutterables, OR UNWHISPERABLES, trousers. See [INEXPRESSIBLES](#).

Up, “to be UP to a thing or two,” to be knowing, or understanding; “to put a man UP to a move,” to teach him a trick; “it's all UP with him,” *i.e.*, it is all over with him; when pronounced U.P., naming the two letters separately, means settled, or done UP. “UP a tree,” see [TREE](#). “UP to snuff,” wide awake, acquainted with the last new move; “UP to one's gossip,” to be a match for one who is trying to take you in; “UP to slum,” proficient in roguery, capable of committing a theft successfully; “what's UP?” what is the matter? what is the news?

U.P., United Presbyterian Church of Scotland.

Upper Benjamin, OR BENJY, a great coat; originally “Joseph,” but, because of the preponderance of tailors named BENJAMIN, altered in deference to them.

Upper storey, OR UPPER LOFT, a person's head; “his UPPER STOREY is unfurnished,” *i.e.*, he does not know very much. “Wrong in his UPPER STOREY,” crazy. See [CHUMP](#).

Uppish, proud, arrogant.

Used up, broken-hearted, bankrupt, fatigued, vanquished.

Vakeel, a barrister.—*Anglo-Indian*.

Vamos, VAMOUS, or VAMOOSH, to go, or be off. Spanish, VAMOS, "Let us go!" Probably NAMUS, or NAMOUS, the costermonger's word, was from this.

Vamp, to spout, to leave in pawn. Also to cobble, as, "a VAMPED play," and "a VAMPED accompaniment," both terms reflecting discredit on the work, but not necessarily upon the musician.

Vamps, old, or refooted stockings. From VAMP, to piece.

Vardo, to look; "VARDO the carsey," look at the house. VARDO formerly was old cant for a waggon. This is by low Cockneys generally pronounced VARDY.

Vardy, verdict, vulgarly used as opinion, thus, "My VARDY on the matter is the same as yourn."

Varmint. "You young VARMINT, you!" you bad, or naughty boy. Corruption of VERMIN.

Varnisher, an utterer of false sovereigns. Generally "snide-pitcher."

'**Varsity**, either UNIVERSITY—more rarely University College, Oxford.

Velvet, the tongue; especially the tongue of a magsman. Also, men who have succeeded in their speculations, especially on the turf, are said to stand on VELVET.

Veneer, the artificiality of society, conventionality. Dickens expressed his dislike for certain forms of VENEER repeatedly, and especially by means of his Veneerings in *Our Mutual Friend*.

Vet, colloquial term for VETERINARIAN.

Vic, the Victoria Theatre, London. Also the street abbreviation of the Christian name of her Majesty the Queen.

Village, or THE VILLAGE, *i.e.*, London. Birmingham is called "the hardware VILLAGE." Also a Cambridge term for a disreputable suburb of that town, viz., Barnwell, generally styled "the VILLAGE."

Ville, or VILE, a town or village—pronounced PHIAL, or VIAL.—*French*.

Vinnied, mildewed, or sour.—*Devonshire*.

Voker, to talk; "can you VOKER Romany?" can you speak the canting language?—*Latin*, VOCARE; *Spanish*, VOCEAR.

Vowel. "To VOWEL a debt" is to acknowledge with an I O U.

Vulpecide, one who shoots or traps foxes, or destroys them in any way other than that of hunting. A foxhunter regards a VULPECIDE as rather worse than an ordinary murderer.

Wabble, or WOBBLE, to move from side to side, to roll about. Johnson terms it “a low, barbarous word.”

Walk into, to overcome, to demolish; “I’ll WALK INTO his affections,” *i.e.*, I will scold or thrash him. “He WALKED INTO the grub,” *i.e.*, he demolished it. WALK INTO also means to get into the debt of any one, as “He WALKED INTO the affections of all the tradesmen in the neighbourhood.”

Walk-over, a re-election without opposition.—*Parliamentary*, but derived from the turf, where a horse which has no rivals WALKS OVER the course. See [DEAD HEAT](#).

Walk your chalks, be off, or run away,—spoken sharply by any one who wishes to get rid of a troublesome person. See [CHALKS](#).

Walker, a letter-carrier or postman. From an old song, called, “Walker, the twopenny postman.”

Walker! or HOOKEY WALKER! an ejaculation of incredulity, used when a person is telling a story which you know to be all gammon, or worse. One explanation of the phrase is this:—“Years ago there was a person named Walker, an aquiline-nosed Jew, who exhibited an orrery, which he called by the erudite name of ‘Eidouranion.’ He was also a popular lecturer on astronomy, and often, telescope in hand, invited his pupils to ‘take a sight’ at the moon and stars. The lecturer’s phrase struck his schoolboy auditory, who frequently ‘took a sight’ with that gesture of outstretched arm and adjustment to nose and eye which was the first garnish of the popular saying. The next step was to assume phrase and gesture as the outward and visible mode of knowingness in general.” This has been denied, however, and a statement made that HOOKEY WALKER was a magistrate of dreaded acuteness and incredulity, whose hooked nose gave the title of “beak” to all his successors; it is also said, moreover, that the gesture of applying the thumb to the nose and agitating the little finger, as an expression of “Don’t you wish you may get it?” is considerably older than the first story would seem to indicate. There are many and various explanations of the term, given according to the development of fancy.—*Notes and Queries*, iv. 425.

Walking the pegs, a method of cheating at the game of cribbage, by a species of legerdemain, the sharper either moving his own pegs forward, or those of his antagonist backward, according to the state of the game.

Wallflower, a person who goes to a ball and looks on without dancing, either from choice or through not being able to obtain a partner. From the position.

Wallflowers, left-off and “regenerated” clothes exposed for sale on the bunks and shop-boards of Seven Dials. See [REACH-ME-DOWNS](#).

Wallabee-track, Colonial slang for the tramp. When a man in Australia is “on the road” looking for employment, he is said to be on the WALLABEE-TRACK.

Wallop, to beat, or thrash. John Gough Nichols derives this word from an ancestor of the Earl of Portsmouth, one Sir John Wallop, Knight of the Garter, who in King Henry VIII.’s time distinguished himself by WALLOPING the French; but it is more probably connected with wheal, a livid swelling in the skin after a blow. See [POT-WALLOPER](#).

[336]

Walloping, a beating or thrashing; sometimes used in an adjective sense, as big, or very large.

Wapping, or WHOPPING, of a large size, great.

Warm, rich, or well off.

Warm, to thrash or beat; “I’ll WARM your jacket.” To WARM the wax of one’s ear is to give a severe blow on the side of the head. To WARM is also to rate or abuse roundly. Also varied, as, “to make it hot” for any one.

Warming-pan, a large old-fashioned gold watch. A person placed in an office to hold it for another. See [W.P.](#)

War-paint, evening dress. When people go out in full costume they are often said to have their WAR-PAINT on. Also, military “full-fig.”

Wash, “It wont WASH,” *i.e.*, will not stand investigation, will not “bear the rub,” is not genuine, can’t be believed.

Waster, a useless, clumsy, or ill-made person.

Watch and seals, a sheep’s head and pluck.

Watchmaker, a pickpocket or stealer of watches. Often called “a WATCHMAKER in a crowd.”

Water-bewitched, very weak tea, the third brew (or the first at some houses). Sometimes very weak tea is called “husband’s tea,” in allusion to the wife taking the first brew, and leaving the rest for her husband. Also grog much diluted.

Water-dogs, Norfolk dumplings.

Water gunner, a marine artilleryman.

Water the dragon, or WATER ONE’S NAG, a hint for retiring.

Waterman, a blue silk handkerchief. The friends of the Oxford and Cambridge boats’ crews always wear these—light blue for Cambridge, and a darker shade for Oxford.

Wattles, ears.

Wax, a rage. "Let's get him in a wax." WAXY, cross, ill-tempered.

Wayz-goose, a printers' annual dinner, the funds for which are collected by stewards regularly appointed by "the chapel."

Weather eye, the cautious eye. Any one who is supposed to have an extra good knowledge of things in general, or to be hard to impose on or cheat, is said to have his WEATHER EYE well open.

Weather-headed, so written by Sir Walter Scott in his *Peveril of the Peak*, but it is more probably WETHER-HEADED, as applied to a person having a "sheepish" look.

Weaving, a notorious card-sharping trick, done by keeping certain cards on the knee, or between the knee and the under side of the table, and using them when required by changing them for the cards held in the hand.

Weaving leather aprons. When a knowing blade is asked what he has been doing lately, and does not choose to tell, his reply is, that he has been very busy WEAVING LEATHER APRONS. (From the reports of a celebrated trial for gold robbery on the South-Western Railway.) Other similar replies are, "I have been making a trundle for a goose's eye," or a "whim-wham to bridle a goose." Sometimes a man will describe himself as "a doll's-eye WEAVER."

Wedge, silver.—*Old Cant*.

Wedge-feeder, a silver spoon.

Weed, a cigar; *the* WEED, tobacco generally.

Weed, a hatband.

Weight-for-age, a sporting phrase which, applied to a race, distinguishes it from a handicap or catch-weight event, and informs all interested that the animals which run carry according to their ages, and not their abilities. Winners of certain great races generally carry penalties in addition to WEIGHT-FOR-AGE, for the purpose of equalizing matters somewhat; but as a rule the results are fairly foreshadowed as soon as in these races the horses are at the post, or as soon as the starters are positively known.

Wejee, a chimney-pot. Often applied to any clever invention, as, "That's a regular WEJEE."

Welcher, a person who makes a bet without the remotest chance of being able to pay, and, losing it, absconds, or "makes himself scarce." In the betting ring a WELCHER is often very severely handled upon his swindling practices being discovered. The Catterick "Clerk of the Course" once provided some stout labourers and a tar-barrel for the special benefit of the WELCHERS who might visit that neighbourhood. The word is modern, but the practice is ancient.

"One Moore, the unworthy incumbent of the 'Suffolk curacy,' dedicated a book to 'Duke Humphrey,' and was then entirely lost sight of by his old college friends, till one of them espied him slung up in 'the basket,' for not paying his bets at a cock-pit."—*Post and Paddock*.

One writer says the term "arose from a fellow who took deposits on account of Welsh ponies, which he said he was importing, and never delivered them." It is not unfrequently suggested by irreverent persons that the word was suggested by the dislike his gracious Majesty George the Fourth had, when a young man, for settling. Others derive it from the nursery rhyme,

"Taffy was a Welshman, Taffy was a thief."

There can be no doubt that, from the days when the stout Earl of Chester and others were constantly employed in checking and cutting off the expeditions of their neighbours till comparatively recently, the term "Welshman" has been hardly one of kindness. It is not hard, therefore, to imagine its use on the Roodee, and its subsequent corruption into WELCHER. The spelling of the word, WELCHER or WELSHER, is optional.

Well, to pocket, to save money. Any one of fair income and miserly habits is said to "WELL it."

Welt, to thrash with a strap or stick. Probably meaning to raise wheals.

West central, a water-closet, the initials being the same as those of the London Postal District. It is said that for this reason very delicate people refuse to obey Rowland Hill's instructions in this particular. An old maid, who lived in this district, was particularly shocked at having w.c. marked on all her letters, and informed the letter-carrier that she could not think of submitting to such an indecent fashion. On being informed that the letters would not be forwarded without the obnoxious initials, she remarked that she would have them left at the Post-Office. "Then, marm," said the fellow, with a grin, "they will put P.O. on them, which will be more ondacenter than the tother."

Wet, a drink, a drain.

Wet, to drink. Low people generally ask an acquaintance to WET any recently purchased article, *i.e.*, to stand treat on the occasion. "WET (originally WHET, to sharpen,) your whistle," *i.e.*, take a drink; "WET the other eye," *i.e.*, take another glass. See [SHED A TEAR](#).

Wet Quaker, a man who pretends to be religious, and is a dram-drinker on the sly.

Wet un, a diseased cow, unfit for human food, but nevertheless sold to make into sausages. Compare [STAGGERING-BOB](#).

Whack, a share or lot. "Give me my WHACK," give me my share.—*Scotch*, SWEG, *or* SWACK.

Whack, *or* WHACKING, a blow, or a thrashing.

Whack, to beat.

Whacker, a lie of unusual dimensions, sometimes called a "round un."

Whacking, large, fine, or strong.

Whacks, to go WHACKS, to divide equally; to enter into partnership.

Whale, "very like a WHALE," said of anything that is very improbable. A speech of Polonius's in *Hamlet*.

What d'yecall'em, a similar expression to "thingumy."

Wheeze, a joke, an anecdote, or dialogue, not strictly connected with a piece that is being played, but introduced by an actor, sometimes with the assistance and for the benefit of others. The dialogues which take place between the songs at nigger entertainments are also known as WHEEZES. The word actually means a new notion as applied to dialogue.

Wherret, *or* WORRIT, to scold, trouble, or annoy.—*Old English*.

Whid, a word. Sometimes, a fib, a falsehood, a word too much.—*Modern Slang*, from the ancient cant.

Whiddle, to enter into a parley, or hesitate with many words, &c.; to inform, or discover. *See* WHEEDLE.

Whim-wham, an alliterative term, synonymous with fiddle-faddle, riff-raff, &c., denoting nonsense, rubbish, &c.

Whip, after the usual allowance of wine is drunk at mess, those who wish for more put a shilling each into a glass handed round to procure a further supply. WHIP-ROUND is now a common term for a subscription of a similar kind to that described.

[339]

Whip, to "WHIP anything up," to take it up quickly; from the method of hoisting heavy goods or horses on board ship by a WHIP, or running tackle, from the yard-arm. Generally used to express anything dishonestly taken.

Whip, the member of the House of Commons whose duty it is to collect and keep together his party to vote at divisions. To give him greater influence, the ministerial WHIP holds, or is supposed to hold, the minor patronage of the Treasury.

Whipjack, a sham shipwrecked sailor, called also a turnpike-sailor.

Whip the cat, when an operative works at a private house by the day. Term used amongst tailors and carpenters.

Whipper-snapper, a waspish, diminutive person.

Whisper, a tip given in secret, a rumour which is spread under the pretence of its being a secret. To "give the WHISPER," is to give a quick tip to any one. An owner's final instruction to his jockey is called "the WHISPER at the post."

Whisper, to borrow money—generally small sums—as, "He WHISPERED me for a tanner."

Whisperer, a constant borrower.

Whistle, "as clean as a WHISTLE," neatly, or "slickly done," as an American would say; "To whet (or more vulgarly wet) one's WHISTLE," to take a drink. This last is a very old expression. Chaucer says of the Miller of Trumpington's wife (*Canterbury Tales*, 4153)—

"So was hir joly WHISTAL well y-wet."

"To WHISTLE for anything," to stand small chance of getting it, from the nautical custom of WHISTLING for a wind in a calm, which of course comes none the sooner for it. "To pay for one's WHISTLE," to pay extravagantly for any fancy.

Whistling-Billy, *or* PUFFING-BILLY, a locomotive engine.

Whistling-shop, a place in which spirits are sold without a licence.

Whitechapel *or* WESTMINSTER BROUGHAM, a costermonger's donkey-barrow.

Whitechapel, anything mean or paltry. Potting one's opponent at billiards is often known as "WHITECHAPEL play."

Whitechapel, in tossing, when "two out of three wins." *See* [SUDDEN DEATH](#).

Whitechapel fortune, a clean gown and a pair of pattens.

White eye, military slang for a very strong and deleterious kind of whisky, so called because its potency is believed to turn the eyes round in the sockets, leaving the whites only visible.

White feather, "to show the WHITE FEATHER," to evince cowardice. In times when great attention was paid to the breeding of game-cocks, a white feather in the tail was considered a proof of cross-breeding.

White horses, the foam on the crests of waves, seen before or after a storm.

[340]

"Now the wild white horses play.
Champ and chafe and toss in the spray.
Children, dear, let us away,
This way, this way."—*Matthew Arnold*.

White lie, a harmless lie, one told to reconcile people at variance. "Mistress is not at home, sir," is a WHITE LIE often told by servants.

White-livered, or LIVER-FACED, cowardly, much afraid, very mean.

White prop, a diamond pin.—*East London*.

White satin, gin,—term amongst women. See [SATIN](#).

White serjeant, a man's superior officer in the person of his better half.

White tape, gin,—term used principally by female servants. See [RIBBON](#).

White un, a silver watch.

White wine, the fashionable term for gin.

"Jack Randall then impatient rose,
And said, 'Tom's speech were just as fine
If he would call that first of GOES
By that genteeler name—WHITE WINE.'"

Randall's Diary, 1820.

Whitewash, to rehabilitate. A person who took the benefit of the Insolvent Act was said to have been WHITEWASHED. Now said of a person who compromises with his creditors.

Whitewash, a glass of sherry as a finale, after drinking port and claret.

Whittle, to nose or peach.—*Old Cant*. To cut and hack as with a pocket-knife.—*American*.

Whop, to beat, or hide. Corruption of WHIP; sometimes spelt WAP.

Whop-straw, cant name for a countryman; Johnny WHOP-STRAW, in allusion to threshing.

Whopper, a big one, a lie. A lie not easily swallowed.

Widdle, to shine. See [OLIVER](#).

Wide-awake, a broad-brimmed felt or stuff hat,—so called because it never had a nap, and never wants one.

Wido, wide awake, no fool.

Wife, a fetter fixed to one leg.—*Prison*.

Wiffle-woffles, in the dumps, sorrow, stomach-ache.

Wig, move off, go away.—*North Country Cant*.

Wigging, a rebuke before comrades. If the head of a firm calls a clerk into the parlour, and rebukes him, it is an EARWIGGING; if done before the other clerks, it is a WIGGING.

Wild, a village.—*Tramps' term*. See [VILE](#).

Wild, vexed, cross, passionate,—said to be from WILLED (SELF-WILLED), in opposition to "tamed" or "subdued." In the United States the word "mad" is supplemented with a vulgar meaning similar to our Cockneyism WILD; and to make a man mad on the other side of the Atlantic is to vex him, or "rile" his temper—not to render him a raving maniac, or a fit subject for Bedlam.

Wild Irishman, the train between Euston and Holyhead, in connection with the Kingstown mail-boats.

Wild oats, youthful pranks. A fast young man is said to be "sowing his WILD OATS."

William, a bill. The derivation is obvious.

Willow, a cricket-bat. From the material of which it is made. The great batsman, W. G. Grace, is often called "champion of the WILLOW."

Wind, "to raise the WIND," to procure money; "to slip one's WIND," a coarse expression, meaning to die. See [RAISE](#).

Wind, "I'll WIND your cotton," *i.e.*, I will give you some trouble. The Byzantine General, Narses, used the same kind of threat to the Greek Empress,—“I will spin a thread that they shall not be able to unravel.”

Windows, the eyes, or "peepers."

Winey, intoxicated.

Winged, hurt, but not dangerously, by a bullet. Originally to be shot in the arm or shoulder. To slightly wound birds is to WING them.

Winkin, "he went off like WINKIN," *i.e.*, very quickly. From WINK, to shut the eye quickly.

Winks, periwinkles.

Winn, a penny—*Ancient Cant*. See [introductory chapter](#).

Wipe, a pocket-handkerchief.—*Old Cant*.

Wipe, a blow. Frequently sibilated to **SWIPE**, a cricket-term.

Wipe, to strike; “he fetcht me a **WIPE** over the knuckles,” he struck me on the knuckles; “to **WIPE** a person down,” to flatter or pacify; “to wipe off a score,” to pay one’s debts, in allusion to the slate or chalk methods of account-keeping; “to **WIPE** a person’s eye,” to shoot game which he has missed; hence to obtain an advantage by superior activity. With old toppers “**WIPING** one’s eye,” is equivalent to giving or taking another drink.

Wipe-out, to kill or utterly destroy. This is an Americanism, but is in pretty general use here.

Wire-in, a London street phrase in general use, which means to go in with a will. In its original form of “**WIRE-IN**, and get your name up,” it was very popular among London professional athletes. The phrase is now general, and any one who has a hard task before him, knows he must **WIRE-IN** to bring matters to a successful issue.

Wire-pullers, powerful political partisans, who do their work from “behind the scenes.”

With and without, words by themselves, supposed to denote the existence or non-existence of sugar in grog. Generally “warm **WITH**” and “cold **WITHOUT**.”

Wobble-shop, a shop where beer is sold without a licence.

Wobbler, a foot soldier, a term of contempt used by cavalrymen.

Wobbly, rickety, unsteady, ill-fitting.

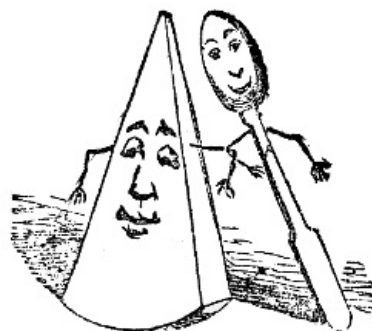
Wolf, to eat greedily.

[342]

Wooden spoon, the last junior optime who takes a University degree; denoting one who is only fit to stay at home, and stir porridge.—*Cambridge*. The expression is also parliamentary slang, and is applied to the member of the ministry whose name appears in the division lists least frequently. At the ministerial dinner annually held at Greenwich, such member sometimes has a wooden spoon presented to him.

Wooden surtout, a coffin, generally spoken of as a **WOODEN SURTOUT** with nails for buttons.

Wooden wedge, the last name in the classical honours’ list at Cambridge. The last in mathematical honours had long been known as the **WOODEN SPOON**; but when the classical Tripos was instituted in 1824, it was debated among the undergraduates what sobriquet should be given to the last on the examination list. Curiously enough, the name that year which happened to be last was **WEDGEWOOD** (a distinguished Wrangler). Hence the title.



Wool, courage, pluck; “you are not half-**WOOLED**,” term of reproach from one thief to another.

Wool, bravery, pluck. Term much in use among pugilists and their admirers. The highest praise that can be bestowed on a man of courage in lower-class circles is that which characterizes him as being “a reg’lar **wooled un**,” or “a rare **WOOL-TOPPED UN**.” Derived from the great pluck and perseverance shown by many pugilists of whole or partial colour, from Molyneux down to Bob Travers.

Woolbird, a lamb; “wing of a **WOOLBIRD**,” a shoulder of lamb.

Wool-gathering, said of any person’s wits when they are wandering, or in a reverie.

Wool-hole, the workhouse.

Woolly, out of temper.

Woolly, a blanket.

Work, to plan, or lay down and execute any course of action, to perform anything; “to **WORK** the bulls,” *i.e.*, to get rid of false crown pieces; “to **work** the oracle,” to succeed by manoeuvring, to concert a wily plan, to victimize,—a possible reference to the stratagems and bribes used to corrupt the Delphic oracle, and cause it to deliver a favourable response. “To **WORK** a street or neighbourhood,” to try at each house to sell all one can, or to bawl so that every housewife may know what is to be sold. The general plan is to drive a donkey-barrow a short distance, and then stop and cry. The term implies thoroughness; to “**WORK** a street well” is a common saying with a coster. “To **WORK** a benefit” is to canvass among one’s friends and acquaintances.

Worm. See [PUMP](#).

Worm, a policeman.

Worming, removing the beard of an oyster or mussel.

[343]

W. P., or **WARMING-PAN**. A clergyman who holds a living *pro tempore*, under a bond of resignation, is styled a **W. P.**, or **WARMING-PAN** rector, because he keeps the place warm for his successor. **WARMING-PAN** was a term first popularly applied to a substitute in the reign of James II.

Wrinkle, an idea, or a fancy; an additional piece of knowledge.

Write, as “to WRITE one’s name on a joint,” to leave the impression of one’s handiwork thereon, to have the first cut at anything; to leave visible traces of one’s presence anywhere.

Wylo, be off.—*Anglo-Chinese*.

X., or LETTER X, a method of arrest used by policemen with desperate ruffians,—by getting a firm grasp on the collar, and drawing the captive's hand over the holding arm, and pressing the fingers down in a peculiar way—the captured person's arm in this way can be more easily broken than extricated.

Yack, a watch; to “church a YACK,” to take it out of its case to avoid detection, otherwise to “christen a YACK.”

Yaffle, to eat.—*Old English*.

Yahoo, a person of coarse or degraded habits. Derived from the use of the word by Swift.

Yam, to eat. This word is used by the lowest class all over the world; by the Wapping sailor, West Indian negro, or Chinese coolie. When the fort, called the Dutch Folly, near Canton, was in course of erection by the Hollanders, under the pretence of being intended for an hospital, the Chinese observed a box containing muskets among the alleged hospital stores. “Hy-aw!” exclaimed John Chinaman, “How can sick man YAM gun?” The Dutch were surprised and massacred the same night.

Yappy, soft, foolish; mostly applied to an over-generous person, from the fact that it originally meant one who paid for everything. YAP is back slang for pay, and often when a man is asked to pay more than he considers correct, he says, “Do you think I’m YAPPY?” do you think I’m paying mad? Thus slang begets slang.

Yard of clay, a long, old-fashioned tobacco pipe; also called a churchwarden.

Yarmouth capon, a bloater, or red herring.

Yarmouth mittens, bruised hands.—*Sea*.

Yarn, a long story, or tale; “a tough YARN,” a tale hard to be believed; “spin a YARN,” to tell a tale.—*Sea*.

Yay-nay, “a poor YAY-NAY” fellow, one who has no conversational power, and can only answer YEA or NAY to a question.

Yellow-belly, a native of the fens of Lincolnshire, or the Isle of Ely—in allusion to the frogs and yellow-bellied eels caught there.

Yellow-boy, a sovereign, or any gold coin.

Yellow-gloak, a jealous man.

Yellow-Jack, the yellow fever prevalent in the West Indies.

Yellow-man, a yellow silk handkerchief.

Yellows, a term of reproach applied to Bluecoat and other charity school boys.

Yid, or YIT, a Jew. YIDDEN, the Jewish people. The Jews use these terms very frequently.

Yokel, a countryman. Probably from yoke, representative of his occupation. Some fancy, however, that the word was originally YOWKEL, in imitation of the broad tones of country labourers.

Yokuff, a chest, or large box.

Yorkshire, “to YORKSHIRE,” or “come YORKSHIRE over any person,” to cheat or cozen him. The proverbial over-reaching of the rustics of this county has given rise to the phrase, which is sometimes pronounced Yorshar. To put Yorshar to a man, is to trick or deceive him. This latter is from a work in the Lancashire dialect, 1757.

Yorkshire compliment, a gift of something useless to the giver. Sometimes called a North-country compliment.

Yorkshire estates; “I will do it when I come into my YORKSHIRE ESTATES,”—meaning if I ever have the money or the means.

Yorkshire reckoning, a reckoning in which every one pays his own share.

Yunker, in street language, a lad or a boy. Term in general use amongst costermongers, cabmen, and old-fashioned people. Barnefield’s *Affectionate Shepherd*, 1594, has the phrase, “a seemelie YUNKER.” *Danish* and *Friesic*, JONKER. In the navy, a naval cadet is usually termed a YUNKER.

Your nibs, yourself. See [NIBS](#).

Yoxter, a convict returned from transportation before his time.

Ziff, a juvenile thief.

Ziph, LANGUAGE OF, a way of disguising English in use among the students at Winchester College. Compare **MEDICAL GREEK**. De Quincey, in his *Autobiographic Sketches*, says that he acquired this language as a boy, from a Dr. Mapleton, who had three sons at Winchester who had imported it from thence as their sole accomplishment, and that after the lapse of fifty years he could, and did with Lord Westport, converse in it with ease and rapidity. It was communicated at Winchester to new-comers for a fixed fee of half a guinea. The secret is this,—repeat the vowel or diphthong of every syllable, prefixing to the vowel so repeated the letter G, and placing the accent on the intercalated syllable. Thus, for example, “Shall we go away in an hour?” “Shagall wege gogo agawagay igin agan hougour?” “Three hours we have already stayed,” “Threegee hougours wege hagave agalreageadygy stagayed.” De Quincey could hardly have been considered complimentary to his own memory if he supposed that he, or for the matter of that any one possessed of brains, could forget anything so simple; or that, if forgotten until suddenly recalled, it could not be mastered by any sensible person in a minute. The language of ZIPH is far inferior to any of the slangs manufactured by the lower classes. Evidently any consonant will answer the purpose; F or L would be softer, and so far better. This ZIPH system is not confined to Winchester College, as it is recorded and described amongst many other modes of cryptical communication, oral and visual, spoken, written, and symbolic, in an *Essay towards a Real Character and a Philosophic Language* (founded on or suggested by a treatise published just before, by Geo. Dalgarno), by John Wilkins, Bishop of Chester, published by order of the Royal Society, fol. 1668, and as the bishop does not speak of it as a recent invention, it may probably at that time have been regarded as an antique device for conducting a conversation in secrecy amongst bystanders—which says very little for either the designers or the bystanders.

[345]

Zounds! a sudden exclamation—abbreviation of “God’s wounds!”

[346]

[347]

SOME ACCOUNT OF THE BACK SLANG.

The costermongers of London number between thirty and forty thousand. Like other low tribes, they boast a language, or secret tongue, by which they hide their designs, movements, and other private affairs. This costers’ speech offers no new fact, or approach to a fact, for philologists; it is not very remarkable for originality of construction, neither is it spiced with low humour, as other cant. But the costermongers boast that it is known only to themselves; that it is far beyond the Irish, and puzzles the Jews. This is, however, but a poor fiction; for, as will be seen, the slang current among them is of the crudest conception, and only difficult to the most ignorant. Any one of the smallest pretensions to ability could learn back slang—could, in fact, create it for himself—as far as the costers’ vocabulary extends, in a couple of hours. Since the early editions of this work were published back slang has become very common; and is now mostly spoken, mixed however, with various other kinds of slang, in the public markets—the new dead-meat market being, perhaps, strongest in the way of pure—if the term may be used—back slang.

The main principle of this language is spelling the words backwards—or rather, pronouncing them rudely backwards. Sometimes, for the sake of harmony, an extra syllable is prefixed or annexed; and occasionally the word receives quite a different turn, in rendering it backwards, from what an uninitiated person would have expected. One coster told Mayhew that he often gave the end of a word “a new turn, just as if he chorused it with a tol-de-rol.” But then costermongers, and more especially those who confided their joys and sorrows to the gentleman just named, are not to be relied on. The coster has, of course, his own idea of the proper way of spelling words, and is not to be convinced but by an overwhelming show of learning,—and frequently not then, for he is a very headstrong fellow. By the time a coster has spelt an ordinary word of two or three syllables in the proper way, and then spelt it backwards, it has become a tangled knot that no etymologist could unravel. The word “generalize,” for instance, is considered to be “shilling” spelt backwards, while “genitraf” is supposed to represent farthing. Sometimes slang and cant words are introduced, and even these, when imagined to be tolerably well known, are pronounced backwards. Very often, instead of a word being spelt backwards right through, the syllables retain their original order; the initial *h* is pronounced as though *c* were before it, “tatch” being back slang for hat, and “flatch” the word supposed to represent half. Again, the full words are shortened, as “gen” for “generalize,” a shilling; and various other artifices are resorted to, in the hope of adding to the natural difficulties of back slang.

[348]

This back language, back slang, or “kacab genals,” as it is called by the costermongers themselves, is supposed to be regarded by the rising generation of street-sellers as a distinct and regular mode of intercommunication. People who hear this slang for the first time never refer words, by inverting them, to their originals; and the “yanneps,” “esclops,” and “nammows,” are looked upon as secret terms. Those who practise the slang soon obtain a considerable stock vocabulary, so that they converse rather from the memory than the understanding. Amongst the senior costermongers, and those who pride themselves on their proficiency in back slang, a conversation is often sustained for a whole evening—that is, the chief words are in the back slang—especially if any “flats” are present whom they wish to astonish or confuse.

[349]

The addition of an *s* invariably forms the plural, so that this is another source of complication. For instance, woman in the back slang is “nammow,” and “nammows” is “women.” The explorer, then, in undoing the back slang, and turning the word once more into English, would have a

novel and very extraordinary rendering of women. Where a word is refractory in submitting to a back rendering, as in the case of "pound," letters are made to change positions for the sake of harmony; thus we have "dunop," a pound, instead of "dnuop," which nobody could pleasantly pronounce. Also all words of one syllable which end with two consonants—such, for instance, as cold, drunk—become dissyllables when read backwards, the vowel e being imagined between the then first and second consonants, as "deloc," "kennurd." Others take the vowel as an initial, girl being pronounced "elrig." This arrangement, as a modification to suit circumstances, may remind the reader of the Jews' "Old clo'! old clo'!" instead of "Old clothes! old clothes!" which it is supposed would tire the patience of even a Jew to repeat all day.

The back slang has been in vogue for many years. It is, as before stated, very easily acquired, and is principally used by the costermongers and others who practise it (as the specimen Glossary will show) for communicating the secrets of their street tradings, the cost of and profit on goods, and for keeping their natural enemies, the police, in the dark. "Cool the esclop" (look at the police) is often said among them, when one of the constabulary makes his appearance. It is only fair to assume, however, that the police know as much or more about the back slang than do the costers; and every child in a "shy" neighbourhood knows the meaning of the phrase just quoted. Those who regard the London costermonger as a fearful being are very much mistaken,—he is singularly simple-minded and innocent, and has, indeed, very little to conceal; but he certainly does like to wrap himself up as in a garment of mystery, and sometimes believes that the few words of slang he knows, mixed as they are, and troublesome as they have been to him, form an impenetrable barrier between him and the rest of the world. He is fond of exhibiting what knowledge he possesses, and so talks slang in public much more than in private; but at most the slang words used bear not forty per cent. proportion to the rest of his conversational structure, even when he exerts himself to the uttermost limits of his ability and education, and even when he is a leader in his walk of life.

[350]

Perhaps on no subject is the costermonger so silent as on his money affairs. All costs and profits, he thinks, should be kept profoundly secret. The back slang, therefore, gives the various small amounts very minutely, but, as has been before remarked, these words are known wherever common folk most do congregate, and are peculiar only for their variations from the original in the way of pronunciation:—

Flatch, halfpenny.

Yannep, penny.

Owt-yanneps, twopence.

Erth-yanneps, threepence.

Roaf-yanneps, fourpence.

Evif, or ewif-yanneps, fivepence.

Exis-yanneps, sixpence.

Nevis-yanneps, sevenpence.

Teaich, or theg-yanneps, eightpence.

Enin-yanneps, ninepence.

Net-yanneps, tenpence.

Nevelé-yanneps, elevenpence.

Evlénet-yanneps, twelvepence.

Generalize, one shilling.

Yannep-flatch, three-halfpence.

Owt-yannep-flatch, twopence-halfpenny. The word "flatch" represents the odd halfpenny when added to any number of "yanneps."

[351]

Gen, or eno-gen, one shilling. "Gen" is a contraction of "generalize."

Owt-gens, two shillings.

Erth-gens, three shillings.

The "gens" continue in the same sequence as the "yanneps" above; but, as a rule, the *s* is left out, and "owt" or "erth gen" represents the quantity. This is, however, matter of individual taste; and any reader who is anxious to become proficient need not be afraid of committing a solecism—that's a good word for back slanging—by giving vent to any peculiarity that may strike him. Variety is the charm of nature, we are told; and in this particular, if in no other, back slang and nature approach each other. So do extremes meet.

Yenork, a crown piece, or five shillings.

Flatch-yenork, half-a-crown. This is generally slurred into "flatch-a-nock." The crown in full rarely receives the title "yenork" nowadays,—it is usually a "wheel" or "evif gen."

Flatch a dunop, ten shillings, *i.e.*, half a pound.

Beyond this amount the slangist reckons after an intricate and complicated mode. Fifteen shillings would be "erth-evif-gen," or, literally, three times 5*s.*; seventeen and sixpence would be "erth-yenork-flatch," or three crowns and a half; or, by another mode of reckoning, "erth-evif-gen flatch-yenork," *i.e.*, three times 5*s.*, and half-a-crown.

Dunop, a pound. Varied by "Dick," back slang for "quid."

Further than which the costermonger seldom goes in money reckoning.

In the following Glossary only those words are given which are continually used,—the terms connected with street traffic, the names of the different coins, vegetables, fruit, and fish, technicalities of police courts, &c. The reader might naturally think that a system of speech so

[352]

simple as the back slang would require no Glossary; but he will quickly perceive, from the specimens given, that a great many words in frequent use in a "back" sense, have become so twisted as to require a little glossarial explanation.

This kind of slang, formed by reversing and transposing the letters of a word, is not peculiar to the London costermongers. Instances of an exactly similar secret dialect are found in the Spanish "Germania" and French "Argot." Thus:—

<i>Spanish. Germania. English.</i>		
PLATO.	TAPLO.	PLATE.
DEMIA.	MEDIA.	STOCKINGS.

<i>French. Argot. English.</i>		
F'OL.	LOFFE.	FOOLISH.
LORCEFE.	LA FORCE.	LA FORCE, the prison of that name.

The Bazeegars, a wandering tribe of jugglers in India, form a back slang, on the basis of the Hindustanee, in the following manner:—

<i>Hindustanee. Bazeegar. English.</i>		
AG.	GA.	FIRE.
LAMBA.	BALUM.	LONG.
DUM.	MUDU.	BREATH.

[353]

GLOSSARY OF THE BACK SLANG.

Birk, a "crib,"—a house.

Cool, to look.

Cool him, look at him. A phrase frequently used when one costermonger warns another of the approach of a policeman, or when any person worthy of notice passes by. When any old lady has been bargaining with a costermonger, and leaves his barrow without purchasing, the proprietor of the barrow will call out to the rest, "COOL the delo nammow," which, though it means literally nothing beyond "Look at the old woman," conveys to them an intimation that she is, from their point of view, a nuisance, and should be treated as such.

Dab, bad.

Dab tros, a bad sort.

Dabheno, a bad one, sometimes a bad market. *See* [DOOGHENO](#).

Da-erb, bread.

Deb, *OR* DAB, a bed; "I'm off to the **DEB**," I'm going to bed.

Delo nammow, an old woman.

Delog, gold.

Doog, good.

Doogheno, literally "good-one," but implying generally a good market, a good man, &c.

Doogheno hit, one good hit. A coster remarks to a mate, "Jack made a DOOGHENO HIT this morning," implying that he did well at market, or sold out with good profit. Actually a good hit only is intended, but redundancy has its charms in the back slang as well as in more pretentious literary efforts.

Dunop, a pound.

Edgabac, cabbage.

Edgenaro, an orange.

E-fink, a knife.

Ekame, a "make," or swindle.

Ekom, a "moke," or donkey.

Elrig, a girl.

Emag, game, "I know your little **EMAG**."

Enif, fine.

Enin gen, nine shillings.

Enin yanneps, ninepence.

Eno, one.

Erif, fire.

Erth, three.

[354]

Erth gen, three shillings.

Erth-pu, three-up, a street game, played with three halfpence.

Erth sith-noms, three months,—a term of imprisonment unfortunately very familiar to the lower orders. Generally known as a “drag.”

Erth yanneps, threepence.

Esclop, police, now used to signify a constable only. ESCLOP is pronounced “slop” simply, but the *c* was never sounded. A policeman is now and then called, by some purist or stickler for etiquette, an “esclopnam.”

Es-roch, a horse.

Esuch, a house.

Evif-gen, a crown, or five shillings.

Evif-yanneps, fivepence.

Evlenet-gen, twelve shillings.

Evlenet sith-noms, twelve months. Generally known as a “stretch.”

Exis-evif-gen, six times five shillings, *i.e.*, 30*s.* All moneys may be reckoned in this manner, either with YANNEPS or GENS. It is, however, rarely or never done.

Exis-evif-yanneps, elevenpence,—literally, “sixpence and fivepence = elevenpence.” This mode of reckoning, distinct from the preceding, is only made by special arrangement amongst slangites, who wish to confound their intimates.

Exis gen, six shillings.

Exis sith-noms, six months.

Exis yanneps, sixpence.

Fi-heath, a thief.

Flatch, half, or a halfpenny.

Flatch kennurd, half drunk.

Flatch-yenork, half-a-crown. *See* preceding remarks.

Flatchyannep, a halfpenny.

Gen, twelvepence, or one shilling. Formerly imagined to be an abbreviation of argent, cant term for silver.

Generalize, a shilling, almost invariably shortened to GEN.

Genitraf, a farthing.

Gen-net, or NET GEN, ten shillings.

Genol, long.

Hel-bat, a table. }
Helpa, an apple. } The aspirate is matter of taste.

Kanitseeno, a stinking one. KANITS is a stink.

Kennurd, drunk.

Kew (or more properly KEEU), a week.

Kews, SKEW, or SKEEU, weeks.

Kirb, a brick.

Kool, to look.

Lawt, tall.

Ler-ac-am, mackerel.

Mottob, bottom.

Mur, rum. A “nettock o’ MUR” is a quartern of rum.

Nair, rain.

Nam, a man.

Nam esclop, a policeman. *See* [ESCLOP](#).

Nammow, a woman; DELO NAMMOW, an old woman.

Neel, lean.

Neergs, greens.

Net enin gen, nineteen shillings.

Net evif gen, fifteen shillings.

Net exis gen, sixteen shillings.

Net gen, ten shillings, or half a sovereign.

Net nevis gen, seventeen shillings.

Net rith gen, thirteen shillings.

Net roof gen, fourteen shillings. It will be seen by the foregoing that the reckoning is more by tens than by “teens.” This is, however, matter of choice, and any one wishing to be considered accomplished in this description of slang, must do as he thinks best—must lead and not be led.

Net theg gen, eighteen shillings.

Net yanneps, tenpence.

Nevele gen, eleven shillings.

Nevele yanneps, elevenpence.

Nevis gen, seven shillings.

Nevis stretch, seven years’ penal servitude.

Nevis yanneps, sevenpence.

Nig, gin.

Noom, the moon.

Nos-rap, a parson.

Occabot, tobacco; “tib fo OCCABOT,” bit of tobacco.

Ogging ot tekram, going to market.

On, no.

On doog, no good.

Owt gen, two shillings. }
Owt yanneps, twopence. } OWT is pronounced OAT.

Pac, a cap.

Pinnurt pots, turnip tops.

Pot, top.

Rape, a pear.

Reeb, beer. “Top o’ REEB,” a pot of beer.

Rev-lis, silver.

Rof-efil, for life—sentence of punishment.

Roaf-gen, four shillings.

Roaf-yanneps, fourpence.

Rutat, OR RATTAT, a “tatur,” or potato.

See-otches, shoes.

Sey, yes. Pronounced SEE.

Shif, fish.

Sirretch, cherries. Very often SIRRETCHES.

Sith-nom, a month. This is because the slang was made from months, not month. Perhaps because the latter was not easy; perhaps because terms of imprisonment run longer than a month, and are often enumerated in the “kacab genals.” However it may be, “months” in this mode of speaking has a double plural as it stands now.

Slaoc, coals.

Slop, a policeman. See [ESCLOP](#).

Sneerg, greens.

Spinsrap,
parsnips. }
Sret-sio,
oysters. }
Sres-wort,
trousers. }

Starps, sprats. }

Stoobs, boots. }

All these will take the s, which is now initial, after them, if desired, and, as may be seen, some take it doubly.

Storrac,

carrots.

Stun, nuts.

Stunlaw,
walnuts.

Tach, a hat.

Taf, fat. A TAF ENO is a fat man or woman, literally A FAT ONE.

Taoc, a coat. "Cool the DELO TAOC" means, "Look at the old coat," but is really intended to apply to the wearer as well, as professors of mixed slangs might say, "Vardy his nibs in the snide bucket."

Taoc-tisaw, a waistcoat.

Teaich-gir, right, otherwise TADGER.

Tenip, a pint.

Theg (OR TEAICH) gen, eight shillings.

Theg (OR TEAITCH) yanneps, eightpence.

Tib, a bit, or piece.

Tol, lot, stock, or share.

Top-yob, a potboy.

Torrac, a carrot. "Ekat a TORRAC."

Tork, a quart.

Trosseno, literally, "one sort," but professional slangists use it to imply anything that is bad. TROSS, among costermongers, means anything bad. It is probably a corruption of trash. Possibly, however, the constant use of the words "dab-tros" may have led them in their unthinking way to imagine that the latter word will do by itself.

Wedge, a Jew. This may look strange, but it is exact back slang.

Wor-rab, a barrow.

Yad, a day; YADS, days.

Yadnarb, brandy.

Yannep, a penny.

Yannep a time, a penny each. Costermongers say "a time" for many things. They say a "bob a time," meaning a shilling each for admission to a theatre, or any other place, or that certain articles are charged a shilling each. The context is the only clue to the exact meaning.

Yannep-flatch, three halfpence,—all the halfpence and pennies continue in the same sequence, as for instance, OWT-YANNEP-FLATCH, twopence-halfpenny.

Yap pu, pay up.

Yeknod, OR JERK-NOD, a donkey.

Yenork, a crown.

Yob, a boy.

Zeb, best.

From these examples the apt student may fairly judge how to form his own back slang to his own liking and that of his friends.

SOME ACCOUNT OF THE RHYMING SLANG.

There exists in London a singular tribe of men, known amongst the "fraternity of vagabonds" as chaunters and patterers. Both classes are great talkers. The first sing or chaunt through the public thoroughfares ballads—political and humorous—carols, dying speeches, and the various other kinds of gallows and street literature. The second deliver street orations on grease-removing compounds, plating powders, high-polishing blacking, and the thousand-and-one wonderful penny-worths that are retailed to gaping mobs from a London kerb-stone.

They are quite a distinct tribe from the costermongers; indeed, amongst tramps, they term themselves the "harristocrats of the streets," and boast that they live by their intellects. Like the costermongers, however, they have a secret tongue or cant speech known only to each other. This cant, which has nothing to do with that spoken by the costermongers, is known in Seven Dials and elsewhere as the "rhyming slang," or the substitution of words and sentences which rhyme with other words intended to be kept secret. The chaunter's cant, therefore, partakes of

his calling, and he transforms and uses up into a rough speech the various odds and ends of old songs, ballads, and street nicknames, which are found suitable to his purpose. Unlike nearly all other systems of cant, the rhyming slang is not founded upon allegory; unless we except a few rude similes, thus—"I'm afloat" is the rhyming cant for "boat," "sorrowful tale" is equivalent to "three months in jail," "artful dodger" signifies a "lodger," and a "snake in the grass" stands for a "looking-glass"—a meaning that would delight a fat Chinaman, or a collector of Oriental proverbs. But, as in the case of the costers' speech and the old gipsy-vagabond cant, the chaunters and patterers so interlard this rhyming slang with their general remarks, while their ordinary language is so smothered and subdued, that, unless when they are professionally engaged, and talking of their wares, they might almost pass for foreigners.

[359]

From the inquiries I have made of various patterers and "paper-workers," I learn that the rhyming slang was introduced about twelve or fifteen years ago.^[61] Numbering this class of oratorical and bawling wanderers at twenty thousand, scattered over Great Britain, including London and the large provincial towns, we thus see the number of English vagabonds who converse in rhyme and talk poetry, although their habitations and mode of life constitute a very unpleasant Arcadia. These nomadic poets, like the other talkers of cant or secret languages, are stamped with the vagabond's mark, and are continually on the move. The married men mostly have lodgings in London, and come and go as occasion may require. A few never quit London streets, but the greater number tramp to all the large provincial fairs, and prefer the "monkery" (country) to town life. Some transact their business in a systematic way, sending a post-office order to the Seven Dials' printer for a fresh supply of ballads or penny books, or to the "swag shop," as the case may be, for trinkets and gewgaws, to be sent on by rail to a given town by the time they shall arrive there.

When any dreadful murder, colliery explosion, or frightful railway accident has happened in a country district, three or four chaunters are generally on the spot in a day or two after the occurrence, vending and bawling "A True and Faithful Account," &c., which "true and faithful account" was concocted purely in the imaginations of the successors of Catnach and Tommy Pitts,^[62] behind the counters of their printing-shops in Seven Dials. And but few fairs are held in any part of England without the patterer being punctually at his post, with his nostrums, or real gold rings (with the story of the wager laid by the gentleman—see [FAWNEY-BOUNCING](#), in the Dictionary), or savealls for candlesticks, or paste which, when applied to the strop, makes the dullest razor keen enough to hack broom handles and sticks, and after that to have quite enough sharpness left for splitting hairs, or shaving them off the back of one of the hands of a clodhopper, looking on in amazement. And Cheap John, too, with his coarse jokes, and no end of six-bladed knives, and pocket-books, containing information for everybody, with pockets to hold money, and a pencil to write with into the bargain, and a van stuffed with the cheap productions of Sheffield and "Brummagem,"—he, too, is a patterer of the highest order, and visits fairs, and can hold a conversation in the rhyming slang.

[360]

Such is a rough description of the men who speak this jargon; and simple and ridiculous as the vulgar scheme of a rhyming slang may appear, it must always be regarded as a curious fact in linguistic history. In order that the reader's patience may not be too much taxed, only a selection of rhyming words has been given in the Glossary,—and these for the most part, as in the case of the back slang, are the terms of every-day life, as used by this order of tramps and hucksters.

It must not be supposed, however, that the chaunter or patterer confines himself entirely to this slang when conveying secret intelligence. On the contrary, although he speaks not a "leash of languages," yet is he master of the beggar's cant, and is thoroughly "up" in street slang. The following letter, written by a chaunter to a gentleman who took an interest in his welfare, will show his capabilities in this line:—

[361]

Dear Friend,^[63]

Excuse the liberty, since i saw you last i have not earned a thick un, we have had such a Dowry of Parny that it completely Stumped Drory the Bossman's Patter therefore i am broke up and not having another friend but you i wish to know if you would lend me the price of 2 Gross of Tops, Dies, or Croaks, which is 7 shillings, of the above-mentioned worthy and Sarah Chesham the Essex Burick for the Poisoning job, they are both to be topped at Springfield Sturaban on Tuesday next. i hope you will oblige me if you can, for it will be the means of putting a James in my Clys. i will call at your Carser on Sunday Evening next for an answer, for i want a Speel on the Drum as soon as possible. hoping you and the family are All Square,

[362]

I remain Your obedient Servant,

The numerous allusions in the Glossary to well-known places in London show that this rude speech was mainly concocted in the metropolis. The police have made themselves partially acquainted with the back slang, but they are still profoundly ignorant of the rhyming slang.

NOTE.

Since the foregoing was written, matters have changed considerably, even, which I much doubt,

if they ever were as is stated; for, as I have already remarked, wherever opportunity has occurred, the costermonger, the patterer, the chaunter, and the various other itinerants who "work" London and the provinces, delight in making themselves appear a most mysterious body; and this, when added to their natural disinclination to commit themselves to anything like fact so far as their natural enemies—inquirers, and well-dressed inquirers in particular—are concerned, has caused all sorts of extraordinary stories to be set afloat, which have ultimately led to an opinion becoming prevalent, that the costermonger and his friends form a race of beings differing entirely from those who mix in the ordinary humdrum routine of respectable life. Nothing could really be much further from fact. Any one who has ever been driven by stress of circumstances or curiosity to take up a permanent or temporary residence in any of the lodging-houses which abound in St. Giles's, Saffron Hill, Turnmill Street, and in all parts of the eastern district of the metropolis, will bear me out when I say that a more commonplace individual, so far as his inner life is concerned, than the London itinerant cannot possibly exist. Certainly he is ignorant, and takes a very limited view of things in general, and religion and politics in particular; but these peculiarities are held in common with his betters, and so cannot be regarded as the special prerogative of any class. If you ask him a question he will attempt to mislead you, because, by your asking the question, he knows you are ignorant of his way of life; and when he does not mystify from love of mischief, as it appears he does from all published books I have seen about him, he does so as a duty he owes his natural enemies, the parish authorities and the tract distributors, the latter of whom he holds in special abhorrence.

[363]

If the rhyming slang was ever, during its existence, regarded as a secret language, its secrecy has long since departed from it. Far easier of construction than even the back slang, it has been common, especially in several printing-offices I could name, for many years, while street-boys are great proficient in its small mysteries. The Glossary which follows here will explain a good deal of its mechanism; but it must be borne in mind that the rhymes are all matters of individual opinion, and that if one man says Allacompain means rain, another is quite justified in preferring Mary Blane, if his individual fancy lies in that direction. And now, if there is any secret about the rhyming slang, it is this—the rhyme is left out. This may at first seem extraordinary; but on reflection it will be seen that there is no other way of making the proceedings of its exponents puzzling to ordinarily sharp ears which have received the slightest clue. Thus, when the first word of a series only is used, and others in the sentence are made up from the back, the centre and various slangs, there is some hope of fogging an intruding listener to a private conversation. When a man is drunk, the rhyming slang would illustrate that fact by the words "Elephant's trunk;" but the practised hand confines himself to the statement that "Bill's Elephants." "Bullock's horn" represents to pawn, but an article is said to be "Bullocked" only; and so on through the list, providing always that the curtailment represents two syllables; if it does not, then the entire rhyme is given.

[365]

I think that this will be sufficient to guide those readers anxious to become proficient themselves, or to understand others who are themselves proficient at this item in the world of slang; and so I have nothing more to say except to call attention to the fact that, in all the other introductions, I have made my corrections, which have been neither few nor unimportant, in the text; but that I could see no way of working on the subject of the rhyming slang fairly and explicitly other than by means of this note.—EDITOR.

GLOSSARY OF THE RHYMING SLANG.

Abraham's willing, a shilling.

Allacompain, rain.

Any racket, a penny faggot.

Apples and pears, stairs.

Artful dodger, a lodger.

Baby's pap, a cap.

Barnet fair, hair.

Battle of the Nile, a tile—vulgar term for a hat. "Cool his BATTLE, Bill."

Ben flake, a steak.

Billy Button, mutton.

Birch-broom, a room.

Bird-lime, time.

Bob, my pal, a gal,—vulgar pronunciation of girl.

Bonnets so blue, Irish stew.

Bottle of spruce, a deuce,—slang for twopence.

Bowl the hoop, soup.

Brian o'Linn, gin.

Brown Bess, yes—the affirmative.

Brown Joe, no—the negative.

Bull and cow, a row.

Bucket afloat, a coat. This is also called I'm AFLOAT, and is generally contracted to “cool his Imer,” or “nark his bucket.” There is no necessity to particularize all contractions. With the key already given they will be evident.

Bullock's horn, in pawn.

Bushy-park, a lark.

Butter flap, a trap, a light cart.

Cain and Abel, a table.

Camden-town, a brown,—vulgar term for a halfpenny.

Castle rag, a flag,—cant term for fourpence.

Cat and mouse, a house.

Chalk farm, the arm.

Charing Cross, a horse.

Charley Lancaster, a handkercher,—vulgar pronunciation of handkerchief.

Charley Prescott, a waistcoat.

Cherry ripe, a pipe.

Chevy chase, the face.

Chump (OR CHUNK) **of wood**, no good.

Covent Garden, a farden,—Cockney pronunciation of farthing.

Cow and calf, to laugh.

Cows and kisses, mistress or missus—referring to the ladies.

Currants and plums, thrums,—slang for threepence.

Daisy roots, a pair of boots.

Dan Tucker, butter.

Ding-dong, a song.

Dry land, you understand.

Duke of York, walk, or talk, according to context.

East and south, the mouth.

Eat a fig, to “crack a crib,” to break into a house, or commit a burglary.

Egyptian hall, a ball.

Elephant's trunk, drunk.

Epsom races, a pair of braces.

Everton toffee, coffee.

Field of wheat, a street.

Fillet of veal, the treadwheel in the house of correction.

Finger and thumb, rum.

Flag unfurled, a man of the world.

Flea and louse, a house.

Flounder and dab (two kinds of flat fish), a cab.

Fly my kite, a light.

Frog and toad, the main road.

Garden gate, a magistrate.

German flutes, a pair of boots.

Girl and boy, a saveloy,—a penny sausage.

Glorious sinner, a dinner.

Gooseberry pudding (*vulgo* PUDDEN), a woman.

Harry Bluff, snuff.

Hod of mortar, a pot of porter.

Hounslow Heath, teeth.

I desire, a fire.

I'm afloat, a boat. This is also used for coat. *See ante.*

Isabeller (vulgar pronunciation of ISABELLA), an umbrella.

Isle of France, a dance.

I suppose, the nose.

Jack-a-dandy, brandy.

Jack Randall (a noted pugilist), a candle.

Jenny Linder, a winder,—vulgar pronunciation of window.

Joe Savage, a cabbage.

Lath and plaster, a master.

Lean and lurch, a church.

Lean and fat, a hat.

Linendraper, paper.

Live eels, fields.

Load of hay, a day.

Long acre, a baker.

Lord John Russell, a bustle.

Lord Level, a shovel.

Lump of coke, a bloke—vulgar term for a man.

Lump of lead, the head.

Macaroni, a pony.

Maids adorning, the morning.

Maidstone jailer, a tailor.

Mince pies, the eyes.

Mother and daughter, water.

Muffin baker, a Quaker (slang term for excrement).

Navigators, tatars,—vulgar pronunciation of potatoes.

Navigator Scot, baked potatoes all hot.

Needle and thread, bread.

Never fear, beer.

Night and day, the play.

Nose and chin, a winn,—ancient cant for a penny.

Noser my knacker, tobacco.

Oats and barley, Charley.

Oats and chaff, a footpath.

Orinoko (pronounced ORINOKER), a poker.

Over the stile, sent for trial.

Paddy Quick, thick, or a stick.

Pen and ink, a stink.

Pitch and fill, Bill,—vulgar shortening for William.

Plates of meat, the feet.

Plough the deep, to go to sleep.

Pope o' Rome, home.

Read and write, to fight.

River Lea, tea.

Rogue and villain, a shillin,—common pronunciation of shilling.

Roll me in the dirt, a shirt.

Rory o'More, the floor. Also used to signify a whore.

Round the houses, trousers,—vulgar pronunciation of trousers.

Salmon and trout, the mouth.

Scotch Peg, a leg.

Ship in full sail, a pot of ale.

Sir Walter Scott, a pot,—generally of beer.

Snake in the grass, a looking-glass.

Sorrowful tale, three months in jail.

Split asunder, a costermonger.

Steam-packet, a jacket.

St. Martin's-le-Grand, the hand.

Stop thief, beef.

Sugar and honey, money.

Sugar-candy, brandy.

Take a fright, night.

Three-quarters of a peck, the neck,—in writing, among experts, expressed by the simple "¾," as it is pronounced.

Tom Tug, a mug (a fool).

Tommy o'Rann, scran,—vulgar term for food.

Tommy Tripe, to pipe; that is, to observe. "Tommy Tripe his plates of meat."

Top Jint (vulgar pronunciation of joint), a pint—of beer.

Turtle doves, a pair of gloves.

Two-foot rule, a fool.

And so on as occasion requires.

[369]

CENTRE SLANG.

Within the past few years the desire to possess a mode of intercommunication which shall be incomprehensible to those who have not taken their degrees in vice, has led the dangerous classes—particularly street-muggers, welchers, skittle-sharps, jerry-hunters, and the various other gentlemen who turn out every morning, when not in charge of the powers that be, to look for their livings—to give their attention to another twist in the English language, and so centre slang has of late been heard with some degree of frequency by those who penetrate to places where there is a likelihood of finding anything new, and take with them sufficient knowledge to comprehend it when, or if, it is found. As this knowledge can never be acquired in any other way than by actual observation, and is not to be obtained by hearsay, or second-hand information, or from books, it is rarely brought to bear upon any subject of this kind as treated in the newspapers, and the articles on real low and criminal life which now and again appear, though extremely amusing, amuse those about whom they are written as much as they do those for whose information they are produced. So, perhaps, those writers who have heard centre slang, and have had opportunity of referring to it, did not know what it was, or certainly, as an institution unique in its way, it would have received some little attention. There is not much in it, of course, as its origin shows, the key being everything towards success in experimentalizing with it. Centre slang, then, is formed by making the central vowel of a word its initial letter, and adding vowels and consonants sufficient to make the sound imposing, or, as cooks say, to flavour palatably. An occasional infusion of back slang is now and again considered advisable, but the taste of the speaker must decide how much is requisite. Mug is a common word to signify a fool or flat; this, in centre slang, becomes Ugmer, or Hugmer, as the speaker likes, while fool and flat themselves become Oolerfer and Atfler respectively. The aspirate can be added, if relished, to any centre slang word. A welcher, by means of the new slang, becomes an Elcherwer or Elchwer, a thief is an Evethee, and a sticker-up of skittles is an Ickitser-pu. As the inventors of this slang are not particular about spelling, phonography is used extensively in its composition—that is, it would be, if it were possible to write centre slang to any extent. However, as it is a spoken language only, and no patent has been taken out for its use, boldness is the chief essential for any one possessed of a mobile tongue and a desire to become expert. There is no Glossary of this slang necessary, as it is only made up of small parcels, as occasion requires, and does not keep well without guiding sentences attached.

[370]

[371]

THE BIBLIOGRAPHY

OF

SLANG, CANT, AND VULGAR LANGUAGE:

A LIST OF THE

BOOKS CONSULTED IN COMPILING THIS WORK.

Slang has a literary history, the same as authorized language. More than one hundred works

have treated upon the subject in one form or other,—a few devoting but a chapter, whilst many have given up their entire pages to expounding its history and use. Old Harman, a worthy man, who interested himself in suppressing and exposing vagabondism in the days of good Queen Bess, was the first to write upon the subject. Decker followed fifty years afterwards, but helped himself, evidently, to his predecessor's labours. Shakspeare, Beaumont and Fletcher, Ben Jonson, and Brome, each employed beggars' cant as part of the machinery of their plays. Then came Head (who wrote *The English Rogue* in 1680) with a Glossary of cant words "used by the Gipsies." But it was only a reprint of what Decker had given sixty years before. About this time authorized dictionaries began to insert vulgar words, labelling them "cant." The Jack Sheppards and Dick Turpins of the early and middle part of the last century made cant popular, and many small works were published upon the subject. But it was Grose, burly, facetious Grose, who, in the year 1785, collected the scattered Glossaries of cant and secret words, and formed one large work, adding to it all the vulgar words and slang terms used in his own day. The indelicacy and extreme vulgarity of the work renders it unfit for ordinary use, still it must be admitted that it is by far the most important work which has ever appeared on street or popular language; indeed, from its pages every succeeding work has, up to the present time, drawn its contents. The great fault of Grose's book consists in the author not contenting himself with slang and cant terms, but inserting every "smutty" and offensive word that could be discovered. However, Harman and Grose are, after all, the only authors who have as yet treated the subject in an original manner, or who have written on it from personal inquiry.

[372]

Ainsworth's (William Harrison) Novels and Ballads.

Some of this author's novels, such as *Rookwood* and *Jack Sheppard*, abound in Cant words, placed in the mouths of the highwaymen. The author's ballads (especially "Nix my dolly, pals, fake away") have long been popular favourites. London,
V. D.

Amorous Gallants' Tongue tipp'd with Golden Expressions; or the Art of Courtship refined, being the best and Newest ACADEMY; containing Select Sentences, forms of Courtship; Choice Letters; Interpretation of Dreams: to which is added Bills, Bonds, Releases, Letters of Attorney, &c.; together with *A Canting Academy*, or the PEDLAR'S FRENCH DICTIONARY, 13th edition. London, for C. Hitch and L. Hawes, n. d. [1740], 12mo.

A New Dictionary of the Jaunting Crew, 12mo.

Mentioned by John Bee in the Introduction to his *Sportsman's Slang Dictionary*. N. D.

Andrews' (George) Dictionary of the Slang and Cant Languages, Ancient and Modern, 12mo.

A sixpenny pamphlet, with a coloured frontispiece representing a beggar's carnival.

Ash's (John, LL.D.) New and Complete Dictionary of the English Language, 2 vols. 8vo. London,
1809.

Contains a great number of Cant words and phrases. 1775.

Bacchus and Venus; or, A Select Collection of near Two Hundred of the most Witty and Diverting Songs and Catches in Love and Gallantry, with Songs in the Canting Dialect, with a DICTIONARY *explaining all Burllesque and Canting Terms*, 12mo.

Prefixed is a curious woodcut frontispiece of a *Boozing-Ken*. This work is scarce, and much prized by collectors. The Canting Dictionary appeared before, about 1710, with the initials B. E. on the title. It also came out afterwards, in the year 1751, under the title of the *Scoundrel's Dictionary*,—a mere reprint of the two former impressions. 1738.

Bailey's (Nath.) Etymological English Dictionary, 2 vols. 8vo.

Contains a great many Cant and Vulgar Words;—indeed, Bailey does not appear to have been very particular what words he inserted, so long as they were actually in use. *A Collection of Ancient and Modern Cant Words* appears as an appendix to vol. ii. of this edition (third). 1737.

[373]

Bang-up Dictionary; or, the Lounger and Sportsman's Vade-Mecum, containing a copious and correct Glossary of the Language of the Whips, illustrated by a great variety of original and curious Anecdotes, 8vo.

A vulgar performance, consisting of pilferings from Grose, and made up with meanings of a degraded character. 1812.

Bartlett's Dictionary of Americanisms; a Glossary of Words and Phrases colloquially used in the United States, 8vo.

It is a curious fact connected with slang that a great number of vulgar words common in England are equally common in the United States; and when we remember that America began to be peopled two centuries ago, and that these colloquialisms must have crossed the sea with the first emigrants, we can form some idea of the antiquity of popular or street language. Many words, owing to the caprices of fashion or society, have wholly disappeared in the parent country, whilst in the colonies they are yet heard. The words "skink," to serve drink in company, and the old term "miching" or "meeching," skulking or playing truant, for instance, are still in use in the United States, although nearly obsolete here. New York,
1859.

Beaumont and Fletcher's Comedy of *The Beggar's Bush*, 4to, 1661.

Contains numerous Cant words.

Bee's (Jon.) Dictionary of the Turf, the Ring, the Chase, the Pit, the Bon Ton, and the Varieties of Life, forming the completest and most authentic Lexicon Balatronicum hitherto offered to the notice of the Sporting World, by John Bee [*i.e.*, John Badcock], Editor of the *Fancy, Fancy Gazette, Living Picture of London*, and the like of that, 12mo.

- This author published books on Stable Economy under the name of Hinds. He was the sporting rival of Pierce Egan. Professor Wilson, in an amusing article in *Blackwood's Magazine*, reviewed this work. 1823.
- Bee's** (Jon.) Living Picture of London for 1828, and Stranger's Guide through the Streets of the Metropolis; showing the Frauds, the Arts, Snares, and Wiles of all descriptions of Rogues that everywhere abound, 12mo. 1828.
- Professes to be a guide to society, high and low, in London, and to give an insight into the language of the streets.
- Bee's** (Jon.) Sportsman's Slang; a New Dictionary of Terms used in the Affairs of the Turf, the Ring, the Chase, and the Cockpit; with those of Bon Ton and the Varieties of Life, forming a *Lexicon Balatronicum et Macaronicum, &c.*, 12mo, PLATE.
- The same as the preceding, only with an altered title. Both wretched performances, filled with miserable attempts at wit. *For the Author*, 1825.
- Blackguardiana**; or, Dictionary of Rogues, Bawds, &c., 8vo, WITH PORTRAITS [by James Caulfield]. 1795.
- This work, with a long and very vulgar title, is nothing but a reprint of Grose, with a few anecdotes of pirates, odd persons, &c., and some curious portraits inserted. It was concocted by Caulfield as a speculation, and published at *one guinea* per copy; and, owing to the remarkable title, and the notification at the bottom that "only a few copies were printed," soon became scarce. For philological purposes it is not worth so much as any edition of Grose. [374]
- Book of Vagabonds.** See under [LIBER VAGATORUM](#).
- Boxiana**; or, Sketches of Modern Pugilism, by Pierce Egan (an account of the prize-ring), 3 vols. 8vo. 1820.
- Gives more particularly the Cant terms of pugilism, but contains numerous (what were then styled) "flash" words.
- Brandon.** Poverty, Mendicity, and Crime; or, The Facts, Examinations, &c., upon which the Report was founded, presented to the House of Lords by W. A. Miles, Esq., to which is added a Dictionary of the Flash or Cant Language, known to every Thief and Beggar, edited by H. Brandon, Esq., 8vo. 1839.
- A very wretched performance.
- Brome's** (Rich.) Joviall Crew; or, The Merry Beggars. Presented in a Comedie at the Cockpit, in Drury Lane, in the Year (4to) 1652.
- Contains many Cant words similar to those given by Decker,—from whose works they were doubtless obtained.
- Brown's** (Rev. Hugh Stowell) Lecture on Manliness, 12mo. 1857.
- Contains a few modern Slang words.
- Brydges'** (Sir Egerton) British Bibliographer, 4 vols. 8vo. 1810-14.
- Vol. ii. p. 521, gives a list of Cant words.
- Bulwer's** (Sir Edward Lytton) Paul Clifford. v. D.
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- Butler's Hudibras**, with Dr. Grey's Annotations, 3 vols. 8vo. 1819.
- Abounding in colloquial terms and phrases.
- Cambridge.** Gradus ad Cantabrigiam; or, a Dictionary of Terms, Academical and Colloquial, or Cant, which are used at the University, *with Illustrations*, 12mo. *Camb.*, 1803.
- Canting**: A Poem, interspersed with Tales and Additional Scraps, post 8vo. 1803.
- A few street words may be gleaned from this rather dull poem.
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- Compiled by Richard Head.
- Canting Dictionary**; comprehending all the Terms, Antient and Modern, used in the several Tribes of Gypsies, Beggars, Shoplifters, Highwaymen, Foot-Pads, and all other Clans of Cheats and Villains, with Proverbs, Phrases, Figurative Speeches, &c., to which is added a complete Collection of Songs in the Canting Dialect, 12mo. 1674.
- The title is by far the most interesting part of the work. A mere make-up of earlier attempts. 1725.
- Carew.** Life and Adventures of Bamfylde Moore Carew, the King of the Beggars, *with Canting Dictionary, portrait*, 8vo. 1791.
- There are numerous editions of this singular biography. The Canting Dictionary is nothing more than a filch from earlier books.
- Characterisms**, or the Modern Age Displayed; being an Attempt to Expose the Pretended Virtues of Both Sexes, 12mo (part i., Ladies; part ii., Gentlemen), *E. Owen*.

- An anonymous work, from which some curious matter may be obtained. 1750.
- Conybeare's** (Dean) Essay on Church Parties, reprinted from the *Edinburgh Review*, No. CC., October, 1853, 12mo. 1858.
- Several curious instances of religious or pulpit Slang are given in this exceedingly interesting little volume.
- Corcoran** (Peter.) The Fancy, a Poem, 12mo. 182-.
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- Decker's** (Thomas) The Bellman of London; bringing to light the most notorious villanies that are now practised in the Kingdom; 4to, black letter. *London*, 1608.
- Watt says this is the first book which professes to give an account of the Canting language of thieves and vagabonds. But this is wrong, as will have been seen from the remarks on Harman, who collected the words of the vagabond crew half a century before.
- Decker's** (Thomas) Lanthorne and Candle-light, or the Bellman's Second Night's Walke, in which he brings to light a brood of more strange villanies than ever were to this year discovered, 4to. *London*, 1608-9.
- This is a continuation of the former work, and contains the *Canter's Dictionary*, and has a frontispiece of the London Watchman with his staff broken.
- Decker's** (Thomas) Gull's Hornbook, 4to. 1609.
- "This work affords a greater insight into the fashionable follies and vulgar habits of Queen Elizabeth's day than perhaps any other extant."
- Decker's** (Thomas) O per se O, or a new Cryer of Lanthorne and Candle-light, an Addition of the Bellman's Second Night's Walke, 4to, black letter. 1612.
- A lively description of London. Contains a *Canter's Dictionary*, every word in which appears to have been taken from Harman without acknowledgment. This is the first work that gives the Canting song, a verse of which is inserted at page 14 of the Introduction. This Canting song has since been inserted in nearly all dictionaries of Cant.
- Decker's** (Thomas) Villanies discovered by Lanthorne and Candle-light, and the Helpe of a new Cryer called O per se O, 4to. 1616.
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- Dictionary** of all the Cant and Flash Languages, both Ancient and Modern, 18mo. [376]
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- Dictionnaire** des Halle, 12mo. *London*, 1797.
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- Ducange Anglicus.**—The Vulgar Tongue: comprising Two Glossaries of Slang, Cant, and Flash Words and Phrases used in London at the present day, 12mo. *Bruxelles*, 1696.
- A silly and childish performance, full of blunders and contradictions.
- Duncombe's** Flash Dictionary of the Cant Words, Queer Sayings, and Crack Terms now in use in Flash Cribb Society, 32mo, *coloured print*. 1857.
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- Contains a few Cant and vulgar words.
- Egan.** Grose's Classical Dictionary of the Vulgar Tongue, with the addition of numerous Slang Phrases, edited by Pierce Egan, 8vo. *London*, 1694.
- The best edition of Grose, with many additions, including a life of this celebrated antiquary.
- Egan's** (Pierce) Life in London, 2 vols. thick 8vo, *with coloured plates by Geo. Cruikshank, representing high and low life*. 1823.
- Contains numerous Cant, Slang, sporting, and vulgar words, supposed by the author to form the basis of conversation in life, high and low, in London. 18—.
- Elwyn's** (Alfred L.) Glossary of supposed *Americanisms*—Vulgar and Slang Words used in the United States, small 8vo. 1859.
- Gentleman's Magazine**, 8vo. N. D.
- "In a very early volume of this parent magazine were given a few pages, by way of sample, of a Slang vocabulary, then termed Cant. If, as we suspect, this part of the magazine fell to the share

of Dr. Johnson, who was then its editor, we have to lament that he did not proceed with the design."—*John Bee, in the Introduction to his Slang Dictionary, 1825.*

Gentleman's Magazine, vol. xcii., p. 520.

Mention made of Slang.

Glossaries of County Dialects.

Many of these will repay examination, as they contain Cant and Slang words, wrongly inserted as provincial or old terms.

V. D.

Golden Cabinet (The) of Secrets opened for Youth's delightful Pastime, in 7 parts, the last being the "City and Country Jester;" with a Canting Dictionary, by Dr. Surman, 12mo.

Contains some curious woodcuts.

London,
N. D. (1730.)

Greene's (Robert) Notable Discovery of Coosnage, now daily practised by sundry lewd persons called Conie-catchers and Crosse-biters. Plainly laying open those pernicious sleights that hath brought many ignorant men to confusion. Written for the general benefit of all Gentlemen, Citizens, Apprentices, Country Farmers, and Yeomen, that may hap to fall into the company of such coosening companions. With a delightful discourse of the coosnage of Colliers, 4to, *with woodcuts.*

[377]

The first edition. A copy of another edition, supposed to be *unique*, is dated 1592. It was sold at the Heber sale.

Printed by
John Wolfe,
1591.

Greene's (Robert) Groundworke of Conny-catching, the manner of their pedlers' French, and the meanes to understand the same, with the cunning sleights of the Counterfeit Cranke. Done by a Justice of the Peace of great Authoritie, 4to, *with woodcuts.*

Usually enumerated among Greene's works, but it is only a reprint, with variations, of *Harman's Caveat*, and of which Rowland complains in his *Martin Markall*. The *second* and *third* parts of this curious work were published in the same year. Two other very rare volumes by Greene were published—*The Defence of Cony-Catching*, 4to, in 1592, and *THE BLACK BOOKES MESSENGER*, in 1595. They both treat on the same subjects.

1592.

Grose's (Francis, generally styled Captain) Classical Dictionary of the Vulgar Tongue, 8vo.

The much-sought-after *FIRST EDITION*, but containing nothing, as far as I have examined, which is not to be found in the *second* and *third* editions. As respects indecency, I find all the editions equally disgraceful. The Museum copy of the *first edition* is, I suspect, Grose's own copy, as it contains numerous manuscript additions which afterwards went to form the second edition. Excepting the obscenities, it is really an extraordinary book, and displays great industry, if we cannot speak much of its morality. It is the well from which all the other authors—Duncombe, Caulfield, Clarke, Egan, &c. &c.—drew their vulgar outpourings, without in the least purifying what they had stolen.

178-

Haggart. Life of David Haggart, *alias* John Wilson, *alias* Barney M'Coul, written by himself while under sentence of death, curious frontispiece of the prisoner in irons, intermixed with all the Slang and Cant words of the day, to which is added a Glossary of the same, 12mo.

Hall's (B.H.) Collection of College Words and Customs, 12mo. *Cambridge (U.S.)*, 1856.

1821.

Very complete. The illustrative examples are excellent.

Halliwell's Archaic Dictionary, 2 vols. 8vo.

An invaluable work, giving the Cant words used by Decker, Brome, and a few of those mentioned by Grose.

1855.

Harlequin Jack Shepherd, with a Night Scene in Grotesque Characters, 8vo.

Contains Songs in the *Canting* dialect.

(About
1736.)

Harman's (Thomas, Esq.) Caveat or Warening for Common Cursetors, vulgarly called vagabones, set forth for the utilitie and profit of his naturall countrey, augmented and enlarged by the first author thereof; whereunto is added the tale of the second taking of the counterfeit crank, with the true report of his behaviour and also his punishment for his so dissembling, most marvellous to the hearer or reader thereof, newly imprinted, 4to.

Contains the earliest Dictionary of the Cant language. Four editions were printed—

William Griffith,	1566
...	1567
...	1567
Henry Middleton,	1573

Imprinted
at London,
by H.
Middleton,
1573.

What *Grose's Dictionary of the Vulgar Tongue* was to the authors of the earlier part of the present century, *Harman's* was to the Deckers, and Bromes, and Heads of the seventeenth.

Harrison's (William) Description of the Island of Britain (prefixed to *Holinshed's Chronicle*), 2 vols. folio.

Contains an account of English vagabonds.

1577.

Hazlitt's (William) Table Talk, 12mo, (vol. ii. contains a chapter on Familiar Style, with a notice on Slang terms.)

Head's (Richard) English Rogue, described in the Life of Meriton Latroon, a Witty Extravagant, 4 vols. 12mo.

Contains a list of Cant words, evidently copied from Decker.

Frans.

[378]

- Hell upon earth**, or the most pleasant and delectable History of Whittington's Colledge, otherwise vulgarly called Newgate, 12mo. *Kirkman*, 1671-80.
- Henley's** (John, better known as ORATOR HENLEY) Various Sermons and Orations. 1703.
Contains numerous vulgarisms and Slang phrases.
- [**Hitching's** (Charles, formerly City Marshal, now a prisoner in Newgate)] 1719-53.
Regulator; or, a Discovery of the Thieves, Thief-Takers, and Locks, *alias* Receivers of Stolen Goods in and about the City of London; also an account of all the flash words now in vogue amongst the Thieves, &c., 8vo, very rare, *with a curious woodcut*.
A violent attack upon Jonathan Wild. 1718.
- Household Words**, No. 183, September 24.
Gives an interesting article on Slang, with many examples.
- Johnson's** (Dr. Samuel) Dictionary (the earlier editions).
Contains a great number of words italicized as *Cant*, low, or barbarous. v. D.
- Jonson's** (Ben.) Bartholomew Fair, ii. 6.
Several Cant words are placed in the mouths of the characters.
- Jonson's** (Ben.) Masque of the Gipsies Metamorphosed, 4to. 16—.
Contains numerous Cant words.
- Kent's** (E.) Modern Flash Dictionary, containing all the Cant words, Slang Terms, and Flash Phrases now in Vogue, 18mo, *coloured frontispiece*. 1825.
- L'Estrange's** (Sir Roger) Works (principally translations).
Abound in vulgar and Slang phrases. v. D.
- Lexicon** Balatronicum; a Dictionary of Buckish Slang, University Wit, and Pickpocket Eloquence, by a Member of the Whip Club, assisted by Hell-fire Dick, 8vo.
One of the many reprints of Grose's second edition, put forth under a fresh, and what was then considered a more attractive title. It was given out in advertisements, &c., as a piece of puff, that it was edited by a Dr. H. Clarke, but contains scarcely a line more than Grose. 1811.
- Liber Vagatorum**: Der Betler Orden, 4to. Translated into English, with Notes, by John Camden Hotten, as The Book of Vagabonds and Beggars, with a vocabulary of their Language (*Rotwelsche Sprach*); edited, with preface, by Martin Luther, in the year 1528, 4to, *with woodcuts*.
The first edition of this book appears to have been printed at Augsburg, by Erhard Oglin, or Ocellus, about 1514,—a small quarto of twelve leaves. It was frequently reprinted at other places in Germany: and in 1528 there appeared an edition at Wirtemberg, with a preface by Martin Luther, who says that the "Rotwelsche Sprach," the Cant language of the beggars, comes from the Jews, as it contains many Hebrew words, as any one who understands that language may perceive. This book is divided into three parts, or sections; the first gives a special account of the several orders of the "Fraternity of Vagabonds;" the second, sundry "*notabilia*" relating to the different classes of beggars previously described; and the third consists of a "Rotwelsche Vocabulary," or "Canting Dictionary." There is a long notice of the "Liber Vagatorum" in the "Weimarisches Jahrbuch," 10ter Band, 1856. Mayhew, in his *London Labour*, states that many of our Cant words are derived from the Jew fences. It is singular that a similar statement should have been made by Martin Luther more than three centuries before. 1859. [379]
- Life in St. George's Fields**; or, The Rambles and Adventures of Disconsolate William, Esq., and his Surrey Friend, Flash Dick, with Songs and a FLASH DICTIONARY, 8vo. 1821.
- Maginn** (Dr.) wrote Slang songs in *Blackwood's Magazine*. 1821.
- Mayhew's** (Henry) London Labour and the London Poor, 4 vols. 1827.
An invaluable work to the inquirer into popular or street language.
- Mayhew's** (Henry) Great World of London, 8vo. 1851-61.
An unfinished work, but containing several examples of the use and application of Cant and Slang words. 1857.
- Middleton** (Thomas) and **Decker's** (Thomas) Roaring Girl; or Moll Cut Purse, 4to. 1611.
The conversation in one scene is entirely in the so-called pedlar's French. It is given in *Dodsley's Old Plays*.
- Modern Flash Dictionary**, 48mo. 1825.
The smallest Slang dictionary ever printed; intended for the waistcoat-pockets of the "BLOODS" of the Prince Regent's time.
- Moncrieff's** Tom and Jerry, or Life in London, a Farce in Three Acts, 12mo. 1820.
An excellent exponent of the false and forced "high life" which was so popular during the minority of George IV. The farce had a run of a hundred nights, or more, and was a general favourite for years. It abounds in Cant, and the language of "gig," as it was then often termed.
- Mornings at Bow Street, by T. Wright, 12mo, *with Illustrations by George Cruikshank*.
In this work a few etymologies of Slang words are attempted. *Tegg*, 1838.
- New Canting Dictionary, 12mo.

New Dictionary of the Terms, Ancient and Modern, of the Canting Crew in its several tribes of Gypsies, Beggars, Thieves, Cheats, &c., with an addition of some *Proverbs, Phrases, Figurative Speeches, &c.*, by B. E., GENT., 12mo.

Afterwards issued under the title of *Bacchus and Venus*, 1737, and in 1754 as the *Scoundrel's Dictionary*. N. D. [1710.]

New Dictionary of all the Cant and Flash Languages used by every class of offenders, from a Lully Prigger to a High Tober Gloak, small 8vo, pp. 62.

[380]

Mentioned by John Bee.

179-.

Notes and Queries. The invaluable Index to this most useful periodical may be consulted with advantage by the seeker after etymologies of Slang and Cant words.

Parker. High and Low Life, A View of Society in, being the Adventures in England, Ireland, &c., of Mr. G. Parker, *A Stage Itinerant*, 2 vols. in 1, thick 12mo.

A curious work, containing many Cant words, with 100 orders of rogues and swindlers.

Printed for the Author,

1781.

Parker's (Geo.) Life's Painter of Variegated Characters, with a Dictionary of Cant Language and Flash Songs, to which is added a Dissertation on Freemasonry, *portrait*, 8vo.

Pegge's (Samuel) Anecdotes of the English Language, chiefly regarding the Local Dialect of London and Environs, 8vo.

1789.

Perry's (William) London Guide and Stranger's Safeguard against Cheats, Swindlers, and Pickpockets, by a Gentleman who has made the Police of the Metropolis an object of inquiry twenty-two years (no wonder when the author was in prison a good portion of that time!)

1803-41.

Contains a dictionary of Slang and Cant words.

1818.

Phillip's New World of Words, folio.

Pickering's (F.) Vocabulary, or Collection of Words and Phrases which have been supposed to be peculiar to the United States of America, to which is prefixed an Essay on the present state of the English Language in the United States, 8vo.

1696.

The remark made upon *Bartlett's Americanisms* applies equally to this work.

Boston,
1816.

Picture of the Fancy, 12mo.

Contains numerous Slang terms.

18—.

Potter's (H. T., of *Clay, Worcestershire*) New Dictionary of all the Cant and Flash Languages, both ancient and modern, 8vo, pp. 62.

1790.

Poulter. The Discoveries of John Poulter, *alias* Baxter, 8vo, 48 pages.

At pages 42, 43, there is an explanation of the "Language of Thieves, commonly called Cant."

(1770?)

Prison-breaker, The, or the Adventures of John Sheppard, a Farce, 8vo.

Contains a Canting song, &c.

London,
1725.

Punch, or the London Charivari.

Often points out Slang, vulgar, or abused words. It also occasionally employs them in jokes or sketches of character.

Quarterly Review, vol. x. p. 528.

Gives a paper on Americanisms and Slang phrases.

Randall's (Jack, the Pugilist, formerly of the "Hole in the Wall," Chancery Lane) Diary of Proceedings at the House of Call for Genius, edited by Mr. Breakwindow, to which are added several of Mr. B.'s minor pieces, 12mo.

[381]

Believed to have been written by Thomas Moore. The verses are mostly parodies of popular authors, and abound in the Slang of pugilism, and the phraseology of the fast life of the period.

1820.

Randall (Jack), a Few Selections from his Scrap-book; to which are added Poems on the late Fight for the Championship, 12mo.

Frequently quoted by Moore in *Tom Crib's Memorial*.

1822.

Scoundrel's Dictionary; or, an Explanation of the Cant Words used by Thieves, Housebreakers, Street-robbers, and Pickpockets about Town, with some curious Dissertations on the Art of Wheedling, &c., the whole printed from a copy taken on one of their gang, in the late scuffle between the watchman and a party of them on Clerkenwell Green, 8vo.

A reprint of *Bacchus and Venus*, 1737.

1754.

Sharp (Jeremy), The Life of an English Rogue, 12mo.

Includes a "Vocabulary of the Gypsies' Cant."

1740.

Sherwood's Gazetteer of Georgia, U.S., 8vo.

Contains a glossary of words, Slang and vulgar, peculiar to the Southern States.

- Smith** (Capt. Alexander), *The Thieves' Grammar*, 12mo, p. 28. 17—.
- A copy of this work is in the collection formed by Prince Lucien Bonaparte.
- Smith's** (Capt.) *Compleat History of the Lives and Robberies of the most Notorious Highwaymen, Footpads, Shoplifters, and Cheats, of both Sexes, in and about London and Westminster*, 12mo, vol. i. 1719.
- This volume contains "The Thieves' New Canting Dictionary of the Words, *Proverbs, &c., used by Thieves.*"
- Smith's** (Capt.) *Thieves' Dictionary*, 12mo. 1724.
- Snowden's** *Magistrate's Assistant, and Constable's Guide*, thick small 8vo. 1852.
- Gives a description of the various orders of cadgers, beggars, and swindlers, together with a Glossary of the Flash Language.
- Sportsman's Dictionary**, 4to. 17—.
- By an anonymous author. Contains some low sporting terms.
- Stanley's** *Remedy, or the Way how to Reform Wandring Beggars, Thieves, &c., wherein is shewed that Sodomes Sin of Idleness is the Poverty and the Misery of this Kingdome*, 4to. 1646.
- This work has an engraving on wood which is said to be the veritable original of Jim Crow.
- Swift's** coarser pieces abound in vulgarities and Slang expressions.
- The Triumph of Wit**, or Ingenuity displayed in its Perfection, being the Newest and most Useful Academy, Songs, Art of Love, and the Mystery and Art of Canting, with Poems, Songs, &c., in the Canting Language, 16mo. *J. Clarke, 1735.*
- What is generally termed a shilling *Chap Book*.
- The Triumph of Wit**, or the Canting Dictionary, being the Newest and most Useful Academy, containing the Mystery and art of Canting, with the original and present management thereof, and the ends to which it serves and is employed, illustrated with Poems, Songs, and various Intrigues in the Canting Language, with the Explanations, &c., 12mo. [382]
- A Chap Book of 32 pages, *circa* 1760. *Dublin, n. d.*
- The Whole Art Of Thieving** and Defrauding Discovered: being a Caution to all Housekeepers, Shopkeepers, Salesmen, and others, to guard against Robbers of both Sexes, and the best Methods to prevent their Villanies; to which is added an Explanation of most of the Cant terms in the Thieving Language, 8vo, pp. 46. 1786.
- Thomas** (I.), *My Thought Book*, 8vo. 1825.
- Contains a chapter on Slang.
- Tom Crib's** Memorial to Congress, with a Preface, Notes, and Appendix by one of the Fancy [Tom Moore, the Poet], 12mo. 1819.
- A humorous poem, abounding in Slang and pugilistic term, with a burlesque essay on the classic origin of Slang.
- Vacabondes**, the Fraternaltye of, as well as of ruflyng Vacabones, as of beggerly, of Women as of Men, of Gyrls as of Boyes, with their proper Names and Qualities, with a Description of the Crafty Company of Cousoners and Shifters, also the XXV. Orders of Knaves; otherwyse called a Quartern of Knaves, confirmed by Cocke Lorell, 8vo. Imprinted at London by John Awdeley, dwellyng in little Britayne strete, without Aldersgate. 1575.
- It is stated in *Ames' Typog. Antiq.*, vol. ii. p. 885, that an edition bearing the date 1565 is in existence, and that the compiler was no other than old John Audley, the printer, himself. This conjecture, however, is very doubtful. As stated by Watt, it is more than probable that it was written by Harman, or was taken from his works, in MS. or print.
- Vaux's** (Count de, a swindler and pickpocket) *Life*, written by himself, 2 vols., 12mo, to which is added a Canting Dictionary. 1819.
- These Memoirs were suppressed on account of the scandalous passages contained in them.
- Webster's** (Noah) *Letter to the Hon. John Pickering, on the Subject of his Vocabulary, or Collection of Words and Phrases supposed to be peculiar to the United States*, 8vo, pp. 69.
- Wild** (Jonathan), *History of the Lives and Actions of Jonathan Wild, Thieftaker, Joseph Blake, alias Blueskin, Footpad, and John Sheppard, Housebreaker; together with a Canting Dictionary by Jonathan Wild, woodcuts*, 12mo. *Boston, 1817.*
- Wilson** (Professor), contributed various Slang pieces to *Blackwood's Magazine*; including a Review of Bee's Dictionary. 1750.
- Witherspoon's** (Dr., of America,) *Essays on Americanisms, Perversions of Language in the United States, Cant phrases, &c.*, 8vo, in the 4th vol. of his works. *Philadelphia, 1801.*
- The earliest work on American vulgarisms. Originally published as a series of Essays, entitled the *Druid*, which appeared in a periodical in 1761.

DICTIONARIES

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THE SLANG DICTIONARY: Etymological, Historical, and Anecdotal. Crown 8vo, cloth, 6s 6d.

A DICTIONARY OF THE DRAMA. By W. DAVENPORT ADAMS. Vol. I (A to G). Demy 8vo, cloth, 10s 6d net.

London: CHATTO & WINDUS, 111 St. Martin's Lane, W.C.

FOOTNOTES:

- [1] "Swarms of vagabonds, whose eyes were so sharp as Lynx."—*Bullein's Simples and Surgery*, 1562.
- [2] Probably from the Gipsies, who were supposed to come from Germany into Spain.
- [3] From *Roter*, beggar, vagabond, and *wälsch*, foreign. See Dictionary of Gipsy language in Pott's *Zigeuner in Europa und Asien*, vol. ii., Halle, 1844. The Italian cant is called Fourbesque, and the Portuguese Calao. See Francisque-Michel, *Dictionnaire d'Argot*, Paris, 1856.
- [4] Richardson's *Dictionary*.
- [5] *Description of England*, prefixed to Holinshed's *Chronicle*.
- [6] The word Slang, as will be seen in the [chapter](#) upon that subject, is purely a Gipsy term, although nowadays it refers to low or vulgar language of any kind, other than cant. Slang and Gibberish in the Gipsy language are synonymous; but, as English adoptions, have meanings very different from that given to them in their original.
- [7] "The vulgar tongue consists of two parts; the first is the Cant language; the second, those burlesque phrases, quaint allusions, and nicknames for persons, things, and places, which, from long uninterrupted usage, are made classical by prescription."—Grose's *Dictionary of the Vulgar Tongue*, 1st edition, 1785.
- [8] "Outlandish people calling themselves Egyptians."—1530.
- [9] Jabber may be, after all, only another form of GABBER, GAB, very common in Old English, from the *Anglo-Saxon*, GÆBBAN.
- [10] This very proverb was mentioned by a young Gipsy to Crabb, some years ago.—*Gipsies' Advocate*, p. 14.
- [11] *Gipsies in Spain*, vol. i. p. 18.
- [12] Shaks. *Henry IV.*, part ii. act ii. scene 4.
- [13] It is but fair to imagine that cheat ultimately became synonymous with "fraud," when we remember that it was one of the most common words of the greatest class of impostors in the country.
- [14] We are aware that more than one eminent philologist states that the origin of "queer" is seen in the German *quer*, crooked,—hence strange and abnormal. While agreeing with this etymology, we have reason to believe that the word was first used in this country in a Cant sense.
- [15] Booget properly signifies a leathern wallet, and is probably derived from the *low Latin*, BULGA. A tinker's budget is from the same source.
- [16] Which, freely translated into modern Slang, might read—especially to those who know the manners and customs of the Dialites—thus:

"Good girls, go out, and look about,
Good girls, go out and see;
For every clout is up the spout,
The bloke's gone on the spree."
- [17] Who wrote about the year 1610.
- [18] *Gipsies in Spain*, vol. i. p. 18. Borrow further commits himself by remarking that "Head's Vocabulary has always been accepted as the speech of the English Gipsies." Nothing of the kind. Head professed to have lived with the Gipsies, but in reality filched his words

from Decker and Brome.

- [19] The modern meanings of a few of the old Cant words are given within brackets.
- [20] This is a curious volume, and is worth from one to two guineas. The Canting Dictionary was afterwards reprinted, word for word, with the title of *The Scoundrel's Dictionary*, in 1751. It was originally published, without date, about the year 1710, by B. E., under the title of *A Dictionary of the Canting Crew*.
- [21] *Bacchus and Venus*.—1737.
- [22] *London Labour and the London Poor*.
- [23] Mayhew (vol. i. p. 217) speaks of a low lodging-house "in which there were at one time five university men, three surgeons, and several sorts of broken-down clerks." But old Harman's saying, that "a wylde Roge is he that is *borne* a roge," will perhaps explain this seeming anomaly. There is, whatever may be the reason, no disputing the truth of this latter statement, as there is not, we venture to say, a common lodging-house in London without broken-down gentlemen, who have been gentlemen very often far beyond the conventional application of the term to any one with a good coat on his back and money in his pocket.
- [24] Mr. Rawlinson's *Report to the General Board of Health, Parish of Havant, Hampshire*.
- [25] Vol. v. p. 210.
- [26] Vol. i. pp. 218 and 247.
- [27] See Dictionary. ([Pal](#), [Patterer](#), [Work](#))
- [28] Sometimes, as appears from the following, the names of persons and houses are written instead. "In almost every one of the padding-kens, or low lodging-houses in the country, there is a list of walks pasted up over the kitchen mantelpiece. Now at St. Albans, for instance, at the —, and at other places, there is a paper stuck up in each of the kitchens. This paper is headed, 'Walks out of this town' and underneath it is set down the names of the villages in the neighbourhood at which a beggar may call when out on his walk, and they are so arranged as to allow the cadger to make a round of about six miles each day, and return the same night. In many of these papers there are sometimes twenty walks set down. No villages that are in any way 'gammy' [bad] are ever mentioned in these papers, and the cadger, if he feels inclined to stop for a few days in the town, will be told by the lodging-house keeper, or the other cadgers that he may meet there, what gentlemen's seats or private houses are of any account on the walk that he means to take. The names of the good houses are not set down in the paper, for fear of the police."—*Mayhew*, vol. i. p. 418. [This business is also much altered in consequence of the increase in the surveillance of the kens, an increase which, though nominally for sanitary purposes, has a strong moral effect. Besides this, Mr. Mayhew's informants seem to have possessed a fair share of that romance which is inherent among vagabonds.—ED.]
- [29] See Dictionary. ([Screever](#), [Traveller](#))
- [30] Mr. Rawlinson's *Report to the General Board of Health, Parish of Havant, Hampshire*.
- [31] Snowden's *Magistrate's Assistant*, 1852, p. 444.
- [32] An outgrowth of this latter peculiarity consisted in anyone with a high or prominent nose being, a few years back, called by the street boys "Duke."
- [33] This term, with a singular literal downrightness, which would be remarkable in any other people than the French, is translated by them as the sect of *Trembleurs*.
- [34] Swift alludes to this term in his *Art of Polite Conversation*, p. 14, 1738.
- [35] See *Notes and Queries*, vol. i. p. 185. 1850.
- [36] He afterwards kept a tavern at Wapping, mentioned by Pope in the *Dunciad*.
- [37] *Sportsman's Dictionary*, 1825, p. 15.
- [38] This introduction was written in 1859, before the new edition of *Worcester*, and Nuttall's recent work, were published.
- [39] Introduction to Bee's *Sportsman's Dictionary*, 1825.
- [40] The Gipsies use the word Slang as the Anglican synonym for Romany, the Continental (or rather Spanish) term for the Cingari or Gipsy tongue. Crabb, who wrote the *Gipsies' Advocate* in 1831, thus mentions the word:—"This language [Gipsy] *called by themselves* Slang, or Gibberish, invented, as they think, by their forefathers for secret purposes, is not merely the language of one or a few of these wandering tribes, which are found in the European nations, but is adopted by the vast numbers who inhabit the earth."
- [41] The word Slang assumed various meanings amongst costermongers, beggars, and vagabonds of all orders. It was, and is still, used to express "cheating by false weights," "a raree show," "retiring by a back door," "a watch-chain," their "secret language," &c.
- [42] North, in his *Examen*, p. 574, says, "I may note that the rabble first changed their title, and were called the "mob" in the assemblies of this [Green Ribbon] club. It was their beasts of burden, and called first *mobile vulgus*, but fell naturally into the contraction of one syllable, and ever since is become proper English." In the same work, p. 231, the disgraceful origin of SHAM is given.
- [43] I am afraid my predecessor was of a somewhat satirical turn of mind, or else he had peculiar notions of melody.—ED.

- [44] This latter is, as I take it, an error, as the sign was originally intended to represent the king's head and cross guns, and may still be seen in parts of the country.—ED.
- [45] Savez-vous cela?—[I fancy this is from the Spanish *sabe*. The word is in great use in the Pacific States of America, and is obtained through constant intercourse with the original settlers.—ED.]
- [46] At page 24 of a curious old Civil War tract, entitled, *The Oxonian Antippodes*, by I. B., Gent., 1644, the town is called Brummidgham, and this was the general rendering in the printed literature of the seventeenth century.—[This must have been the first known step towards the present vulgar style of spelling, for properly the word is Bromwich-ham, which has been corrupted into Brummagem, a term used to express worthless or inferior goods, from the spurious jewellery, plate, &c., manufactured there expressly for "duffers."—ED.]
- [47] This was more especially an amusement with medical students, after the modern Mohocks had discarded it. The students are now a comparatively mild and quiet race, with very little of the style of a generation ago about them.
- [48] *Edinburgh Review*, October, 1853.
- [49] A term derived from the *Record* newspaper, the exponent of this singular section of the Low, or so-called Evangelical Church.
- [50] A preacher is said, in this phraseology, to be "owned" when he makes many converts, and his converts are called his "seals." This is Cant in its most objectionable form.
- [51] "Swaddler" is also a phrase by which the low Irish Roman Catholics denominate those of their body who in winter become Protestants, *pro tem.*, for the sake of the blankets, coals, &c., given by proselytizing Protestants. It is hard to say which are the worse, those who refuse to give unless the objects of their charity become converted, or those who sham conversion to save themselves from starving, or the tender mercies of the relieving officer. I am much afraid my sympathies are with the "swaddlers," who are also called "soupers."—ED.
- [52] "All our newspapers contain more or less colloquial words; in fact, there seems no other way of expressing certain ideas connected with passing events of every-day life with the requisite force and piquancy. In the English newspapers the same thing is observable, and certain of them contain more of the class denominated Slang words than our own."—*Bartlett's Americanisms*, p. 10, edit. 1859.
- [53] When this appeared, "all serene" was one of those street phrases which periodically spring up, have their rage, and depart as suddenly as they come into popularity. These sayings are generally of a most idiotic nature, as their latest specimens, "I'll warm yer," "All serene," and "I'll 'ave your hi"—used without any premonitory notice or regard to context, and screeched out at the top of the voice—will testify. I suppose we shall soon have another of these "ebullitions of popular feeling."—ED.
- [54] The terms "leader" and "article" can scarcely be called Slang, yet it would be desirable to know upon what authority they were first employed in their present peculiar sense.
- [55] The *Morning Herald* was called "Mrs. Harris," because it was said that no one ever saw it, a peculiarity which, in common with its general disregard for veracity, made it uncommonly like "Mrs. Gamp's" invisible friend as portrayed by Dickens. But the *Herald* has long since departed this life, and with it has gone the title of "Mrs. Gamp," as applied to the *Standard*, which is, though, as impulsive and Conservative as ever.—ED.
- [56] This is rhyming slang, and is corrupted into "lord" only. "Touch-me," a common term for a shilling, is also derived from the same source, it being short for "touch-me-on-the-nob," which is rhyming slang for "bob" or shilling.
- [57] Since the first edition of this work a great alteration has taken place in this respect. Though topical ballads are now often sung, the singers confine themselves to low neighbourhoods, and as soon as a policeman approaches, if ever he does, they make themselves scarce. The practice is singular. One man gets as far through a line as he can, and when his voice cracks his companion takes up. For this reason the business is as a rule conducted by a man and woman, or sometimes by a woman and child. The writing of these ditties is generally work of a character for which even 7s. 6d. would be a high rate of pay.—ED.
- [58] Eurasian is not a child of mixed race, but one born of European parents in an Asiatic clime. A similar error exists with regard to the word creole, which is generally supposed to mean a man or woman in whom white and black strains are mixed. I need not say how wrong this is, but the vulgar error is none the less current.—ED.
- [59] There is something so extremely humorous and far-fetched about this explanation, that though it is utterly unworthy of its place in a dictionary, I, finding it there, have not the heart to cut it out.—ED.
- [60] Of course by those who don't know the scientific way used in "canine exhibitions" and dog-fights—of biting their tails till they turn round to bite the biter.—ED.
- [61] This was written in 1858.
- [62] The famous printers and publishers of sheet songs and last dying speeches thirty years ago.
- [63] The writer, a street chaunter of ballads and last dying speeches, alludes in his letter to two celebrated criminals—Thos. Drory, the murderer of Jael Denny, and Sarah Chesham, who poisoned her husband, accounts of whose trials and "horrid deeds" he had been

selling. Here is a Glossary of the cant words:—

Thick un, a sovereign.

Dowry of Parny, a lot of rain.

Stumped, bankrupt.

Bossman, a farmer.

✱ *Drory* was a farmer.

Patter, trial.

Tops, last dying speeches.

Dies, ib.

Croaks, ib.

Burick, a woman.

Topped, hung.

Sturaban, a prison.

James, a sovereign.

Clye, a pocket.

Carser, a house or residence.

Speel on the Drum, to be off to the country.

All Square, all right, or quite well.

Transcriber's Note

An advertisement for dictionaries has been moved from the beginning of the text to the end.

Footnote 27 ("See Dictionary") is referred to three times; links to the three entries concerned have been added to the text.

Footnote 29 ("See Dictionary") is referred to twice; links to the two entries concerned have been added to the text.

The following are used inconsistently in the text:

- banknote and bank-note
- battles and battells
- big-bird and big bird
- blackguard and black-guard
- boatrace and boat-race
- Boozingken and Boozing-Ken
- bow-Catcher and bowcatcher
- brother-chip and brother-chip
- Bubble-and-Squeak and Bubble and Squeak
- chamberpot and chamber-pot
- cherry-colour and cherry colour
- chuck up and chuck-up
- coalheaver and coal-heaver
- cocksby and cock-shy
- cocoanuts and cocoa-nuts
- comb cut and comb-cut
- coon and 'coon
- corner men and corner-men
- crabshells and crab shells
- cutpurse and cut-purse
- daylight and day-light
- dead-heat and dead heat
- dolly shop and dolly-shop
- dunnyken and dunna-ken
- everyday and every-day
- fagot and faggot
- fawney bouncing and fawney-bouncing
- fyeback and fye-buck
- halfpence and half-pence
- horse chaunter and horse-chaunter
- housebreaking and house-breaking
- kin-the-lamb and kin the lamb
- knobstick and knob-stick
- lovelock and love-lock
- M. B. and M.B.
- M. T. and M.T.
- Merry Dun of Dover and merry dun of Dover
- mountain pecker and mountain-pecker
- necktie and neck-tie
- newcomers and new-comers
- now-a-days and nowadays
- outdoor and out-door
- overbearing and over-bearing
- overnight and over-night
- overreach and over-reach
- P. P. and P.P.

- parney and parny
- percentages and per-centages
- pillbox and pill-box
- playhouse and play-house
- purseproud and purse-proud
- racehorse and race-horse
- randem and random
- reach me downs and reach-me-downs
- ringdropping and ring-dropping
- schofel and schoful
- schoolboys and school-boys
- seaport and sea-port
- secondhand and second-hand
- signpost and sign-post
- Soft-soap and soft soap
- spechmaking and speech-making
- turncoat and turn-coat
- turnout and turn-out
- W. P. and W.P.
- water-bewitched and water bewitched
- watercloset and water-closet
- wideawake and wide-awake

The following errors in the printed text have been corrected:

- advertisement "W.," changed to "W."
- advertisement "A to G)" changed to "(A to G)"
- p. 15 "Bcck" changed to "Beck"
- p. 17 "coined money" changed to "coined money."
- p. 29 "'cribs'" changed to "'cribs'"
- p. 41 "*Tam O' Shanter.*" changed to "*Tam O' Shanter.*"
- p. 68 "on't—" changed to "on't"—"
- p. 74 "appearance" changed to "appearance."
- p. 74 "I Cor." changed to "1 Cor."
- p. 82 "Dr" changed to "Dr."
- p. 83 "under-raduates" changed to "under-graduates"
- p. 88 "BLUHEN" changed to "BLÜHEN"
- p. 89 "ἄσπρον" changed to "ἄσπρον"
- p. 90 "the new police" changed to "the new police."
- p. 91 "belong to you" changed to "belong to you."
- p. 94 "Spit-curl,"" changed to "Spit-curl,"
- p. 97 "Rothwalsch" changed to "Rothwälsch"
- p. 97 "good fellow;" changed to "good fellow;"
- p. 98 "at races" changed to "at races."
- p. 101 "large thick," changed to "large, thick,"
- p. 106 "tumble up," changed to "tumble up"
- p. 107 "contruction" changed to "contraction"
- p. 110 "CASER" changed to "CASER"
- p. 111 "ny temporary" changed to "any temporary"
- p. 114 "pay.—ED" changed to "pay.—ED."
- p. 115 "CHEESE your barrikin,"" changed to "'CHEESE your barrikin,'"
- p. 116 "Derivation obvious" changed to "Derivation obvious."
- p. 118 "and waistcoat" changed to "and waistcoat."
- p. 120 "first-rate" changed to "first-rate."
- p. 128 "Κορινθίαζ εσθαι" changed to "Κορινθιάζεσθαι"
- p. 135 "Very often" changed to "'Very often"
- p. 136 "Culloden;*" changed to "Culloden;"
- p. 137 "CUT ONE'S" CHANGED TO "'CUT ONE'S"
- p. 139 "interrupted Julian" changed to "interrupted Julian,"
- p. 141 "SO LOOK OUT"" CHANGED TO "SO LOOK OUT.""
- p. 152 "MEDIOCITY" CHANGED TO "MEDIOCRITY"
- p. 161 "O FOURTEEN" CHANGED TO "OF FOURTEEN"
- p. 168 "'OR IN BAD" CHANGED TO "OR "IN BAD"
- p. 171 "FULLY committed for trial." changed to "FULLY committed for trial.""
- p. 176 "crush hat" changed to "crush hat."
- p. 178 "by schoolboys" changed to "by schoolboys."
- p. 188 "unthinking" changed to "unthinking."
- p. 189 "**Harry-soph**" changed to "**Harry-soph**,"
- p. 197 "Umh!" changed to "'Umh!"
- p. 209 "*Gloucestershire.*" changed to "*Gloucestershire*,"
- p. 217 "of the door,"" changed to "of the door,'"
- p. 219 "nothing five" changed to "nothing: five"
- p. 224 "what a MEASLEY" changed to "'what a MEASLEY"
- p. 229 "bad MOUNT." changed to "bad MOUNT.""
- p. 232 "*Neptune's Triumph*, which" changed to "*Neptune's Triumph*, which"
- p. 233 "Shakspear ehas" changed to "Shakspeare has"
- p. 234 "VAMOS."" changed to "VAMOS."
- p. 236 "'Your NIBS," yourself.'" changed to "'Your NIBS," yourself."
- p. 237 "**Nix my dolly**once" changed to "**Nix my dolly**, once"
- p. 243 "*i.e.*, you" changed to "*i.e.*, "you"
- p. 247 "to the PARTY?"" changed to "to the PARTY?"
- p. 247 "*Stephano.*" changed to "'*Stephano.*"
- p. 250 "drive awa ;" changed to "drive away;"
- p. 251 "Nor yet a single" changed to "'Nor yet a single"

- p. 253 “dérobé”).” changed to “dérobé”).”
- p. 253 “English word” changed to “English word.”
- p. 254 “its purity?” changed to “its purity?””
- p. 254 “trrdesman” changed to “tradesman”
- p. 256 “£100,0000,” changed to “£100,000,”
- p. 258 “**Pops** ,pocket-pistols.” changed to “**Pops**, pocket-pistols.”
- p. 264 “THICK UN a” changed to “THICK UN, a”
- p. 265 “for the account”” changed to “for the account.””
- p. 275 “in unproductive” changed to “an unproductive”
- p. 285 “improvementns” changed to “improvements”
- p. 295 “voilently” changed to “violently”
- p. 296 “a good beating,” changed to “a good beating.”
- p. 297 “Sluieing” changed to “Sluicing”
- p. 297 “tip-top nation.” changed to “tip-top nation.””
- p. 299 “SNIDE ‘UN.’”” changed to “SNIDE ‘UN.’”
- p. 304 “a person, to cease” changed to “a person,” to cease”
- p. 305 “TEA-SPOON,” changed to “TEA-SPOON;”
- p. 306 “prisoners, when,” changed to “prisoners, when”
- p. 307 “**Stab-rag**” changed to “**Stab-rag**,”
- p. 316 “first six months” changed to “first six months;”
- p. 321 “that term” changed to “that term.”
- p. 322 “upon TICKET.” changed to “upon TICKET.””
- p. 331 “TWIG,”” changed to “TWIG,””
- p. 334 “can you” changed to ““can you”
- p. 334 “Romany!” changed to “Romany?”
- p. 338 “WORRIT, ro” changed to “or WORRIT,”
- p. 334 “igin hougour” changed to “igin agan hougour”
- p. 340 “WHITE WINE.”” changed to “WHITE WINE.”””
- p. 349 “end with two vowels” changed to “end with two consonants”
- p. 354 “**Exis yanneps**xpence.” changed to “**Exis yanneps**, sixpence.”
- p. 354 “an apple” changed to “an apple.”
- p. 368 “of beer” changed to “of beer.”
- p. 369 “centre slang, then,” changed to “Centre slang, then,”
- p. 372 “*London*, 1809” changed to “*London*, 1809.”
- p. 374 “part of the work” changed to “part of the work.”
- p. 374 “attemp” changed to “attempts.”
- p. 375 “1858” changed to “1858.”
- p. 376 “1797” changed to “1797.”
- p. 378 “1859” changed to “1859.”
- p. 379 “Wiemarisches” changed to “Weimarisches”
- p. 379 “10te” changed to “10ter”

Inconsistent use of small capitals and italics has been left as printed.

On p. 76, “will about win” has been left as printed.

On p. 121, “*See* COAL” in the entry for “Coal” has been left as printed.

On p. 195, “the blue jackets wont” has been left as printed.

On p. 379, “Wirtemberg” has been left as printed.

The following were not clearly printed and are conjectural:

- Footnote to p. 53 “most objectionable”
- p. 90 full stop in “Bethnal Green Museum.”
- p. 94 the letter p in “person who steals”
- p. 94 bracketed text in “swindler[, or a] lie”
- p. 114 bracketed text in “Ch[aw] over”
- p. 158 comma in “unfeminine accomplishment,”
- p. 164 letter n and comma in “**Flim-flamn**,”
- p. 181 bracketed text in “[tie]d.—*Sea*.”
- p. 197 last two digits in “1632.”
- p. 207 last two digits in “1820.”
- p. 211 bracketed text in “so[lic]ited”
- p. 243 bracketed text in “descripti[on,]”
- p. 248 semi-colon in “POIX);”
- p. 262 “to” in “stratagem to excite”
- p. 295 comma in “into a man,”
- p. 337 comma in “WELSHER,”

There are a number of references to non-existent entries:

- the entry for “Briefs” refers to “Reflectors”;
- the entry for “Bub” refers to “Bibe”
- the entry for “Harum-scarum” refers to “Tandem”;
- the entry for “Lucky” refers to “Strike”;
- the entry for “Man in the moon” refers to “Election Inquiries”;
- the entry for “Random” refers to “Tandem”;
- the entry for “Whiddle” refers to “Wheedle”.

In some cases entries of that name exist, but appear to be unrelated:

- the entry for “Buz” refers to “Snooks” and “Walker”;
- the entry for “Random” refers to “Sudden Death”.

The following possible error has been left as printed:

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