



na. Blount.

à l'honorable N. C. Belcourt

Président de la Chambre des Communes

Ministre de l'Intérieur

Ottawa

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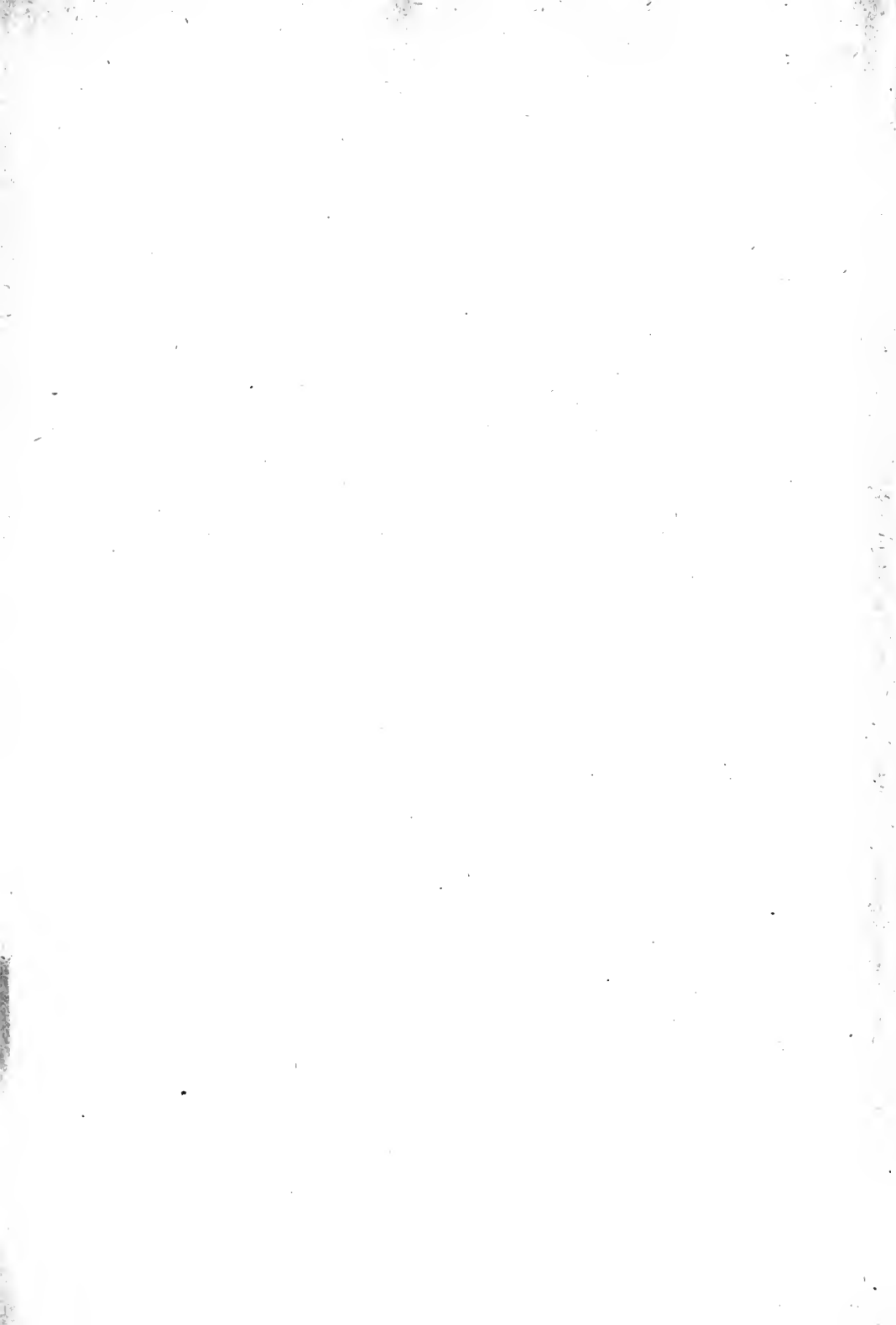
Seymour

N. C. Belcourt





A NEW  
DICTIONARY  
OF  
AMERICANISMS



A NEW  
DICTIONARY  
OF  
AMERICANISMS

BEING A GLOSSARY OF WORDS  
SUPPOSED TO BE PECULIAR TO THE UNITED STATES  
AND THE DOMINION OF CANADA,

BY

SYLVA CLAPIN

*You speak another tongue than mine,  
Though both are English born.*

R. L. STEVENSON.



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## PREFACE OF THE EDITORS

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A very dull man, and a pertinacious reader—the terms are by no means incompatible—is said to have had Johnson's *Dictionary* lent to him by some mischievous friend as an interesting new work, and to have read it through from beginning to end, quite unconscious that he was doing anything unusual. He observed, when he returned it, that the author appeared to him a person of considerable information, but that his style was slightly unconnected.

The remark had a good deal of truth in it, for a dictionary is not bad reading on the whole. It is much more endurable than a good many of what are called lighter books, and not much more unconnected.

What is an Americanism? In a good many instances the name is given to some archaism belated, or some English provincialism that has worked its way into general acceptance in the United States. It is usual to object, when expressions of either kind are classed by some one as Americanisms, that they are nothing of the kind, which, though in strictness true enough, is a little unpractical; for surely, when words that have become obsolete in the mother country, or are merely "local" here and there, find themselves in wide or universal popularity in America, it is indeed convenient to class them as what they have practically become—Americanisms. Such words, for instance, as *shyster*, *meeching*, etc., are for all practical purposes Americanisms now, and are best classed and defined therewith. If we reject them, we must reject also such characteristic words as *boss*, *stoop*, *portage*, etc. Carry it far enough, and we would have hardly anything left but neologisms.

A very erroneous impression generally exists as to the manner in which the English language is spoken in the United States. This has arisen in some degree from the circumstance that travellers have dwelt upon and exaggerated such peculiarities of language as have come under their observation in various parts of the Union; but also in greater measure from the fact that in England novels and dramas in which an American figures—whether or not a man of education—he is made to express himself in a dialect happily combining the peculiarities of speech of every section of the country from Maine to Texas. With the exception of Anthony Trollope's *American Senator*, we cannot recall to mind a single work of fiction in which this is not the case. Take, for instance, those portions of *Martin Chuzzlewit*, the scenes of which are laid in the United States; Richard Fairfield, in Bulwer's *My Novel*; the Colonel, in Lever's *One of Them*; Fullalove, in Charles Reade's *Very Hard Cash*; the younger Fenton, in Yate's *Black Sheep*; or the American travellers in *Mugby Junction*—in each and every instance the result is to convey a most erroneous idea as to the manner in which the English language is ordinarily spoken in the United States.

As a matter of fact, and as regards the great bulk of the people of the United States, there can be no question but that they speak purer and more idiomatic English than do the masses in the Old Country. In every State of the Union, the language of the inhabitants can be understood without the slightest difficulty. This is more than can be said of the dialects of the peasantry in various parts of England, these being in many instances perfectly unintelligible to a stranger. Again, the fluency of expression and command of language possessed by Americans, even in the humbler ranks of life, form a marked contrast to the poverty of speech of the same class in England, where, as an eminent philologist has declared, a very considerable proportion of the agricultural population habitually make use of a vocabulary not exceeding 300 words.

The words and phrases which are here collected under the general term Americanisms may be fairly classed under four heads: 1. Genuine English words, obsolete or provin-

cial in England and universally used in the United States; 2. English words conveying, in the United States, a different meaning from that attached to them in England; 3. Words introduced from other languages than the English:—French, Dutch, Spanish, German, Indian, etc.; 4. Americanisms proper, i. e. words coined in the country, either representing some new idea or peculiar product.

All the provincialisms of the northern and western counties of England have been naturalised in the New-England States, settled, as they were, in the first instance, by the "Pilgrim Fathers," who had left the banks of Trent and Humber, and by the later colonists who followed from Norfolk and Suffolk. A similar transmission may be traced in Virginia through the settlers from the south western counties of England. Indeed, it has already been argued, with much plausibility, by several English tourists, that New England might more correctly be called "Older England." "Let the English traveller in the United States", says one of those tourists, writing in the *New Englander*, "instead of going west from New-York, go east. Let him traverse the Holy Land of Boston Common and linger under the impecunious shadow of the old South. Let him stroll along the wharves of Nantucket or Martha's Vineyard, and spend an hour amid the quaint headstones of a New-England burying ground. My conviction is that he will come away with the impression that he has never been in quite such an old-world country as this. He has left old England indeed; but it is only to find an older England still, 3,000 miles nearer to the setting sun."

Let us judge now of the extent of the modifications and alterations to which a great many English words have been subjected in America, even to their having become nearly, if not quite, as unintelligible to the average Cockney as he would find the dialect of a Northumberland village.

Thus, if a Londoner is fortunate enough to cross the Atlantic, and be introduced to a sky which has not been discoloured by smoke, a sun which has not been dimmed by fog, and an atmosphere which the powers have not forgotten to dry, and is as stimulating as champagne, but is unfortunate enough to have to buy a frock-coat—a most

expensive article—or to order one—as a rule, quite a different matter—he must call it a “Prince Albert.”

Prince Albert coat it is in Republican America, whatever it may be in Monarchical England; where “Albert the Good” is occasionally remembered when the anniversary of his death comes round.

If he wants a billycock hat, he will never get it if he asks for it by that name; he must request the shopman to bring him a “Derby.”

Should the coverings of his feet be worn out and he orders a new pair of boots, he will be given Wellingtons, which are “boots” in the American language; if he wants English boots he must ask for “shoes,” while if he likes to show pretty socks and wears Oxford shoes, he must call for “ties” or “low cuts,” and “slippers” if he needs pumps.

He will find, too, that he does not buy articles in a shop, but at a “store,” and he will be sent to its different departments by a “floor-walker,” not a shop-walker.

If he would travel in the city and wishes to go by or talk about what he would at home call a tram, he must be careful to say “surface car” or “street-car,” for trams have no existence in the American vocabulary. If, further, he would, when in Rome, do what Rome does, let him forswear the use of railway until he returns home, and train himself to say “railroad,” and let him never forget that he walks on the “sidewalk,” not on the pavement.

Should he unfortunately happen to get ill, let him boldly declare that he “feels sick,” entirely heedless of what he would be understood to mean at home, or it will be taken that he is nauseated, for the words sick and ill mean just the reverse of what they signify in London; and if his doctor gives him a prescription, let him not ask to be directed to a chemist, or he will be sent off to a manufacturer of chemicals. if any one knows the address of such a firm, but let him seek for a “pharmacy” or “drug store.”

Instead of a draper's shop he will find a “dry goods store,” and if he desires to go to one of the upper floors he will “take the elevator”—though, as is so frequently the case, the reverse is the truth—for he will certainly not dis-



cover a lift; while, if his wife has requested him to buy her some hairpins, hooks and eyes, cottons, or other small articles, he will find them at the "notion-counter."

As, being a stranger, he will not have his own carriage, he will, if he wants a drive, "ride" in a "waggon," which is not a cart for carrying packages, but a very comfortable, light, open vehicle, or else in a "buggy," an equally light conveyance with a hood, but open at the sides. If he prefers a single-horse brougham he will do well to call it a "coupé," and if he asks for a "carriage" he will get a Victoria with a pair of horses.

In the evening he will naturally go to the theatre, but he must be careful to ask for "orchestra seats" if he wants stalls; while if his tastes are not for drama proper, and he prefers a music-hall entertainment, he should invite his friend to go to a "variety show."

If a play is advertised as a "farce-comedy," and he imagines he will see a farcical comedy, he will be doomed to disappointment, for a farce-comedy is only an alleged play in which the characters are taken by variety show "artistes" who introduce their "specialties"—song and dance—in season and out of season. In other words, it is cousin-German to a music-hall entertainment without the diversity in the programme.

In its pronunciation United States is a law unto itself, and if the aforesaid Londoner gets "busted," or wants employment as a clerk, let him not call himself a "clark," or people will open their eyes at his peculiar occupation and let him also remember he wears a Derby hat, not a darby.

Above all, let him avoid, as he would the plague, the nasal twang which passes current for the American accent on the London stage, unless he hankers after being mistaken for a denizen of the "wild and woolly West," or as hailing from Oshkosh or Kalamazoo, both of which places, in spite of a popular belief to the contrary, will be found on the map of the country over which the Stars and Stripes float and the bald-headed Eagle screams.

Amongst the foreign contributions to the American idiom the first is a very small offering from the poor Red Man. The fact is certainly to be regretted, for, as is well known,

there is music even in the roughest of Indian names, while most of them are smooth and melodious almost to perfection.

The representatives of so many different nationalities, landing in America in hordes vaster than those of the barbarians who from the North used to cross the Alps into Italy, have accepted the Anglo-Saxon with a celerity and completeness which almost deserves to be called a reversal of the confusion of tongues. But, every emigrant has tended nevertheless, although to a very small extent, to influence the language of his adopted country, and some peculiar strands have thus become interwoven with the national web.

Almost all Americanisms of French origin, besides names of places, are geographical terms. Of this class are *bayou*, *levee*, *prairie*, etc.

The Spaniards have been so long masters in Texas, Arizona, California and Florida, that the formation of those States, after the Mexican war, brought into common use many words belonging to their language. Even to-day, immense regions of the South-West remain almost altogether Spanish, so far as local names and the more familiar expressions are concerned. And especially can this be said of words relating to horses and mules and to their equipments. It seems also probable that any future accretion to American English will be more and more from Spanish sources, the more so that the recent acquisition of Porto-Rico and the conquest of Cuba have made the United States, so to say, virtual masters of the commerce of their Spanish-speaking neighbors.

The influence of the Dutch is seen in the idioms of New York and New Jersey, but, strange to say, the Germans have not enriched the American language by a dozen important words, although their element is one of the most important in the States. The Germans have, no doubt, powerfully affected the national mind in all that pertains to the realm of thought; but the marks are not visible, because, of all foreigners, they were the ones to show the most excessive readiness to adapt themselves to all the exigencies of their new home, and their action has been too subtle and silent to leave its traces on the surface.

he subject of Americanisms has been laboriously investigated by several diligent students, no less than five books—not to speak of articles in periodicals and brief essays—devoted to the “American language” having from time to time appeared: Pickering’s Vocabulary, in 1816; Elwyn’s Glossary, in 1859; Schele de Vere’s Americanisms, in 1872; Bartlett’s Dictionary, of which successive editions were published in 1848, 1859, 1860 and 1877; and Farmer’s Americanisms, in 1889.

John Pickering’s “Vocabulary, or Collection of Words and Phrases supposed to be peculiar to the United States,” originated in the author’s practice, while living in London, of noting down, for the purpose of avoiding them, such of his own verbal expressions as were condemned by his British friends. As finally published, the list contains over five hundred words, consisting principally of mere vulgarisms and blunders, and words really British in their origin, though not current in good London society.

Elwyn’s “Glossary of Supposed Americanisms” was undertaken to show how much there yet remains in the United States of language and customs directly brought from England, a purpose quite different from that of Mr. Pickering. But the chief value of the book consists in the contributions it makes to our knowledge of Pennsylvania provincialisms, of which the author is evidently a careful observer. About four hundred and sixty words are included.

Schele de Vere’s “Americanisms” differs from the other works mentioned in not adopting the usual alphabetical form common to dictionaries, but presenting American peculiarities of speech arranged in various classes. About four thousand words and phrases appear in the index.

Bartlett’s “Dictionary of Americanisms” is a valuable and entertaining work, although it has been too much filled up and weighed down, so to say, with slang words of merely temporary vogue, mispronunciations, grammatical errors, and even wearisome repetitions. This dictionary is in its latest edition, a bulky octavo of over eight hundred pages, containing something above five thousand six hundred entries.

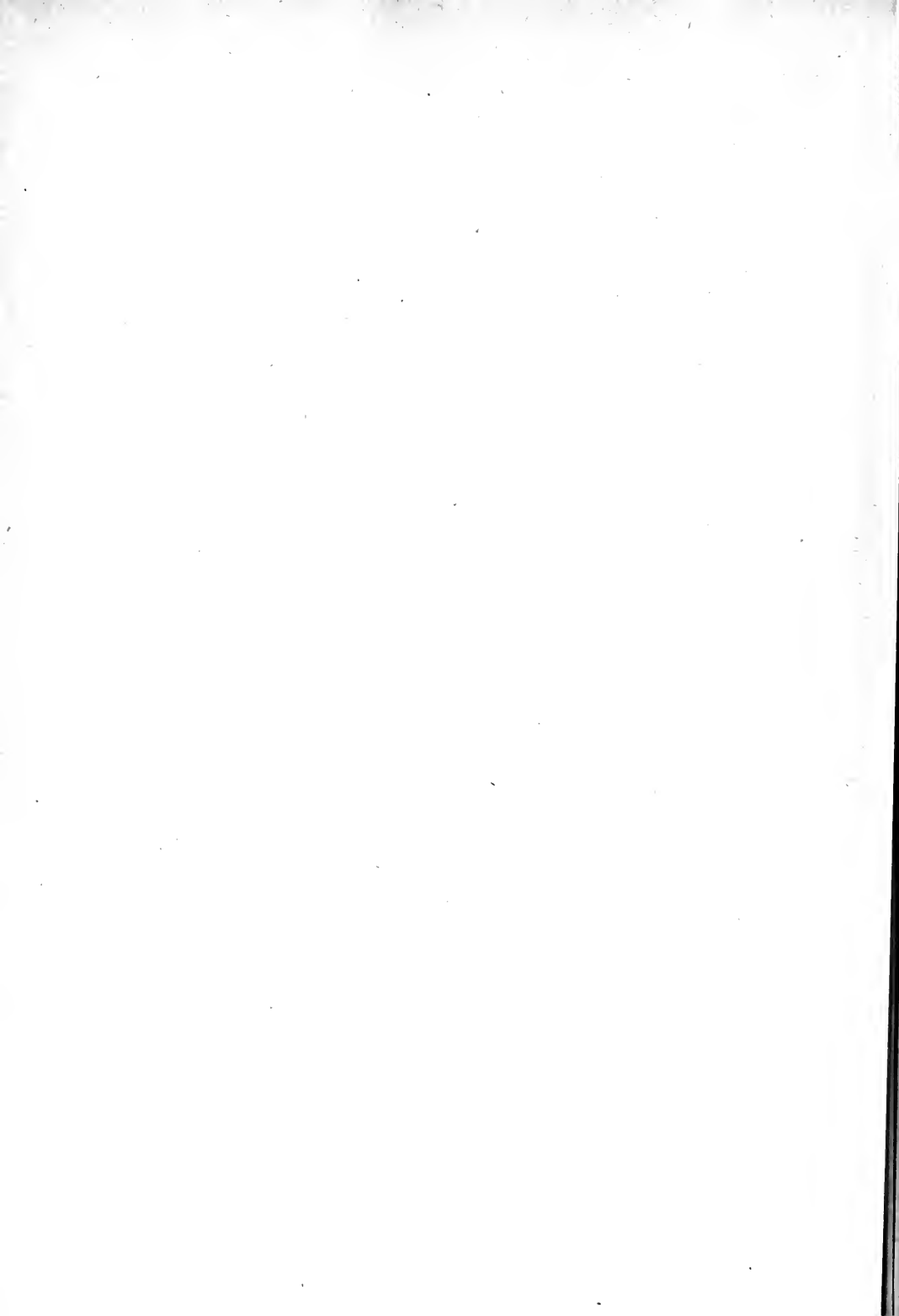
Farmer's "Americanism Old and New" is likewise a valuable book, but the author lacks one essential quality for writing upon Americanisms: that of having been born and brought up in America. And thus it happens that Mr. Farmer, being an Englishman, has often failed conspicuously in the task of deciding what are really Americanisms and what are not. We must, however, commend the author for his laudable researches in collecting so much new material, especially the words relating to the flora of America and the strange New-England euphemisms employed by those in whom the remnant of the old Puritanical spirit is still strong enough to render them unwilling to utter vulgar or profane expressions openly.

The "New Dictionary," which we present to the public, has no pretence at being a scholarly work. The author—well known for his preceding investigations in the peculiarities of speech of French Canada—having had here simply in view to make an up-to-date book which would be accessible and useful to a larger class of American readers than the one usually interested in philological matters. Particular attention has been paid to the fauna and flora, and to the words derived from foreign languages, especially the French and Spanish, the data obtained under those two heads being especially noticeable and important. Valuable additions have been made to the newspaper and political vocabulary, to the nicknames of persons, States, cities, etc., and great care has been taken in eliminating all words which are at best only mushroom growths or linguistic abortions of merely ephemeral vogue. The reader will no doubt also remark the wide field that has been covered by this book, its scope embracing the peculiarities of speech of the Dominion of Canada and Newfoundland as well as of the United States. Lastly, we draw attention to the valuable innovation constituted by appendices I and II, in which all substantives are classed analytically, thereby offering the advantages which have made De Vere's book on Americanisms particularly precious, and greatly facilitating researches.

PRINCIPAL ABBREVIATIONS USED IN THIS DICTIONARY

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Abb.	Abbreviation.	Mex.	Mexican.
Adj.	Adjective.	N. B.	New-Brunswick.
Alg.	Algonkin.	Neb.	Nebraska.
Am.	America, or American.	N. Eng.	New England.
Cf.	Compare.	New Eng.	New England.
Co.	County.	Nfld.	Newfoundland.
Contr.	Contraction.	N. J.	New Jersey.
Corrupt.	Corruption.	N. S.	Nova Scotia.
Dict.	Dictionary.	N. Y.	New York.
Dim.	Diminutive.	Old Eng.	Old English.
Eng.	England, or English.	Ont.	Ontario.
Esp.	Especially.	Pa.	Pennsylvania.
F. A.	French-Acadian.	Part.	Participle.
F. C.	French-Canadian.	Pl.	Plural.
Fem.	Feminine.	Prob.	Probably.
Fla.	Florida.	Pron.	Pronounce.
Fr.	French.	Q. V.	Which see (quum vide).
Ga.	Georgia.	R. I.	Rhode Island.
Ger.	German.	S. C.	South Carolina.
Hist.	History.	S. E.	South-East.
I. E.	That is, namely (id est).	Sp.	Spanish.
Ind.	Indian.	S. W.	South-West.
Ky.	Kentucky.	Va.	Virginia.
Lit.	Literally.	W. Ind.	West Indian.



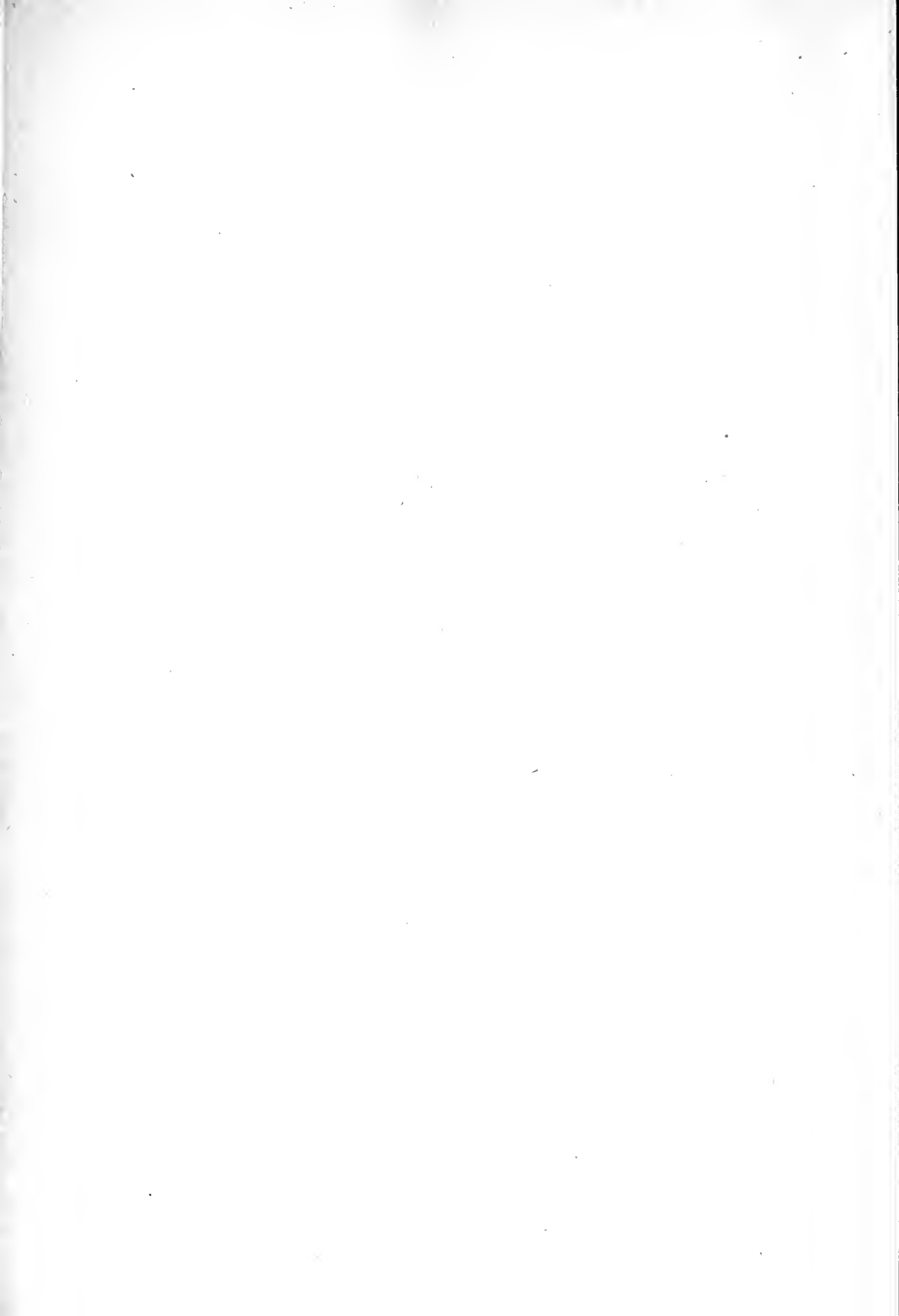
## NUMBER OF ENTRIES

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A.....	296
B.....	698
C.....	744
D.....	253
E.....	53
F.....	271
G.....	262
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I.....	57
J.....	80
K.....	71
L.....	161
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Y.....	18
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A NEW  
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A

- A.** The old Anglo-Saxon prefix *A*, meaning at, in, on, to, is more generally retained in the United States than in England.
- A.** With the exception of the greater part of New England, we have the almost universal use of what we may call the short *a*; that is, the pronunciation of that letter with the sound that it has in "man." This particularity also holds good of the provinces in England, the broad vowel sound being of cockney origin.
- A** for an, as in "a hotel" for "an hotel." The elision of "n" before hotel is so general in the United States that it may be regarded as universal, while in England it is very rare. This difference is the consequence of the difference in the pronunciation of "hotel," which in England, except among a very few cultivated speakers, is pronounced "otel."
- A 1.** A slang expression, borrowed from the familiar designation of ships at Lloyd's, and which can be distinctly traced to America, if not in its first creation, at least in the special meaning which it has acquired. Thus, as Sam Slick was wont to say, it is customary to hear: "She's a prime girl, she's *A No. 1*," and J. R. Lowell sings:

He was six foot o'man, *A 1*,  
Clean grit and human natur'.

An intensified form also exists: *A No 1 and no mistake*, which is the equivalent of the English "First-class, letter A No. 1."

- Aaron's Band.** A Masonic degree, instituted by Joseph Cerneau, founder of the Sovereign Grand Consistory of the United States of America.  
See *Cerneau rite*.

**Abergoins, Abrogans.** A corruption of "aborigines" said to be common in the West among the illiterate, and which is used jocularly for Indians.

**Aboard.** Not exclusively nautical, and generally also transferred from sea-life to shore-life, as in the familiar expressions: *Aboard* a train or a carriage, and even *aboard* a mule or a horse.

**Aboard (all),** pronounced as though it were one word, accented on the syllable "all."

Before the invention of the railway, the Englishman was generally carried by land in a coach, while the American was taken by water in a boat. And this is why an American conductor always cries out "All aboard" as his train is about to start, while an English guard will prefer to say "Passengers, take your seats."

**Aboideau, Aboiteau,** ab-bwa-doh,—toh (Fr. A.). A sluice through a dike so arranged that the water can run out of the creek at low tide. When the tide is coming in, a valve automatically closes the passage.

Used in connection with the dikes of the Tantramar marshes in New Brunswick, and of the Grand Pré in Nova Scotia.

Other forms are *abito*, *bito*.

**Abolitiondom.** A strictly grammatical word, formed after the manner of "kingdom," and which came into use, in the South, during the Civil War, to designate the Northern States then clamouring for the abolition of slavery.

**Abolitionists.** A name given, during the Revolution, and when the Constitution was made, to various societies formed for the abolition of slavery in the United States. At first, these societies generally advocated gradual and voluntary emancipation, and indeed it was only in 1830, at the time of William Lloyd Garrison's furious arraignment of slave-holders as criminals, that radical measures were demanded with a view of obtaining the immediate abolition of slavery all over the United States.

In 1849, the Abolitionists first appeared as a distinctive political party, the great majority of them then forming the Liberty Party, which afterward acted with the Free Soil and Republican parties. The abolitionist movement finally culminated in President Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation of January 1, 1863.

**Abolitionize.** To convert to the doctrine of the abolitionists.

**Aboriginal.** Used adjectively for Indian.

Bolling Robertson. . . . had the Indian eye, and the whole cast of his countenance was *aboriginal*. (Letters from the South, I. p. 23.)

Also used in sense of original, out of the common. "That is an *aboriginal* idea."

**About.** A distinctive Americanism is the habit by all classes of putting all they want to say definitely, and know definitely, in a doubtful form, i. e. "I reckon the local election *about* pleased you."

**About East.** About right, in a proper manner.

This curious slang expression originated in the West, among the New Englanders emigrated from the East. With them, naturally, all that is done in their native land is right, and hence what they admire they simply call *about East*.

See *Down East*.

**About right.** Nearly right.

In the sense of well, thorough, Bartlett was surely wrong in noting *about right* as peculiar to America, it being in that sense a native expression in many parts of England.

**About the size.** An expression covering a wide field: assent, general satisfaction, approval, etc. Synonymous with *about right*.

Got no home, no wittles, and never a' a penny to buy none with. That's *about the size* of how destitoot we are, sir.

(James Greenwood, *New Roughs' Guide, in Odd People in Odd Places*.)

**Above one's bend.** Beyond one's power, or out of one's reach. Above one's ability, power, or capacity. Literally, above one's power of bending all his strength to a certain purpose.

This expression is common enough in the West. Referring to it, J. R. Lowell calls attention to Hamlet's "To the top of my bent."

An English equivalent is "above one's hook."

**Above one's huckleberry.** The equivalent, in the South, of *above one's bend*.

**Above par.** A stock-broker's expression, extended to mean anything superior, or beyond the ordinary.

See *under par*.

**Abra** (Sp.). In the South-West, a narrow pass between mountains.

In Texas, however, the term more especially applies to a break in a *mesa* (q. v.) or in a range of hills.

**Abskise** (prob. Ger. *abscheiden*). Of local usage, in parts of the West settled by Germans, in sense of to depart, to go away.

**Abquatulate.** To abscond, to vanish. To run away, with the more or less forcible idea of running away in disgrace.

This fictitious word first came to light in 1833, in a play called "The Kentuckian," by Bernard, and De Vere inclines to think that it may be derived from the Latin *ab* and the American *squat*. Our opinion would be that *abquatulate* is only a facetious negroism, which has come into use in the same kind of playful way as many people in England, for

instance, might say "no forrarder." The disposition of our negro to multiplication and confusion of syllables is well known, and, in the absence of a sure derivation, the above inference possesses, we think, good ground for plausibility.

**Abutter.** A real-estate term coined in Boston, and denoting the owner of an adjoining or coterminous estate.

Such of the present *abutters* or borderers on the said flats.  
(Boston Town Records, 10 sept. 1673.)

**Academy.** Used with grandiloquence for school, a custom well high ancient, and not peculiar to America, if we may well believe the scornful denunciation of it by Boswell's father, the old Laird of Auchinleck:

He keepit a schule and call'd it an *acaademy*.

Following the same trend of thought, every college of some pretensions must needs also, in the United States, be a University.

**Accommodate.** Used especially in New England in the sense of providing for travellers, from the English meaning of "accommodation" as applied to public houses.

**Accommodation train.** A slow train stopping at all stations.

**According to Gunter.** According to rule, or correctly done; properly, arithmetically. A popular standard of appeal, derived from Gunter, an English mathematician who was the inventor of a famous Rule of Proportion, at the time of the early Puritan settlements. The old laws of Rhode Island say:

All casks shall be gaged by the rule commonly known as *gauging by Gunter*.

In England, a similar locution is "According to Cocker," from the arithmetician Cocker, living under the reign of Charles II. The American phrase is however the older one of the two by at least half a century.

**Account (of no).** An expression of utter contempt, evidently borrowed from the ledger, and which is especially much used in the South, and South-West. For instance a man is of *no account* when he is a worthless fellow, literally when he does not "count" in the struggle for life; a thing is of *no account* when it has no value.

Pete ! he *no'count* nohow, he poor fiel' hand nigger!  
(J. G. Baldwin, *Flush Times of Alabama*, p. 117.)

**Accountability.** The state of being accountable. In England, "accountableness."

*Accountability* has the authority of Robert Hall.

**Accumulatives.** In newspaper parlance, a kind of literary sparring match. Some editor will make a remark or a joke; another will cite it with comments; and, in his turn, he will be handled by a third. Indeed, there are cases in which the original paragraph has gone the round of twenty or thirty prints.

Also called *codicils*.

**Aceite**, ah-say'-ee-tay (Sp.). In Texas, any kind of comestible oil.

**Acequia**, ah-say'-kee-ah (Sp.). An irrigating ditch, in Texas and New Mexico. The main ditch is called *acequia madre*.

Also spelled *azequia*, *zequia*.

**Acequiador**, ah-say-kee-ah'-dor (Sp.). The officer in charge of the acequias, in Texas and New Mexico.

In Spain, "acequiador" is the acequia builder, while "acequero" is the officer mentioned above.

**Achigan** (Ind. *manachigan*, or *achigan*, Otchipwe). A common name, among the French Canadians, for the black bass of Canada.

This word is found in the old writers, namely in Hennepin :

On y pesche.....des *achigans*.

(Description de la Louisiane, 1683.)

The form *manachigan* is still used by the Algonkins of the Lake of Two Mountains, in the province of Quebec.

**Acknowledge the corn.** To make an admission of failure, to admit being outwitted. To confess a charge or imputation.

The best authenticated story, to account for derivation, is given by De Vere, and runs somewhat as follows :

In 1823, Hon. Andrew Stewart, from Pennsylvania, was in Congress discussing the principle of Protection, and said in the course of his remarks that Ohio, Indiana and Kentucky sent their hay-stacks, corn-fields and fodder to New York and Philadelphia for sale. The Hon. Charles A. Wickliff, from Kentucky, jumped up and said : "Why, that is absurd, and I call the gentleman to order. We never send hay-stacks or corn-fields to New York or Philadelphia.—Well, what do you send ? replied Mr. Stewart.—Why, horses, mules, cattle, hogs.—Well, what makes your horses, mules, cattle, hogs? If you feed a hundred dollars' worth of hay to a horse, when you ride off to market with that horse, don't you simply get upon the top of an hay-stack worth a hundred dollars? Same, for your cattle. Now, about your hogs, how much corn does it take to fatten one of them?—Why, thirty bushels.—Then you put that thirty bushels of corn into the shape of a hog, and make it walk off to the Eastern market." At this, Mr. Wickliffe jumped up again and said : "Mr. Speaker, *I acknowledge the corn.*"

**Across lots.** By the most direct way, in the quickest manner. From the habit of cutting across vacant lots, in sparsely built-up districts, in order to save distances. Brigham Young is reported to have said that

he "would send his enemies to hell *across lots*," and J. R. Lowell improves upon him by making an epithet of the word :

To all the mos' *across lot* ways of preachin' an' convertin'.  
(Biglow Papers, II, p. 100.)

I did'nt see Crosby go by, did you ?—He'd have had to foot it by the path *cross-lots*, replied Ezra, gravely, from the doorstep.  
(Sarah Orne Jewett, *Law Lane*, in *Scribner's Magazine*, Dec. 1887, p. 735.)

**Acting.** Literally "acting as." Said of one who fulfils ad interim the duties of a position : *Acting Mayor*, *Acting Governor*, etc.

**Ad.** A printer's usual abbreviation for "advertisement," now generally adopted, not only in newspaper parlance, but also in the whole advertising business of the country.

**Adam and Eve** (*Aplectrum hiemale*). The popular name of the puttyroot, from its pair of tuberous roots always found together

**Adamites.** A current appellation, from 1821 to 1832, for the adherents of John Quincy Adams, 10th president of the United States.

**Addition.** A legal term to designate part of a village or city laid out in addition to original plot. (*North Mississippi Valley*.)

Also used generally in New England to denote new part of a house added to original building.

**Addition, division and silence.** A Philadelphia expression, which for a time had a vogue as a catch phrase, and for which Wm. H. Kemble, of Pennsylvania, is generally credited. As the story goes, in March 1867, Wm. H. Kemble, then treasurer of Pennsylvania, wrote the following letter to Titian J. Coffey, a former Pennsylvania politician, but then a resident of Washington :

MY DEAR TITIAN :—Allow me to introduce to you my particuar friend, Mr. George O. Evans. He has a claim of some magintude that he wishes you to help him in. Put him through as you would me. He understands addition, division and silence. YOURS : W. H. KEMBLE.

The story was given at length in the *New York Sun* of Sept. 29, 1891, and Kemble admitted on the witness stand, in his suit against Charles A. Dana, that he had written the letter.

**Addressed.** A postal term which it is still common to find on letters sent by messengers, and denoting that those letters are to be delivered as directed. The term came up when the Post-Office department began to fight private mail carriers, about 1840, and only lost its significance some twenty years after. The object of so addressing letters was to avoid having them come under the postal monopoly, as, theoretically, every closed letter must be delivered by the United States postal service.

**Addressee.** The person to whom a letter or other object is addressed.

**Adjective jerker.** A term of derision applied, like *ink-slinger*, to those who write for the press. The allusion, in the present case, is doubtless to the indiscriminate use of adjectives, among young writers and reporters.

**Admiral.** In Newfoundland, a name given to the oldest man of a fishing settlement. Also, to the recognized chief commander of a fleet of fishing vessels.

**Admire.** (1) To wonder, to be affected with surprise. Now obsolete in that sense in England, although its use has once had the highest authority. In the New-England States, particularly in Maine, still a very current expression.

Let none *admire*  
That riches grow in hell.  
(Milton, *Paradise Lost*, bk. I, l. 690.)

He (Charles II) is so fond of the Duke of Monmouth, that everybody *admires* it.

(Pepy's Diary, Feb. 22, 1663.)

(2) To wish eagerly. "I should *admire* to go to Europe." Also especially confined to New England, although it is still heard now-a-days in some eastern counties of England.

**Adobe,** ah-doh'-bay (Sp.). In the South-West, a common name for sun-dried or unbaked bricks, and, by extension, for the tenacious clay itself used as material.

Also used adjectively in the sense of suitable for making adobes, built or made of adobes. "An *adobe* soil, an *adobe* house."

Often colloquially shortened to *dobe*, or *dobie*.

**Adocté,** ah-dok-tay. In French Canadian folk-lore, a word used among the old "coureurs des bois," to designate an Indian who has passed a secret agreement with an evil genius.

Also called *Mahoumet*.

**Adulterer.** Not only an infringer of the 7th commandment, but also one who "adulterates."

**Adventism.** The doctrine taught by Dr. William Miller, who might be called the American counterpart of Dr. Cumming, in England.

The chief tenet of Adventism was a belief in the physical second advent of Jesus-Christ, which event Miller affirmed would take place on the 23rd of October 1844, whereupon numbers of his followers settled their earthly accounts and prepared to meet their Lord and Saviour.

Also called *Millerism*.

**Adventist.** A believer in the doctrine of Adventism, as taught by Dr. William Miller.

Also, *Millenarian*, *Millerite*.

**Adventurer.** In early colonial times, the landlord “adventuring” or investing money in a plantation.

The *adventurers* which raised the stock to begin and supply the Plantation, were about seventy gentlemen....some adventuring great summes, some small....  
(Captain John Smith, *Historie of Virginia*.)

**Advice and consent.** A term in American constitutional law, denoting a formal vote of specified persons or boards.

From this day there shall noe house at all be built in this towne neere unto any of the streets or laynes therein, but with the *advise and consent* of the overseers.

(Boston Town Records, 4 October 1636.)

Parliament used the term, 16 December 1653, in the Instrument of Government, borrowing it from Massachusetts, like the term Commonwealth.

**Advise ment (to have under).** To have under consideration. Rarely heard in England, but common in the United States.

**Afeared** (Old Eng.). Still current in the Southern States, especially Virginia, in sense of afraid, frightened.

**Affection (to).** To have a liking for. A very old form, now about obsolete in England.

**Afflicted.** Mentally deficient, or deformed. (Maryland.)

**Afore, Aforehand** (Old Eng.). Still surviving in remoter regions of the New-England States, in sense of before, beforehand. Also *aforetime*. J. R. Lowell says that neither Spencer nor his Queen scrupled to write *afore*, and that *'fore* was common till after Herrick.

**Africanization.** A word coined by Southern political writers, after the Civil War, for the act of placing under the control or domination of the black race. The word obtained especially a frequent and melancholy currency, at the time of the nefarious proceedings of the “carpet-baggers.”

**Africanize.** To place under negro domination or control.

**After.** Used for afternoon, in South-Eastern Pennsylvania. “I’ll see him this *after*.”

**Afterclaps** (Old Eng.). (1) A current word in Pennsylvania and the Western States, in the sense of an unjust and additional demand beyond the conditions previously stipulated of a bargain.

(2) An unexpected after-effect, the fag-end of anything. Once current in England, but very rarely heard now.

In Scotland, *afterclaps* means “evil consequences.”



**Again.** Used among the illiterate for *against*, and usually pronounced *agin*: “*Again* the house.”

The language of low life has preserved for us *again*, as a préposition, instead of *against*. Etymologically, the form is perfectly correct, and goes back to the earliest known period of the history of our tongue. The literary language, with thorough inconsistency, uses *among*, as well as *amongst*, and indeed prefers it, while *alongst*, corresponding to *against*, and once in use, has now entirely given place to *along*, corresponding with *again*.

**Agate.** A glass marble used by boys at play.

**Agaze.** Astonished, open-eyed. (Thieves' slang.)

**Age.** In game of poker, the first player to the left of the dealer who bets. This player holds the “age,” and is not compelled to bet until all the other players have signified their intentions.

Also called *edge*.

**Ager, Agur, Aguy, Agy.** In the South, frequently used among the uneducated for “ague,” meaning a form of intermittent fever, while in the North “ague” itself is often pronounced like “plague.”

With the addition of the word “fever,” the familiar *fevernagy* is formed, from fever-an'-aguy for fever-and-ague.

Also *dumb-ager*, *dumb-chill*, *shaking-ague*.

**Agohanna** (Ind. Algonkin.). A king, or chief sachem among the Indians. This word belongs to the Indian mythology of Canada, and is frequently met in the relations of some early French discoverers.

Le Roy et Seigneur du pais qu'ils appellent en leur langue *Agouhanna*. (Lescarbot, Nouvelle-France, p. 320.)

**Agostadero**, ah-gos-tah-der-'o (Sp. *agosto*, the month of August, harvest-time). In Texas, a summer pasture, a tract of open country used as a pasture.

**A-greening.** (1) Growing or becoming green. “The grass will soon be *a-greening*.”

The prefix *A* is an Anglo-Saxon survival.

(2) To impose upon one's credulity. “Somebody's been *a-greening* on you.”

**Agrito**, ah-gree'-toh (Sp. dim. of *agrío*, sour). In Texas, a small, red berry; the fruit of a species of berberis probably identical with the *chaparral* (q. v.) berry.

Also called *algereta*, *algireta*.

**Agua**, ah'-goo-ah (Sp.). A retention, on the Mexican border, of the Spanish name for “water,” being applied to lesser streams, as *Agua Azul* (New-Mexico), *Agua Dulce* (Texas), etc.

**Aguardiente**, ah goo-ar-de-en'-tay (Sp. contr. of *agua ardiente*, meaning literally "burning water"). On the Mexican frontier, a kind of brandy distilled from the red wine of Mexico. Also any common distilled liquor, especially American whiskey.

**Ahead**. A seaman's term, used in the United States for every possible forwardness that can be imagined.

*Ahead* of every one, at the head, in advance of every one.

*Go ahead*, to go on, to proceed, to rush forward. This idiomatic phrase, which is very characteristic of the restless and energetic progress of the American people, is also sometimes converted into an adjective, as a *go-ahead* fellow, meaning a progressive, dashing fellow.

Although *to go ahead* is commonly regarded as a genuine Americanism, in the sense aforesaid, there are indications of its use, with same meaning, in several old English writers. Davy Crockett made the maxim "Be sure you're right, then go ahead." Indeed this use of *ahead* came in at least two centuries before Crockett's time, as we read in Milton :

But how, among the drove of custom and prejudice, this will be relisht by such whose capacity, since their youth, *run ahead* into the easy creek of a system or modulla, etc.

(Doctrine and Discipline of Divorce, Letter to Parliament.)

**Ai**. In South Carolina, generally pronounced *ee*: *cheer*, *steer*, for chair, stair. With strict retaliation, *ee* generally becomes, in same region, *a* or *ai*, as in *dave*-meat for *deer*-meat.

**Aiguille**, a-gwel (Fr.). A name given, in California, to spiry, needle-like, bare and inaccessible rocks.

**Aim**. To intend. "She aims to go to-morrow." (Tennessee mountains.)

**Air-hole**. A term applied, in the North, to certain openings in the frozen surface of a river or pond, which, even in the hardest winter, do not freeze.

**Air-line**. A railroad built in a straight line, avoiding all curves, and windings. The term originated in the West, where the surface of the level prairies lends itself admirably to those *air-lines*.

Although strictly limited at first to the above sense, an air-line is now often extended to mean the most direct road from one point to another.

Also called *straight shoot*.

*To take the air line*, to go direct, and by the shortest route; idiomatically, to avoid circumlocution.

**Airy**. Said of one who is conceited, literally who puts on "airs."

**Alacran**, ah-lah-krahm' (Sp.). A name applied, in formerly Spanish States, to different species of the genus "scorpio," common in Texas and Mexico.

**Alameda**, ah-lah-may'-dah (Sp.). A popular name, in Texas and other South-Western States, for a road planted with *alamos* (cotton-wood trees), and, by extension, for a walk or park planted with any kind of trees.

**Alamo**, ah'-lah-mo (Sp.). In Texas and other South-Western States, they call *alamo* the species of poplar known as cotton-wood (*Populus monilifera*) in other parts of the Union. Whence, *alameda*.

Many places, in Texas, bear the name of *alamo*, among others the famous mission in San Antonio, scene of the massacre of the Texan garrison by the besieging Mexicans, in 1835.

**Albany beef**. A popular name for the sturgeon's flesh, in the city of Albany, where it abounds and is highly esteemed, especially when roasted in the form of steaks.

Other expressions, due to a similar mixture of names, are *Cape Cod turkey*, *Marblehead turkey*, and *Taunton turkey*.

**Albany hemp** (*Urtica Canadensis*). Canada nettle, so called from the fact that in Albany its fibrous bark was once largely used in the manufacture of hemp.

**Albany regency**. A political term designating an important Democratic junta, having its headquarters at Albany, and which controlled for many years (1820 to 1854) the action of the Democratic party throughout the United States.

See *Bucktails*.

**Alberca**, al-bear'-kah (Sp.). In Western Texas, a water hole, water pocket, or watering place.

**Albur**, al-boor' (Sp. *albures*). In Texas, a game of cards.

**Alcalde**, al-kal'-day (Sp.). In Texas, and other formerly Spanish States, a judge, magistrate, or justice of the peace. We may here recall that the ex-governor of Texas, O. M. Roberts, who was a justice of the peace in the early days of the State, bore the affectionate nickname of "the Old Alcalde."

In Spain and Portugal, the "alcalde" is more especially the mayor of a pueblo or town, who is vested with judicial powers similar to those of a justice of the peace.

**Alder**. Deserves a place, among Americanisms, only in so far as the term is recklessly transferred to other shrubs, that resemble the original in the form of their leaves. Thus, we have the following :

- (1) *Black alder* (*Prinos verticillatus*), a species of winter-berry ;
- (2) *Dwarf alder* (*Rhamnus alnifolia*), the alder-leaved buckthorn ;
- (3) *Spiked alder*, also called *White alder* (*Clethra alnifolia*), the sweet pepper-bush.

**Alewife.** A common term, along the New-England coast, for two species of fishes of the herring kind, the "*Alosa vernalis*" and the "*Alosaestivalis*."

In Maryland and Virginia those herrings are called *old wives* and in Connecticut *alewhaps*.

The *alewife* is like a herrin, but has a bigger bellie ; therefore called an *alewife*.  
(John Josslyn, Two Voyages to New-England.)

The form *aloof*, recorded in 1678, is said to be the Narragansett name of the fish ; but it is probably an error for *alewife*.

**Alfalfa** (Sp.). A Chilian plant of the clover family, otherwise known as lucerne or the English sanfoin, and now extensively cultivated in California, and other South-Western States.

**Alfargas, Alforgas** (Sp.). In Texas, a popular name for saddlebags. Used almost exclusively in the plural.

**Alfilaria**, al-fee-lah'-ree-a (Sp. *alfiler*, a pin, the suffix *ia* or *ria* expressing assemblage, aggregation).

A valuable forage plant (*Erodium cicutarium*) of the dry regions of the South-West, especially Western Texas.

Other names are *filaree*, *pin grass*, *storkbill*.

**Algic.** A generic name proposed by Schoolcraft, to designate the different dialects of the Algonkin languages, which were originally spoken by all the tribes of New England, the Middle States, Virginia, and part of North Carolina.

**Aljibar**, al-hee'-bar (Sp. *aljibe* or *algibe*). In Texas, a cistern.

**Alkali flats.** The region of extinct lakes and inland seas of Southern Nevada and South-Eastern California, forming wide and desert-like districts covered with an efflorescence of alkali whose dust is extremely annoying. Indeed, before the days of the Pacific railroad, so unpleasant to the traveller were the "Alkali flats," that they were called the "Old bugbear of the great American Desert."

Same region is also graphically called *Thirstland*.

**All any more**, or simply **All** (Ger. *alle*, a familiar word used in the sense of "gone"). A Pennsylvania vulgarism signifying "all gone." Thus, a waiter, at a restaurant, will say: "The roast-beef is *all any more*," meaning that there is no more.

This curious piece of jargon is also frequently heard in New Jersey.

**All around sports** (sportsmen). Men whose interest in sport is all embracing.

Also taken in a pejorative sense, as in the case of men versed in all forms of dissipation.

- All-a-setting.** A term of barnyard origin, current in the West, and meaning "in good condition." "It will make them *all-a-setting* again."
- All both** (Ger. *alle beide*). Used for both, in South-Eastern Pennsylvania.  
Cf. Fr. *tous deux*.
- All-day.** Able to work a whole day, or every day; and, by extension, steady, strong. An *all-day* horse.
- Allerickstix** (Ger. *alles richtig*). A ludicrous corruption from the German, used in common schools of Cincinnati as equivalent for the English "all right."
- All-fired.** Probably a Puritan modification of "hell-fired," and in that respect a profane euphemistic adjective, carrying with it the meaning of immense, excessive, or inordinate. "That's an *all-fired* lie."
- All firedly.** A compound of the above, sometimes used for enormously, excessively.
- Alligator.** In parts of Connecticut, a name applied to the larva of the hell-granite (*Corydalus cornutus*), an aquatic insect used as bait for bass.
- Alligator** (Sp. *el lagarto*, literally the lizard). A term applied to all the saurians found in the New World, and more especially to the crocodile of the southern United States. (*Alligator mississippiensis*.)
- Alligator gar** (*Lepidosteus tristœchus*). A large pike-like fish found in rivers of the South, and so called from its resemblance to the alligator.
- Alligator pear** (*Laurus persea gratissima*). A West-Indian fruit resembling a pear in shape, and much esteemed on account of its delicately flavored buttery or marrow-like pulp.  
The name is also applied to the fruit of other trees of the genus *Persea*, as of the red bay (*P. Carolinensis*) of the eastern United States.  
Other variants, for the *alligator pear* proper, are *avocado pear* and *milshipman's butter*.
- Alligator tortoise** (*Chelydra serpentina*). A marsh tortoise found in Carolinian and other Southern waters.  
Also called *swapping turtle*.
- Alligator wood** (*Guarea swartzii*). A West-Indian tree of the *Melia* family.
- Allot upon (to).** Used by illiterate people, in remote districts of New England, in sense of to anticipate, to intend, to form a purpose. Generally contracted in *to'lot*. "*Plot upon* going to see you."
- Allotment certificate.** A certificate specifying the land, etc. allotted to a person named in said certificate.

**All-out** (Old Eng.). An archaism preserved in the United States in the sense of by far. "He was *all out* the best of the lot."

Quoted in Burton, *Anatomy of Melancholy*.

**Allow.** (1) Constantly used, in the Middle and Southern States, in the sense of affirming or making a statement, and then obviously a corruption of that meaning of "to allow," which is synonymous with to admit, to acknowledge.

(2) In the West, "to allow" is frequently heard in the more vague sense of to think, to suppose, corresponding with the "guess" of the North, or the "reckon" of the South.

(3) In New England, "to allow" is generally used as meaning to approve. This meaning is however common enough in the Old Country, as in the phrase affirming that the Deity "cannot look upon sin with any degree of allowanee."

Other variants are *calculate, claim, expect, guess, reckon*.

**All-possessed.** Affected by evil spirits. "Swearing like *all-possessed*."

**All quiet on the Potomac.** A phrase now become famous, and used in jest or ironically as indicative of a period of undisturbed rest, quiet enjoyment, or peaceful possession. It originated with Mr. Cameron, Secretary of War during the Rebellion, who made such a frequent use of it, in his war bulletins, that it became at last stereotyped on the nation's mind.

**All right on the goose (to be).** This phrase had its origin in Kansas, during the contentions in that State on the subject of the extension of negro slavery within its limits, and meant to be in favour of slavery, to be true to the cause of slavery.

Now extended to mean : to be orthodox on the question at issue, to be true to the principles of a political party.

Also, *to be sound on the goose*.

The old saying, "everything is lovely and the goose hangs high," is a perversion of a phrase that originated in Delaware. When the spring comes, the migratory birds fly northward ; if the weather is rainy or cloudy their flight is near the earth, whereas, if the sky is clear, they soar at a great height, uttering their characteristic cries. The phrase originally was : "Everything is lovely and the goose honks high."

**All sorts.** A slang term designating the drippings of glasses in saloons, collected and sold at half-price to drinkers who are not over-particular.

**All sorts of.** A prevalent vulgarism in the South and West, answering to the English slang "out-and-out" and used as a complimentary term in the sense of cate, clever, expert.

She was *all sorts* of a gal..  
(Robb, *Squatter Life*.)

**Allspice.** In addition to designating the tropical Pimento (*Eugenia pimenta*) of the West India Islands, it is also often applied to a sweet-scented shrub of the South (*Calycanthus floridus*), the bark and wood of which have quite a spicy flavor. At times, a more careful distinction is attempted, by calling that shrub the *Carolina Allspice*, from the State in which it is quite abundant.

**All talk and no cider.** Purposeless loquacity. Literally, much ado about nothing, the idea conveyed being the insignificance of results compared with the means adopted to obtain them.

Particularly used in political circles.

**All the go.** Anything in great demand, or on which there is a great run. Also, *all the rage*.

**All the time.** An Americanism of the truest ring, used in sense of "always."

Nature tells every secret once. Yes; but, in man, she tells it *all the time*. (Emerson, Essay on Behaviour.)

**All two.** A pleonastic negro corruption used in sense of "both."

An exact equivalent of that expression is found in the French language with "tous les deux."

**Alluvions.** Used in parts of Texas for bottom-lands (q. v.).

**All wag blue.** A rollicking time; a spree, a kick-up.

**All wool and a yard wide.** A simile for thoroughgoing genuineness.

**Almighty.** Used as adjective and adverb, in sense of excessively great or powerful, as in the *almighty dollar*, meaning the power of money, Mammon regarded as an embodiment of the worship of, and the quest for gold.

However surprising it may appear, we are indebted to England for the sense attached to that word, and our English cousins could even lay claim on the phrase "almighty dollar," for Ben Johnson has once said:

Whilst that for which all virtue now is sold,  
And almost every vice, *almightie* gold.  
(Epistle to Elizabeth, Countess of Rutland.)

The modern application of the word to dollars is traceable to Washington Irving, who made use of it in his charming little sketch, entitled *A Creole Village*:

The *almighty dollar* seems to have no genuine devotees in these peculiar villages.

**Almouchiche**, al-moo-sheesh (Ind. *animout*, a dog, with dim. *shish*).

A word borrowed from the Micmac Indians, and used in the region of the Restigouche, N. B. to designate a certain variety of dogs trained up for porcupine hunting.

Pour l'almouchiche point de péril dans la chasse.

(J. C. Taché, Soirées Canadiennes, 1861, p. 18.)

**Almshouse**. A term often applied, in the United States, to what would be called, in England, a poor-house or a work-house.

See *asylum* and *home*.

**Almud**, al-mood' (Sp.). In Texas, a dry measure equivalent to about a peck.

Also as much as may be sowed with an almud of wheat or corn.

**Along (to get)**. Used in the sense attached, in England, to the expression "to get on." Mrs. Trollope has the following words: "We must try to *get along*, as the Americans say."

**Alonsenel** (*Cowania stansburiana*). A Mexican term, familiarized to American ears on the Western prairies, and designating a medicinal herb, largely found in the neighbourhood of Salt Lake, which is especially much esteemed for its astringent properties.

**Alter**. A euphemism used in the South in sense of to castrate, to geld, the transition from a general change to a special one of this kind being very natural.

**Alto** (Sp.). In Texas, a hill, or eminence, generally without trees.

**Alumnus** (fem *alumna*; pl. *alumni, nae*). Literally, one who is being educated at a particular college or university, and, specifically, a graduate of any such institution.

*Alumni society*, a society or club formed of some or all of the graduates of a college or university, for the promotion of literature and good fellowship. Some such societies are large and influential, as the Harvard club, of New-York; the Yale, of Chicago; etc.

Also called *alumni association*, *society of alumni*, etc.

**Alum-root** (*Henchera americana*). A plant formerly much used by herb-doctors, and so called on account of its astringent properties.

The term *alum-root* seems to be a popular one, and other roots of an astringent character bear the same name, as for instance *Geranium maculatum*.

**Amalgamate**. A verb applied more particularly, in the United States, to the mixture or mingling of the white and black races.

**Amalgamation**. The mixing of the white and black races. Another word, representing the same idea, is the ill-shapen compound *miscegenation*, which has lately come into use. ■



**Amargoso**, ah-mar-gos'-so (Sp.). The bark of the goatbush (*Castela Nicholsonii*), used as a febrifuge and a remedy for diarrhoea, and intensely bitter, as its name implies. (Texas, esp. lower Rio Grande Valley.)

**Ambia**. A euphemism connected with the use of tobacco, and designating, in Virginia and the Carolinas, the expectoration which the chewing of the weed makes necessary. When we add that the word comes probably from "amber"—denoting its color—we hope that the whole poetry and delicacy of it will be readily recognized.

**Ambition**. (1) Oddly used, in Virginia and North Carolina, instead of grudge, or spite. "He has an *ambition* against me."

(2) In the Northern States, *ambition* is often heard as a mere synonym for "energy."

**Ambitious**. (1) Ill-tempered, violent, unmanageable. "An *ambitious* horse." (Georgia and Western States.)

(2) Angry, spiteful. (South and West.)

(3) Industrious, energetic, business-like. (New England.)

**Ambuscades**. Disagreements. "Him an' me had several little *ambuscades*." (Tennessee Mountains.)

**American ivy**. A name given, in the South, to the Virginian creeper.

**American Knights**. Knights of the Golden Circle (q. v.).

**American party**. A political party, which originated in New York in 1844, with the avowed object of opposing the usurpation of the city government by foreigners. Owing to the extreme views of its leaders it fell into disfavor, but came again to the front in 1853, under the popular designation of *Know-Nothings*.

**American tweezers**. A burglar's instrument, mainly utilized by hotel thieves, for turning an inside key on the outside of a door.

Also called *nippers*.

**Amiable**. Oddly enough, this adjective, when applied to a man, is often understood in a derogatory sense, as if he were stupid.

**Amnesty oath**. An oath exacted of conquered Southerners, after the Civil War, in order to secure their loyalty, and granting amnesty upon certain conditions. So peculiarly harsh and severe were some of the measures contained in that oath, that it was at once irreverently called *Damnasty Oath*, and also *Iron-Clad Oath*, from Gen. B. F. Butler, nicknamed "Iron-Clad."

**Amole**. The *soap*-plant (*Phalangium pomeridianum*) is known as *amole* in California and Arkansas. Its pulp, when rubbed on wet clothes, produces an abundant lather, and even smells somewhat like new brown soap.

**Among.** The use of "among" instead of "between," when only two persons are referred to, is of frequent occurrence in the United States, although by no means absolutely unknown in England.

**Among the missing (to be).** A common slang phrase denoting simply to be absent, to absent one's self.

**Amparo,** am-pah'-ro (Sp.). In the mining phraseology of Texas, permission to stop working a mine for a definite period, without forfeiting the concession.

**Amputate.** In thieves' slang, to decamp, to take flight. Used in the same way as to cut, to skip, in English slang.

**Amusers.** A brutal and cynic expression, designating those thieves' accomplices who throw snuff, pepper, or other noxious substances in the eyes of a victim they intend to rob, while a confederate, under pretence of coming to the rescue, completes the operation.

Old English cant, but now obsolete in England.

**Anacahuita,** ah-nah-kah-wee'-ta (Sp. from Mex. *anaquahitl*). A small tree of the borage family (*Cordia Boissieri*), found in South-Western Texas, and often confused with the *anaqua* (q. v.).

**Anan, Anend,** from "anon" (Old Eng.). A very interesting survival still persisting, in New Jersey, Pennsylvania and among old-fashioned people, in the precise sense given by Halliwell :

Anend: How, what did you say? By lower class of persons to higher, when they do not understand what is said to them.

The form *anan* is constantly met with in Fenimore Cooper's novels.

It may well be remarked here that *right anend*, used in sense of "continuously," is almost certainly a corruption of "on end," and has nothing to do with the above interrogative form.

**Anaqua,** ah-nah'-coo-ah (Sp.). A tree or shrub of the borage family (*Ehretia elliptica*), found in South-Western Texas.

Also called *knackaway*.

**Anchovy pear** (*Grias cauliflora*). A large esculent mango-like fruit, indigenous to Jamaica.

**Ancon,** an-cone' (Sp.). In Texas, and especially on the lower Rio Grande, a piece of land on the banks of a river, which is cultivated by irrigation.

In Spain, the name applies to a small anchorage or roadstead.

**And the rise.** Used, in some parts of the South, in sense of more than that, and more.

See *rising*.

**Angel.** A slang word of low life designating one who possesses the means and inclination to "stand treat."

**Angler** (*Lophius americanus*). One of the most remarkable of American fishes, so called from its long feelers, which it protrudes from its hiding-place in the mud, for the purpose of attracting the smaller fry on which it feeds.

Also popularly but wrongfully named *devil fish*, *sea devil*.

**Angler.** In thieves' slang, a street prowler, generally belonging to a gang of petty thieves, and who is always on the lookout for opportunities to commit small larcenies.

**Angle-worm.** In Western Connecticut, a common name for the earth-worm. Indeed, in that region, no other word is known, although, curiously enough, the verb "to angle" is not used.

**Animal.** A name given to new arrivals at the Military Academy of West Point. See *beast*.

Also, in the slang of several colleges: (1) A literal translation, or pony (q. v.); (2) A very vulgar person; (3) A Welsh rabbit, or bunny (q. v.).

**Animule** (with a sly pun upon mule). A favorite substitute for *animal*, in California and the South-West.

Generally used as a substitute for "mules." A witty play upon "animals" and "mules."

**Annatto.** A well known West-Indian orange-red dye, and article of commerce, otherwise also called *orlian*.

Other forms are *anotta*, *annotto*.

**Annex.** In thieves' slang, to steal. The equivalent of the English "to convey."

**Annexationist.** In Canada, an advocate of annexation to the United States.

See *Political Union*.

**Anointed.** One who has been flogged and chastised so severely, that an application of ointment has been deemed necessary.

In English cant the same word is used to signify great rascality.

**Anointing.** A chastisement severe enough to call for the application of ointment.

**Another lie nailed to the counter.** A detected slander. Prob. from old practice of nailing spurious coins to shop counters.

**Antagonize.** In addition to ordinary English sense of "to oppose," used with the meaning of "to convert into an enemy."

**Ante, Anti.** A chip of an agreed value, at game of poker, being the stake or bet placed *anti*, or in opposition to the dealer's bet, before the cards are given.

**Ante, Anti (to).** A verb extended from the substantive, and meaning to risk or bet generally. "What will you *ante* he will lose his election?"

Another form is *ante-up*, mostly used in sense of to pay, to disburse.

**Antic.** Clown, joker. (Tennessee mountains.)

**Anti-federalist.** A word coined about 1788, and more particularly identified, in American history, with the political party that was then opposing the adoption of the Constitution of the United States.

Also, *anti-unionist*.

**Anti-Masonry.** A movement precipitated, in 1826, by the alleged murder of Morgan by the Free-Masons. Wm. H. Seward, Millard Fillmore and Thurlow Weed were among the leaders of the Anti-Masons, and the party wielded power for several years.

**Anti-negro.** This word acquired special significance, in the United States, at the period following the close of the Civil War, and during which the extension of the suffrage to the negro was being agitated. The anti-negro party was then a large and powerful one, on account of the inevitable swamping of the white by the colored vote in some of the States which was foreseen in the event of negro suffrage.

**Anti-rentism.** An organized opposition to manorial rights of agricultural lands in the State of New York, which resulted, in 1846, in the abolishment of all feudal tenures. The movement resulted from the attempt of the heirs of General Van Rensselaer to collect rents, which attempt was resisted on the ground that those semi-feudal land tenures were inconsistent with the spirit and genius of Republican institutions.

The *anti-rent* movement bore a conspicuous part in the politics of New York, during most of the decade prior to 1847, and those who were affiliated to it were called *anti-renters*.

**Antony over.** A school-boy's term, in Pennsylvania, for a game of ball played by two parties on opposite sides of a school house, over which the ball is thrown. Antony is merely here a proper name pressed into service, as Reynard, Robin, etc.

Also called *anty-over*, *haily-over*.

**Anxious bench.** A technical term preserved by some Baptist and Methodist communities, and designating the seat or bench near the altar to which those persons are led who are peculiarly excited, during revivals, to a consciousness of their sinfulness.

Also called *anxious seat*, *mourners' bench* or *seat*.

Fast falling out of use, although still common enough in New England, in a figurative sense.

**Anxious meeting.** A religious meeting consequent on a revival.

**Anxious mourner.** A "mourner" at a revival, urged on by the necessity of seeking salvation, and who is led to the "anxious bench," there to receive aid and comfort.

**Any.** Very curiously used, like *some* (q. v.), in sense of "at all." People speak of not being angry *any*, or angry *some*, meaning they were angry or not, as the case may be.

**Any how.** At any rate. "I am going to try, *any how*."

**Any how you can fix it.** At any rate whatever.

**Any more.** An intensive form used in South-Eastern Pennsylvania. "I can't find my knife any more."

**Anything else.** An hyperbolic phrase, often added, with *not*, to any assertion requiring, in the speaker's mind, a strengthening affirmation. "We didn't do *anything else*," meaning we certainly did it.

On the other hand, if the assertion is strongly negative, *anything* is changed into *nothing*.

See *nothing else*.

**A. P. A.** Standing for American Protective Association, an organization which sprung into existence some ten years ago, with the avowed object of fighting the so-called encroachments of the Catholic Church in the United States. See *Know-Nothings*.

**Apaism.** The doctrine of the A. P. A. or American Protective Association.

**Apaiat.** A member of the A. P. A. One who adheres to the doctrine of the A. P. A.

**Aparejo**, ah-pahr-a'-ho (Sp.). A Spanish word, preserved in the former Spanish States, and designating a pack-saddle.

**Apast.** Used, in parts of the South, esp. Tennessee, for beyond, on the other side.

Cf. "to apass" (Old Eng.) meaning to pass by, to pass on, to pass away.

**Apishamore** (Ind. *apishamon*, Chippewa). A saddle-blanket, made of buffalo-calf skins, and used on the great prairies to protect the animal's back from being chafed.

Also, a bed, or anything to lie down.

**Apola** (Ind.). An Indian word, frequently met in the relations of the old French traders and "voyageurs" of Canada, and designating a certain variety of stew made with larks.

*L'apola*, ou étuvée d'alouettes, avec pommes de terre, mie de pain, et michi gouen.

De Gaspé, Anciens Canadiens, p. 192.)

**Appearanced.** Used in parts of the South, esp. Tennessee, as part. adj. from appearance. "She is very good *appearanced*."

**Apple-bee.** An assembling of neighbors, in the country, to gather apples, or to cut them up for drying. When for the latter purpose, the reunion is known as an *apple-cut*, or *apple-peeling*. These gatherings, like "husking-bees," consist mainly of young people, and are the occasion of much merriment.

**Apple-brandy.** A Virginia term for a genuine brandy, distilled from fermented apple-juice.

In New England, known as *apple-jack*, and *apple-john*, whilst in the South it is called *Jersey-lightning*.

Other names are *cider-brandy*, *snap-neck*.

**Apple-bug** (*Conotrachelus nenuphar*). A black, beetle-shaped insect, frequenting summer pools, and so called by country people because it destroys apples, plums, etc. by puncturing them to insert its eggs, which causes the fruit to fall prematurely.

Also known as the *plum-weepil*.

Must not be confounded with the *apple-worm* (*Carpocapsa pomonetta*), which is the name given in America to the larva of the European coddling-moth.

**Apple-butter.** A thick sauce made of apples stewed down in cider, which is then put away, like butter, in tubs and firkins, and keeps for nearly a year. Although not unlike the "apple-sauce" of New England, *apple-butter* is a dish more peculiar to Virginia and Pennsylvania, where it has been inherited from the first settlers through several generations.

**Apple-jack.** A popular drink, distilled from fermented apple-juice.

Also commonly called *jack*.

**Applejees or Speck and applejees** (Dutch *apeltjees*). An old-fashioned Dutch dish still in favour in New York, and consisting of fat pork and apples which are cut up together and cooked.

**Apple-leather.** Apples parboiled and stirred into a paste of considerable consistency, then rolled out and dried in the sun, when they become as tough as leather. (Pennsylvania and Maryland.)

**Apple Peru** (*Datura stramonium*). (1) The Northern name of the "thorn-apple," a coarse growing and troublesome weed, the seeds and stems of which are powerful narcotic poisons.

Also called *devil's trumpet*, and *Jamestown weed*, this last one being traceable to the fact that it was first noticed in Jamestown, Va.

(2) The garden rhubarb, or pie-plant. (Maine.)

**Apple-slump.** The old name of a favorite New-England dish, consisting of apples and molasses, baked within a bread-pie in an iron pot.

Also known in New England as *panlowdy*, which no doubt is a descendant of Halliwell's *pandouble*.

Also *pan-pie*.

**Apple-toddy.** A favorite mixture made of whiskey or brandy, then stirred into a punch, and into which roasted apples are substituted for the usual lemons.

**Applicant.** Besides English meaning of "one who applies" for anything, has sometimes in New England the sense of a diligent student, that is one who applies himself closely to his studies. In this latter sense, however, it is now fast growing obsolete.

**Apportion.** A political term meaning "to arrange" a district in the interests of the party who undertakes the work, so as to give to every one connected with that party his due share of representation in a future election.

**Apportionment.** The act of "apportioning" an electoral district, so as to bear on the result of a future election.

**Appreciate.** Besides ordinary meanings, has the peculiar sense, both as active or neuter verb, of to raise, to increase in value. "These improvements will *appreciate* your property. . . . His lands have not *appreciated*."

**Appreciation.** A rising, an increase, in worth or value, besides usual meaning of estimation, valuation.

**Approbate.** With some people, meaning to approve, to feel or express approbation, but mostly used, as past participle, in a sort of technical sense among the clergy, to denote a person who is licensed to preach. "An *approved* minister."

Also common enough in New England in sense of to grant a license to keep a public house, or sell spirituous liquors. Thus, a law enacted by the General Court of Massachusetts, in 1851, prohibits a certain class of men "being *approved* to keep an inn or public house."

**Arado**, ar-ah'-doe (Sp. *arada*). In Texas, plowed land, or cultivated land in general.

**Arbor Day.** The day set aside, in several States, for the planting of shade and ornamental trees. The observance of *Arbor Day* is a typical Western innovation, and was first inaugurated, about twenty years ago, in Nebraska, during the administration of Governor Thayer, in response to the exigencies presented in the treeless and arid West.

**Arch of Zerubbabel (Royal).** The seventh degree of the American rite.

**Arctics.** Fur-lined foot-gear, generally consisting in heavy woolen stockings to wear with boots. In England, *goloshes*.  
See *overshoes*.

**Argufy.** A corruption of "to argue," in sense of to debate, to discuss.  
The participles *argufed* and *argufying* are also common.

**Arid Belt.** A tract of country stretching from Canada to Mexico, through the middle of the United States, and where stock raising is almost the sole industry.

**Ark.** A sort of massive boat, made after the form of an oblong ark, which was formerly much used on the Mississippi, for the transport of merchandise, before the introduction of steamboats. Now mostly relegated to the more remote water-courses of the great river, where time is of less vital importance. The *ark* is generally about fifteen feet wide, and from fifty to a hundred feet long, with a carrying capacity of from two to four hundred barrels.

Also called *broadhorn* and *flatboat*.

**Ark and Dove.** A Masonic illustrative degree, preparatory to the Royal Arch degree, and, when conferred at all, given immediately before the ceremony of exaltation.

**Arkansas toothpick.** A variety of bowie-knife, so called with savage irony in Arkansas, because its blade shuts up into the handle, and it can thus be worn more easily on the body.

**Arm.** In Western Florida, an arm of the prairie extending into and partly surrounded by woods.

See *bay*.

**Armory.** A name applied to a place or building where fire-arms are manufactured, as well as to an armory proper.

In England, *armory* means only the place where arms are kept, the factory being there known as a "gun factory."

**Arm-shop.** In England, a gun-smith's shop.

**Around.** Constantly used adverbially in sense of near, in the neighborhood. "To be *around*," that is, to be near, or close by.

The most violent abuse of the word is mentioned by Bartlett, in the case of a minister who is reported to have said of one of the Saviour's apostles that "he stood *around* the Cross," thereby recalling memories of that Irishman who once "surrounded" his cottage.

**Arpent (Fr.).** A French word still persisting for "acre" in Louisiana, as in the days before it was a State of the Union.

Also in general use in the valley of the St. Lawrence, among the descendants of the old French settlers in Canada.



**Arrastra**, ar-ras-trah' (Sp. *arrastre*, a mining term). A South-Western word designating a primitive or drag-stone mill for pulverizing ore.

**Arriero**, ar-re-er'-o (Sp.). A muleteer, or driver of a pack of mules, in Texas and the South-Western States.

**Arroba**, ar-ro'-bah (Sp.). A Mexican weight (25 lbs), and a Mexican measure (32 pints), in use in Texas.

**Arrow**. The flower of the sugar-cane, previous to the appearance of which the sugar-cane does not arrive at the maturity indispensable for grinding purposes.

**Arrow-head** (*Sagittaria variabilis*). A common and very variable aquatic plant, so called from the shape of its leaf.

Also known in some parts of England.

**Arrow-root** (*Zamia integrifolia*). A valuable plant indigenous in Florida, and from which is obtained the preparation called *coontie*.

**Arrow-wood** (*Viburnum dentatum*). A tree peculiar to America, and so called from the fact that almost all the Indian tribes, roving over the Western plains, make their arrows from its long, straight stems.

**Arroyo**, ar-ro'-yo (Sp.). A common name, all over the South-West, for deep, rocky ravines, or dry water-courses.

The Spanish meaning of the word is simply brook or creek, or even street gutter.

In the North-West, esp. Manitoba, the equivalent of *arroyo* is the *coulée* of the old French "voyageurs."

The word *gulch*, so often quoted in connection with California matters, also designates an *arroyo*, although perhaps generally conveying a meaning of a mountain ravine still more abrupt and inaccessible.

Diminutives of *arroyo* are *arroyito*, *arroyullo*.

**As big as all out of doors**. Anything very large or important.

I will never truckle to any man, though he be *as big as all out of doors*.  
(McClintock's Tales.)

**As good as**. An illiteracy often heard in New York, instead of "as well as." "I'd *as good* go there," i. e. I might as well go there.

**As I can**. Following generally a phrase like "I don't know," is frequently heard in the rural districts of New England, where it represents the cautious hesitation by which the Yankee thinks it prudent to qualify every promise or assertion.

The "I don't know as I can" of Yankeedom much resembles the "Quien sabe" of the Spanish.

**As long as**. Because, since. "*As long as* you are willing to do it."

**Ash-cake**. A Southern term for a corn-cake baked in the ashes.

**Ash-cart.** A scavenger's cart.

**Ash-hopper.** A lye-cask, to contain ashes, used in country districts by people who make their own soap.

**Ashlanders.** (1) A notorious political club, identified with Ashland square, in Baltimore.

(2) A club of Baltimore rowdies, so name from Ashland square, near which they lived.

**Ash pole.** The white-ash tree selected in flag-raising, in 1823, as symbolic of the whig party, in opposition to the hickory-tree of the Democrats. It might here be recalled that "Ashland" was the name of Henry Clay's plantation, near Lexington, Ky.

**Assemble** (Old Eng.) Still used in the sense—now obsolete in England—of joining one thing to or with another.

**Assemblyman.** A member of the House of Representatives in New York, and in some of the New-England States.

**Assentatious.** One who is ready and willing to assent to all that is said.

**Assign.** Often heard in the South instead of "to sign." A striking illustration of the force with which analogy fashions words, coming in this instance from a vague conception of a peculiar force adhering to the initial *a*.

**Assignment.** Among newspaper men, the particular work for which a reporter is paid. His name is placed in a book called the *assignment-book*, along with others, and opposite each name is the topic which the man is expected to look after.

**Assinabe** (Ind. Alg. *assin*, a stone). A Franco-Indian word met in the relations of the "voyageurs," and denoting a heavy stone used to keep a fishing-net in position at the bottom of the water.

**Assistant.** From 1621 to 1848 an *Assistant* was, in New England, an officer both judicial and executive, ranking next to the chief Magistrate, and being moreover a member of the Governor's Council.

See *Court of Assistants*.

**Associé,** ah-sos-yay (Fr.). In the time of the old "voyageurs," a partner in a fur company.

**Asylum.** *Asylum* or *Home* is a word often used in America, when idea intended to be conveyed is that which an Englishman attaches to the word *almshouse*.

**At.** A particle most abused in American speech, though of course much allowance must here be made for ancient usage still surviving from the Old Country.

(1) Sense of *by*. "A sale *at* auction. No goods *at* retail."

"I bought it *at* auction" is correct English, but "it will be sold *at* auction" is American only.

(2) Sense of *about*, or *after*. "What is he *at* now?" meaning "what does he propose to do now?"

As a mere expletive, *at* plays especially a prominent part in Southern speech, and seems in the South the indispensable finish to every sentence. "Where have you been *at*? Where does she live *at*?"

(3) Sense of *in*. "*At* the East. *At* the West."

This provincialism is not, however, promiscuously used, as, curiously enough, the better-known New-England States are generally spoken of as "in the East"

(4) Sense of *on*, or *near*. "*At* hill, *at* wood," meaning a place on a hill or near a wood.

We have here a very old form, dating back from the Puritan days, and from which many proper names like Atwood and others have been derived.

See *on*, *over*, *to*.

**Ataca, Atoca**, ah-tah-kah,—toh-kah (Ind. *toça*). The French-Canadian name of the cranberry (*Viburnum oxycoccus*).

*Toca*, petit fruit comme cerises rouges, qui n'a point de noyau.  
(Sagard, Dictionnaire de la langue huronne.)

**Atajo**, ah-tah'-ho (Sp. *atajar*, to divide off). (1) A current word, in the States bordering the old Spanish Dominions, for a drove of pack-mules.

(2) In Texas, *atajo* has the additional sense of a "bunch" of horses, tame or wild, though more generally the latter. Also a fence or enclosure in the corner of a pasture, to stop or gather wild cattle.

See *reparadero*.

**Atamaseo lily** (*Amaryllis atamaseo*). A small one flowered lily, especially flourishing in Virginia and the Carolinas, where it is held in high esteem.

Also called the *fairy lily*.

**At grade**. Used of a railroad, crossing another road on a level.

**Athens of America**. A name usually given, in the United States, to the city of Boston, on account of the culture of its inhabitants, and its numerous educational, philanthropical, and social institutions.

Also, the *Classic city*, the *City of baked beans*, the *City of Notions*, the *Hub of the Universe*, the *Modern Athens*, the *Tri-Mountain City*.

**Atole** ah-toh'-lay (Sp.). A common term in formerly Spanish States, for prepared corn meal, and especially for the thin gruel made from corn meal and water or milk.

The word is probably of Mexican origin, though not in Sanchez.

**Atomy.** An old English word still surviving in America, and used in contempt of a small person. Shakespeare has it in the very same sense, in his "King Henry IV."

Also sense of a empty-headed person.

**Atosset (Ind.).** An Indian word of the Montagnais tribe, designating a fish especially abundant in the region of Lake St. John, province of Quebec.

**Atshen (Ind.).** See *Outiko*.

**At that.** Probably a contraction of "added to that," and often used as an expletive to strenghten an expression. "He is a down East Yankee, and a smart one *at that*."

**Attleboro.** A word applied adjectively to sham jewelry, from town of same name, in Massachusetts, celebrated for its manufactures of cheap jewelry.

Also, by extension, applied to any men or things of a sham, insincere, or doubtful character.

**Auger.** A person given to prosiness ; a bore. (Thieves' slang.)

**Aunt, Aunty.** An affectionate term given to old negresses, in the Middle and Southern States. Similarly, *uncle* is used with reference to an elderly colored man.

Uncle and Aunt cannot be said, however, to be absolutely peculiar to America, as Pegge's *Supplement* to Grose distinctly states that the two words are "in Cornwall applied to all elderly persons."

**Auntsary.** In the Maritime provinces of Canada, a kind of catamaran turned up at both ends. A variant of "Aunt Sarah."

Cf. "Aunt Sally," the name given to an athletic game in vogue among the English country folk.

**Aura,** oh'-rah (Sp.). In Texas, a species of large Mexican vulture, probably the true turkey buzzard (*Cathartes aura*).

**Authority.** (1) In Connecticut, the justices of the peace are denominated *the civil authority*.

(2) Also used, in some States, in speaking collectively of the professors, etc. of our colleges, to whom the government of those institutions is intrusted.

**Avail.** Used actively, instead of reflectively, that is, omitting the usual oneself. "He *availed* of the offer. *Availing* of the courtesy..."

Witherspoon even cites the following example: "The members of a popular government should be continually *availed* of the situation...."

The active use of *to avail* was not always unknown in England, for Pope has the line:

Explore

What means might best his safe return *avail*.

**Avails.** An old word designating the proceeds of all sales, rents, profits, etc. and which is still often heard in some States, especially in New England.

J. R. Lowell maintains that *avails* must forcibly remind us of the *vails* given to servants in Old England, two terms which he assures are identical.

**Avalanche.** A curious corruption for "ambulance," said to be in use in Texas and the outlying territories.

**Avocado pear.** See *Alligator pear*.

**Awadosi (Ind.).** The literal translation of this Indian name would be "carrier of stones," and the very peculiar fish to which it applies is found in the southern region of Hudson Bay. It appears that this fish is so called, because it is wont, in the spring, to gather stones or gravel which serve to build small mounds where its spawn is deposited.

**Awful.** An intensive adjective, used in New England in sense of disagreeable, detestable, ugly, and in the West in sense of excessive.

Taken adverbially, as in "awful hungry," etc. it has no claim at being an Americanism, as it is in that sense just often heard in England as here.

In sense of ugly, unpleasant, distasteful, the use of *awful* is very old, and was in past times a colloquialism often heard in England, north of the Tweed.

**Ax, Axe.** In sense of "to ask," still persisting here with astonishing vitality among the uneducated, especially in the South.

This word has the warrant of great antiquity and noble patronage, and was used by the best writers, in Queen Elisabeth's time, with the same frequency as *ask* is now. "Axe not why," says Chaucer's Miller; and in the Frere's Tale we read: "Axe him thyself if thou not trowest me."

Still provincial in parts of England.

**Axes to grind (to have).** A phrase derived from politics, and meaning to have some personal object to serve, to seek personal advantages under color of party zeal. The phrase first appeared many years ago in a newspaper sketch, introducing a boy who was induced, by a clever fiction, to turn the grindstone for another man to *grind his axe*.

The number of axes which are taken to the various State Capitols, to be ground at the public expense, is perfectly enormous.

(*New-York Tribune*, March, 1871.)

The whole countryside turned out to greet McKinley, but a number of little axes that were desirous of immediate grinding had to remain in the background.

(*Boston Herald*, February, 1890.)

**Axolotl** (Mex. *atl*, water, and *xolotl*, glutton). In Texas, a name commonly used for the Mexican water-lizard (*Amblystoma mavortium*).

**Ayudante**, ah-you-dan'-tay (Sp. *ayudar*, to help.). In Texas, a man temporarily employed on a ranch or hacienda.

**Azote**, ah-so'-tay (Sp.). In Texas, a switch, or anything used as a whip.

### B

**Baalam box.** See *hell-box*.

**Babe.** A term applied to the youngest member of a class, at West Point Military College.

**Babes.** A Baltimore term for a noisy set of rowdies.

**Babiche** (Ind. *ababich*, a string). A word designating, among the French Canadians, strips of eel's skin which are especially much used in making snow-shoes.

This word has been known since the discovery of Canada, as we find "ababich" mentioned in Lescarbot's "Histoire de la Nouvelle-France," under date of 1612.

**Bacayere**, bah-kah-yair (Fr.). A variety of duck common in the Gulf of St. Lawrence.

**Bach, Batch (to).** A slang word derived from "bachelor," and meaning "to live in a bachelor's way." Thus, young men living alone, and doing their own cooking, are said "to batch it."

**Back.** (1) Often used for *ago*, as in the familiar phrase: "A long time *back*." Is a remnant of the old English form *backward*, formerly so employed.

(2) Sense of behind, etc. See *back of*.

**Back (to).** (1) A commercial word used in the sense of "to endorse;" literally, to write on the back of a letter, bill or check.

(2) Often heard, in parts of the West and the South, in sense of to address a letter, i. e. writing the address on the back of an envelope.

**Back (to take).** When a man utters a mistaken charge, or wrongfully applies an epithet, he generally says, by way of apology: "I take that *back*."

**Back and forth.** Often used, especially in New England, for "backward and forward."

Is after all only a slight alteration of the *back and fore* of Scotch immigrants.

**Back and hidden.** A common colloquialism, meaning that which is secret or kept back.

**Backbone.** Grit, courage, moral stamina, weight of character.

The word is now common wherever the English language is spoken, but is believed to have been first introduced by the Abolitionists in the stormy days just before the war.

**Backcap (to).** To speak evil of some one, so as to spoil his game.

**Backcap (to give a).** In thieves' argot, to expose one's past life.

**Back country.** In colonial times, the country lying immediately back from the earlier settled Atlantic seaboard. Now, the uncleared timber country of the West, and we might add, in a figurative sense, the confines of civilization. Hence the terms *back country* and *up country people*, used adjectively in a derogatory sense, and always suggesting a certain inferiority, because up the rivers, toward the headwaters, population becomes scarce, civilization imperfect, and schools few in number.

Other forms are *back settlements*, *backwoods*, *up country*.

**Back down (to).** To retreat, to yield, to give up. Very suggestive in meaning, and corresponding in a striking way to the opposite phrase of going *ahead*.

Equivalent forms are *to back out*, *to back water*, *to take the back track*.

**Back down (a square).** A severe rebuff, an utter collapse.

**Back-end.** A quaint manner of speech, meaning lately, towards the end. "He did not do very well *the back end*...."

**Back-house.** A privy, so called from its position at the back of the house.

In some parts of England, it is called the *backward*.

**Backing and filling.** A *backing and filling* policy is one which is shilly-shally, trifling, irresolute.

**Back-load.** The maximum quantity of game which a man can carry on his back. (N. J.)

**Back log.** A large log used, in fire-places, to support the other fuel.

**Back of.** Sense of behind, previous to, back from. "This was *back of* Chaucer's time."

Was known in Ireland as long ago as 1732, and Mr. Heslop, in his Northumberland Words, notes it as a dialectal shortening of *aback of*, as in: "He wis *back o'* the engine-hoose at the time."

**Back seat.** An inferior position.

**Back seat (to take a).** To retire into obscurity. The phrase also sometimes implies a silent confession of failure, an inability to accomplish what one has attempted.

**Back talk.** An impertinent answer.

**Back talk (no).** A slang catch phrase indicating that the matter in question is closed to discussion.

**Back track (to take the).** To retreat, to abandon an undertaking. To recede from a false position, after having gone too far.

A Western phrase derived from the life of the hunter and trapper in the back settlements.

**Backward.** Often used, especially in the West, as an adjective for bashful, unwilling to appear in company, on the same principle as "forward," meaning the very contrary. In the West, for instance, a modest and timid young man is sometimes called a "backward colt."

**Back water (to).** A Western metaphor, derived from steamboat language, and meaning to retreat, to withdraw.

**Backwoods.** See *back country*.

**Backwoodsman.** An inhabitant of the forest, in the back country, and, by extension, a simple and unsophisticated man.

**Backwoods preacher.** One whose clerical functions are exercised in the wild, unsettled portions of the country, with the blue vault of heaven for a church roof, and a tree stump for an altar.

**Bad.** (1) As an adjective, often refers not to moral depravity, but to the state of one's health, as in the familiar phrase: "I feel *bad* to day," where an Englishman would say "I feel ill." According, however, to a recent article in the London Saturday Review, "to feel bad" is now a current cockney phrase.

In low slang *bad* receives the sense of *hard*, as for instance a *bad man*, which, in thieves' parlance, means a bully, a bruiser.

(2) Used in sense of plenty, in South-Eastern Pennsylvania. "Pheasants are very *bad* in the woods."

(3) As an adverb, bad is generally used for badly, greatly, very much. "I want to see him *bad*. This hurts me *bad*, etc."

**Bad crowd.** In Western parlance, a set of people not thought much of i. e. what in England would be regarded as no great shakes.

**Bad egg.** A Californianism for a worthless speculation.

**Badger State.** The State of Wisconsin, so called in allusion to the abundance of badgers in it. Hence also the sobriquet *badgers* applied to residents of Wisconsin.



**Badger.** One who robs a man, after a woman accomplice has enticed the victim into her den.

In old English cant *badgers* were river thieves, and in modern English slang *to badger* is to tease, to annoy, in which sense it is also concurrently used in the United States.

**Badger game.** In thieves' slang, a variety of the "panel game." A woman gets a man in a compromising situation, and her male accomplices either rob him, or extort money from him by threats.

**Bad lands.** In the arid region of the Great West, the alkali lands with bare mud buttes are called the *Bad Lands*, from the French "Mauvaises Terres," which was the name first applied to them by the early French explorers, on account of their striking aspect of sterile and dreary wastes. By extension, any stretch of specially rough land.

The French name still answers in the corruption "Movey Star" of some localities.

**Bad man.** A desperadoe, among frontier communities, i. e. a professional fighter or man-killer, who is a sure shot and who will use his revolver upon the most futile pretext.

**Bad medicine.** One who is objectionable for any reason. Derived from the Indian "medicine man's" practice of being helpful or harmful accordingly as he is paid.

**Baft.** A number, quantity. "There was a great *baft* of people." (Texas.)

**Bagasse** (Fr.). A Southern word designating the dry remains of the sugar-cane, going to the furnace for use as fuel.

Formerly the bagasse was either burned in a furnace to get rid of it or thrown out on the "levees" to help fight out the river from eating away the bank.

**Baggage.** A formerly English word, meaning the "impedimenta" of a traveller, now almost entirely discarded in England for the less appropriate form "luggage."

**Baggage agent.** An employee of a railway having charge of a baggage room at a station.

Also, *baggage-master*.

**Baggage car.** A railway car usually placed next behind the tender, and in which the baggage is stowed for conveyance. In England, luggage-van.

**Baggage check.** See *check*.

**Baggage-smasher.** A derisive name applied, on American railways, to the employee transferring baggage to and from the cars, from his usual reckless way in handling the property of travellers.

By extension, and figuratively, a coarse and brutal person.

**Bagged.** Used to signify imprisonment and victimization.

Probably only an extension of the idea of capture as derived from sport, through the slang "to bag," meaning to steal.

**Bagging.** A Southern term designating the coarse, hempen bags used in packing cotton.

Also, *cotton bagging*.

**Bag of nails.** A state of confusion or topsy-turveydom.

**Bags o'guts.** A useless individual. A big man with little brains. (N. J.)

**Bail.** In New England, a pail or bucket handle. A survival of the old Puritan days, and one which is given in Forby's Glossary as a Norfolk provincialism.

**Bail (to) one's own boat.** To be self-reliant, i. e. to mind one's own business, independently and without waiting for help from others.

Also, *to paddle one's own canoe*.

**Bailee** (Sp. *baile*, a dance). A cowboy's word, in the South-West, for a ball or dance.

It means also "bailiff," which is significant, as the connection, in those distant regions, between balls and bailiffs, is unfortunately very frequent.

**Bait.** A common term, in New England, for a fulcrum, i. e. the means by which a leverage is obtained.

**Baiting.** (1) A hay-maker's term, for a lunch in the harvest field.

(2) A feed for a horse on a road.

**Bake-oven.** Used in the West for the simple word *oven*, in a bakery. Also applied to the iron bake-pan.

The form bake-oven is of Dutch origin.

**Bake-shop, Bakery.** The place where bread, pastry, etc. are sold. In England, baker's shop.

**Balance.** Used throughout the United States to signify the remainder of almost anything. "The *balance* of a speech, the *balance* of the day, etc." Indeed, the pitch to which this convenient mercantile word is sometimes carried, seems wellnigh surprising, as for instance reading in a newspaper account of a shipwreck :

"The yawl.... took ten or eleven persons and landed them, and then went and got the *balance*."

Or again, as in "William's Florida" :

"Most of the respectable inhabitants held commissions in the army.... ; the *balance* of the people kept little shops."

**Bald-face.** One of the many slang terms under which bad whiskey passes in the West.

Also, *forty rod lightning, lightning whiskey, red eye, pine top*.

**Bald-faced shirt.** A cowboy's term for a white shirt.

Thought to come from the fact of Hereford cattle having white faces.

**Bald-headed row.** The first row of stalls at theatres, especially those which make a feature of ballets.

A cynical allusion to the fact that these seats are generally occupied by men of mature age.

**Balk.** In parts of Connecticut and New York, an iron stake used to "stake out" an animal to graze.

**Balk, Baulk.** Said of horses when, in going up-hill, they suddenly stop and refuse to move forward, showing, on the contrary, a disposition to go back.

In the English sense, *to balk* means simply to frustrate or disappoint, as in the sentence given in Bailey: "*Balked* are the courts, and contest is no more." Its American application to horses is, hence, by no means inappropriate, and quite expressive.

**Balky, Baulky.** Said of a horse that stands still and refuses to go forward.

**Balloon (to).** To fraudulently inflate prices, either in stocks or commodities. Confined to Wall street parlance.

**Ballot-box stuffing.** Originally practised in New-York, where boxes were constructed with false bottoms, so that an unlimited number of spurious ballots could be introduced by the party having control of the polling place.

**Ball-up.** In college slang, to become confused, to confuse. The intransitive use is the original one, and it probably comes from the "balling up" of a horse in soft, new-fallen snow, when a snowball forms within each shoe, making the horse's footing insecure and his movements awkward.

**Balm of Gilead** (*Populus caudicans*). A well known tree largely cultivated in the Eastern States, more especially in New England.

**Balsam fir** (*Abies balsamea*). A slender tree growing in the North, in damp woods, and owing its name to the balsam (Canada balsam), furnished from certain blisters under its bark. The tree itself is also known as *Balm of Gilead*, in imitation of the Eastern terebinth.

**Balsam poplar** (*Populus balsamifera*). A tall tree growing from New England to Wisconsin, and owing its name to the resinous matter covering its buds.

Also, *tacamahac*.

**Baltimore Oriole** (*Icterus baltimore*). The American *oriole*, differing from its European congener in that it has here a rich orange plumage where the other has pale yellow, therefore so much more deserving its

name, derived from *aureolus*, the golden. It is especially found in large numbers near the city of Baltimore, and is also known as *hang bird*, from its peculiar hanging nest.

**Bamboo (to).** An abbreviation of "bamboozle," used with same meaning, i. e. to cheat, perplex, mystify.

**Bamboo-brier** (*Smilax rotundifolia*). The green-brier of the United States, attaining at times, in the rich alluvial bottoms which it prefers, the size of the bamboo.

See *hull-brier*.

**Band.** In prairie parlance, a troop or herd of bisons. In California, vast flocks of sheep are also formed into *bands*.

**Band (to).** In prairie parlance, *to band* means to form, to assemble cattle, sheep, into vast flocks.

**Banded drum** (genus *Pogonias*, Cuvier). A fish found in Atlantic waters, south of New York.

Also called *grunter*, *grunts* and *young sheepskin*.

**Banded garfish** (*Belone truncata*). A species of pike found in Southern waters, and growing to a large size.

Also called *alligator gar*, or simply *gar* and *bill-fish*.

**Bang.** A style of hair-dressing adopted by women, and consisting in the hair being generally curled and frizzed upon the forehead.

**Bang (to).** To bang the hair is to dispose "bangs" upon the forehead.

**Banger.** At Yale College, a stout cane, a bludgeon.

**Bango.** A negro expletive, common to the black race in the South and the West Indies, and conveying a meaning of general pleasure.

**Bang-up.** (1) An old word for a heavy overcoat, still surviving in some parts of the Union.

(2) Anything of superior quality. "This cloth is *bang-up*."

**Bank (to).** To deposit money in a bank. Also, "to go shares."

**Bank (to play).** To play against the bank or gambling house.

**Bank-bill.** In England, bank-note.

**Banker.** A vessel employed in fishing on the Banks of Newfoundland, and deriving its name from the locality.

**Bankers.** A name given, in North Carolina, to the people living near that part of the Atlantic coast which there is called the "banks." The *bankers* used to be wreckers of doubtful repute, but have now taken to farming and fishing.

**Bank shaving.** In banking parlance, the practice of purchasing notes of hand and similar documents, at enormously usurious rates of discount, the unfortunate debtor being then said to get *his paper shaved*.

Before banks were regulated by Act of Congress, bank-shaving prevailed extensively among the least reputable of such institutions.

**Bannock.** In the United States, a *bannock* is a cake of Indian meal fried in lard, whereas in Scotland, where the word comes from, it is a round cake of oat meal baked against a stone.

**Banquette** (Fr.). A word still common in Louisiana, and other formerly French parts of the Gulf States, in sense of foot-path or sidewalk.

Also *bankit*, now rarely heard however, and which is merely a corruption of the above.

**Banter.** In South and West, a challenge, a wager.

**Banter (to).** Besides signifying, as in England, to joke, to jest good-humoredly, *to banter* means, in the West and South, to challenge to a match, to provoke to a wager.

**Bantling** (Old Eng.). A child, from an infant in "bands."

**Banty.** Saucy, impudent.

**Bar.** The common pronunciation for *bear*, in certain parts of the Southern and Western States.

Commonly written *bar*. In *barsmeat* the sign of elision is omitted

**Bar.** A drinking-shop, or public-house.

**Bar (to).** A verb coined in the West, in sense of to frequent saloons or drinking-shops. "He *bars* too much, and won't stand it long." (Western Scenes, p. 771.)

A spurious verb, the signification of which is derived from the drinking-bar.

**Barachois,** bah-rah-shuah (Fr. C.). In the lower St. Lawrence region, a name designating a pond or small lake, at the mouth of a river, which is separated from the sea by a sand bar.

**Barbecue** (Fr. *barbe-à-queue*, from snout to tail). The roasting whole of a large animal over an open fire, the animal being laid on a rude gridiron of stakes. The *barbecue* is a conspicuous feature of political meetings, still common especially in the South and West, and is moreover often extended to mean any public meeting in the open air, with a dinner or other refreshments.

Although the French *barbe-à-queue* seems to give us the most plausible etymology of the word, many writers have however insisted on *barbecue* being directly derived from the Spanish *barbacoa*, which was as near as the early Spanish explorers could get to *herbekot*, a term formerly used among the Indians of Guiana for the wooden grill on which they broiled or smoked their meats and fishes.

**Barber.** (1) A Canadian backwoods term for a kind of blizzard, characterized by a powdery snow with sharp spicules cutting the face like a razor-

(2) The vapor rising from the water on a frosty day. (Nfld. N. S. and N. B.)

**Barber, Barberize (to).** A word confined to barbers, and meaning to ply the trade of a barber, to keep a barber's shop.

**Bar diggings.** In miners' parlance, placers where the gold-bearing gravel gathers in the slack water portions of the streams, and is generally submerged by floods. This collection is called a bar.

See *gulch diggings*.

**Barfoot.** "To take one's tea or coffee *barfoot*," i. e. without cream or sugar, is a very curious phrase sometimes heard in the West. According to J. R. Lowell, our Westerner only uses, in this very novel signification, an old English term written in precisely the same manner in the old English Coventry Plays.

**Barge.** A vessel of burden, of about the size and appearance of an Atlantic schooner, employed on the Mississippi and its tributaries before the introduction of steamboats.

**Bark.** "The word with the bark on it," i. e. without mincing the matter, without circumlocution.

**Bark (to).** In the North-West, to cut a circular incision through the bark and alburnum of a tree, so as to kill it. A process much in vogue among new settlers, in clearing land. Also, *to giralle*.

In the South they say, in preference, *to belt* trees.

**Bark (to) squirrels.** In the West, to strike with a rifle-ball the bark of a branch immediately beneath where a squirrel sits, and with such accuracy that the concussion will kill the little animal without in the least mutilating it.

Hence, metaphorically, the expression signifies to exercise skill and acute judgment.

**Bark (to) through the fence.** To take advantage of some obstacle or shield for saying or doing something, which otherwise would not be said or done, or which might entail unpleasant consequences upon the sayer or doer.

**Bark up (to) the wrong tree.** To act under a mistaken impression, or, as the Englishman would say, "to get on a wrong scent," a mistake into which the trapper's dogs occasionally fall when the game has taken refuge in a tree which they cannot precisely locate, thereby often barking at the wrong one, and deluding their master into straining his eyes to no purpose.

**Barley.** A child's word, common in Pennsylvania, meaning to intermit play (for a rest).

In Scotland, barley (corrupt. of parley) is a cry used by children in certain games when a truce or temporary stop is desired.

**Barm, Barne** (Old Eng.). An old English word in use in New England for yeast. Shakespeare has it in his *Midsummer Night's Dream*, and we read in Chaucer :

“Of tarte, alum-glas, *berme*, wert, and argoils.”  
Also, *emptyings* (pron. emptins).

**Barn.** Frequently used for stables.

**Barnacle.** In Cape May, N. J., used incorrectly for limpet found on oysters.

**Barnburners.** A political party representing the young Democracy of New York some fifty years ago, and whose members, through their pronging reforms at any cost, were compared to the farmer who once burned down his barn to get rid of rats.

The opponents of the *Barnburners* were called *Hunkers* (q. v.).

**Barney.** A hoax ; something pre-arranged, not genuine.

Also current in England, but commonly supposed to be of American origin.

**Barney.** At Harvard College, this word was formerly used to designate bad recitations, whilst *to barney* was to recite badly.

**Barnumize.** To talk or assert oneself in the bombastic style popularly attributed to the famous American showman, P. T. Barnum.

**Barra** (Sp.). In Southern Texas, the equiv. of bar, meaning a shoal or shallow entrance.

**Barrack.** A common word to indicate a rough four post structure for the storage of hay and straw.

In Maryland, and perhaps elsewhere, the term is applied to any kind of building intended for the storage of hay or straw.

**Barraclade** (Dutch *baare-kledeeren*, bare-clothes). A term peculiar to New York City, and to the original Dutch settlements of the Empire State, and designating a home-made nap-less blanket.

**Barracoon** (Sp. *barracon*, used in the West Indies, from *barraca*, a barrack). A slave-house, or slave-pen. An inclosure in which, at the time of slavery, negroes were temporarily detained.

**Barracouda** (*Sphyraena barrocuada*). A valuable fish of the pike kind, taken with a spear and especially abounding in Tampa Bay and other Florida waters.

**Barranca**, bar-ran'-cah (Sp.). In the formerly Spanish States, a mountain gorge, or deep ravine, with very steep banks, and without water at the bottom except in the rainy season.

**Barranco**, bar-ran'-coh (Sp.). A term applied, in the formerly Spanish States, to a bluff or to the steep bank of a river.

**Barred killy**. See *killifish*.

**Barrel**. A political word used elliptically for a "barrel of dollars," and having originated during the Tilden campaign of 1876, when that candidate was charged with having opened a very large "barrel," for the benefit of his henchmen and supporters.

**Barrel-boarder**. A loafer in low drinking-saloons.

**Barrel-house**. A low groggery.

**Barren gravel**. In mining, the gravel or rocks from which the grains and nuggets of gold have been washed out during the process of deposition.

**Barren ground reindeer** (*Tarandus arcticus*). A species of caribou confined almost entirely to the Barren Grounds and to Greenland.

**Barren grounds**. The denomination of a vast stretch of barren lands in the north-eastern corner of North America.

**Barrens**. Elevated patches of poor soil, formerly abounding even in the Central and Eastern States, and either having no growth on them at all, or barely supporting stunted trees unfit for timber. In that case they are classed as Oak-barrens, Pine-barrens, etc. according to the kind of tree which prevails upon them.

In Kentucky, the term is applied to certain regions in the carboniferous limestone formation, the soil of which is really very fertile. Hence Barren County and Barren River.

**Barring out**. In cane cultivation the removal, in the spring, of the earth from the roots of the cane, to permit the light and air to hasten the germinating of the "ratoons."

**Bars (to let down the)**. (1) To interfere, to put a stop to a thing.  
(2) To wind up a business, a sitting, a session.

**Bartender**. The attendant in charge of a drinking saloon, and almost invariably a man, as bar-maids are almost unknown in America.  
Also, *bar-keeper*.

**Base-ball**. A game of ball looked upon as the national game of the United States, cricket being here comparatively unknown, and so called from the three *bases* or stations used in it.

**Base-burner**. A stove so constructed that the fire within is fed from the top.

**Basket-meeting**. A sort of picnic peculiar to the West, and where the fun is quaintly mixed up with religious exercises, after the manner of the Pilgrim fathers.



A *basket-meeting* is usually got up on the occasion of a "corn-husking" or a "raising-bee," each bringing his provisions in a basket.

It sometimes also occurs, in sparsely populated districts, that a clergyman's stipend is largely paid in kind, and the occasions upon which the obligation thus incurred is carried out, are called in the West *basket-meetings*.

See *donation parties*.

**Basque** (Fr. C.). On the north shore of the St. Lawrence, below the city of Quebec, a name given to the velvet-duck (*Edemia velvetina*), which has a black glossy plumage and red beak.

**Basswood** (*Tilia americana*). A tree closely resembling the European linden in all but the size of its leaves and flowers.

Also called simply *bass* or *bast*, and *white wood*.

The name *basswood* is now obsolete in England.

**Baste (to)**. To beat, to chastise. Other words used in same sense are *larrup*, *lather*, *lick*, *wallop*, *welt*, *whack*.

All those words are noted in Glossary of Edwin Moor, for county of Suffolk, Eng.

**Baster**. A New York term for a house thief.

**Bat**. A frolic, a spree. Contraction of "batter."

**Bat (to)**. (1) To strike, to beat. "To *bat* a man over the head.

(2) To wink, as in the phrase "to *bat* the eyes." Also "to bat with the eyes." (Southern.)

**Bat (on a)**. A slang phrase meaning "on a drunk."

**Bateau** (Fr.) In New Jersey, a small, flat bottomed boat, used by oystermen.

**Batter-cake**. A familiar cake of Indian meal, made with buttermilk or cream, and seldom absent from a Southern breakfast-table.

Also called *batter-head*.

**Battery**. (1) A sort of boat used for duck shooting, and so ballasted that the shooter lies below the surface of the water. Other boats are *box*, *coffin-boat*, *sink-boat*, *surface boat*.

(2) The pitcher and catcher, in base-ball parlance.

**Battle (to)**. Sometimes heard in sense of "to beat."

**Battling stick**. A stick to cleanse soiled clothes by beating, after the process of French laundry-women.

**Batture** (Fr.). In Louisiana, a deposit of sediment accumulating rapidly on one bank of a river at times of high water, due to the caving in of the other bank. Also, any alluvial elevation or accumulation of land, thrown up at the mouth of a river by the action of a swift current.

In Canada, the term, which is principally used in the plural, is restricted to stationary ice formed along the banks of a river or around shoals.

**Bawcock** (Old Eng.). A fine fellow.

Example in Shakespeare, King Henry IV.

**Bawdy** (Old Eng.). Has in the United States the old English sense of indecent.

**Bay.** (1) In Western and Southern prairie regions, a large opening of a prairie into a forest.

(2) In N. Carolina, a tract of land, low and marshy, producing the bay-tree.

(3) Applied to water, as a recess in the land, a *bay* may sometimes consist of an arm reaching far up into the back country, as Green Bay, Wisconsin ; Chesapeake Bay, Virginia.

(4) In Florida, a deep-set, open curvature of the shore, as Appalachie Bay. In Western Florida, however, the word *arm* is more frequently used.

**Bay-berry.** (*Myrica cerifera*). A fragrant shrub, so called because its leaves have an odor resembling that of the *bay*. The berries, when boiled, yield a green wax much utilized in making candles and for other purposes.

**Bay-gall.** In Florida, a large and gloomy swamp, almost impenetrable and full of deer, bear and catamount.

**Bayoo.** A negro term for a man who would be more aptly called a "low-down mean cuss."

**Bayou** (Fr. *boyau*, a gut, a narrow passage). In the Southern states, esp. Louisiana, an arm of the sea, the accidental and secondary outlet of a lake or river. Also, a sluggish watercourse.

Several etymologists would have this word derived from the Sp. *bahia*, a bay, on the ground that *bahia* comes nearer, as to meaning, to the Anglicized bayou. But the French source seems better to us for phonetic reasons, and the meaning raises no serious difficulty, as cf. the various senses of "gut" in English.

**Bayou State.** The State of Mississippi.

**Bay State.** Previous to the War of Independence, Massachusetts was known as the Colony of Massachusetts Bay. Hence, the now popular name of that State.

The name *Bay State* originally came from Cape Cod bay, which includes a great part of the coast of Massachusetts.

From *Bay State* has been coined *Bay Staters*, designating the inhabitants of Massachusetts.

**Bay-tree.** A well known Southern shrub, of the same family as the *Magnolia grandiflora*, only smaller in size, and especially abounding in the localities called *bays*.

Also called *bay-laurel*.

**Bay truck.** Along the New-Jersey shore, used for food from the bays which indent the coast, in distinction from *garden truck*.

**Bazoo.** A slang term meaning to brag, to boast or talk freely about one-self.

**Be** (Old Eng.). The use of *be*, instead of *am* or *are*, as in the Bible, is an old English provincialism still surviving with some tenacity in several parts of New England.

*Be ye content, now, deacon?*

(MRS H. B. STOWE.)

**Beach.** A name given to sand islands, on the Jersey coast.

*Young or little beach*, new-made beach containing young timber.

*Old beach*, parallel ridges crowned by old timber.

**Beach-combers.** (1) A name given to the long deep swell of ocean waves rolling on to the shore.

(2) A term much in vogue among sailors, and applied, in a derogatory sense, to certain roving characters who will not attach themselves permanently to a vessel, and are a reckless, rollicking set of fellows.

Especially current on the Pacific slope.

**Bead (to draw a).** A Western metaphorical expression, furnished by the hunter on the prairies, and meaning "to fire a rifle." Also figuratively, and by extension, to attack another man in his speech.

In taking cautious aim, the Western hunter raises the foresight of his rifle, which resembles a bead, till it comes in a line with the hind-sight, and then fires.

**Bead (to raise a).** To bring to the point, to ensure success, etc.

**Beagles.** A nickname applied to the inhabitants of Virginia, and inherited from the Colonial Days, through the introduction, in the Old Dominion, of the English beadles of the Court Customs.

**Beaker** (Old Eng.). An old English word (from the Dutch *beker*), preserved in the United States in sense of "tumbler."

As bubbles that swim on the *beaker's* brim.

(C. F. HOFFMANN.)

Beaker is still used in England, but only with the meaning of a glass vessel for chemical analyses.

**Beal.** Still used in Pennsylvania, in sense of to fester, to suppurate.

Now obsolete in England, but still current in Scotland.

**Bean.** This word, unqualified, is specialized, in its American meaning to what is called in England "French beans," whereas the simple word "bean" implies in England the varieties of broad-bean (*faba*).

**Beans (Turkish).** The beans that were found here were so called by the first Dutch and Swedish writers on America.

**Bear-berry.** A translation of the Indian term *makouabina*, or *maskouabina*, which is the name of a sorb-tree producing a berry of which bears are particularly fond. Hence the name of *bear-berry*, also applied to the tree itself.

See *pimbina*.

**Beard.** On the New-Jersey coast, a term applied to the byssus of mussels, or the fringe of an oyster's mouth.

**Bear-grass.** See *silk-grass*.

**Bear off (to).** A cowboy's term meaning to chase out a stray brand from a herd of cattle.

Also, to keep off a single animal, by riding between it and the herd, when in motion.

**Bear State** (pron. bar). The State of Arkansas, so named because of the vast numbers of bears which once abounded within its limits.

Also often applied to the State of Kentucky.

**Beast.** (1) A common name for a horse in Virginia and other Southern States, as it was the custom with Englishmen at the time the Old Dominion was settled.

(2) A euphemism used for "bull" in the South, and especially common among the women-folk on farms.

(3) A name given to new cadets at the Military Academy of West-Point.

See *animal*.

**Beast-back.** Used for horseback in Kentucky. "I went *beast-back* to town."

**Beat.** Often used, as past participle for "beaten," in sense of astounded, overcome. "I felt *beat*. I was quite *beat*."

**Beat.** (1) Used in many ways, its precise meaning often depending on its qualifying adjective.

*Daisy beat*, an euphonious name applied to a swindle of the first water.

*Dead beat*, one who sponges on his fellows.

*Live beat*, anybody or anything that surpasses another. Nothing derogatory.

(2) In newspaper parlance, an exclusive story, or important news which a reporter has obtained for his own paper in advance of others.

When the story is exceedingly important, it is called a *king beat*.

Another name is *scoop*.

**Beat (to).** (1) Still retains here the meaning of to surpass, to excell, given in Bailey's Dictionary. "It beats all creation."

(2) To amaze, to astound, to overcome with astonishment, as in the form *beat* already given.

(3) In college slang, to attempt to recite without preparation; to defraud, to obtain an unfair advantage of.

**Beat all hollow (to).** To beat thoroughly. In England, they simply say "to beat hollow."

**Beaters.** A slang term for boots.

*Beater-cases* is now nearly obsolete in England with same meaning, *trotter-cases* having supplanted it.

**Beat hoop.** Used in New England for drive hoop. Similarly, the hoop-stick is sometimes called a beater.

**Beat on (to get a).** To get the advantage of. The same idea is expressed in the phrase "to beat one's way through the world," meaning to push one's interests with vigor and pertinacity.

In thieves' parlance, *to get a beat on one*, besides conveying the idea of obtaining an advantage, also implies that the point has been scored by underhand, secret or unlawful means.

**Beat the Dutch.** *It beats the Dutch* is often used in New York and New England, whenever a peculiarly astonishing fact has to be announced. In Bartlett's Dictionary, we meet with an instance of it, in a Revolutionary song, showing that it was applied in the above sense as early as 1775.

**Beau (Old Eng.).** A general term, among girls, when speaking of their lover, or sweetheart.

The plural form *beaux* is also often used by them, in a less intimate sense, when speaking of young gentlemen who used "to wait on" them.

*Beau* is an old word now nearly obsolete in England.

**Beau (to).** Used by the uneducated in sense of "to pay attentions" to a girl, or simply "to escort."

**Beautiful.** A much misused term, often indiscriminately applied to anything good, pleasing, or even tasty. "*Beautiful* butter, a *beautiful* conduct."

See *elegant*.

This perversion of language is not unknown in England, but such extraordinary forms as the two above cited are scarcely ever heard however in the Mother Country.

**Beaver-tree (Magnolia glauca).** A tree so called from the preference shown by the beavers in using its bark for their food, and the wood for their structures or beaver-dams.

Also, *beaver-wood*, *castor-wood*.

The name beaver-wood is furthermore also often applied to the *hoop-ash* (*Celtis occidentalis*) or *hackberry*.

*Beaver-tree* is specially Western; in the East the same tree is called the *castor-tree*, from "Castor Americanus," the scientific cognomen of the American beaver.

**Because** (Old Eng.). A corruption of because used in the South, and especially current in Virginia. Also, *cayse*.

*Because* was already sanctioned by usage in England, at the time when Virginia was settled.

*Because* of my thorough quietness.  
(Pepys, Appendix to his diary, v. IV. p. 339.)

**Becci, Bee-scie**, bek-see (Fr. C.). A species of greenish-black duck (*Mergus merganser*) feeding especially on fish, and frequenting the region of the Gulf of St-Lawrence. The French Canadians have so nicknamed it, from its beak being like a sharp-pointed saw.

**Bed-bug**. The "*Cimex lectularius*," otherwise known in the South under the Spanish name of *chinch*, brought from the West Indies.

See *bug*.

**Bed-rock**. In mining phraseology, the stratum which underlies the mineral-bearing rock.

Metaphorically, "to reach bedrock," to attain a solid basis or foundation; "bedrock facts," the incontestible truth.

Also, *bottom-rock*, *rock-bed*, *rock-bottom*.

**Bed-spread**. A quilt, counterpane, or coverlet. Also, simply a *spread*. In England, *bed-quilt*, *coverlet* or *counterpane*.

**Bee**. The swarming of bees has given rise to several phrases that savour of a new country, and of the help that settlers in the backwoods are always ready to afford one another. Thus a *bee* has come to mean almost any gathering of neighbors to do one of their friends a good turn, and to have a social laugh or gossip over it at the same time.

*Apple-bee*, helping to gather the apples, and prepare them either for drying or for the vat.

*Beefing-bee*, an assembly of people for the purpose of slaughtering cattle.

*Building-bee*, or *raising-bee*, setting up the frame or the logs of a house or barn.

*Chopping-bee*, felling trees with the axe, so as to clear a tract of land.

*Husking-bee*, stripping the husks from the year's crop of maize, to be stored away for the winter.

*Quilting-bee*, a gathering of women around a large frame, to make a patchwork quilt.

*Sewing-bee*, a gathering of women to do sewing.

*Spelling-bee*, a gathering of young people to exercise their wits on spelling.

*Stone-bee*, clearing a field of its stones.

**Beef.** Used in the South and the West as the singular of oxen ; thus a *beef* instead of ox.

**Beef (to).** To kill oxen, and convert their flesh into beef.

**Beef-cattle.** Animals fit for food, in contradistinction to those used as beasts of burden.

**Beef-critter.** In South-Eastern Pennsylvania, a common name for a cow or steer to be killed for beef.

**Beef dodger.** A meat biscuit made of beef and Indian Corn.

**Bee-gum.** A term originally applied, in the South and the West, to a species of the gum-tree from which bee-hives were made. Now, the bee-hive itself, made of any kind of boards.

Also, *bee-tree*.

See the word *gum*.

**Bee-line.** The straightest possible route to a given point. From the well known habit of bees of flying back to their hives in a direct line.

An Englishman would say "as the crow flies."

**Bee-tree.** In the South and the West a tree, often found hollow, in which the wild honey-bee makes its hive or nest.

**Beer.** A term generally applied to lager-beer, *ale* being used where an Englishman would say *beer*.

**Beggar-ticks.** A species of "bidens" whose seeds adhere to the clothes.

Also called *beggar-lice* and *harvest-lice*.

In English cant, "chats."

**Begin.** Frequently used, accompanied by *not*, to express a very emphatic negation when making a comparison. "It doesn't begin to..." i. e. it does not approach in merit, in importance. Thus, also, an inferior article does not begin to equal a better one.

**Begosh, B'gosh.** A half-veiled oath used as an expletive and probably of negro origin.

**Behindments.** Arrears, liabilities, deficits.

**Belduque**, bel-doo-'kay (Sp.). A common name, in Western Texas, for a certain sheath knife, smaller than the "machete," and larger than the "cuchillo."

Also, *berduque*, *verduque*.

**Beliked.** A Western term for beloved, liked.

**Belttle.** To lower in character ; to depreciate, to disparage. To make small or smaller.

This word first originated in the United States about 1796, and is now also quite familiar in England.

**Bell-boy.** In American hotels the "bell-boy" occupies very much the place of the English "boots."

**Bell-mare.** A horse chosen to lead a caravan or drove of mules in the South-West. Generally an old white or gray mare of known gentleness and steady habits.

By extension, in slang language, a name given to a political leader.

**Bellows-fish.** See *devil-fish*.

**Bell-snickle.** In Eastern Pennsylvania, a name applied to a grotesquely attired visitor on Christmas night, who brings candies and toys for the good child, and rods for the bad.

**Belly-bump.** (1) An awkward dive, as for instance when a boy, instead of cleaving the water head first, falls flat on his stomach with a splash.

Also, *belly-bumper*, *belly-whacker*.

(2) A boy's word, for coasting face downwards on a sled.

Also, *belly-bunk*, *belly-buster*, *belly-flounder*, *belly-grinler*, *belly-gut*.

**Belly-guts.** (1) In Pennsylvania, molasses candy.

(2) In New England, low sleds so named because boys lie flat on them on their bellies, when sliding down-hill in winter.

**Belly-wax.** A New Jerseyism for molasses candy.

**Belly-whistle.** In New Jersey, a common name for a drink made of molasses, vinegar, water, and nutmeg, used by harvesters at the daily nooning.

**Belongings** (Old Eng.). Often used for possessions, in sense of garments, especially gentlemen's shirts and drawers. More often, simply a euphemism for trousers.

This word appears in the Philological Society Dictionary, under sponsorship of Mr Ruskin.

A survival of old English usage.

**Belt.** In parts of the West, quite common for blow, in the expression "Hit him a belt."

The verb to belt is used in New England, in sense of to strike with or as with a belt.

**Bend-a-bow.** In parts of New England, thin ice that bends when skated upon.

Also, *bendy*,



**Bender.** In New York, a drinking-bout or a spree, in the course of which its participants are decidedly "umbent." Perhaps also from the facetious name given to the arm, which becomes so frequently a "bender" in lifting the glass to the mouth.

In Lowland Scotch, *bender* is the name given to a hard and persistent drinker.

An intensified form is *hell bender*, meaning a protracted drunken frolic.

**Bens.** A workman's slang term for his tools.

**Bent.** In Kentucky, the timbers of one side of a barn as they stand framed together.

Cf. the Century Dict. and Webster's Dict. for this sense.

**Berrendo**, ber-ren'-doh (Sp.). In South-Western Texas, a common name for a deer or antelope which is found in herds of sometimes as many as two hundred. That animal has been probably so called on account of its color, "berrendo" being in Spain an adjective applied to ripening wheat when it begins to turn yellow.

**Berry.** In college slang, anything easy or soft ; a good thing.

Also used adjectively in sense of good-looking.

**Berth.** A nautical term, transferred to shore-life, and generally applied to a sleeping compartment in a sleeping car.

**Best bib and tucker.** One's very best, meaning one's best clothes. "She was dressed in her *best bib and tucker*."

**Bestowment.** A bestowal, i. e. the act of giving, or that which is conferred or given.

**Best room.** A name generally applied, in the Northern States, to a room of a house kept closed, and scrupulously clean. This room is only opened on great occasions, when company is expected, from a custom bequeathed by the first Dutch settlers of New York.

**Bet (you).** A new asseveration, which has arisen in the South-West, and meaning "You may bet on what I say." The derivation of the word is obvious enough, it having naturally emanated from a community where gambling is prevalent.

As a pithy way of emphasizing confidence in a fact or statement, *you bet* is said to be now almost as prevalent in England as in America.

**Better.** (1) Used to assert a thing certain. "You'd *better* believe it."

(2) Also colloquial in the East for "more," in which sense it is still provincial in England, though dating back to Saxon times.

**Bettermost** (Old Eng.). A cumulative superlative common in New England, and modeled after many a similar form in Shakespeare.

I stopped the *bettermost* part of the time with my cousin, the deacon.

(Mrs. Stowe.)

Also, the *bettermost best*. "To be dressed in one's bettermost best."

**Betty.** The straw-bound and pear-shaped flask of commerce, in which olive oil is brought from Italy.

**Between hay and grass.** A youth who is neither a man nor a boy is said to be between hay and grass, which expression is certainly more poetical than the English "hobbledehoy," used in same sense.

**Bevel.** In Long Island, a slope or declivity.

Forby, in his "vocabulary of East Anglia," defines a *bevel* as a road which is laid higher in the middle, hence *bevel-edged*.

**Bezugo,** bes-soo'go (Sp.). A name applied, in Texas, to the coarse fish commonly called buffalo-fish (genus *Ictiobus*), from its hump-like back near the front of the dorsal fin.

**Bibbles.** An innovation used for drinks, on a bill of fare. Similarly, *edibles* for food. "The table was loaded with odibles and bibbles of every possible kind."

**Bible Christians.** A denomination of Christians abstaining from animal food and spirituous liquors, and living on vegetables and fruits.

**Bif, Biff, Bift.** Current in several parts of the States in sense of to strike, and especially to give a quick blow. "He *biffed* him on the ear."

Also used as a noun, as in the familiar phrase: "To give one a *biff* on the ear."

**Big.** Great, fine, excellent in quality. "A *big* thing, a *big* country, *big* whiskey, etc.

De Vere says the term, in sense of "great," can hardly be called an Americanism, and quotes as proof "the biggest example" from Jeremy Taylor. But as descriptive of quality, and, in a vulgar sense, of persons of supposed consequence (a *big* bug), it is very probably a product of the soil, and especially must that be said of the superlative combination *great big*, which is certainly also a native extravagance.

A recent writer in *All the year round* says to "look big" and to "talk big" are very old slang expressions, and even assures us that many cellars, in England, have been filled with "big" clarets and ports long before the American spirit was distilled.

**Big bug.** A disrespectful but common mode of allusion to persons of wealth, distinction or social importance. The equiv. of "big-wig," or "great gun," as used in England.

Miss Savage is a *big bug*, she's got more money than almost any body else in town.

(Widow Bedott's papers.)

Other forms are *big dog*, *big toad*. Thence also come:

*Cattle-bug*, a wealthy stock raiser.

*Gold-bug*, a monied man.

**Big dog.** (1) The principal man of a place, or in an undertaking.

(2) A recognized leader or chief.

(3) A consequential pompous individual; an overbearing person who will allow no one to differ from his views. See *biggity*.

Thence also come the following intensified forms:

*Big dog of the tanyard.*

*Big dog with a brass collar.*

*Biggest toad in the puddle.* Esp. current in the West to designate a recognized leader, whether in politics, or in connection with the rougher avocations of pioneer life.

**Big drink.** (1) A large glass of liquor.

(2) A cant term applied, in the South-West, to the Mississippi river.

(3) The Atlantic Ocean.

**Big figure.** See *go the big figure*.

**Biggest toad.** See *big dog*.

**Biggity.** A negro term applied to a man inclined to be independent, consequential, assuming, or who is giving himself airs.

**Big-head.** A disease peculiar to cattle, and so named from the swelling produced in the head.

**Big-head (to get a).** Applied in cases where new ideas result in unbearable conceit.

**Big horn** (*Ovis montana*). The Rocky Mountains sheep, found on the plains west of the Missouri River, and so named from its horns, which are of great size and twisted like those of a ram.

**Big meeting.** A Western term for the protracted religious meetings of New England, which are customary among all denominations except the Protestant Episcopal Church.

See *camp-meeting*.

**Big tree** (*Sequoia gigantea*). The giant pine-tree of California, often reaching to a height of three hundred feet, and measuring at the base one hundred feet in circumference.

**Bilberry** (*Vaccinium*). Used here, as in England, for whortleberry, with this difference that the American variety belongs more properly to the division *Euvaccinium*.

The same plant was formerly known in England as the "bilberry whortle," which term is now obsolete.

**Bile** (Old Eng.). Often used for *boil* both as noun and verb. *Bile* is an old English form, which once had a defender in no less an authority than the great Dr Johnson, who says: "Bile: this is generally spelt *boil*, but, I think, less properly."

**Biled cakes.** A species of doughnuts.

See *doughnuts*.

**Biled shirt** (boiled shirt). A linen shirt being an article rarely used in the backwoods, where flannel is the constant wear, it is often called there a "biled shirt," because—forsooth!—it has to be occasionally boiled to be washed.

**Bilk** (Old Eng.). An old English verb meaning to defraud, or cheat, by means just outside the laws.

Used as a noun it is considered, in the Far West, one of the most degrading epithets that could possibly be applied, signifying a person who habitually sponges upon another. Its meaning, however, is still considerably more softened in America than in England, where it is current slang for a down-right cheat or swindler.

**Bill.** In general use for invoice, and for a bank-note.

**Bill (to).** To charge upon an invoice.

**Bill (to fill the).** Some one "fills the bill" when he comes up to the description, or is able to accomplish what is undertaken.

**Bill (to foot the).** To pay a bill, or to signify his intentions to pay the same.

**Bill-board.** A notice-board.

**Bill'et.** In Newfoundland, wood cut up for burning.

See *breastner, lurn, turn*.

**Bill-fish** (*Belone truncata*). A small sea-fish, fond of running up into fresh water during the summer.

Also called *banded garfish, silver gar, sea-pike*.

**Billy.** A slang word for a murderous appliance, made of a strip of leather weighted with lead.

In English slang, a policeman's staff.

**Billy-noddle.** A slang term applied to a fellow whose self-conceit leads him to suppose himself specially attractive to the other sex.

**Bindery.** A shop for book-binding, a place where books are bound.

At Worcester, he also erected a paper mill, and set up a *bindery*.  
(Isaiah Thomas, Printing, I, 492.)

**Binding-pole.** In Connecticut, a pole used to hold a load of hay on a wagon.

Another form is *boom-pole*, used especially in New Jersey.

**Bindweed.** The popular name, in Massachusetts, for the "convolvulus."

**Binnacle.** In parts of New York, the flume of a mill stream, a mill race.

**Birch.** A birch-canoe.

**Bird.** In college slang : (1) a girl ; (2) a person extremely accomplished (often ironical) ; (3) a sport.

**Birdie.** A frequent name, especially in the South, applied to young ladies.

From *bird* or *burd*, which is a Scotch term of endearment.

**Bird's eye.** (1) A variety of limestone in New York, which is a peculiar geological formation of that region.

(2) A variety of maple, also called *curled maple*, furnishing a peculiarly beautiful wood for the cabinet-maker.

**Bird's nest.** In parts of New York, a fruit pudding, in which any kind of pudding fruit may be used.

**Bisagre**, bis-sah'-gray (Sp.). In Texas, a plant of the cactus family, sometimes sliced and candied in Mexican sugar.

**Biscuit.** (1) A hot roll, or bun, usually fermented, served at breakfast or tea.

(2) A cookie, or small hard cake.

In England, a biscuit is what would be called here a cracker.

**Bishop.** An appendage to a lady's dress, otherwise called a bustle, or dress improver.

**Bislings.** The first milk given by a cow after calving. (N. Eng.) A corruption of "beestings."

**Bit.** An old cant word designating, in some Southern States, a silver coin of the value of one eighth of a dollar, the Spanish real (*de plata*). A *short bit* is a dime, a defaced twenty-cent piece being called a *long bit*.

Other denominations exist for the same coin, as for instance *escalán* in New Orleans, *eleven pence* or *levy* in Pennsylvania, Maryland and Virginia, *nine-pence* in New England, and *skilling* in New York.

Four-penny pieces are still *bits* in some parts of England, and in Demerara the term is in general use for the same coin.

**Biz.** A vulgar abbreviation for "business."

**Biznaga**, biss-nah'-gah (Sp.). A name applied, in Texas, to several cactaceous plants (echinocacti), all growing to large dimensions. They are armed with formidable spines, used, it is said, as toothpicks by Mexicans. Also called *viznaga*.

**Black bass.** (1) A highly esteemed fresh-water fish of the lake and river districts of the North and West. See *achigan*.

(2) On the New-Jersey coast, a name given to the sea bass (*Centropristis nigricans*).

(3) Along portions of the Pacific coast, a name given to the black rock-fish (*Sebastichthys melanops*).

**Black code.** A collection of laws first made by Bienville in Louisiana, which became the model for all legislation on the relations of master and slave. Its power continued long in Louisiana, even after the colony became a State of the Union.

**Black-eyed Susan.** A Texas term for a revolver.

Other slang equivalents in the same State are *Blue Lightning*, *Meat in the Pot*, *Mr. Speaker*, *My unconverted Friend*, *a One Eyed Scribe*, *Peace-Maker*, *Pill-Box*.

**Black-fish** (*Labrus americanus*). A fish caught off Rhode-Island shoals, and so called from the color of its back and sides.

Also, *tautaug*.

**Black grass.** A fine, short grass common on the salt, marshy lands of the New-England coast.

**Black gum** (genus *Nyssa*). A well known tree common in the Middle States.

Other names are *pepperidge*, *sour gum*, and *tupelo*.

**Black harry** (*Centropristis nigricans*). A common name applied to the black sea-bass, one of the most savory and delicate of fishes.

Also called *hannahill*, or simply *black-bass*.

**Black head.** (*Fulix marila*). A popular name, on the Chesapeake bay, for the variety of sea-ducks usually known as broadbills.

In Virginia, another name is *raft-duck*.

**Black-jack.** (1) The barren oak or scrub oak of botanists (*Quercus nigra*), a small stunted species thriving on the sea-shore, and largely used in the manufacture of walking-sticks. Also called *jack-oak*.

(2) In the Gulf States, a name applied to small trees (*Quercus Catesbœi*) of little value except for fuel.

(3) In New England, rum sweetened with molasses.

(4) A miner's term for an ore of zinc, the sulphuret of zinc of chemists.

**Black-Jack.** An army nickname given to general John A. Logan, because of his very dark complexion.

**Blackleg.** A rapidly fatal disease to which cattle on the Western plains are subject.

**Blackleg (to).** "To blackleg it," in trade-union parlance, is to return to work before the causes of a strike have been removed or settled.

**Black Republicans.** A term formerly applied by Southerners to the Republican party, on account of the latter's antagonism to the introduction of slavery into any State where not already recognized.

**Blacksnake** A long whip of raw-hide, with a short handle, largely used by cowboys.

Hence, the verb *to blacksnake*, meaning to castigate with a blacksnake whip.

**Blackstrap.** (1) A mixture of molasses with some spirituous liquors, and commonly distributed to the hands during harvest.

In old times, the common beverage of engine companies at fires in Boston.

(2) Among sugar manufacturers, a technical term for the residuum of molasses sugar, itself the product of a second boiling.

**Black swimmer.** One of the familiar names applied to the Great Northern Diver.

See *loon*.

**Blacktail** (*Cervus columbianus*.) A species of large deer common on the Pacific slope, of a dark color, and with a tail tipped for two or three inches with a thick tuft of short black hair.

Also called, in some parts of the country, *mule deer* (*Cervus macrotis*), from its ears being rather long and heavy.

**Black-tailed hare.** The tiny rabbit of the Rocky Mountains region.

See *jackass-rabbit*.

**Blackwood.** A comprehensive term, in the Northern States, especially Maine, for the timber of the hemlock, pine, spruce and fir.

**Bladder-tree** (*Straphyla*). A handsome shrub, from six to ten feet high, and remarkable for its large, inflated capsules.

**Blamed.** A New-England euphemism for damned, derived from blarmed.

An expletive used to emphasize a statement, and partaking slightly of the nature of an oath. Possibly English slang, but colloquial in the United States.

**Blanket.** The principal article of an Indian's attire. Hence, to have an ancestor who has "worn the blanket," is to have Indian blood in his veins.

Same remark applies to French Canada.

**Blanket coat.** A common term, in the West, for a coat made from a blanket, and generally from the quality of blanket known as "Mackinaw."

**Blanket Indian.** (1) A semi-civilized aborigine, who receives blankets and rations from Uncle Sam.

(2) A Western term for an Indian who still remains in a savage state.

**Blarney.** Besides signifying "to wheedle," as in English slang, also bears, among the low and criminal classes, the secondary meaning of "to pick locks."

**Blatt.** To talk with noisy assurance and bluster. Doubtless a derivative of "blatant."

**Blauser** (Dutch *blazer*, a blower). A typic and graphic name for the Deaf Adder (*Vipera berus*), which, as is well known, has the habit of distending or blowing up the skin of its neck and head.

**Blaze.** (1) A mark on a tree.

Some writers affect to derive the word from the old French "blazon," and quote the use of "blazen," by Shakespeare :

"Thyself thou *blazen'st*  
In these two princely boys"

in a sense not altogether dissimilar to the meaning conveyed by the American *blazing*. At all events the word is in general use in nearly all English colonies, especially those like Australia, where there have been, or are still, large tracts of primeval forest land.

The white "blaze," or spot, in the forehead of a horse, will also here be familiar.

(2) At game of poker, a hand consisting of five court cards, and which, when played, beats two pairs.

**Blaze (to).** (1) A backwoods term, used in the sense of cutting tree barks with an axe, in passing, so that the path taken might be retraced.

(2) The process of taking possession of a tract of land, in the early settlements, by chopping a piece out of a tree here and there, within the lines chosen as one's own. Thus the new-comer would, in the language of the day, "at once blaze out on the tree-trunks his pre-emption claim," and henceforth he was secured in his property.

As for me.... I am a *blazed* pine in the clearing of the pale-faces.

(Fenimore Cooper, Last of the Mohicans, XXXIII.)

**Blazing star.** (1) A medicinal plant (*Aletris farinosa*), held in great esteem by the Indians and people of the West.

Also known as the *devil's bit*, probably from the well known legend that the devil once bit off a portion of the root in order to destroy its medicinal properties.

Both above terms are also popularly given to a plant belonging to the genus called "colchicum."

(2) In the West, a slang term for a stampede of pack-mules or other animals from a central point.

**Bleach.** A family washing hung out to dry.

**Blenker.** A cant army word in sense of "to plunder," which originated during the Civil war.

**Blick, Blickey** (Dutch *bliek*, tin). (1) Used for a small bucket or pail, in parts of the States of New York, New Jersey and Pennsylvania. The variety is distinguished by an adjective, as "wooden" or "tin" blickey.



(2) In parts of New Jersey, a coat or "jumper," such as workmen wear with overalls.

**Blind.** (1) An arrangement of bushes, used by duck hunters, so as to secure themselves from observation.

(2) At game of poker, the ante deposited by the age previous to the deal.

See *blind poker*.

(3) A slang word for object, intention. "You see my *blind*," i. e. the drift of what I am saying.

This is a curious illustration of the custom of some classes to use words calculated to mislead all but those initiated into the mysteries of their jargon.

In English slang, *blind* means a pretence, or make-believe.

**Blind-eel.** Among fishermen, "to catch a blind eel" is to bring to the surface a piece of seaweed or some other worthless object.

Figuratively, to obtain results of little worth, to exhaust oneself in fruitless endeavours.

**Blinders.** In Newfoundland and the Canadian maritime provinces, often used for the whole bridle of a horse.

**Blind poker.** A form of poker, whose hazards are indefinitely increased by betting on the cards in one's hand prior to examination.

**Blink, Blinky.** Often said of sour milk, and even of vinegar which has become slightly sour.

"Blinked," as applied to milk, is still provincial in England and Scotland.

**Blister.** A New Jerseyism, used from Barnegat south to Cape May, for an oyster smaller than a quarter dollar.

**Blizzard.** A term now commonly applied to a sudden and exceptionally severe snow storm, with the air full of dry sharp crystals, which, driven before the wind, bite and sting like fire.

The word probably originated in Pennsylvania, in the counties where the German element predominates, and where it has long been familiar as implying anything sudden combined with violence (Cf. Ger. *blitz*, lightning). Perhaps, also, as several have been conjecturing, is it simply an onomatopy, an attempt, not wholly unsuccessful, to represent the whistling and driving noise of a terrible storm.

Also, sense of a stunning blow or an overwhelming argument.

**Blizzardy.** Anything stunning or overwhelming in its effects.

**Bloat.** A drowned body. Also, a drunkard.

**Bloated eels.** In Connecticut, eels prepared for cooking by being skinned and drawn.

**Blob.** In college slang, to make a mistake.

Also used as a substantive.

**Block.** (1) A connected mass or row of buildings, not intersected by streets; or even a whole portion of a town, inclosed by streets, whether it be built upon or not.

Also called a *square*, notably in Baltimore.

In New York City, the *block* is the regular unit of distance—20 blocks—a mile.

(2) In Wall street parlance, a *block* of shares means a large number of shares massed together and sold in a lump.

Also, adverbially, a *block* loan, a *block* advance, etc.

**Block coal.** A term applied to a peculiar kind of coal, which breaks readily into large square blocks, and is used in the smelting of iron.

The term originated in Mahoning valley, and is now in general use all over Illinois and Indiana.

**Block-Island turkey.** A common term for salted cod-fish, in Connecticut and Rhode-Island.

Compare with *Taunton turkey*.

**Blood.** In some Western colleges, signifies excellent, as a *blood* recitation. A student who recites well is said to make a *blood*.

**Blooded.** An adjective used when speaking of thoroughbreds in horses or choice breeds in cattle.

In England, the form "blood" is similarly applied.

**Blood-root** (*Sanguinaria Canadensis*). One of the earliest of the wild flowers, bearing a pure white blossom, and so called from the blood-red juice of its root.

Also called *poccoon*, an Indian name for various roots which furnish coloring pigments.

**Blood-tubs.** A term coming from Baltimore, and designating roughs and street loafers.

"A set of Baltimore rowdies, chiefly butchers, once got the epithet from having, on an election day, dipped an obnoxious citizen head down in a tub of warm blood, and then drove him running through the town." (Bartlett.)

**Bloody chasm (to bridge the).** A favorite expression with those orators who, after the Civil War, sought to obliterate the memory of that great struggle.

The anthithetical phrase is "to wave the bloody shirt."

**Bloody shirt (to wave the).** Calling up the issues of the Civil War, for political purposes. From this special meaning the phrase is now also passing into general use to indicate similar tactics, in regard to any cause involving revenge as its principal object.

Has lately been introduced in English journalism in connection with the Irish struggle.

The origin of the expression is to be sought in the Corsican custom, in the days of the fierce "vendetta," of waving the blood-stained shirt of a murdered man as an incitation for revenge, and its application to American politics is credited to Mr. Oliver P. Morton who, after the Civil War, took a prominent part as a leader of the more radical Republicans.

**Bloody shirters.** An opprobrious epithet applied, after the Civil War, to the radical Republicans favoring a stern policy of coercion towards the South.

**Bloomer, Bloomers.** A costume introduced for independent women, in 1849-50, by a Mrs. Bloomer, and which comes very near that worn by Turkish ladies.

The term *bloomer* also frequently designates the wearer himself of such a costume.

**Blotworscht** (Ger. *blutwurst*). The blood-sausage of the Pennsylvania Germans, very similar to the English black-pudding.

**Blotter.** A police station and newspaper term for a charge sheet, kept at police stations.

**Blow.** (1) A single blossom. Now rarely heard. From the old English "blowth," still provincial for blossom.

(2) In the South a *blow of cotton* means the bursting of the pods of the cotton plant.

**Blow (to).** (1) To brag, to boast. In England, to blow is taken more usually in the sense of to "blab."

To talk boastfully or swaggeringly, varied in Tennessee by *blowin' his bazoo*.

(2) To blame, to cast a slur upon, to stigmatize.

**Blower.** (1) A piece of sheet iron, used to create a free draught in a furnace or fire-place.

(2) A noisy, demonstrative, self-important person; a braggart, one who is full of gasconading stories. A very near brother, as one can see, to the Englishman who blows his own trumpet.

Also, *blowhard*.

**Blow in (to).** To spend one's money freely.

**Blow out (to).** To talk violently or abusively.

**Blowth.** In New England, the blossoming of flowers. "There's been a good *blowth* of apples this year," i. e. the flowers were numerous.

The word is still provincial in England in sense of blossom.

**Blow up** (Old Eng.). Still used, in parts of Pennsylvania, in sense of to raise or produce by blowing, in speaking of atmospheric changes. "I think it will *blow up* rain soon."

This windy tempest, till it *blow up* rain,  
Held back his sorrow's tide, to make it more.

(Shakespeare, *Lucrece*, l. 1788.)

**Bluebacks.** A term applied to the paper money of the Confederate States, in contradistinction to the "Greenbacks" of the North.

After the war, the "Bluebacks" became known as *Shucks*, from their utter worthlessness, "shucks" being an old English term for the refuse of peas and similar products when shelled.

**Blue Bellies.** A nickname bestowed by Southerners, during the Civil War, to the soldiers of the North, from the blue color of their uniforms.

Also, *Boys in blue*, *Yanks* etc.

**Blue cat.** A fish common in all the plain's streams, and attaining sometimes a weight of fifteen to twenty-five pounds.

**Blue curls** (*Trichostema dichotomum*). A common plant, with flowers of a deep blue and very long coiled filaments.

Also called *bastard pennyroyal*, from its resemblance to that plant.

**Blue-fish** (*Pomatomus saltatrix*). A voracious salt-water fish of the mackerel order, but larger in size.

Also called *skipjack*, *horse-mackerel* (Jersey coast), and *salt-water tailor* (Virginia).

On the Jersey coast the name *blue-fish* is applied to the *weak-fish*, *squeteague* or *chickwit*.

**Blue grass** (*Poa pratensis*). The name of a valuable meadow grass flourishing on the rich limestone lands of Pennsylvania, Tennessee and Kentucky, especially the latter. Hence the term *blue-grass* applied to Kentucky and its inhabitants.

In Maryland, the term *blue-grass* is applied to a species of grass very injurious to wheat and clover, and hard to eradicate.

The Texas *blue-grass* (*Poa arachnifera*) closely resembles the Kentucky species, the chief difference consisting in its being better adapted to a more Southern range, which fact makes it valuable for winter pasture.

**Blue grass State.** The State of Kentucky, so called from its rich limestone lands, yielding blue grass.

**Blue Hen Chickens.** A nickname given to the natives of Delaware, and which has its source in the following story. During the war of the Revolution, one of the most gallant fighters of Delaware was captain Caldwell, a man who was also notorious for his fondness of cock fighting. As he had been heard repeatedly giving vent to a peculiar theory of his,

i. e. that no cock was really game unless it came from a blue hen, this led in the course of time to the substitution of Blue Hen Chickens as a nickname for his regiment, all composed of admirably drilled and picked men, and from there and then the term was subsequently extended to all the sons of Delaware.

See *Musk-Rats*.

**Blue Hen State.** The State of Delaware, so called from the notoriety which one of her sons, captain Caldwell, acquired in the war of the Revolution for his fondness of cock fighting.

See *Blue Hen Chickens* and *Diamond State*.

**Blue Law State.** The State of Connecticut, from the unenviable fame acquired by the first government of New Haven Plantation, in framing the famous Blue Laws of that colony.

Also simply *Blue State*. Other names are *Freestone State*, *Land of Steady Habits*, *Nutmeg State*.

**Blue Lightning.** A grimly facetious name, in Texas, for a revolver.

**Blue-lights.** (1) During the war of 1812, while the British fleet lay off New London, the inhabitants along the coast were accused of having made signals for the benefit of the enemy, by burning blue lights at night. The charge, it is said, was utterly unfounded, but the term has survived to this day and is frequently used in political controversies as applied to traitors.

(2) At the University of Vermont the term *blue-light* is used to designate a sneaking boy, who reports to the Faculty the short-comings of his fellow-students.

**Blue nose.** A nickname for a native of Nova Scotia, and derived, as Sam Slick informs us, from a celebrated kind of potato which is grown there to perfection.

Others, however, hazard the suggestion that the nickname simply refers to the blueness of nose resulting from intense cold.

The term is also used with reference to New Brunswick, but not so frequently as when speaking of Nova Scotians.

**Blues.** A nickname of the inhabitants of New Jersey, which has its origin in the fact that "blue" was a term once applied to an over-religious and strictly governed section of that State.

**Blue skin.** A contemptuous term applied to the Presbyterians, from their alleged grave deportment, or because of their stern and steady adherence to principles believed by them to be the only true ones.

**Blue-stocking** (*Recurvirostra Americana*). (1) The American avoset, a common bird in the Northern States.

(2) In college slang, a woman student, and especially a masculine college girl devoted to study.

**Bluet** (*Houstonia cœrulea*). A delicate herbaceous plant, producing in the spring a profusion of pale blue flowers fading to white.

Also called *quakers*.

**Blue weed** (*Chicorium*). The wild endive, or chicory-plant, so called in New England from its large dark-blue flowers.

**Bluff.** (1) A variety of the card game of poker.

(2) An excuse or a brag. Mere talk; talk intended to mystify or deceive.

Also, one who bluffs, i. e. puts up a bluff.

(3) In the West, a hill of moderate size, by the side of a river.

In sense of bold prominence jutting out into the sea, *bluff* is thoroughly English.

**Bluff (to).** (1) To stay in a game of cards with a poor hand, and, by heavy betting, try to "bluff" the game through.

(2) To frighten a person in any way, in order to deter him from accomplishing his ends.

Also, *to bluff off*.

(3) In college slang, to make a false show of ability. To gain, or attempt to gain an advantage by making a false show. To make fun of. To answer all questions put by an instructor.

**Bluff City.** The city of Hannibal, Missouri, so called from the fact of its being built on high bluffs on the margin of the river.

**Bluffe, Bluffer.** (1) A braggart.

(2) In the patter of New York thieves, the landlord of an hotel.

**Blummie.** A Dutch word still in use for flower in New York city, and along the Hudson and Mohawk rivers.

The diminutive form *blummachee* or *blummechie*, meaning small flower, is also well known in the New York markets.

**Board-bank.** On the coast of New Jersey, a floor of boards placed on the bed of a creek near the shore, on which oysters are laid to fatten.

See *floats, platform*.

**Board-walk.** The "parade" of American watering-places, consisting in a foot-path constructed of planking.

**Bob.** (1) A bait, used in fishing for eels or trout. The *bob* is either made of a knot of worms or chicken-guts, or simply of colored rags.

(2) Immature veal, the sale of which is prohibited by law.

Also, *bob-veal*.

(3) A petty shop thief.

**Bobbery.** A cant term for a noise or hubbub, used here in a good natured sense, as differing from the English meaning of an objectionable row.

Noted as peculiar to Suffolk, England, in sense of disturbance, in Glossary of Edwin Moor, published in 1823.

**Bobbing club.** An association of members who amuse themselves, in winter, by sliding down hills on bob-sleds.

**Bob-cat.** A species of wild cat, very nearly the color of a raccoon, and from twelve to fifteen pounds in weight. Its head is rather large, and its mouth is furnished with very strong, curved teeth.

**Bobolink.** (*Icterus agripennis*). A lively little bird so called from its peculiar notes, and which is a general favorite for its inimitable and busy active flight.

Other popular names by which it is known in different parts of the Union, are *reed-bird* (Middle States), *rice-bunting* and *rice-bird* (Southern States). Also called *American ortolan*, *bob-lincoln* (facetiously *Robert of Lincoln*), *meadow-bird*, *skunk-black bird* (from its coloring which resembles that of the skunk).

In Jamaica, the bobolink is known as *butter-bird*.

**Bobolition, Bobolitionist.** Derisive epithets for *abolition*, *abolitionist*, used by the enemies of the emancipation movement in its early days. A correspondent of the N. Y. Nation dates the term as far back as 1824, and remembers having then seen the word "on a broadsheet containing what purported to be an account of a *bobolition* celebration at Boston."

**Bobs.** Large double sleds with a box for the transportation of anything.

**Bob sled, Bob sleigh.** (1) A sled much used for the transportation of large timber, its special characteristic being two pairs of "bobs," or short runners.

(2) A boy's sled, usually known as "double runner."

Also simply called *bob*.

**Bobtail car.** The popular name for a small tram-car, driven by a single horse, and whose only official is the driver, who collects fares and acts as conductor.

**Bobwhite** (*Bonassa umbella*). The American ruffed grouse, so called from the drumming sound produced by the rapid beating of its wings.

In New England, this bird is confused with the partridge, and in the Middle and Southern States with the quail and the pheasant.

**Bockey** (Dutch *bokaal*). A word limited to N. Y. City and its immediate vicinity, and designating a certain bowl or vessel made from a gourd.

**Bodark, Bodok** (Fr. *bois d'arc*, lit. bow-wood). A local name, in the West, for the Osage orange (*Maclura aurantiaca*), a shrub whose wash is especially well adapted to make bows with.

The form *bowdark*, long familiar along the whole Western frontier, has now nearly entirely given way to the shorter *bodok*.

**Bodewash** (Fr. *bois-de-vache*). Dried cow-dung used for fuel on the prairies of the West and South-West, and gathered near springs, where cattle are apt to congregate.

Also called *buffalo-chips*.

The Fr. *bois-de-vache* was the name originally applied by the old "voyageurs" of the West.

**Body** (Old Eng.). A bodice, a corsage, in speaking of a woman's dress.

Their *bodies* were of carnation cloth of silver, richly wrought.

(B. Jonson, Masque of Hymen.)

**Bogie-engine.** A form of locomotive used for work in railroad yards.

**Bogus.** (1) Applied adjectively to anything or any person suspected of being unreal or fraudulent. Thus, a woman whose beauty is artificial, is a *bogus beauty*, and in courts of justice *bogus charges* are of frequent occurrence. A maimed man wears *bogus legs*, and a member of a Legislature, supposed to have been unfairly elected, is a *bogus representative*. Indeed, the variety of meanings, to which the term has been bent, would be almost endless and we have even heard of the illegitimate offspring of a woman being called a *bogus child*.

If we may believe a story told by the Boston Daily Courier of June 12 1857, the word *bogus* is a corruption of the name of one Borghese, a very corrupt individual who, twenty years before, was doing a tremendous business up West in the way of fictitious checks, notes, and bills of exchange upon the principal traders and bankers. The Western people soon fell into the habit of calling the man by the more handy name of Bogus, and his goods "bogus currency."

On the other hand, and in spite of the almost historical descent of *bogus* from the above source, several etymologists, notably J. R. Lowell, have insisted in its being nothing but a corruption of the French *bagasse*, which has traveled up North from New Orleans, where it means the worthless refuse of sugar-cane.

(2) A beverage consisting of rum and molasses, well known to the fishermen in the Eastern States.

Also, *catibogus*.

**Bogus boys.** A broker's term designating the swindlers and frauds, who are the pests of Wall street and other commercial districts.

**Bogusly.** In a false or fraudulent way.

**Bohea-tea.** A dark tea made of every other shrub and plant, only not of the Chinese shrub known by that name.

**Bohn.** In college slang, a close student. Also one who uses a literal translation.

Derived from Bohn, the name of a well-known publisher of translations from the classics.



**Bohn (to).** In college slang, to study hard or diligently.

**Boiled down to a point.** The gist of anything; a simile denoting a reduction to a bare statement of fact.

**Bois barré,** bwah-bah-ray (Fr.). A name applied, in Canada, to the striped maple. (*Acer Pennsylvanicum*), a small slender tree, the bark light green striped with brown or black, and sometimes also with white.

**Bois blanc,** bwah-blan (Fr.). A common name, in Canada, for the American linden or lime-tree (*Tilia americana*).

See *bass-wood*.

**Bois-brûlé,** bwah-brü-lay (Fr. lit. burnt-wood). (1) In Canada, and in the North-West, a burnt tract of forest. Also simply *brûlé*.

(2) A Canadian metis or half-breed.

**Bois de fer** (Fr. lit. ironwood). A name applied, in Canada, to the hop-hornbeam or leverwood (*Ostrya Virginica*).

**Bois-forts,** bwah-for (Fr.). A name formerly applied, in the West, to the deep forest, near the sources of the Mississippi.

**Bois-pourri,** bwah-poo-ree (Fr. C.). A name applied, in French Canada, to the night-jar, or whip-poor-will (*Caprimulgus*).

**Boke.** A tailor's word for the shape or curve of the breast of a coat.

**Bold.** Freely, plentifully. "The spring don't flow as *bold* as it did."  
Cf. sense of deep, in speaking of water navigable close to the shore.

**Bolt.** To desert, to reject suddenly one's political party (simile of a "bolting" horse).  
To abstain from voting for, or to vote against the candidate of the "ticket" of one's party.

**Bolters.** A word applied, during the Presidential election of 1884, to indicate a section of the Republican party who, for that time, voted with the Democrats.

**Boltocrat.** An atrocious verbal coinage invented in the West, during the Presidential campaign of 1896, and used to designate a Democrat having "bolted" the Bryan-Sewal ticket.

**Bombo.** A hedge-hog-like animal found in North Carolina, and by some called a badger.

**Bonanza** (Sp. lit. good fortune, good luck). A term first applied, by Spanish speaking Californians, to the discovery, in the mining regions, of any vein or pocket of extraordinary richness. Now extended to mean any lucky nit, or successful enterprise, from a mine of the same name, in Nevada, which once, and quite unexpectedly, turned up to be of enormous value.

**Bone.** (1) A tip given by a traveller to a Custom House official, to ensure a superficial examination of one's baggage. A term especially well understood in New York city.

(2) In college slang, a close student. Cf. *bohn*.

**Bone-pits.** Indian places of interment scattered throughout the United States and Canada, the practice among Indian tribes being to deposit such remains in long trenches or pits.

**Bones.** (1) Castanets made of real bones, and used by negro minstrels.

(2) In college slang: 1. A skeleton. 2. Dice. 3. Instructor in physiology and anatomy. 4. The fist. 5. A thin man.

**Boneset.** The popular name of the thoroughwort (*Eupatorium perfoliatum*), a medicinal plant much esteemed for its sudorific and tonic properties, and so called because it is generally regarded as a specific for the "break bone fever."

**Bonesetter.** (1) A slang term for a surgeon.

(2) A hard riding horse. Analogous to the "boneshaker" of the English rough, although the American term is far more brutal in its suggestiveness.

**Boneyard.** A cemetery.

**Bony fish** (*Alosa menhaden*). A fish of the herring kind, caught in enormous quantities in New-England waters and as far south as Chesapeake bay. Besides being used for food, it is also employed as manure, chiefly for Indian corn.

Also called *hard-head* and *white-fish* (Maine), *moss-bunker*, *mossyback* and *skippaug* (New-York), *panhagen*, *pohagen* and *menhaden* (Mass. and Rhode-Island).

**Booby hack.** A kind of sleigh, consisting of a carriage-body put upon sleigh runners.

Only a slight alteration of the *booby-hutch*, an English provincialism denoting a clumsy, ill-contrived covered carriage or seat.

**Boodle** (Dutch *buidel*, a pocket, a purse). A word now immensely popular in its present meaning of bribery, plunder, and owing its sudden prominence to a corrupt board of New York aldermen, many of whom were convicted of having accepted bribes or *boodle* for their votes.

Was probably thieves' argot a long while, before generally known, meaning the "bulk of the booty." We read in Macaulay's Political Georgics (1828): "And *boodle's* patriot band," with evident sense of bribery and plunder. The word was also current in the West about 1870, with a meaning not far wide of its present signification in American politics.

Although several etymologists are somewhat inclined to regard *boodle* as an anglicized form of the German *beutel*—meaning a purse, and,

in a figurative sense, money—it is however so easy to see how the Dutch *buidel* might have come into colloquial American without passing through English, that we can risk guessing New York as the American birth-place of our present *boodle*. We are, also, the more confirmed in that opinion, that there does not exist, so far as we know, any Anglo-Saxon dialectic form accounting for the term.

Among the thieving fraternity *boodle* is used to denote money that is actually spurious or counterfeit.—*Fake boodle* is a roll of paper, over which, after folding, a few bills are so disposed that it looks as if the whole was made up of a large sum of money.—*To carry boodle* is to utter base coinage, *boodlers* being the men who issue it.

*Boodle* is also sometimes identical with the slang expressions *dust*, *rhino*, for money.

**Boof.** (1) Scare, fright. "He got a *boof*."  
(2) Peach-brandy. (Pa.)

**Booger.** In parts of New York, to shy, be frightened. "That horse *boogers* a little at dogs."

**Boogie.** Ball of mucus in the nose. A term mostly restricted to school children.

**Boo-hoo (to).** To cry aloud, to make a bellowing noise, and, idiomatically, to be in a state of whining supplication. From the sounds made by a child, when crying.

**Bookstore.** A place where books are sold. In England, it would be called a bookseller's shop.

**Boom.** (1) A logger's term, descriptive of a flooded or swollen stream, bearing logs down toward tide-water. "The river is booming."

Hence, by extension, a rush of business, or a sudden advance in popularity or in price, from the analogy with the "booming out" of the logs, in the lumber districts, when the rivers rise to a sufficient height in the spring.

Perhaps also derived from the nautical phrase "boom-out," signifying a vessel running rapidly before the wind.

(2) In the mining phraseology of the Far West, a boom is an artificial torrent rushing down a slope, so as to clear off surface soil and reveal supposed mineral veins.

**Boom (to).** (1) To be lively, prosperous. "Business is *booming*."

(2) To inflate prices. Hence "to boom a town," i. e. to cause a sudden advance in the value of its real estate.

(3) To bring into prominence or public notice. "The whole State is *booming* the candidacy of Brown."

**Booma** (Ind.). A North Carolina term for the little red squirrel known, in the North, as the *chickaree* (*Sciurus hudsonius*).

- Boom-belt.** Any particular spot within a flourishing district.
- Boomer.** A term applied to those adventurers who, in anticipation of the opening of a territory to settlement, attempt to exploit or *boom* the country on their own account.
- Boomerang.** A story put forth for political purposes, the untruth of which reacts afterwards against its disseminators.
- Booming-squad.** A successful team or party.
- Boomlet.** A progress, or a *boom* of a lesser degree.
- Boonder** (Dutch). A word still in use in New York City for a scrubbing-brush.
- Boost.** A push, a help [up]. An upward shove or push. Often used figuratively.
- Boost (to).** To lift or raise by pushing, in the sense of helping one up a tree or a fence.  
 Whereas ole Abram'd sink afore he'd let a darkie *boost* him;  
 (J. R. LOWELL, Biglow Papers, II., 106.)  
 Lord Palmerston was *boosted* into power by the agricultural interests of England. (New-York Herald.)
- Booze** (Old Eng.). To drink deeply.
- Boozy** (Old Eng.) Originally a vile gypsy word, but now largely used, even by careful writers, in sense of drunk, inebriated. The term is an interesting reminiscence of Queen Elizabeth's time, when a "bouzing ken" was the accepted expression for a public house, from the Dutch *buysen*, to tipple.
- Border ruffians.** A term originally applied to bands of voters who crossed the border from the slave States, during the Kansas-Nebraska troubles of 1854-55, in order to carry the elections in the territories.
- Bos.** At the University of Virginia, the dessert which the students are allowed twice per week, "Senior and Junior *bos*" being the two respective appellations of the same.
- Bosaal** (Sp. *bozal*, a muzzle). A peculiar halter, used in the breaking-in of unruly horses. (Texas and S. W.)
- Bosculus** (Fr. C.). In the lower St Lawrence region, a name applied to packed ice, which offers a rough surface.
- Bosom (shirt).** In England, called "shirt front.
- Boss** (Dutch *baas*, master). (1) In universal use, all over the Union and in Canada, in a semi-respectful way, for master, employer, overseer, or one who deals the work out to workmen and pays their wages.

(2) Often heard as the equivalent of the English "Sir" of polite society. Also, figuratively, in sense of superior, sovereign. Thus the New York Herald once said, in speaking of Rotschild: "The fact is Rotschild is the real pope and *boss* of all Europe."

(3) In politics, the word *boss* generally carries with it an implication of corrupt or discreditable methods. The renowned Tweed was the first to wear the title in a semi-official way, and "political boss" has now become a familiar expression for a leader whose word is law to his henchmen, and who reigns supreme over them.

**Boss (to).** To rule over, to lead, to domineer, and indeed to direct, to manage anything. "To *boss* a job," i. e. to contract or superintend a work. "To *boss* the house," i. e. to rule or manage it.

**Boss cow.** The cow which can drive all the rest of the herd, and so has the privilege of being first in all matters of advantage.

**Bossism.** The control of politics by bosses.

**Boston.** (1) A card game dating from the War of Independence, and so called in honor of the town of Boston. Supposed to have been invented by Dr Franklin.

(2) The generic name, for a white man, among the natives of Oregon, having originated there at the time when Massachusetts sent her enterprising sons—mostly from Boston—on trading voyages to the Pacific coast.

**Boston bread.** Bread composed of Indian corn and rye meal.

Also, *Indian bread*.

**Bostonese.** Said of a method of speech or manners, supposed to be specially affected by the residents of Boston.

**Boton,** bo-ton' (Sp.). More specifically, in South Western Texas, a peculiar knot at the end of a rope.

**Bottom.** (1) In the West, a piece of rich, flat land. In England, more especially, a low, alluvial land.

(2) A slang term for spirit put in a tumbler, preparatory to the addition of an aerated water. "Soda and dark bottom."

(3) Power of endurance, stamina. Slang in England but respectably colloquial in the United States.

**Bottom dollar.** The last of one's money.

**Bottom fact.** An undoubted fact, the exact truth about any matter.

The phrase is also varied by *bottom rock*.

See *rock bed*.

**Bottoms.** A common term, in the West, for low or alluvial lands enriched by overflowing rivers.

Also, *bottom-lands, river-bottoms.*

See *intervale.*

**Boucanière** (Fr.). A term applied, in Canada, both to the burning coal areas of the northern country, and to a smoke-house for drying meat.

**Boughten.** An old participle used as adjective, in parts of New England, New York and New Jersey, to distinguish articles bought at a shop from the home-made ones. The term is evidently of Scotch parentage, as in the familiar phrase of Scotch settlers: "I have *putten* on my coat."

Still provincial in North of England, in connection with baker's bread, as compared with home-made bread.

See *store clothes, store goods, etc.*

**Bounce.** "To get the grand bounce," i. e. to be discharged from service, and especially to be dismissed from an office under government.

**Bounce (to).** (1) To throw out, to fire. Used especially in sense of forcibly ejecting a troublesome or noisy person from a house, a car, etc.

(2) To swagger.

**Bouncer.** (1) One hired in a saloon or dive, for the purpose of throwing out objectionable visitors.

Also, *chucker-out.* See *bung-starter.*

(2) A thief who commits his depredations with bravado and bullying.

**Bound** (Old Eng.). (1) Determined, resolved. "I'm *bound* to have it."

(2) Obligated. "I feel myself *bound* to act in like manner."

(3) Certain. "He's *bound* to succeed."

Still provincial in some parts of England, especially in English districts of South Wales.

**Bounder.** In New Jersey, to scrub or wash thoroughly (the person).

**Bounty-jumper.** A term applied, during the War of the Rebellion, to those unprincipled men then enlisting in the army, merely for the sake of the large bounty offered for volunteers, and who, as soon as they had received it, hastened to decamp, and reappeared in another State in order to go through the same performance.

**Bourbon.** (1) A Democrat of the strictest sect, so called from the old and uncompromising monarchical party of same name in France.

The term is also generally applied to any old-fashioned politician acting unmindful of past experience.

(2) A superior kind of rye whiskey, formerly only manufactured in Bourbon county, Kentucky.

**Bourdignons** (Fr. C.). In the province of Quebec, a name applied to clumps of frozen snow and earth, which make the roads very rough.

Also, *bourdillons, bourdignons.*

**Bourgeois** (Fr. C.). A term formerly applied, at the time of the "voyageurs," to the chief-trader, or to the head of a fur-company's fort in the great North-West.

**Bower** (Ger. *bauer*, a peasant, or yeoman). The knave of trumps, or the other knave of the same colored suit, at game of euchre, the first one being the "right bower," and the second the "left bower."

By extension, a man will also speak of his partner, or business assistant, as his "right bower", this expression being moreover a common term of high praise, applied to a chief, a director, etc. or indeed any one specially fitted to become a leader of some kind.

**Bowie-knife**. A short knife, with a broad blade sharp at the point, and so named after its inventor Col. James Bowie, a famous frontier-man of the South, living in the first half of the century.

**Bowie-knife (to)**. To stab with that weapon.

**Bowman**. An antiquated term applied, in Virginia, among army men, to a body-servant.

Perhaps one of the oldest relics of pre-colony days now extant in the New World.

**Bowman's root** (*Gillenia trifoliata*). A medicinal plant, which is a species of *ipecacuanha*.

Also called *Indian physic*.

**Box**. (1) A boat used for duck-shooting.

See *battery*.

(2) In North Carolina, an incision made in trees, so as to hold a quantity of the sap exuding into it.

**Box (to)**. In North Carolina, to make a bowl-like incision in gum-bearing or resinous trees for the purpose of collecting the exuding sap.

**Box-car**. (1) A closed freight-car.

(2) In tramway parlance, a closed car, to distinguish it from an opened one.

**Box-elder** (*Negundium americanum*). The tree also known as the *ash-leaved-maple*.

**Box-turtle**. A species of tortoise distinguished by an under shell arranged in two or three sections, which fact gives it the power, when alarmed, of rolling itself up, appearing as if enclosed in a box.

**Boy**. (1) A term used in the South, before the Civil War, to designate any colored man-servant without regard to age, a fact due, after all, to the same tendency which in French calls the waiter "garçon."

(2) In the plural form, often used to designate the political hangers-on of a candidate or party, who expect for their remuneration sundry

minor offices or even only free drinks. *Heelers* has much the same meaning but is rather derogatory by implication.

**Boys in blue.** (1) The soldiers of the North, during the Civil War, from their blue uniforms.

(2) The official title, since the Civil War, of sundry half-military organizations, in many of which negroes predominate.

**Brace.** To get credit by swagger.

*To brace it through*, to succeed by dint of sheer impudence.

**Brace game.** A swindling operation.

**Brace up.** (1) To pull oneself together, to get to business.

(2) To take a drink. In English slang, signifies to pledge stolen goods.

**Brackwater.** Along the coast of New Jersey, said of the salt water of bays or rivers, near shore, modified by flow of fresh water.

**Braes.** A New Jerseyism for bark partially charred that slips from the wood in a charcoal pit.

See *brands*.

**Braguero**, brah-ger'-o (Sp.). In Texas, a name applied to the girth nearer the hip, when two are used, the one nearer the shoulder being the *cincha* proper.

See *cincha*.

In Spain, *braguero* is said of a truss, a bandage, or the breeching rope of a gun, to check the recoil.

**Braid.** Instead of beating the eggs, the women in New England often say *braiding* the eggs or *cutting* them.

**Brainy.** (1) Possessing or manifesting brain-power. Clearheaded, courageous.

(2) In newspaper parlance, a *brainy* journal is not, as might be supposed, one characterized by deep thought or research, but rather one who has become renowned for its "imaginative and airy nothings."

(3) Mental restlessness. "The Americans are a *brainy* people."

**Brake.** In parts of Connecticut, said of fern of any kind.

**Brakes (to put on the).** Adapted from railroad use, and meaning to act prudently, to go slow.

**Branch** (Old Eng.). Used in the Southern and some of the Western States for any stream or brook that is not a river or a bayou.

This word in defined in Bailey's Dictionary with same meaning, and has been also used in the same sense by sir Walter Raleigh.

In New England, only *brooks* are known, while in other States it is the *run* and the *creek* that prevail.



**Branch water.** A Southern expression for stream-water, as distinguished from well-water.

**Brand.** A mark of proprietorship placed upon cattle, especially in the Western ranches. Brands are placed usually on the hip, shoulder and side, or on any one of them, and comprise letters, numbers and figures, in every combination.

**Brand-book.** A register of the multitudinous marks used in branding cattle.

**Brand-bunch.** A small herd of cattle.

**Brand-reader.** An inspector appointed to examine cattle marks, in order to see whether they have been tampered with.

**Brands.** A New Jerseyism for imperfectly burned and charred wood in a charcoal pit.

See *brasa*.

**Brandy smash.** A well known drink, of which brandy, mixed up with crushed ice, is the chief component.

**Brasero, bras-ser'-o** (Sp.). A current word, in Southern Texas, for a pan, mostly made of copper or brass, to hold lighted charcoal.

**Brash.** (1) In New England and New York, used in sense of brittle, as applied to wood and vegetables. Also said of frangible ice, i. e. ice which has become brittle and pulverized.

This word is no doubt a relic of the English provincialism of same name, still used in parts of England for broken twigs.

(2) Harsh, impertinent, probably from former meaning of hasty, impetuous, as quoted by Grose.

(3) Sickly, in poor health.

(4) In Southern New Jersey and Pennsylvania, used as a substantive in sense of a sudden sickness, with acid rising taste in the mouth. In that sense, still provincial on border of England and Scotland.

Also called *water-brash*.

**Brashy.** In Southern New Jersey and Pennsylvania, ill or indisposed. Still provincial on border of England and Scotland.

**Brass city.** The city of Waterbury, Connecticut, from its extensive brass manufactures.

**Brasseur** (Fr. C.). A species of seal (*Phoca greenlandica*) found in the Gulf of St. Lawrence.

**Brave** (Fr.). A romantic term borrowed from the French, and meaning a fighting-man, a warrior, among the Indians. The word was first used by Father Hennepin, in a written document, and Indian warriors are

still always now-a-days officially described as *braves* in the military reports from the Western plains.

**Bravely.** Still used in the United States, as of old in England, for very well, excellently. "The work on the big New York subway is going on *bravely*."

**Bravo** (Sp.). In Texas, bold, impetuous, in speaking of a stream, and then synonym with "grande," as *Rio bravo del Norte*.

When speaking of Indians, *bravo* means wild, roaming, uncivilized.

**Breachy.** In New England, said of unruly oxen, especially those breaking down fences.

Still provincial in South of England.

**Bread-root** (*Psoralea esculenta*). A farinaceous root found in the Rocky Mountains region, and possessing a sweet, and highly nutritious white pulp.

**Breadstuff.** A term designating all the cereals which can be converted into bread. Also, the bread itself.

The plural *breadstuffs* is now more generally used.

**Break.** (1) In Virginia, and other tobacco-raising States, the opening of the hogsheads of tobacco, previous to a public sale. Also, the sale itself.

(2) A Wall street term for a sudden decline in the value of stocks.

See *bad break*.

(3) A rough, irregular piece of ground. (Neb.)

**Break (to).** To open the hogsheads of tobacco, previous to a public sale.

**Break back.** A term applied to a peculiar roof, the rear portion of which is extended beyond the line of the opposite side, and at a different angle. Such additions are very common in the country, where they are used for wash-rooms or storehouses.

**Break (bad).** A slang term meaning a serious mistake, or even a collapse in some business venture.

**Break (to make a).** To make a rush for. Probably a mere modification of the same word in billiard phraseology.

**Break (to) one's back.** To be crushed, defeated; to become bankrupt. A Californianism which has spread over the whole Union and the Mother Country.

**Breakbone.** A species of malarial fever, peculiar to some swampy localities in the South, and so called from the extreme pain in the bones which the patients suffer.

Also known under the Spanish name of *denque*.

**Breakdown.** (1) A noisy dance, generally identified with negro song and dance performers.

In England, any dance deemed violent enough to break down the floor.

(2) A failure in any attempt or business venture.

**Breaker.** In parts of Pennsylvania, a name applied to a ridge of earth in hilly part of a country road, to throw surface water into side ditches. Other names are *cradle*, *thank-you-ma'am*, *water-butt*.

**Breakish, Breaky.** A colloquialism for frail, brittle.

**Bream** (*Pomotis vulgaris*). A fresh-water fish, of the perch variety, very glittering and beautiful.

Also called *pumpkin-seed* more habitually *punkin-seed*, from the curious spots on its sides, and *sun-fish*, from its showy and glittering colors.

**Breastner.** In Newfoundland and the Canadian Maritime provinces, a word often applied to a stick of wood for fuel.

Cf. *billet*, *burn*, *turn*.

**Breed.** In the West, said of a half or quarter breed Indian.

**Breezy.** Noisy and boisterous, when used of persons. Probably a sea term.

**Bretsel** (Ger. *Bretzeln*). German twisted bread.

Also, *pretzel*.

**Brewis.** A New-England dish made of crusts of rye and Indian bread, with milk and molasses.

In England, a pottage of bread with broth poured over it.

**Briago**, *bre-ah'-go* (Sp. *embriagado*). Often heard, in Texas, for a drunkard.

**Brickle** (Old Eng.). Still common in the South, among settlers of English lineage, for frail, brittle.

The form *brickly* is also used.

**Brief.** (1) In Virginia and the South, often heard of rife, common, prevalent, in speaking of epidemic diseases, and in that sense probably only a corruption of rife. "I hear smallpox is very *brief* there."

(2) Peart, frisky. "The wind is sort of *brief*." (South.)

Still provincial in England.

**Briggle.** To work clumsily or ineffectively. (Western Pa.)

**Bright.** Intelligent, quick, in sense of clear-headed, quick-witted.

*Bright* means here what, in England, would be called "clever," but this latter word, in the United States, denotes amiability and courtesy.

**Bring.** Takes in the United States almost altogether the place of the English "to fetch."

**Bring on.** To produce, to show.

**Bring up.** A steamboat term used in sense of "to stop."

**Broadbill** (*Fulix marila*). A species of wild duck frequenting the Eastern shores in the fall of the year.

Also called *black head* (Chesapeake bay), and *Raftduck* (Virginia).

**Broad horn.** A name formerly applied, in the Mississippi region, to a flat boat of very old-fashioned rig, and used for transporting produce, etc.

Also simply *flat-boat*.

**Broady.** Among American thieves, the name given to material of any kind worth stealing.

In English cant, broady, itself a corruption of broad-cloth, is only applied to cloth.

**Brogues** (Dutch *broek*). An old word, now nearly obsolete, and formerly in use for "breeches."

**Broke.** Ruined, bankrupt, out of money.

"All broke up," i. e. either miserable, or in hard luck financially.

**Broncho, Bronco** (Sp.). In the South-West, an unbroken mustang, and by extension any native pony, even after being broken.

The Spanish signification of the name is "rough and crabbed little beast," and the term is also familiarly applied to any horses that buck and show other signs of vice.

See *cayuse* and *mustang*.

**Broncho-buster.** One who makes a profession of breaking-in bronchos.

Also called a *flash-rider*.

**Bronze John.** A Texas name for yellow fever.

**Broom Corn** (*Sorghum saccharatum*). A variety of maize, whose top and dried seedstalks are largely used for brooms.

**Broom-sage.** A tall, stiff jointed grass, common on the abandoned fields of Virginia and N. Carolina.

**Brother Jonathan.** The cognomen of a citizen of the United States, as John Bull is the designation of an Englishman. Said to be derived from Jonathan Trumbull, to whom Washington was often wont to apply for advice, saying: "We must consult Brother Jonathan." The phrase soon became familiar, and ultimately passed into a bye-word.

**Brotus** (pron. brought us). A superfluity, a heaped measure, i. e. something given in as make-weight. Almost exclusively confined to Charleston, S. C., and the exact equivalent of the New-Orleans *lagniappe*.

**Brought on.** Said of clothes not home made. "Your clothes are *brought on*, I see." (Tennessee mountains.)

**Brow.** Logs piled on the steep bank of a stream, ready to be rolled in when the spring freshet comes. (Nfld. N. B. and N. S.)

**Brown bread.** A bread much used in New England, and made of a mixture of two parts of corn-meal, with one part of rye-meal.

In other States, known as *Boston brown bread*.

**Brown stone.** A dark variety of red sandstone which, although a very perishable material, is highly esteemed in New York city in the building of fashionable quarters. Hence, "living in a brown stone house" is apt to be looked upon as a sign of gentility.

**Brown thrasher** (*Turdus rufus*). The popular name of the brown thrush, one of the best known American song-birds.

Also called *ground* or *mountain mocking-bird*.

In Maryland, *French mocking-bird*.

**Brush.** (1) The undergrowth of a forest; also branches of trees. A contraction of brushwood.

(2) In Maryland, brush is whatever wood cannot be cut into cord wood.

In England, the term *brushwood* is exclusively confined to undergrowth.

(3) A well-known Californian plowing implement.

**Brush (to).** To humbug by flattery.

**Brushing up a flat.** The slang equiv. of "laying it on thick," i. e. using mealy-mouthed words.

**Brushed (to be).** To be covered with brush (brushwood).

**Brusher.** A cant word for a full glass.

**Bubbler** (*Aplodinotus grunniens*). The fresh water drumfish of the Ohio river, so called from its peculiar bubbling noise.

**Buccaneer.** A term now obsolete, applied to a long musket, by the early settlers of New England.

**Buck.** (1) A frame of peculiar construction, on which wood is sawed for fuel. Also called *saw-buck* and *wood-horse*. (N. J. and Pa.)

See *saw-horse*.

(2) A New-Jerseyism for a fop, a flash swell. Used contemptuously.

(3) A slang term applied to a driver of a public cab.

(4) In the West, an adult male Indian or negro. Probably from the general meaning of buck as a slang term for strong or lusty. "A big *buck nigger*."

**Buck (to).** (1) To saw wood for fuel. "To *buck* one's wood."

(2) In speaking of horses, in the West, "to buck" is plunging forward and throwing the head to the ground, in an effort to unseat the rider.

(3) An equivalent of "to butt," in sense of to strike with head or horns.

(4) In slang of some colleges, to haze.

(5) Said of swinging a boy against a tree. (Kentucky.)

(6) *To buck the tiger*, to play against the bank at faro.

**Buck ague, Buck fever.** A hunter's and trapper's term for the trepidation which seizes young and inexperienced sportsmen, when in the presence of deer or other large game.

**Buckbeer** (Ger. *bock*). The strongest beer made by the Germans, in the United States.

**Buckboard.** (1) A light, four-wheeled vehicle in which a long elastic board or frame is used in place of body springs and gear.

Also, *buck wagon*.

**Buck-darting.** Along the coast of New Jersey, said of a zigzag method of sailing employed on tide-water creeks.

**Bucker.** In political parlance, a refractory voter, one who refuses to follow the lead of his party. The significance of the term is obvious, when compared with the verb "to buck."

**Bucket.** A general term, in South and West, especially Kentucky, applied to all kinds of pails and cans holding over a gallon.

**Bucket-shop.** (1) A petty stock gambling den, carried on in opposition to regular exchange business.

(2) A low grocery.

**Buckey.** The name of the "alewife" in Western Connecticut.

**Buckeye.** (1) A beautiful variety of horse-chestnut (*Æsculus glabra*), which used to be specially abundant in the valleys of Ohio. The tree was so called on account of the resemblance which its dark-brown nut bears to a buck's eye, when the shell first cracks and exposes it to sight.

(2) A nickname for a native of the State of Ohio.

Buckeyes are very proud of the connection with their native State. Hence, the adjective "buckeye" often used in that region to signify excellence of quality.

**Buckeye State.** The State of Ohio, so called from the buckeye tree (horse-chestnut), which formerly abounded in that region.

**Buck fly.** An insect pest of the West, which, at certain seasons, becomes very troublesome to deer.

**Bucking iron.** A miner's term for a small flat iron tool, used in "bucking" or breaking up ores.

**Buckle.** The bend of the knees. (New Eng.)

**Buckle (to).** To bend. Used of ice under one's weight. (New Eng.)

**Buckle in (to).** To close in; embrace or seize the body, as in a scuffle.

**Buck-party.** A party composed entirely of men.

See *hen-party*, *stag-party*.

**Buckra.** A negro term, in the Southern States, for a white man. Also used adjectively in the sense of superior, excellent, the term *swana* *buckra* standing for an elegantly dressed white man or dandy.

In the Calabar language of Africa, *buckra* means the devil, in the sense of a spirit or powerful being, and the early application of the term to white men probably comes from its having been at once closely identified, by the natives, with the slavers carrying on their nefarious traffic on the Calabar coast.

**Buck-saw.** The saw used with a saw-buck.

**Buckshot War.** The electoral riots of 1838, in Pennsylvania, so called from the suppressing forces having been supplied with cartridges of the *buckshot* stamp.

**Buckskins.** (1) The American troops were so designated during the Revolutionary War, from their dressed deer or "buckskin" garments. Analogous to *Boys in Blue*, *Blue Bellies*.

(2) A name formerly given to inhabitants of Virginia, a State settled by hunters, who traded in deer skins.

**Bucksome (Old Eng.).** Racy, with life and vigor and originality.

So used by Milton.

**Bucktails.** A term applied to a political faction, which sprung in New York about 1815, in opposition to the administration of Governor De Witt Clinton. Its members were so designated from their having adopted, as insignias, "bucktails" worn in their hats.

**Budge.** (1) Used in New England, and as far south as New Jersey, for intimate, familiar. "She and your sister are quite *budge*."

(2) An accomplice who gains access to a building during the day, for the purpose of being locked in, so as to admit his fellow thieves during the night.

**Buffalo.** (1) The most gigantic of the indigenous mammalia of America, once so abundant in our Western prairies, but now nearly extinct.

Also called *bison*.

(2) A sleigh-robe, made of a buffalo skin.

Also, *buffalo-robe*.

(3) A sort of fresh-water fish of the sucker species, found in the Mississippi and other Southern rivers.

(4) Occasionally, during the Civil War, the pilfering "bummer," on the flanks of the army, was called a *buffalo*.

(5) A name given by their opponents to those members of the Equal Rights party who in 1836 accepted the overtures of the regular Democratic organization toward a coalition.

(6) A nickname given to the dwellers on the coast of North Carolina.

**Buffalo-berry** (*Sheperdia argentea*). A plant of the upper Missouri, growing in thickets, and producing scarlet berries much relished by the Indians. So called from its being mostly found on the plains once frequented by the buffalo.

**Buffalo-bush.** A shrub growing near Humboldt river, Utah, the fruit of which is called the bull-berry.

**Buffalo-chips.** The dry dung of the buffalo, used for fuel.

Also called *bodewash*.

**Buffalo-cider.** A liquid found in the stomach of the buffalo, and for which many a hunter has felt thankful when far removed from water.

**Buffalo-clover** (*Trifolium reflexum*). The Western species of clover, of which the buffalo was formerly believed to be particularly fond.

**Buffalo-cow.** A common expression, among colored people of Virginia, for a cow without horns, because its head somewhat resembles that of the female buffalo, whose horns are very short.

See *mooley cow*.

**Buffalo-gnat.** A small, black, and poisonous insect pest, common on the prairies of the West, and infinitely more dreaded than the mosquito.

**Buffalo-grass** (*Seteria dactyloides*). A species of short grass covering the immense prairies of the West, where formerly the buffalo was roaming at large.

**Buffalo-nut** (*Pyrularia oleifera*). The oil nut of the West.

**Buffalo-wallow.** A sink or marshy place in the prairies, caused by heavy rains, and in which the buffalo was wont formerly to take especial delight in rolling and rubbing himself.

**Buffalo-wolf.** A lean and gaunt animal of the wolf kind, as tall as an ordinary greyhound, and which is of an exceedingly cowardly disposition.

**Bug.** A generic term, in America, for all coleopterous insects, with the exception of the "Cimex," always called in full *bed-bug*.

In England, the word *bug* is restricted to the species found in bedding, all coleopterous insects being there called "beetles." Indeed, the term has now-a-days, in England, so limited an application, that, when a recent edition of the works of Edgar Allan Poe was put in London, the editor altered the title of one story, the "Golden Bug," to the "Golden Beetle," in order not to give offense to "ears polite." The English



writers who are apt to amuse themselves at the American habit of calling their beetles *bugs*, should not however lose sight of the fact that the word comes in direct line from their ancestors, as witness the following in one of Bacon's Letters: "A *bug* hath buzzed it in mine ears."

Also, the verse in Pope:

"Let me flap this *bug* with gilded wings."

See *bed-bug*, *hoodlebug*, *hornbug*, *lightning bug*, *peabug*, *pinchbug*, *potato bug*.

**Bug-eaters.** A term applied derisively to inhabitants of Nebraska, on account of the poverty-stricken appearance of many parts of the State. Indeed, so they say, if one living there were to refuse to eat bugs, he would, like Polonius, soon be "not where he eats, but where he is eaten."

**Buggy.** (1) A light, one-horse, four wheeled vehicle, usually with one seat.

In England, a two wheeled vehicle.

(2) An adjective, meaning eaten with worms, as of dry-rotted wood.

**Bug juice.** A term formerly applied to the Schlechter whiskey of the Pennsylvania Dutch, a very inferior spirit. Now extended to bad whiskeys of all kinds.

Also, *bug-poison*.

**Bugleweed** (*Lycopus virginicus*). A medicinal plant, which is especially a favorite for affections of the chest.

Also called *Virginia water-horehound*.

**Bug out.** To extend, or expand; idiomatically, to be filled with astonishment. "His eyes *bugged out*, and he was interested."

**Build.** Whilst in England *to build* is rarely, if ever, used outside its natural meaning of masonry, except for wheeled vehicles and vessels, the tendency in America is to extend the word in all ways imaginable. Thus, not only do we build embankments, tunnels, and even telegraph cables, but a merchant builds up his fortune, and a professional man his reputation. Nay, tailors often use also the word for making clothes, and will speak of "building you a nice pair of pants."

The expression is even extended to individuals, being used in the meaning of formed. "I was not *built* that way," expressing thereby one's unwillingness to adopt a specified course.

Also, *to build up*.

**Bulger.** Western for anything uncommonly large, a whopper. "A *Bulger* of a story, a *bul'ger* of a town."

Not unknown in England.

**Bulkhead.** Outside entrance to a cellar, with a sloping door. (New Eng.)

**Bull.** (1) A general prefix, in America, for large, immense.

(2) A cant word for a locomotive. Also sometimes lengthened into *bullgine*.

(3) In college slang, an error, a mistake of any kind.

**Bull (to).** In college slang, to recite badly, to make a poor recitation. From the substantive bull, meaning a mistake or blunder of any kind.

**Bull-bat** (*Caprimulgus americanus*). The vulgar name of the large bat or night-hawk.

Also called *chuck-will's-widow*, and *whip-poor-will*.

**Bull-boat.** A term applied, in the Far West, to an ox-hide boat, once commonly used for crossing rivers.

**Bull-brier** (genus *Smilax*). A large brier growing to a large size in the rich alluvial bottoms of the South-West, and whose root contains a farinaceous substance much esteemed by the Indians.

*Bamboo-brier* is another name, from the plant often attaining the size of a bamboo.

**Bulldose.** A flogging, a cowhiding, the cow's hide standing for the bull's hide.

The derivation is almost literal: a "bull dose," a flogging with a strip of hide.

**Bulldose (to).** To intimidate by violent and unlawful means, especially in politics. To overawe, to terrify, to silence by threats.

Also spelled *bulldoze*.

A term of Southern political origin, originally referring to an association of negroes whose enthusiasm on the suffrage question led them to use coercive measures in converting their brethren to the Republican faith.

**Bull-frog** (*Rana catesbiana*). A large species of frog, with a deep, harsh croak, at times so potent that it resembles the low roar of a bellowing bull.

In New England, *bull-paddock* is a popular synonym for bull-frog.

Also, *bull-paddy*.

See *bull-tucker*.

**Bull-head** (genus *Pimelodus*). One of the most common fish of the United States, usually dark in color, so called from its thick head with long feelers. Also called *cat*, *cat-fish*, *catty*, *horned pout*.

Another species is known as *mudpout*, from its preference for the mud of rivers and creeks, and, irreverently, from its black color perhaps, as *minister*.

**Bull-headed.** Clumsy and strong.

**Bullion State.** A nickname applied to the State of Missouri, from one of its senators, colonel Thomas H. Benton, having been himself nicknamed "Old Bullion" on account of his exertions in favor of gold and silver currency, at the time when the question of paper versus gold and silver currency was to the front.

**Bull-nigger.** A large, powerfully-built negro.  
Cf. *buck-nigger*.

**Bull nose.** A useless hard clam. (Cape May Co. N. J.)

**Bull nut** (*Carya tomentosa*). A large kind of hickory nut of the Southern States.

**Bull plough.** A large wooden plough used with oxen.

**Bullrag.** To tease, to domineer over. (N. J.)  
Also, *to bullyrag*.

**Bull-tailing.** A cowboy's term, on the Western prairies, and meaning, when chasing bulls, to seize them by the tails and turn them somersaults.

**Bull-tucker.** A current word for a frog, among Philadelphia boys.

**Bull-whack.** A heavy whip used in the South-West, for driving cattle.

**Bull-whacker.** One who drives cattle with a bull-whack, and by extension a cowboy, or cattle-herder.

**Bully.** (1) A weapon formed by tying a stone or a piece of lead in a handkerchief.

(2) A sail-boat with two masts, used for fishing and carrying small cargoes. (Nfld.)

(3) A current word used adjectively in sense of excellent, fine, capital, with a connotation of strenght or efficiency.

*Bully for you, well done! bravo!*

*Bully* has now in England usually a disagreeable meaning, but Shakespeare uses it once or twice as a term of endearment: "What says my *bully* rock?" (*Merry Wives of Windsor*); and it is probably the same word as the old Scotch "billie" or "billy," a term, as Jamieson says, expressive of affection and familiarity.

**Bum.** (1) In college slang: 1. A spree. 2. An unpretentious spread. 3. A frolic. Also used adjectively for bad, very poor.

(2) A bummer (q. v.).

**Bum (to).** A verb much in vogue, during the War of Secession, in sense of to pilfer, to loot.

**Bum (on a).** A slang expression meaning "on a drunk."

**Bumberell.** A slang word for an umbrella.

Also, *bumbershoot*.

**Bum-boat.** Besides the English meaning of a shore boat supplying sailors with provisions, this word is also applied, in the United States, to a floating drink-shop or resort for toughs.

**Bummer** (Ger. *bummeler*, idler). (1) A loafer, tramp, or vagabond. An idle, worthless fellow, without any visible means of support. Also used as a general term of reproach, in the same way as rascal, blackleg, etc. are used in England.

(2) During the war of Secession, the *bummer* was the usual army pest or follower, whose principal occupation was pilfering and looting; and since the war the term has been extended to designate one who, having been formerly in the Quartermaster's or Commissary Department, now exclusively "supports" himself by lobbying.

**Bummerism.** Character of a *bummer*; *bummers* collectively regarded. Habits of loafing and petty stealing.

**Bumper.** In railway phraseology, what in England is known as a "buffer," and perhaps also the more appropriate term of the two.

**Bun.** A term frequently applied, in the United States, to the squirrel, and recalling the old English "bunn," the familiar name of the rabbit in Halliwell's Dictionary.

**Bunch.** (1) A mining term for an irregular mass of ore.

(2) A group. "A *bunch* of buffaloes."

**Bunch (to.).** To collect, to bring together, to corral. "The speaker *bunched* his lips; the herds were *bunched* together, etc.

**Bunch-grass.** A species of "festuca," offering excellent feed for stock, and growing on the bleak mountain-sides of Nevada and neighboring territories.

**Bunco (to.).** To rob, cheat, or swindle by means allied to what is called in England the confidence trick.

Also, to *bunco*.

**Bunco-case, Bunco-game.** The action of practicing the confidence-trick, a swindle generally effected by inducing a greenhorn to play cards.

**Bunco-man, Bunco-steerer.** A swindler who practices the *bunco-game*.

**Buncombe, Bunkum.** Empty talk, pointless speech making, from the well-known answer of a member of Congress, from North Carolina, who, when asked why he persisted in delivering a long harangue when the members were all leaving the House to avoid it, replied: "Never mind; I'm talking to Buncombe!"—that being the county in which he lived.

*Buncombe* was first applied to speeches made in Congress for the mere purpose of being published and sent home to gratify constituents, but it

is now current all over the country to denote especially any hypocritical enthusiasm in speechifying, what is commonly called flap-doodle, gas, or bosh.

Also sometimes used as an adjective. "A *buncombe* proclamation."

Our people talk a great deal of nonsense about emancipation, but they know it's all *buncombe*.

(Sam Slick, in *Human Nature*.)

**Bundle (to.).** A term designating a custom, formerly practiced in New England, of men and women sleeping on the same bed with all their clothes on, when there was not house-room to provide better accommodation.

Stopping occasionally in the villages to eat pumpkin pies, dance at country frolics, and *bundle* with the Yankee lasses.

(Irving, *Knickerbocker History of New York*.)

The same practice is mentioned by Wright as having been customary in Wales.

**Bungo.** A Southern name for a species of small boat.

**Bung-starter.** A word said to be common, among the bartenders of the saloons of New York and vicinity, to designate an implement kept behind bars to help expelling the roughs and toughs.

**Bungtown coppers.** A term once applied to counterfeit English half-pence, which were in circulation in N. Y. State in 1785-86, and afterwards extended to mean all spurious copper coins.

*Bungtown* is from the slang-term "to bung," meaning to lie or deceive.

**Bunk.** A contrivance on lumbermen's sleds, to sustain the end of heavy pieces of timber.

**Bunk (to).** (1) To retire to rest, to retire to bed—from "bunk," a berth or bed on board ship.

(2) Among lumbermen, to so arrange lumber for inspection that a false impression is conveyed as to the cubic contents of any given pile or stack.

**Bunker** (*Alosa menhaden*). An abbreviation for *mossbunker*, a species of fish of the herring kind, abounding in the waters of New England, and as far south as Chesapeake bay.

See *bony fish*.

**Bunty.** (1) Short and stumpy, as in the case of an individual who is short of stature. (Ont.)

(2) A tailless fowl. (Pa.)

**Burden.** In parts of New England, sometimes used for crop. "A good *burden* of grass."

**Bureau** (Fr.). A term commonly applied to an office, in the language of officialdom. "The *Pension Bureau*, the *Bureau of Education*, etc."

The French form *bureaux* is also used for the plural.

**Bureaucrate** (Fr. C.). A contemptuous term applied by the French Canadians, during the rebellion of 1837-38, to their countrymen who kept aloof from the insurrectionary movement.

**Burgall** (*Ctenolabrus cæruleus*). A New York name for the cunner or blue perch, a small fish very abundant on the Atlantic coast, from New England to Delaware bay.

Other names are *chogset* (Indian name), and *nibbler*.

**Burgoo**. A feast akin to a *barbecue*, among hunters and fishermen in the South and South-West, fish, flesh and fowl being compounded into a vast stew. When the *burgoo* has a political character, speeches are made after the partaking of the meal.

*Burgoo* is apparently a variant of "burgood."

**Burn**. (1) A clearing in the woods made by burning the trees.

Cf. *brûlé*.

(2) A stick of wood for fuel. (Nfld. N. B. and N. S.)

See *billet*, *breastner*, *turn*.

**Burrites**. A term applied to an independent and short-lived political party, organized and led by Aaron Burr in 1797.

**Burro**, boor'-ro (Sp.). An ass, donkey, and esp. the Mexican jackass, used as a pack-wood carrier. Also, a saw-horse. (Texas and S. W.)

Another name is *cuddy*.

**Burr oak** (*Quercus macrocarpa*). A beautiful oak tree, laden with dark green foliage, and which abounds in the Middle and Western States.

Also called *overcup white oak*, from the peculiar form of its acorn.

**Burrowing owl** (*Pholeoptynx cucularia*). A species of day owl, so called from its frequenting the forsaken burrows, in the "villages" of the prairie-dog.

**Burying**. Often used as a noun, in sense of funeral.

**Bury the hatchet**. A very picturesque phrase, borrowed from the famous Indian ceremony of making the burying of the war-hatchet the symbol of a compact of peace. Now applied to affairs of every day life, in sense of putting away all strife or enmity, ending a feud or difficulty.

Similarly, *to dig up the hatchet*, to declare war, to open hostilities.

**Bush**. A land covered with rank shrubbery. The primeval or virgin forest land. A thicket of trees. Uncultivated land covered with trees and undergrowth.

In England, the term more especially applies to a single shrub or thicket.

**Bush-beans** (*Phaseolus vulgaris*). A common name for beans that do not climb, i. e. string-beans. Also called *snap-beans*, or *simply snaps*.

In England, called kidney-beans and French beans.

**Bushed.** Whipped, tired out, as in the case of one who gives up work from fatigue. "She was completely *bushed*."

**Bush-meeting.** A gathering in the woods, for religious purposes, and differing from the *camp-meeting* in the fact of lasting only one day. Bush-meetings are at present mostly done away with, except among the negroes of the South, the occasion serving also as an excuse for a frolic.

**Bushwhacker.** (1) One accustomed to beat about through bushes. Also, sometimes, and by extension, a raw country-man.

(2) During the Civil War, the term lost its harmless meaning, having then served to designate a deserting soldier, or an unauthorized raider, from their habit of taking to the bush, to escape justice. A sort of irregular cavalry, analogous to the "*Jayhawkers*" (q. v.), especially made the name of *Bushwhackers* famous at that time.

(3) A scythe or other instrument used for cutting brush or bushes.

(4) In politics, as in war, simply a "free-lance."

**Bushwhacking.** (1) Travelling through bushes, by beating them down with a scythe or a cudgel. Also propelling a boat, by pulling the bushes on the edges of the stream.

(2) Fighting in guerilla style, much in vogue at the South during the Civil War.

**Bussy.** A sweetheart. (Tennessee mountains.)

**Bust.** (1) A failure in business, being the vulgar pronunciation of "burst."

(2) In college slang, a failure in examination.

(3) A frolic, generally accompanied by boisterous drunkenness. The figure is, of course, taken from the idea of enjoying a thing to bursting "To be on a *bust*," to indulge in a drinking bout, accompanied by free and easy practices of all kinds.

The term *bust* is sometimes varied with *buster*, which, besides applying to a spree, is also extended to mean any astonishing thing, person, or event, i. e. anything so large or unusual as to look like bursting.

Now common in England, but of Californian origin.

**Bust (to).** (1) To burst, and especially to fail in business.

(2) In college slang, to fail in recitation or examination.

**Bust-head.** A Western term for common whiskey, literally "burst-head."

It may be interesting to note here how rich is the Western vernacular in terms for bad whiskey, the idea enshrined being mostly always brutal

in its plain, outspoken cynicism. Of such terms are *bald-face*, *railroad*, *forty-rod-lightning*, *stagger-juice*, *stone-fence*, *tangle-foot*, *turpentine*.

Mostly all those terms are especially figurative of the rapidity with which bad whiskey hurries men to the end of this life's journey.

**Butcher.** In newspaper jargon, a term applied to the copy-reader, who uses mercilessly the blue-pencil in cutting short reporters' stories.

Also called *cutter*.

**Butcher-bird.** (*Lanius septentrionalis*). A small bird of the shrike kind (*Collyris*), almost songless, and of a dull slate color, which, in Canada and the Eastern States, is often confounded with the "mocking-bird" (*Mimus polyglottus*).

Also known under the popular appellation of *nine-killer*, from the prevailing notion that the number of grasshoppers, which he impales and hangs up as a butcher does his meat, never exceeds the number of nine every day.

**Bute.** An abbreviation standing for beauty. "He's a *bute*."

**Butt.** Used in the West, as a contracted form of buttock. "I fell on my *butt*."

Provincial in West of England for a buttock of beef only.

**Butt (to).** To oppose. (S. W.)

**Butte** (Fr.). A detached hill or knob rising abruptly in the prairies of the Far West, and reaching somewhat higher than the ordinary hill or ridge, although never to such an elevation as would entitle it to be called a mountain.

The *buttes* of the Rocky Mountains and Oregon are extremely picturesque as landmarks, a notably conspicuous one being the *Butte au Chien*, in the vicinity of the Red River.

**Butte (to).** A verb used in California in sense of "to chop off with a dull axe," and, in the North West, for laying out or recognizing an established logging-camp.

**Butter.** Fruit preserved by stewing down to a butter-like consistency. (Pa.)

**Butter-bread.** Spread bread and butter. (Pa.)

**Butter fingered.** Said of a person whose powers of retaining an article in his grasp are not great. (N. J.)

**Butter-fish** (*Stromateus triacanthus*). A common slimy fish, so called from its slime which makes it very difficult to handle.

**Butterfly.** A common name erroneously applied, in the United States, to the night-flying moths.



In England, the usual name is *moth*.

See *moth*.

**Butternut.** The fruit of a tree (*Juglans cinerea*), so called from the oil it contains.

Also called *oil nut*.

See *long walnut*, *white walnut*.

**Butternuts.** (1) A term applied, during the Civil War, to the Confederate soldiers, from the color of their clothes, which, being home-spun, were dyed brown with the juice of the butternut.

(2) A popular name, in parts of the West and South, for overalls of the common butternut brown.

**Button-bush** (*Cephalanthus occidentalis*). A shrub growing in low-lying, swampy districts, and abounding in almost every part of the United States. So called from its globular flowers appearing at a distance like the balls, or buttons, of the sycamore tree.

Also called *butter-bush*, which is a corruption of the above.

**Buttoning-up.** A Wall street phrase, referring to the action of brokers who, having bought stock on speculation, find it cast upon their hands, and who, for any reason, prefer to keep the matter to themselves.

**Buttonwood** (*Platanus occidentalis*). A New-England term for the sycamore-tree, so called from the curious ball-shaped seed vessels hanging on its branches in winter by long slender threads, and which do not drop till the following spring.

Also called *button tree*.

**Buzzard.** (1) A half-facetious, half-contemptuous term applied, in several mechanical professions, to a badly-spoiled piece of work.

(2) The silver dollar, so called derisively from the buzzard-like eagle on the coin.

Also, *buzzard dollar*.

(3) A name applied to a vulture instead of to a hawk.

**Buzzards.** A nickname of the inhabitants of Georgia, from a very strict law enacted in that State for the protection of the buzzards, as they act in the capacity of scavengers.

**Buzzer.** A slang term for a pickpocket.

**Buzzing.** (1) Confidential talk.

(2) Searching or looking for. "What are you *buzzing*?"

**Buzz-saw.** A very characteristic and picturesque expression for a circular saw.

**By.** (1) Used for "to" or "into." "Come *by* my house and stay all night." (Ga. and Fla.)

(2) Used for "of." "I met a man *by* the name of Smith."

- By and again.** A Southern adverbial phrase meaning occasionally, now and then.
- By and large.** On the whole, speaking generally.  
*To take it by and large* is a slang phrase, equivalent to taking it all round, or after due thought.
- By-bidder.** An auctioneer's decoy who, by spurious bidding, runs up prices.
- By sun.** Before sunset. (Ga.)
- Byo.** A cradle. Used in speaking to a child. Perhaps from by-lo, as in by-lo-land. (S. E. Pa.)

## C

- Caballad**, generally pronounced "cavy-yard" by Americans (Sp. *cabal-lada*). A bunch, or drove of horses or mules, carrying merchandise. (Texas and S. W.)  
 Also, *cavallad*, *cavallard*.
- Cabbage.** *I don't boil my cabbage twice*, a very common expression in the country towns of Pennsylvania, and signifying that the person uttering it does not intend to repeat an observation. Allusion to the cabbage which when boiled a second time, is not always palatable.
- Cabbage (to).** To appropriate surreptitiously; to steal, in sense of theft of any kind.  
 In England, "to cabbage" is confined to tailor's slang, and means the purloining of pieces of cloth by dishonest workmen.
- Cabbage-tree** (*Palma altissima*). A well known palm-tree of Florida, from the pith of which sago is manufactured, and whose long straight stems are used as water-pipes.  
 "Cabbage-tree" is also a generic name, in Florida, for all palms bearing an excellent shoot.  
 Also called *cabbage-palm* or *palm-cabbage*.
- Cabestro**, kah-bes'-tro (Sp.). A kind of lasso made of hair, and used for catching horses and cattle. (S. W.)  
 The *cabestro* is also employed for fastening animals to stakes or pegs driven into the ground.  
 Also, *cabero*.
- Cable, Cablegram.** A message by sea cables. Now rapidly passing into general commercial use, wherever the English language is spoken.  
 (2) A popular abbreviation for cable-tramway.
- Cable (to).** To send a message by sea cables. Of same coinage as "to wire."

**Caboodle (the whole).** A pleonastic expression for the whole, the whole lot. Probably an enlarged form of "boodle," used in its primitive sense of bundle, estate, possession, crowd. Thus, in sense of mass or crowd, we find "buddle" so used by Markham as early as 1625.

**Caboose, Caboose car.** A guard's or conductor's car, at the rear of a freight train.

In England, *caboose* (Dutch *kombuis*) is a nautical term for a ship's galley or kitchen, and the "caboose-car," like much of the American terminology connected with modes of land travel, has been borrowed from sea-life.

Equivalent to the guard's van attached to a goods train in England.

Also, simply a *cab*, by abbreviation.

**Cabrée, kah-bray (Fr.).** The French voyageurs' name of the *pronghorn* (*Antilocapre americana*), a species of antelope found on the plains west of the Missouri river.

See *pronghorn*.

**Cacaoui, kah-kah-we (Ind. *cacanwi*).** Among the French Canadians, a word designating the long-tailed duck (*Harelda glacialis*) of the north shore of the St Lawrence, below Quebec.

Also, *kikawi*.

**Cache (Fr. *cache*, to hide, to conceal).** A word dating back from the old "voyageurs," and meaning a hole dug in the ground, to conceal stores or provisions which it is inconvenient to carry. The term is only heard now in the remotest districts, but is still generally in use in the Canadian North West.

**Cache (to).** To hide, to conceal stores or provisions in the ground.

**Cachupin, kah-tchoo-pin' (Sp.).** A native Spaniard settled in America. Used opprobriously. (Texas and S. W.)

**Caek.** In parts of New England, used playfully of a small child, and generally preceded by the adjective "little." Probably a metaphorical use of the shoemaker's word for an infant's shoe.

Also, *tucker*.

**Cacomite (Mex. *cacomitl*).** An edible bulbous root of a species of *Tigridia*, and from which a good flour is prepared. (Texas.)

**Cad:** A railway guard or conductor.

In English slang, "cad" is a generic name for omnibus conductors, but the application of the term to railway officials is peculiarly American.

**Cageot (Fr. *cage*).** A fisherman's term, in the region of the Gulf of St. Lawrence, for a structure used in making cod-liver oil. It is in the form of a sort of inverted cone, built of boards, with perforated bottom, over which the livers of the fish are heaped up.

**Cahoot.** A favorite Western word in the phrase : “ The whole cahoot,”  
i. e. the whole lot of them.

**Cahoots (in).** A slang expression meaning, in the South-West and the West, in company with or associated together. From the old English word *cahoot*, denoting a company or partnership.

Men who live in the same house, those in partnership, or who act in concert, are said to be “ in cahoots,” just as, politically, the same expression is synonymous of alliance, analogous however, in this case, to a species of jobbery, i. e. an unholy alliance.

**Cahoot (to).** To act in partnership.

**Cain (to raise).** Of Western origin, and meaning originally to raise a disturbance with homicidal intent. While still retaining this meaning, its more general signification is that of being merely disputatious or quarrelsome.

Also, to *raise hate*.

A sarcastic variant is to *raise merry cain*.

**Cake (to take the).** To be the best of a kind, to beat all records, to rank the highest. From the well known *cake-walks* in vogue among colored people, in which a cake is in the centre of a room, and the contestants promenade around it, the couple putting on most style winning the cake.

**Calabacilla,** kah-lah-bah-sil'-ya (Sp.). In Texas, a gourd (*Cucurbita foetidissima*) with round fruit the color of an orange.

**Calabash** (Sp. *calabaza*, a gourd). (1) The gourd (*Cucurbita lagenaria*), and, more generally, a drinking utensil made from the bottle-shaped shell of that plant.

(2) In a figurative sense, a jeering term applied to a weak-minded individual, that is, an “ empty head.”

**Calaboose** (Sp. *calabozo*, dungeon). The common gaol or prison. (S. W.)

**Calaboose (to).** To imprison.

**Calash** (Fr. *calèche*). (1) An old-fashioned kind of gig on two wheels, which is still in use in Canada, especially in city of Quebec, and immediate surroundings.

(2) A term applied to that particular ladies' head-gear, formed of hoops, which in England is appropriately called an “ ugly.”

**Calculate.** Often used, especially in New England, in a similar way to the word “ guess,” though not to so great an extent, that is, in the sense of to judge, to exercise his judgment, to esteem, to suppose, etc.

To expect, to intend.

**Calculated.** Adapted to, designed for

**Calculation.** Judgment.

**Calf-kill** (*Kalmia angustifolia*). An absurd name, given in the North, to a beautiful flowering shrub of the laurel species, from the erroneous supposition that its leaves, if eaten by cattle, will prove fatal.

Also called *lamb-kill*, *kill-lamb*, and *sheep-laurel*.

**Calibogus.** A mixture of rum and spruce beer, already quoted by Grose, in 1792, as an American beverage.

**Calico.** (1) A term applied exclusively, in the United States, to printed cotton cloth.

In England, all white and unprinted cotton goods are now called *calicoes*.

(2) A slang term, especially among students, for a woman, individually as companion to a man, or collectively wherever sex plays a part in social life. By a further figure, the term is even extended to mean a flirtation, or love affair, of a more or less serious nature.

Also used adjectively in sense of pertaining to women students. "A *calico* course," a course frequented by women students.

**Calico-back** (*Streptilas interpres*). The brant-bird or turnstone, so called from the variegated plumage of its upper parts.

**California-widow.** The equiv. of grass-widow, i. e. a married woman whose husband is away from her for any extended period.

This expression dates from the period of the Californian gold fever, when so many men went West, leaving their wives and families behind them.

**Callithump.** A factitious word meaning to produce hideous and discordant sounds, with tin kettles, bells, rattles, etc.

**Callithumpians.** A name formerly assumed by students, in remote college towns, when out for a good time, and making all the noise and discord possible. Allusion has been made, for its etymology, to Calliope, one of the nine muses, and to the verb to thump. But we incline, however, to believe that the word must be derived from the two Greek terms *kalos*, pleasant, and *thumos*, the soul, the more so because the students engaging in the sport, and who were wont to associate a good deal with the classics, were then of necessity "pleasant souls" or jolly fellows.

From the colleges, the word spread to some cities, and, in Baltimore especially, a famous gang of rowdies once was called the *Callithumpian band*. The term has now fallen almost entirely into disuse, and only lingers, in some out-of-the-way districts, to mean a "charivari," or burlesque serenade, given on the occasion of an unpopular wedding.

**Calumet** (Fr.). An old word sprung into existence through the frequent intercourse between traders and Indians, and meaning, amongst the

a boriginal tribes, a tobacco-pipe with a long reed and bowl of marble, usually used also as a symbol of peace and war.

**Camfire.** A vulgar substitute for "camphor," and not unfrequently found written as it is sounded.

**Camote,** kah-mo'-tay (Sp.). In Southern Texas, the sweet potato, or yam.

**Camp.** Even though there be but one traveller, a *camp* is formed, in the Far West, whenever a halt on a journey is decided.

**Camp (half faced).** A camp so formed that one side is opened for the free passage of the cattle and horses comprised in the train. (S. W.).  
Also, *corral*.

**Campaign.** The period antecedent to an election, during which the candidates take the field. The word is applied alike to a presidential election, or to the canvass of the merest petty official.

**Campaign (to).** To proceed upon a campaign, to exploit.

**Camp down (to).** To form a camp. To spend the night in the open air on the plain, or under some sheltering tree.  
Also, to *camp out*.

**Camphene.** A well known oil, used for lighting purposes.

**Camp-meeting.** A gathering in the wood or field for religious purposes, the assemblage "camping out" in tents, booths, and other improvised and temporary habitations. In many respects a camp-meeting often partakes of the character of a protracted picnic, the religious exercises being quaintly mixed up with games and amusements of all kinds.

The "camp-meeting" was, primitively, associated with the Methodists, but now-a-days other denominations and associations also use the word, as applied to their own meetings. Among the Mormons, however, the term wood-meeting is almost exclusively employed.

**Campus.** A student's word meaning the college grounds. Also, the athletic field.

**Camus-plant.** See *quamish*.

**Can.** Often incorrectly used for "may," when there is no question of ability. For instance, we could read on our postal cards the following absurd statement: "Nothing but the address *can* be placed on this side." The English newspaper wrappers have a similar notice, correctly worded: "This wrapper *may* only be used for newspapers."

**Can (to).** To put up meats, fruits, vegetables, in air-tight cans.

**Canack, Canuck, Cunnuck.** Familiar and colloquial slang appellations for a native of Canada, although, within the Canadian border, a *canuck* is almost solely understood to be a French-Canadian.

Said to be derived from Connaught, which was a name given by the French-Canadians to the Irish.

**Canada rice** (*Zizania aquatica*). A plant abounding in the Northern States and Canada, and growing along the edges of pools and sluggish streams.

Also called *water-oats* and *wild-rice*.

**Canada thistle** (*Cnicus arvensis*). A weed introduced from France into Canada, whence it has spread over the whole of North America.

**Canaille**, kah-nay'-gray (Sp.). In Texas, a species of dock (*Rumex hymenosepalus*), the root of which is very rich in tannic acid.

**Canaille**. Shorts, or low grades of flour.

**Canaoua**. A factitious and derogatory term formerly much employed by the French Canadians, and applied to the Indians.

Also, *canaouache*.

Les *canaouas* vont l'écorcher comme une anguille.  
(De Gaspé, Anciens Canadiens, II, 135.)

**Canard branchu** (Fr. C.). In the lower St. Lawrence region, a name applied to the wood-duck (*Aix sponsa*), from its being wont to perch upon the branches of trees.

The term has been used by Charlevoix as early as 1744.

**Cancer-root**. The name of several plants (species of *Orobanché*) very common throughout the United States, and so called because they supply a pretended remedy for cancer.

See *squaw-root*.

**Candelia**, can-del'-ya (Sp.). In Texas, bad weather, especially cold weather, with rain and sleet, killing sheep and cattle.

The word implies the notion of dying, and is probably related to the Spanish idiom "acabarse la candela," i. e. to be dying.

**Candidate (to)**. To be a candidate, to act as a candidate. To seek, or be proposed for office, etc.

**Candleberry** (*Myrica cerifera*). The wax-myrtle, bearing a berry covered with a shining wax, from which candles are made.

**Candy**. A name given, in the United States, to sweetmeats of all kinds.  
Also, *candies*.

**Cane-brake**. A name given, in the South, to thickets of canes, abounding in low lands from South Carolina to Louisiana.

In the Carolinas, *cane-meadow*.

**Cane-rush**. In college slang, a contest for class supremacy, which consists in trying to get and retain control, by force, of a stick or cane held at the start by members of each class.

Also, *cane-spre*.

**Cane-trash.** The leaves of the sugar-cane, when cut and stripped for grinding. Such trash usually serves as manure for the soil.

Also, *bagasse*.

**Caney.** An adjective still prevalent to designate places where cane is growing, or once grew in abundance. Hence, the "caney branch" of Kentucky and Tennessee.

Where Chinese drive  
With sails and wind their  
*cany* waggons light.

(MILTON, PARADISE LOST.)

**Canker lettuce.** In New England, a name applied to the plant (*Pyrola rotundifolia*) said to be a cure for canker.

**Canker rash.** A familiar term for scarlatina fever.

**Canne-de-roche** (Fr. C.). A species of duck (*Histrionicus torquatus*) of the lower St. Lawrence region.

**Canned goods.** Fruits, vegetables, etc. preserved in air-tight cans. In England, more generally known as "tinned" goods.

**Cannery.** An establishment, where "canning" is going on.

**Canning.** The process of preserving fresh fruits, vegetables, etc. in air-tight tin vessels.

**Canoe.** A term generally applied to the birch canoe, from the bark of the "*Betula papyracea*," which, being glossy and pliant, is taken whole from the tree, then spread open, and fashioned into a graceful shape. It requires no mean skill and close attention to propell the exceedingly frail thing; hence the slang phrase of "paddling one's own canoe" meaning, as the song says, to be skillful enough to succeed unaided.

Hunters are also apt to speak briefly of birch canoes as *birches*.

**Canoe birch** (*Betula papyracea*). Also called *paper birch*, the "bouleau à canot" of French Canada.

**Canon, Canyon, kan-yone** (Sp.). A gorge or a ravine, worn by violent watercourses, and generally overhung by precipitous rocks, rising sometimes, especially in the Rocky Mountains, to enormous heights which fill the beholder with feelings akin to awe.

Diminutives of *cañon* are *cañanita*, and *cañoncito*.

**Canoncito, kan-yon-see'-to** (Sp.). A diminutive of *cañon*, and, more specifically, in South-Western Texas, an opening in the *chaparral* or in the *mònte* (q. v.).

**Can-opener.** A bladed instrument adapted for opening canned goods.



**Cant (to).** A verb thoroughly colloquial in the United States, in sense of to turn about, to turn over, to roll over. For example, a person restless in bed “cants” over, when shifting the position of the body; a log of wood is “canted” over, etc.

In England, “to cant” is now rarely heard, and then its sense is rather that of unequal balancing, or a leaning to one side.

**Cantankerate.** To produce strife, to make or become ill-humored. From the English *cantankerous*, meaning malicious or contentious.

**Canter.** To slope down.

**Cant-hook.** A lever with hook, used in raising or moving heavy weights. From *to cant*, meaning to move or to incline to one side, to turn about. This invention is American in name and design.

Also *can-hook*, more especially used however in sense of a rope with an iron hook at each end, for hoisting casks.

**Canticoy** (Ind. Algonkin *chintika*, meaning an act of worship, with dancing). A word applied by the early Dutch of New Netherland to a merry-making, or social gathering, and still used in same sense by aged people in New York and on Long Island.

The verb *to canticoy* has also formerly been used, applied to Indians holding a religious worship.

Also, *cantica*, *cantico*.

**Cantina** (Sp.). A frequent word, in Texas, for a bar-room.

**Canvasback** (*Anas valisneriana*). A species of wild duck, highly esteemed for the delicacy of its flesh, and found chiefly in the Chesapeake bay and tributaries.

The pride of the American kitchen, so known from its color.

**Canvass.** When used politically, to count officially the votes after an election, which meaning is somewhat different from that current in England, where it simply refers to the solicitation of voters prior to an election.

**Cape Cod turkey.** A slang term for cod fish, in Massachusetts.

Also, *Marblehead turkey*.

**Cape May goody.** See *lafayette*.

**Caporal** (Sp.). In Texas, an overseer who directs the work, but does not pay the laborers.

**Capper.** (1) In thieves' and gamblers' parlance, a confederate, especially one who at cards makes false bids, with the object of enticing a genuine player.

(2) In auctioneer's slang, a man or woman acting as a dummy bidder.

**Cap sheaf.** Figuratively used, in the United States, to denote pre-

eminence, the highest degree, the summit. Derived from the well-known capping sheaf of straw used to decorate the top of a stack.

**Caption.** Originally a legal term, and now applied, in newspaper parlance, to headings or titles of articles.

**Capul,** kah-pool' (Sp.). A tree or shrub of South-Western Texas, with small, blackish red or deep yellow edible berries, called *capules*.

**Car.** A railroad or tramway carriage.

In England, carriage, coach, or tramway.

The American vehicles running upon rails bear various denominations: baggage-car, drawing-room or palace-car, freight-car, horse-car or street-car, mail-car, sleeping-car.

**Caracara** (Sp.). In Texas, a sort of vulture (Polyboros cheriway), which is probably the typical Mexican eagle.

**Caramel (to).** In Louisiana, to burn the cane juice by a careless application of heat.

**Caravan.** An association of traders or pioneers, travelling between the old settlements and the new colonies, under the direction of an experienced guide. This institution now only survives in the South-West, and in some wild portions of the Rocky Mountains.

In New Mexico, the caravan is called by its Spanish name *conducta*.

**Car-brake.** The ordinary brake, used to diminish speed.

**Carcajou** (Fr. C.). (1) The American wolverene (*Gulo luscus*), or prairie wolf.

(2) The American badger (*Taxidea americana*). Another scientific name is "*Meles labradorica*," which is certainly a misnomer, as the species of wild cat it refers to is not found in Labrador.

(3) The cougar (*Felis concolor*).

See *otsitso*.

**Cards (to give).** To give an advantage, a slang expression borrowed from the gaming table, and which is the equiv. of the English "to give points" derived from the billiard saloon.

**Carf.** A blaze or mark made on a tree destined to be felled.

**Carga** (Sp.). In Texas, a common name for a Mexican dry measure, equal to four *fanegas*, or 336 pounds.

**Cargador** (Sp.). In Texas, the man in charge of the packs, in a pack train.

See *patron*.

**Car-house.** A covered shed, for protecting railway carriages.

**Caribou** (Fr. C.). The American reindeer (*Rangifer canadensis*), found in the northernmost parts of this continent. Two varieties exist, the *barren*

*ground caribou* and the *woodland caribou*, but some travellers tell us nevertheless that these two names merely represent the same animal at different seasons.

**Carlicues.** 1 Boyish tricks and capers. "To cut earlicues," i. e. to cut capers, to indulge in frolicsome mirth.

2 Fantastic ornaments worn on a person or used in architecture.

Also, *curleycues*, *curlycues*.

Evidently a fancifully-formed word, from curley and queue.

**Carolina allspice** (*Calycanthus floridus*). The sweet scented shrub, whose bark and wood have a somewhat spicy flavor.

**Carolina pink** (*Spigelia marilandica*). The pink root of Maryland is so called further South. It is a medicinal plant, bearing beautiful flowers, and well known as a purgative and vermifuge.

**Carolina potato** (*Convolvulus batata*). A name applied, in the Eastern States, to the sweet potato of tropical America.

**Carouge commandeur** (Fr. C.). A French Canadian name applied to the red-winged starling (*Agelæus phœniceus*).

See *officer bird*.

**Carpet-bagger.** (1) An opprobrious term applied in the South, after the Civil War, to unprincipled political adventurers, whose wordly possessions were literally comprised within a "carpet-bag," and who were then seeking their fortunes in any deed of shame that was safe and profitable.

The term, as a party nickname, first came into existence in 1868, at the time of the meeting of the first Alabama convention, to frame a reconstructed constitution. The convention was in search of a name, and it so happened that, at a caucus of the opposition, one of the leaders, Colonel Reese, came to strike the imagination of his hearers in speaking of the large influx, into Washington, at the appointment of President Lincoln, of shabby office-seekers with carpet-bags. The next morning, the Montgomery Daily Mail applied the name of *carpet-baggers* to the strangers who had seized the government of the South, and the epithet has since been extended to include any unpopular person of Northern origin living in the South.

(2) In the West, a *carpet-bagger* was originally a "wildcat" banker, that is, one who had no local abiding place and could not be found when wanted.

**Carreta**, ear ray'-tah (Sp.). In Texas, a common name for a primitive, two-wheeled ear, the wheels of which are generally solid and held together by wooden pins.

**Carriage.** A generic name, in the United States, for any vehicle having a top, and, more specifically, for what would be called in England a double-horse victoria.

**Carry.** An equivalent of the "portage" in Maine.

**Carry (to).** In Virginia and the Southern States, used in sense of to lead, to escort, to accompany. "Mr. G. *carried* Miss M. to the ball." This use of the word is said to have been prevalent with the English novelists of the 18th century.

In Virginia and the South we even constantly hear: "To *carry* a horse to the stable, to the river," and, with respect to this curious extension, it is interesting to note here that, on the other hand, in some parts of England, notably Sheffield, they say, "to lead hay, corn, coals, etc." and almost everything which elsewhere they *carry* or cart.

**Carry (to) stock.** A Wall street phrase, meaning to hold stock for a client's account.

**Carryal** (Fr. C. *carriole*). The name of a four-wheeled pleasure carriage, common in the Northern States.

The term has probably originated in Canada, where however it now only means a sleigh, or sledge.

Also, *carryall*.

**Carry-log.** A rough contrivance on wheels, used for transporting timber.

**Casa** (Sp.). A country-house, in the formerly Spanish states.

Originally applied to a house of any kind.

**Cascara**, cas'-car-ah (Sp.). In Texas, a common name for bark, and, more specifically, the dry bark of trees which is used to kindle fires.

**Case (in).** Said, in the Southern states, of tobacco when it is soft and pliant, or in a condition to be packed away in casks without loss.

**Cashaw** (Ind.). An Algonkin name for pumpkin. In the West, *kershaw*.

**Casket.** A sort of coffin which resembles a casket, its shape, top and bottom, being that of a parallelogram, and its lid having hinges and a lock, instead of being screwed down.

The word first appeared, in that sense, in the Webster supplement of 1879.

**Cassareep** (W. Ind. *cassava*). A sauce made from the juice of the bitter cassava-root, and which becomes a very highly flavored and pleasant relish.

**Cast.** In parts of New England, said for hue, or tinge. "Good flour has a yellow *cast*."

**Castanas**, cas-tan'-yahs (Sp.). The Spanish name for chestnuts, quite frequently given in Texas and the South-West to the edible fruit of the *screw-pine* (*Pandanus*), and to the *jack-fruit* (*Artocarpus integrifolia*).

**Casten** (Old Eng.) An old form for cast, past participle of to cast.

The Old Eng. termination *en*, for past participles, has survived in many words until quite recently in New England, and such forms as *gotten*, *boughten*, *putten*, etc. are even now not unfrequently heard.

**Castor-tree** (*Magnolia glauca*). See beaver-wood, beaver-tree.

**Castoria**. Castor oil so prepared as to be inoffensive to the taste and smell.

**Cat, Catfish, Catty**. See *bull-head*.

**Cat (to)**. To fish for cat-fish.

**Catalpa** (Ind.). An ornamental tree (*Catalpa cordifolia*), native of the Middle and Southern States, possessing broad, large leaves, and gorgeous clusters of flowers.

**Catamount** (*Felis concolor*). The popular name of the feline species, as the cougar, the puma and the panther.

Some etymologists maintain that we have here a derivation of the two Spanish words *gato*, a cat, and *monte*, a mountain. Nevertheless the word is more probably only a shortened form of the fuller and older name *cat-a-mountain*, as used by Beaumont and Fletcher :

Would any man of discretion venture such a gristle,  
To the rude claws of such a *cat-a-mountain*.

**Catan** *cah-tan'* (Sp.). In Texas, a fresh-water fish of the gar family, growing to a large size.

**Catawamptiously**. A Western expletive derived from catamount, meaning with avidity, with fierce eagerness, and founded on the ferocity of the feline animals in attacking their prey.

*To be catawamptiously chawed up*, an idiom signifying complete annihilation.

**Catawba** (Ind.). The indigenous grape of North America (*Vitis labrusca*), celebrated for its luscious qualities, the name being derived from the Catawba river, in the Carolinas, where this variety of grape was first raised.

**Cat-bird** (*Mimus carolinensis*). A well-known oscine passerine bird, related to the mocking-bird, so called because its cry of alarm resembles the mewling of a cat.

**Catch on (to)**. To appreciate, to be alive to the situation. *To catch on* to a thing is to understand it, to grasp its meaning.

Also enlarged to signify a capacity to quickly grasp an opportunity and turn it to advantage.

**Catch up (to)**. In the West, to harness or prepare the horses or mules, for a march across the prairies.

Also used in the imperative tense, as a command to rouse from one's slumber and make ready for an early start.

**Catch up with (to).** To discover, to find guilty. "They *caught up* with him for stealing the horse."

**Catchy.** Sometimes used in sense of impatient, irritable.

**Cat's claw.** The name of a shrub with sharp pines; of Western Texas (*Mimosa biuncifera*).

**Catstick.** Any unsplit stick of wood with the bark on, and small enough to be grasped by the hand. Also, small wood for burning. Probably still provincial in England, in those two senses, although the English catstick more commonly means a bat or cudgel for playing certain games at ball.

**Catted chimney.** See *stick-chimney*.

**Cattle.** Only designates, in the United States, beasts of the bovine genus, whilst in England it is sometimes a generic term for all animals serving for food or draught.

**Cattle mark.** A proprietor's brand placed upon cattle.

**Cattle raiser.** A grazier on a large scale. Also, when very rich, a *cattle king*.

**Cattle range.** In Kentucky, a park, even when it is one attached to a country residence.

**Caucus.** A preliminary meeting or gathering of partisans, to decide upon the action to be taken in an approaching election. The word has now crept into English parlance, but whereas in Great Britain it is only used in the sense of a private assembling of politicians before an election, its meaning has been extended in the United States to any party meeting, however large or small, held with reference to an election.

Probably the first use of the word was among the ship-caulkers of Boston, who, when they were on strike, or had a grievance to complain of, used to hold a meeting to discuss their affairs. Such a meeting was called a *caucus*, from *caulkers'*, the word meeting being understood. On the other hand, if we may believe Dr Trumbull, of Hartford, the origin of the word is Indian and must be found in *cau-cau-as-ic*, meaning "one who advises."

The word is said to have been used as early as 1724 (Gordon's Hist. of Am. Revolution).

**Cavalli, ka-val'i (Sp).** A fish of the genus "Caranx," found in the Gulf of Mexico. (Texas.)

**Cave in (to).** To give up, to abandon, to collapse, to break down, from the caving in of an abandoned mine, or of a well or shaft.

**Cavendish.** A well-known brand of tobacco, sweetened with syrup or molasses.

Also called *negro-head*.

**Cavern limestone.** The carboniferous limestone of Kentucky, so called from the large number of caves or holes with which it abounds.

**Cavort (to).** (1) A term used, in horsemanship, in the sense of riding or running around in a heedless, purposeless manner, or simply to show off.

(2) To prance about in a playful and purposeless way.

(3) Figuratively, also used to designate any very extravagant manner of speaking or acting, with an intention of ridiculing the action.

*To cavort* is chiefly used in the Southern States.

**Cay, Kay, Key** (Sp. *cayo*). A low, flat, rocky island, or ridge of rocks, in the West Indies and Florida.

Key West, Fla. is said to be derived from the Spanish "Cayo Hueso," meaning Bone Island.

**Cayuse** (Ind.). A name applied, in the West and South-West, to a common Indian pony, a somewhat degenerated animal, but possessing remarkable powers of endurance.

Also used figuratively in a depreciative sense, being then applied to any poor, broken-down jade.

The "cayuse" is sometimes designated figuratively as the *yatch of the prairie*, on the same principle as the camel is the ship of the desert.

**Cazagot** (Fr. C.). A word said to be derived from the dialect of the Montagnais Indians, inhabiting the Lake St. John region, in Canada, and designating, among the French Canadians, a sort of cradle made of bark, which the squaws tie over their shoulders and in which they carry their nurslings.

**Cedar.** A name erroneously given, in the United States, to trees other than the genuine species :

*Red cedar* (*Juniperus virginiana*), a juniper.

*White cedar* (*Cypressus thyoides*), a cypress abounding in the famous cedar swamps of the South.

**Cedar-swamps.** In the South, low-lying grounds mainly under water, filled with cypresses.

Also called *cedar-brakes*.

**Ceja**, say'-hah (Sp.). In Texas, a long and narrow strip of chaparral (q. v.).

**Celestial.** A nickname for a Chinaman. Also used adjectively.

**Cellar-case.** In parts of New England, an outside entrance to a cellar, with a sloping door.

See *bulkhead*.

In the West, *cellar-way* is used in preference.

**Cencerro**, sen-ser'-ro (Sp.). In Texas, the leading mule in a pack train, wearing the bell.

In Spain, a cencerro is a bell worn by the leading mule.

**Cenizo**, say-nee'-so (Sp. *ceniza*, ashes). A shrub of southern Texas, bearing ash-colored leaves.

**Cent.** A small copper coin worth the hundredth part of a dollar, and almost equivalent in value to the halfpenny of England.

**Centennial State.** The State of Colorado, from its having been admitted in the Union, in the centennial year of Independence (1876).

**Centrical.** Still prevalent in Virginia, in sense of central.

It is time to draw our party to a head, either at York, or some other *centrical* place.

(SIR W. SCOTT, *Ivanhoe*.)

In very little vogue in England, its use, colloquially, savoring somewhat of pedantry.

**Century-plant** (*Agave americana*). A name given to the American aloe. See *maguey*.

**Cenzontle** (Mex. *centzontlatole*, four hundred voices). A name applied, in Texas, to the mocking-bird.

The forms *ceusontle*, *chinchoute*, and *sinsonte*, are also heard.

**Cerda**, cer'-dah (Sp.). In Texas, horse or cow-hair.

**Certain.** An adjective constantly used as an adverb, in sense of certainly. "He will do it *certain*."

It is also frequently strengthened by the addition of *for*. "We shall be burnt out *for certain*."

Another form is *certain sure*.

**Certified.** *Certain*. In Sam Slick's "Clockmaker" occurs the phrase: "I ain't quite *certified* we shan't have a tower [tour] in Europe yet."

**Cesarism.** In American politics, the doctrine of favoring the re-election, to the Presidency, for the third time, of one who has already held the office twice.

Also, *imperialism*.

**Cesarist.** A term of reproach applied to persons favoring the re-election, to the Presidency, of a candidate having held office more than twice, and even more than once, previously.

**Chacate**, tchah-kah-tay (Prob. of Mex. origin). A small shrub (*Krameria canescens*) common in Southern and Western Texas, the bark of which is used as a dyestuff.

**Chaufaud, Chaffaut** (Fr. C.). A stage on piles, half in the water, where the cod-fish is beheaded. (Gulf of St Lawrence.)

**Chain-lightning.** The Western equivalent for forked lightning, often rendered more redundant by being changed into *chained-lightning*.

Also constantly applied, figuratively, to inferior whiskey, from its terrible strength and stunning effect.



**Chalk talk.** A lecture illustrated by "lightning sketches" with the aid of a black-board and chalk.

Similarly, a *chalk-talker*.

**Chance.** Used in the South to express a certain amount, portion, or supply. "He lost a smart *chance* of blood."

**Change.** To alter, or correct anything written. "To *change* an invoice," i. e. to alter it.

**Change (to) one's base.** A humorous way of admitting a defeat, or at least the necessity of trying once more in some other way, from the well-known phrase, during the war, of those Federal Commanders who never could admit, in their official reports, of having fallen back before Lee's forces, but simply professed to have *changed their bases*.

**Change (to meet with a).** In religious, or camp-meeting parlance, to have change of heart, to experience religion, to be struck under conviction, thereby implying that a change has come as regards the motive power regulating one's life conduct.

**Change off (to).** To move household goods.

**Chank.** To chew noisily. (N. Eng.)

**Chankings.** Parings of apples and other fruits, or the core and other rejected parts of an apple. (N. Eng.)

**Chapa,** tchah'-pah (Sp.). In Texas, a thin metal plate or scutcheon, usually of some precious metal, worn as ornament on the Mexican sombrero.

**Chaparago,** tchah-pah-rah'-ho (Sp.). See *chaparros*.

**Chapparral,** tchah-par-ral' (Sp.). (1) Used in Texas and New Mexico for any thick tangle of bramble bushes or thorny shrubs in clumps.

In Spain, a "chapparral" designates only a bush of a species of oak, from *chapara*, a dwarf evergreen oak, and *al*, a termination equal to "a place of."

(2) Also the name of the chaparral cock, or road-runner (*Geococcyx Californianus*).

**Chaparral berry.** In the South-West, the fruit of a species of berberis (*Berberis trifoliata*).

**Chaparros,** tchah-par'-ros (Sp.). A familiar term, in the South-West, for trousers made of stout leather, and worn especially by cowboys to protect their legs from thorny bushes.

Also, *chaparajos*, or simply *chaps*.

**Chapote,** tchah-po'-tay (Mex. *tsapotl*). In Texas, a shrub or tree of the ebony family (*Diospyros Texana*), otherwise called black persimmon.

Also, *sapote*, *zapote*.

**Chaps.** See *chaparros*.

**Chaqueta**, *tchah-ket'-ah* (Sp.). In Texas, a jacket, and, more specifically, a jacket made of leather or very heavy cloth, worn by cowboys as a protection against thorns of the chaparral.

**Charco**, *tchar'-co* (Sp.). In Texas, a word sometimes applied to a bold spring, generally gushing forth from a ledge of rocks.

In Spain, the term means a pool of standing water, or small lake.

See *reventon*.

**Charcoal blossom.** In college slang, a young negress.

**Charley.** Among American thieves, a gold watch.

In old English slang a watchman, or beadle, and latterly a policeman.

**Charter-Oak City.** The City of Hartford, Connecticut. This singular cognomen is supposed to have been derived from a large oak, in the cavity of which the charter of the colony of Connecticut was concealed by the Legislature, when king James II, in 1698, having decided to withdraw the privileges conferred by that document, sent Sir Edmund Andros to demand its restitution.

**Chasse-galerie.** A popular superstition dating back to the days of the "coureurs des bois," under the French regime, and perpetuated among the "voyageurs" in the Canadian North-West. As the story goes, anyone may be carried through the air in a birch-canoe, in real lightning-express time, if he agrees to sell his soul to His Satanic Majesty in the event of not fulfilling certain conditions, the principal of which are that, during the time stipulated for his peregrinations, he will not strike a church steeple, nor invoke or even pronounce the name of God.

The shantymen of a later date have taken up the tradition, and it is in the French settlements, bordering the St. Lawrence river, that the legends of the *chasse-galerie* are specially well known at the present time. Mr. Honoré Beaugrand, ex-mayor of Montreal, who wrote an interesting tale founded on this tradition (*Century Magazine*, Sept. 1892), says he has met many an old voyageur who affirmed most positively that he had seen bark-canoes traveling in mid-air, full of men paddling and singing away, under the protection of Beelzebub, on their way from the timber camps of the Ottawa to pay a flying visit to their sweethearts at home.

**Chauffant** (Fr. C.). In the region of the Seven Islands, in the Gulf of St. Lawrence, a sort of rude shed where cod-fish is left to dry.

**Chaw.** A chew, i. e. a quid of tobacco.

**Chaw (to).** Still prevalent for "to chew," especially in Virginia and the whole South, among the illiterate. Used by Spencer and Dryden, and noted in Johnson's Dictionary.

So that I was forced to buy some roll-tobacco to smell and to *chaw*.

(PEP-Y'S DIARY, June 7, 1665.)

**Chaw up.** To utterly demolish or defeat.

**Chaw up one's words.** To eat one's words, to retract.

**Cheat** (*Bromus scalinus*). A troublesome weed, not unlike oats, growing up amongst wheat and other grain crops, and erroneously supposed to be degenerate wheat. Hence its name.

Also called *chess*.

**Chebacco-boat.** A peculiar craft formerly much used in the cod-fisheries of Newfoundland, and so called from the fact that this class of boats was, at one time, largely built and fitted out at Chebacco, Mass.

Also *pinkstern*, *tobacco boat*, this last one, of course, by corruption, and *pinky*, a shortened form of *pinkstern*.

**Check.** 1 A ticket.

2 A counter at cards.

3 A brass label fastened to a piece of baggage, and whose counterpart is given to the traveller.

4 The name, in Pennsylvania, of an impromptu meal of cold provisions.

**Check (to).** In railway parlance, equiv. to the English "to book."

Also, to give tallies or other receipts for personal "impedimenta" left in cloak-rooms, etc.

**Check-clerk.** The clerk in charge of a cloak-room, or one employed in the office at hotels, to allot rooms to visitors.

**Checkerberry** (*Gaultheria procumbens*). A handsome little plant, the only species of its genus, and bearing a red-colored aromatic berry.

Also, *chequerberry*, *chickberry*.

Other names are *partridge-berry*, and, in New England and Canada, *twin-berry*, from the plant's uniformly double scarlet berry.

**Check rail.** In railroads, a contrivance at the crossing from one line of rails to another, or at a siding, for allowing trains to run on to or move into the other line or siding.

**Checks.** Money, cash. A term derived from poker, where counters or "checks" are equivalent to current coin.

**Checks (to pass in one's).** To adjust one's account at the end of a game of poker, by handing one's counters to the banker.

Hence, also, a euphemism for dying, i. e. settling the final account of life. Especially so used in the West.

**Check-strap.** To put a *check-strap* on an opponent, is to adopt such measures as will enforce the doing of what is desired.

From the well-known phrase drawn from the training of horses, the *check-strap*, amongst cowboys, controlling the bit in the horse's mouth

**Cheek.** Has retained in America the old English meaning of a door-post, as quoted in the Craven Glossary.

Little heard now in the United States, although still used in the same sense in the Craven dialect.

**Cheek (to).** In college slang, "to cheek it" is to go into recitation unprepared as if prepared.

**Cheese box.** A nickname applied by Confederates to gunboats of the Monitor type, from their cupolas or round towers, resembling huge cheese-boxes on rafts.

See *tinclads*.

**Chestnut.** An old story, a trite jest, an often repeated yarn. From the average chestnut of the "dago" fruit stand, which is often of doubtful freshness.

The variants to which the word is applied may well be called legion. Thus we have *chestnut* songs, and if one attempts to foist a stale joke upon a company, somebody may jokingly implore him to spare the *chestnut*-tree, or again not to rustle the *chestnut*-leaves, or set the *chestnut*-bell a-ringing. Similarly, anything old or out of date is said to have a *chestnutty* flavor.

Although *chestnut* is commonly supposed to be of American origin, it may here properly be recalled that in the "Broken Sword," a two-act melodrama by William Dimond, produced at Covent Garden Theatre, London, in 1825, the following passage occurs :

Zavior—Let me see—ay! It is exactly six years since that, peace being restored to Spain and my ship being paid off, my kind brother offered me a snug hammock, etc., etc.

Pablo (jumping up)—A chestnut, captain, a chestnut!

Zavior—Bah, you booby!

Pablo—And I swear, a chestnut, captain! This is the 27th time I have heard you relate this story, and you invariably said a chestnut till now.

Zavior—Did I? Well, a chestnut be it.

**Chetowaik** (Ind.). An Indian name for the plover. Used by Longfellow, in introduction to *Hiawatha*.

**Chew (to) one's own meat.** To attend to one's own business; to do a thing oneself.

**Chewink** (*Pipilo erythrophthalmus*). The ground robin, so called from its peculiar note, which in some parts of the Union is reproduced in its equally familiar name of *towhee*.

Also called *marsh-robin* and *grasslet*.

**Chiben** (Ind.). A name applied, among the French Canadians of the lower St. Lawrence region, to a species of sunflower (*Helianthus tuberosus*), much esteemed for its sweet and farinaceous tuberous roots.

Also, *chibequi*.

**Chicagoed.** A Western equivalent for "beaten out of sight."

A certain Chicago base-ball club having once met with phenomenal success, the other competing clubs were said to have been "Chicagoed."

**Chicharra**, *tehe-tehai'-rah'* (Sp.). In Texas, the harvest-fly (*Cicada spumaria*).

**Chickadee** (*Parus atricapillus*). The black-cap tit, so called from its peculiar note or cry.

Also known as the *hoary tit-mouse*.

**Chickaree** (*Sciurus hudsonius*). The red squirrel common in all the Northern States, so called in imitation of its cry.

**Chickasaw plum** (*Prunus chicensis*). A red plum, pleasant to the taste, and abounding in the neighborhood of Red River, Arkansas, a favorite hunting-ground of the Chickasaw Indians.

**Chicken-fixings**. In the West, a hash, stew, or fricassee of chicken.

Also applied to any fare out of the common, and also to show of any kind, by opposition to meaning plain every-day fare, *common doings*.

**Chicken-grape** (*Vitis riparia*). The Southern name of the river-grape, a sterile vine cultivated for its sweet-scented blossoms.

Also, *frost-grape*.

**Chicken gumbo**. A kind of chicken soup, in which "gumbo" enters as a component part.

**Chickwit** (Ind.) An obsolete name of the squeteague or weakfish (*Cynoscion regalis*), which is still, however, sometimes heard in Connecticut.

Also, *chickewit*, *chigwit*.

**Chicote**, *tehe-cot'-ay* (Sp.). In Texas, a long whip with a wooden handle, used by cowboys in driving cattle.

In Spain, means the end of a rope.

**Chigoe** (Sp. *chico*). In the South, a minute and noxious acarus or tick (*Pulex penetrans*), abounding in the sand along the bays and rivers of Maryland and Virginia, which burrows in the skin and often produces very serious inconvenience. It is not, however, so noxious as the true tropical chico, which deposits its eggs under the skin of the feet, thereby often producing dreadful sores.

Also, *chigo*, *chigya*, *chiggre*, *jigger*, *seed-tick*.

**Chilaquiles**, *tehe-lah-ke'-les* (Mex. *chilaquilitl*). In Texas, a name applied to a Mexican dish of vegetables seasoned with red peppers, or of pieces of fried "tortilla" in red pepper sauce.

**Chilchote**, *tchill-tchoh'-tay* (Mex. *chilchotl*). In Texas, green peppers, or sweet peppers.

**Chile**, *tche'-lay* (Sp.). The American red pepper. In the plural, it refers to the pods or fruit of the capsicum.

Also *chile colorado*, in formerly Spanish States.  
Other forms are *chili*, *chilli*.  
See *enchilada*.

**Chill.** A common expression for fever.

**Chills and fever.** Commonly used, in malarial sections, for fever and ague.

**Chiltapin**, tchill-tah-pin' (Mex. *chiltepin*). In Texas, bird-pepper (*Capsicum baccatum*), a shrubby plant with yellowish or red berries, used as a condiment.

**Chimisal**, tche-me'-sal (Sp.). A Spanish name of the *grease-wood*, used in California, Texas, and all formerly Spanish States.

*Chimisal* is derived from *chamiza*, a kind of a wild reed or cane.

**Chimley** (Old Eng.). An old English form for chimney. The fuller word *chimbley* is perhaps even more general in the United States.

Agin the *chimbly* crooknecks hung.

(J. R. LOWELL Courtin')

**Chin (to).** (1) To talk or act impudently, or with brazen effrontery.

(2) In college slang, to buzz, to gossip. To talk to an instructor for the purpose of gaining favor. To get the advantage of in a joke.

**Chinaman.** A slang term, in the West, for a cup of tea.

**Chinatown.** The Chinese quarter, in a city. From the celebrated Chinatown of San Francisco.

**China wedding.** The 20th anniversary of a wedding.

**Chinecapin, Chinquapin** (Ind.). (1) A diminutive species of chestnut (*Castanea pumila*), especially common in Virginia. The name is applied both to the shrub and to the fruit.

They have a small fruit.....most like a very small acorn. This they call chechinquanims....

(Capt. JOHN SMITH, Virginia. I., p. 122.)

(2) On the Pacific coast, a tree or shrub (*Castanopsis chrysophylla*) more nearly allied to the oak than to the chestnut, though the nut is inclosed in a similar spiny bur.

**Chinch, Chintz** (Sp. *chinche*). The name given in the South to the bed-bug.

Also applied to an insect creating great havoc among grain crops. This insect is, however, more particularly called *chinch-bug*.

**Chink.** To fill up chinks and interstices, between the roughly hewn timber of log cabins. The material used is chiefly mud or clay formed into a kind of plaster or cement.

The same process is known in North of England as "filling and daubing."

Also, *chince*, *chins*.

**Chinkers.** In thieves' argot, handcuffs united by a chain.

**Chinkin.** Boards, sticks, or clay used to fill spaces between logs in cabin building.

**Chinook** (Ind.). (1) A conventional language of the Volapuk order, invented and used in Oregon and British Columbia, and dating back to the fur-traders of the last century.

(2) A wind which blows at certain seasons, on the Pacific slope, and so called by the Indians of the Columbia River, because it comes to them from the direction of the country of the Chinooks.

**Chip.** A disc of ivory or bone, used in playing cards.

**Chip (to).** To put in money at cards ; to contribute. Also, to *chip in*.  
To join in an undertaking.

**Chip beef.** See *hung beef*.

**Chip in (to).** To stand one's share of expense when several have united to buy something. "We *chipped in* and bought some grapes."

**Chipmonk** (*Tamias striatus*). The popular name of the striped squirrel. Also *chipmunk*, *chipmuk*, *chitmunk*.

Thought by some to be of Indian derivation, although it is also very possible that it may come from "chips," an old Eng. provincialism meaning lively, merry ; and, as every one knows, the "chipmonk" is an exceedingly lively little creature and a great chatterer.

Also called *hackee*, in some of the Eastern States.

**Chipper.** Said of a lively, cheerful person, from the English "to chip," to be merry.

**Chippy.** A derogatory term for a young girl or woman of a questionable character.

**Chippy-chaser.** A well-dressed loafer, lying in wait for shop girls or school-children.

**Chips.** *To pass in one's chips* was formerly more commonly used than now as a way of saying that one was dead. This, of course, was a gambling expression ; when a man had finished playing, he turned over the chips—if any—remaining in his possession, and received cash for them from the man running the game. A great number of phrases originating at the card table have found their way into common employment, and occasionally are heard even in the pulpit.

**Chip-yard.** A wood-cutting yard, a yard in which logs are chopped for fuel.

**Chirk.** Still lingering in parts of New England for cheerful, lively, in good spirits, from the old English "to chirk," found in old writers in sense of chirp.

- Chirk (to).** (1) To put in good spirits ; to become lively, cheerful.  
To *chirk up*, to cheer up.  
(2) To make more comfortable. (Connecticut.)
- Chirp.** Substituted in the United States for the English "crick."
- Chirp (to).** To be merry, cheerful. Adapted from the chirping of birds, insects.  
Still provincial in England.
- Chirpy.** Cheerful, contented.
- Chisel (to).** To cheat, to defraud, to swindle. Said to be a Western phrase.  
*To go full chisel*, equiv. to the phrases "full drive" and "full split," i. e. going with earnestness, with great speed, the metaphor being derived from the quick glancing-off motion resulting from an ill-delivered chisel stroke.
- Chitlins.** A contraction of chitterlings, for rags, tatters.  
*All to chitlins*, all to pieces.
- Chitter.** To call in question one's right to a thing, to stop to question one's right.
- Chivalry.** A term often applied to Southern gentry and their peculiar social views.  
Claimed as a proud title by Southerners, but always heard and used at the North with a shade of contempt.  
The abbreviated form *chiv* is also used to designate a Southerner.
- Chivaree** (Fr. *charivari*). A terrific uproar produced by kettles, frying-pans and horns, accompanied by shouts and cries, and the singing of rather low songs under the windows of the newly married, especially if they are in advanced years or have been married before. Disapproval of unpopular persons is also expressed in the same way, and by extension the name is now applied to any tumultuous discord.  
The *chivaree* is especially prevalent in the rural communities, and its custom extends to nearly all over the United States, especially in the districts having a sprinkling of French population, as in Louisiana, Alabama, etc. In French Canada, the word *charivari* is still preserved.  
Also, *shivaree*.
- Chivarros**, *teche-var'-ros* (prob. Sp. *chavari*, a kind of cloth). In Texas, leggins made of strong cloth or leather.  
See *sherryvallies*.
- Chock (to).** Much used in America in sense of to fill up, to crowd to over-flowing.  
Still provincial in England.



**Chockfull, Chuckfull.** Entirely full, an English provincialism quoted by Halliwell, and which is in general use in the United States.

**Chock up.** Close, tight ; said of a thing which fits closely to another.

**Chogset** (Ind.). A common name, in New England, for a small fish (*Ctenolabrus ceruleus*) known in New York as the *burqall*, or *blue fish*, and *blue perch*.

Other names are *conner*, and *nibbler*, from the wicked delight it takes in nibbling off the fisherman's bait.

**Choke.** The alluvial deposit which silts up at the mouths of rivers, etc.

**Choke-berry** (*Pyrus arbutifolia*). A somewhat stunted apple-tree, the fruit of which is possessed of astringent qualities.

**Choke-cherry** (*Prunus Virginiana*). A plant, so called from its astringent properties.

**Choke off.** To forcibly obstruct or stop a person in the execution of a purpose. To interrupt, to frustrate. A slang and figurative expression, borrowed from the act of choking a dog to make him loose his hold.

**Chomp** (corrupt. of *champ*). To chew loudly, and especially to eat or chew up greedily.

*Chomp* is also a pronunciation commonly used, instead of *champ*, in North of England.

**Chompins.** The masticated refuse of fruit.

Also, *champins*.

**Choose.** Sometimes used, by the uneducated, with the peculiar meaning of "to choose not to take." For instance, "I don't *choose* any" would mean "I will not take any."

**Choque-mort** (Fr. C.). A species of mullet abounding on the coast of Gaspé, province of Quebec.

Elsewhere known as *yoget*.

**Chore (to).** To do odd jobs.

**Chore-boy.** An errand-boy.

**Chores** (of same root as Eng. "charwoman," and pronounced "tshores").

A small job or work of a domestic character ; the miscellaneous duties of a barn-yard. Mainly used in the plural, as doing *chores*.

The maid that milks  
And does the meanest *chares*.

(SHAKESPEARE, Antony and Cleopatra.)

"Char," in England, is used both as a noun and a verb in much the same sense.

**Chouse.** (1) To cheat, to defraud. Now classed as slang in England, but looked upon as orthodox in America, where it is applied to all kinds of fraudulent dealing and deceit.

(2) To put forcibly into.

Also, to *chowzle*.

**Chowder** (Fr. *chaudière*). A corrupted French word designating a dish of fish, pork, onions and biscuit, invented by the Canadian "voyageurs"—perhaps aided in the task by recollections of the "bouillabaisse"—and so named from the receptacle in which the savoury mess was compounded. Cider and champagne are sometimes added.

**Chowder excursion.** A pic-nic by the sea, so called in that a *chowder* forms the "pièce de résistance."

**Chowderhead.** A dunce, or dunderhead. In Anglo-Chinese slang "chowder" stands for a fool, and "chowder-head" may be derived therefrom, without its having any connection with the American "chowder."

**Christian Scientists.** A new sect, whose distinctive doctrine is that disease is all a matter of imagination, and that faith is the only healer.

**Chromo civilization.** An invention of the late J. R. Dennett, and a term admirably suited to the gilt and tinsel, so to say the surface polish, which characterizes the civilization of the present time.

It is notorious that, in America, chromo lithographic prints are sent out in shoals, and are generally a sorry would-be substitute for the genuine article.

**Chub.** (1) A local name, in Texas, for the *tautaug* or *blackfish*.

(2) In Connecticut, a round squash.

**Chub-sucker** (*Erimyzon sucetta*). An ungainly sea-fish, otherwise called the *horned-sucker*.

**Chuck.** (1) In thieves' argot, refreshments, delicacies.

Also, money.

(2) A clipped form of wood-chuck.

**Chuck (to).** In parts of Pennsylvania and Ohio, to strike, as "to *chuck* one a blow on the ear."

In England, to chuck is sometimes used in sense of to throw, or impel, with a quick motion.

Is but a ball chuck'd between France and Spain.

His in whose hand she drops.

(TENNYSON, *Queen Mary*, iii. 1.)

**Chuck-a-chuck.** A gambling game played in the West with dice.

**Chucklehead.** An idiot, a block-head.

**Chuck-hole.** Mud-hole, slough.

**Chuck-will's-widow** (*Caprimulgus Carolinensis*). The common name, in the South, of a bird of the whip-poor-will family, so called from the peculiar notes of this bird resembling the sound "Chuck-will's-widow."

**Chum.** In college slang, a room mate.

**Chump.** In college slang, a queer or even stupid fellow, literally as unintelligent as a chump of wood. A butt for wit, a blunderer.

**Chumpy.** In college slang, foolish, stupid. Also, mean, contemptible.

**Chunk.** (1) A short, stout piece of wood, or of any thing else. Still provincial in England.

(2) In Southern and Western parlance, anything short and thick. Hence a *chunk* of a pony for a cob. We even hear of a small *chunk* of sentiment or patriotism.

**Chunk (to).** To throw sticks or chips at one. Used in South and South-West, especially in the alluvial region of the Mississippi, where there are no stones. Sometimes, in that region, *to chunk* will also be used in sense of throwing a clod of earth at some one or animal.

**Chunked.** In the South-West, sense of impudent or bold.

**Chunker.** In New Jersey, a coal boat used on the canal.

**Chunk-head.** (*Trigonocephalus contortrix*). A name of the red-snake, or copper-head.

**Chunky.** Short and thick, as applied to the stature of a person. Hence, a small-built man is chunky built.

Also, *stocky*.

**Chunk-yard.** A name given by white traders to oblong four-square yards adjoining the high mounds and rotundas common in Florida, and supposed to have been built by the Seminole Indians.

Also, *chunkee-yard*.

This is doubtless an Indian term, *chunkee* having been once the Indian name of a game played, in an enclosure as above described, with a flat, round stone, and a pole about eight feet long.

**Church (to).** Sometimes used in sense of to try or investigate before the church on the charge of some offense unbecoming a church member.

**Church house.** A meeting house, or building used for religious services.

**Church-maul.** A New-England vulgarism, equivalent to the English slang phrase "calling over the coals," when the jurisdiction is one of an ecclesiastical character.

**Chute** (Fr.). A cascade, a waterfall, or any place of a river where the waters rush through with great fury. Also, a [river which has been artificially] contracted, in order to increase the depth of water.

(2) In the Mississippi region (esp. Louisiana), a bayou or narrow portion of a river. Also, an artificial conduit.

(3) An inclined plane, for lowering wood and timber by sliding.

(4) In the Far West, a rush, a stampede; a hasty, confused migration, applied to men and animals in a body.

Also, *shoot, shute* (q. v.).

**Cider-oil.** A concentrated decoction of cider, to which honey is subsequently added.

Also, *cider-royal*, which was probably the original name.

**Cimarron,** se-mar-rone' (Sp.). In Texas, used in sense of wild, as applied to plants.

Also used as a noun for shy, bashful, children.

**Cinch** (Sp. *cincha*, a girth). In the West and South-West a saddle-girth made of leather, canvas, or woven horsehair, and more specifically the girth nearer the shoulders of the horse.

Figuratively, a sure thing. Also, in college slang, an easy or agreeable study or occupation, something obtained or done without difficulty.

To have a *cinch* on a person, i. e. to have a bind or a dead-pull on him.

To have a *cinch* on a thing, i. e. to have it tied up securely.

An intensified form is a *lead-pipe cinch*, coming from the fact that stable boys have sometimes used lengths of half-inch lead pipe instead of rawhide as cinches to bind their saddles.

**Cinch (to).** To put the cinch on a horse, to pull a saddle-girth tight.

Figuratively, to have the grip on, to put the screw on. To make sure of anything,

*To be cinched*, a Californian localism signifying to come out on the wrong side in mining speculations.

**Cincinnati oysters.** Pigs' trotters, or pigs' feet. Many examples can be given of this strange perversion of names: Albany beef, Marble-head turkey, etc.

Similarly, in England, a fish herring is called a Billingsgate pheasant, a Yarmouth bloater, a two-eyed steak, etc.

**Cipher Despatches.** Allusion is often made to the celebrated Cipher Despatches which emanated from the Democratic headquarters in New York, during the contested Presidential campaign of 1876. Some of those despatches having come, after the election, into the possession of the New York Tribune, the key was most ingeniously discovered, thus throwing in full light corrupt dealings of the most flagrant nature in connection with the bribery of State-returning boards.

**Circle.** A spiritualist's term for a gathering of people assembled for the purpose of holding communication with spirits. Originally restricted, in

its meaning, to a gathering sitting around a table in a circle, for table tipping and rapping, but, later on, extended to include all meetings at which spirit communication is practiced.

**Circle-riding.** A cowboy's term, on the plains and ranches, applied to the riding of herdsmen on circles converging to a common centre, for the purpose of driving in all stray beasts they may come across.

**Circulate.** Often used in sense of to travel, to move. Thus a gentleman, who travels on the American railways, will be said to circulate, as if he were a bank-note.

Also, to circulate in good society, etc.

**Circumstance.** Often used half-humourously, and almost always negatively, in sense of a trifle, a thing of no importance. "That was *not* a *circumstance* to what happened to me."

See *priming*.

*To whip something into a circumstance*, meaning that the thing whipped is thrown into the shade, or compares unfavorably with the object of comparison.

**Ciscovet** (Ind. *siskivit*). A beautiful fish (*Salmo amethystus*) of the trout family, but possessing a flesh much more delicate than the trout proper.

Also called *cisco*.

**Citron.** A species of candied fruit made from the melon, and so called from its resemblance to the fruit of the citron-tree.

**Citron-melon.** The popular name of the variety of melon, employed in making the crystallized fruit called *citron*.

**City.** Almost any collection of dwellings, large enough for its inhabitants to despise the name of village; even sometimes a mere collection of cabins, tents, and shanties, which in England would hardly be dignified with the name of hamlet.

The settlers and miners of the West are no doubt the greatest sinners in this respect, as all their mining camps are called cities, but other parts of the country, and even New England, are far from being free from such an abuse of terms.

**City College.** A cant term for the prison of the Tombs in New York city.

**City of baked beans.** The city of Boston, from its supposed predilection for baked beans.

**City of brick.** The city of Pullman, in Illinois.

**City of Brotherly Love.** The city of Philadelphia, from the two Greek roots (*philos*, love; *adelphos*, brother) forming its name.

Also, *Quaker City*.

**City of Churches.** The city of Brooklyn, N. Y. from the number and beauty of its ecclesiastical edifices.

**City of Colleges.** The city of Toronto, in Canada, from its numerous educational establishments.

**City of Elms.** The city of New-Haven, in Connecticut, from the numerous elm-trees which adorn its public places.

Also, *Elm City*.

**City of the Golden Gate.** The city of San Francisco, in California, from the celebrated Golden Gate forming the entrance to its port.

Also called *City of the Hundred Hills*, *Frisco* (abb. of San Francisco), and *Golden City*.

**City of Magnificent Distances.** The city of Washington, D. C., from its many public buildings being isolated one from another, and built on carefully selected sites.

Other names are *Executive City* and *Federal City*.

**City of Notions.** The city of Boston. A sarcastic allusion, partly to the thousand and one articles of utility, forming one of the staples of trade of Boston, and partly to the assumption of intellectual superiority of its inhabitants.

**City of Rocks.** The city of Nashville, Tennessee, from its being built literally upon a rock, at a considerable elevation.

**City of Soles.** The city of Lynn, Massachusetts, from its numerous and extensive shoe factories.

**City of Spindles.** The city of Lowell, Massachusetts, from its being one of the largest centres of cotton manufacture in the United States.

**City of the Straits.** The city of Detroit, Michigan, from *strait* being a translation of the French *détroit*, a name given by the French founders of the city, on account of its being situated upon a narrow neck of land, connecting Lake Erie with Lake St. Clair.

**City of Witches.** The city of Salem, Massachusetts, from the famous episodes in connection with the belief in witchcraft, which belong to the history of that town.

**Civil Service Reform.** A system adopted under the Cleveland administration, which obviates to the removal of officers for partisan reasons, and also, in the same time, prevents appointments to offices as rewards for partisan services.

**Clabbek** (Old Eng.). A survival of old English usage, for thick milk, in Pennsylvania and the South.

“Clubber” is still provincial in England.

**Claggy.** In the South, often heard in sense of heavy, in speaking of bread.

**Claim.** Primarily, a piece of land, or the mining property, marked out by a settler or prospector. Hence, a piece of land allotted to one, and colloquially a dwelling or resting place.

**Claim (to).** In the Northern States, to assert, to state as a fact, to profess.

Other forms are *calculate, expect, guess, reckon.*

**Claim-jumper.** A land grabber, i. e. one who violently seizes another's claim. This practice was frequent in the early days of the country, but now-a-days the settler has to go through a regular routine when "locating his claim."

**Claim-jumping.** The taking by violence of another's claim.

**Claireur** (Fr. C.). Among French Canadian lumbermen, one who goes about tramping down the snow, and removing the branches and remnants of trees from the path of the log-sleighs.

**Clam.** The popular name of the common shell-fish, found in the sand of tidal rivers, and of which there exist two varieties: the hard clam (quahog), and the soft clam (mananosay).

The shell-fish *clam* derives its English name very probably from its resemblance to a clamp, and this last word was even the only one used for a long while.

You shall scarce find any bay....where you may not take many *clamps* or lobsters....

(Capt. JOHN SMITH, *Virginia, I.*, p. 124.)

**Clam-bait.** The soft clam, when salted for the fisheries.

**Clam-bake.** (1) A dish of clams, baked in an impromptu stove of stones and weeds, in the primitive style of the Indians.

Also called *Indian bed.*

(2) A feast, or banquet, often having a political character, at which "clam-bakes" are freely indulged in. Especially a Rhode-Island institution.

**Clam-banks.** Beds or banks, where clams abound.

**Clam-catchers.** A nickname applied to the inhabitants of New Jersey, clam catching being the principal occupation of many of the poorer classes of that State on the Raritan Bay shoals.

**Clamish.** Happy, contented.

*Happy as a clam at high-water,* a New-England proverb of widely extended usage, and eminently representative of contentment and happiness.

**Clam-shell.** A slang expression for the lips, or mouth, which is common enough in New England, especially among the sea-coast people.

.....of you let your *clamshells* gape.....

(LOWELL, *Biglow Papers*, II., 19.)

*Clam-shell padlock.* De Vere mentions that even the Government of the United States condescends to allow its patent locks on mail-bags to be officially designated as *clam-shells*.

**Clankers.** A cant word for silver, pitchers, and the like.

**Clapboard.** A thin, narrow board, from three to four feet long, used in the construction of farm-houses.

Considerable difference of opinion exists as to the derivation of the term. Dr. Elwyn, of Philadelphia, inclines to the opinion that the word is the same as the English provincialism "clapboard" which, in the North of England, stands for a thin, smooth board on which a certain kind of bread is "clapped," called "clapbread." Bartlett, on the other hand, insists that the term was originally formed from "clove-board," or board made by "cleaving."

Also, *shake*.

**Clapboard (to).** To cover with clapboards.

**Clape** (*Picus amatus*). The common name of the golden-winged woodpecker. Said to have been an old provincialism, introduced by the English colonists.

Other names are *flicker*, *high-hole*, *pigeon woodpecker*, *pique-bois jaune* (Louisiana), *wake-up*, *yellow-hammer*, *yucker*.

**Clapper-creamers.** Milk jugs furnished with swinging covers to exclude flies.

**Clapper-rail.** A name applied to a salt-water bird of the Gulf of Mexico.

Also called *marsh-hen* (q. v.).

**Clark.** Stands for clerk in Virginia and some parts of the South, as at the time when the Old Dominion was settled.

.....while his *clarkes* were feasting of it.....

(PEPYS DIARY, July 30, 1662.)

In the North, "clurk."

**Class-baby.** In college slang, the first child born to a member of a class after graduation. Also, the youngest member of a class.

**Class-day.** In college parlance, a day of the commencement season devoted, by the graduating class, to exercises of a more or less formal nature, and even to social entertainments.



**Classic City.** The city of Boston, from the famous classic learning of its inhabitants.

**Clatterments.** Belongings, accoutrements. (Tennessee mountains.)

**Clatterwhacking.** A clatter, a racket, being a factitious compound of "to clatter," and "to whack."

**Clatty.** Untidy, dishevelled. A similar meaning attaches to the word in Lowland Scotch.

**Claw out.** To make excuses. To get out of an embarrassment, and the like. "He'll *claw out* of it in some way."

**Claybank.** A Texas word for a color of a yellowish dun, approaching the color of a bank of clay.

**Clay-eaters.** A name given to the poor whites of some remote regions of the South, especially remote counties of South Carolina, who appease their craving for more substantial food by eating quantities of soft, white, aluminous clay, abounding everywhere.

Also a nickname applied sometimes to natives of South Carolina.

**Clean cut.** Used adjectively in sense of sharp, crisp, to the point.

Thus, the sermons of an American divine have been spoken of as specimens of rare, *clean cut* preaching.

See *clear cut*.

**Clean gone.** In New England, used for entirely gone, out of sight.

Of frequent occurrence in Shakespeare, especially in sense of out of sight.

**Clean thing.** A vulgarism, denoting propriety, or what is honorable.

Thus, "to do the clean thing," is to do the thing that is morally right.

**Clean up.** (1) In cowboy parlance, to clean up a herd is to separate from a mixed lot of cattle all the animals of same ranch or brand.

(2) In gold-mining, the operation of separating the gold after the auriferous gravel has been for a certain length of time through the sluices.

Also, substantively, the gold itself obtained at a given time by the above process.

**Clear.** Often used to mean "undiluted," in speaking of liquids.

In England, neat or transparent.

**Clear-cut.** Used adjectively for real, sterling, honest. Compare with *clean-cut*.

**Clear grit.** A person of superior worth or genuineness, as distinguished from one inferior who is only "chaff."

Decided, honest, unalloyed.

Other forms are *real grit*, *true grit*.

**Clear-grits.** In Canadian politics, a name applied, in 1855, to a strong faction of the Liberal party of Upper Canada, who, under the guidance of George Brown, had then inaugurated a crusade against the French element of Lower Canada.

See *Grits*.

**Clearing.** A settler's tract of land, which has been "cleared" of wood, and is ready for cultivation. The word *clearing* obtains, irrespective of field or cabin being visible or not on the settler's place.

**Clear out.** To disappear, to go away, to decamp. Also, *to dig out, to skip*.

Either borrowed from the custom-house, or from the Western usage of "clearing out" trees, in order to afford room for a settlement.

Now common on both sides of the Atlantic.

**Clear swing.** *To get a clear swing*, i. e. to get ample scope or a good opportunity.

Also, *full swing*.

**Clear the skirts.** To vindicate the political character, to clear it from taint.

You do not in the least touch the question, nor do you *clear the skirts* of Gen Grant and of your party, for the basest treachery to the people.

(Letter in *New York Tribune*.)

**Clear the track.** A figure borrowed from railway parlance, and meaning to clear a way, either figuratively or literally, of all obstructions.

In the imperative tense is a favorite admonition, when summoning persons to get out of one's way.

**Clearty.** A Scotch word sometimes heard in sense of sticky, as of soil that sticks to the plough.

**Clearweed** (*Pilea pumila*). A species of nettle, so called from its semi-transparent stems.

Also, *richwood*.

**Clerk (to).** To engage oneself as clerk in a store, to act as a clerk. Especially common in the West.

Also, *to clerk it*.

**Clevel.** In New England, a grain of corn.

Also, *clevil*.

**Clever.** Used in the United States in two senses: one implying a compound of good nature, honesty and obligingness; the other, which is the accepted definition in England, implying an active, alert, adroit, ready use of means in the power of the user. That is to say, an American *clever* man is one who adapts himself easily to the ways and

wishes of those around him, while the *clever* Englishman would be more akin to one who is called here a "smart" man.

Still provincial, in American sense, in several parts of England.

It must also be remarked that the American *clever* is only heard colloquially, and is even then fast getting superseded by the English sense of the word.

**Cleverly.** Sometimes heard, in New England, in sense of possibly, reasonably. "As soon as I *cleverly* can."

**Cleverness.** Amiable disposition of mind, kindness. (New England.) Obligingness, good nature.

**Cling, Clingstone.** A popular name for a variety of peaches in which the pulp adheres firmly to the stones.

Those of which the reverse can be said are called *free-stones*.

**Clingjohn.** A rye cake lightly baked.

**Clink.** In New Jersey, used of two chairs which are tilted so as partially to support each other, each having two legs on the floor.

**Clinker-built.** A variation of the English term "clinker-built," applied to a class of boats in which the lower edge of every plank overlays the next under it.

Also used idiomatically to convey the idea of absolute certainty, or completeness in its way, thoroughness.

**Clip.** A blow, or stroke with the hand.

Still provincial in England. Bailey and Halliwell have a "clap" for a blow.

**Clip (to).** To give a blow.

**Clipper-ship.** A sailing-ship built expressly for speed, from to clip, i. e. to fly, to cut the air or waves.

Though American in origin, the term has now ceased to be exclusive to the United States.

The clipper-ships owed their origin to the eager competition for the new trade which sprang up between the Pacific coast and the Atlantic sea-ports, after California had been incorporated in the Union.

**Clockmutch** (Dutch *klap-muts*, a night cap). A New-York provincialism designating a quaint, though not unbecoming woman's cap, composed of three pieces, a straight centre one, from the forehead to the neck, with two side-pieces. The *clockmutch* is still worn by some old-fashioned ladies, and a fair representation of it is often seen in Gerard Dow's paintings.

Also *clapmatch*, which besides being used in the above sense, is applied moreover to the designation of a certain kind of sealskin.

**Close.** Scarce or difficult to obtain, in speaking of money. In England, "tight" is more generally used.

**Close-herding.** A cowboy's term for the difficult art of keeping cattle together in a close body.

By extension, to keep closely together, in speaking of persons, as when a sheriff, out West, will talk of *close-herding* several prisoners in his charge.

**Close one's peepers.** To go to sleep.

**Close out.** In trading parlance, to clear out, to dispose of without reserve.

**Clothier.** A term applied both to the manufacturer of cloth, as well as to the merchant converting it into garments.

**Clotten house.** In Newfoundland, a poor one-story house, built of small hewn sticks, set vertically.

Also called a *tilt*.

**Cloud.** A large woollen knit wrap for the head. Now, as well known in England.

The French-Canadians have literally translated the word into "nuage."

**Cloudburst.** The climax of a storm.

**Cloud up.** To become overcast, to grow cloudy, in speaking of the sky. "The sky is *clouded up*."

**Clove** (Dutch *klove*, a cleft). Along the Hudson river, and especially in the Catskills, a narrow gap or valley, a ravine, a gorge.

Somewhat analogous to the *notch* of New England.

**Club-tail.** A common name applied to the shad, on the coast of Carolina, from the swollen aspect of the tail of this fish, at certain seasons of the year, when fattened up.

**Cluckers.** In Southern Jersey, a name applied to frozen oysters.

See *rattlers*.

**Coach.** In college slang, the director of any athletic team. Used generally, as the foot-ball coach.

**Coachwhip.** A name applied to a harmless colubrine serpent of the genus "Masticophis," inhabiting southerly portions of the United States.

**Coal.** The anthracite coal is thus classified, according to the different sizes offered for sale :

1. Furnace coal ; 2. Egg coal ; 3. Stove ; 4. Chestnut ; 5. Pea or nut ; 6. Coal dust.

**Coast (on the).** Near at hand, hard by. Said by DeVere to be peculiar to Nantucket fishermen.

**Coast (to).** In boy's parlance, to slide down a frozen or snow-covered hill on a sled. (New York and New England.)

Now used in England by cyclists in the sense of going down a hill.

**Coasting.** The amusement of sliding down hills in winter.

**Coat.** Used in the South for "petticoat." This contraction is also provincial in some parts of England.

**Cob.** The stalk of maize or Indian corn. When the kernels are attached to it, it is called an *ear*.

Probably from the old English word "cob," meaning the top or head.

**Cobbler.** (1) A drink concocted of wine, sugar, lemon, and pounded ice, and imbibed through straws or other tubes.

(2) A Western dish, consisting in a kind of open fruit pie, with a very thick layer of dough.

**Cocash** (Ind.). A plant (*Erigeron canadense*) much used by the Northern Indians for medical purposes.

Also called *squaw-weed*.

Both names are also given to another medicinal plant (*Senecio aureus*) used for diseases of the skin.

**Cochranites.** A rather notorious sect who, for some time, scandalized the communities of New England by public exhibitions of so gross a character, that the authorities were more than once compelled to intervene in behalf of public order and decency. Among other articles of faith, the "Cochranites" were claiming to have arrived at such a state of perfection that they had become angels or seraphs, and as such could appear in public in the traditional garb of our first parents.

**Cock of the plains** (*Centrocercus urophasianus*). A species of prairie-fowl, so called by Audubon, to signify his appreciation of the size and beauty of that bird.

This fine grouse is however more commonly known as the *sage-hen*.

**Cocktail.** A stimulating beverage, made of some liquor, mixed with bitters, sugar and a little water, or crushed ice.

**Coco-grass.** A weedy plague of the South, much dreaded by planters, as, when once fairly rooted, it will speedily ruin any field.

**Cocum.** See *poke-berry*.

**C. O. D.** Collect or cash on delivery.

Letters put upon packages sent by express, and meaning that payment for same has to be made on delivery.

Hence, also, the colloquial use of the initials C. O. D. to signify regularity and frequency

**Codfish aristocracy.** A name applied, especially in New England, to "parvenus" deficient in intelligence and good manners, from supposing that their money was made out of the fisheries.

**Co-ed** (abb. of co-educate). In college slang, used adjectively of an institution educating both sexes.

**Coffee-tree** (*Gymnocladus canadensis*). An ornamental tree with valuable wood, and so called from its seeds being at times used as a substitute for coffee. This was especially the case during the Civil War.

Also called *Kentucky coffee-tree*, and *Kentucky locust*.

**Coheses.** A nickname given to certain communities of Western Pennsylvania, from their use of the archaic form *quo' he*, i. e. "quoth he."

**Cohog** (Ind.). A beautiful w elk bearing the scientific name of "Venus mercenaria," from its being a substitute among Indians for money.

Also *quahaug*.

See *peac*, *seawan*, *wampum*.

**Cohosh** (Ind.). An Indian name for a well known medicinal herb (*Actæa racemosa*), comprising several varieties, the best known of which are the blue, white, and black *cohosh*.

See *pappoose root*.

**Coker-sack.** In parts of the South, a sack of heavy stuff for corn, bran, etc.

**Colcannon night.** Almost universal in St John, Newfoundland, for Hallowe'en, and used by those who eat colcannon on that night.

**Cold.** At game of poker, *cold* or a *cold deck* is a good hand or a packed hand, i. e. a good hand right at the very start, without the necessity of drawing fresh cards.

(2) Certain, positive: *cold cash*. "I give it out *cold* that I will do it."

(3) Stale. *Cold bread* is stale bread.

(4) Distant. Said in New England of one who, in play hunting to find a thing concealed, is remote from it.

**Cold flour.** A back-woodman's dish, consisting of parched and pulverized maize mixed with sugar, and stirred into a paste with water.

Also known as *nocake* (New England), and *pinole* (Spanish districts).

**Cold scald.** A double misfortune or trouble, the idea conveyed being that of getting frozen and scalded at one and the same time.

**Cold shut.** Among trappers, out West, a split ring, which can be fastened by hammering, and which is used to make fast a trap's chain to a log.

**Cold-slaw** (Dutch *kool-slaa*, cabbage salad). A salad consisting of cabbage leaves cut fine, and dressed with vinegar and oil, pepper and salt. The term, it may be remarked, is a very curious corruption of the original word, the prefix *cold* having been substituted to *kool* from an utter ignorance of the latter's foreign etymology, and simply through an innate desire to twist an unfamiliar word into a more pleasant shape.  
See *hot-slaw*.

**Colima**, co-lee'-mah (Sp.). In Texas, a species of dwarf prickly ash (*Xanthoxylum pterola*).

**Collect** (Dutch *kolk*, a pit, a lake). A depression in which rain water forms a temporary pond; a large puddle.

A portion of New York—the neighborhood of the Tombs and Five Points—was formerly, on that account, known as “The Collect.”

**Collect (to)**. To receive money, without any connotation of gathering together. “To collect accounts.”

A contraction for “to collect payments.”

**Collector**. The principal officer, in a custom-house. Equivalent to the superintendent of the English service.

**Collide**. A collision.

**Collide (to)**. To come in collision with. Formerly confined to railway phraseology, but now extended to mean any collision whatever, i. e. the violent meeting of vessels, persons, etc.

The term is a good English word, which has simply fallen into disuse in England, but is now again making its way into popular favor.

**Collier**. In New Jersey, used for a charcoal-burner.

**Colonel**. A courtesy title of all work, whether one has served with the colors or not.

A similar laxity is observable as regards professional titles, such as judge, professor, etc. Indeed, so numerous are colonels and judges in the United States as to lead one to suppose that the entire population has gathered unto itself the quintessence of the earth, as far as martial valor and legal learning are concerned.

**Color**. In mining parlance, a “speck of gold.”

**Colorado beetle**. An insect pest about half-an-inch long, and, in color, yellow striped with black, whose name has especially become, unhappily, too familiar to growers of potatoes.

Also called *potato bug*.

**Colored**. A euphemism applied to negroes, and which was especially most rife during the period immediately succeeding the Civil War, when the Republicans were striving to enhance the importance of the black man.

Other terms of contempt, sickly philanthropy, and humor, as the case may be, are *contraband*, *niggers*, *freemen*, and *unbleached Americans*.

Also used adjectively, in sense of pertaining to the negroes. "The *colored vote*."

**Comal** (Mex. *comalli*). In Texas, a slightly hollow utensil of stone or earthenware on which "tortillas" are cooked or baked.

**Combine**. A combination of persons for a common object, as for instance a trade union.

Used with same meaning as *trust*, but supposed not to be quite so distasteful to opponents of monopolies.

**Come (to)**. This verb is used in a variety of slang ways, many of which are, no doubt, of English origin, although it is very difficult to draw the line with any degree of precision.

*To come around*, to entice, to lure, to prevail upon.

*To come down*, to abate prices. Also, to furnish money, equiv. of "to stump it."

*To come down from the walls*, to abandon one's position, to retire.

*To come in with*, to bring forth, to litter. (N. Eng.)

*To come it over*, to convince by argument, to get the advantage of one.

*To come it strong*, to work vigorously, to act with force.

*To come off*, to occur.

*To come out*, (1) to make a profession of one's belief or religion. An expression used among certain religious enthusiasts.

(2) To fare in an undertaking. "How did you come out of it?"

Hence *to come out of the little end of the horn*, an allusion to the thin end of the horn of plenty, meaning "to fare badly."

(3) To make one's first appearance in society, in speaking especially of a young maiden.

*To come up to the chalk*, to come up to the mark, to fulfill one's promises, to perform one's duty. Equiv. to the Eng. "coming up to the scratch."

*To come upon the town*, in New England, to be supported at the public charge, or in the poor-house.

*To come up smiling*, to be impervious to rebuff or disaster; to meet defeat without flinching.

**Come-alongs**. Articles of twine or wire, used by policemen in lieu of handcuffs.

**Come-by-chance**. Used, in parts of New England, in speaking of an illegitimate child.

**Come down**. Used as a substantive in sense of a fall, whether of pride or worldly prospects.

**Come out**. Used as a substantive in sense of something to admire, praise, or commend. "There is some *come out* in him after all."



**Come-outers.** A cant term applied, especially in New England and the Northern States, to all those who have come out from the religious organizations with which they were previously connected, and who, holding aloof from any distinctive bodies, profess to be independent concerning matters of faith.

Somewhat analogous to the "libres-penseurs" of France.

**Comical.** Has in the South the meaning of strange, or extraordinary.

The French-Canadians have also the word *drôle* (funny) used in same sense.

**Comitiek** (Ind.). A sort of sledge, drawn by dogs, in use in Labrador.

**Commencement.** Among college students, the closing exercises of the college year, when the degrees are conferred, and the graduates go out to commence active life.

**Common-doings.** Plain every day fare, in opposition to specially prepared dainties, or *chicken-fixings*.

Of Western origin, and at first restricted to the above meaning, but now extended in its application to persons, actions, and things in general of an inferior kind.

**Commons.** In college slang, board furnished to the students by purveyors on behalf of the college. Also, the dining rooms or buildings where the students partake of the college fare.

**Company.** A name applied, in California, to an amalgamation of five societies, maintaining a sort of Chinese intelligence and assurance office on a large scale.

**Compass-plant** (*Silphium laciniatum*). A plant, so called from its leaves being supposed to point north and south.

Also called *rosin-weed*.

**Complected.** Complexioned, of a certain complexion. Usually, with the addition of another word, as *light-complected*, etc.

**Compliment.** In the South-West, synonym with present.

**Comprador** (Sp.). An agent, sub-contractor, or boss stevedore, in the formerly Spanish States.

**Conastogas.** See *conestogas*.

**Conceit (to).** To have in view, to think, to form an idea. Equiv. to reckon, guess, calculate. (Interior of New England.)

Formerly colloquial in England in sense of to think, but now obsolete, although the substantive conceit still lingers in a somewhat similar sense.

**Conceity.** Over particular. "He's too *conceity* about what he eats."

**Concern.** A term much used in the mercantile world, as applying to a certain business without regard to size.

Provincial in England and Ireland, where it denotes a small estate.

**Concession.** In Cañada, a subdivision of a township, bordered by a public road.

**Conch.** (1) A name applied to the inhabitants of the Bahamas, and of the Keys of the Florida reef, from their extensive use of the flesh from concho as food.

(2) A name applied, in Key West, to a wrecker.

(3) A name applied to white inhabitants of parts of North Carolina.

Also written *conk*, *conck*, *konk*.

**Conchas** (Sp.). Silver ornaments attached to the spurs worn by cowboys and other plainmen, on high days and holiday occasions. (S. W.)

**Conduct (to).** Frequently used, especially in New England, without the reflexive pronoun, that is, instead of "to conduct oneself."

An offensive barbarism, which has also crept, of late, into the pages of several English writers.

**Conducta**, con-dook-tah (Sp.). The name of the "caravan," in New Mexico, and other formerly Spanish States.

**Conductor.** A railway official, who has entire charge of a train, and whose functions, on the whole, somewhat resemble those of the "guard," in England.

Also *captain*, a sobriquet drawn by analogy from water traffic.

**Conepate** (Mex. *conepatl*). A term used to designate the skunk, in some of the Southern States.

**Conestoga horse.** A breed of large, strong, and heavily-built horses, which was originated in Pennsylvania, and was so named from the Conestoga river.

**Conestogas.** In the West, coarse, rough shoes or boots.

Also, *stogies*.

**Conestoga-wagon.** A covered wagon of a large capacity, specially built for the powerful Conestoga horses.

**Coney.** Counterfeit money.

**Confectionery.** In the South-West, and other parts of the West, a bar-room or saloon.

Also, *grocery*.

**Confederate.** A term applied, during the Civil War, to any person or anything connected with the Confederacy of the Southern States.

In Texas, the word *confederate* is sometimes used in a very singular sense, being then synonymous with the Yankee's "About East." Thus, when wishing to express the strongest possible approval of something, the Texan will be wont to exclaim: "It's mighty *confederate*."

**Confederate States.** A name assumed, in 1861, by the Southern States which seceded from the Union on the question of slavery.

**Congress.** The American Legislature, consisting of a Senate and a House of Representatives. From 1774, until near the close of the Revolution, the Legislature was called the Continental Congress, and it was the Federal Congress which ruled the country from 1781 to 1789.

**Congressional.** Pertaining to the Congress of the United States. Emanating from Congress.

**Congressman.** A member of Congress, and especially a member of the House of Representatives.

**Coniacker.** A counterfeiter of coin.

**Conjecture (to).** Used in New England, with a kind of mental reservation, in same sense as calculate, guess, from the ingrained characteristic of the New-Englander of never venturing upon a direct statement when there is the slightest possibility of mistake.

**Conkerbill.** In the Canadian Maritime provinces and Newfoundland, said of an icicle hanging from the eaves of a house or from a horse's nose.

**Connection (in this).** A favorite New-England phrase, meaning "in connection with this subject."

**Connections.** Persons related by marriage, as distinguished from those united by common descent, and who are called "relations."

The English words kinsman and kinswoman are but rarely heard in the United States.

**Connections (to make close).** Said when trains meet at junctions without causing delay to the traveller.

**Conniption fit.** In New England and New York, often used as a synonym for hysteria, or a state of collapse. Also, an overwrought state of mind, or nervous excitement.

**Connubiate.** To act in concert with, to act with.

**Considerable.** Of frequent occurrence, as adverb or noun, especially in the North, in the sense of much, a good deal, or for emphasizing qualities and quantities as applied to men and things. "He is *considerable* of a doctor. I've heard *considerable* of him."

**Consumpted (to be).** To have consumption of the lungs, to be a phthisic

**Contemplate.** To propose, to intend, to have in view.

An enlarged form is "to have in contemplation."

The French-Canadians make a similar use of the Fr. verb "contempler."

**Continental.** (1) Frequently used for colonial, in the early days of the Independence.

First applied to the Congress of 1774; then to the army raised under its auspices; and then to the money or scrip issued by it.

(2) A trooper, or armed patriot, during the War of Independence.

**Continental dam.** *Not worth a continental dam*, a curious slang phrase handed down from the times of the American Revolution, and which is almost universally applied to the utterly valueless "continental" paper-money of those days.

The phrase is, however, traced back to a very different origin by Richard Grant White, who thinks it is only a mere modification of others of the same sort, as a tinker's, a trooper's damn, etc. A "continental's damn" was at first used, and afterwards the sign of the possession was gradually dropped.

**Continentials.** The uniform of the Continental troops during the War of the Revolution. Used exactly as the term "regimentals" is now employed.

**Continuance.** Sometimes used in sense of remand. This sense has obviously come, by an easy transition, from that which signifies duration.

**Contraband.** A term applied, during the Civil War, to the negro slaves in the South, who were then treated as "contraband of war." General Butler, when first stationed at Fortress Monroe, is credited with the honour of having invented this very happy designation, although the term had previously been applied to negroes in Africa, as slaves or chattels, by captain Canot.

During the Civil War, the negro slave of the South was also often designated, by newspaper correspondents, as the "intelligent contraband."

**Contraption.** A factitious word meaning a contrivance, any new-fangled device.

**Contraptions.** A genuine African vulgarism applied to any new-fangled, peculiar thing or idea, as for instance an extravagant form of dress, an unusual manner of speech, etc.

**Contrive.** Noticed by Witherspoon in the "Druid Letters," in sense of to perform, to do anything by contrivance.

Bartlett says the word can still be heard in remote parts of New England, but we incline to think that it has come to be now nearly altogether obsolete.

**Convenient.** Has assumed, in the United States, the new meaning of near at hand, within easy reach. "Wood and water *convenient* to the house."

**Convention.** An assembly of delegates to accomplish a specific object, civil, political, or ecclesiastical.

The most important conventions are those held, by the different political parties, for the purpose of nominating candidates for the Presidency. The delegates number many hundred, and the vote is recorded as the roll of States is called from the presiding officer's desk.

In former times, that is, before increased facilities for travel, in a country as large as the United States, had really made possible the assembling of National Conventions, it was in Washington that general nominations were made, the Congressmen representing the two great parties meeting in caucus for the purpose.

**Coodies.** The name of a political party which originated, in 1814, in the State of New York.

So called from Abimelek Coody, a fictitious name for Gulian C. Verplank, a distinguished writer, who under cover of the above signature, was the originator of the party in a series of well-written articles published in a New York paper.

A full account will be found in Hammond's Political History of New York.

**Coof.** In Nantucket, Mass., a local term for all "off-islanders."

**Cookey** (Dutch *koekje*, little cake). A little tit-bit; a small, flat, sweet cake.

Also used for small cakes of various other forms, with or without sweetening.

See *oly-cook*.

He's lost every hoof and hide, I'll bet a *cookey*!

(Bret Harte, Luck of Roaring Camp, p. 227.)

**Cook-house.** (1) In the Southern States, a small detached building for cook's use. An out-door kitchen.

(2) On board ship, the cook's galley.

**Cooler.** (1) The calaboose, or police station.

(2) A refreshing beverage, a drink of spirits.

(3) In college slang, a sharp retort, or a treatment purposely rude.

**Cooling-board.** A ghastly name given in Pennsylvania and Maryland to the board or slab upon which a dead body is laid out.

**Coolwort** (*Tiarella cordifolia*). A medicinal herb, celebrated for its diuretic and tonic qualities, and which is one of the far-famed remedies of the Shakers.

**Coon.** (1) A shortened and popular form of *raccoon* (q. v.).

(2) A common term for a negro.

(3) A political nickname first applied, in 1840, to members of the Whig party, either because, as some claim, that party adopted the skin

of the raccoon as a kind of badge, or as a derisive epithet suggestive of the known character of the animal, up to all manner of shifts in self-defense.

(4) A *gone coon* is said of a man who finds himself in a serious or hopeless difficulty. A forcible phrase drawn from the idea of a coon which has been "treed."

See *gone coon*.

**Coon's age.** A common expression, in the South, for any long period of time.

**Cooner.** A common term, at the South, for a canoe.

**Coonery.** Whiggery, from the word "coon" having been applied to members of the Whig party. Hence also perhaps, in the Southern States, the whimsical corruption of "chicanery," which they have travestied into "shecoonery," as though it were a sort of mild feminine whiggery.

**Coon-oyster.** In New Jersey, a small oyster attached to the sedge, rather than to its usual solid supports.

**Coontie** (Ind.). An arrow-root indigenous in Florida (*Tamia integrifolia*), and from which is obtained a farina which is much esteemed. The root is, however, in its crude state, very poisonous, and much care must be taken in extracting its deadly properties.

**Coop (to).** In political slang, to coop voters is to collect and confine them, as it were in a coop or cage, so as to be sure of their services on election day. For obvious reasons, which need not be further explained, liquor dealers become the usual *coopers* on such occasions.

**Coot.** A small water-fowl (*Fulica*), living in marshes, and which differs considerably from its European namesake.

By extension, often applied also to a stupid or weak-minded person, a simpleton. In this connection, Halliwell notices the old proverbial saying "As stupid as a coot," which is still provincial in England.

**Cooter** (*Cistudo carolina*). A local name, in the South, for the common box-turtle of the United States.

**Copa** (Sp.). In the formerly Spanish States, a land-mark, or any well-known tree or group of trees in the prairie by which travellers or cow-boys are guided.

A diminutive form is *copita*.

**Copperhead.** (1) A venomous and noisome serpent (*Trigonocephalus contortrix*), whose bite is considered as deadly as that of the rattlesnake, and which is so much more dangerous that it gives no warning of its approach or whereabouts.

Other popular names are *chunk-head*, *copper-belly*, *deaf adder*, *dumb rattlesnake*, *red adder*, *red eye*, *red ripper*.

(2) A term of transient currency applied, during the Civil War, to stay-at-home Northern men who sympathised with the South; also to the Peace party, which was suspected of favouring the South.

Equivalent to "secret foe," the copperhead being wont to lye in ambush and strike without warning.

Abbreviated into *cap.*

(3) A term of contempt for the Indian or Redman, among the early Dutch colonists.

**Copperheadism.** Policy of *Copperheads* during the Civil War; sympathy of Northern men for the Confederates.

**Copse.** An abbreviated form of "copsewood," sometimes used for a small wood, or a low growth of shrubs and bushes.

**Coral-berry** (*Symphoricarpos vulgaris*). The Indian currant of Missouri. Also, *Indian currant*.

**Corbigeau,** cor-bee-jo (Fr. C.). The French-Canadian name of a species of curlew (*Numenius hudsonius*), of the Gulf of St Lawrence.

This word is met in some relations of travels of the first years of the 18th century.

**Cord.** (1) A solid measure, equal to 128 cubic ft, used for wood or other coarse material. (Old Eng.)

The French-Canadians similarly use the Fr. word "corde."

Wood thus sold is called *cord-wood*.

(2) In the West, any indefinite and large quantity: "cords of money."

The enlargement of the term is probably due to the plentiful supply of wood, once so common in those regions.

**Cordelle** (Fr.). A Western name for a tow-line.

Also, *to cordelle*, to propel by means of a tow-line.

**Corder.** In colonial times, a town officer who measured fuel by the cord. The term disappeared at the end of the 18th century.

**Corduroy.** To make a corduroy road, over a swamp or marsh.

The roads towards Corinth were *corduroyed* and new ones made.

(U. S. Grant, Personal Memoirs, I. 372.)

**Corduroy road.** In new "clearings," a rough kind of a road, consisting of loose poles or logs laid across a swamp, and so called in allusion to the ribbed appearance of the "corduroy" velvet.

Similarly, a *plank road*; a road made with a flooring of planks laid across the tracks.

**Corn.** A word universally appropriated to maize, in the United States. Also, *Indian corn*.

In England, corn is a generic name for all cerean grain, as wheat, rye, oats, barley. It is also interesting here to remark that most Teutonic peoples are in the habit of specializing the signification of the term, and

denoting by it thier most important cereal. Thus, and although it sometimes includes other varieties, the word "corn" stands primarily for rye in Northern and Central Germany; for spelt in Franconia, Swabia, and most of Switzerland; for oats in Scotland; for barley in Sweden and Ireland.

See *flint corn*, *pop-corn*, *she-corn*.

**Corn balls.** A sweet-meat made of pop-corn and molasses.

**Corn blade.** The leaf of the maize.

**Corn bread.** Maize meal bread which is unfermented with yeast.

**Corn brooms.** Brooms made from the dried seedstalks of a species of maize called *broom-corn*.

**Corn cob.** The spike on which the kernels of maize grow.

*Corn-cob-pipe*, a pipe manufactured from the maize cob.

*Corn-cob-shell*, a weapon of offense much in vogue during the Civil War, made by taking the pith out of the cob of a full ear of corn and replacing it with powder.

**Corn-cracker.** A sobriquet for a native of Kentucky.

Also the name for a poor white in North and South Carolina, Georgia, Florida, and other Southern States.

*Corn-cracker State*, the State of Kentucky.

**Corn crib.** A sort of lattice-work structure, in which the dried ears of maize are kept.

**Corn dodger.** A cake made of corn-meal and baked very hard. Also *hoe-cake*, *Johnny-cake*, or simply *dodger*.

In Virginia and in the West, dodger has also the meaning of unleavened corn-bread.

**Cornel-tree** (*Cornus florida*). The common *dog-wood*, a beautiful and useful tree, covered in early spring with large snowy-white flowers, which are replaced in the autumn by brilliant scarlet berries.

Not to be confounded with the *poison sumac*, which also is popularly called *dog-wood*.

**Corner.** (1) An artificial scarcity in any commodity, created for purposes of gain by brokers and dealers. "A corner in pork, etc."

An operation in any article of speculation, by which the "shorts," not having the goods to deliver, are "cornered."

(2) In the newly-settled districts of the West, a mark on a tree, standing for the boundary line on a claim or tract of land. For instance, surveyors will say, in speaking of a particular claimant, that they often meet with his *corners*.

Also the tree itself so marked, which tree is besides called a *corner-tree*, a *witness-tree*.



**Corner (to).** (1) To raise artificially the price of a stock or a commodity.  
(2) To get the advantage of another person in an argument.

**Corner on (to have a).** (1) To have on hand a larger quantity of stock or other commodities than is really on the market.  
(2) Also used colloquially in the sense of having the command of, or taking first place in anything.

**Corner trees.** In newly settled districts of the West, trees marking the corners of the boundary lines of a homestead, and which have been blazed in order that they might be distinguished from others.  
Also called simply *corners*, and *witness-trees*.

**Corn-field school.** The old-time school house of the South.

**Corn fodder.** Maize sown broadcast, and left to take care of itself, after which it is used for cattle as fodder.

**Corn fritter.** A fritter, in the batter of which green corn has been mingled, after being grated.

**Corn husk.** The coarse outer leaves enclosing the ear of maize.  
Also, *corn-shuck*, *corn-trash*.

**Corn husking.** An assembling of young people, in the country, at a neighbor's house, to strip the husks from the year's crop of maize.  
Also *husking frolic*, or simply *husking*, and *corn-shucking*.

**Corn juice.** A Western term for whiskey.

**Corn meal.** Maize meal.

**Corn oyster.** A dish somewhat similar to a corn-fritter, and supposed to taste like the oyster.

**Corn pone.** A tin-baked maize-meal bread, enriched with milk and eggs.

**Corn popper.** A sieve-like utensil for making pop-corn.

**Corn-right.** In the early days of settlement, in Virginia, the title under which land was acquired, it being then sufficient for a settler to plant an acre of corn to be entitled to one hundred acres of land.

**Corn-snake** (*Scotophis guttatus*). A large harmless serpent which frequents the corn-fields of the South.

**Corn-stalk.** The stalk of the maize plant.

**Corn-stalk fiddle.** A child's play-thing, made by loosening the external fibre of a corn stalk and placing a fiddle bridge under each extremity.

**Corn tassels.** The graceful, feathery flowers of the maize plant.

**Cornwallis.** The name of a mock-muster held annually in New England to commemorate the surrender at Yorktown.

There is fun to a *Cornwallis*, I ain't agoin' to deny it.

(J. R. LOWELL, Biglow Papers, I. p. 26)

**Corona**, cor-on'-ah (Sp.). Specifically, in the formerly Spanish States, the highly decorated piece of canvas used to put over each pack.

**Corporosity**. A Pennsylvania word used for referring to the living body, the human form.

This *corporosity* touches the ground..... in a vain attempt to reach it.  
(J. C. NEAL, Charcoal Sketches.)

**Corral** (Sp.). In the South-West, a circular enclosure, often temporarily made with wagons, into which horses and cattle are driven for safety or other purposes.

Evidently the same as the Dutch *kraal*, used in South Africa for same purposes.

**Corral (to)**. In the South-West, to secure, to pen up horses or cattle in an enclosure, for the purpose of fending and feeding them. Also, to make up the enclosure itself.

Now colloquially extended, all over the West, in the general sense of "to embarrass in anyway." For instance, a criminal will be *corralled* in prison, and a debtor is *corralled* with debts; Indians will *corral* men on the plains, and a storm will *corral* tourists in the mountains.

**Corse**, cor-say' (Sp.). In the South-West, a ranchman's word for the cover of light leather used to protect the saddle in wet weather.

Also, *course*, *course*.

**Cossade** (Fr. C.). Among the French-Canadians, a name applied to a sort of marshhawk or buzzard (*Falco hudsonius*), frequenting the shores of rivers, or low swampy lands.

**Cotbetty**. A molly-coddle, a man who meddles with woman's special duties in a household.

Probably a compound of "cot," which English glossaries give as meaning an effeminate, troublesome man, and "betty," used very much in the same sense.

**Cotton-bagging**. A coarse hempen cloth, chiefly manufactured in Kentucky, and used as an outside wrapping for cotton bales.

Also, simply *bagging*.

**Cottondom**. The region of the South, where cotton is grown.

Also called *Cottonia*.

**Cottonmouth** (species of *Trigonocephalus*). A deadly snake found in Arkansas, and thought to be the same as the moccasin snake. So called from a white streak along the lips.

**Cotton-rock**. A variety of magnesian lime-stone found in Missouri, very valuable for building purposes, and probably so called because, when first bared to the light, its color somewhat resembles fresh gathered cotton-wool.

**Cotton-seed oil.** The oil of the cotton-seed, a product mainly used for adulteration purposes, and which has given rise to quite a large industry.

**Cottonwood.** The name of several species of poplars, from the cotton-like substance in which the seeds are protected against the cold.

The common eastern specie is the "Populus monilifera," otherwise called *alamo* in the South and South-West.

**Couac,** koo-ak. A species of heron (*Nyctiardea grisea*), frequenting the Gulf of St-Lawrence region, and so called from its peculiar cry.

**Cou blanc** (Fr. C.). Among the French-Canadians, a name applied to the ring-necked plover (*Tringa hiaticula*).

**Coulée** (Fr.). (1) In the West, a dried up creek or ravine; a gully or narrow rocky valley of great depth.

In Mexico and California, called *arroyo*.

(2) In the Canadian North-West, a valley through which generally a stream runs.

Also, *cooley*.

**Council fire.** The sacred fire kept burning, in the middle of an encampment, while Indians hold their council.

**Count.** In Southern Jersey, a common name for a terrapin six inches across belly, fit for market.

A six-inch female terrapin is called a *cow*.

**Count clams.** On the coast of New Jersey, quahaugs, 800 to the barrel.

**Counterbrand.** In the prairie regions, a duplicate mark placed upon cattle when sold, and which annuls the original title.

**Counterbrand (to).** To destroy a brand, on cattle, by branding on the opposite side.

**Country-jakes.** In parts of the South, country-folk, people from the backwoods. Equiv. to the English "country-joskins" or "country-bumpkins."

**Count ties.** To tramp a railroad, as when a tramp is compelled to walk on the ties of a railroad.

**Coup** (Fr.). Among the Indian tribes of the Northern plains, a very curious custom exists which is as yet unexplained. When a foe has been struck down in a fight, the scalp belongs to him who shall first strike the body with knife or tomahawk. This is the *coup*, so called by the old French trappers, predecessors of the Hudson bay company. The consequence is that, when a foe falls, even in the hottest fight, the slayer must at once, in order to obtain proper recognition of his act, give up all thought of further killing, make or give his *coup*, and take the scalp.

By extension, any special success or good stroke of fortune is often apt, in the West, to be called a *coup*, in which sense the word still also survives to this day among the French-Canadians.

**Course.** See *corse*.

**Court.** In New England, the name of a legislative body composed of a House of Representatives and a Senate. "The *General Court* of Massachusetts."

**Court-House.** A curious usage, which applies however mainly to official documents, prevails in Virginia of designating the county towns as the Court-Houses, without regard to their proper names. Thus Providence, the county town of Halifax, is known as *Fairfax Court-House*, and so forth.

The same custom has also existed, to some extent, in South Carolina and Maryland.

**Court of Assistants.** A court formerly in existence in New England, where a magistrate or an assistant presided. These courts were subsequently merged in the County Court.

**Cove.** (1) A term taken from sea phraseology to indicate a strip of prairie running into the woodland.

(2) A hollow, nook, or recess in a mountain. Used especially, in this sense, in parts of the Appalachian range.

See *clove* and *notch*.

**Coverclip** (genus *Achius*). The curious name by which the sole is known in the waters of New York.

An equally curious appellation for the same fish is *calico*.

**Cowberry** (*Viburnum lentago*). A small, shrivelled fruit, somewhat resembling the common cranberry, and found in the mountains of New England.

**Cow-bird** (*Icterus pecoris*). A species of bobolink, so called from its habit of searching for food among the droppings of cattle.

Also, *cow-blackbird*, *cowpen-bird*.

**Cow-boy.** (1) A cattle herder, or drover, in the West and South-West. Also called a *cow-puncher*.

(2) A contemptuous appellation applied, during the War of the Revolution, to the tory partisans of Westchester county, New York, and in 1861 to semi-secessionists in New England. At the time the term first came into usage in New York, the tories had obtained, in the eyes of their opponents, an unenviable reputation for their barbarous and ruffianly ways, and it is probable that the word was afterwards perpetuated as a name for cattle-herders, because descriptive of their real or alleged rough manners and customs.

**Cowboyism.** A general term tipifying the spirit and practices of the cowboys.

**Cow-catcher.** A contrivance triangular in shape, fixed in front of a railway locomotive, to clear the line of cattle or other obstructions.

In England, called *plough*.

**Cow-grass.** A weed which constitutes one of the plagues of farming in the Southern States.

**Cow-hide.** A whip of undressed leather, that is made of twisted strips of rawhide, and is principally in use amongst ranchmen and cowboys.

Also, *cow-skin*, *vaw-hide*.

**Cow-hide (to).** To chastise with the cow-hide.

**Cowlick.** A slang term for a peculiar smooth arrangement of the hair, from its presenting the appearance of having been licked by a cow.

**Cow-parsnip** (*Heraclum latanum*). The popular name of one of the far-famed Shaker remedies, celebrated for its carminative and diuretic properties.

**Cow-pease.** A small black bean abounding in a wild state in Texas, and forming food for man and beast.

**Cow-pony.** Among cowboys, a mustang before it is broken in.

**Cow-town.** In the West, the local centres of the stock-raising industry are often so called.

**Cow-whip.** Among cowboys a very long lash with a very short stock, which is used only in driving the herd.

**Coyote** (Mex. *coyotl*). The common name of the prairie wolf (*Canis latrans*), abundant almost everywhere from the great plains to the Pacific.

Often improperly spelled *cayote*.

See *gopher*.

**Coyote (to).** A California term meaning to sink, in the gold mines, small, shallow shafts resembling the burrow in which the prairie-wolf lives.

Also used substantively for the digging itself.

**Coyotillo**, co-yo-teel'-yo. A shrub of Western Texas (*Karwinskia Humboldtiana*), bearing blackish berries of which the coyote is particularly fond. Hence, its name.

**Crab-grass** (*Agenus Digitaria*). A species of grass, abounding in Louisiana and Texas, much to the detriment of growing crops, and yet makes excellent fodder.

**Crab lantern.** In the South, the curious name for a small pasty or turnover pie.

**Crack (to).** To forge bank-notes, cheques; to utter worthless paper.

Possibly an idiomatic extension of the Eng. slang phrase "to crack," i. e. to force, and "cracksman," a burglar.

**Crackajack.** A person of remarkable ability. Applied especially to bicyclists.

**Cracker.** (1) A small, hard biscuit. Still provincial in North of England.

(2) A small firework, what in England is called a "squib," which word is only heard here in political slang.

(3) A nickname applied to the poor whites of Georgia and South Carolina, from cracked corn being their supposed chief article of diet.

See *Cracker State*.

(4) A lampoon, or "mot d'esprit," what in England is termed a "squib."

**Cracker boy.** A boy attendant on "crackers," machines used for pulverizing anthracite coal.

**Cracker State.** The State of Georgia is occasionally so designated, from the "crackers," the lowest and most ignorant of its citizens before the abolition of slavery.

**Crackling-bread.** Corn bread interspersed with cracklings.

**Cracklings.** (1) A favorite dish of the South, consisting of the crisp residue of hog fat, after the lard is fried out. In England, "crackling" is the crisp rind of roast pork.

Also called *goody bread*.

(2) A Southern term for the cinders remaining of a wood-fire.

**Crack-loo.** A game among bar-room loafers and others, which consists in pitching coins so that, after touching the ceiling, they shall descend as near as possible to a certain crack in the floor which has been previously selected.

**Crack on (to).** To put on, to apply with energy. A verb synonymous with prompt and energetic performance. "To *crack on* all hands," i. e. to employ all one's resources.

**Cracky.** A small hybrid dog. (Nfld. N. B. and N. S.)

**Cracky-wagon.** A one-horse wagon, without springs.

**Cradle.** (1) A wire net basket, shaped like a child's cradle, and used to wash crushings at the gold fields.

Also called a *rocker*.

(2) A scythe, with a light frame work attached, used for cutting grain. Quoted in Halliwell in that sense.

Also, *cradle scythe*.

**Cradle (to).**

- (1) To wash ore.
- (2) To cut grain with the cradle-scythe.

**Cradle-hole.** A rut or slight depression in a road, and, more specifically, a spot in a road from which the frost is melting.

**Cradle of Liberty.** The old Faneuil Hall of Boston is occasionally so called, from its having been, before the Revolution, the scene of meetings, the purpose of which was to rouse the American people to throw off the English yoke.

**Cram.** In college slang, one who does much extra work before an examination. Also, a course requiring hard study.

**Cram (to).** In college slang, to study hard, i. e. cramming the memory, without regard for assimilation.

**Cramp-bark** (*Viburnum oxycoccus*). The popular name of a medicinal plant, having anti-spasmodic properties, and which bears a bright pinkish berry of a very acid taste.

Also called, in New England, *cranberry-tree*.

See *pembina*.

**Crank.** An enthusiast, a fanciful or eccentric person. A man supposed to attach undue importance to some particular scheme or notion. One who manifests a deep enthusiasm in any subject or thing. An erratic person, one of ill-balanced mind.

Also used adjectively in sense of unsteady, capricious, obstinate, self-conceited. "You needn't be so *crank* about it."

**Crap (to).** In the West, to raise a crop.

To *crat it on the sheers*, to farm on rented land.

**Crapais**, *cra-pa* (Fr. C.). Among the French-Canadians, a common name for the sun-fish (*Pomotis vulgaris*).

**Crap-house.** A negro gambling den, where the game of "craps" is played.

**Craps.** A game played with dice by negroes, and of which they are passionately fond.

**Crawfish.** A turn-coat, a backer-out, and especially a political renegade.

**Crawfish (to).** To back out, to retract one's statements, in speaking of members of a political party who suddenly back out of a position they have long maintained, from the well known habit of the crawfish of backing out of his position under disturbing circumstances. Also, *crayfish*.

"To crawfish" is the exact equivalent of the English cant term "to rat."

**Crawfishy.** (1) Said of one who manifests a disposition to be a "crawfish."

(2) A term applied to wet land, because inhabited by crawfish.

**Crawm.** In parts of New England, a pile of old straw or rubbish.

**Crazy.** Synonymous with mad, or insane.

This word is very seldom used, in the United States, in the English sense of unsteady, crooked, or shaky, except in such terms as *crazy-work* (in England, patch-work), *crazy-quilt*, etc.

**Crazy-bone.** The funny bone, the point of the elbow, a blow on which causes a painful tingling.

**Crazy-quilt.** A patch-work counterpane.

**Creamery.** A dairy, a place where butter is sold, or where milk and cream are put up in cans for market.

**cream soda.** A favorite summer beverage, composed of ice cream mixed with soda water.

**Crease.** In hunting, to shoot a horse or deer in the upper part of the neck, so that it falls stunned but is not killed.

Special to the West.

**Creature.** (1) A word generally applied, in the South, to a woman or child, and implying a certain amount of goodness, beauty, and love.

Similarly, the French *créature* is of constant occurrence, among the French Canadians, as applying to women in general.

(2) Also frequently used in the South for an animal, especially a horse, although a more common form would then be *critter* (q. v.)

**Creek.** Used extensively, except in most of New England, and as far up as Canada, to mean a running stream of fresh water, which in England is called a "brook," and in the Southern States becomes a "branch."

**Creek-bottom.** Low land near a creek.

**Creep.** In Pennsylvania, a stool.

"Creepie" is quoted by Jamieson as a low stool, in his Scottish Dictionary.

**Creeper.** In New England, a shallow frying-pan, a spider.

**Creepy.** In Pennsylvania, a speckled kind of fowl.

**Creeter.** In parts of New England, used in the general sense of the noun being. "We're all poor *creeters*."

Also, *creetur*.

See *creature*.



**Creole** (Sp. *criollo*). This word, used both as a noun and an adjective, simply means "one of native birth," and is also applied, in the South and West Indies, to horses, cattle, and sheep, even to market produce of native growth. In the Southern States, however, the term *creole* is never applied by residents to negroes or mulattoes, and in Louisiana (especially in New Orleans) the meaning of the word is restricted to a native of French descent.

**Creole French.** A dialect or patois of Louisiana, now rapidly passing into disuse.

**Creole State.** The State of Louisiana, so called from a great number of its inhabitants being descended from French and Spanish settlers.

**Cree-Owls.** A facetious adaptation of creoles sometimes applied, as a nickname, to the inhabitants of Louisiana.

**Creosote plant** (*Larrea mexicana*). A plant, characterized by its powerful resinous odor, and abounding in the sandy deserts of California and as far eastwards as Arkansas. It is particularly noxious to animals, and is employed externally in the treatment of rheumatism.

**Crescent City.** The city of New Orleans, Louisiana, so called because built in the form of a crescent, on a bend of the Mississippi river.

**Crescent City of the West.** The city of Galena, Illinois.

**Crevasse** (Fr.). In the Mississippi region, a breach in the embankment or "levee" of a river, through the pressure of the waters.

R. G. White mentions the word as used by Chaucer.

**Crib.** (1) On the St. Lawrence and Ottawa rivers, a division of a raft of staves, containing a thousand staves.

(2) A solid structure of timber or logs secured under water to serve as a wharf, jetty, or dike.

(3) In Southern Jersey, horizontal sticks piled triangularly around the centre pole in a charcoal pit.

(4) In college slang, a paper or book to be used unlawfully in a recitation or examination, or in the preparation for the same.

**Crib (to).** In college slang, to interline, to cheat in recitation or examination, to steal.

**Crimmy.** In parts of New England, chilly, out of sorts, "under the weather."

**Crisseross.** A game played on a slate by children, and derived from the old-fashioned Primers, who almost uniformly began the alphabet with the sign of the Cross, called "Christ Cross."

**Critter.** Always associated, in the South, in speaking of a woman, and in opposition to *creature*, with some idea of inferiority, or even of contempt.

Also, of constant occurrence, in the South, for an animal, especially a horse, while to other animals the term *stock* is applied.

**Croak.** In college slang, to flunk; to play the informer, to disclose secrets.

**Croaker.** A name of various fishes, from the peculiar sound emitted by it, when taken out of the water.

**Croaker.** A species of water-fowl found in the Chesapeake and rivers of Virginia.

**Cronker.** A species of wild goose.

**Crook.** A thief, a swindler, one whose ways society regards as not straight.

**Crooked.** Said of anything stolen.

**Crookedness.** Rascality of every kind.

**Crooked-stick.** A cross-grained and perverse person, who does not suit society, from the well known "crooked stick" that will not fit into the pile of wood.

**Crooked whiskey.** Illicit whiskey, that upon which the government tax has not been paid.

**Crookneck.** In New England, applied to several varieties of squash having a long recurved neck.

**Crop.** In the language of the plains, an ear-mark on cattle, made by cutting the ear.

Also used as a verb.

**Cropper.** One who cultivates a farm for a share of the crop.

**Croppie.** A local name for a species of green bass found in Lake Minnetonka, near the Minnehaha falls.

**Cropping.** In the West and South, used to signify giving special attention to one kind of crop.

The nearest approach of *cropping* to the above sense, in England, is to sow or plant land.

**Crosse** (Fr.). The implement used in the game of lacrosse.

**Cross-fox** (*Vulpes fulvus*). A breed of fox, whose color is between the silver-gray and reddish-brown varieties, and which has usually a black cross marked upon its back.

**Cross-lots.** See *across lots*.

**Cross timbers.** In the West, the name of a belt of forest several hundred miles long, extending in a south-westerly direction from the Arkansas river, and which marks the natural boundary between the cultivable lands and the desert regions. The trees—mostly post-oaks and black-jacks—are very lofty, and disposed in such singularly regular lines and cross-lines, that they seem to have been planted at some remote period by the hand of man.

Timber, it must here be remarked, is a Western word for forest.

**Cross-vine** (*Bignonia capreolata*). In the South, a trailing plant, the stem of which, when stripped of its bark, divides, as if split cross-wise into quarters.

**Crow (to eat).** To take back what one has said. For instance, politicians are often compelled to eat considerable crow after an unsuccessful campaign.

Again, a newspaper editor who becomes obliged by his party to advocate "principles," very different from those which he supported a short time before, is said "to eat boiled crow."

**Crowd.** Frequently used, in the South and West, for a company, an assemblage, a gathering of any kind, and of whatever size it may happen to be.

Now also frequently heard in England.

**Crowd (to).** To squeeze in, to push, to crush, or simply to pass in without abnormal exertion.

**Cruel** (Old Eng.). An intensive expression, much affected by uneducated people, and used as a substitute for very, exceedingly.

W. Batten denies all but is cruel mad.

(Pepy's Diary, 21 Feb. 1636.)

This use of the word was brought over from England in the early part of the 17th century, and is still common in the North of Ireland.

**Cruller** (Dutch *kruller*, a curler). A strip of sweetened dough, which is boiled in lard, and then loops up (curls) at the two ends.

Also, *doughnut*, *olycook*.

**Crummy.** American slang for comely, pretty.

In England, the word is only used when speaking of a plump, full-figured girl.

**Crunnocks.** Dry wood, used for kindlings. (Nfld., N. S. and N. B.)

**Crush.** In college slang, a liking for a person. Also, a reception.

**Crush-hat.** Any soft head-gear.

In England, only applied to a collapsible opera hat.

**Cry.** To publish the banns of marriage, in church. Only heard nowadays in some remote districts, but was formerly, in colonial times, a meaning general throughout the whole of the New-England States.

**Cubby.** In the charcoal pits of New Jersey, a term applied to a little hollow-square cabin.

**Cubbyhole.** In New Jersey, a place in a garret where refuse is stored.  
In New England, still persistent in the old English sense of a snug, confined place.

**Cuckle-button.** In parts of New England, the burr of the burdock, from which children make baskets.

**Cucumber-tree.** (*Magnolia acuminata*). A tree, so called from the resemblance of its fruit, in its early stages, to small cucumbers. As it grows the likeness disappears, and the fruit becomes pinkish-red.

**Cuddy.** The Mexican jackass, or *burro*.

**Cudweed** (*Gnaphalium*). The popular name of a species of everlasting plant.

**Cuffey, Cuffy.** A generic name for a negro, akin to Sambo, or Quashee.

**Cull.** In New Jersey, to assort, in speaking of oysters.

**Cullinteens.** In New Jersey, bushel oysters.

*Cullins*, poor oysters.

*Culls*, the grade next to the poorest.

**Cully.** A companion, a partner, either man or woman.

From the old Eng. slang "cull," which had the same signification.

**Cunner.** (1) In New England, the name of a univalve shell of the genus *Patella*.

(2) A popular name for the blue-perch.

**Cunning.** (1) Pretty, small, pleasing, tiny. "A *cunning* little hat."

Chiefly used by women in that sense.

(2) Often applied to that sweet and innocent intelligence so delightful in children. Thus, a *cunning* child is what would be called in England a "knowing little thing."

**Curbstone broker.** A Wall street term for an irregular speculator, who does his business on the sidewalk, and who does not belong to any Exchange.

**Curicous** (Old Eng.). Still persisting, especially among New-England farmers, in the old English sense of nice, excellent, particularly fine, of high quality. "These are *curicous* apples."

The same sense still attaches to *curious*, in the London tea-trade, to mark the degree of excellence next to choicest. One even sees "curio-choicest."

**Curled-maple.** A species of maple, the wood of which is peculiarly adapted for cabinet work.

**Cuss.** A mean, worthless fellow, a scamp. For instance, a despicable person will be stigmatised as a mean *cuss*, an ugly *cuss*.

Also employed in the West, although more rarely, where one wishes to express anything but a curse, often even affection.

Authorities differ as to whether *cuss* is derived from a mis-pronunciation of "curse," or whether it is an abbreviation of "customer," with the primary idea of what is frequently called a "bad" or an "ugly" customer.

**Cussedness.** Malice, spite, mischievousness. On the other hand, some instances exist in which the idea conveyed is resolution and courage.

It may here also be noted that the Coventry Plays employ *cursydnese* in the sense of sheer wickedness and malignity.

**Cuss-words.** Oaths, curses.

**Custard apple** (*Annona squamosa*). A West-Indian shrub, which bears a greenish-colored fruit.

Also called *papaw*, *sugar-apple*, *sweet-sop*.

**Custom-made.** Said of clothing which is made to measure.

**Cut.** (1) A reduction, as when speaking of a *cut* in freight rates for grain.

(2) In Kentucky, a common word, among tobacco-raisers, for a portion of a tobacco field.

(3) In college slang, self-imposed absence of a student from recitation.

**Cut (to).** (1) In New England, to beat, in speaking of eggs.

Also, to *braid*.

(2) In college slang, to absent oneself from a college exercise.

**Cut a figure.** To display, to do well, to show to advantage.

**Cut capers.** To be frolicsome, the idea conveyed being one of boisterous fun, with or without wine and women.

Also, to *cut didoes*, to *cut shines*.

It is here obvious that some mischief, in fact some "cutting," must be mixed up with the proceedings, or there would be no fun at all.

The derivation of "to cut didoes" has so far baffled all research, the nearest interpretation being that of Prof. Mahn, who sees in it some allusion to the cunning device by which the famous Queen Dido once received her magnificent "hide" of land.

**Cut dirt.** To go fast, to run away in haste. Allusion to the rapid motion of a horse on a muddy road, and to the fondness of Americans for fast driving.

**Cute.** A common colloquialism, especially in New England, for acute, sharp, keen. "A *cute* child."

Cute, for acute, has become in the United States, almost a distinct word, being stronger than the original in its peculiar meaning, and is one of the most expressive Americanisms of the day.

Also employed with same meaning as *cunning*, in sense of pleasing, quaintly pretty, or amusingly odd.

**Cuteness.** Acuteness, keenness.

**Cut grass** (*Leersia oryzoides*). A species of grass, so called from the sharp edges of its leaves.

**Cut it fat.** To overdo a thing, to indulge in extravagant flattery. Synonymous with "going it too strong."

**Cut-off.** (1) A word of common occurrence, in the Mississippi region, applied to a channel which a river has formed for itself, by cutting through a bend.

(2) A part of a steam-engine.

**Cut one's stick.** Used in England in sense of "to leave," but enlarged in its meaning by American vigor of speech, and often heard in the United States instead of "to die."

**Cut out (to).** A Western plainman's term for separating a particular animal from the rest of the herd.

**Cut round.** To fly about, to make a display.

**Cut a splurge.** To make a display in dress, to affect a swaggering pomposity in gait or dress.

Also, *to cut a swathe*, evidently in allusion to the ambition of powerful, well-trained mowers to cut the widest swathe.

**Cutter.** (1) A light one-horse sleigh.

(2) In newspaper parlance, the city editor who cuts short a reporter's story, by a profuse use of his blue pencil.

See *butcher*.

**Cut-throat games.** Games of chance which readily lend themselves to fatal quarrels.

**Cuttoe** (Fr. *couteau*). A word still lingering in New England, and meaning a large knife, which was much used in olden times.

**Cut up (to).** (1) To rudely break in upon conversation.

(2) To act in a boisterous or riotous manner. To act mischievously, play antics.

(3) To put to pain or to shame, to employ severe language towards a person. Chiefly used in a passive sense.

“To be cut up” about anything, in the sense of being put to mental pain or anguish, is also well known as an English colloquialism.

**Cymblin.** See *simlin*.

**Cypress** (*Taxodium disticha*). A Southern tree, which is much in request for building purposes, and which is entirely distinct from the European variety. It often attains, in America, a very great height, sometimes as much as 120 feet.

**Cypress-brake.** In the South, a low-lying tract of swampy ground, into which the superabundant waters of neighboring bayous find their way, and in which fallen cypresses abound.

Also, *cypress-swamp*.

## D

**Daddock.** An old English provincialism, sometimes heard, in New England and the West, in sense of a fallen tree which is showily rotting away and falling into mould.

**Daddyism.** A recent word, made to represent slavish adulation of high parentage or noble birth.

**Daffa-down-dilly.** The old English enlargement of “daffodill,” used by Spencer in his “Shepherd’s Callendar,” which still maintains its vitality in Virginia.

*Daffa Down Dilly* came up in the cold,  
Thro’ the brown mould.

(SOUTHERN MAGAZINE, Jan. 1871.)

**Daft.** Frequently heard in the South, for a fool, a lunatic. “Are you *daft* to do such a thing?”

From Chaucer’s *daffe*, and still provincial in North of England and parts of Scotland.

**Dago** (Sp. *San Diego*, the patron Saint of the Spaniards). A common name for Italians, now popular all over the United States. The term originated in Louisiana, where it at first denoted people of Spanish birth or parentage, but was gradually extended so as to apply also to Italians and Portuguese, especially to those of the low class.

In college slang, *dago* is a current word either for the Italian language, or a professor of Italian.

**Daisy.** First-class, out of the common. Often used particularly when speaking of the physical attributes of a woman, and in that sense its affinity can be easily traced to the sweet, crimson-tipped flower of England.

**Damage.** The pay, the cost, or, to put it precisely, the sum of extortion. Analogous to the English "bill", or the French "addition".

**Damaged.** Intoxicated.

A simile of little wit, but much point.

**Damiana,** dah-me-ab'-nah (Sp.). In Western Texas, a small plant exhaling a strong aromatic odor (*Chrysactinia Mexicana*), and bearing yellow flowers.

**Damson-plum** (*Chrysophyllum Cainite*). A smooth-skinned West Indian fruit, of the size of a peach, with a soft pulp, and a number of glossy, brown seeds,

Also called *star-apple*.

**Dander.** Anger, passion.

*To get one's dander up, or raised, to get angry, to work oneself into a passion.*

Possibly an English provincialism. In "Phrase and Fable," Brewer quotes *dander* as a corruption of "Damned anger," and Halliwell gives *dander* (anger) as common to several English counties.

**Dandy.** Something out of the common, first-class.

**Dandyfied.** Dandyish, foppish.

**Dangerous.** Used colloquially in sense of endangered, being in danger.

Is a local provincialism in England, and is so quoted by Forby in his *Vocabulary of East-England*.

**Dangle-berry** (*Gaylussacia*). A species of the blue whortleberry.

See *bilberry*.

**Danites.** A name formerly applied to an organisation within the Mormon ranks for the purpose of putting out of the way obnoxious Gentiles and apostate Mormons.

Also called *Destroying Angels*.

The *Danites* exist no longer, at least for purposes of assassination.

**Dansy.** Applied in Pennsylvania to persons whose faculties are failing them from old age.

"*Dansy-headed*" is quoted by Grose as a provincialism of Norfolk and Suffolk, in sense of giddy or thoughtless.

**Dare.** A New-Jersey and Pennsylvania provincialism, in localities settled by Scotch-Irish, in sense of "to may." Thus, the pupil will ask his teacher: "*Dare* we have a holiday."

Also used substantively, in sense of permission. "May I have the *dare* to go out?"

**Dark and Bloody Ground.** An expression formerly much used in allusion to Kentucky, and forcibly recalling suggestions of the fearful Indian wars of bygone days.



**Darkie, Darky.** A popular appellation for a negro.

**Dark moon.** In the West, the interval between full moon and new moon.  
Also, *dark of the moon*.  
Still provincial in England.

**Dauber.** A species of sand-wasp (*Ammophila*), so called from the manner in which it builds its nest, literally daubing it all over.

**Daubin.** A corrupted form of "daubing," for mud used between the logs in a log house.

**Day-clown.** In parts of the South, sometimes heard for sunset, the end of the day.

**Daze.** Often used to represent a state of utter bewilderment. "She sat, like one in a *daze* . . ."

To daze, a verb, was once the ancient form of to dazzle, and was so used by Spencer, Drayton, and others.

**Deacon.** In New England, a new-born calf, or the skin of a very young calf.

**Deacon (to).** In New England, *to deacon berries or apples*, it to put the largest and best on top, when preparing for a sale. This curious expression owes no doubt its origin to the Yankee proverb that "all deacons are good, but there is odds in deacons."

*To deacon a calf* is to knock it in the head, or kill it, as soon as it is born. (New England.)

*To deacon land* is to extend one's fence, so as to include a portion of the highway. (New England.)

**Deacon off (to).** *To deacon off* a hymn, at church, is to give it out line by line, the congregation singing each line as soon as read. This custom, which is still continued in some remote parts of New England, was wont to be the rule in former times when congregations were not generally supplied with hymn-books.

Hence the signification of "to deacon off" now extended to mean to give the cue, to lead a debate.

To funk right out o'p lit'cal strife ain't thought to be the thing,  
Without you *deacon* off the tune you want your folks should sing.

(THE BIGLOW PAPERS.)

**Deacon seat.** A lumberer's camp term for a plank of wood, forming a kind of settee, in the log cabin, in front of the fire.

Probably in allusion to the pews formerly reserved for the deacons, in front of the pulpit, and which were considered the best seats.

**Deacon's hiding places.** In Boston slang, private curtained compartments in oyster saloons.

**Dead.** Used, as in England, to intensify various expressions, of which the following may properly be regarded as peculiar to the United States, the meaning conveyed being that of certainty or extremity.

*Dead-beat*, one who sponges on others and pays nobody. One who is worn out, or has become good for nothing. Also, to *dead-beat*, to live on others.

*Dead-broke*, utterly ruined, without any resources whatever. Also, *flat-broke*.

*Dead-duck*, anything which has depreciated in value, to the verge of worthlessness, i. e. which is "played out."

*In dead earnest*, in very truth, without doubt.

*Dead-fall*, a huntsman's trap, so called because the quarry is killed as well as caught by it.

*Dead gone*, (1) infatuated, (2) utterly collapsed.

*Dead give-away*, a betrayal, in varying shades. Also used as a verb.

*Dead-head*, (1) one who has free admission to theatres, or rides freely on railroads; hence, *deadism*, and to *dead-head*. (2) In Florida, a log so soaked with water, that it will not float. Opposite term is *live log*.

*Dead load*, a great quantity of anything.

*Dead-must*, in newspaper parlance, an article which requires absolutely to be published, i. e. which cannot be kept out of the day's edition for any reason. See *must*.

*Dead to rights*, certain, positive. For instance, policemen will say that they have a man "dead to rights," when they have found absolute proofs of crime against him.

*To be dead-set against*, to be strongly opposed to, to be animated with a violent antagonism.

*Dead unit*, collective advocacy or, or opposition to a subject, principle, or line of action.

*To have the dead wood* on anything, to have control or a firm hold (Western.)

**Deaden.** In newly-settled districts of the West, to prepare the way for a new clearing, by "girdling" the trees, thereby wounding them to death.

Also extended, in political slang, in sense of lessening the chances of an opponent, by circumventing the peculiar dodges and tactics which play so prominent a part in elections.

**Deadening.** (1) The process of wounding trees to death by "girdling."

(2) A tract of land, the trees of which have been deadened by "girdling."

**Deaf.** In Pennsylvania, nuts are said to be "deaf" when they are decayed or empty, which probably originated from the Low Scottish custom of calling soil or vegetables "deaf," when they are sterile.

**Deaf-adder.** The name of the hog-nosed snake, or “blauser,” in New York.

**Deal.** A transaction of any kind. A term borrowed from the card table.

**Dearborn.** A light four-wheeled carriage, named after its inventor.

**Death.** Like *dead*, the word *death* is dragged in by slang to denote the last extremity in everything.

*To be death on anything*, to be completely master of a subject, or at least to be a capital hand at it; to be passionately fond of something.

Also, *to be dead on*.

*To dress to death*, to wear clothes so fashionable, that they may have a stunning or “killing” effect.

*Death Horses.* The death watch.

**Deck.** (1) In general use, especially in the Western States, for a pack of cards. This word occurs in Hoyle’s famous Book of Games, but is now obsolete in England.

But, whiles, he thought to steal the single ten,  
The king was slyly fingered from the *deck*.

(SHAKESPEARE, HENRY VI.)

(2) A variety of poker, also called “twenty-deck” poker, in which twenty cards are used.

**Declension.** An archaic form for a refusal, the act of declining an invitation.

Now very rarely used in England.

Also, *declination*.

**Decoration Day.** A public holiday, occurring generally towards the end of May, and set apart for the decoration of the graves of those who fell in the late Civil War.

Also called *Memorial Day*.

**Deed.** To convey, or transfer by deed or assignment, and generally by a deed of trust. “To *deed* one’s property.”

**Deedies.** In the South, a common name for chickens or young fowls.

**Deef.** A frequent form for “deaf”, which was the rule in England in olden times, and is still provincial in Westmoreland, Cumberland and other parts.

**Deef-meat.** A generic term for venison, following the usual American simplicity in designating flesh-food, as in bear-meat, sheep-meat, etc.

**Dehort.** To exhort, to beg, to entreat.

Now obsolete.

Judge Sewall, in his diary (Ap. 1, 1718), *dehorted* Sam Hirst to eschew idle tricks.

**Delta.** A piece of land at Cambridge in the shape of a  $\Delta$  belonging to Harvard, and used for recreation purposes.

**Demean.** This verb, in sense of degrade or humiliate, has been justly stigmatised as “servant-girl English,” as the term cannot be separated from the sense of demeanor or deportment.

Webster too readily licences this vulgarism, in the sense of debase or lower, by a single quotation from Thackeray, of similar character. At any rate, he mistakes the force of the word when he gives us Shakespeare as follows ;

Antipholus is mad.

Else he would never so *demean* himself.

Here it certainly means “behave” himself, and we do not think any old writer has ever used it otherwise.

**Democrats.** *Democratic-Republican* is the full official designation of this great party. It was originally known, at least until 1828-30, as the Republican party, but affiliating at that time with the Democratic faction, it assumed the compound title which it still claims. The party overthrew the Federalists in 1800, electing Jefferson to the Presidency, and remained in power until 1848, when they were defeated by the Whigs and Free Soilers. (Magazine of Am. History, vol. 15, p. 614.)

See *Republicans*.

The Democratic party, in the United States, is that most nearly akin to the English Conservative party.

See *Lecompton Democrats, National Democrats*.

**Dengue,** den -gay (Sp.). A malarial fever of the South, otherwise called *break-bone fever*.

**Department** (Fr.). A Government office at Washington, at the head of which is a Secretary.

Most American official terms are of French derivation.

**Departmental.** That which relates to the principal offices or “departments” of State.

**Depot,** dee po (Fr.). A railway station, or a railway terminus.

There is no excuse whatever for the employ of this word, which, besides, is a blunder, as the French themselves only apply it to a store-house and never to a railway station.

Similarly, the French-Canadians also say *dépôt* for a railway station, a meaning which they must of course have borrowed from their Yankee neighbors.

**Derail.** To throw a train off the track, or to be so thrown off.

**Derramadero,** der-rah-mah-der'-o (Sp. *derramar*, to pour). In Texas a drain, or draining canal.

The term is now obsolete in Spain.

**Derrick.** A scaffold-like construction, to support a crane. Probably derived from Derrick, an English hangman who flourished early in the 17th century.

**Desert** (Fr. C.). Among the French-Canadians, a patch of cultivated land in a clearing. Hence the Fr. verbs *désérer* and *faire le désert*, in sense of to destroy the forest, to introduce cultivation.

**Desirable.** In newspaper parlance, an article which comes next to a *must*, and which, for some reason, may be deferred.

**Desk.** In New England, the pulpit in a church, and, figuratively, the clerical profession. Thus, when a father intends his son for the church, he speaks of sending him to the *desk*.

**Desperate.** Often used intensively as awful and cruel, in sense of very, exceedingly.

Also, *desperately*.

**Despisement.** A new form for contempt, disdain.

**Dessert.** A word often misapplied by Americans, as it is here generally understood to mean the puddings and pies, etc. following meats.

Properly speaking, the term *dessert* should be restricted to mean the fruits, nuts, and sweet meats which follow the regular courses of a dinner.

**Detail.** Generally employed to signify a marking or telling off for any given purpose.

The verb *to detail* is similarly used.

**Detrain.** To empty a train of its passengers. Especially used when speaking of large bodies of people. Like *derail*, this is a verb which the exigencies of railway traffic have called into use. It is employed both transitively and intransitively.

**Devil-fish** (*Lophius americanus*). One of the many popular names of the American Angler, a fish of hideous appearance.

Other names are *bellows-fish*, *fishiny-frog*, *goose-fish*, *monk-fish*, *sea-devil*.

All those names may however be considered as being erroneously applied, as the true *devil-fish* is the *stingray* of the Southern States.

**Devil's-bit** (*Aletris farinosa*). A popular medicinal plant.

**Devil-wood** (*Olea americana*). A species of live-tree growing in the Southern States, and so called from the impossibility of splitting its wood.

**Devisadero**, day-ve-sah-der'-o (Sp. *devisar*, to desery at a distance). In Texas, a commanding hill or eminence used by cowboys to look for their horses or cattle.

**Dewberry?** (*Rubus canadensis*). A low-trailing species of blackberry whose fruits differ from the English variety in color, being black, and are utterly unlike dew-drops, which the English berries represent by a white, wax-like covering.

In New England, called *low blackberry*.

**Dewlap.** A ranchman's term for a brand used in marking cattle, and which is a cut in the lower part of the neck.

**Diamond State.** The State of Delaware, so called through its small size but great importance.

**Dicker.** A bargain, a trade. An article bartered.

**Dicker (to).** To exchange, to barter, to bargain, and generally applied to trade in small articles.

May probably be traced back to the old English noun *dicker*, representing the number of *ten*.

**Dickey.** In New England, a gentleman's shirt collar.

In England, a dickey is a detachable shirt front, what would be called here an extra shirt bosom.

**Difficulted.** A Lowland Scotch expression used in the South, especially Georgia, in sense of perplexed, embarrassed.

Jamieson has the verb "to difficult" in his Scottish Dictionary.

**Dig.** In college slang, a diligent and hard-working student, i. e. one who is supposed to dig deep into his books. Also, a thrust, a poke in the side.

**Dig (to).** In college slang, to study constantly and diligently.

**Digger-pine** (*Pinus sabiniana*). A species of pine of a bluish green foliage, and found mainly upon the foot-hills.

**Diggers.** A name applied to a tribe of wretched Indians of California, who subsist chiefly from digging for roots, for their food. These degraded people have however now mostly all gone out of existence.

Also, *Digger Indians*.

**Digging.** (1) A college slang word for the act of applying diligently to one's studies.

(2) In the South, used adjectively in sense of dear, costly. "A mighty *digging* price."

**Diggings.** A miner's term, in the West, to denote a place where the ore is dug. "Wet diggings" are near rivers or wet places, and "Dry diggings" are upon higher lands.

By extension, the neighborhood of gold mines, or even any particular locality or region, or a place of abode. For instance: "Were you ever

before in these diggings?" is a phrase very often heard in the West, upon first introduction. In sense of lodgings or quarters, the word is as familiar in England as in America, having there come from Australia.

**Dight.** In New England, often heard in sense of small portion. "A little *dight* of butter." Also, *dite*. Cf. *doit*, a trifle.

**Dig out (to).** To elope, to depart. To decamp, or abscond suddenly.

**Dig up the hatchet.** To open up the hostilities, to make a declaration of war. From the well-known custom of the Indians of digging up the symbolical tomahawk or hatchet, every time a renewal of warfare has been decided.

**Dike.** (1) In New England, a bank of earth, without reference to water. Perhaps a result of the Pilgrims' sojourn in Holland.

A term applied to the full dress, or fine clothes, of a man. Also, sometimes, the man himself who is so dressed.

To *be out on a dike*, to be carefully attired, to show one's finery in public.

**Dike (to).** To attire oneself faultlessly for social purposes.

*Dicked out*, to be dressed up, with connotation of being in one's best clothes.

Not unlikely that the word is merely a corruption of the Old English "dight" which meant "decked out."

**Dime.** A silver coin of the U. S. worth ten cents, or the tenth of a dollar.

**Dime novels.** Cheap, trashy novels, sold for a dime. Of same kind as those known in England as "penny dreadfuls."

**Dingbat.** A bat of wood, or indeed anything that may be thrown (dinged) with force or dashed violently at another object.

**Dingee, Dinky.** In New England, a peculiar tub-like boat, elsewhere called *dory*.

In England, called "dingy."

**Dingle.** In Northern New England, a protecting weather-shed built around the entrance to a house. Also, among Maine lumbermen, a storm-door, built by standing spruce or fir poles close together in front of the camp-door.

**Dingling.** Between two stools, tottering, insecure.

**Dining-room servant.** In the South, a male waiter, the equivalent of the butler of English households.

**Dip.** (1) A pickpocket.

(2) A stolen kiss.

(3) In New Jersey, pudding-sauce

**Dip (to).** A mode of taking tobacco by women, chiefly in the South, and which consists in rubbing the gums with a split, brush-like stick, the end of which is wetted and dipped in snuff. These filthy practices are said to have originated in the use of snuff as a powder for cleansing the teeth. Also, *to rub snuff*.

The stick above alluded to is called the *rubbing-stick* or *snuff-swab*, and the person who indulges in the practice is called a *dipper*, or *snuff-dipper*.

**Dipper.** (1) A ladle-like utensil, used to dip water or other liquids.

(2) The constellation of the Great Bear, known in England as "Charle's Wain."

(3) A small aquatic bird, also called *water-witch* or *hell-diver*.

(4) In the South, one who dips snuff.

**Dipsy.** In Pennsylvania, a sinker used in sea fishing. A corruption of "deap sea," the dipsy or deep sea lead being used for soundings off-shore or in deep water.

**Dirt.** Very commonly used for soil, earth, clay, and, in the mining regions, for any substance dug. Thus, a gardener will fill his flower-pots with *dirt*, and an unfloored cabin will be spoken of as having a *dirt* floor.

See *pay dirt*.

**Dirt cart.** A cart for removing street sweepings, what in England is called a "dust-cart."

**Dirt road.** An unpaved road.

**Discard.** At game of poker, to take from one's hand the number of cards one intends to draw, and place them on the table, face upwards, near the next dealer.

**Disfellowship (to).** (1) In religious circles, to dispossess of church membership. A threat equivalent to excommunication or any other major anathema.

Also, *to unfellowship*. See *fellowship*.

**Disgruntled.** Disappointed, disconcerted; to have a spoke put in one's wheel.

Also, in a contrary sense, *undisgruntled*.

**Disremember.** Still surviving, in South and West, in sense of to forget, to fail to remember. Esp. South and West.

Now entirely obsolete in Great Britain, except in Ulster where it is still a common vulgarity.

**Distressed.** Sometimes heard for wretched, miserable.

**District (to).** To apportion a State into electoral districts or counties.

Often synonymous with *gerrymander*.



**District courts.** Courts for the administration of the Civil Law, also for Admiralty Cases, held in each of the thirty-five districts into which the United States are divided.

**District school.** A public school within a district.

**District school-master.** The teacher of a district school.

**Dite.** See *dight*.

**Dittany** (*Cunila mariana*). A plant, the leaves of which are used for herb tea.

**Ditty-bag.** A sailor's "housewife," containing what is necessary for mending his clothes.

**Dive.** A basement saloon, or low variety show.

**Divide.** In the West, a long, low ridge of land which separates rivers flowing in different directions.

**Docious.** A Southern survival, for docile, of an English provincialism.

**Docity.** Like *docious*, is a survival, in the South, of an English provincialism used negatively in sense of quick comprehension, aptness, quickness of wit. "He has no *docity*."

**Dock.** The slip or space between two piers, for the reception of vessels. In England, sense is restricted to an enclosed basin. Various words are used for docks, according to particular regions. Thus, vessels go into "docks" on their arrival at Philadelphia, but into "slips" at Mobile; they are tied up to "wharves" at Boston, but to "piers" at Chicago.

**Doekmackie** (*Viburnum acerifolium*). A medicinal plant for external application, probably named by the Dutch, and whose properties were well known to the Indians before settlement of the country.

**Dock-walloper.** In New York, a loafer that hangs about the wharves. Also, *dock-loafer*.

In addition to above sense, the term *dock-walloper* is applied also to the frequent crowds of unemployed emigrants, so often seen in every large seaport.

A laborer on the wharves or docks.

**Dodger.** A hard-baked cake of corn-meal, either made up with cold water into *pones*, or with lard or grease of some kind.

In Virginia and the West, has also the meaning of unleavened corn-bread.

**Dodgers.** Small hand-bills, especially those distributed in advance of a show.

- Dodunk.** A stupid, simple person. (Northern New-England.)
- Doe-bird** (*Numenius borealis*). A New-England name for the Esquimau curlew.
- Dog.** A cant term for an iron instrument used by burglars.
- Dog-fall.** A fall in wrestling, in which neither party has the advantage.
- Dogfish** (*Amia calva*). The mudfish of lakes Erie and Ontario, so called from its ferocious looks and voracious habits.  
In other Western waters, bears the sarcastic name of *lake-lawyer*, evidently due to the same qualities that have procured for him the epithet of *dogfish*.
- Dogger.** A mean grog-shop, a low public house, a basement saloon. (South and West.)  
Is in particular often applied to a low dive, or unlicensed whiskey shop.  
See *grogger*, *rum-hole*.
- Doggies.** The commonest kind of marbles, generally colored brown.
- Doggoned.** Used, in the South, as a substitute for strong language of a blasphemous character.  
*A doggoned fivement* is a Texan phrase applied to anything that is praiseworthy or acceptable.
- Dogs.** A name still given to andirons, from the frequent occurrence of dog's heads on their front part. (Virginia and New England.)  
Also, *fire-dogs*.  
Provincial in parts of England, and quoted in Brockett's Glossary of North Country Words.
- Dog's-age.** A long time, an indefinite period. "To be gone a dog's-age."
- Dog-soldiers.** A name given, among the Cheyennes, to a sort of guild composed of all the hunters of a tribe, thus comprising in fact the whole working force which protects and supplies the women and children.
- Dog-towns.** In the West, the communities formed by the little marmot (*Cynomys ludovicianus*), miscalled the *prairie-dog*, whose dwellings consist of burrows thrown up like little conical huts.  
Also, *dog-villages*.
- Dog watch.** Among reporters attached to an evening paper, said of being on duty from nine until midnight.
- Dogwood.** See *cornel-tree* and *poison-sumac*.

**Doings** (pron. doin's). A Western vulgarism for victuals, prepared food ; an entertainment.

Also, *fixings*.

*Common doings*, common daily fair.

*Great-doings*, high feasting, or solemn ceremonies. See *chicken fixin's*.

*Hard doings*, hard times, dark days of adversity.

In New England, the question "How are the *doin's*?" is an inquiry as to the state of the roads.

**Doless**. Colloquial for inefficient, lacking in many qualities; shiftless, good for nothing.

Doless is a Scottism quoted by Jamieson.

**Dollar**. The standard coin of the United States, of the approximate value, in English money, of 4s. 2d.

**Dollar of the Fathers**. The 412½ grain silver dollar, used as a watch cry during the remonetization agitation of 1877, and which was claimed to be the coin favored by the fathers of the Republic. The opponents of the movement, on the other hand, called it *dollar of the daddies*, *dollar of the dads*.

**Domestics**. Goods manufactured in the country—especially cotton goods—as distinguished from imported articles.

**Dominie**. A name often applied to clergymen, especially of the Dutch reformed church, in portions of New York and New Jersey.

From the Scotch *dominie*, meaning a school master.

Also used adjectively. "A *dominie* lookin' feller."

**Donate**. To bestow a grant, to contribute, to give as a donation.

**Donation-party**. An occurrence in the rural districts, partaking of the nature of a jollification, and consisting in the presentation to the pastor of some articles of food or clothing, as a supplement to his meagre salary.

Also, *giving-party*, *pound-party*, this last one being however specially used for a presentation of groceries, etc., put up in pound packages.

Sometimes, also, those different parties are for the benefit of public charities.

**Done**. Often used adverbially, esp. in the South, as an intensive, and in a way which is quite unique, as for instance in such phrases, and constantly added to a past participle: "He's *done* gone, *done* dead, *done* come," etc.

**Done up**. Often heard, in Pennsylvania, in sense of all gone "The apples are *done up*."

**Donnock, Donock.** In the West, and parts of New England, a stone or rock. More specifically, a large stone or boulder imbedded in the ground, but not a "tight-stone" or ledge.

Also, *dornick*.

*Donock* and *dornick* are thought by some to be humorous corruptions of doughnut, while it is also very possible that they may have come down to us from the Gaelic "doirneag," Irish "doirneog," which means a stone of convenient size for throwing.

**Doodel.** In parts of Pennsylvania settled by Germans, used in sense of sing or play, especially when speaking of unskilful performers. "We heard them *doodeling* away inside."

**Doodle.** In parts of Pennsylvania, said of a small pile of hay. "Throw the windrows up into *doodles*."

**Doodle-bugs.** In the South, applied to a species of beetles which live in holes in the ground.

Bartlett volunteers the information, in explanation of the derivation of the word, that by calling *doodle* several times near their holes, those bugs will make their appearance.

**Doom.** In Massachusetts, to assess taxes on reasonable discretion. To tax by estimate, as on the failure of a taxpayer to make a statement of his taxable property.

The law is of 1703, but the term is much older, as Massachusetts has always rated property and assessed taxes in proportion.

**Doomage.** A penalty or fine for neglect, under the law of New Hampshire.

**Dooming-board.** In Massachusetts, the combined assessors taxing property by estimate or at discretion.

**Door-rock.** (1) In the West, the door-stone or step.

(1) In the South, a slang term for a piece of money.

**Door-tender.** A door-keeper, or hall-porter.

**Dory.** A kind of boat in use among fishermen. The term has reached up from the West-Indies as far up as Canada, and is especially much in use there among the Acadian fishermen of the Bay of Fundy and the Nova Scotia shore.

Also, *dorie*.

*Dory* has been inherited from the West Indies, and comes from "dorey," the local name for a canoe hollowed out of a log of wood.

**Doted.** Applied alike, in the South and West, to objects animate and inanimate, in sense of unserviceable, rotten, spoiled.

In Newfoundland, and the Canadian Maritime provinces, often said of wood, especially fire-wood, which has become partly decayed and brittle.

**Do tell.** A senseless Yankee catch-phrase, lugged in every where in sense of really ! you don't say so ! is it possible !

**Double ender.** During the late Civil War, a special build of gun-boat round at both ends.

**Double-horse (to do).** (1) To do, or attempt to do two things at once.  
(2) To have a two-faced character or position.

**Double-ripper.** Two sleds fastened by a plank, and used for sliding down hills.

Also, *doubler*.

**Dough.** Among college students, a slang term for money.

**Doughface.** A contemptuous nickname applied, during slavery times, to those Northern politicians who, as abettors of slavery, were looked upon as trucklers to Southern policy. John Randolph, a senator from Virginia, appears to have been the first to use the term.

By extension, a politician who is open to influence, personal or otherwise.

The term is evidently traced to the baker, meaning a man easily moved to change his opinion, in fact, as Lowell would say, "a contented and kneadable lickspittle" who can be moulded, like dough, to any shape.

**Doughfacism.** Truckling to the slave power, in slavery times. A truckling policy.

**Dough-head.** A soft-pated fellow, a fool. (Bartlett.)

**Doughie.** Among ranchmen, a name applied to young immigrant cattle.

**Doughnut.** A popular delicacy, made of flour, eggs, sugar and milk, rolled into balls and fried in lard.

The word *donnut* is quoted by Halliwell, as used in Hertshire, to denote a pankake made of dough instead of batter.

See *crullers*, *olycocks*.

**Do-ups.** In New Jersey, a current word for preserves.

**Dove.** The old form of the past tense of *dive*, used in some parts of the United States, and also among the Anglo-Canadians.

*Dove* is now creeping into use in England, and it may also here be remarked that the strong preterit (*hung* for *hanged*) is nowadays current in provincial English speech in the case of many verbs which are properly of the weak conjugation.

Plunged as if he were an otter,  
*Dove* as if he were a beaver.

(LONGFELLOW, *Hiawatha*.)

**Down.** A peculiar usage of *down*, unaccompanied by a preposition, prevails in New England, as, for example, *down* cellar, for down in the cellar.

Similarly, *up* garret, for up in the garret.

**Down (to).** An old word, now obsolete in England, and still preserved in America in sense of to humble, to humiliate, as in Sidney's "to down proud hearts."

**Down country.** Used in the interior, to denote the region round and about the mouth of a river, or near the sea.

Similarly, *up-country*, as meaning the interior.

**Down-east.** Said in the West of the whole country extending eastward from the Mississippi, and particularly of the New-England States, which are the Yankee's Mecca, the only part of the States where alone a man can be born, live or die with any degree of credit to himself.

**Down-easter.** A New-Englander, although in parts of New England the term is more particularly applied to a native or resident of Maine.

**Down on style.** Out of the common.

**Down-town.** The business portion of a city.

**Down to the ground.** Entirely, completely. "That suits me *down to the ground*."

**Down to a point.** To get anything down to a point, is to define its exact conditions and limitations.

See *boiled down to a point*.

**Down upon (to be).** To seize with avidity. Also, in reference to persons, to be influenced by dislike or enmity. "I'll *be down upon* you," i. e. I'll be even with you.

**Dozed, Dozy.** Often said of timber already brittle, and which is beginning to decay.

**Drag.** (1) A kind of stout sledge upon which heavy loads, especially stones, are dragged over the ground.

In the West, often called *stone-boat*.

(2) In college slang, one who tries to curry favor.

**Drag (to).** In college slang, to curry favor with an instructor.

**Drag-driver.** A cowboy's name for a herdsman who follows in the rear of a herd of cattle to drive up the stragglers.

**Dragged out.** Used colloquially, like "fagged out," in sense of exhausted, fatigued.

**Drag out.** (1) A fight of a rough and tumble character, that is, which is carried to extremities.

(2) In the South, a bully, a tearer.

**Drains.** The tributaries of the larger rivers are sometimes so called, in the West.

**Dratted.** An intensive epithet derived from *drat*, a peculiarly British form of objurgation. "This is a *dratted* piece of business."

**Draw.** (1) The game of draw-poker.

(2) In the West, a name often applied to a broad ravine.

**Draw (to).** At game of poker, to receive from the dealer the same number of cards corresponding to those that have been discarded.

**Draw a straight furrow.** A metaphor derived from the plough, signifying to go right about one's business, to be truthful and honest, and to indulge in no shams or false pretences.

**Draw the wool over the eyes.** To impose upon one; to hoodwink; to throw dust in the eyes.

**Dreadful.** Used adverbially, for the purpose of giving emphasis to an expression, in sense of very, greatly, exceedingly, excessively. "A *dreadful* good man, a *dreadful* nice gall, etc."

Provincial in England, in the Westmoreland and Cumberland dialects.

**Dress.** Generally used for gown, as a part of a lady's costume.

*To dress to death, to dress to kill, to dress to the nines*, and, in the South, *to dress up drunk*, are women's phrases which signify to overdress, to be dressed in clothes cut in the very extreme of splendor or fashion.

**Dress around.** In parts of Pennsylvania, to change outer garments. "I must dress *around* before I go to town."

**Dressing.** A term applied to the sauces, gravies, stuffings, and other condiments which accompany fish, flesh, and fowl.

**Dress out.** Often heard for undress, in Pennsylvania.

**Drink.** A Western slang word to designate a river or a pond. The Mississippi river appears also quite frequently, in the South-West, as the *Big Drink*.

Drink, for river, is certainly an interesting illustration of the assumption that the chief use of any fluid is for potation, but it is nevertheless curious to notice a similar use of the word by Shakespeare, when he says of Ophelia:

Till that her garments, heavy with her *drinke*,  
 Pul'd the poor wretch....  
 To muddy death.

**Drinks.** Spirituous liquors and wines served in bar-rooms.

**Drive.** (1) In cattle districts, a gathering of herds for branding or other purposes.

(2) The annual "round-up" of cattle, in the great plains of the West and South-West.

(3) A mass of logs accumulated on a stream, and floated down to tide-water. (Esp. Maine and Canada.)

**Drive the river.** In Maine and Canada, an expression used by lumbermen, and meaning to direct the passage of logs to navigable waters.

**Driver.** (1) The universal name for the man who drives the horses, whether he be a coachman, a carman, or a ploughman.

(2) In the South, an overseer of negroes on a plantation. The foreman of a gang of laborers.

(3) Among lumbermen of Maine and Canada, the man who directs a *drive* of logs down a river to navigable waters. Also, *river-driver*.

(4) A hustler, a hard taskmaster.

**Driveway.** (1) A road set apart for driving, as distinguished from the foot-path.

(2) A covered approach to hotels, churches, etc.

**Driving-park.** A race-course, a tract of ground appropriated to horse-racing.

**Droger** (Dutch *draager*, a carrier, a porter). A vessel of the barge type, with or without sails, built solely for transportation of heavy loads, and known as such all over the country among mariners.

Also, *drogher*, *drugger*.

**Drop-game.** A variety of the confidence trick, which consists in pretending to pick up a pocket-book full of notes, and inducing a greenhorn to part with ready money in exchange for the notes, which of course are spurious.

This trick is also played with rings and other supposed valuables.

Thence, also, *pocket-book dropper*, *pocket-book dropping*.

**Drop-letter.** A letter dropped into the post-office, for a resident of the same place, and which therefore does not pass through the mails at all.

**Drudge.** Raw whiskey. The term originated in the Eastern States.

**Drug-store.** What, in England, is called a "chemist's shop."

**Druggist.** In England, a chemist.

Also, *pharmacist*.

**Drummer.** A mercantile word meaning a commercial traveller, and especially one soliciting the custom of country merchants.

**Drumming.** The soliciting of customers, especially country merchants, by the aid of *drummers*.



**Drung.** In Newfoundland, a narrow lane leading to a pasture.

**Drunk.** A drinking-bout, a spree, a debauch.

**Druthers.** In the South, often heard in sense of choice, preference.

“To have one’s *druthers*,” i. e. to have what one had rather have.

**Dry.** (1) Thirsty. So used in Middleton’s plays, and also in Skelton, and in the *World* (1754).

(2) Prohibitionist, in favour of temperance. “The country will give a *dry* majority of several hundred votes.”

Similarly, a town is said *to go dry* when, on the question of local option, it declares for the shutting up of drinking saloons. Compare with *wet*.

**Dry creek.** A Western expression applied to a stream which, judging by first appearance, is apt to promise comfort in times of drought, but nevertheless “dries up” entirely during the summer months.

Also synonymous with a *coulee*.

**Dry-goods.** Clothes, stuffs, laces, etc. that are offered for sale.

**Dry goods store.** An establishment for the sale of the above, what in England would be called a draper’s, or haberdasher’s shop.

Similarly, the French-Canadians have made *marchandises sèches*.

**Drys.** A nickname applied to the members of the Prohibition or total abstinence party. Their opponents are called the *wets*.

**Dry up (to).** As the drying up of a river stops most agricultural operations, to verb *to dry up* has become synonymous with to make amend to quit, while *dry up!* in the imperative tense, is a familiar slang term for the more considerate “hush!”

*Dry up!*—no, I won’t *dry up*. I’ll have my rights, if I die for’em... so you had better *dry up* yourself.

(P. REEVES, *The Student’s Speaker*, p. 79.)

**Dubersome.** In interior of New England, a common vulgarism for doubtful, dubious, uncertain.

*Dubersome* is evidently derived from the English vulgarism *duberos*, but whereas this English term expresses only the doubtful fact, the American *dubersome* is very often applied besides to an uncertain state of mind. “He was a *dubersome* man, who always meant well, but always hesitated between two opinions.” (Mrs. H. B. Stowe.)

**Dud, Dude.** What we might call a very convenient tailor’s block.

If not American by origin, it is certainly so by usage.

**Dud-chest.** A clothes’ chest.

**Duds.** A Low Scotch word, sometimes used in England for rags and old clothes.

In the United States, wearing apparel of any kind, and indeed, sometimes also, all movable property.

**Dug-out.** (1) A boat or canoe hollowed or dug out of a large log. Also, *dug-canoe*, *log-canoe*, this last name being more specially used in Canada.

(2) In the West, a house or cabin made by excavating the prairie, and throwing up the soil to form sides and a roof. Also, a cabin made by digging into a hill, or other elevated ground.

**Dully.** An uncouth and needless form for stupidly.

**Dumm, Dummy** (Scotch *dummie*). (1) A stupid or silent person, a blockhead.

(2) An absent partner at cards.

In England, dummy is a slang word for deaf-mute.

**Dummerhead** (Ger. *dummkopf*). A blockhead, any stupid or silent person. (Pennsylvania and Western States inhabited by Germans.)

Also, simply *dumm*.

**Dump.** (1) Any place or open lot where dirt or rubbish is unloaded. A low piece of ground will mostly thus be utilized, for the purpose of raising its level.

(2) A place at the mouth of a coal pit, where the waste is deposited.

**Dump (to).** To unload a cart by tilting it up, as when unloading wood, coal, etc.

Provincial in Devonshire in sense of to knock heavily, to stump. Hence, perhaps, its American application, or it might be only an imitative term made from the heavy thud produced by the unloading of a cart.

**Dumpage.** (1) The privilege of dumping loads from carts, especially loads of refuse matter.

(2) A fee paid for such a privilege.

**Dump-cart.** A cart used for dumping, and which usually tilts up in front.

**Dumping-ground.** An open ground where rubbish is dumped.

**Dumpy.** Quite common, in the West, in sense of heavy, sad, stupid, as of a chicken with some disease.

**Dunch.** In Newfoundland, said of bread not properly baked.

**Duncy.** A variant of duncish used in parts of Pennsylvania for stupid, sottish. "He's rather a *duncy* fellow."

**Dunfish.** A superior kind of dried cod-fish, so called from the process of curing it, by which they acquire a dun color. The process itself is called *dunning*.

**Dungaree.** A vessel used, in New-York and Connecticut waters for the transportation of dung.

**Dung-beetle.** See *tumble-bug*.

**Dunker.** A member of a sect of German-American Baptists, so named from their manner of baptism, which is practised by triple immersion. Driven from Germany by persecution early in the 18th century, the *Dunkers* first took refuge in Pennsylvania, and thence extended into the neighboring States, especially Ohio.

Also, *Tunker*.

**Dunky.** Excessively thick, badly-proportioned, clumsily shaped.

**Durham boat.** A large sharp-pointed, flat-bottomed boat, formerly in much use on the St Lawrence, Mohawk, Delaware, and other rivers, especially in the colonial period.

**Dupes.** In printing-house parlance, the duplicate proofs, by which the amount of type set by a compositor is measured, the aggregate *dupes* forming his *string*.

**Durgen.** In New Jersey, said of a old horse, worn out by use.

Durgen is still provincial in England in sense of a dwarf.

**Dusky-grouse.** A fine large bird, second only to the sage grouse, and affording a most delicious food, which is found almost everywhere in the mountainous regions of the great West, between an altitude of about 6,000 feet and the snow line.

Other names, according to different parts of the country, are *black grouse*, *blue grouse*, and *mountain grouse*.

**Dust (to).** In Texas, to depart rapidly, to move about quickly, and even to castigate.

Also, *to get up and dust*.

**Duster.** An outside coat, generally made of brown linen, and used when traveling to protect one's garments from dust.

**Dutch** (Germ *Deutsch*). A generic name applied to all persons or things of German origin, and said to have been in common English use two hundred years ago.

*It beats the Dutch.* A common exclamation still common in all parts of the Union to indicate surprise, or applied to anything astonishing. Bartlett quotes it as early as 1775, in a Revolutionary song, and it probably can be traced back to the time when the naval superiority of the Dutch had not altogether disappeared, and when Dutchmen, the world over, had obtained quite a renown for their sturdy hardihood.

**Dutch curse.** The common, or ox-eyed daisy, so called, says Bartlett, from its annoyance to farmers.

Also, *Dutch cuss*.

**Dutchman.** (1) A generic name applied to members of the Dutch, German, or Scandinavian races. Also, by extension, any foreigner who speaks English brokenly or not at all.

(2) In carpentry, a wooden block or wedge to fill a space left or made by mistake from careless work.

**Dutiable.** Subject or liable to import duty.

In England, specially applied to the tax levied on real estate or farmer's stock.

**Dwy.** In Newfoundland, said of a sudden squall of wind, with rain or snow.

**Dyed in the wool.** Out-an-out; ingrained; thorough. Usually applied to unflinching partisanship.

**Dyspeptic.** Has long lost its special meaning in the United States, and is now used to denote all the various forms of weakness of the digestive organs.

### E

**Eagle.** A gold coin of the value of ten dollars, so called from the emblem of the republic which it bears.

A double eagle is \$20, a half eagle \$5.

**Earth almond** (*Cyperus esculentus*). A reed-like plant, indigenous to Southern Europe, which was introduced into the Southern States by the Department of Agriculture, in 1854.

Also known under its Spanish name of *chufa*.

**Earthenut** (*Arachnis hypogœa*). The pea-nut of the South, so called from its peculiar habit of ripening its pods by burying them underground after flowering.

Also, *groundnut*.

In Florida, the negro name is *pinder*, while in Virginia and N. Carolina it is called *goober*.

**Easy.** Gently, softly. "Talk easy, walk easy, etc."

**Eat.** A verb used transitively in the West, in the sense of "to supply with food." Thus a Western steamboat is said to be able *to eat* two hundred passengers, and *to sleep* at least two hundred.

"To egg," and "to piece" are other verbs similarly formed.

**Eat dirt.** To retract, to be penitent, the Yankee equiv. of "to eat one's words."

**Editorial.** Used elliptically, in newspaper parlance, instead of editorial article, in sense of English leader or leading article.

Now also a common expression in England.

**Eels-pout.** See *pout*.

**Eelskin.** One of the many devious ways formerly in use, at the polls, to secure the election of some favored nominee on a ticket otherwise in the minority. An *eelskin* was a thin slip of gummed paper, on one side of which was printed the favored politician's name, and which at the proper moment was deftly pasted on the ballot over the opponent's name.

Also called *paster*.

**Eel-spear.** A sort of trident for catching eels. In England, "eel-shear."

**Egg (to).** (1) To incite and push forward, to stir one up to strife. Also, to *egg on*. Still provincial in parts of England. In Pennsylvania, pronounced "to agg," which seems so much more exact that Grose gives *agging* from French *agacer*, to provoke.

(2) To pelt with rotten eggs.

**Egg-nog.** Eggs, cream, and brandy mixed together, and a favorite beverage all over the South, especially at Christmas time.

**Egypt.** A sobriquet given to Southern Illinois, according to some on account of the fertility of the land, whilst others unkindly aver that it alludes to the mental darkness of the inhabitants of that region.

**Ejido,** ay-hee'-doe (Sp.). In Spanish or Mexican settlements in Texas, land set apart to lay out a town. Mostly restricted to deeds, or other documents, either public or private.

In Spain, the term means a common, or public space of land.

See *porcion* and *suerte*.

**Elegant.** In frequent use for anything admirable, or of first rate quality "Elegant landscape, attire, food, etc."

**Elevator.** (1) A mechanical contrivance for lifting grain, etc. to an upper floor (Bartlett). Also the building itself used for storing grain, and fitted with elevators.

(2) What in England is called a "lift," and used for carrying persons to the upper stories.

**Empire City.** The city of New-York, so called from its wealth and population, and from its being the metropolis of the Empire State.

**Empire State.** The State of New-York, as surpassing all other States in wealth and population, and thus forming an empire of its own. Also *Excelsior State*

**Emptins, Emptyings.** In New England, the lees of beer, cider, etc. yeast, or anything by which bread is leavened.

To *run emptins*, to show signs of not holding out well, as for instance a speech or an enterprise of any kind. Probably from analogy of a beer-barrel.

**Enchilada,** en-tche-lah'-dah (Sp.). In Texas, the name of a Mexican dish, the principal ingredient of which is *chile* (q. v.).

**Engine** (pron. *ingine*). A railroad locomotive, a fine-engine.

Similarly, the French-Canadians have made *engin*.

**Engineer**. An engine-driver, an engine-man.

Similarly, the French-Canadians have made *ingénieur*.

**Engineer (to)**. Often used instead of to plan, to work out.

**Enthuse**. (1) A newspaper barbarism meaning to fill or to be filled with enthusiasm, to manifest delight or to become enthusiastic.

(2) In a religious sense, to infuse divine spirit.

**Epinette** (Fr. C.). A generic name given, by the French Canadians, to several members of the fir and larch family, of which the following are especially well known :

*Epinette blanche* (Albies alba), spruce ;

*Epinette rouge* (Larix americana), larch ;

*Epinette noire* (Albies nigra), a species of fir.

The word *épinette* occurs in the works of La Hontan, and dates back to the 17th century.

**Esquire**. A much abused title now applied, in the United States, with republican uniformity, to any one who is not already a colonel or a judge.

Although now-a-days, in England, the same word is often used in a very inappropriate way, still John Bull always feels that he must draw a line somewhere ; and *esquire* with him usually stops at professional men and merchants, among whom he does not include shop-keepers.

**Esquite**, es-kee'-tay (Mex. *izquilt*). In Texas, a name applied to pop-corn sweetened.

**Essence-peddler**. A derisive name applied to the skunk, which every one fights shy of, as from a peddler. The name, we think, was first given by the poet Lowell.

**Eternal**. An intensive of same type as almighty, awful, cruel, everlasting, which we owe to the terse and vigorous vernacular of the West. Thus, an *eternal* time is a long time.

**Eternal camping ground**. A simile for a future state of existence, borrowed from the phraseology of backwoodsmen.

**Euchre**. A game of cards, very much in vogue throughout the United States. The word is said to be of German origin, which ancestry seems so much more acceptable that the two highest cards are designated as *right* and *left bower*, evidently the German "bauer" or peasant.

**Euchre (to)**. (1) To defeat, to foil, to overcome in any scheme, from *enchred* which, in the terminology of the game *euchre*, means to lose two points.

(2) To defraud, or cheat.

**Euchred.** To be beaten at euehre.

**Eulachon.** See *hoolikan*.

**Evacuation day.** The anniversary of the day (Nov. 25, 1783) when the British troops evacuated the city of New York, and which was once kept as a public holiday.

**Evening.** Applied in the South and West to the afternoon, the time after sunset being designated as night. Thus, it is "evening" at Richmond, while "afternoon" still lingers a hundred miles due north at Washington.

**Everglades.** A term applied, in the Southern States, to swampy grass-land. In Florida, however, the word is used to designate portions of land lower than the coast, and but little above the sea, covered with fresh-water.

**Everlasting.** Often used in the same way as almighty, in sense of very, exceedingly. "What an everlasting great city this is." (Mark Twain.)  
An intensitive of the same type as almighty, awful, cruel, eternal, etc.

**Everlasting** (Gnaphalium). The American representative of the "Immortelle" of Europe, so named from the endurance of its flowers when dried.

**Every which way.** Anyhow, anyway.  
Every way, in all directions.

**Evidence (to).** To bear witness, to give evidence, in sense of testimony.

**Excellency.** A title given, by courtesy, to governors of States, and to representatives at foreign Courts.  
In Massachusetts, the title is given, by the constitution, to the Governor of the State.

**Excelsior State.** The State of New York, from the motto "Excelsior" upon its coat of arms.

**Exchange.** A euphemism for a drinking shop or saloon.

**Executive City.** The city of Washington, D. C. from its being the official capital of the Union, and the seat of Government.

**Exercices.** A generic term for any public proceedings, especially those of a religious nature, and indeed for any portion of a religious service.

**Expect.** To intend, to think, to suppose, to anticipate. A New Englandism used in same sense as to guess, to reckon, to calculate.

**Experience.** A term having originated among American revivalists, and meaning what one has passed through in "getting" religion. Thus, relating one's *experience* is relating the progress of one's mind in becoming an ardent believer.

*To experience religion*, to become converted. Also, *to get religion*.

**Expose.** A corruption of exposure, which has become colloquial.

**Exposition.** An exhibition. To put on exposition, i. e. to exhibit. Americans follow here closely the French word "exposition."

**Express.** A system in operation on all railways, for the rapid conveyance and delivery of packages and goods.

*Express-car*, a railway carriage for the conveyance of express packages. — *Lightning express*, a quick-transit train. — *Express-man*, answers to the parcel-conveying agent of England. — *Express-office*, where the business is transacted.

**Express (to).** (1) To send or convey by express-train, or by a special train.

(2) To send or convey through an express company.

**Eye-opener.** (1) A startler, something which arouses one's surprise.

(2) One of the many names for a morning pick-me-up, in American bar-rooms.

## F

**Face the music.** To meet an emergency, to stand up against trouble. Said to have originated among actors, when nervously preparing, in the green-room, to go on the board and literally "face the music."

**Factory.** Often heard for muslin. "Bleached factory."

**Factory-cotton.** Unbleached cotton made at home, in contrast with the imported one.

**Fag end.** A New-Jerseyism, meaning the end piece of anything.

**Fair-maid.** A popular name, on the Virginia coast, for a small fish elsewhere known as *porgy*, and *scup*.

**Fair off.** To clear off, to clear up, in sense of denoting that the weather is clearing up slowly. Particularly current in the South and South-West.

Also, to *fair up*.

**Fairy.** In college slang, a pretty girl.

**Fairy tale.** In newspaper parlance, a story whose authenticity is doubted.

Also, *ghost story*.

**Faith-curists.** A name applied to those religious enthusiasts who hold that all disease can be cured by faith and prayer alone.

**Fake.** (1) A falsity, or swindling of any kind.

(2) A story without foundation.



In newspaper parlance, a story is called a *fake*, when the writer has invented the whole thing, or has depended on a too fertile imagination for his details.

- Fake (to).** (1) To commit a swindling.  
 (2) To draw solely upon one's imagination in relating a story.  
 Especially current among newspaper men.

**Fakir.** (1) An itinerant merchant, so called from the street corner peddlers, who used to draw attention to their wares by performing tricks. In India, as is well known, a fakir is an adept at sleight of hand.

Also, *faker*.

- (2) In newspaper parlance, a reporter who draws upon his imagination for his facts.

**Fall.** (1) The season of falling leaves, the autumn.

This beautiful word, which corresponds so well to its opposite "spring," can only be called an Americanism in that it is as generally employed here as "autumn" is in England. But the word itself, although it has become somewhat unfamiliar to English ears, has been used by every writer of mark from Dryden's time.

(2) An apparatus used in hoisting and lowering goods in warehouses. Hence, *fall-way*, the line in which the *fall* works, i. e. the opening or well through which goods are raised or lowered by a *fall*.

- (3) Used elliptically to designate a "fall of rain."

**Fall (to).** Often used in sense of *to fell*, as to fall a tree instead of to fell a tree.

Still provincial in some parts of England.

Used by Shakespeare (*Tempest*) in sense of *let fall*:

And when I rear my hand, do you the like,  
 To *fall* it on Gonzalo.

**Falling weather.** Used to designate rainy or snowy weather, and especially a damp, misty, or drizzling temperature.

**Falls City.** The city of Louisville, Kentucky, from the falls of the same name on the Ohio river.

**Family.** Often used to denote a man's wife and children, especially the latter.

In England, a "man of family" almost exclusively denotes a man of good family, while in the United States it means a man who has a wife and children.

**Fandango (Sp.).** In Texas and New Mexico, originally a certain dance brought over from Spain, but now extended to mean any dancing party or nocturnal jollification of low order.

**Fancies.** In gambling parlance, stocks about which very little is known, and are accordingly *fancied* in preference to others by unscrupulous brokers, for their operations in fleecing speculating greenhorns.

**Fancy.** (1) Anything fantastical or unusual. "Fancy prices."

(2) Applied to things and persons more ornamental than useful. "Fancy people."

(3) Fictitious, imaginary. "Fancy stocks," such as exist only on paper.

**Fanner.** Often heard in Charleston, S. C. for an open basket dishing out from the bottom upward.

**Fan out.** (1) To pass an examination with credit, to make a show at an examination. Probably from *fan* in the sense of winnow, and said to have originated at the Military Academy of West Point, where for many years it was local.

(2) To strike out, as in baseball.

**Fantail.** On the Western rivers, the stern paddle-wheel of a steamboat.

**Farce-comedy.** A play in which the characters are taken by variety-show "artists," who introduce their specialities, generally in the form of songs, dances, etc.

In England, a farce-comedy would be more generally understood as a farcical comedy.

**Farina.** A superior quality of wheaten flour.

**Fast runner** (*Tachydromus sexlineatus*). A species of lizard of great beauty, so called from its swiftness of motion.

**Fat.** Rich in resinous matter; resinous. "*Fat* pine."

**Fattikows, Fetticus** (Dutch *vettkost*, meaning, by irony, something like rich fare). A local term, in New York City, for corn-salad, or lamb's lettuce (*Valerianella*).

**Favor.** (1) Often used, especially of horses and other animals, when they limp slightly, sparing one foot. "The off horse *favours* his right foot."

Quoted by Grose with meaning of to ease, to spare.

(2) To resemble, especially referring to family resemblance.

**Favored.** The combinations *long-favored*, *square-favored*, *round-favored*, etc., which are still current in America to describe a type of face, have now grown obsolete in England, but the forms *well-favored* and *ill-favored* are still legitimate English terms.

A good *favour* you have.....

(Shakespeare, *The Spectator*.)

**Fay** (Old Eng.). An old word, curtailed from fadge, still lingering in New England with the meaning of to fit. "Your coat *fays* well."

In use during the Augustan age of English literature.

**Faze.** To disturb, ruffle, daunt. "You didn't *faze* him," i. e. you did not disturb him, did not even attract his attention.

Also used of inanimate objects.

See *feaze*.

**Fearful.** (1) Still has, in the United States, the meaning it bore in Shakespeare's time, when it was invariably used in sense of timid, timorous, or afraid.

"Romeo, come forth, come forth, thou *fearful* man," as the Friar says to Romeo, who, after slaying Tybalt, is lying hidden in Friar Lawrence's cell.

So obsolete, however, has now the word become in England, in sense employed by the poet, that in most editions of Shakespeare a foot-note is appended to it, giving the definition as "timorous." In America, the expression: "he is a fearful man," is frequently applied to an individual of timid disposition, the meaning intended to be conveyed being precisely the opposite to that which in England would attach to the phrase, i. e. to inspire terror or awe.

(2) Used by Pennsylvanians in same manner as awful, overlasting, etc. that is, in sense of much, great, strongly.

**Feast** (Dutch *vies*). This word can hardly be said to exist any longer. Nevertheless, the phrase: "I'm *feast* with it," still lingers in New York, among the descendants of the Dutch, in the sense of "I'm disgusted with it."

**Feather (to).** Used in New England to designate the rising of cream on the surface of a cup of tea or coffee.

**Feature.** In newspaper parlance, often heard in sense of a special article, which is of interest from some other point of view than that of news.

**Feaze** (Old Eng.). To be in a *feaze*, to be in a state of turmoil or excitement, is a good old English word which is still colloquial in several States, especially Virginia and other Southern parts.

The form *fease* is mentioned in Nall's Glossary of Yarmouth words.

And thereat came a rage and such a *vese*.

(Chaucer)

This expression is probably derived from the Anglo-Saxon "fysan," meaning the rapid and noisy movement of water, and from which we have received the modern "fizz."

Also, *feeze*, *pheeze*.

**Feaze (to).** To vex, to bother, to knock out. In this last sense, especially, saying of somebody "that he cannot be feazed," it would be considered as a compliment.

The form *faze* is also frequently heard.

**Federal.** (1) Founded upon, or formed by a league, treaty, or compact between independent States.

(2) Pertaining to the United States, as functionally considered.

**Federal City.** The city of Washington.

**Federal currency.** The legal currency of the United States.

**Federalize.** To unite, or confederate for political purposes.

**Federalists.** A term applied to the members of the political party who favored, in the origin, the adoption of the Constitution of the United States, in preference to remaining loyal to England.

The Federalists grew out of a wing of the Colonial Whig party, with Washington as the acknowledged head, and their power was not broken until the Presidential election of 1800, when Thomas Jefferson and Aaron Burr were elected by the then Republicans, defeating the Federalist candidates John Adams and C. C. Pinckney.

**Federals.** The Union men, during the war of the Rebellion.

Also, *Feds*, by abbreviation.

**Feed.** (1) A meal. "A square *feed*."

(2) Fodder, for sheep, cattle, etc., in sense of pasture.

(3) Grass. "Tall *feed*," i. e. high grass.

(4) A slang term for money.

**Feed (to).** (1) To give as food, as to feed crumbs to the birds.

(2) To take meals, board. "Where does he *feed*?"

**Feel.** Used colloquially in sense of to feel disposed, to feel inclined. "I do not *feel* like walking."

*To feel pale*, i. e. to experience fright or sudden shock.

**Feelay.** A Louisiana term applied to the leaves of the sassafras prepared by being dried and powdered.

**Feel one's oats.** Said of conceited or bumptious persons, who like to "put on airs," who are given to a display of self-importance.

Obviously derived from the stable, where horses fed on oats exhibit far more spirit and mettle than would otherwise be the case.

**Feller** (for *fellow*). A young woman's *feller* is the particular one who is paying her attention with possible matrimonial intention.

Also, *beau*.

**Fellow.** Holder of a college fellowship.

**Fellowship.** (1) Often used in religious writings or discourses, in sense of communion, i. e. union in religious worship, doctrine and discipline. In England, means especially companionship, consort, society.

(2) In college parlance, a beneficiary foundation, the income of which is awarded to a talented student, to enable him to continue his studies.

**Fellowship (to).** To hold communion with, to unite with in doctrine and discipline, in Puritan theological practice. Also, *dis-fellowship*.

Perhaps there is no one usage, which is more generally regarded as owing its existence to the religious life of New England, than the employ of *fellowship* as a verb; none also, unquestionably, which has been more violently attacked. As a matter of fact, this vocable, inelegant and unnecessary as it may seem, is five hundred years old. Chaucer, in his translation of Boethius, says of thought, that she "joineth her ways with the sun, and *fellowshipeth* the way of the old, cold Saturn." Of wicked men, he points out "how great pain *fellowshipeth* and followeth them."

**Female.** A word applied indiscriminately, in the United States, to all members of the fair sex, from the first lady of the land to the lowest outcast.

Shakespeare uses the term frequently, and often with all respects, whilst Hume, we are told, calls Joan of Arc a *female*, and the same occurs incessantly in Walter Scott. Indeed, *female* for *woman*, runs through the whole range of English literature since the Reformation. But the idiom has now become so offensive to English taste, while in the same time maintaining a firm hold in America, that it may still properly be classed as a pseudo-Americanism.

*Advanced female*, an expression sneeringly applied to the "new woman," i. e. the woman claiming all the rights and privileges of men, in addition to those already willingly granted to her sex. The word was introduced at the commencement of the agitation in favor of woman suffrage.

*Female help*, an expression applied to any kind of employment for women, whether it be that of a governess, a chamber-maid, or a cook.

**Fence.** (1) A term applied, in the United States, to any kind of enclosure, even to what is called in England a "hoarding," or a wooden inclosure.

(2) A slang term to designate a house where stolen goods are received.

**Fence (snake).** A zig-zag fence built up of split rails, and common in new "clearings" where wood abounds.

Also, *Virginia fence*, *worm fence*, this last word doubtless from such a fence harboring in its corners boundless supplies of vermin.

**Fence (to be on the).** In political slang, the exact counterpart of the old English verb "to trim," i. e. to carry water on both shoulders, or waiting to see which way the cat is going to jump.

**Fence-man.** As a man sitting astride his rail-fence can with equal ease jump down on either side, a *fence-man*, in political parlance, is one waiting to see on which side victory will declare itself, so as to join in the shouts of the winning party.

Also, *fence-politician*, *fence rider*, *nigger-on-the-fence*.

**Fence-riding.** The practice of "sitting on the fence" in a political contest, a position understood at its best in America, where Brother Jonathan takes delight in sitting on the rail of a neighbor's fence, "whittling" for hours, to his own immense satisfaction.

**Fergen.** In New Jersey, the centre pole of a charcoal pit, forming the central part of the *crib* (q. v.).

**Feria.** fer'-e-ah (Sp.). In Texas, a fair; often synonymous with *fiesta* (q. v.).

**Ferry flat.** A flat-boat mainly used, in the Mississippi region, for ferrying purposes.

**Fetch.** (1) Almost unknown, in the United States, in sense of "bringing," but, on the other hand, often used for bringing up. "He has been *fetched up* for the work."

(2) Often heard, in the South, in the sense of to perform. "He *fetches* his blows quick and sure."

(3) To convince, as when some potent argument is necessary to influence strongly, or *fetch* a man.

(4) To agree with. "You will all *fetch* with me. . . ."

**Fetch away.** To part, to separate. "A fool and his money are soon *fetched away*."

**Fetching.** Pretty, attractive, as a *fetching* bonnet, or even a *fetching* woman.

Evidently an extension of to fetch, use in sense of to convince.

**Fever-bush** (Benzoin odoriferum.) A name given in Massachusetts to the *spice-bush* or wild allspice, from its bark being much valued as a febrifuge.

**Fice** (Old Eng.). In the South, especially Kentucky, a term applied to a small dog, a cur, a puppy.

Also, *fjyse*, *phyce*.

In Pennsylvania, a *fiste* (*i* as in *mice*).

Now obsolete in England, and evidently the last small remnant of the old English *foisting* or *fisting* hound, of which Nares gives the following gradual corruptions: foisty, foist, fyst, fyce.

**Fid.** A small portion of tobacco; a plug or a quid. Evidently from "fid," a bunch of oakum put into the touch-hole of a gun.

**Fiddler.** A small, lively, one-armed crab, which runs about side-ways as jerkinly and nimbly as a fiddler's bow, whence its familiar name.

**Field.** In New Jersey, a deserted farm overgrown with pine, scrub oak and brambles. Somewhat equivalent to *plantation*.

**Field-driver.** A New-England term for a civil officer, whose duty is to impound all cattle, hogs, etc., going at large on the public highways.

In England, same officer is called "pound-keeper."

See *hog-reeve*.

**Field-martin** (*Tyrannus carolinensis*). A Southern name for the common king-bird.

Also, *sachem*, *scissor-tail*.

**Fiend.** In college slang, a hard student, one who gets high marks. Also, one who rides a hobby, who is addicted to a particular habit.

In some colleges, the term is also applied to an instructor who makes his students work hard.

**Fierro**, *fe-er'-ro* (Sp.). In Texas, a brand or mark on cattle and horses.

In Spain, *fierro* is an old form for "hierro," iron.

**Fiesta**, *fe-es'-tah* (Sp.). In the formerly Spanish States, any festivity, religious or national.

In the plural form *las fiestas*, the word is synonymous with a fair, which lasts several days.

**Figure.** (1) To count upon. "You may *figure* upon getting an answer to-morrow."

(2) A common colloquialism, in the West, is "to figure on that," used in sense of to consider, to think over.

(3) To single out, to spot.

**Fike** (Dutch *fuik*, a weel, a bow-net). A current word for a large bow-net, among fishermen in the bay of New York.

Also, *fyke*.

**File.** A cloth used for wiping a floor after scrubbing; what is known to English servants as a "house-flannel."

Hence, to *file*, to scrub with a file.

**File-pail.** A wash-pail, or house-maid's pail.

Also, *fling-pail*.

**Filibuster.** (1) An adventurer, engaged in a lawless pursuit and especially one who, on the occasion of an insurrection, makes a practice of furnishing arms, ammunition, to the rebels, contrary to international laws, as was lately the case during the last war in Cuba.

(2) In political parlance, a member of a Legislature who obstructs legislation.

The word *filibuster* first came into general use in America, in 1847, after the Mexican war, when *filibustering* expeditions were talked of against the West Indies.

**Filibuster (to).** (1) To pilfer, to acquire by freebooting. "Every State in the Union has been *filibustered* from the Indians."

(2) To be, to act as a filibuster.

(3) In political parlance, to obstruct legislation by purposeless long speeches, calling for divisions, etc. in order to gain time. It is thus seen that the parliamentary meaning of the word implies a disposition to override regular rules.

**Filibustering.** (1) Freebooting, freebootery.

(2) In legislation, the use of irregular means to defeat a proposed measure. The sharp manœuvring of a party to get an advantage over its opponent.

Also, *filibusterism*.

**Filling.** At game of poker, to match or strengthen the cards to which you draw.

**Fill the bin.** A slang expression, evidently derived from the stable, and meaning to come up to the mark, to acknowledge the accuracy of a description.

**Find.** A discovery.

Now about as common in England as in America.

**Findings.** Shoemakers' supplies in general, excepting leather. In former times, shoemakers used to go to the homes of the country people to make their footwear, the customers supplying the leather, while the mechanic had to find tools, wax, etc. The Boston directory of 1827 contains the following advertisement:

General Finding Store for boot and shoe makers.... keeps all kinds of tools and other articles used by shoemakers.

**Finding-store.** A shop where shoemakers' tools, appliances, etc., are sold.

In England, called a "grindery warehouse."

**Fine and close.** To get one down *fine and close* is to find out all about a man, to deliver a stinging blow, etc.

**Finger.** A nip, a small quantity; usually applied to spirituous liquors.

**Fip.** In Pennsylvania, and several Southern States, the vulgar name for the Spanish half real or pieayune, representing 1/16 of a dollar.

Also, *fippenny*.

Fippence, for five-pence, is provincial in England.

**Fire.** To expel by force. To eject, dismiss, or expel forcibly or peremptorily. Generally accompanied with "out."

**Fire-bug.** An incendiary.



**Fire-copper.** A designation for a group of brands of whiskey, "because of their uniformity and cleanliness."

Another large group is the "sour-mash" family.

**Fire-eaters.** A name originally applied, in political parlance, to the advocates of extreme Southern views, and now extended to those favoring war measures.

This expression is of Irish origin, and may be found in Barrington's sketches.

Equivalent to "Bourbon," but probably of earlier origin.

**Fire-hunt.** A night hunt for game, with the aid of torches of various kinds.

See *shine*.

**Fire in the wrong flock.** A metaphorical expression used in the West, to denote a mistake made in rashly attacking an adversary who "turns out a Tartar," thus corresponding to the English saying about taking "the wrong sow by the ear."

A variant is "to bark up the wrong tree."

**Fireman.** A railway stoker.

**Fire-works.** A quaint substitute for matches, not unfrequently heard in New England. (De Vere.)

Probably at no time anything more than a perversion of language.

**Firing-place.** In New Jersey, a common name applied to a spot suitable for charcoal burning.

**Firstly.** Colloquial, in the West, for prompt, hasty, violent, hot-headed.

The transition from the legitimate meaning of the word is both easy and apparent.

**First-rate and a half.** An intensified form of "first-rate."

First-chop, first-class, and first-rate have been, however, erroneously quoted as Americanisms, all these words being pure idiomatic English.

**Fish (to).** In college slang, to curry favor with instructors. Also, sometimes used in sense of to copy from a fellow student.

**Fish-crow** (*Corvus ossifragus*.) A bird almost entirely confined to the maritime districts of the Southern States, where it is seen hovering in search of small fry or crabs.

**Fisherman-farmer.** On the sea-coast of Massachusetts, said of one who combines farming with fishing, according with the seasons of the year.

**Fish-flake.** In New England, a kind of fagot-hurdle used for drying fish.

**Fish-fry.** A sort of picnic, where the fish are caught and cooked on the grounds.

**Fishing-frog** (*Lophius piscatorius*). The angler, or *devil-fish*.

**Fish-story**. An incredible narration; a marvellous story aiming at taxing credulity; the equivalent of what, in English newspaper slang, would be called a "big gooseberry" or a "sea-serpent yarn."

**Fisticate**. Proceeding from "fisticuff" and meaning to quarrel, to meddle, to fight. We read, in Capt. John Smith's "Account of Virginia":  
There are so many *fisticating* tobacco-mungers in England.

**Fisty**. Low, mean. Also, cross.

**Fits (to give)**. To punish a man severely by tongue, or pen, or cow-hide, or the bare fist, or to throw him into fits, i. e. into a paroxysm of rage and fear.

But he must'n come fooling around my gal, or I'll *give him fits*.

(Bartlett, a Glance at New-York.)

Also, *to give Jessie*.

*To give particular fits*, or *Jessie*, is the comparative of the original positive, the "ne plus ultra" of chastisement, mental or physical.

**Fits (by) and starts**. By short and sudden intervals, from the suddenness and painful violence of a fit.

**Five-Pointers**. A name given at one time to a band of New-York rowdies, from the notorious Five Points district.

**Fix**. To do anything conceivable: to arrange, to unfix, to tighten, to loosen, etc. A man threatening vengeance, will even say to his adversary: "I'll *fix* you."

Also, *to fix up*.

To *fix* may be safely called the American word of words, since there is probably no action whatever, performed by mind or body, which is not represented at some time or other by this universal term. A minister *fixes* his sermons, and a mechanic his work-bench; a young lady, at her toilet, is *fixing* herself, and the waiter says "I'll *fix* you," when, to the guest in doubt, he brings a varied and numerous assortment of dishes.

In commercial circles, to *fix* a thing for the market often comes perilously near flagrant and dishonest dealing.

Americans must have had an early liking for the word, as we read in Bradford's History of Plymouth, 1646: "Where they might *fix* their pieces" (muskets).

**Fix (in a)**. In difficulties, in a dilemma, in a predicament.

An expression which in England is only slang, but is used in the United States in serious language.

The following advertisement, taken from a Boston paper, will give an idea of the extent to which the word *fix* is worked in the United States:

A *fixed* sum of money is desirable as an inheritance for your family. While you are *fixing* a sum of money we advise insurance, as many a *fixer* gets out of *fix* before the *fixing* is done.

**Fix (out of).** Out of health, out of humor, out of almost any normal condition of body or mind.

**Fixed.** (1) A *fixed* fact is a certainty, or what is generally called a bottom fact.

(2) Men who are ready for any emergency are said to be *fixed*, also those who, according to English slang, have been "squared."

(3) At public meetings, or in political contests, those are *fixed* who are to be the candidates for office.

**Fixings.** *Fixings* of all kinds abound in American speech, especially in the South and West, from the *railroad fixings* required for the equipment of a new railway, to *chicken fixings*, *tea and fixings*, in sense of garnishings, trimmings, accompaniments of a dish.

**Fix it.** *Any how you can fix it, no how you can fix it*, slang phrases meaning not by any means, not in any way that you can arrange it.

**Fix one's flint.** A phrase taken from backwoods' life and equivalent to the English slang "to dish" or "to do for."

**Fix out.** Adornment, arrangement, outfit.

**Fix out (to).** To adorn, to arrange, to fit out, to display.

**Fix up.** Ornament, supply, contrivance, device, arrangement.

**Fix up (to).** Same as to *fix out*. Also, to mend, to repair, to contrive.

**Fizzle.** In school and college slang, to make a poor recitation; and, more specifically, to fail in a recitation or an examination.

Also, to *fizzle out*.

**Flag.** To signalize a train, in the day time, with the aid of a flag. Thus, a train is now said to have been *flagged* before a collision.

**Flag-rush.** In college slang, a contest between two classes for a flag placed in some conspicuous position by one of them.

**Flag-station.** A station where passengers are put down or taken up, only by notice or signal.

**Flake (Old Eng.).** A frame for drying fish. The word is a survival of English provincial usage.

See *fish-flake*.

**Flapdoodle.** Nonsense, vain boasting, stuff they feed fools on, from a cock's flapping of wings and crowing.

**Flap-jack (Old Eng.).** A flat griddle-cooked pancake.

....and, more'er, puddings and *flap-jacks*.....

(Shakespeare, Pericles.)

Also, *slap-jack*.

**Flash.** In newspaper parlance, an original device for beating time. When a set event is coming off in which there must be one of two results—as, for instance, a big prize fight—papers are printed in advance with the names of both men in huge letters, and sent to the various distributing points. When the result of the fight reaches the office, orders are then telephoned to release the papers bearing the name of the winner.

**Flashy** (Old Eng.). Still persisting in Virginia in sense of anything that is not sweet and fruitful.

Else distilled books are like common distilled waters, *flashy* thing.  
(Bacon, Essay, of studies.)

**Flat.** (1) Low alluvial land; a river shoal, or bottom land. On the New-England coast, all the spaces, bays, inlets, etc., where the sea flows and ebbs.

(2) A broad-brimmed and low-crowned hat, worn by women, similar to the large leghorn.

(3) A species of flat-bottomed boat, used in the Mississippi region. Also, *flat-boat*, and *Kentucky flat*.

(4) A rejection, dismissal, or jilting, at the hands of a lover.

**Flat** (adj.). (1) Often used in a sense approaching very closely to the meaning of thoroughness, completeness. “A *flat* contradiction, a *flat* denial.”

(2) Low-spirited, dejected. “To feel *flat*.”

*Flat-broke*, equiv. to dead-broke, i. e. completely ruined.

**Flat (to).** A Western colloquialism, meaning to jilt or to reject a lover.

**Flat-boatman.** (1) A man employed on a flat-boat in the Mississippi region.

(2) A nickname applied to Abraham Lincoln, from his having once served as a flat-boatman.

**Flat-footed.** Downright, resolute, earnest, thorough. First originated in Western political slang, and, when applied politically, is the highest summum of praise that can be bestowed upon a man. Very characteristic of a man who, when driven to extremity, is ready to lay down his life in the attempt to accomplish his purpose.

**Flat-out.** A Western colloquialism, which first saw the light in political meetings, and means a collapse, a fiasco, a fizzle.

Similarly, the verb to *flat out*, meaning to prove a failure, to collapse.

“The meeting *flatted out*.”

**Flat top** (*Vernonia noveboracensis*). In the North-Eastern States, the name of the *iron-weed* of Kentucky and Tennessee.

**Flax round.** To beat; to be energetic; to move quickly. (New Eng.)

**Flea-bane** (*Erigeron canadense*). One of the most hardy and common weeds, largely used as a medicinal herb, in the well known Shaker preparations, as an astringent and diuretic.

The flea-bane of England is not the same plant.

**Flea bitten.** A Texas term to describe the color of a horse or other animal dotted with minute specks of black and white, like pepper and salt.

**Fleet.** In fishing, a single line of one hundred hooks, so called when the bultow was introduced in Newfoundland, in 1846.

**Fleshy** (Old Eng.). Corpulent, stout. "You look quite *fleshy*, now."

Her sides long, *fleshy*, smooth and white.

(Chaucer, *Troilus and Creseide*, III.)

But an if the woman be anything grosse, fat, or *fleshy*," etc.

(Raynald, *Birth of Mankynde*, 1565.)

Now making again its way into popular English speech, though still regarded as vulgar.

**Flicker** (*Colaptes auratus*). The popular name of the golden-winged wood-pecker.

See *highholder*, *yellow-hammer*.

**Flicker (to).** In parts of the South, to fail, to back out.

**Flint corn.** One of the many varieties of maize which, says Beverley, in his "History of Virginia," looks smooth and as full as the early ripe corn.

**Flint in.** To perform or act with energy, and without standing on ceremony.

Applied to all kinds of actions, even to eating.

Also merely employed as a variant of "chip in."

**Flip** (Ger. *fepp*). A drink of brandy, beer and sugar made hot and foaming by means of a red-hot poker.

**Float.** (1) In the charcoal-pits of New Jersey, a word designating the irregular sods laid on "four-foot lengths," over which sand is placed.

Generally used in the plural.

(2) In New Jersey, a word applied to pens of boards placed in fresh water, upon which oysters fatten during one tide.

See *board-bank*, and *platform*.

**Floater.** In political parlance, a candidate representing several counties, and therefore not considered directly responsible to any one of them.

Also, a doubtful voter, an elector of uncertain principles, who may perchance be secured by the highest bidder.

(2) A body found floating in the water.

**Floating batteries.** A term applied in bitter irony by the Confederate soldiers, during the Civil War, to the army bread furnished by their Government.

**Floor-walker.** In England, shop-walker.

**Flop-up.** A day's tramp.

*Flop-up time, bed-time.*

**Flour City.** The city of Rochester, N. Y., from its being the centre of flour mills.

Also, *Flower City.*

**Flour (to).** To convert grain into flour. A word still used in those parts where there are mills for grinding wheat.

**Flouring-mill.** A grist-mill, especially one in which flour is made from wheat. (Bartlett.)

**Flower City.** The city of Rochester, N. Y., from its large and important nursery trade.

**Fluke.** In college slang, an utter failure.

*To go up the fluke, to fail in recitation or examination.*

**Fluke (to).** In college slang, to fail utterly.

**Fluken.** A local name, in parts of North Carolina, for the scaly whitish soil dug from mica mines.

*To put the fluken on one, to get the advantage on him, to "do him up."*

**Flume.** (1) In mining districts, a *flume* is a contrivance for conveying water, in order to wash out pay-dirt.

*To go up the flume, a miner's slang term meaning "to die."*

(2) A narrow passage confining water for the purpose of turning a mill-wheel.

The term is thoroughly good English, especially in second sense, but is far more largely colloquial in America.

**Flumma-daddle.** A holiday mess of New-England fishermen, consisting of a number of ingredients baked in the oven, the most important of which are stale bread, pork fat, molasses, cinnamon, allspice, and cloves.

**Flummux.** In college slang, a poor recitation, a failure.

**Flummux (to).** (1) To give in, to give up. "We regularly *flummuxed*," i. e. we dared not say a word.

(2) To faint, to collapse, and even to die.

To *flummux* is a slang term used in England, but then only transitively, and in the altogether different sense of to overcome, to overwhelm, to hinder, to bewilder, etc.

**Flunk** (Old Eng.). A failure, a back-down ; a backing out through fear. In current use, in Wall street parlance.

In college phraseology, a complete failure in a recitation or an examination.

The term is now obsolete in England.

**Flunk (to).** To give up, to back out from fear. To fail utterly in a college examination.

Also, to *flunk out*.

**Flunker.** In college slang, one who fails in examination.

**Flunky.** (1) In college parlance, one who backs out from examination for fear of failure.

(2) In the slang of Wall street, an unlucky outsider who speculates in stocks without any knowledge of the market, or even of monetary matters.

**Flush.** One who has plenty of money, who is lavish in his expenditures.

**Flutter-wheel.** A small water-wheel, used mostly in saw-mills, and which, from the rapidity of its motion, makes a fluttering noise.

**Fly** (Dutch *vly*). In New-York, a swamp, a marsh. The "Fly market" of New-York is well known.

**Fly (to).** In constant use, even among careful writers, instead of to flee.

**Fly around.** To make haste, to move about quickly. To be quick and active at some pressing work.

**Flyer.** (1) An outsider's venture or speculation, through the regular brokers of the Stock Exchange. "To try a *flyer* in stocks."

(2) In the slang of railway men, a fast train.

**Flying-brand.** A brand used for cattle by the ranchmen of the Western plains.

**Flying-fish** (*Prionotus lineatus*.) Not the flying-fish of the tropics, the name in this case being simply an allusion to its peculiar mode of motion under water, its long outstretched fins then closely resembling the wings of a bird.

Also called *sea-robin* and *pig-fish*, this last designation being on account of the grunting noise emitted by the flying-fish when caught.

**Fly light.** To take things easily ; to make oneself comfortable.

**Fly off the handle.** A figurative phrase meaning to break a promise, and suggested by the disappointment which befalls a backwoodsman, when his axe-head suddenly flies off leaving the useless handle in his grasp.

Hence also, by extension, to lose temper, to become unreasonably excited to wrath. We have even heard of a poor man having succeeded

to the fortune of a distant relative, "who *went off the handle* in England rather unexpectedly." Usually, however, in this last sense, the phrase runs "to *slip off the handle*."

Also, to *go off the handle*.

**Fog.** In the Canadian Maritime Provinces, last year's grass standing in the fields through the winter.

Also, *fog-grass*.

**Fogo.** In parts of New England, sometimes heard in sense of sténch.

The word is common enough among North of Ireland people.

**Fogy.** An ultra-conservative in politics, i. e. a man "befogged" with regards to the demands of the present time.

In England, a "fogey" is the old-fashioned person popularized by Thackeray, and in Scotland "fogie" applies to a dull and slow old man who is unable or unwilling to reconcile himself to new ideas.

**Folks.** In New England, used very generally for people, especially neighbors and company. "How's the *folks*?"

Also, sense of immediate family.

See *white folks*.

**Folle-avoine** (Fr.). A name applied to the wild rice of the lakes and rivers (*Zizania aquatica*).

Also, *riz du Canada*, or Canadian rice.

**Follow in one's tracks.** To follow one so immediately and closely, as to step into his footmarks.

The phrase is of Western origin, and is now common all over the country.

**Fool around.** To hang about, implying an idea of resentment to the presence of the person spoken of.

Has also a signification akin to the verb to flirt, when applied to a man given to dangling about a woman's skirts.

**Fool-fish** (genus *Monocanthus*). The popular name of the file-fish, from its extremely odd manner of locomotion.

**Fool's gold.** Bogus gold; ore which, from its appearance, misleads the novice in mining.

**Foot-loose.** Free, not tied to business.

**Footy.** (1) Poor, mean, small, insignificant, worthless, trashy.

(2) A blunderer, a simpleton.

**For.** Used for from.

Some years before, he had named his two children, one *for* Her Majesty, and the other *for* Prince Albert (Hawthorne.)

This use of *for* is pronounced, by F. Hall, to be an Americanism of the truest ring.



**Force.** (1) A gang of laborers, as for instance those at work on a railway, or a plantation.

(2) In slavery times, the slaves pertaining to a planter, and constituting his "working force."

**Fore-day.** A very expressive word often heard for the period of time immediately before sunrise.

**Forefathers'-day.** A holiday formerly kept in New England, in commemoration of the landing of the Pilgrim Fathers, at Plymouth, on Dec. 22, 1620.

**Forehanded.** Besides ordinary English meaning of early, timely, has in America the signification of well-off, well provided, comfortable in circumstances, and even economical, in which sense it is now very rarely heard in England.

**Fore-pay.** Payment beforehand.

**Forest City.** The city of Cleveland, Ohio, from its many thoroughfares adorned with trees. Portland, Maine, and Savannah, Georgia, are also similarly named.

**Forge ahead.** To advance, to move with alacrity; to make rapid progression.

**For God's sake.** Thoroughly, effectively. This curious phrase, which is probably of Puritan derivation, is still sometimes heard when the meaning to be conveyed is that a thing is thoroughly, or well done.

**Fork.** One of two roads into which the main road divides, at a place which is called the *forks*.

**Forks.** Where a road divides, or a river branches.

**Fork out.** To hand over money, to pay up. "You will please *fork out* that money, and pay your bill."

Also to *fork over*, to *fork up*.

In England, to *fork out* is merely used, in thieves' parlance, in sense of picking pockets, from seizing their contents as with a fork with the stiff fingers.

**Forrent** (Low Scotch). Near by, alongside. Quite common, especially in Pennsylvania.

**Forrard.** A corruption of forward, used in New England in sense of early, ahead of the season. "I've got some *forrard* apples."

**Forty-niner.** Said of one who went to California in 1849, at the time of the great gold fever and general exodus to the gold mines.

**Forty rod lightning.** In the West, a common term for whiskey of the most villainous description. So called because humorously warranted to kill at forty rods.

**Fosforo, fos'-for-o** (Sp.). In Texas, a sulphur match, a match in general.

**Fotch, Foted** (Old Eng.). The old participle of *to fetch*, still continuing in use among low people in the South, especially among negroes.

**Foul-hand.** At game of poker, a hand composed of more or less than five cards.

**Foul-tip.** At game of base-ball, a ball touched by the bat, but which falls within the foul line.

**Foundation.** In Montana, a legal notification of intent to take up a claim, consisting of four logs laid across each other so as to form a square.

**Four hundred.** The "society" class of New York city, said to be limited to that number, and of which the late famous McAllister was the founder and "great priest."

**Fox.** (1) Used by shoemakers, when repairing boots, in sense of making a new foot to old uppers.

(2) In parts of Canada, to play truant.

**Fox-fire.** Rotten wood found in swampy places, and which, at night, presents a phosphorescent appearance. Hence, "that is all *fox-fire*," i. e. of no consequence.

**Fox-grape** (*Vitis labrusca*). A large grape, of a rank taste, common on the borders of streams. In the South, a kindred grape (*Vitis vulpina* or *vulpina*) bears larger berries and is less acid than the former.

Several explanations have been given for the name *fox-grape*, some etymologists pretending that it is either derived from the fox-smelling taste of the fruit, or the foxy pubescence characterizing the surface of the leaves, while others, having in sight the intoxicating qualities of the berries, maintain that they owe their appellation to the old English word "to foxe," in sense of to intoxicate.

**Foxy.** In college slang, scheming, deceitful. Also, bright, well-dressed.

**Fractional currency.** The legal term by which the nickel and copper coins—fractional parts of silver coins—issued since the war are known.

**Fraggle.** In Texas, to rob, to despoil.

**Frail.** In Louisiana, especially New Orleans, often heard in sense of to whip, as a child.

**Frame house.** A house made of timber.

**Frat.** A common abbreviation, in college slang, for a fraternity, or a member of a fraternity.

Also, pertaining to a fraternity.

**Fraud.** (1) A deceitful person, a cheat.

(2) A disappointment, not necessarily with suggestion of bad faith, or trickery.

Any person disappointing expectations, without the idea of attributing actual dishonesty to him.

The nearest English equiv. is the slang use of the word "sell."

**Freak.** A very odd person.

In college slang, a student who is exceptionally proficient in a given subject. Also, somebody or something of a peculiar appearance.

**Free.** (1) Used, before the Civil war, as the antithesis of slavery.

*Free-cotton*, cotton grown by free men, and not slaves.

*Free-labor*, that performed by free men.

*Free-States*, those States in which negro slavery did not exist.

(2) Gratuitous, open to all. "Free lunch," in drinking saloons.

*Free lunch fiend*, in drinking saloons one who makes a meal off what is really provided as a snack.

**Free-fighter.** A free lance, a guerilla soldier, during the Civil War.

**Free soil.** In former years, lands owned by the United States, and yet free from slavery; were called free-soil territory.

**Free-soiler.** An advocate of the exclusion of slavery, from the territories belonging to the United States.

The early settlers of Kansas and Nebraska, who were opposed to slavery, were the first *free-soilers*, and the name still survives there with the passionate recollections of days of terrible and relentless warfare. The *free-soilers* were once a powerful party in politics, especially in 1852-56, but in 1860 they were finally merged into the Republican party.

**Free-soilism.** The principles and doctrines of the free-soilers.

**Freestone State.** The State of Connecticut, from the valuable quarries of freestone to which the State is largely indebted for its revenue.

**Freeze.** To wish ardently, to become possessed of an intense longing for anything. "I freeze to go back."

**Freeze (to).** To adhere closely to a thing; to attach oneself strongly, to cling to another person.

Also, to *freeze on to*.

Another variant is to *cotton to*.

**Freeze out.** A variety of game of poker.

**Freeze out (to).** Applied to persons, "to leave out in the cold," so as to compel them to do one's will, the idea conveyed being that of unfair pressure.

**Freezer.** A refrigerator.

**Freight.** (1) Conveyance of merchandise by inland carriage.

(2) The charge made for such conveyance.

In England, freight is a term almost exclusively confined to ocean transport.

**Freightage.** Charge for carriage of merchandise.

**Freight-car.** A railway car for carrying merchandise. In England, a goods van.

**Freight-train.** A railway train, for the carrying of merchandise. In England, a goods train.

**Frejoles, fray-ho'-lez (Sp.).** In Texas, a kind of long red bean, which is one of the standard articles of diet of the Mexicans.

In Spain, the name applies to the common French bean.

Also, *frijoles*.

**Fresh.** (1) In the South, especially Maryland, a small tributary of a large river, or a stream distinct from the tide-water.

Used by Milton and Bailey to denote a pool of fresh water, while Beverley writes:

There are the Mawborn Hills in the *freshes* of James River.

(Hist. of Virginia, p. 110.)

(2) In college slang, an abbreviation for a freshman (q. v.). Also, *freshie*.

**Fresh (adj.).** Overbold, cheeky. Said of a man who thinks he knows everything, and who talks freely and pushes himself forward.

Also, sense of unsophisticated.

**Freshet (Old Eng.).** An old English word, now mostly used in America, and designating an inundation or overflowing of a river.

The word *fresh* is still used in the north of England and in Scotland, in precisely the same sense.

**Fried-cake.** In New England, a kind of cake fried in lard.

See *biled-cake, doughnut*.

**Friends.** This word is used where in England "relations" would be employed.

**Frijollilo, fre-hole-ec'-yo (Sp.).** In Texas, a large, leguminous shrub, with bright red, very poisonous beans (*Sophora secundiflora*).

**Frills.** In the West, presumption, self-conceit. "I cannot bear his ways, it's all *frills*."

A somewhat less offensive meaning is conveyed in other instances, when accomplishments such as music, French, German, etc., are called *frills*.

To *put on frills*, to make considerable show on small justification; to impose oneself with an assumption of style in which conceit and bump-tiousness play a considerable part.

**Friseo.** A common abbreviation for San Francisco.

**Frog.** In railway parlance, the iron plate where two lines of railways intersect.

In England, a crossing plate.

**Frog's-hair.** In parts of New England, the plant "Eleocharis acicularis," and other allied species.

**Frolic.** In the West, a pleasure party or social gathering.

An American equiv. of the English "junketing."

*Husking frolic*, a gathering of young people, at a neighbor's house, to strip the husks from the year's crop of maize.

*Quilting frolic*, a meeting of ladies for the purpose of making bed-quilts, generally for a charitable motive, and to which the young men are wont to find their way, on the Irishman's following principle:

If all the young women was ducks in the water,

It's thin the young men would jump in an swim a' ter.

**Fromety** (Old Eng.). An old English delicacy described in Hallamshire Glossary as wheat boiled with milk, to which sugar and spice are added.

The *fromety* is especially well known in Maryland, where the word is, however, commonly pronounced *furmety*.

**Front name.** Often used, in the West, for the Christian or first name.

In New England, the form *given name* is used in preference.

**Frost-fish** (*Morrhua pruinosa*). A small fish, so called from its appearing off the coast in cold weather.

Also familiarly called *tom-cod*.

**Frost-grape.** The river-grape (*Vitis riparia*), in its wild state.

Also, *chicken-grape*.

**Frost-smoke.** In Hudson's Bay region, a thick, black vapor, arising in winter.

Noted by Ellis in 1748.

**Frostwort** (*Cistus canadensis*). A medicinal herb, possessing astringent and tonic properties, and largely used in the "Shaker preparations."

So called from the crystals of ice which shoot from the bursting bark, during freezing weather in autumn.

**Frougthy** (Old Eng.). In New England, spongy, brittle, easily broken, of inferior quality.

Still provincial in North of England, from "frough," used with same meaning.

**Frowchey** (Dutch *vrouwte*). In city of New York and vicinity, a term applied to an old woman, with bent shoulders, and deep-wrinkled, furbelowed face. A wellnigh desperate attempt to render, into English, the staid old greeting "Vrouwte," so much in use amongst the good burgher's wives in Knickerbocker times.

**Frump** (Old Eng.). Still lingering in New England in sense of to mock, to insult.

Quoted by Bailey as meaning to frizzle up the nose as in contempt, and so used by Beaumont and Fletcher.

The substantive form survives now-a-days in England, where people speak of a cross, ill-tempered person as an "old frump."

**Fudge**. In newspaper parlance, a news bulletin printed in red ink, as in the case of the evening editions of the *World* and *Journal*, in New York. The fudge is inserted in actual type in the plates, the presses being stopped for the purpose.

**Fudges**. Chocolate bonbons, especially home-made.

**Full** (Old Eng.). An old participle often heard in the South for filled.  
Also, *fulled*.

**Full feather**. Good trim, good condition, good form, in athletic parlance. "To be in *full feather*."

**Fun (to)**. Often used for to joke. "I'm only *funning*."

**Funeralize**. To officiate at the religious ceremonies of an interment  
To bury. To conduct a funeral service for.

**Funeral-procession**. Very common in Ontario, Canada, in sense of "cortège."

**Funked**. In Kentucky, used in sense of rotten, as applied to tobacco.

**Fuste**, foos'-tay (Sp.). In California, a strong saddle-tree, made of wood, and covered with raw-hide, used for lassoing.

Also, *fusty*.

**Fust out**. To come to nothing, to end in smoke, to fizzle out.

**Fyke**. A sort of a fish-net, distended by hoops, largely used in New York and Connecticut waters.

## G

**Gab** (originally, the mouth, in old Eng.). Used in the United States almost exclusively for idle chatter, gabble, prat, i. e. a great command of words without an over-abundance of ideas. In the South, the word is strengthened by being lengthened into *gabment*, but only in its lowest sense.

We find the "gift of the gab," in Grose, as meaning facility of speech, and Chaucer uses the verbal form in sense of "to talk idly."

**Gabbey.** A foolish talker, one who has "the gift of the gab."

**Gaby.** A simpleton.

**Gachupin.** See *cachupin*.

**Gad.** A small whip, used to drive cows to pasture, and, more often, a whipstock without lash, made of a slender stick or rod of any kind. In this latter sense, still colloquial in England.

**Gaffer.** A small boy. Also, a foreman in a machine shop. In this latter sense, still provincial in England, especially when meaning the foreman of a squad of navvies.

**Gait** In the patter of the criminal classes, refers to one's walk in life, i. e. calling, trade, profession, manner of making a living.

**Gal-boy.** Used occasionally, in New England, for the more familiar tom-boy.

**Gale.** Often used to denote a state of pleasant excitement, especially among women and children. "The children were in such a *gale*, it took us nearly an hour to get them to bed."

**Galena.** Salt pork, so named from the city of Galena, Illinois, being one of the chief hog-raising and pork-packing centres of the country.

**Gall.** (1) A generic name applied to the jelly-fishes, by New-York children.

*Stinging-galls*, the medusae, or sea-nettles (Discophora).

*Lightning-galls*, ovoidal, phosphorescent jelly-fishes (Ctenophora)

(2) Common slang for bumptiousness, conceit, effrontery, cheek, with connotation of audacity, pluck, courage of one's conviction under difficulties.

In England, the term has the meaning of rancour, and bitterness of mind or speech.

(3) A kind of low land, consisting of a matted soil of vegetable fibre, producing little that is worth harvesting.

In Florida, such tracts of land are called *bay-galls*, and, were cypresses grow on them, *cypress-galls*.

**Gallantize.** To show attention to ladies, to do the agreeable. To wait upon ladies.

Used both in the transitive and neutral forms.

**Gallinipper.** (1) A West Indian mosquito, well known for its voracity and powerful sting.

Authorities vary with reference to derivation, some referring the word to *gall* and *nip*, while others would see at least the true source of the first syllable in the English provincialism "gallier," to fight.

(2) In parts of Ontario, Canada, a large reptile-insect, found under stones and used as bait.

Also, *galnipper*.

**Gallows.** A central core formed of several cornstalks interlaced diagonally, to serve as a support for cut maize which is placed about it in forming a shock. (Century Dict.)

**Galumph.** To go "bumping along" in the manner that street-cars are apt to do, when driven at a high rate of speed on uneven metals. An onomatopy.

**Galvanized Yankee.** A contemptuous epithet applied, during the Civil War, to those Confederate prisoners who, getting weary of confinement and privations, were at last enlisted in the United States Army. The word is probably derived from an indistinct association with worthless galvanized imitations of gold and silver.

**Gam.** A sea-faring term, often used, on the Atlantic coast, in sense of a social visit, and especially of a long and merry chat among acquaintances. Originally applied to occasions when meeting friends or countrymen in a strange land, or where few opportunities exist for social intercourse.

**Gancho,** gan'-tcho (Sp.). In Texas and the South-West, a crooked iron for branding horses.

Also, a loop-eared horse.

**Gander-party.** A social gathering, or party, consisting of men only.

Other forms are *stag-party*, and, in a less complimentary sense, *gander-gang*, or simply *gang*.

**Gange** (Sp. *gancho*, a hook, or crook). In the South-West, to attach a hook to a line or snell.

**Garden.** A term almost exclusively applied, in the United States, to what in England would be called a market-garden, i. e. a place set apart for the cultivation of vegetables, market produce, etc.

In England, garden means a place where fruits and flowers are cultivated, besides vegetables and other plants.

**Garden of the West.** The State of Illinois.



**Garden State.** The State of Kansas, from the beautiful appearance of rolling prairies which abound in that fertile region.

**Garden-truck.** Market-garden produce.

**Garrison.** A name applied, in the West, not only to a military force occupying a post, but also to any fortified place, and even to old forts and posts long since abandoned.

**Garvey.** The name of a small scow, in Barnegat region, N. J.

**Gas** Idle boasting, brag, lots of talk.

**Gas (to).** In political parlance, to deliver long speeches, merely to consume time.

**Gasparau.** (Fr. C.). One of the many names of the alewife, a fish of the herring kind abounding in New England and in the Canadian Maritime Provinces.

Also, *gasperau*.

**Gat** (Dutch). A term applied to several places in the vicinity of city of New York, and meaning a strait, a narrow passage at sea, as Barnegat, Hell-Gate (formerly Dutch *Helle-gat*).

**Gate City.** The city of Keokuk, Iowa, from its being the point at which the Mississippi becomes navigable.

**Gaum** (Old Eng.). A survival of Elisabethan English, still provincial in England, and which is colloquial in the United States in sense of to smear, to soil. "Don't let the child *gaum* herself all over."

**Gavel** (Old Eng.). The amount of wheat cut by the reaping machine, and shaken out by one motion.

Formerly a small heap of grain sufficient to make a sheaf, in which sense it is still provincial in the east of England, from Fr. *javelle*.

**Gawnicus.** A fictitious enlargement of "gawk," meaning a dolt, a fool, a simpleton.

**Gazon** (Fr.). The carpet grass of dry uplands.

**Gear-up.** Used in Pennsylvania in sense of to harness. Wright gives "gears" as horse-trappings.

**Gee.** To serve a certain purpose. "That won't gee," i. e. that will not do. *Gee* is English, in sense of a term employed in driving a wagon.

**Gee with.** To agree with, to get on with.

**Gentiles.** A contemptuous epithet applied by Mormons to all outsiders, i. e. those who are not of their faith.

**Gentle** (Old Eng.). A survival of Elizabethan English, meaning to ease, to soften, to soothe. Young, in his "Night Thoughts," has the line "*To gentle life's descent.*"

By extension, to tame, to subdue a horse by kind treatment.

**Gentleman.** A term possessing, in America, no distinctive meaning, and applied indiscriminately to men of every grade and every calling.

Similarly, the word *lady* is used in the same way.

In England, both terms are specially reserved to people of education and good breeding.

**Gerrymander.** In political parlance, to so divide and redistribute an electoral district, that its representation, in the Legislature, will go to the party having in fact the minority of votes in that district.

The name originated during the governorship of Elbridge Gerry, in Massachusetts, that State having been then redistricted in an arbitrary manner (1811), and the termination "mander" is in humorous imitation of "salamander," from a fancied resemblance to this animal of a map of one of the newly-formed districts.

Also used substantively, in sense of any arbitrary arrangement of the political divisions of a State.

**Get.** An imperative mood, meaning "go away."

Also, *get a move on*, i. e. go away, move along.

**Get along.** The American substitute for the English phrase "to get on."

**Get around.** To overcome, to get the better of. Thus, *to get around* an opponent is to score an advantage over him.

Also, *to go round*.

**Get back at.** To satirize, to call to account.

**Get into the short rows.** To come to the end of a task, to have nearly finished, from the rapidly shortening rows at the end of a field which hoe off with surprising rapidity after the rest are done.

**Get outside a thing.** To understand it, or, to use a common expression, to get to the windward of it.

**Get the drop on.** Literally, to pull and fire a revolver, before one's opponent can get his own revolver in hand, and, generally speaking, to be in a position wherein one holds the life or honour of another in hand.

**Get the hang of.** To acquire the knack of doing anything; to get well acquainted with something.

**Get there.** To attain one's object, to be successful, as in the case, for instance, of a smart, intelligent fellow who displays great business aptitudes and meets with success.

Also used substantively, as embodying the sum of qualities necessary to attain one's object. "The much esteemed *get there* quality."

**Get there with both feet.** A forcible extension of the above, meaning to achieve a great or wonderful success.

**Ghost dance.** A war dance introduced among the Sioux of Dakota, in 1891, the participants wearing long shirts of fantastic appearance.

**Ghost story.** In newspaper parlance, a reporter's story which there is good ground to think has been invented in all its details.

**Gibe.** To go well, when compared with another object. To be pleasing, or acceptable.

This sense, as will be seen, is thus entirely antagonistic to the ordinary acceptance of the word.

**Gigging.** Used in Virginia to denote night-fishing with a three-pronged spear, as it was done in the days of captain John Smith.

**Gila** (*Heloderma suspectum*). A venomous lizard about 18 inches long over all, with head of about 2 or 3 inches, striped with an orange hue, and presenting a somewhat hideous appearance. It derives its designation from the Gila river, in Arizona, where it is mostly found.

**Gilded-rooster.** A person of importance, i. e. a big bug, from the gilded rooster on the top of a steeple.

**Gilly.** An idiot, a soft pate.

**Gilly-flower.** A variety of apple, in New England.

**Gilt.** Quite common, among farmers, for a sow with her first litter of pigs. Still provincial in England.

**Gilt-edged.** First class, the best of its kind. Thus, a dairy-man will speak of "gilt-edged" butter.

**Gimbal-jawed.** Applied to a person whose lower jaw projects beyond the upper, thus appearing to be loose and out of joint.

Derived from "gimbal," a mechanical contrivance, on board ship, for suspending anything freely, as the compass, etc.

Also, corrupted into *gimber-jawed*.

**Gimpy.** Sprightly, or active, as a *gimpy* horse.

*Gimp* and *gimpy* are provincial in England, in sense of nice, spruce, etc.

**Gin-and-tidy.** To be *gin and tidy* is to be spruce, neatly dressed, arrayed in one's best, what in England is known as "best bib and tucker."

**Ginets, he-nay'-tay** (Sp.). In Texas, a bronco buster, i. e. a man whose business is to break mustangs.

**Gird (to take a).** Has in the North-West the peculiar meaning of to make an effort, to take a shot.

Evidently a factitious extension of the verbal form to gird, as when one *girds* oneself to special endeavor.

**Girdle.** In the West, a method of clearing forest-lands, consisting in making circular incisions through the bark of trees, the result of which is decay and death.

Also, to *bark*, to *belt*.

**Girdling.** In the West, a place cleared of trees, or where the trees have been girdled.

**Gism** (Dutch *geest*). Energy, spirit. "I knock'd all the *gism* out of him."

**Git.** (1) A Western vulgarism for go, go ahead, move on.

(2) A forcible injunction equivalent to "there's the door; leave quickly." This injunction is strengthened into *git out*, *you git*, or *git up and git*, *git up and dust*, which are really emphatic notices to use the utmost expedition in departing.

**Git up and git.** A substantive form used in various ways. For instance a thing that has *no git up and git* is a thing that is weak, vain, mean, slow, etc.

**Git to.** Local in Pennsylvania in sense of to obtain leave, to be permitted.

Also, to *git to go*.

**Give item.** To signal information unfairly to a confederate, at card playing.

**Given name.** Represents, especially in New England, the Christian name, or first name given to a person.

Probably a relic of the Puritan dislike to the many Saints' names given as Christian names.

**Givy.** Pliable, yielding, liable to give way, as when a material "gives" a little.

Especially applied to tobacco leaves, in a certain condition of their preparation for market.

Also, *givey*.

**Gizzard-shad.** (1) A North-Carolina term for the alewife.

(2) A fish of the Ohio (*Chatoessus ellipticus*), common in Cincinnati, and so called because it possesses a muscular stomach resembling the gizzard of a gallinaceous fowl.

**Glade** (Old Eng. primarily, a bright open spot in a wood).

(1) In New England, a tract of smooth ice.

(2) In the Southern States, a tract of land covered with water and grass. Evidently here a curtailment of everglade.

See *moonglade*.

**Glakid** (Lowland Scotch.) Used in Pennsylvania in sense of stupid.

Jamieson gives the Low Scotch *gluikit* as unsteady, giddy, stupid.

**Glare-ice.** Newly frozen ice, smooth and transparent ice.

**Glass** (Old Eng.). Used in the South and West in sense of to glaze, as was done in England in the times of Boyle. "The windows are sashed and *glassed*."

**Glaze**. In the East, rime, or hoar-frost, when speaking of the state of the ground.

The ground, when rimed by hoar-frost, is also said to be *glazed*.

**Gleet** (Old Eng.). A large wooden wedge. So quoted by Halliwell.

**Glibe**. A term applied to writing generally, but more particularly to a written agreement.

**Glimpse**. To discern, to get a glimpse of. "I barely *glimpsed* him."

**Glims**. In the patter of criminal classes, a name especially given to the eyes.

In England, among the same fraternity, a lamp, a light, or a pair of spectacles.

**Glut** (Old Eng.). Still persisting in New England, in sense, already quoted by Halliwell, of a large wooden wedge used in splitting blocks.

See *gleet*.

**Gnarler**. A generic name, among burglars, for a watch dog.

**Go**. Success. "Make a *go* of it."

**Go (to)**. (1) To taste. "Don't that *go* good?"

(2) In political parlance, to vote. "The State will *go* Republican."

**Go ahead**. Spirit of progress, progressiveness, in a sense of bold and fearless progress.

Also, *go aheadativeness*.

Used adjectively, means rapidly advancing, progressive. Thus, the American people, by virtue of their restless, untiring activity, are said to be a *go-ahead* nation.

Also, *go aheaditive*.

**Go ahead (to)**. See *ahead*.

**Goat**. A name applied, among fur-traders, to the prong-horn antelope (*Antilocapre Americana*).

**Goatee**. A tuft of hair worn on the chin, similar to a goat's beard, hence its name.

**Gob**. In parts of New England, a small quantity of any matter in a plastic state. A "*gob* of mud."

The word is more especially colloquial, in England, in sense of a mouthful.

**Go back on.** To abandon a friend, or an undertaking. To turn tail, to disappoint expectation. Also equivalent to "give away," in sense of exposure.

**Go back on one's hash.** In the racy vernacular of the West, to weaken in face of unexpected difficulties or hardships; having put one's hand to the plough, to turn back.

**Gobbler.** In the West, a turkey, and especially a turkey-cock.

**Gobble up.** To carry off, to remove as by swallowing, to vanquish. Especially much used during the late civil war, in sense of "taking from the enemy," a meaning derived from the voracity which is generally conveyed by gobbling.

**Go better.** At game of poker, to make a higher bet than one's adversary, and, by extension, to do better than others, to excel others.

**Gobsticks.** Silver forks and spoons, from "gob," English slang for mouth. Similarly, a bridle is called *gobstring*.

**Go by.** In the South, to stop, to call at. "Will you *go by* and dine with me," i. e. will you go by (way of) my house, and stop and dine with me?

**Godet** (Fr. C.). The penguin or razor-billed auk (*Alca torda*), of the lower St Lawrence region.

**Godfathers.** A flash name for "gentlemen of the jury."

**Go-down.** A word of squatter origin, designating a cutting in the hilly bank of a stream for enabling animals to cross it or to get to the water.

**Gofer** (Fr. *gaufre*). A relic of the early Huguenot French, still in use among the negroes for a waffle.

**Go for.** (1) To advocate, to be in favor of, to decide in favor of. Also, to *go in for*.

(2) To attack, in a sense akin to personal castigation.

**Going.** Travelling. "The *going* is bad, owing to the deep snow."

**Go it alone.** At game of euchre, to play independent of one's partner, and, idiomatically, to engage in any undertaking without outside assistance.

**Go it bald-headed.** To act on the spur of the moment, i. e. in great haste, with eager impetuosity, as where one rushes out without his hat.

**Go it blind.** To run all risks, to engage in an undertaking without forethought, an expression derived from game of poker, where the player has the privilege, before seeing his hand, of "blinding" a stake, i. e. betting on the chances.

**Go it strong.** To act energetically, to advocate vigorously, to live freely, and, in short, to do anything accentuated in character.

**Go large.** To live extravagantly.

**Golden City.** The city of San Francisco.

**Golden Circle.** An organization formed among "Copperheads" during the Civil War, to aid in the rescue of confederate prisoners.

Also one of the alleged names of the "Klu-Klux-Klan."

**Golden eye** (*Bucephala americana*). A large white and grey duck, otherwise known as the *whistler* or *whistle-wing*.

**Golden State.** The State of California, from its rich gold mines.

**Go like.** To imitate.

**Gombo.** A popular dish of the South, prepared with the pod of the Okra (*Hibiscus esculentus*). Also, the name of the plant itself.

Also, *gumbo*.

**Gone beaver.** In the West, an invalid hunter who can no longer hunt for meat.

**Gone case.** One who is altogether broken up, or who is completely lost or beaten.

**Gone coon.** A man lost beyond recovery, one whose case is absolutely hopeless.

Other variants are *gone gander*, *gone goose*, *gone gosling*, *goner*, *goney*.

All those expressions are varieties of a phrase that was first brought into popularity by the story of a certain Colonel Scott, a Western hunter, whose aim with rifle was so unerring that a raccoon upon a tree, at which he was going to fire, surrendered at discretion after a short parley:

—Are you colonel Scott?

—Yes.

—The famous colonel Scott?

—Yes, so people say.

—Don't fire, colonel, I give in, I'm a *gone-coon*.

**Goner.** (1) One who is lost or ruined in fortune and health.

(2) A politician, a merchant, or even an official, who is "gone," done for, finished.

(3) In the West, a hopelessly bad debt, one that is gone beyond the chance of a recovery.

**Gone up.** A slang phrase occasionally referring to death, but more frequently to the failure of any enterprise, great or small.

**Goney.** A dull, stupid fellow.

Provincial in Gloucestershire, England.

Also, *gony*.

**Gonus.** A latinized form of "goney," used in colleges.

**Goober** (*Arachnis hypogæa*). A Southern name for peanuts or earthnuts.  
Also, *guber*.

By extension, an inhabitant of some Southern States.

**Goober-grabber.** In the South, a nickname applied to an inhabitant of Georgia or Alabama, from the "goober" being so common in those States.

**Good.** As applied to food, used in sense of pleasant, agreeable; and to health, is used where Englishmen would say "well."

To feel good, i. e. to feel well, comfortable.

**Good-wooled.** A man whose courage can be depended upon never to fail him.

**Goody.** A New-Jerseyism for the *spot-fish* of Virginia, a fish of peculiar delicacy and in great favor from Atlantic City to Cape May.

**Goody-bread.** A negro delicacy, consisting of bread in which pieces of roast rind of pork have been baked.

**Goody-goody.** Often contemptuously applied to an over-fastidious person.

**Go-off.** Commencement, beginning. "There may be a few blunders on the *go off*, but . . ."

**Go off half-cooked.** A metaphor borrowed from sporting phraseology, and applied to a person who undertakes to do a thing without due preparation, thereby failing to attain what would be otherwise within his reach.

**Go off on his ear.** To get violently angry, to go away angry.

Also, to *get on his ear*.

**Go one's death.** To lay one's life on something.

**Go one's pile.** To expend one's fortune to the last penny, and, idiomatically, to throw one's heart and soul into an undertaking. Allusion to the "pile" (of money) obtained in mining or trade.

**Go on with the procession.** To continue; to allow no break in the continuity of any act.

A simile drawn from processions being quite a feature in American public life.

**Goose.** Used by shoemakers in sense of making new bottoms to a pair of boots, and renewing them half way up.

Probably adapted, for distinction's sake, from "to fox."

**Gooseberry-fool.** An old time dish of gooseberries and eggs, eaten with cream.



**Goose-egg.** In college slang, a nought or round O at any game. Also, zero, as in marks or other connection.

**Gopher** (Fr. *gaufreur*, from *gaufre*, honeycomb, waffle). (1) A generic name applied to several animals of mining or burrowing habits.

(2) In the Middle States, a species of mole, burrowing in the prairies, and more than twice the size of the common field mole.

(3) In the South, especially Georgia, a species of land turtle.

(4) In the South, the name of a rude wooden plough.

(5) In police language, a young sneak-thief or associate of burglars, who is passed into a room through a transom or window.

(6) A nickname for an inhabitant of Minnesota.

**Gormy.** In New England, often said of a horse that "gawks" in stable or harness.

**Gospel-sharp.** A Western term for a clergyman.

**Gossamer.** In the East, a waterproof cloak.

**Gotham.** A name given, by Washington Irving, to the city of New York, as a satirical acknowledgement of the superior wisdom of its inhabitants. The word comes, of course, from the well known story of the villagers of Gotham, in Lincolnshire, who once raked the pond to get the moon out.

**Gothamite.** A citizen of the city of New York.

In England, a simple or credulous fellow.

**Go the big figure.** To do things in a magnificent manner, on a large scale. "Our senators *go the big figure* on oysters and whiskey-punch."

Also, to *go the whole figure*, in sense of to go to the fullest extent in a speculation or enterprise. To embark upon an enterprise of magnitude.

**Go the entire animal.** To do a thing out and out. To put everything on one chance. Equivalent to "go the whole hog," which we have borrowed from England.

Also, to *go the whole animal*, to *go the whole dog*.

**Go through.** (1) To complete, to finish.

(2) To go directly, without change of car or train.

(3) When applied to a man, used in sense of "turning him inside up," i. e. either holding him up and robbing him, or otherwise making it generally unpleasant for him.

**Go through one's sweat.** To accomplish one's task : to go through one's trouble or anxiety, with a connotation of nearing the end of it.

**Go through the mill.** To gain experience, and especially to meet with difficulties, losses, etc.

**Go to grace.** Same sense as "Go to Halifax!"

Perhaps derived from "go to grass."

**Go to Halifax.** Be off! Get out! Stop your nonsense! A survival from Revolutionary times, which meant originally: "You are a Tory; go where you belong!"

**Go to leather.** A ranchman's term used when, in riding a plunging horse, a man grasps the saddle to avoid being thrown.

**Go to smash.** To be utterly ruined, or broken.

**Gotten** (Old Eng.). An old and soft form of the past participle of "to get," which is much more colloquial in the United States than the modern "got."

**Gouging.** At the Naval Academy of Annapolis, dishonesty in work, as for instance the copying as one's own of a theme written by another.

**Gougou.** A terrible monster in the form of a gigantic woman, who, according to the myths of neighbouring Indians, resided on an island of the Baie des Chaleurs. Samuel de Champlain gives a detailed account of the *gougou*, taken from the lips of the natives, some of whom were claiming that the monster was feeding on human beings, catching them and preserving them in pouches large enough to hold a ship, all the time also emitting horrible noises.

**Go under.** (1) To die, to perish, a metaphor evidently borrowed from the final disposal of the body.

(2) To fail in business, to sink in the maelstrom of financial difficulties.

Compare with German "untergehen," meaning to perish, to fall, to go to ruin.

**Go up.** (1) To be used up, worn up.

(2) To die, and especially to mount the gallows, to be hung. For instance, a victim of lynch law is liable to go up on the first tree that will be met.

**Go up the spout.** (1) To come to grief, to collapse, in speaking of an affair that does not succeed.

(2) To mount the gallows, to be hung, to die.

**Go up a tree.** To be in difficulties, like an opossum going up a tree when hunted.

**Go West.** A favorite expression of Horace Greely, now often used as a mere catch-phrase in sense of quit, be off, let me alone.

**Grabble.** In digging potatoes, to remove large ones without disturbing the small. Also, to steal potatoes without disturbing the hill.

Another form is *gravel*.

**Grade.** (1) A degree in rank or quality.

(2) A step or degree in any ascending or descending series.

(3) A gradient on a railroad.

**Grade (to).** (1) To arrange in order of some sort, whence the two tenses *graded* and *grading*. (Old Eng.)

(2) On Western ranches, to improve cattle by mixing the breeds.

(3) To change the level of a road. Is only used technically in that sense, in England, by surveyors.

**Graft.** (1) A shoemaker's word used in sense of adding new soles to a pair of boots.

(2) In thieves' parlance, to pick pockets. To help another to steal.

**Grain** (Old Eng.). (1) The universal name for the produce of all cereals : wheat, barley, rye, oats, etc. the word "corn" being applied to maize only.

The smell of *grain*, or teded grass, or kine.

(MILTON, Par. Lost, IX. 445.)

What it devours not, herb, or fruit, or *graine*.

(MILTON, Par. Lost, XII, 184.)

(2) A particle, a bit, a little. Also curiously applied to distance, in sense of "a little further," as when one is asked "to move a grain."

If he say so, may his pernicious soul

Rot half a *grain* a day.

(SHAKESPEARE, Othello.)

**Grama-grass** (Sp. *grama*). A species of grass (*Chondrosium*) much esteemed as cattle-food, and which grows especially to perfection in Texas.

**Grand.** A much abused term, in sense of anything great or large, and even anything very good, excellent or pleasant. "A *grand* day, a *grand* show, the sleighing is *grand*."

.....where should they

Find this *grand* liquor that hath gilded 'em?

(SHAKESPEARE, Tempest.)

**Granger.** A farmer.

**Grangers,** A secret society of patrons of husbandry, extending throughout the United States, and which oftentimes has taken a hand in politics, with a view to promoting the interests of agriculture.

**Granite State.** The State of New Hampshire, from its rich granite quarries.

**Grape-vine telegraph.** During the Civil War, exciting news of battles not fought and victories not won were said to be received by *grape-vine telegraph*.

**Grasset** (Fr. *gras*). The ground robin, so called in Louisiana, from its plumpness,

Other names are *chewink* and *marsh-robin*.

**Grass-widow.** A widow by the grace of circumstances, i. e. a married woman living apart from her husband.

Also applied to divorcees.

In England, an unmarried woman who has had a child.

**Gravel.** A Western equivalent of to go against the grain, to be unwilling. Shakespeare uses it in the sense of a quandary in "As you like it."

**Graveyard.** Possesses, in America, the sense of a melancholy and deserted place, as for instance a lonely piece of land, where soldiers slain in battle, or the dead from an epidemic, have been buried.

For general purposes the word cemetery is preferred.

**Graveyard issues.** A bold and gruesome metaphor, to describe what can only be carried by extreme measures.

**Gravy.** Used in New England, for any liquid or juice accompanying certain dishes, as the *gravy* of an apple-pie, of a pudding, etc.

**Grayslick.** Used on the coast of New England to designate a state of the sea when the water, unbroken by waves, assumes the familiar "glassy" appearance. Thus, fishermen will be heard to say that they have got into a *grayslick*.

Also, *slick*.

**Grease.** Money used for bribery, i. e. boodle.

**Greased lightning.** A Western metaphor for a lightning express, or quick travelling train.

**Greaser.** (1) A term first applied to Mexicans, during the war with Mexico, and having its explanation in the not over-cleanly appearance of certain classes of Mexicans. It was subsequently extended to all Spanish Americans generally.

(2) In the West, a vagrant miner, who gambles off his wages as soon as he receives them.

(3) On steamboats, an assistant to the fireman, one who oils the machinery.

**Great.** A survival of Elisabethan English, in sense of distinguished, excellent, admirable.

**Green.** A generic name, in Connecticut, for any public square or common.

**Greenbacks.** A term first applied to the United States notes, issued on the breaking out of the Civil War, and whose versos were printed in green ink, mainly for the purpose of preventing alterations and counterfeits.

Now often extended to mean all legal tender notes of the United States in general.

**Greenbackers.** (1) The supporters of paper currency. Also called *Inflationists*, as they are opposed to the resumption of specie payments.

(2) Those who, previous to resumption of specie payments for sums of less than a dollar, were opposed to any change whatever.

(3) The advocates of an unlimited issue of paper money.

**Greenback Labor Party.** A party advocating a currency based in general terms upon the National Credit and authority, without the security of a specie reserve.

**Green-goods.** Counterfeit bills from greenbacks, and of which, if recent revelations are to be credited, a regular trade is carried on.

**Green-goodsmen.** Counterfeiters of greenbacks. Those who utter spurious paper currency. Those who deal, or affect to deal in them.

**Greenhead.** In New Jersey, the name of a fly common in the coast district.

**Green Mountain State.** The State of Vermont (Fr. *vert-mont*).

**Greens.** A common name, in the South, applied to vegetables.

**Griddles.** Used elliptically for cakes baked on a griddle.

**Gridiron.** A nickname for the "Stars and Stripes," the flag of the United States.

*Gridiron and doughboys*, a slang term, used among British sailors, for the flag of the United States.

**Griffin** (Fr. *griffon*). A Louisiana term applied to mulattoes, more especially to women.

**Grig.** To vex, to irritate.

Still provincial in England in sense of to nip, to pinch.

**Grim.** A skeleton, death itself being known under the name of *Old Grim*.

**Grind.** (1) In newspaper parlance an uninteresting subject assigned to a reporter.

(2) In college slang, a student who confines himself to persistent study. Also, an instructor who demands an excessive amount of work, or a course requiring an unusual amount of study.

**Grip.** A vulgar name for a satchel, chiefly heard in the West.

Also, *gripsack*.

**Grip (to be a).** To be easy to get or steal. "The leather was a grip," i. e. the pocket-book was easy to steal.

**Grip (to lose one's).** (1) To lose control of anything.

(2) To fail in business or other effort.

**Gripe-fist.** A miser, or broker ; evidently a corruption of "grip-fist," meaning a hand that squeezes over much.

**Grist.** A large number or quantity. "There was a whole *grist* of fellows there."

**Grit.** (1) Used figuratively for courage, pluck, spirit, etc. from the grindstone which should combine hardness and firmness to make it serviceable.

(2) A member of the Liberal party, in Canada.

See *clear grit*.

**Gritty.** Courageous, spirited.

**Grizzly.** Used elliptically for *grizzly bear*. De Vere says the term *grizzly* is nothing more than the old English "grisly," meaning ugly, from "grise" which once was a name of swine.

*Grizzly-meat*, bear-flesh.

**Groaners.** Among the thieving fraternity, those who carry out their depredations at funerals and other church gatherings.

**Grocery.** (1) A place where groceries are sold.

In England, grocery-store or grocery-shop.

(2) In the South-West, a frequent name for a bar-room or drinking-saloon.

**Groceries.** (1) Used in the plural for the articles themselves, while English usage limits it to the singular as denoting a grocer's shop or the grocer's ware.

(2) In the South-West, a frequent word for liquors or ardent spirits.

**Groggery.** A low drinking saloon or grog-shop.

In the West a *doggery*, in New York and elsewhere a *rum-hole*, or *rum-mill*.

**Groper** (*Serranus erythrogaster*). A thick-set fish of Florida, covered with olive colored irregular spots, and having the gills and gullet of a bright red hue.

**Ground.** In Virginia always used instead of land. "Tobacco-grounds."

**Ground-bridge.** The well known corduroy-road of the South, laid in the water at the bottom of a ford.

**Ground-cherry** (*Physalis*). An edible cherry, growing wild, and otherwise called *winter-cherry*.

**Grounder.** At game of base-ball, a ball which is struck low, or flies near the ground.

**Ground-hog** (*Areomys monax*). The Southern name for the *woodchuck* of the North, a species of the marmot tribe very destructive to grass and growing-crops generally.

**Ground-hog day.** Candlemas (Feb. 2) is often designated in the Middle and Western States as *Ground-hog day*, from the popular belief that the ground-hog then comes annually out of his hole, after a long winter nap, to look for his shadow. If he perceives it, he retires again to his burrow, which fact means a return of cold weather and a late spring. But if he does not see his shadow, he stays out, and then mild and agreeable weather will surely set in.

**Ground-nut** (*Arachnis hypogaea*). The earth-nut, or pea-nut. Also, *ground-pea*. Much cultivated in the West Indies and Southern States.

**Ground-plum** (*Astragalus caryocarpus*). A plant growing on dry soil of the Mississippi region, and so called from its plum-shaped pod.

**Ground-puppy.** See *man-eater*.

**Ground-sluicing.** Amongst miners, an expression used as a substitute for shovelling, and meaning the process of washing down the sides of banks by means of water.

**Ground-squirrel** (*Spermophilus tredecimlineatus*). A name sometimes erroneously given to the striped prairie squirrel, mentioned elsewhere as *gopher*. The ground squirrel is really the *chipmunk*.

**Grout-house.** In the West, a house built of coarse plaster containing small stones.

**Grouty.** In the Northern States, used in sense of cross, ill-natured, troubled in spirit. Merely a metaphorical application of an old and widely diffused English word. Thus, in Halliwell, we see that thick, muddy liquor is "grouty." Quotations are also given of "grouted" for begrimed, and of "grouts" as dregs, lees.

**Growler.** A common name for a jug, pail or can, brought by a customer for beer.

To *rush or work the growler*, to buy beer in a growler.

*Growlering*, the business of selling beer by measure.

**Grubby** (*Batrachus variegatus*). A New-England name for the *toad-fish*, allied to the fishing-frog and resembling it in repulsive ugliness. Also, *grubley*, and *grumpy*.

On the New-Jersey coast the same fish is called *oyster-fish*, from its frequenting the oyster-beds.

**Grub-stake.** Food and other necessaries, furnished to prospectors in mining districts, by men who share in the profits of a mine.

**Grullo**, *grool'-lo* (Sp. *grulla*, a crane). In Texas, smoke-colored, of isabel color, in speaking of horses.

**Grunter.** (1) One of the popular names of a fish (genus *Pogonias*), found in Atlantic waters, south of New York. Other names are *banded-drum*, *young-sheepskin*.

(2) A hog, a pig.

**Gubernatorial.** (1) Pertaining to government. *Gubernatorial* Mansion, i. e. Government House.

(2) Pertaining to the governor of a State. Relating to the office of Governor.

The English word "governmental," used in England in a similar sense, is almost unknown in America.

**Guess** (Old Eng.). To judge, to suppose, to think, to surmise.

To conjecture, to state an opinion not based on exhaustive evidence.

To believe, to fancy, as an affirmation of certainty.

Although English purists have unceasingly twitted Americans upon their indiscriminate use of the verb "to guess," still, in point of fact, it can be readily shown that the word has been already used in England in every sense in which it is now used in America. Shakespeare, Chaucer, Milton, Coleridge, Selden and Locke, among the great authors, constantly employ it, and indeed so orthodox is the term, that it can only be counted an Americanism on the ground that special applications of it have lived on in America while they have died out in the Mother Country.

The American use of "to guess" is grievously misunderstood by most English people. The American guesses quite correctly, in order to draw conclusions from imperfect evidence. Indeed, his use of the word has such an immediate reference to "conjecture" — the legitimate English sense — that he might as naturally substitute "reckon" or "calculate." Perhaps the only difference between the English and American use of the word is that the former always denotes a fair, candid guess, while the American is sometimes apt to guess when there should be no guessing at all, as when he affirms a statement which is known to be beyond a doubt.

**Guinea-corn** (*Holeus sorghum*). The millet of the Egyptians, a plant with a stalk of the size and appearance of maize.

**Guinea-grass** (*Panicum maximum*). A West-Indian grass, mainly used for fodder, and only of late years introduced into the United States.

**Guinea-keet.** See *keet*.

**Gulch** (Old Eng.). An old English word, now obsolete in the Mother Country, and of frequent occurrence, in California and the South-West, to designate a deep ravine caused by the action of water, sometimes with a stream flowing through it.

**Gulch-diggings.** Gold-bearing gravel found in abandoned water-courses or gulches.



**Gulch-mining.** Mining in gulches, a method akin to that of *placer-mining*, consisting in ascertaining the existence of the gold-croppings which are washed down by heavy rains into the ravines or gulches.

**Gulf.** In parts of New York, often said of a small gorge or ravine, usually narrow and having steep sides.

**Gulf-weather.** Warm, moist, cloudy weather, attributed to the influence of the Gulf Stream.

**Gully.** To wear a hollow channel in the earth, from the noun "gully," a hollow channel. "The roads are much *gulfied*."

**Gum.** (1) A name given to various trees throughout the Union. The *black-gum* of the North, and *sour-gum* of the South both belong to the Nyassa species, while the *sweet-gum*, often called *gum-tree* or simply *gum* (*Liquidambar styraciflua*), is the very tree which has furnished the many figures of speech derived from its being a favorite haunt of the opossum or raccoon: *to gum*, *gum-game*..

(2) In the South and West, a term originally applied to bee-hives made of the hollow trunks of gum-trees, and now extended not only to any kind of hive made of wood, but also to any casks or firkins for domestic use.

(3) India-rubber, and, by extension, the plural form *gums* often applied, especially in Philadelphia, to india-rubber shoes or overshoes. And thereby hangs a tale. It is said that a certain Philadelphian, arriving suddenly on a stormy night at the house of a friend in New-York, was asked where his wife was, and replied that she was just outside, "wiping her *gums* on the mat."

**Gum (to).** To punch out the teeth of a saw, by means of a *gummer*. Allusion to the growth of the teeth from the gums.

**Gumbo.** In Kansas, Missouri, and the Indian Territory, a name given to a hard, tough soil, which underlies the good soil, and can scarcely be plowed through at all.

Also called *hard-pan*.

**Gumbo-French.** A curious dialect or patois of Louisiana, and some riparian counties on the Mississippi, consisting in the main of strangely disfigured French words, with an admixture of some English and a few genuine African terms.

Mr. Van Name, of Yale college, has made quite a comprehensive study of Gumbo French.

Also, *Creole French*.

**Gum-game.** A trick, a dodge, a piece of humbug. The simile is drawn from the preference shown, by opossums and raccoons, for the leafy retreat of the gum-trees, when hotly pursued. This is called "coming

the *gum-game*” over the hunter, and the phrase is applied with great shrewdness and force to any case in life when one thinks there is danger of getting over-reached by concealment.

Hence also, *to gum*, meaning to deceive, to impose upon.

**Gump.** A foolish, stupid person; an awkward creature.

Also, *gumpy*.

**Gumptious.** One who has understanding, discernment. One who has a good opinion of himself, who is intelligent and smart.

*Gumptious* is derived from “gumption,” indigenous in England for comprehension, capacity.

**Gun.** A frequent term, in the West, for a revolver.

**Gun (to).** *To gun a stock*, in Wall street parlance, is to use every art to produce a “break,” when it is known that a certain house is heavily supplied, and would be unable to resist an attack.

**Gunboats.** A term used in derision, during the Civil War, for the heavy contract shoes served out to the men, and which were apt to be as clumsy and awkward as the famous gunboats of the time.

**Gundalo** (Old Eng.) In New England, and along the Atlantic coast, a flat-bottomed boat or scow, in which produce is carried to market.

Also, *gundelow*.

Not unknown in England, in sense of a peculiarly-shaped railroad car. “Gundelo” is in Hakluyt, and “gundello” in Booth’s reprint of the Folio Shakespeare of 1633.

**Gunning (to go).** Used in the Northern States, in sense of “to go out shooting.” This form of gunning for shooting occurs in Drayton.

Also used figuratively.

**Gun-shop.** A gun-smith’s shop.

**Gun-stick.** A ramrod, in the West.

**Gurry.** (1) A fisherman’s term for the slime and blood resulting from handling and curing fish.

In all probability, an inheritance from the old English, though a connection with *gory* might, perhaps, be established.

(2) Among fishermen and in commerce, the crude oil made from the livers of cod and other fish.

**Gush.** A large quantity, a great abundance. “A *gush* of apples,” etc.

**Gusher.** A flowing oil-well.

**Gutter-snipe.** (1) A little ragamuffin who plays in the gutters of the poorest part of a town.

(2) In Wall street parlance, and in a sense of derision and contempt, an outside broker doing business chiefly on the sidewalk or in the street, and who is not a member of the Stock Exchange.

## H

**Habitant** (Fr. C.). Among the French-Canadians, a yeoman ; a small landed proprietor ; one engaged in agricultural pursuits.

**Hack** (Old Eng.). A cab, or common carriage on hire. A survival of Old English usage.

In England, a hack is now a horse used for riding.

**Hackamore** (Sp. *jaquima*). In the South-West, a plaited bridle, made of horse-hair, and used on the plains for breaking in purposes.

**Hackberry** (*Celtis occidentalis*). A small tree, having a sweet edible fruit, and which gives excellent wood for fuel,

Also called *sugar-berry*, *pompion-berry*.

**Hackmatack** (Ind). The old Indian name of the *tamarack* (*Larix americana*) of our day, a larch furnishing a hard, strong, and durable wood, and largely found throughout British America and the North-Eastern States.

**Haily-over**. Same as Antony-over (q. v.).

**Haiqua** (Ind.). The name of a variety of shells (*Dentalium*) known on the Pacific coast, and which the natives use mainly for ornaments, and, in some localities, employ after the manner of *wampum* (q. v.).

**Half-a-hog**. An English flash term applied, in America, to a five cent piece.

In England the term is used among thieves, to designate a six-penny-bit.

**Half-breeds**. A derisive nickname once applied to certain Republicans of New York, who wavered in their party allegiance during the fight over the United States Senatorship in 1881.

**Half-saved**. In New England, often used in sense of half-witted, weak-minded.

Still provincial in England.

**Half-way strainer**. In parts of the South, said of one who tries to live above his true station.

**Half-widow**. A term applied, in New England and New York, to a woman whose husband is shiftless, and fails to provide properly for her.

**Ham.** (1) Sporting slang for a loafer.

(2) In theatrical parlance, a tenth-rate actor or variety performer.

Also, *hamfatter*.

**Hamfatter.** In the fashionable quarters of New York city, and more especially in that part known as the "Tenderloin," a recent name applied to a second-rate dude or masher, or a low variety actor.

**Hammock.** In the South, an undulating tract of country, thickly wooded with oak, hickory, and magnolia.

Also, *hommock*, *hummock*.

**Handle.** (1) To handle wines, hardware, etc. i. e. to do business in wines, etc.

(2) A peculiar meaning attaches to this verb in Connecticut, that of "to trouble" or "to distress," as when a troublesome cough *handles* a person badly.

(3) To manage; to overcome an opponent, particularly in wrestling.

**Hand-out.** A cold lunch given to a tramp.

**Hand-round.** A Western term for a social gathering or entertainment, where refreshments, instead of being served at a table, are simply handed round.

**Handsomely.** Among American sailors, used in sense of carefully, or steadily.

**Hang around.** To loiter about; to loaf.

In England, "to hang about."

**Hang out.** To reside. Especially current in the West.

**Hang the landlady.** To decamp without payment, a phrase applied to "moonshining" practices of all descriptions.

Another form is to *stand off the tailor*.

**Hang up.** (1) To pawn.

(2) To rob with violence on the street.

(3) To quit work. "I reckon we'll have to *hang up* for all day."

**Hang up one's fiddle.** To retire; to give up or abandon an undertaking.

**Hannahill** (*Centropristes nigricans*). One of the popular names of the black sea-bass, one of the most savory and delicate of fishes.

Also, *black-harry*.

**Hant.** In the South, especially among negroes, often heard for a ghost.

"There's *hants* in this here house."

**Happen in.** To happen to come in. To call at a house without any definite object; to go or come in accidentally.

**Happenings.** In newspaper slang, events, occurrences.

Also, *occurrences*.

**Happen upon.** To come across any one.

**Happy hunting grounds.** A phrase now passed into popular language, and meaning the other world, the future state, according to the belief of the Indian, whose idea of heaven naturally pictures to him a place where he can have the unlimited enjoyment of his greatest pleasure, which is hunting.

**Hard.** Often heard in sense of bad or undesirable, and then mostly used in combination with other words, as in a "hard case," meaning a worthless fellow, a tough.

A favorite word applied universally to men or things, from "hard money," for gold or silver, to "hard times," for times of business depression, evil fortune. Similarly, a man will drink, eat, or sleep "hard."

*Hard cole*, a cant term for silver or gold money.

*Hardware*, in thieves' parlance, said of counterfeit coin.

**Hard coal.** Anthracite coal.

The term soft coal is applied to bituminous coal.

**Hardhack** (*Spiroea tomentosa*). The familiar name, in New England, of a well known plant growing in low grounds, and celebrated for its astringent properties.

Also, *steeple-bush*.

**Hard pan.** (1) A firm and solid foundation; the bottom, a figure of speech from the same term designating, in geology, the hard stratum of earth that lies below the soil.

(2) In parts of Connecticut, a mixture of clay and subsoil underlying the upper soil, and which is of a peculiarly hard consistence.

See *gumbo*.

**Hard pan (at).** At the lowest possible point, in speaking of prices.

Obviously drawn from the geologic term, designating the lowest stratum of earth.

**Hard pushed.** To be "hard up," to be in difficulties.

Also, *to be hard run*.

**Hard tack.** Slang for silver money, especially dollars.

**Hard Shells.** Originally a nickname applied to some very strict and rigid Baptists, as opposed to *Soft Shells*, meaning those who were of a more liberal turn of mind, the simile being drawn from the crab in its different states of existence.

Both terms, often also simply contracted into *hards* and *softs*, are now freely used in a variety of political connections, the earliest conspi-

enous instance of which was when the "Hunkers," from the unswerving fidelity of their conduct, took the name of *Hards*, and their opponents, or "Barnburners," that of *Softs*.

Also used adjectively, as a *hard* or *hard-shell* Baptist, a *hard-shell* Democrat.

**Hard-tack.** Sea-bread, or dry biscuit, as opposed to *soft-tack* or fresh bread. Originated during the late Civil War.

**Hard-wood.** A general term for all woods of solid texture, beech, ash, elm, maple, etc. as opposed to pine, or "light-wood."

**Harm.** A contraction of harmful used in the South, especially Georgia, in sense of unkind. "He never said a *harm* word to any one."

**Harman** (Old Eng.). This old word, now obsolete in England, still retains its hold, here, among the criminal classes, for a policeman, whilst a sheriff is also designated as a *harman-beak*.

**Hash-house.** A slang word for a refreshment room.

**Hasty-pudding.** See *supawn*.

**Hat.** A generic term, among women, for any kind of head-gear, the "sun-bonnet" being the only bonnet known in America.

**Hatch.** To ponder, to wonder, i. e. "hatching" thoughts and ideas.  
Also, to *hetch*.

**Hatchet.** A cant name for the "grease" used in lubricating the palms of dishonest customs officials.  
See *bone*.

**Hate** (Low Scotch *haet*). A bit. "There is not a *hate* of truth about the news."

**Hate out (to).** A significant Western term given to a practice very much akin to boycotting, and which commonly results in the banishment of the person against whom it is directed.

**Haul.** A New Jerseyism used in sense of to pull up, as "to *haul* weeds."

**Have.** (1) To cause, or, more accurately, to cause by influence, as "I will *have* the servant do it."

Analogous, in that sense, to the French "faire faire quelque chose," and still provincial, in England, in Essex and Suffolk counties.

(2) To permit, to tolerate.

**Hawk.** A swindler, and more especially one who works the confidence trick.

**Hawk-Eye State.** The State of Iowa, said to be so named after a famous Indian chief, who was once a terror to "voyageurs," trappers, and pioneers.

Similarly, *hawk-eyes*, meaning the inhabitants of Iowa.

**Hay-barrack** (Dutch *hooi-berg*, hay-mountain). A somewhat ludicrous corruption used to designate, in New-York State, a sort of thatched roof, supported by four posts, under which the hay is stored.

**Hayseed.** A generic name for a countryman, one not accustomed to the wiles of city life.

Also, *hay-pitcher*.

**Hay-ward** (Old English). A township officer, whose duty it is to impound stray cattle and feed them until they are redeemed by their owners. Also, *hay-warden*.

This old word is found in the old English records, and is closely allied to hedge-ward, fence-ward.

**Haze.** (1) To frolic; to play practical jokes, as, for instance, in speaking of the treatment which Freshmen often receive from Sophomores.

(2) To indulge in a drunken spree.

(3) Among sailors, to work at high pressure.

**He.** In parts of Massachusetts, Connecticut and New Jersey, a woman speaks of her absent husband, not by name, but with the pronoun *he* or *him*.

Likewise, the 3d person is used instead of the 2d by bashful, ignorant people. In talking with you, they will say: "Will *he* take a chair?"

**Head.** In newspaper parlance, the title and sub-title of an article.

**Head-cheese.** The flesh of pig's head minced, cooked, and pressed into a kind of a cheese.

Also, *hog's-head cheese*, and *souse*.

**Head off.** To turn from a purpose; to put off; to distract attention.

**Head-rights.** Rights to certain of the public lands, which every citizen, who is the head of a family, can claim if he desires to do so.

These rights are also enjoyed by women, within certain limits.

**Head-stall.** A halter, and even sometimes a bridle. (Nfld. N. S. and N. B.)

**Heady.** Sometimes heard, in Virginia, in sense of persistent, tenacious.

**Hearn** (Old Eng.). The old participle form of "heard," still current in New England and Virginia.

Or ever *hearn* to make your feelin's blue.

(LOWELL, Biglow Papers, II, p. 161.)

**Hear to.** Give heed to. (New-Eng.)

**Heater-piece.** In New England, as applied to land, a triangular or wedge-shaped piece of ground.

Probably derived from the similarity of shape to the "heaters" of box irons used by housewives.

**Heathen Chinee.** A popular sobriquet for a Chinaman, derived from Bret Harte's poem of "Truthful James."

**Heath-hen.** See *prairie-hen*.

**Heavy-handed.** In New England, often said of a cook who uses much salt. "She's *heavy-handed* with salt."

**Heel.** A cowboy's term, meaning to "lariat" or secure an animal by the hind leg.

**Heeled.** Prepared for an undertaking; well armed for any purpose.

Meant originally, in the West, armed with deadly weapons, secure from attack, probably from the cock's spur, not unfrequently, as in England, supplied with a steel spur.

**Heelers.** (1) A contemptuous term applied to the followers or henchmen of a politician or party.

(2) Loafers and idlers of every description, especially those frequenting drinking saloons and on the look out for "shady" work.

(3) Among thieves, the *heelers* are those working the "pocket-book racket." This consists in drawing a chosen victim's attention, by touching his heels, to a pocket-book containing counterfeit money which has been dropped by a companion, with the object of inducing the finder to part with genuine coin in dividing the spoils.

**Heel-fly.** An insect pest which infests cattle on Western ranches.

**Heft** (Old Eng.). Weight. Also used as a verb, in sense of to estimate weight by lifting.

**Hefty.** Weighty, and, by extension, important, forcible. "A *hefty* argument."

**Heifer.** Not uncommon in the West for "wife," and used with all kindness and respect.

Equivalent of the "old woman" of the English lower classes.

**Heifers.** A New Jerseyism, for young cow terrapins.

**Heir (to).** Common in Pennsylvania and New Jersey in sense of to inherit.

**Hell-bender** (*Menopoma Alleghaniensis*). An aquatic reptile of the salamander type, growing sometimes to eighteen inches, and probably so called on account of its extraordinary hideousness.



**Hell-box.** In printer's slang, the counterpart of the "batter-slipper" of the English printing offices.

Also, *baalam-box*.

**Hell-hounds.** During the Civil War, a name applied by the Confederates to the Northern gun-boats.

**Hellion.** A term formerly much used in Massachusetts, in sense of a denizen of hell. The word, which is still common enough, has now lost all derogatory meaning, and simply applies to a "devil of a fellow."

**Hell-matter.** Among printers, broken and battered type, the destination of which is the hell-box.

**Help.** (1) A servant of any kind, and especially a domestic servant or hired hand, the term "servant" being seldom used in the United States.

(2) An operative in a cotton or woollen factory.

This use of *help* is only an extension of the original word from an instrument to a person, and originated in New England where perfect social equality was wont to be the rule, at least in olden times.

The term has recently found some footing in England.

**Hen-clam.** The New-England name of a species of clam (*Mactra gigantea*).

**Hen-hawk** (*Butes lineatus*). The popular name of the red-shouldered hawk of naturalists.

**Hen-hussy.** In parts of New England, a man who meddles with women's affairs, especially one who concerns himself overmuch with household matters.

**Hen party.** A gathering consisting only of women. Compare with *buck-party*, *stag-party*.

**Hermit-thrush** (*Turdus palassi*). A bird of passage with sweetly plaintive notes, and so called because of its shy and mysterious habits.

**Herring pond.** The Atlantic.

**Herring-salmon** (*Coregonus clupeiformis*). A local name, in the lake Erie region, for the *shad salmon* or *white fish*.

**Hessian.** A political term for a mercenary person, from the fact that Hessian troops were employed by England during the war of Independence.

During the late Civil War the word was also used, at the South, as a term of reproach directed against the loyal U. S. citizens and soldiers.

**Hessian-fly** (*Cecidomyia destructor*). A small insect, very destructive to young wheat, and which is said to owe its name to the popular notion that it was first imported into the United States in the straw beds of Hessian soldiers, enlisted during the War of the Revolution. On the other hand, many entomologists assert that it is strictly of American origin, although its existence has long been known in several European countries.

**Het.** Often heard in sense of heated, i. e. a building all *het* up.

Shakespeare and Chaucer both used the past tense "heat" instead of "heated."

**Hickey.** A degree or two short of being drunk.

**Hickory** (Ind. *pawcohiccora*, as quoted by captain John Smith). A tree of the genus "Carya" producing a timber exceedingly tough and strong, besides also flexible to an unusual degree, and bearing an edible nut sometimes called walnut, esp. in the North where the real walnut does not thrive.

Hence also figuratively employed, as adjective, in speaking of a person, either in sense of flexible or yielding, or to indicate an unswerving fidelity to one's principles, as was the case, for instance, in 1828, during the Jackson campaign, when the "hickory tree" became the emblem of the Democratic party, and Gen. Jackson himself was nicknamed *Old Hickory*, from his tough and unyielding disposition.

**Hickory-nut.** The fruit of the hickory. These nuts are also erroneously called *walnuts* in the North, especially in New York.

**Hickory-shirt.** A shirt much worn by laborers, made of heavy twilled cotton, and so called from its strength.

**Hicksites.** A sect of Quakers who adopted the name of their first leader, M. Hicks, and are Socinians.

Richard Grant White says the term has also been so used in England since the division in the Society of Friends, of which it is a sign.

**Hifer.** To loiter. (Northern Pennsylvania.)

**Highbelia** (*Lobelia cardinalis*). A plant of the *Lobelia* family, so called from being of greater size than the *Lobelia* proper (*Lobelia inflat.*), and much in vogue among quack doctors for their decoctions.

See *lowbelia*.

**Highbinder.** (1) A term applied, in San Francisco, to members of a Chinese secret society, who blackmail gamblers and prostitutes, and remove by knife or pistol those who incur the enmity of their organization.

"Highbinder" is generally supposed to be of California origin, but this is an error, the word having been used in New York City, forty years ago, to denote a member of a gang. From there it found its way to the Pacific coast.

According to the Century Dictionary the "high" has the same force as in "high jinks," "hifalutin," etc. while "bender" or "binder" is one who goes on a "bender."

(2) A rowdy, or roysterer.

**High-blackberry.** A distinctive name, for the fruit of the "Rubus Villosus."

**High-bloke.** A judge, among American criminals.

**High-coloring.** A pugilistic phrase, synonymous with the free drawing of blood.

**High-dutchers.** Skates, the blade of which is curled up high in front, while those without those ornamental projections are called *dumps*.

**Highfalutin.** High-flown language; an exaggerated bombastic speech, with a good deal of "spread-eaglim" thrown in.

The word can be obviously traced back to 'a corruption of "high-flying," "high-flyghting," or "high-floating."

Also used adjectively in sense of showy, stuck up, affected, high-sounding, bombastic.

The term has now become naturalised in England.

Also, *highfaluten*, *highfaluting*.

**High holder** (*Picus amatus*). In New York, the popular name of the *flicker*, or *yellow hammer*, from the Old English "high-whele."

**High-jinks.** A thief's term for a petty gambler.

**High-minded Federalists.** A derisive term applied, in 1820, to a few Federalists who supported Governor Clinton, and were laughed at for their frequent use of the phrase "high-minded."

**High-muck-a-muck.** Overbearing in presence; possessed of inordinate self-esteem; affecting great dignity.

Also, *high studdled*.

**High old time.** A Western equiv. for what in the East would be designated "as a good time."

**High-roller.** A fast liver; one who gambles freely and for large sums.

**High-toned.** Aristocratic, stylish, fashionable.

**Hike.** (1) To hasten, to run away, to decamp.

(2) To hitch. "The curtain *hikes*," i. e. does not pull up smoothly.

(3) Said of clothing which is uneven, i. e. does not "set well."

**Hindoos.** An allusive sobriquet given in 1856 to the Know-Nothings, from the president of that party, Daniel Ulman, being supposed to have been born in Calcutta, East Indies.

See *Know-Nothings*, *Native Americans*, *Sams*.

**Hindsight.** (1) The "backsight" of a gun, and figuratively the popular antithesis of foresight. "An ounce of foresight is worth a pound of *hindsight*."

**Hinny.** The game of leap-frog. (N. Y.)

**Hips (to have the).** To be restless at night and unable to sleep.

**Hired-man.** A man servant. Similarly, a *hired-woman*, for a servant-girl.

**Hi-spy.** The name given by little girls to out-door hide-and-go-seek.

**Hitch.** This word, originally meaning a substantial obstacle and its effects upon the gait of persons, is constantly applied in America to difficulties in business matters.

**Hitch (to).** To marry, from hitching necessary for harness.

Similarly, a couple not agreeing is said "not to hitch."

**Hoarsed up (to be).** To suffer from hoarseness produced by a severe cold.

**Hobble.** On ranches, to secure horses or cattle, by fastening the two fore-feet together by a "lariat" or hobble.

See *sideline*.

**Hobble-bush** (*Viburnum lantanoides*). A shrub having long, straggling branches, which impede progress, whence also called *tangle-legs* and *wayfaring*, or *wayfaring-tree*.

**Hobo.** A tramp. Originally Western, but wellnigh universal now.

**Hock.** The last card remaining in the deal-box, at faro.

The soda card is the top-card of the deck. Hence "from soda to *hock*."

*To be caught in hock*, said of those who venture into the toils of card-sharpers, and get fleeced.

*To be in hock*, among the gambling fraternity, to be where one can enjoy free board and lodging, i. e. to be in jail.

**Hoe-cake.** A cake made of corn-meal unleavened, and baked in the ashes on the side of a hoe.

**Hoe-down.** A negro dance. Same as *break-down*.

**Hoe one's row.** To do one's share of a work; to attend to one's own business.

Similar to "paddle one's own canoe."

*A hard row to hoe*, a simile drawn from the cultivation of Indian corn, and synonymous with what is difficult of accomplishment.

**Hog.** A pig. Pigs are always called *hogs* in America, even when named figuratively.

Takes almost exclusively the place of the English "swine," which is rarely heard in the United States.

**Hog (to).** To behave greedily ; to appropriate greedily and selfishly.

**Hog and hominy,** or pork and corn. The standard dish of all early settlers. "To be bidden to a planter's *hog and hominy*, is to be presented with the full, free hospitality of his house." (T. O. Richards, Rice Fields of the South.)

**Hog-backs.** A generic name, in the West, for all long, flat-ridged elevations.

The use of this term is not unknown in England, although there strictly applied to particular localities, whereas in America it has become a generic name.

**Hog-choke.** In North Carolina, a species of flounder.

**Hog-fish** (*Etheostoma caprodes*). A fish common in all the Western rivers.

**Hogg.** Slang for a ten cent piece.

In Old English cant a hog is a shilling.

**Hog-minder.** A swine herd ; one who has charge of swine.

**Hog plum** (*Ximenia americana*). A tall shrub of South Florida, bearing a fruit in size and shape like a plum, and pleasant to the taste.

Also, *pig-plum*.

**Hog-reeve.** A title formerly given, in New England, to the local officer whose duty it was to impound stray pigs.

Old Eng. "reve," an officer, a steward.

See *field-driver*.

**Hog-tight.** Said, in the South, esp. Maryland, of fences that are sufficient to restrain trespassing stock, and used in the same way that in England a thing would be said to be sound, "lock, stock, and barrel."

**Hog-wallow.** A sink hole or mud spring on the prairies, presenting every appearance of having been formed by the wallowing of swine. In reality, however, hog-wallows are caused by heavy rains, which form a rapid succession of little hillocks and valleys, on land already parched and cracked by long drought.

**Holden** (Old Eng.). The old participle form of to hold, still colloquial in many parts of the United States.

We are *holden* to men by every sort of tie, by blood, by pride, etc.

(R. W. Emerson, *Friendship*. p. 187.)

**Hold for.** To hold for trial ; to detain in custody while awaiting trial.

**Hold over.** A place of detention, for prisoners awaiting trial.

**Hold over (to).** To have an advantage over one, in some way or other.

A phrase probably derived from poker phraseology.

**Hold up (to).** To stop and rob, as for instance when a railway train is "held up" by masked robbers, for the plundering of the express safes.

Probably derived from the well known phrase "Hold up your hands" of Western brigands.

**Hold-ups.** A generic term, in the West, for robbers or brigands who make a specialty of "holding up" travellers or trains.

**Holibut.** In many parts of the United States, the familiar "halibut" recovers its original name "holibut," as quoted in Bailey's Dictionary.

In his "World of Worlds," Phillips also takes great pains to make us aware that the proper name of the fish is "Holy But."

**Holler.** A common form of hollo, i. e. to call out, to shout.

**Holly-bay.** See *loblolly-bay*.

**Holp, Holped, Holpen** (Old Eng.). Old archaic preterites of "help," still sometimes heard, "holpen" being however the least frequently met with.

De Vere says *holpen* is still often heard in Kentucky, while in Virginia and among the negroes of the South, *holped* is more frequent.

**Home.** Often used in America where idea intended to be conveyed is that which an Englishman attaches to the word "almshouse."

**Home-bringing.** In the North of New Jersey, the entertainment given at the house of the bride-groom after the marriage.

Similarly, in Southern New Jersey, they will say *home-coming*.

See *infair*.

**Homely.** Unattractive, plain in appearance; as nearly as possible, ugly.

In England, used for homelike, whilst in the United States it serves mainly to express a want of comeliness.

**Homestead.** An act passed in 1862, for the object of giving to every citizen of the United States a home farm of 160 acres, the sole condition being five year's residence upon the property, and some improvements by cultivation. A very important provision of this act is also the absolute exemption of the homestead from forced sale for debts contracted prior to the issuing of the patent, or free title.

Also, *Homestead Law*.

**Hominy** (Ind. *ahuminea*, for parched corn, in Roger William's Key. Other forms are *rockahominy*, in Beverley, and the *ustatahamen* of the Powhatan dialect).

An Indian dish eaten all over the Union, and consisting in a preparation of corn, either coarsely ground or broken, or the kernels merely hulled, and boiled with water.

Also, *homony*.

**Hominy-beater.** A snapping beetle (*Elater*, of Pennsylvania), so called from some fancied resemblance to a kernel hulled.

**Hondou** (Sp. *honda*, a sling for throwing stones). In Texas, the slip knot of a *reata*, or *lariat* (q. v.).

**Honey.** (1) A good fellow; one who commands admiration and respect.

Also a favorite word for all real and verbal sweetness.

(2) A generic name for money.

**Honey (to).** To cajole with soft words or promises.

**Honey-fogle (to).** In the West and South, to swindle, to cheat, to humbug.

To allure by traps.

Also, to *honey-fuggle*.

Bartlett suggests that this curious word may come from "coney fogling," a Lancashire term mentioned by Halliwell as meaning "to lay plots."

**Honey-locust** (*Gleditschia triacanthus*). A tree so called from its bearing a large pod containing a pulp of honey-like sweetness.

Also known, in the West and South, as the *thorny-locust*.

**Honey-suckle** (*Azalea viscosa*). A name given in the South to a curious woody plant, the brilliant flowers of which are surrounded by a viscous secretion. This plant is, of course, far remote from kinship with the real English honey suckle.

**Hoodlebug.** In Virginia, the larva of the ant-lion.

**Hoodlum.** A general term for roughs, or toughs, having originated in San Francisco about 1868, as the designation of a company of young ruffians.

The word is now frequently met with, in political parlance. "The *Hoodlum* element in politics."

As the story goes, the origin of the name is ascribed to a newspaperman of San Francisco, who in writing up the deviltry of a gang of young toughs, under the leadership of one Muldoon, called them the "noodlums," that is, he simply reversed the name of the leader. The compositor read "h" for "n," and set the word up "hoodlums."

Hence also, *hoodlumism*.

**Hoodoo.** A negro term for a person who is bewitched, and has the power to bring bad luck.

**Hoodoo (to).** To bewitch.

**Hook** (Dutch *hoek*, a corner, a cape). An old word designating certain corners and angular points in the Hudson and the East Rivers, as Sandy Hook, Kinderhook, etc.

**Hookey (to play).** To play truant, chiefly current in State of New York, among school-boys.

In England, "playing the wag."

In New England, the form to *hook Jack* is used in preference.

**Hoolikan** (Ind. *oulachan*). A small salmonoid fish of the Pacific coast (*Mallotus pacificus*), which comes every spring in shoals as far south as the mouth of the Columbia river.

Also called *Eulachon*.

W. Irving reported the same fish as "about six inches long," called by the natives the "Uthlecan."

**Hoop-la** (Fr. *houp-là*). An exclamation indicating jollification, and which Bartlett cites as a common stage-driver's ejaculation to his horses, in California. We may be reminded of the French origin of the word by the following extract from: "Le Prisonnier de Rennes, a popular Breton "roade":

Dans la ville de Rennes,  
*Houp-la la la, houp-la,*  
Il y a t'un prisonnier.

**Hoope** (Dutch *hoepel*). A common term, amongst New-York boys, for a trundling hoop.

**Hoosier.** A native of the State of Indiana.

The most reasonable explanation of the word, is that, in the early days, the customary challenge or greeting, in that region, was "Who's here" (pron. hoosier).

On the other hand, some people think it is simply a corruption of "husher," which was formerly a common term applied, in the Western settlements, to all "bullies" in general, and more especially to the boatmen of Indiana, from their primary capacity to "hush," i. e. to still their opponents.

**Hoosier cake.** A coarse kind of gingerbread, so called because the inhabitants of Indiana—the Hoosier State—are said to be very partial to it.

**Hoosier State.** The State of Indiana, from "hoosier," a nickname applied to a native of same State.

Also, *Hoosierdom*.

**Hooter.** A thing not worth a *hooter*, is a thing not worth an iota, of no account.

Chiefly confined to New York, and probably only a corruption of the English "iota."

**Hopine.** A name given to malt-liquor, which, for all practical purposes, is genuine beer, it being however so called to evade the provisions of the Prohibition Act.



**Hopping-John.** In South Carolina, a dish of bacon and peas stewed with red pepper.

**Hopping mad.** Exceedingly angry ; mad enough to mop about.

**Hop-tree** (*Ptelia trifoliata*). A tall shrub of the Eastern States, so called from its seed clusters being used as a bitter tonic, somewhat like hops.

**Horn.** (1) A measure for drink ; a drink of spirits. Probably from the old custom of drinking out of a horn.

(2) In the Far West, the pommel of a saddle, from its horn-like shape.

**Horn (in a).** A slang phrase, analogous to the English "over the left," and which, when applied to any statement, means the reverse of words already spoken.

**Hornbug.** The stag-beetle (*Lucanus*) of England.

**Hornswoggle.** A Western creation applied to any kind of chaff, foolery, non-sense, denoting groundless bragging for the purpose of getting the better of another.

Also, *shenanigan*, *skulduggery*, this last word denoting however more particularly some kind of underhand plotting.

**Hornswoggle (to).** To cheat.

**Horqueta,** or-kay'-tah (Sp. dim. of *horca*, meaning a little fork). In Texas, a forked piece of wood tied to the leg of a horse to prevent his straying or running away.

**Horse.** (1) The horse being "par excellence" the friend of man, and moreover a fine horse being one of the most beautiful objects on earth, this word is often used, as a term of endearment or admiration, as applied to a dear friend or old companion, or in speaking of men, and even women, whose traits of character command respect and homage.

Amongst the ruder sort, the term affectionately becomes "Old hoss," and a man is apt to speak of himself as "this horse."

(2) Still current in the Old English sense of a plank support or trestle.

**Horse and horse.** Originally applied to horses which, in running a race, come in side by side, and then transferred to gamblers in sense of even.

Also used, in throwing poker dice, when each player wins one throw ; the third horse decides the game, and then the loser is said to have a "horse on him."

**Horse-boat.** A sort of ferry-boat, the propelling power of which is a horse, and especially common in Western waters.

Also, *horse-ferry*.

**Horse-cappers.** Horse swindlers, whose trick is generally to dispose of a worthless animal at a price far above its value.

**Horse-car.** Tram-car, or tramway.

**Horse-foot** (*Limulus polyphemus*). The popular name of the king-crab of England, from its closely resembling a horse's hoof. Also called *horse-shoe*.

**Horse mackerel** (*Cybrum maculatum*). In New England, a salt water fish of the mackerel kind, otherwise called *Spanish mackerel*.

In same region, the name *horse-mackerel* is also given to the *blue-fish* (*Temnodon saltator*).

**Horse marine.** An awkward person.

**Horse milliner** (Old Eng.). A saddler and harness maker.

This old name has high and ancient authority for its use, dating back as far as the 16th century. Sir W. Scott, also, in his "Heart of Mid-Lothian," makes Bartoline Saddletree say: "Whereas, in my wretched occupation of a saddler, *horse-milliner*, and harness maker."

**Horse-mint** (*Monarda punctata*). A large species of mint found from New York southward.

**Horse-nettle** (*Solanum carolinense*). A low, troublesome weed, especially abundant in the Southern States, and well known for its bright, yellow berries of poisonous properties.

**Horse-railroad.** A tramway.

**Horse sense.** Good, sound, practical, common sense.

**Hose.** The Western equivalent for ladies' stockings, which term is considered very indelicate.

**Hot-slaw.** Minced cabbage, pickled in vinegar and made hot. So called to distinguish it from *cold-slaw*.

**Hounds.** (1) In the old slavery days, men who hunted and caught runaway negroes.

(2) A gang of ruffians, also styling themselves *Regulators*, who infested San Francisco in 1849.

**House-car.** A closed car; a box-car.

**House-keep (to).** To keep house.

See *keep*.

**Housen.** Plural of "house," heard in various parts of New England, New York and New Jersey.

**House-raising.** A gathering of neighbors or friends, in country districts, for the purpose of building or re-building a house. Such events usually wound up with feasting and merry making.

Also called *raising-bee*.

**Hove** (Old Eng.). This old preterite form of "to heave" is still in use, principally in New England and the South.

**How.** A common New-Englandism for what did you say? used when a remark is not clearly heard or understood.

Analogous to the French "comment."

In using this word, Americans attach to it no meaning whatever of rudeness, it being simply part of the brevity which characterises them as a people, they having no time to lose, or, at any rate, acting as if the law of life was ceaseless hurry.

**How come?** A Southern contraction meaning "How came it? How did it occur?"

**How is that for high?** What do you think of it?

This slang expression is of Western origin, and is borrowed from a low game, known as "Old Sledge," where the "high" depends, not on the card itself, but on the adversary's hand.

**How you talk.** A New-England exclamation which may mean surprise, approbation, or, indeed, any emotion whatsoever.

**Huajolote**, oo-ah-ho-lo'-tay (Mex. *huezolotl*). In Texas, the wild turkey (Meleagris gallopavo Mexicana).

**Huarachos**, oo-ah-rah'-tchos. In Texas, a kind of sandals worn by Indians and the lower classes generally.

Also, *huaraches*.

**Hub.** A heap on a road; a projection on a mountain.

**Hub of the universe.** A grandiloquent title given by Oliver Wendell Holmes to the city of Boston, and meaning the great centre or chief city, like the hub of a wheel, to which the spokes are subservient.

**Hubbles.** Rough pieces on a road, as humps or lumps, especially when a road is frozen after being cut into ruts.

Also, ice formed on the surface of water.

**Huckleberry** (Gaylussacia). A kind of blackberry, resembling the whortleberry of England. Indeed, *huckleberry* might be said to be merely whortleberry, pronounced with the old English interchange of *k* and *t*.

**Huckleberry above the persimmons.** A Southern phrase expressing that something apparently simple and easy is far above the ability of the person who makes the attempt.

**Huckster.** To peddle. Especially current in Philadelphia.

**Huggerum-buff.** In Newfoundland and the Canadian Maritime provinces, a mixture of fish and potatoes ready to fry into fish-cakes.

**Huisache**, we-sah'-tchay (Mex. *huazin*). In Texas, a small tree or shrub with very sweet smelling yellow flowers (*Acacia Farnesiana*).

**Hu'l** (1) The husk of corn, peas, etc.  
 (2) At the South, the shell of oysters.  
 (3) The green and stalk of strawberries.

**Hull (to)**. (1) To free from the husks, as in shelling peas, corn, etc. At the South, to *hull* oysters is to open them.

(2) In New Jersey, to gad about, wander, roam.

**Hulled-corn**. Indian corn, which is husked by being scalded, making afterwards a most palatable dish.

**Huly**. In New England, noise, uproar. "To raise *huly*."

**Hum around**. To bring to account; to call over the coals.  
 See *make things hum*.

**Hum-bird**. The popular name of the humming bird, chiefly the "trochilus colubris."  
 Also, *hummer*.

**Hum-box** An auctioneer's desk, among thieves.

In England, the same term, in thief's parlance, has for a long time stood for a pulpit.

**Human** (Old Eng.). This word, used by Western backwoodsmen for human being, was known long ago in English literature of the highest order—appearing notably again and again in Chapman's Homer, 1603—and its resurrection on our Western frontier is an interesting illustration of the way in which a word will crop out unexpectedly in one place in a language, after having disappeared from another.

Although Bartlett designates *human* as being both Western and Eastern, it must be added, to avoid all misapprehension, that the word is never used in the East except jocosely and with a subaudition of reference to the frontiersman's use of it.

**Humility**. The marbled godwit, a frequenter of the fens and river banks of New England.

**Hummer**. (1) A lively, industrious worker; one who does not let the grass grow under his feet.

Other slang equivalents are *hustler*, *lala*, *rustler*.

(2) In thief's parlance, a big lie.

**Humphrey**. A coat with false pockets, the better to facilitate thieving operations.

**Hump oneself**. To make haste, to hasten, which may perhaps be old, seeing that "hump" is, etymologically, of same root as "hop."

*Hump yourself* is a frequent injunction for "be sharp!" "look alive!"

**Hung-beef.** Dried beef, so named from its being cured by hanging.  
Also, *chip-beef*.

**Hunk.** (1) A large piece, or slice; a big lump, or chunk. Probably only a variation of "hunch," used in England in precisely the same manner.  
(2) A country fellow. "He is a country *hunk*."

**Hunk** (Dutch *houk*, place, post, home). The goal, or home, in a child's game. Especially used by New-York boys.

Hence, also, to *be hunk*, to be safe, i. e. to have reached the goal without being intercepted by one of the opposite party; also *hunky*, *hunkey*, meaning very fine, tip-top, good, jolly, and to *be hunky*, or *all hunky*, to be all right.

**Hunkers.** A local political term applied in New York, in 1844, to the Conservative Democrats, as opposed to the "Barnburners," from their supposed clinging to the homestead or home principles.

Hence, also, *hunkerism*, the doctrine of the *hunkers*.

The hunkers were also nicknamed *hards*, as opposed to the *softs*.  
See *Hardshells*.

**Hunting shirt.** A blouse-like garment, generally made of deerskin, and in use amongst trappers and frontiersmen.

**Hurry up the cakes.** An injunction to expeditious movement, equivalent to: be quick! look alive! from the well known phrase so often heard in restaurants, in conjunction with buckwheat and other hot cakes.

**Hussif.** A contraction of "housewife," meaning a flannel book for needles.

**Hustle.** To be active in movement, or quick in speech; to be generally alive at all points.  
Used actively and passively.

**Hustler.** An active, busy individual; one who is energetic and pushing in business.

## I

**Ice-boat.** A kind of yacht on skates, which furnishes an exhilarating winter pastime on the frozen rivers and lakes of the Northern regions.

**Ill.** In the South-West, vicious, ill-tempered, and even immoral, as "an ill fellow," meaning a man of bad habits, "an ill dog," meaning one which would be rather given to bite.

"Ill" has been so used in England for centuries, in connection with man, beast, or intentions. Thus, in the old ballad of the Widow of Watling street, we have it applied to the first and to the last:

O husband, remember your sonne, she said,  
Although *he* hath benee *ill*.  
For by his dayly *practices*,  
Which were both lew1 and *ill*

**Illy** (Old Eng.). Still persistent in sense of "ill."

So used by several old writers, notably by Southey and Strype.

**Immense.** Excellent, and especially pre-excellent.

Has now also gained some acceptance in England.

**Independence Day.** The 4th of July, anniversary of the date of the declaration of independence of the American colonies, by Congress, in 1776.

**Indian bed.** See *clam-bake*.

**Indian bread.** (1) See *Boston bread*.

(2) In New Jersey, the *tuckahoe* or fungus found underground in the pine woods.

**Indian corn.** Maize, so called by the first colonists because cultivated by the aborigines.

**Indian dab.** A Pennsylvania batter-cake.

**Indian fig.** (1) The prickly-pear (q. v.).

(2) The barberry fig.

(3) A large Cactus (*Cereus giganteus*), the fruit of which is not unlike the fig in taste.

**Indian file.** A single file, a single trail, from the custom of the first aborigines of creeping along in "single file," when they were interested in preventing any estimate being formed of their number.

**Indian gift.** A gift, a return for which is expected. This word is a sad commentary on the cupidity of the white man, whose so-called presents to the red-skins have nearly always involved returns wellnigh a hundredfold in value.

**Indian hemp** (*Apocynum cannabinum*). A medicinal plant.

**Indian ladder.** In the South a tree, the branches of which are trimmed to a few inches of the main stem, which thus form projecting substitutes for the rungs of a ladder.

**Indian liquor.** Whiskey of the vilest description, from the well-known habit of traders and Government agents of supplying Indians with whiskey adulterated with all sorts of noxious condiments.

**Indian meal.** Ground maize.

**Indian millet** (*Oryzopsis cuspidata*). One of the most prominent of the native grasses, growing in the Rocky Mountains region from one to two feet high, or even higher in moist situations.

See *bunch-grass*.

**Indian mortars.** See pot-holes.

**Indian mounds.** Originally, the burial-places of the Indians, but now frequently applied, in some parts of the country, to any unusual contours of rising ground.

**Indian orchards.** In New York and Massachusetts, plantations of wild trees, the popular idea being that such places were originally planted by Indians.

**Indian peach.** A species of wild peach.

**Indian physic.** See *bowman's-root*.

**Indian pipe** (*Monotropa uniflora*). A wax-like plant, the head of which bends over before maturity.  
Also called *wax-plant*.

**Indian pudding.** A pudding made of maize-meal and molasses.

**Indian reservations.** Certain tracts of country throughout the Union, set apart by Congress for the special benefit and use of the Indians.

**Indian rice** (*Zizania aquatica*). Wild rice, so called from the fact of certain Indian tribes depending upon it as part of their food supply.

**Indian summer.** The St Martin's Summer of Europe, said to have been so called by the early settlers because it afforded the Indians a last opportunity of making incursions into the settlements, before the real onset of winter.

**Indian tobacco** (*Lobelia inflata*). A plant, the leaves of which were sometimes used by the aborigines as a substitute for tobacco.

**Indian turnip.** (1) A poisonous, acrid root (*Arum triphyllum*), also known as *Jack in the pulpit* (Rhode Island), and *wake-robin* (New Eng.).

(2) A Western root (*Psoralea esculenta*), used as food by the Sioux Indians, and otherwise known as *pomme-blanche* and *pomme-de-prairie*.

**Infare.** A wedding reception, the housewarming given by a newly married couple.

Still provincial in England and Scotland.

Also, *infair*.

**Influence.** Advantage, over another person, in sense of influence (pull) of politicians.

**Inglor.** A cant word for a horse cheat or swindler.

**Injunct.** Legal slang, for "to issue an injunction," to command.

**Ink-slinger.** In newspaper parlance, any professional writer for the press, especially a reporter. The term is, however, now generally applied contemptuously to raw hands.

**Ins.** Persons in office, those hoping to get in being the *cuts*.

**Inside.** A variant of *bottom*, often used adjectively in sense of reliable. "The *inside* facts," i. e. trustworthy facts.

**Inside of.** In common use for within, in less time than. . . . " *Inside of* three hours."

**Inside track.** *To be on the inside track* of an undertaking, is to be in a position to derive advantage therefrom, to be on the safe side.

**Institute.** A convention, a meeting. Farmer's' institutes, lasting two or three days, with lectures and discussions, are especially very common at the West.

**Institution.** A practice, or habit; a permanent or essential part of any system. "Electrocuting is now an *institution* in the State of New York."

**Interment.** A funeral, or burying.

**Intervale.** In New England, a name given to low or alluvial lands enriched by overflowing rivers.

In the West, same are known as *bottoms*, *bottom-lands*, or *river bottoms*.

**Into.** (1) Used for in. "There is good land *into* that farm. (New Jersey and New York.)

(2) With the exception of; short of. "A dollar *into* ten cents. Six miles *into* a quarter." A qualifying contraction used in Connecticut.

**Involvement.** State of being involved; entanglement.

**Inwardness.** That which is beneath the surface; the real interest or purpose.

The real object aimed at; its exact drift.

**Irish potato** (*Solanum tuberosum*). The popular name of the common potato, to distinguish it from the native "Sweet" or "Carolina" potato (*Batis edulis*), akin to the "convolvulus."

So called because introduced by the Irish, and used in Morse Gazetteer, 1797, s. v. Kentucky.

**Iron City.** The city of Pittsburg, Pa., from its enormous iron manufactures.

**Island.** In the prairie regions, a grove or cluster of trees surrounded by prairie on every side, and so called from its resemblance to a wooden island in the sea.

**Issuance.** The act of publication, sending out, or delivering.

**Istle** (Mex. *ichtli*). In Texas, the strong fibre taken from the long leaves of the "Agave rigida," and which serves to make sisal hemp.

Not to be confused with *iztle* (q. v.).



**Item.** (1) In newspaper slang, a point of information for the press ; a portion of news or literary matter.

(2) A secret and unfair information at card playing.  
See *give item*.

**Itemize.** (1) To make, or prepare for printing a report of an information.

(2) Among business men, to divide a total into its constituent parts.  
To make a list of ; to collect ; to write an account of a transaction.

**Itemizer.** (1) A reporter ; a penny-a-liner.

(2) One who makes an abstract ; a précis-writer.

**Ivory-nut** (*Phytelephas macrocarpa*). The Corosso nut of commerce, from the ripe fruit of which exudes a fluid largely used in the manufacture of vegetable ivory.

Also, *vegetable-ivory*.

**Ivy.** A name erroneously given to the laurel, in the South.

See *American ivy*.

**Ivy-bush.** A hairy faced man ; one with thick hair, long and bushy beard and moustache.

**Iztle** (Mex. *itzli*). In Texas, a sort of obsidian used by the Indians to make arrow points, knives, etc.

## J

**Jab.** To strike, stab, or thrust ; to handle roughly.

A Western term, popularized by pugilists.

**Jacal**, hah'-cal (Mex. *xacalli*, a straw hut). A peculiar dwelling, common in Texas and the formerly Spanish States, consisting of a rough hut built of stakes driven into the ground, and made weather-tight with fillings of clay.

**Jacana**, ha-cah'-nah (Mex.). In Texas, a tropical bird of the genus "Parra," found along the north banks of the Rio Grande.

**Jack.** An abbreviated form of jackass-rabbit.

**Jack (to).** Amongst ranchmen, to brand an unmarked yearling or maverick.

**Jackass-rabbit** (*Lepus callotis*). A tiny rabbit of Texas and the Rocky Mountains region, so called from its very large ears and long, slender legs.

Also known as *black-tailed hare*, *jack-rabbit*, *mule-rabbit* and *Texan-hare*.

**Jack-dandy.** An impertinent fellow, who besides is short in stature.

**Jack-in-the pulpit** (*Arisæma triphyllum*). The Indian turnip, whose root, boiled in milk, constitutes a valuable adjuvant in the case of coughs.

In Connecticut, it is called the *one-berry*.

See *pomme blanche*.

**Jack-leg.** A black-leg, a lawyer whose record would not be regarded in a desirable light.

**Jack-oak** (*Quercus nigra*). The barren oak of botanists, otherwise called *black-jack*.

**Jack-pot.** Said at game of poker, when the game cannot be opened except by a player who holds a pair of jacks or better.

Also, the accumulated bets in a game of poker.

**Jacksonites.** Said of the followers of general Andrew Jackson (1821-32). Their opponents were called *Adamites*.

**Jack stones.** The old English game of "dibbs," played with five small stones, or with same number of bones taken from the knees of a sheep.

**Jade.** A cant word for a long term of imprisonment, what in England is called a "stretch."

**Jag.** (1) A parcel, bundle, or load, among descendants of Puritans in the East, esp. lower New-Jersey and Long-Island. "A *jag* of hay or wood." So quoted by Halliwell, and still provincial in North and Middle of England, esp. Norfolk.

(2) A decided and emphatic drunk, i. e. a load of drink, more than one can carry.

**Jagger-wagon.** In New Jersey, a light, open farm-wagon used on the road for light work.

**Jake.** A rough, uncouth country fellow.

**Jalma,** hal'-mah (Sp.). In the formerly Spanish States, a pack saddle.

**Jamboree.** A spree; a noisy frolic, even sometimes bordering upon a disturbance of the peace.

**Jam-up.** Beyond comparison; capital, or prime; the pink of perfection. Equivalents in English slang are "slap up" and "bang up."

**Japanned.** Said of one who is alleged to have been converted by a prison chaplain.

In English University slang, "to japan" is to ordain, the allusion being to the black garb usually worn by the clergy.

**Jaquima,** hah-ke'-mah (Sp.). The head-stall of a halter, used in Texas and California for breaking wild horses.

**Jay.** (1) A countryman or greenhorn ; an unsophisticated person.

(2) A New York synonym for a dude or masher, the allusion being in this case to the plumage of the biped.

**Jayhawkers.** (1) A term applied, during the Kansas troubles of 1856, to bushrangers and guerillas, then perpetuated during the Civil War, and subsequently borne by political marauders and pillagers in general.

The term is doubtless derived from "jayhawk" (a ferocious bird, delighting in killing from mere love of sport), and is said to have first come from Australia, where it was originally coined to mean a thief by nature, who could be also, according to occasion, a murderer and pillager.

(2) A nickname given to the inhabitants of Kansas.

**Jeff Davis-boxes.** A facetious name given by the Confederates, during the Civil War, to their creaking, ill-built army wagons.

Also, *musical boxes*.

**Jell.** To harden, as of jelly. "The jelly doesn't *jell*."

**Jerk** (Sp. *charqui*, dried beef). (1) Meat dried in the open air.

(2) Meat which has been cut in thin strips, and dried over a fire or in the sun.

**Jerk (to).** To dry meat in the open air.

**Jerks.** A term applied to the convulsive paroxysms, which have been a marked feature at many monster gatherings of religionists.

Also, *jerking*, or *jerky exercise*.

**Jerky.** A roughly made vehicle, which is, as its name implies, a regular "bone-shaker."

**Jersey blue.** The color of uniform worn by Jersey troops before the War of the Revolution.

**Jersey-tea** (*Ceanothus americana*). A herbal decoction, known, as implied by the name, in New Jersey.

**Jetée** (Fr.). Among French-Canadian lumbermen, a place on the bank of a river where logs are heaped up upon the snow and ice until spring-time, when they are carried down by the waters.

**Jew (to).** The earlier editions of "Webster's Dictionary" contained the verb "to jew," and defined it "to cheat," "to play with," etc. At the request of a number of influential Israelites the word was eliminated from the book. As a matter of fact, however, the word had no connection with or reference to the followers of the Mosaic faith. It was derived from the French *jeu* and *jouer*, which means "to play with," "to cheat," etc. ; but its orthography had become corrupted to "jew." It did not appear in subsequent editions of the work.

**Jibe.** To agree with ; to harmonise ; to go well with.

**Jicote**, he-co'-tay (Mex. *xicotli*). In Texas, a ground bee, the sting of which is very painful.

*Jicotera* (he-co-tay'-rah), the nest of the *jicote*.

**Jig**. A kind of spoon-bait ; an artificial squid for trolling. (New-Eng.)  
On river St Lawrence, a *spoon-hook*.

**Jig (to)**. To play truant from school. (Nfld. N. B. and N. S.)

**Jigger**. (1) One of the many names of the seed-tick, or chigre of Kentucky.

(2) In New England, a small fishing vessel, so called, it is said, from its peculiar manner of moving through the water, closely resembling that of the ill-famed "jigger" or sand-flea.

(3) A small measure used by bar-keepers.

(4) The bridge, or rest used at billiards.

(5) In Connecticut, gig, sulky.

**Jigger (to)**. To move uneasily ; to fidget. (South-West.)

Evidently an amplified form of "to jig," meaning to dance in a lively manner.

**Jiggered**. In parts of New England, not sound minded, having a screw loose.

Also, *jiggery*, *jigger-head*.

**Jiggling-board**. A spring-board, such as is used for diving and athletics.

From "jig," in the sense of quick motion.

**Jilote**, he-lo'-tay (Mex. *xiloll*). In Texas, an immature ear of corn.

**Jilt**. A cant word for a woman accomplice of a thief, who entices the victim and occupies his attention whilst he is being robbed.

**Jimberjaw**. A protruding lower jaw.

Also, *whapper-jaw*.

**Jim-jams**. Delirium tremens. Said to have originated in Kentucky.

Also applied, figuratively, to distorted views of men and things.

The contracted form, *jams*, is also often used.

**Jim-slinger**. In parts of the South, a hard blow.

**Jim-swinger**. A name sometimes given, in the West, to a long tailed coat, especially a "Prince Albert."

**Jingle-brains**. A wild, haram-searum kind of fellow.

**Jocoque**, ho-co'-kay (Mex. *xococ*). In Texas, butter-milk.

Also, *jocoqui*.

**Joe-Pye weed** (*Eupatorium purpureum*). A medicinal herb used by an Indian, called Joe-Pye, in the treatment of typhus fever. Known in Maine and surroundings.

**Jog.** A projection, or deviation from a straight line or even surface.  
A contracted form of "joggle," meaning a piece of projecting stone introduced into a joint.

**John.** A common name, in the United States, for a Chinaman.  
Also, *John Chinaman*, and *Johny*.

**John Collins.** An iced drink, made of Old Tom gin, with a mixture of lemon, sugar and soda-water.

**Johnnies.** In parts of the West, a popular name for violets.

**Johny.** A nickname applied, during the late Civil War, to the Confederate soldiers by those of the Union armies.  
Also, *Johny-Reb*.

**Johny-cake.** A cake made of unleavened Indian meal, mixed with milk or water. The real Johny cake should be baked on the earth.

**Johny-jump-up.** The heart's-ease, or violet.  
Also, *Johny-jumper*.

**Joint** (Sp. *junta*, a collection of persons). (1) An opium-smoking den or gambling-house.  
(2) Any resort of bad repute.

**Joker,** At game of euchre, an additional (53d) card, ranking as the highest trump.

**Jornada,** hor-nah'-dah (Sp.). A name given, in the South-West, to a land measure, i. e. as much land as may be ploughed in one day. Also, a dreary waste or arid tract of country.  
In Spain, *jornada* means, more specifically, a day's journey.

**Jorra,** hor'-rah. In Texas, any female domestic animal that is sterile.  
The name may come from *horro*, designating, in Cuba, tobacco which does not mature well.

**Josh.** An inhabitant of Arkansas was thus known in the rebel army during the Civil War.

**Josh (to).** To hoax, to chaff, to "roast" a person; to make fun of him.

**Juberous.** In parts of the South, timid, timorous. Also, dubious, doubtful.

**Judas tree** (*Cercis canadensis*). A small ornamental tree, with peach like flowers.  
Also called *red bud*.

**Judges of the plains.** Men appointed, in cattle-raising districts, for the purpose of settling all disputes which may crop up at gatherings of cattle-men, or "round-ups."

The phrase is a literal translation of the Spanish "Jueces del Campo."

**Judy.** A fool, a simpleton. "To make a *judy* of oneself" is, to put it mildly, "making an ass of oneself."

**Jug.** A cant word for a bank.

In English slang, a prison of any kind.

**Jug-breaking.** Committing a burglary at a bank.

**Jugful.** *Not by a jugful*, by no means; not by a great deal.

Equiv. in Eng. slang: "not by a long shot."

**Jug money.** To hide away, evidently the nearest approach to banking known to the majority of thieves.

**Jump.** To abscond, to decamp surreptitiously.

To *jump bail*, to abscond.

To *jump one's bill*, to leave an hotel without payment.

**Jump a claim.** To occupy by force a land or mining claim, rightfully belonging to another.

See *claim-jumper*, *bounty-jumper*.

**Jumper.** (1) One who takes a squatter's claim.

Also *claim-jumper* (q. v.).

(2) In the North and North-West, a rude kind of sleigh made of two elastic poles on which a box is fastened.

**Jumping-off-place.** (1) The destination of one's journey.

(2) The end of a road or railroad.

Also, *jump-off*.

*Jumping-off-places* formerly designated the confines of civilization, the ever shifting termini of railways being thus for a while typically known.

**Jump the blind.** In the West, to steal a ride on the platform of a baggage-car.

**Jump the cut.** To cheat at cards; to so manipulate cards when cutting that the result is to give an unfair advantage to the one cutting.

**Junk.** (1) Old iron, rags, or other rag material.

Hence, also, *junk-dealer* and *junk store*, for what in England are known as marine stores and marine store dealers.

(2) In New England, a substitute for "chunk," meaning a fragment of any solid substance.

**Junk-bottle.** The common, dark bottle, used for beer and malt liquors generally.

## K

**Kakawi.** See *cacaoui*.

**Kamas-root** (*Camassia esculenta*). A variety of the *Indian turnip* called by the early French hunters *pomme blanche* or *pomme des prairies*, and very extensively used as food by the Digger Indians.

**Katey.** A burglar's tool for picking locks.

**Katoose** (Ger. *getöse*). In New England, a din, a tumult, and in fact any unpleasant noise heard suddenly.

Also, *katowse*.

**Katydid** (*Cyrtophyllum concavum*). A species of grasshopper, so called from the peculiar noise which the male makes in autumn towards evening, by means of the membranes of its wing-covers, and which is easily interpreted as meaning *Katy did*, the answer being, in children's views, *Katy didn't*.

**Kearnylites.** Followers of Dennis Kearny, a Communist who once gained some notoriety at the time of the Anti-Chinese agitation, in San Francisco.

**Keel-boat.** A long, slender boat, of graceful build, admirably adapted to pass over shallow places, and which was formerly often seen on the Mississippi and its tributaries.

**Keeler-tub.** In New England, a pan or tub for washing dishes.

Also, simply a *keeler*.

**Keel over.** Of nautical origin, and meaning to capsize, to upset.

Also, figuratively, to collapse ; to succumb to sickness or old age.

**Keel up.** Figuratively, to recover oneself ; to come back to one's senses.

**Keener.** Said, in the West, of a shrewd, sharp man. "He's a *keener*."

**Keeping-room.** In New England, the living-room, or common sitting-room next to the parlor.

Still provincial in England.

**Keep one's eyes peeled.** To be on the alert, to have one's wits about one. We owe this phrase to the vigorous speech of the West, from the huntsman or pioneer, on the plains, having had once to depend largely, for success or safety, upon keenness of sight and untiring watchfulness.

Also, to *keep one's eyes skinned*.

To *keep one's trigger eye on one*, to keep close, and perhaps, suspicious watch of another.

To *keep tab*, to keep tally or count ; to score.

**Keet.** A name given in some localities to the guinea-fowl, simply from its peculiar and unpleasant note.

Also, *Guinea-keet*.

**Kellock** (Old Eng.). A small anchor in use on fishing smacks, and mentioned by Forby.

Provincial in England, in some small sea-ports.

Also, *kellick*, *killock*.

**Kennebunker.** In Maine, a name given to the valise in which lumbermen store their clothes, when they go into camp for the winter.

**Keow.** The common pronunciation for cow, in the New-England States. Still provincial in Essex, Norfolk, and Sussex counties, England.

**Ketch.** The old English sound and spelling of to catch, still prevalent in New England and as far south as Virginia.

That of the pens that he can muche and ketzhe....

(Chaucer, *Troilus and Cresida*.)

Also, to *kotch*, especially in Virginia.

**Ketchy.** In New Jersey, said of changeable weather.

**Kettereen** (Old. Eng.). A two wheel chaise, such as were used in colonial times.

Also, *kittereen*, *kittern*.

Possibly the word is the "cateran" of the New English Dictionary, which has the spelling "kettrin" for 1768.

A two wheel chair, commonly call'd a kittern, compleat, made in London. (Boston News-Letter, Aug. 29, 1751.)

**Kettle.** In New England, a tin-pail; a dinner-pail.

*Sugar-kettle*, the open boiling-pan of old, now entirely superseded.

**Key-Stone State.** The State of Pennsylvania, from the fact that when the names of the original thirteen States were arranged archwise in their geographical order, Pennsylvania occupied the central position.

The great importance of Pennsylvania, due to its extent, wealth, and immense manufacturing interests, makes the name Key-Stone also quite appropriate in a higher sense of the word.

**Kibblings.** Small fragments of fish used as bait on the banks of Newfoundland.

Among Gloucester fishermen same are called *slivers*, from to *sliver*, meaning to cut or rend lengthwise.

**Kick.** In the Southern States, the equivalent of the English to "jilt."

Also, to object, to protest.

**Kicker.** Among politicians, one who revolts against party discipline.



**Kid.** (1) A common name for a small boy or girl.

(2) In New England, a large box, on fishing vessels, into which fish are thrown as fast as they are caught.

**Kill** (Dutch *kil*, small stream, or creek). (1) A channel or arm of the sea.

(2) A stream, equiv. to the *brook* of New England.

*Kaatskill Mountains*, so called from a picturesque brook arising in their bosom.

*Kill van Kull*, or simply the *Kills*, channel separating Staten Island from Bergen Neck.

*Schuylkill* (hidden creek).

**Kill (to).** (1) In political parlance, to neutralize votes, or to defeat a measure through counter-votes or opposition.

Also used colloquially, with general meaning of to defeat, to nullify, to obstruct.

(2) To do a thing thoroughly. "To dress, to dance to *kill*."

**Killdee, Killdeer** (*Oxiechus vociferus*). A small aquatic bird of the plover kind, so called from its very sharp and piercing note.

**Killhag** (Ind.). A wooden trap used by the hunters of Maine, Canada, and the North-West.

**Killick.** In New Jersey, a small anchor.

**Killing-time.** A Southern term for the early winter; literally, the killing-time for swine, which in former days was a time of overflowing abundance and great rejoicing.

**Killy.** A small fish of the genus *Fundulus*, especially abounding in the "kills."

Also, *killy-fish*, *mummachog*.

**Kindle.** To light, in sense of lighting a fire.

In the United States, a fire is first *built* and then *kindled*, whilst in England it is laid and afterwards lighted.

**Kindlings.** Broken wood used for lighting fires.

Also, *kindlers*.

See *light-wood*.

*Kindlings* is still provincial in Suffolk, England, for fire-wood.

**King.** A large employer of capital and labor; one who exercises an undoubted preeminence in any particular trade or industry. "A cattle *king*, a railway *king*," etc.

**King-beat.** In newspaper parlance, exceedingly important news which have been obtained in advance of other papers.

**King-pin.** The tallest pin at skittles or ten-pins.

Hence also, by analogy, the chief or superior.

**King's ex** (abb. of King's excuse). A call used by children to stop a game for a moment.

In playing base, when a boy falls down, and to keep from being caught, he usually says: "King's ex," which serves him as a protection.

**Kini-kinik** (Ind. Alg. *kinne-kanik*, designating a "mixture," probably from the two Ojibway words *nin kininigegi*, meaning "I mix"). The inner bark of the "*Cornus stolonifera*," or Red Osier, which is finely chopped and grated, and used as a mixture or substitute for tobacco. This bark, when dried and smoked, has very much the flavor of tobacco, but is more acrid. Although nearly limited to the Indians and voyageurs, the term is now occasionally used in English-speaking Canada, chiefly by traders, and also among Canadian children to whom the use of tobacco is interdicted. They then go to the swamp and make *kini-kinik*.

The word also serves to designate a preparation of tobacco, sumac-leaves and willow-twigs, two thirds tobacco and one of the latter, gathered when the leaves commence turning red.

See *red sumac*.

**Kink**. (1) A "hitch" in any undertaking. A metaphorical extension of a "kink" (accidental knot) in a rope or cord.

Hence also, *kinky*, for troublesome, excentric.

(2) A pain. "A *kink* in the back," i. e. lumbago.

**Kinry**. In the South, sometimes used for relatives, kindred.

**Kip** (1) A bed.

(2) A dull witted person.

(3) In New Jersey, young chicken.

**Kiskitomas** (Ind.). The peculiar Indian name often given to the nut of the hickory. Literally, it means a nut that may be cracked with the teeth, and Rasles gives, for the Abenaki, *nesekouskadamen*, i. e. "J'en casse avec les dents."

Descendants of the Dutch settlers who inhabit New Jersey, near city of New-York, have corrupted the word into *Kisky-Thomas* nut.

**Kite**. Chief of a gang of thieves.

**Kite-flying**. To lead a mob or party.

**Kiting** (abb. into kitin'). Moving rapidly. "To go a-kitin."

**Kitty-corner**. To cut off a corner by going across lots.

*Kitty-cornered*, diagonal, set diagonally.

**Knack**. Familiarity, habit of staying near.

**Knee high to a mosquito**. Very small, very short. A phrase often used in speaking of a person whom one has known from infancy.

Also, *knee high to a duck, to a toad, to a grasshopper*.

**Knickerbockers.** Descendants of the old Dutch settlers in New York State and city.

Also, a nickname for the inhabitants of city of New York.

**Knife (to).** To stab ; and, metaphorically, to do some one harm ; to stab him in character if not in person.

**Knifing process.** The cutting down of rates ; economization.

**Knights of labor.** A powerful organization of working-men, having branches all over the Union, and connected with every known trade.

Another large organization of the kind is the *Knights of Pythias*.

**Knob.** Originally a term limited to certain peculiar round hills in Kentucky, formed by the weathering of the soft sandstones and shales composing them, but now meaning in the West any rising or hill.

**Knobby.** Hilly, accidented.

**Knobite.** A dweller in the knob formations of Kentucky.

**Knob-lick.** A deposit of alum and other salts, at the base of a knob, to which animals resort.

**Knock down.** To embezzle ; to appropriate surreptitiously.

**Knock down and drag out.** In pugilistic circles, a fight carried to extremities, as when one of the contestants has to be carried out of the arena.

**Knocked-up.** Sense of "enceinte," and never used, as in England, to mean fatigued.

A lady describing herself as "knocked up," indelicately confesses to a condition sometimes affecting young married women, but not usually spoken of.

**Knock out the wedges.** To desert ; to leave in an embarrassed condition.

Prob. borrowed from the phrasology of building operatives, as, when the wedges being knocked out, a scaffolding loses all its strength.

**Know-nothings.** A secret association, somewhat outlined after the manner of the Native Americans, and which, from 1852 to 56, cut a considerable figure in American politics. They finally ran their ship on Slavery Rock, and it foundered.

The *Know-nothings* got their name from professing to know nothing when questioned as to the objects of their order.

The following articles of the platform of the Know-nothings contain the gist of the whole :

- 1 Repeal of all naturalization laws.
- 2 None but native Americans for office.
- 3 A pure American common school system.
- 4 War to the hilt on Romanism.

**Know-nothingism.** The doctrines of the Know-nothings.

See *Hindoos, Native Americans, Sams.*

**Knucks.** A game at marbles in which the winner shoots at his adversary's knuckles.

**Kone.** Spurious money, either paper or specie.

**Koniacker.** A coiner of counterfeit money.

**Kootoo.** To bow ; to make courteous obeisance.

The exact Chinese synonym of the Hindoo "salaam."

Also, to *kotow*.

**Kooyah** (Ind.). A name applied by the Indians of Oregon to the *tobacco-root* (*Valeriana officinalis*), and of which they make a bread called *supale*, after they have baked the root for two days in the ground to deprive it of its poisonous qualities.

Also, *kooyah root*.

**Kriss-kringle** (Ger. *Christ-kindel*, the Child-Christ). A sadly mutilated form, for the Child Christ, on whom children are wont to rely for their gifts on the Christmas-tree.

**Ku-klux-klan.** Originally, a secret association of Southerners, organized in 1866 for the purpose of preserving order during the period of lawlessness immediately following the war, but which afterwards outgrew the design of its founders, and often resorted to murder and the vilest outrages against negroes and settlers from the North.

This curious name is an alliterative corruption of the Greek "kuklos" (a circle), the "klan" being added to enhance the strange jingle of consonants.

Other names were *The Invisible Empire, The Knights of the white Camellia, The Knights of the Golden Circle,* etc.

Hence, also, *Ku-kluxer*.

## L

**Labor**, lah-bore' (Sp.). In Texas, any field of small size, not definite, and, more specifically, a land measure of 177 acres.

See *milpa*.

**Labrador tea** (*Ledum palustre* and *latifolium*). A substitute for tea in the North-West.

**Lace horse.** In Texas, a trig, smirk little horse.

**Ladies' tresses** (*Neotti atortillis*). In the South, an herb, so called from its flowers bearing a supposed resemblance to curls.

**Ladino**, lah-dee'-no (Sp.). In Texas, used as a noun for a vicious, unmanageable horse, full of cunning and tricks.

In Spain, the word is only used adjectively in sense of cunning, crafty.

**Lady**. A generic term applied, in the United States, to women of all stations, even to those acting in a menial or dependent capacity.

The principle, underlying the misuse of this word, in America, is of course praiseworthy, as the causes are laid deep down in the roots of Democracy, but the results are none the less deplorable.

See *gentleman*.

**Lafayette** (Leistormus obliquus). A delicious sea-fish, so called from the fact, it is said, of having arrived in the waters of New-York bay precisely at the same time that General Lafayette paid his last visit to America.

The Lafayette fish abounds mainly on the coast of New Jersey, where it is much relished. Hence, also, its other name of *Cape May goody*.

**Lagniappe** (pron. lanny-yap). In New Orleans, a gratuity of the given-away-with-a-pound-of-tea kind; the equiv. of the thirteenth roll in a baker's dozen.

"A nice, limber, expressive, handy word," says Mark Twain.

See *pilon*.

**Lagoon** (Fr. *lagune*). In the Gulf region, a name given to the many bays, inlets, or channels, between the islands and the main coasts.

In Texas, the Sp. word *laguna* (lah-goo'-nah) is used in preference.

**Lake-State**. The State of Michigan, from its being surrounded by four of the large Northern lakes: Michigan, Huron, Superior, and Erie.

**Lam** (Old Eng.). To thrash, to beat, to drub, to maltreat.

This word, partially colloquial in America and still provincial in Yorkshirê, England, is of very old English parentage and has long had a recognized place in English literature. In a north-country ballad of the time of Edward VI, one line runs: "They *lammed* him and bammed him." The term may also be found in Marlowe, and we read in Beaumont and Fletcher:

One whose dull body will require a *lamming*.

(A King and No King, Act. V, sc. 3.)

**Lamantin**. An herbivorous cetacean, otherwise called *manatee* or *sea-cow*, measuring some six or seven feet in length, and inhabiting the mouths of rivers opening on the Gulf of Mexico, and parts of South America.

**Lamas**. In the slang of the gaming-table, chips and tokens representing in value about \$25, \$50, and \$125 each.

**Lambaste.** To thrash, to maltreat. An elaboration of to lam, "evidently combining" says DeVere, "the two effective agencies of lamming and basting into one formidable operation."

Also, to *lambaste*.

**Lambasting.** A beating, a thrashing.

**Lamb's-quarter** (*Chenopodium album*). A popular Southern name for a well-known herbage.

**Land-broker.** A cant word for an undertaker.

**Land-grabber.** An applicant for grants of public lands; one who, under the forms of law, or in defiance of them, gets possession of the public domain or of the property of individuals.

The great majority of *land-grabbers* well deserve their unenviable name, through the frequent impudence of their demands and the pertinacity with which they pursue their end.

**Land-office.** The general office, at Washington, in which is vested the disposal and control of public lands.

**Land of steady habits.** The State of Connecticut, from the alleged staid deportment and excellent morals of its inhabitants.

**Land warrants.** Authorizations, issued by the General "Land Office" at Washington, entitling the possessors to take up new and uncultivated land.

**Lane.** In the South, a common name given to all roads with fences on each side.

**Lang.** In New Jersey, the coupling-pole of a wagon.

**Lap.** In New Jersey, a "hank" of thread.

**Lap (to).** To throw on one's lap. For instance, newsboys throwing prize-candies and magazines in the cars, are said to *lap* them.

**Lap-tea.** An informal afternoon meal, where sitting at table is dispensed with.

**Lariat** (Sp. *la reata*). A lasso made of a horse-hair rope, or of a twisted or braided raw-hide, and used on the plains of the West for catching and tethering cattle and horses.

Also, *reata*, which comes then very near being the original Spanish word, without the article.

**Lariat (to).** To stake out, or tether with a lariat.

Also, to *lariat out*, to *stake*.

**Larigo** (lar-ee'-go (Sp.)). In the South-West, a ring at each end of the "cinch" and forming part of the huge Mexican saddle.

**Larrigan.** In the North, a kind of moccasin made of prepared oiled leather, and used chiefly by lumbermen.

**Larrup.** In the West, molasses.

**Last of pea-time.** *To look like the last of pea-time*, to be hard up; to have a forlorn or desolate appearance; to be in the decline of years, when one's opportunities of usefulness are fast passing away.

A most happy and picturesque phrase, as every one knows who has seen the draggled vines and sallow pods that hang forlorn upon the half-bare, ragged brush.

Also, *last of pea-picking*.

**Latigo**, lah'-te-go (Sp.). In the South-West, a strong strap or strip of leather used for tightening the "cinch" or girth in packing.

Chiefly used in the plural form *latigos*.

**Lave** (Fr. *lève*, imperative tense of *se lever*, to get up). A familiar cry for "get up!" among mountaneers and hunters of the Far West, and with which the guide, or chief-hunter of a party, rouses his companions from their short slumbers.

**Law (to).** To go to law. (Western.)

**Law-day.** In the thinly populated districts of the West, the day on which an itinerant magistrate administers the law.

**Lawyer.** (1) The uniform name, in America, of the person who, in England, would either be called a solicitor or a barrister, as the case might be.

(2) The black-necked stilt (*Himantopus nigricollis*), a small bird which has been thus wittily nicknamed, by New-Jersey people, "on account of its long bill."

Also called *longshanks* and *tilt*.

(3) A fish of the Northern rivers (genus *Iota*), so called, we are told by the fishermen there, "because he ain't of much use, and the slipperiest fish that swims." (J. Hammond, *Wild Northern Scenes*.)

The *lake-lawyer* (*Amia*) is the *mud-fish* of Western waters.

**Lay.** (1) A sailor's word, meaning a share in any enterprise. For instance, whalers are generally paid "by the lay," i. e. in proportion to the success of the voyage.

(2) Terms or conditions of a bargain; price. "He bought his goods at a good *lay*."

This sense of the word is quite in keeping with its etymological signification, being akin to the meaning contained in the phrase "on this *lay*." We cannot, moreover, agree with Bartlett, in regarding the word as being probably a contraction of "outlay," the idea conveyed by it being more abstract than that of a sum of money expended.

**Lay one out.** To defeat; to secure an advantage; to get the better of one.

**Leader.** The length of fine hair or gut, connecting a fishing line with the hook.

Also, a *snell*.

**Leaf.** In Newfoundland, the brim of a hat.

**Leary.** In Newfoundland, faint, weak.

**Leather.** A cant word for a pocket-book.

Hence, to *pull off leather*, to steal pocket-books or purses.

**Leatherheads.** A nickname given of old to policemen or watchmen.

**Leather-wood** (*Dirca palustris*). A species of maple-tree, with flexible branches and a tough, leathery bark, growing in the Northern States.

Also called *moose-wood*, from the fondness of the moose for its leaves, and in New England *wicopy*.

The *leather-wood* is the "bois-de-plomb" of the French-Canadians.

**Lecompton Democrats.** A name applied, in 1857, to the members of the Democratic party who supported the pro-slavery constitution adopted at Lecompton, Kansas.

**Legaderos**, lay-gah-day'-ros (prob. Sp. *legadura*, ligature). A Spanish-Mexican term for stirrup-straps, which, in the Mexican saddles, are veritable leg-guards.

It has been also suggested that the word, instead of having a Spanish origin, is merely a corruption of the English "leg-guards."

**Leg-drama.** A ballet.

**Leg-shop.** A theatre, where stage dancing forms a prominent feature of all entertainments.

**Leg-stretcher.** To take a *leg-stretcher*, to take a drink, to walk up to the refreshment bar.

This phrase is said to have originated in the stage-coach days, when passengers were wont to alight, at inns or hotels on the road, with the professed purpose of stretching their legs, this innocent relaxation always invariably ending, so to say, by having a dram (drink) at the bar.

**Legua**, lay'-goo-ah (Sp.). In Texas, a league, or land measure of 4428 acres.

**Leg-work.** In newspaper parlance, a reporters' word to characterize a task in which there is more running than writing.

**Lena**, lané'-yah (Sp.). In Texas, any kind of fire-wood or timber.

**Lenter.** A corruption of "lean-to," meaning an addition to a house.



**Let out.** To commence ; to begin ; to make a statement or explanation.

**Let slide.** To let anything pass.

*Let it slide*, let it go, don't trouble. An expressive archaism revived in the United States.

Therefore " *paucas pallabris* ;" let the word slide : *sessa* !

(Shakespeare, *Taming of the Shrew*.)

**Let up.** To release ; to let go.

Hence, also, a *let up*, meaning a break, a relief, as when a stringency in the money-market disappears.

Of pugilistic origin.

**Levee** (Fr. *lever*, to rise). An old Creole word of Louisiana used to designate the vast earth-mounds raised on both sides of the Mississippi, to protect the rich alluvial lands which are on a lower level than the bed of the river. The term has been subsequently extended to all banks used as wharves, like the famous *levee* of New-Orleans.

Also, *levy*.

*Leveeing*, constructing *levees* on a river bank.

**Level.** Used in many phrases, the common origin of which is to be found in mining phraseology.

*To do one's level best*, to go to the full extent of one's ability.

*To do things on a broad level*, to do things on a base of stability and fixedness.

*To make an offer on a broad level*, to name the lowest price possible ; to propose the most reasonable terms or conditions.

*To be level-headed*, to be practical, shrewd ; to have a well-balanced mind.

**Leverworscht** (Ger. *leberwurst*, liver sausage). In Pennsylvania, a pudding, so-called to distinguish it from the *blootworscht* or blood sausage.

**Levy.** A contraction of elevenpence, and a local word formerly designating, in some Southern States, a Spanish silver coin of the value of 12½ cents.

Both term and coin are now obsolete.

**Lewisites.** A local New-York term applied to the supporters of Gov. Lewis, in 1804. The *Lewisites* were then the "swell" party of the day.

**Liberals.** This term acquired a renewed significance from a movement headed by Carl Schurz in Missouri, in 1870, which resulted in a division of the local Republicans into Liberals and Radicals, the latter being equivalent to *stalwarts* as more recently used. (Farmer.)

Also used in combination with other party names.

**Liek.** (1) Effort, exertion, stroke. Hence, *big licks*, used adverbially in sense of vigorously, as in the slang phrase: "To put in *big licks*," i. e. to make great exertions, to work hard.

(2) A locality abounding in rock-salt and saline springs, so called *lick* from the fondness of both wild and domesticated cattle for salt.

Also, *salt-lick*.

*Big bone lick*, a locality in Kentucky, abounding in saline springs, where immense numbers of animal remains have been found.

**Liek (to).** To chastise, to defeat, by beating or thrashing. This old word, perhaps anterior to the Tudor period, retains in the United States the full force it already had, under its quaint form of "to lyeke," in Thomas Harman's "Caunting Dictionary," published under Queen Elisabeth. The root, here, is evidently "licitor," the name of the official who carried around the "fasces" to thrash the rabble into a proper respect for the Roman magistracy.

**Lickity-split.** Very rapidly, at full speed.

Also, *lickity-sritch*.

**Lie around loose.** To lounge; to loaf; to be out of place.

The Americanism is, here, chiefly in the use of "around" for "about."

**Lift.** In newspaper parlance, the taking of a big exclusive story from another newspaper, and printing enough of it "to save ourselves."

**Lift hair.** See to *raise hair*.

**Light and shut.** In New England, said of the weather, when the sun peeps out at intervals.

**Light-bread.** In the South and West, often heard for wheat bread, in distinction from "bread," which means corn-bread.

**Lightning bug.** The fire-fly, that flits about so picturesquely in the hot summer evenings.

**Lightning-express.** A through express; a quick travelling train.

A Western variant is *greased-lightning*.

**Like all wrath.** A Southern simile for vehemently, violently, angrily, generally employed to express great emphasis.

**Likely.** Used adjectively in sense of respectable, worthy of esteem, sensible. A *likely* man, a man of good character or accomplishments.

In England, the true English sense of the word is that relating to external appearance, i. e. handsome, well made, prepossessing, pleasing to the eye: A *likely* man, a *likely* woman, meaning a fine, healthy, proper man or woman, although not necessarily pretty or handsome in the face.

**Limbs.** A euphemism for "legs" sometimes used by young ladies and ultra-refined people. Sensible persons, however, have little part in such prudery.

This squeamishness may also be found on the pages of many British writers.

.....and the nice proportion of her arms promised the truest symmetry in her *limbs*.

(FIELDING, TOM JONES, book IV, chap. II.)

Their *limbs* are of great strength, but not their arms.

(DR KNOX, Races of Men, p. 272.)

**Limekill** (Old Eng.). In New England, often heard for "limekiln."

So used by Gayton, in his "Festivous notes on Don Quixote," and therefore a survival.

**Limit.** At poker, a condition made at the beginning of a game, limiting the amount of any single bet or raise.

**Limonillo**, lee-mo-nee'-yo (Sp. dim. of *limon*, lemon). In Texas, a low herb of the composite family (*Actinella odorata*), used as a perfume plant.

**Limpsy.** In New England, limp, weak, flexible.

Also, *limsy*.

**Linemen.** A railway term designating the plate-layers.

**Line riding.** A plainsman's term, for patrolling, in winter time, the *lines* or beats on which cattle are stationed.

**Lines.** Reins.

*Handle the lines*, equiv. of to handle the ribbons or reins.

**Lingua Franca.** Often applied, in the United States, to the Chinook jargon of the North-West and the Pacific coast.

In Europe, those two words designate the corrupt Italian employed as the language of common intercourse in the Mediterranean and the Levant.

**Linguister** (pron. linkister). In New England, a talkative busybody.

Doubtless derived from the sailor's usage of the word, i. e. linguist, interpreter.

**Linter.** In Massachusetts, a cattle feeding-trough.

**List, Listing.** Terms used in cotton cultivation, and signifying to make ready plots of lands.

Also, to make beds or raised terraces.

**Lister.** In Connecticut, one who schedules or makes out lists of cattle or other property.

**Little Giant.** A nickname applied to Stephen A. Douglas, from being small of stature but of great intellect. At the time of his nomination for the Presidency, in 1859, campaign clubs, calling themselves "Little Giants," were organized and uniformed after the manner of the *Wide-awakes*.

**Little Mac.** The army nickname of Gen. George B. McClelland, which became especially conspicuous in 1864, when the general was the Democratic candidate for the Presidency.

**Little Magician.** The nickname of Martin Van Buren, eight president of the United States.

Also, *Young Hickory*.

**Little-misery.** At game of Boston, the loss of the whole twelve tricks, after having discarded a card which is not to be shown.

Also, known under its French name *petite misère*.

**Little Rhody.** The State of Rhode-Island, from its being the smallest State in the Union. An appellation lovingly used, although it must be said that the compliment is somewhat marred when the term *Gun-Aints* is applied to its inhabitants.

**Live.** (1) Quick, active, energetic, lively, as a *live* dealer, meaning one who is alive to his business.

(2) In activity, as a *live* wire, meaning a wire which is conveying an electric current.

In sense of "lively" now very rarely heard in England, and mostly entirely superseded there by "quick".

**Live-oak** (*Quercus virens*). The evergreen oak.

**Live out (to).** To be at service; to live as a domestic servant.

**Lizards.** A nickname applied to the inhabitants of Alabama.

**Llano, lyah'-no** (Sp.). In the South-West, a Spanish-Mexican term designating a treeless level steppe or plain.

**Loaf.** To lounge here and there, to remain idle. To lead the life of a vagabond, or idle loungeur.

**Loafer.** An idler, or dawdler. A vagabond, or idle loungeur, the American equivalent of the *lazzarone* of Naples.

It has been suggested that *loafer* must be derived from the German *laufer*, which in Germany means a man irregular or unsettled in life. But Mr. Richard Grant White, whose authority on all matters pertaining to Americanisms is wellnigh uncontested, is of opinion that as "loafer" was not uncommon in the N. Y. newspapers of more than sixty years ago, the time of its birth is against its suggested German origin; and the place is equally against its derivation, alleged by some other etymologists, from the Spanish "gallofero," a wandering beggar.

Mr. White believes that it is simply a corruption of "low feller," which, becoming naturally in speech "low-f'er," was, when it came to be written, spelled as naturally *loafer*.

**Loaferishly.** In a way becoming the true loafer.

**Loan.** To lend.

In England, "loan" is a noun and not a verb; it is the thing lent.

"To loan" has been used by Chaucer, and Todd has also found the word in Huloet (1552) and Langley (1664), two little known English writers of the 16th and 17th centuries. These examples, however, are merely of misuse, whilst the "Americanism" consists in the turning of the misuse into common usage.

**Lobby, Lobbyist.** A person frequenting the approaches to legislative halls, and seeking to influence legislation by argument or bribery.

Also, *lobbyist*.

**Lobby (to).** To work among a legislative body; to wait outside the chambers of legislatures, so as to use influence for passing of certain measures.

**Loblolly-bay** (*Gordonia lasyanthus*). An ornamental tree, with a luxuriant foliage, flourishing in the maritime parts of the Southern States.

Also called *holly-bay*.

**Loblolly-pine** (*Pinus taeda*). A variety of pine, whose timber is much used for building.

Also known as *white-pine* (Virginia), and *old-field-pine* in the South.

**Lobseouse.** In New Jersey, an awkward, hulking fellow.

**Local.** In newspaper parlance, an article of local interest only. Often also the reporter whose special duty it is to collect local news.

Hence, also, to *localize*, to prepare local news for the press.

**Locate.** To place; to settle in a particular spot or position.

This verb has now also forced its way into England.

**Location.** A plot of land, chosen for a dwelling.

**Locator.** In American land law, one who selects places or settles in a particular spot.

**Lock, stock and barrel.** The whole of any important matter. A figurative expression borrowed from sportsmen, and which it is strange that our much-shooting cousins across the water have left for us to invent.

**Lock-eye.** The game of hide-and-seek.

**Loco-focos** (Sp. *loco*, crazy ; *foco*, flash). A nickname of transient currency and importance, first applied in 1835 to a numerous fraction of the Democratic party, and afterwards to the whole party itself.

The political application of the term, which at the time had been coined as an advertising catch, by a New York dealer, for some newly invented friction-matches, came about in this wise.

A division having arisen in the Democratic party as to the nomination of a candidate, a grand row took place at Tammany Hall, during which the gas was put out. One of the sections—the Equal Rights party—had been provident enough to bring some “loco-focos” matches with them, and the room was relighted in a moment. They were dubbed, in consequence, *Loco-focos*, and the name was shortly afterwards affixed to the whole party.

**Loco-weed** (Sp. *loco*, mad, crack-brained). A venenous plant of the West, which, in poisoning cattle, produces all the ordinary symptoms of insanity.

Hence, to be *locoed*, i. e. showing signs of madness, a phrase at first only applied to cattle rendered insane by eating *loco-weed*, but now also extended to human beings.

**Lodge** (Fr. *loge*, a hut). The family of the Indian, whenever not the “braves” only, but women and children are all included.

**Log (to)**. Literally, to fell trees and convert them into logs.

**Log-cabin**. A cabin, made of logs, generally unhewn.

*Log cabin and hard cider*, a catch-phrase of the Presidential campaign of 1839, in allusion to the antecedents of the candidates. Miniature log cabins and cider barrels were then drawn in procession through the streets.

**Log-canoe**. A canoe hollowed out of the trunk of a tree.

Also, *dug-out*.

**Logger**. A lumber-man, a wood-cutter.

**Logging-camp**. The place where trees are cut.

Also the cabin or hut occupied by those engaged in logging operations.

**Logging swamp**. In the State of Maine, a generic term for any spot where pine-trees are being felled, from the finest pine-trees usually growing, in that State, in swampy places.

**Logie**. (1) In the West Indies, esp. Demerara, an open shed for storing the refuse of the sugar cane.

(2) Among cod-fishermen, fish of inferior quality. Mostly used in plural *logies*.

**Log-rolling.** (1) In the lumber regions, the rolling of the logs to the river, after they are felled and trimmed. It is then customary for the men of different logging-camps to assist each other in turn in this work, which is the hardest incident to their business.

(2) A political term applied to the system of cooperation by which one member will vote for the pet measure of another, in return for a like service, after the manner of lumbermen assisting each other in rolling their logs.

See *pipe-laying*.

**Logy** (Dutch *log*, prosy, dull). Heavy, slow, stupid. A term especially applied to men, and which comes very near the meaning of a "bore." A *logy* preacher, a *logy* talker, etc.

**Lolly.** In Newfoundland and the Canadian Maritime provinces, a word designating soft ice along the shore. The term is especially well known in connection with the crossing of the ice boats to Prince Edward Island.

**Loma** (Sp.). On the Mexican frontier, and in the formerly Spanish States, a term designating a flat-topped hill or ridge.

*Lomita* is a diminutive of the above.

**Lone Star State.** The State of Texas, from the flag of that State bearing a single star in its centre.

**Long-bit.** Formerly, a defaced twenty-cent piece.

**Long-Knives.** An Indian term for white men, in allusion to their swords, and dating from the bloody struggles of the middle of the eighteenth century.

**Long-moss** (*Tillandsia usneoides*). A name given, in the South, to a phenoganeous plant, hanging down in festoons from the branches of live-oaks and eypresses, and closely resembling masses of moss.

**Long on** (Old Eng.). A survival of old English usage, still heard in New England, and meaning "occasioned by."

**Long sauce** (Old Eng.). The old English usage of calling vegetables *sauce*, or more commonly *sass*, is still preserved in the New-England States, where *long sauce* means beets, parsnips, carrots, etc. and *short sauce* is used in speaking of turnips, onions, and other similar bulbs.

**Long sugar.** Molasses were formerly so called in North Carolina, from their ropiness.

In New England, the same product was long known under the name of *long sweetening*.

Also, *long sweetening*.

**Long-Tom.** An apparatus used by miners in the washing of gold.

**Long-walnut.** See *white-walnut*.

**Looed (to be).** A simile derived from the card table, having same meaning as "euchred," i. e. defeated or "worsted" in an undertaking.

**Look-out.** An assistant to the dealer at faro. An attendant who, at the gaming-table, is supposed to see that matters are conducted fairly, and that no mistakes are made.

Also, *looker-out*.

**Loon.** (1) A foolish fellow. "Stupid as a loon."

Evidently derived from the Scotch "loun," or "lown," given in Jamieson with above signification.

Also, *looney*.

(2) The common name of the Northern diver, or *black-swimmer* (*Colymbus torquatus*).

As *straight as a loon's leg*, a common simile, derived from the bird in question.

**Lop.** In college slang, to curry favor. Used as both noun and verb.

**Lope.** A long, easy gallop.

Also, to *lope*, meaning to leap, to run.

Both terms, which are mostly confined to the West, are probably only new adaptations of "lope" and "lopen," the old English forms of the preterite of "leap."

**Loper.** In New Jersey, a worthless, intrusive fellow.

**Lop-lolly.** Sometimes heard for careless, slouchy, as applied to one's gait and dress.

**Lot.** A piece of land, in the sense of any piece, portion, or division of land. Thus *city-lots*, *cemetery-lots*, *house-lots*, etc.

The equivalent, in England, is "plot."

**Louisiana Tigers.** A nickname applied, during the Civil War, to a corps of Confederate sharpshooters.

**Lowbelia.** A corruption of lobelia (*lobelia inflata*).

See *highbelia*.

**Low-downer.** In North Carolina, a wrecker.

**Lucivee** (Fr. *loup-cervier*). A corrupted form standing for the wild-cat, or lynx of Maine (*Lynx canadensis*).

Also, *lucyree*, *lucyver*.

**Lugs.** Ground leaves of tobacco, when prepared for market.



**Lumber.** Timber sawed or split for sale.

In England, lumber means cumbrous and refuse articles which are hindrances unless they are put away, ; whence all large dwelling-houses have a "lumber-room." In America, lumber meaning timber, is so rooted in our commercial speech that there is no hope of its displacement. Indeed the perversion of lumber has not only injured that word, but has almost driven timber out of use.

**Lumberer, Lumberman.** (1) A man employed in the timber trade.

(2) A man employed felling trees in a "lumber" shanty.

**Lumber State.** The State of Maine, from its extensive lumber-yards.

Also, *Pine-Tree State*.

The law associated with nicknames does not seem, for the inhabitants of Maine, to have yet resolved itself into a real sobriquet, but no doubt it will, in course of time.

**LummoX.** Colloquial in the United States for a heavy, stupid fellow.

Provincial in the east of England.

Also, *lunk-head*.

**Lumper.** In parts of New England, a common, unskilled laborer.

Lumper is still provincial in England for a dockhand, a stevedore.

**Lunch.** Besides its legitimate sense of "mid-day meal," the word *lunch* is often applied, in the United States, to an improvised meal eaten at any time, by day or night. In England, they would, in that case, perhaps say a "snack" or merely "something to eat." The American use of the word is, however, found in Sterne's "Sentimental Journey."

**Lunge.** An abbreviated form of *muskelunge* (see *maskinonyé*) used in Canada.

**Lyceum.** A lecture hall, or literary association, often enriched with a library and various collections.

**Lynch.** To inflict punishment, without the form of law.

The origin of the term is wrapped in mystery, none of the explanations already put forward having proved thus far conclusive.

**Lyncher.** One who "lynches," i. e. inflicts punishment according to *lynch law*.

**Lynching-bee.** A gathering of lynchers, for the purpose of lynching a criminal.

**Lynch law.** A kind of rough and ready justice, much in vogue in certain wild and lawless communities of the country.

## M

**Machine.** (1) A fire-engine.

(2) A synonym for any undertaking or enterprise.

(3) A railway official's term for a locomotive.

**Machine politician.** An opprobrious epithet applied to a politician who yields implicit obedience to the lead of his party.

**Mackinaw** (Ind. Alg. *misi-makinâk*, or *mikkînâk*, meaning big turtle).

A heavy blanket originally used in the Indian trade, the chief post of which was at Mackinac.

**Macreuse** (Fr. C.). A species of wild duck of the Gulf of St Lawrence.

**Madam.** (1) A title applied to women moving in respectable society, especially ladies of old age and high social position.

(2) In accordance with an old English custom, a title given, especially in New England and Virginia, to mothers-in-law who have married daughters of their own name, so as to distinguish them from those daughters.

*Marm* is a familiar corruption of "madam," peculiar to New England.

(3) Among negroes, in slavery days, *madam* was also a common name for a master's wife; the term is still in use, but slightly changed in meaning.

**Mad-dog** (*Scutellaria lateriflora*). A once much renowned weed for the cure of hydrophobia.

Also known as *skullcap*, from the shape of its flowers.

**Madre**, mah'-dray (Sp.). In the South-West, used adjectively for principal, main. "Sierra *madre*, acequia *ma'tre*, etc."

**Madrona**, mah-dron'-ah (Sp. *madrono*, strawberry-plant). In Texas, a shrub of the heath family, bearing yellowish red berries, of a sub-acid taste.

**Madstone.** A round stone of dark color, to which, in the South, a superstition is attached that, if applied to the part bitten, it is a specific cure for hydrophobia.

**Maguey**, mah-ghay'-e (Sp.). In the South-West, a species of aloe (*Agave americana*).

Also called *century plant*.

**Mahala.** In California, a vulgar name for an Indian squaw.

**Mahonists.** The followers, in 1878, of general Mahone, of West Virginia, who seceded from the ranks of the Bourbon Democrats.

**Mahoumet.** In French-Canadian folk-lore, a name given, by the old "coureurs des bois," to an evil genius having passed a secret agreement with an *adocté* (q. v.).

**Maldenland.** In Virginia, a plot of land forming the dower of a wife, and the right to which reverts at death to her family.

**Mail.** (1) Letters and papers received from the post office or sent to it.  
(2) The train bearing the post.

In England, mail properly means the bag in which letters and papers are carried, or, when signifying the letters and papers themselves, is always used with the connotation of ocean passage, same as freight; that is, an ocean-mail.

**Mail (to).** To post letters or papers.

**Mailable.** Suited for conveyance by post.

**Mail-car.** A special car, provided for the conveyance of the mail or post.

**Mail-stage.** The stage or coach which carries the mail.  
In England, called a mail-coach.

**Maine law.** An enactment, passed about the year 1844, in the State of Maine, which provided that no one, save an officially licensed agent, should engage in the sale of intoxicating liquors.

Hence, also, *Maine lawite*, an advocate of the principle of Maine law.

**Main-guy.** The chief or leader of any organization.

**Majorano**, mah-ho-rah'-no (Sp. *mejorana*, sweet marjoram). In Texas, a low shrub of the sage family, bearing small bluish or purple flowers.

**Make.** In parts of Pennsylvania inhabited by Germans, and in conjunction with other words, *make* is used in many senses, as follows :

*Make awake*, to waken. "Make me awake at five."

*Make hot*, to become heated. Used impersonally. "We were talking politics, and it made hot."

*Make one's self*, to go. "Make yourself home at once."

*Make out*, to extinguish. "Make the light out and go to bed."

*Make shut*, to shut. "Make the door shut."

*Make to*, to close. "Make the window to."

**Make a shippy.** To make a sheep's face. Said of a child who twists up his face when about to cry.

**Make come.** Amongst Western hunters and plainsmen, to bring down game with the rifle; to make a dead shot.

**Make good.** At poker, to deposit in the pool an amount equal to any bet previously made. This is done previous to raising or calling a player, and is sometimes called seeing a bet.

**Make meat.** Among frontiersmen, to dry thin slices of animal flesh for future use.

**Make (on the).** On the look-out for what one can get.

**Make one's Jack.** To carry one's point.

A phrase borrowed from poker, and used as an affirmation of success.

**Make the fur fly.** To breed a disturbance; to make a display of temper; to proceed to blows, etc.

**Make things hum.** To look alive; to make every thing alive about oneself; to present a scene of untiring activity.

From the humming of the bee, which insect is regarded as the emblem of restless industry.

**Make tracks.** To change one's quarters, with the connotation of getting away in a hurry.

Also, to *pull up stakes*.

**Making-up.** In newspaper parlance, the process of arranging the masses of type in the form. The result is also spoken of as a *make-up*.

**Male help.** An expression applied indiscriminately to any kind of employment for men, whether it be that of a professor, a servant, or an errand-boy.

**Mammee apple** (*Mammea americana*). A well-known West Indian fruit, with a yellow flesh, and which sometimes grows to the size of a man's head.

**Mammee sapota** (*Lucuma mammosa*). A fruit, not so large as the mammee-apple, with reddish flesh and one large polished seed.

See *sapote*.

**Mammy.** In the South, an affectionate term given by children to negro nurses and old servants.

Also sounded and written *mammer*.

The old English sense of "mammy" is grand-mother, from the gypsy "mami."

**Manada**, man-ah'-dah (Sp.). In California, a word especially applied to breeding mares, whilst elsewhere it is generally used when speaking of a herd of cattle or drove of horses.

See *remudo*.

**Mananosay** (Ind.). The soft-shell clam (*Mya arenaria*), especially abundant on the shores of Narragansett bay.

In Maryland, called *maninose*.

**Man-eater.** In Pennsylvania, and the Eastern States, a generic name for various species of salamanders, or lizard-shaped animals, with smooth, shiny, naked skins.

Another name, in same regions, is *spring-keeper*, whilst in the West, all those species are known as *ground-puppies*, *water-dogs* and *water-puppies*.

**Mango.** A green musk-melon, stuffed with various condiments, and then pickled.

**Mango humming bird** (*Trochilus colubris*). The hum-bird or hummer.

**Mangosteen.** A variety of the East Indian mango, which flourishes in the West Indies.

**Manifest destiny.** As specially applied to American politics, this phrase originated with Mr. Webster, who asserted that God intended America should be a Republic.

**Manitou** (Ind. Alg. *manito*). A spirit, either good or bad, among the Indians. Also a fetish, a ghost, a symbol, and even sometimes a god. Indeed, the term can be made to stand for an infinity of meanings, as it is well known that the Indians have a *manitou* for every cave, waterfall, or other commanding object in nature.

The word is, in the United States, a descendant of the coast Algonkin, represented by the old New England and Virginian dialects, although the same form, used in French Canada, is there also derived from the Indian without the intervention of English.

**Maple-honey.** The molasses-like residuum, after boiling, of the sap of the sugar-maple tree.

Also called *maple-molasses*, and *maple-syrup*.

**Maple-sugar.** A sugar obtained from the sugar-maple tree.

**Marabou** (Fr. *marabout*). A negro cross between a mulatto and a griffe in the proportion of  $\frac{1}{2}$  black blood, and  $\frac{1}{2}$  white.

**Marble (to).** To move off, to depart with alacrity—the result of persuasive argument, moral or physical. (Pennsylvania.)

Also, to *marvel*.

**Margot** (Fr. C.). The gannet or solan goose of the Gulf of St. Lawrence region.

In Cartier's relation there is mention of birds, which he says "we called "godets" and "margaulx."

**Mark.** A cant word for the pit of the stomach. "To hit one in the *mark*."

**Marmette** (Fr. C.). The guillemot (*Uria ringvia*) of the Gulf of Saint Lawrence region.

**Marm school.** A school kept by a woman, with a certain connotation of inefficiency.

In England, and also in Connecticut, such schools were known formerly as "dame-schools."

*School-marm*, the colloquial designation for a woman having charge of a *marm-school*.

**Marooning.** In the South, to go on a picnic, on the shore or in the country, for several days at a stretch.

Evidently derived from maroon, which is a universally accepted term, in all English speaking countries, for a runaway slave or negro.

**Marsh hen** (*Rallus virginianus*). The popular name of the Virginia-rail, or *mud-hen*.

Also a name applied to the *clapper-rail*, a salt-water bird of the Gulf of Mexico.

**Marsh--tortoise.** See *mud-tortoise*.

**Marshy milk.** In Charleston, S. C., a term applied to the milk of a cow feeding on the marsh grass, which gives the milk a peculiar marshy taste.

**Maryland end.** In Maryland and Virginia, the curious name given to the hock end of a ham, the thick part being called the *Virginia end*.

Both terms are said to be derived from the supposed rough resemblance, to a ham, of the contour lines of the States of Maryland and Virginia.

**Mary Walkers,** Women's trousers, made after a modified form of this article of male attire, which had been adopted by Dr Mary Walker.

**Masa,** mas-'sah (Sp.). In Texas, the cornmeal after it has been ground in the *metate* (q. v.).

**Mash** (Old Eng.). In the South, the common pronunciation for "marsh." For instance, the "mash-market" of Baltimore derives its name from the fact that it was built upon low, marshy ground.

An old English form is "mas," and "mash" is found in various English dialects.

**Mash.** A school girl's term for a street flirtation.

**Masher.** A species of the "dude" variety, who rudely ogles women on public thoroughfares, in a belief, mostly always mistaken, that his charms are irresistible.

Hence to *mash*, to ogle, or "to be spoons on" where the object of such attention is an unwilling victim.

**Maskeg** (Ind.). A word of Cree origin designating, among the French-Canadians, a marsh or swamp.

**Maskinongé** (Ind. Alg. *muskelunge*, the ugly fish). Among the French-Canadians, the common name of the "Esox estor," the largest pike known in America, abounding in the Northern lakes and rivers, and sometimes reaching, in the upper lakes, a length of five feet and a weight of eighty pounds.

In the Algonkin dialect of the Lake of Two Mountains, province of Quebec, the name of the fish is *mackinonge*, and among the English-Canadians the forms *maskinonge*, *maskalonge*, *muskalunge*, and *muskelunge* are heard.

**Maskouabina.** See *bear-berry*.

**Mason and Dixon's line.** The boundary line, following the 40th parallel of the North latitude, between Pennsylvania on the south and the adjoining States of Maryland and W. Virginia, and so called from its having been surveyed, in 1763-66, by two Englishmen of the names of Mason and Dixon, in order to settle a dispute between the States in question.

The phrase was especially often echoed through the country, at the time of the first controversies about the abolition of slavery, as far back as 1820, and it was afterwards, during a long period, looked upon as representing roughly the dividing line between the Free and Slave States.

**Massa.** A negro vocative for any white man.

In slavery times, a term especially used for "master."

**Mast** (Old Eng.). In the Middle region and in the South, used for nuts considered as food for swine, squirrels, etc.

See *shack*.

**Matachias** (Fr. C.). A word of Algonkin origin designating, among the French Canadians, ornaments of beads, feathers, etc. in use among the Indians.

Also used in sense of tattooing.

This word is very old, being quoted in Champlain, Lescarbot, Sagard, etc.

**Match.** In parts of New England, to kindle, or set fire to, by the application of a match. "To *match* a fire, a candle, etc."

**Materialize.** To become visible; to put in an appearance.

The term, at first restricted to spiritualists, and meaning the act by which a spirit is supposed to make itself visible, became shortly afterwards associated in the public mind with putting in an appearance of any kind. Thus, a person failing to keep an appointment, or so on, would be said not to have *materialized*.

Hence, also, *materialization*.

**Maul.** To prepare; to make. (Southern States.)

Probably derived from the "maul," in England a woodcutter's tool or mallet for preparing wood.

**Maul and wedges.** The equivalent of the "bag and baggage" of England.

**Maverick.** In Texas, a name applied to an unbranded or unmarked yearling steer, from one Samuel Maverick, formerly a rich cattle-raiser of San Antonio, who was notoriously negligent in attending to the branding of his own cattle. Other persons put their own brands upon them, and thus became their owners.

**May-apple.** See *swamp-honeysuckle*.

**May blob.** A New-England name for the cowslip.

**May-pop.** A Southern name for the passion flower.

**Meadow.** (1) Damp grass land, with an implication of inferiority, although in parts of New England it means land devoted to the hay crop, thus coming very near to the sense, as implied in England, of any land which can be mowed.

(2) Along the coast of New Jersey, a word applied to a salt marshy tract used for grazing and "shingling."

**Meadow-grass.** Inferior hay, in distinction from that which grows on uplands, and which is called "English hay."

Also, *meadow-hay*.

**Meamelouc** (Fr. *mameluk*). A name given to the offspring of a white and a metis, containing  $\frac{1}{16}$  of black (negro) blood.

The following grade is *demi-meamelouc*, the offspring of a white and meamelouc, with  $\frac{1}{32}$  of negro blood.

See *mulatto*.

**Mean.** (1) A term of contempt applied to one who is bad-tempered, poor in character, or is doing something contemptible to the detriment of his friend.

In England, they would say "stingy" or "close," and indeed, in the United States, the word always carries also with it a certain sense of stinginess.

*Mean enough to steal acorns from a blind hog*, the nec plus ultra of consummate meanness.

(2) Worthless, bad, or poor in quality.

**Mean-white.** A term applied in the South, in slavery times, and especially by negroes, to a low-class white person who was too poor to possess any slaves, and who lacked alike landed property.

A more contemptuous term for this class of people is *poor-whites*, *poor-white folk* and even *white trash*, and *poor-white trash*.

Those whites, being generally intemperate and improvident, and eschewing labor of all kinds, have been during a long while, and are still more or less to-day, a stumbling block in the arduous task of "reconstruction" of the South.

**Meat.** A general term for animal food of all kinds: *beef-meat*, *deer-meat*, and even *sheep-meat*.



**Meat biscuits.** Compounds of animal food (generally beef) and flour baked in the form of a biscuit.

**Meat chamber.** A refrigerating room on board ocean going steamers.

**Meat in the pot.** A Texan term for a revolver or rifle, from its being often the only means by which a man can replenish his larder, literally put "meat in his pot."

Other variants are *peace-maker*, a sarcastic commentary on the proverb that "Short reckonings make long friends;" *pill-bottle*, a dispenser of physic, warranted easy in action and sure in effect; *pill-box*.

**Meat market.** In England, a butcher's shop.

**Meat victuals.** In parts of New England, the meat course at dinner.

**Meaty.** In newspaper's reporter's slang a *meaty* person is one who, when interviewed, can furnish a good amount of "copy."

**Mecate**, may-cah-tay (Mex. *mecatl*). In Texas, a word for a rope, made either of hair or the fibre of the agave or "maguey."

**Mechoacan** (*Convolvulus panduratus*). The Indian name of a plant growing in sandy soil all over the United States, and whose large root possesses medicinal virtues.

Also called *man-of-the-earth* and *wild potato vine*.

**Meech, Meeching** (Old Eng.). This word, which is a true archaism of very respectable lineage, still survives in New York and New England, in sense of skulking, sly, sneaking, or underhand.

Hamlet calls the murderer in the dumb-show "miching mallecho," and the other Elisabethans use it too, and all with one vague connotation of illicit love-making:

Sure she has

Some *meeching* rascal in her house.

(BEAUMONT and FLETCHER, *Scornful Lady*, v. 1)

Such special connotation, however, was not "classical," and has not been preserved in the American use. The word is the middle English "michen," which has simply the sense of secret or underhand, and is so used in the "Romaunt of the Rose."

*To go meeching about*, to go in a mean or underhand way.

**Meeting.** An assembly for divine worship, and often also the place of worship itself, in which sense it accords with English usage.

**Meeting-house.** A place of worship of Methodists, Quakers, etc. in Puritan times.

**Meet with a change.** To be struck under conviction.

See *conviction*.

**Meet with the rubbers.** Often heard in New England, in sense of to meet with misfortune, ill-luck.

Also, *pass through the rubbers.*

**Melon-fruit** (*Carica papaya*). The papaw; a West-Indian fruit which is also called the tree melon.

**Mend (on the).** Often heard for convalescent, to be convalescent.

Also, *on the mending hand.*

**Mend fences.** Said of a politician elected to congress or other office, when he returns home occasionally to heal up differences among his supporters, and to prepare for a renomination.

**Menhaden.** See *bony fish.*

**Merchandise (to).** To engage in trade; to enter into commerce; to transact business of any kind.

Bacon, in his Essay on Usury, uses the word several times:

For were it not for this lazie trade of usury, money..... would in great part be employed upon *merchandising.*

Also, sometimes, to *merchant.*

**Merchant.** Anyone who engages in trade, from a wholesale dealer to a petty shopkeeper or hawker.

**Mesa, mes'-sah** (Sp.). In the formerly Spanish States, a high plain or table-land.

A diminutive is *mesilla*, meaning a small table-land.

**Mesquite, mes-kec'-tay** (Mex. *misquilt*). A tree of the locust family (*Algarobia glandulosa*), abounding in the South and South-West, and whose pods are much liked by cattle and horses.

Also, *mesquit, muskeet.*

**Mesquit grass.** A nutritious grass of great vigor and beauty (*Stipa spata*), which is found on the Western plains.

**Message.** An official communication from the President to congress.

**Mestee** (Sp. *mestizo*). The offspring of a quadroon and a white, the proportion being  $\frac{1}{2}$  black.

Also, *mustee, metis.*

**Metate** (Mex. *metatl*). In Texas, a hollow oblong stone, used by Mexicans for grinding purposes, especially for grinding corn.

Also, sometimes, the instrument or pestle with which the grinding is done.

**Methy** (*Lota maculosa*). The burbot, a fish called *loche* by the French-Canadians.

**Metsel-soup** (Ger. *métzelsuppe*, from *metzeln*, to kill, to butcher). In Pennsylvania, and the Western States inhabited by Germans, a gift sent by farmers, in the killing season, to friends or near neighbors, and consisting of as much of the puddings and sausages they make, as is necessary for one meal.

**Mezcal** (Mex. *mexcalli*). In Texas and other formerly Spanish States, a spirituous liquor distilled from the bulb of the "maguey" after it has been baked underground.

**Michigouen** (Fr. C.). A word of Montagnais origin designating, among the French Canadians, a variety of parsley possessing a flavor much superior to that of our domestic species.

**Micky**. A sobriquet for a rowdy, a rough.

**Middlings**. A technical term in the pork-packing trade for that portion of the animal between the hams and shoulders. (Farmer.)

**Midget**. The sand-fly. (Canada and North-West.)

**Milchy**. In New Jersey, an adjective applied to oysters "in milk," i. e. just before or during spawning.

**Mileage**. An allowance made to members of Legislatures, for travelling expenses, to and from the seat of government.

Whenever such allowance is paid to members who are only supposed to have gone home, without having actually been absent, it is called *constructive mileage*. This is the case, for instance, when, one Congress having expired on the 3rd of March, all the members who "hold over," until the next day, are supposed to have all gone home and come back to Washington within the twenty-four hours elapsed.

**Mileage-ticket**. A ticket entitling bearer to travel a certain number of miles.

**Milk-ranch**. Sometimes heard for a dairy farm.

**Milk sleekness**. A dangerous disease peculiar to the saline districts of the West, and thought to arise from the detrimental effects of the soil and water of these regions.

**Mill**. An imaginary coin, representing the tenth part of a cent, or the one thousandth part of a dollar.

**Mill (to)**. To cockle, in speaking of cloth. A weaver's term, in the mills.

**Miller**. A large white moth or worm, infesting tobacco plantations, and exceedingly destructive in its ravages.

**Miller boy of the Slashes**. A nickname applied to Henry Clay, from his having, in his youth, tended a mill in a region known as "the Slashes," near his birth-place.

- Milpa** (Sp.). In Arizona and New Mexico, a land measure of 177 acres.  
See *labor*.
- Mind out.** Sometimes heard in sense of to take care, to look out.
- Mink** (*Putorius vison*). A species of the weasel kind, that burrows in the earth near water, and the fur of which is much esteemed.  
Also, *minc.*
- Mint-julep.** A concoction made of brandy, sugar, and pounded ice, flavored with mint.
- Mint-stick.** A peppermint sweetmeat, or stick of candy flavored with peppermint.
- Minute-men.** Militia men, or country troops, during the Revolution, whose engagement was that they should always be ready to march at a minute's notice.  
The word originated in Worcester, in 1774.
- Misery.** Often heard in the South in sense of pain, especially among negroes, to whose minds the term represents any feeling which they cannot definitely describe.
- Miss a figure.** To make a vital mistake; to so act that unchangeable results accrue therefrom.
- Mission school.** The American term for what the English call "a ragged school."
- Miss lick.** A stroke wide of the mark; the false blow of an axe. A Western backwood's term.
- Missouri compromise.** A name given, in 1820, to an Act of Congress, intended as a compromise between the two great sections which were then struggling, in Missouri, one to promote, the other to hinder the extension of slavery. By the terms of that act, Missouri was admitted into the Union as a slave-holding State, but with the provision that slavery would be prohibited in any State thenceforth to be admitted lying north of latitude 36° 30'.
- Mitasse** (Fr. C.). A word of Indian origin in use for legging, among the French Canadians.
- Mitten (to get the).** To be rejected or discarded by one's sweetheart.  
De Vere says the word ought to be "mittens," as the phrase is derived from the same use made of the French "mitaines," i. e. mittens which had to be accepted by the unsuccessful lover instead of the hand after which he aspired.
- Mitten (to).** To reject or discard a lover.
- Mix.** Not uncommon, in New England, in sense of muss, disorder, or what is called "mess" in colloquial English.

**Mixed ticket.** In politics, a "ticket" combining the nominees of different parties.

**Mizzy.** In Louisiana, a negro expression for the stomach-ache.

**Mobtown.** A name formerly often applied to the city of Baltimore, from its having been long notorious for the gangs of roughs and rowdies which infested its streets.

**Mocasson-fish.** In Maryland, a species of sun-fish.

**Moccasin** (Ind. Powhattan *mockassin*, *mohkisson*. Baraga gives the Otchipwe *makkisin*, and Cuoq the Algonkin form *makinin*).

A shoe made of a strong and soft leather without a stiff sole, and frequently ornamented more or less richly. In French Canada the same word exists in the same sense, and is absolutely engrafted there on the French language.

**Moccasin snake** (*Toxicophis piscivorus*). -A poisonous snake, brown with black bars faintly marked, like the black marks of wear and tear on the buff leather. (De Vere.)

**Moccasoned.** Said figuratively, in the South, for drunk, intoxicated, that is, "bitten by the snake."

**Mocker-nut** (*Juglans tomentosa*). The white heart hickory.

**Mocking-bird** (*Mimus polyglottus*). A native bird, so called from the inimitable mimic qualities with which it is endowed.

In some parts of the country, the *butter-bird* or *nine-killer* is confounded with the true mocking-bird.

**Mock-orange** (*Prunus caroliniana*). A small evergreen, bearing a resemblance to the cherry-laurel of Europe.

In England, mock orange is a name applied to the syringa.

**Mocuck** (Ind.). A large and peculiarly shaped cake of sugar.

**Mogote**, mo-got'-ay (Sp.). In Texas, a thicket or bush, with heavy undergrowth, where wild cattle is wont to take refuge.

In Spain, the word means principally an insulated rock at sea. Also, an isolated mountain.

**Moke.** In parts of the South, a negro, and, more specifically, a negro minstrel.

**Mokok** (Ind.). An Acadian word designating a marsh, a swamp, in the Maritime provinces of Canada.

**Molasses.** A product of the sugar cane, what in England is called treacle or golden syrup.

- Molly-cotton-tail.** A common name, in Virginia, for a rabbit.
- Molly-Maguires.** A secret society which, for a long period, prior to 1877, terrorized the coal regions of Pennsylvania, and which derived its name from the circumstance that in the accomplishment of their designs or murders the men were dressed as women.
- Momick.** In Pennsylvania, a bad carver. Obviously derived from "to momick," which is provincial in various parts of England in sense of to cut or handle anything awkwardly.
- Moniac** (Fr. C.). A sort of eider-duck (*Somateria mollissima*) of the Gulf of St-Lawrence region.  
Also, *monniac*, *moyac*.
- Monitor.** A name applied to war vessels with a revolving turret, from the first iron-clad vessel of similar construction so called by Captain Ericsson, a distinguished naval engineer.
- Monkey (to).** To play about; to toy with anything; to play malicious tricks.  
Also, *monkey around*.
- Monkey-business.** Tricks, such as those of boys at play; proceedings at once farcical and reprehensible. (Bartlett.)  
Also, *monkey-shines*.
- Monkey-spoon.** An old Americanism which, according to De Vere, appears to be the name of a spoon, bearing the figure of an ape carved in solid silver on the extremity of the handle, and given at the funerals of great people in the State of New York to the pall-bearers.  
Compare with the old custom of presenting apostle spoons at christenings, and the modern practice of presenting ordinary gold or silver spoons, etc. on like occasions.
- Monkey-wrench-district.** The 3rd congressional district of Iowa was so called in 1890, from its resemblance in shape to a monkey-wrench. It has often been cited, by Democrats, as a flagrant case of Republican gerrymandering.
- Monongahela** (a river of Pennsylvania). A generic name for American whiskey, analogous to Usquebaugh and Inishowen, designating Scotch and Irish brands.
- Monte.** A Spanish-Mexican card game of pure chance.  
Also often used, in Texas, as an equivalent of *chaparral* (q. v.).
- Monumental City.** The city of Baltimore, from the several fine monuments it contains; also from the fact of its having had alone, for a long time, monuments in his squares, before other cities had followed her example.

**Mooley.** A common name, especially in New England, for a cow. In Connecticut, it is distinctly a hornless cow.

Quoted in Halliwell as provincial in England.

Also, *muley*.

**Moondown.** The time of setting of the moon, a word formed in the same way as sundown.

Similarly, *moonrise*, the time of rising of the moon.

**Mooneye** (*Hyodon tergisus*). A fish of the herring kind, being called in some parts the "lake and river herring."

**Moon-glade.** A track of moon-light on the water; the soft and silvery track which moon-light traces on the water.

**Moonshiner.** A term applied, in the West, to makers of illicit whiskey, from they being supposed to carry on their operations under cover of the night.

A "moonshiner" is also one who evades the payment of excise on whiskey, and, similarly, any illicit whiskey is apt to be called *moonshine whiskey* or simply *moonshine*.

**Moose** (Ind. *mooswah*, meaning the "stripper" or "smoother" in the Abenaki dialect). A deer of immense size (*Alces Americanus*), weighing sometimes as much as 1200 pounds, and which is mostly found in the extreme north of New England and in the wilds of Canada. The name of "stripper," given to it by the Abenakis, comes from the animal's manner of feeding by stripping the young bark and the twigs from the lower branches of the trees.

**Moose-bird** (*Gamulus canadensis*). The Canada jay, a native of Maine.

Also called *whiskey jack*.

**Moose fly.** A venomous fly of a rusty brown color, which is especially common in Maine.

**Moose-wood** (*Dirca palustris*). A species of maple-tree, with a tough, leathern bark, so called from its being a favorite wood with the moose.

**Moose-yard.** That part of a forest occupied by a special herd or family of mooses.

**Mop-board.** In New England, the wash-board which extends around the floor of rooms.

In England, base-board.

**Morgan-horse.** A name given to a "strain" of horses, of great renown in sporting circles, from one Justin Morgan, of Randolph, Vermont, who was a famous breeder of the beginning of the present century.

**Morgue.** A slang word for a saloon where all liquors are sold for 5 cents.

**Mormons.** A politico-religious sect, whose most characteristic tenet is polygamy. The Mormon people also term themselves *Latter-day Saints*, and derive the word Mormon from the name of the pretended author of the "Book of Mormon," from the Gaelic and Egyptian languages, alleging it to be compounded of "mor," great, and "mon," good, or great good.

Hence, also, *Mormondom*, *Mormonism*, *Mormonites*.

**Mosey.** To leave suddenly, generally under doubt or suspicion.

This mysterious word, about which many etymologists have exercised their wits, is probably nothing more than a mere variety of *ramose* (q. v.) with the final vowel sounded and the first syllable lost.

To *mosey along with any one*, to agree with.

**Mosey sugar.** In Pennsylvania, a sweetmeat much liked by children.

**Moshay.** A Florida term for a keeper of bloodhounds.

**Moskoui** (Ind.). An Acadian word taken from the Micmac Indians, and designating the bark of which birch-canoes are made.

**Mosquito** (*Culex mosquito*). A well-known insect pest, with an insatiable appetite for blood.

**Mosquito-bar.** A net, placed round a bed, to protect a sleeper from the attacks of mosquitoes.

Also, *mosquito-net*.

**Mosquito-kawk.** In Louisiana, a name for the dragon-fly.

**Moss.** A cant name for money.

**Mossbacks.** A term applied, at the origin, to a subdivision of the Democratic party in Ohio, supposed to comprise all the old "fogies," as opposed to the "kids" or younger element, and now extended to mean old-time politicians and people behind the age.

A vivid allusion to the "moss-back," which is an alligator turtle, with a growth of moss-like algae on its back.

Also, *rock-rooted*.

**Mossybank.** (1) A variation of mossbunker.

(2) At the time of the Civil War, a name given to men who, to avoid conscription, fled to the woods and swamps.

**Mote.** In parts of New England, a sort of little pond or puddle in an old river bed.

**Moth** (genus *Tinea*). A name strictly confined, in the United States, to the well-known domestic pest, destroyer of woollen fabrics, furs, etc. all night-flying kinds being popularly and erroneously called *butterflies*.

Also, *moth-miller*.



**Mother of States.** The State of Virginia.

See *Old Dominion*.

**Motte** (Fr.). A grove or clump of trees, in the prairies.

Also called an *island*, by the contrast of its thick boughs with the vast ocean of waving grass surrounding it on all sides.

**Mought** (Old Eng.). The old preterite form of "may," now obsolete in England, is frequently heard in the South.

Yet mould with death, then chastise, tho' he *mought*.  
(Fairfax.)

**Mound.** A barrow or tumulus supposed to have been used, mainly for sepulchral purposes, by the early inhabitants of the country.

**Mound-builders.** A name given to the race who built the mounds found in large numbers in the valleys of the Mississippi and Ohio rivers, Mexico, Yucatan, etc.

**Mound City.** The city of St Louis, Missouri, from its being built upon the site of many artificial mounds, believed to have been Indian burial-places.

**Mountain-lamb.** In parts of New England, especially New-Hampshire, a common term for deer killed out of season.

**Mouse (to).** A variation of *to mosey* (q. v.), with a connotation of aimless or fruitless motion or action.

**Movey Star** (Fr. *mauvaises terres*, bad lands). An amusing corruption of the Fr. expression, meaning "bad lands."

The designation of "*mauvaises terres*" was first given by the early French settlers, in the districts west of the Missouri, to the jagged, sterile, alkali hills abounding in that region, and *Movey Star* still lingers in some of those localities.

**Mr Speaker.** In Texas, a revolver. A speaker, against whose rulings there is usually no appeal.

**Much.** Often used, in New England, as a synonym of good qualities, either in men or things. "Much of a man, of an idea, etc."

**Muck.** In mining phraseology, the top of the soil, over the gold-bearing gravel.

**Mucker.** In college slang, a youthful inhabitant of the vicinity not belonging to the college, i. e. a "towney."

**Muckrakes.** A slang political epithet applied to place-mongers, i. e. those who seek the "small change" of office.

**Mud-cat.** A species of cat-fish, of a muddy flavor, which attains an enormous size, and abounds in the waters of the Mississippi river.

**Mud-cat State.** The State of Mississippi, from the mud-cat, abounding in the waters of the Mississippi river.

The inhabitants are sometimes, also, humorously designated *mud-cats*.

**Mud-dabbler.** A small fresh-water fish.

**Mud-lizard.** In the West, a species of salamander, possessing many other "aliases."

**Mud-fish** (*Melanura pygmaea*). A mud-burrowing fish of small size, found on the Atlantic coast.

**Mud-Head.** A native of the State of Tennessee.

**Mud-hen.** In "bucket-shop" phraseology, a woman who dabbles in stock-gambling.

**Mud-lumps.** The mud banks which form at the mouth of the Mississippi.

**Mud-poke** (*Grus cinerea*). A species of crane, so called from its habit of resting on the mud, at the sides of streams, whilst engaged in catching fish.

**Mud-scoop.** A water-dredging machine.

**Mudsill.** Often used, figuratively, to designate the laboring classes, or substratum of society, from the "mudsill" originally denoting a timber laid down to form a foundation for a railway-track.

The word was also much used, formerly, by Southern people to express their contempt for Northerners, who were such "base mechanics" as to work for a living. It is now, however, very seldom heard in that connection.

*Mudsill clubs*, a name given, in 1858, in California, to associations of miners and working-men.

**Mud turtle** (*Sternotherus odorata*). A species of reptile, common throughout the States.

Other names are *marsh-tortoise*, and *mud-terrapin*.

**Mud-wallop.** To soil one's self with mud. To play in the mud when fishing.

**Mugwump** (Ind. Alg. *mukquomp*). An independent politician, and especially a deserter from his party. One who sets himself up to be better than his fellows, i. e. a Pharisee.

*Mugwump* was used as early as 1872, and the Indian "mukquomp" occurs in Eliot's Indian Bible to translate such titles as lord, chief, leader, duke, etc.

**Mulada**, moo-lah'-dah (Sp. *mula*, a mule, and suffix *ada*, expressing aggregation). In Texas, a drove or herd of mules.

**Mulatto** (Sp.). The offspring of black and white parents, although the term is more loosely applied, in the United States, to any one of those offsprings who has white blood in him.

Generally speaking, all persons with a "touch of the tar brush" are, in the States, called mulattoes.

**Mule-whacker.** A teamster in charge of mules.

**Muley saw** (Ger. *mühlen-sage*, mill-saw). A saw which is not hung in the gate.

Also spelled *mulay*, *moiley*, *muhley*.

**Mull.** In New England, to stir, to bustle, or to fume. A metaphor probably derived from "mulling" wine.

*To mull along*, to move sluggishly.

**Mumblety peg.** A game played with knives.

Also, *mummelty peg*.

**Mummachog** (Ind.). In Long Island Sound region, the popular name of the *barred killy*, or *killifish* (genus *Fundulus*).

**Mummick.** In Pennsylvania, to eat awkwardly and with distaste.

Also, to soil, as one's clothing.

Still provincial in England.

**Mung** (Old Eng.). This word, which is the preterite of the old English verb "ming," to mix — whence "mingle" — has been preserved here in all its purity and power, as in *mung news*, meaning confused (not false) or contradictory statements.

The original sense of "ming" is still retained, in Scotland, in the noun "mung" which means a porridge of two kinds of meal.

**Munroe Doctrine.** A doctrine originated by Mr. Munroe, the fifth President of the United States, and which may be briefly described as a theory that the American continent is no longer open to any attempt, on the part of European powers, to extend their jurisdiction. On the same principle, the United States also decline to meddle in the affairs of the Eastern Hemisphere.

**Mush.** A kind of hasty-pudding or porridge made of Indian meal boiled in water, and eaten either with milk or molasses.

In Hallamshire, England, "to mush" means to crush or pound very small, and from this our substantive may have originated.

**Music.** Fun; frolic; amusement.

Hence, also, *musical*, meaning amusing, and especially frequently heard in New-England. "I can't say it's *musical*."

**Musical-box.** A Confederate's term, for a creaking army wagon in use during the Civil War.

Also, *Jeff Davis' box*.

**Muskeg** (Ind. Otchipwe *maskek*, or *maskig*). A term in use among the English-speaking settlers of the North-West, especially in Canada, and designating a marsh, a swamp. The French-Canadian form, transmitted from the early voyageurs, is *maskeg*.

**Muskelunge**. See *maskinongé*.

**Musk-ox** (*Ovibos moschatus*). An animal inhabiting the hilly, barren grounds between the Welcome and Copper mountains, from the 63d or 64th parallel to the Arctic Sea, and so called from its flesh being tainted with a strong flavor of musk.

**Muskrat** (*Ondatra zibethicus*). A water rat, closely allied to the beaver, and smelling strongly of musk. The muskrat is especially hunted for its fur, which is valuable.

**Muskrats**. A nickname applied to the inhabitants of the State of Delaware.

**Muslin**. In some States, this word is synonymous with longcloth or calico-shirting, whilst in others, especially at the North, it is used for all thin, clear fabrics.

**Musquash root** (*Cicuta maculata*). A poisonous plant growing in swamps.

**Muss** (Old Eng.). A state of confusion; a noisy squabble; a row.

This old English term is defined in Nare's Glossary as "a scramble, when any small objects are thrown to be taken by those who can seize them," and it has moreover been used by several English writers of the 16th and 17th centuries, in a sense very much akin to the American meaning.

Like boys into a *muss*, kings would start forth.

And cry, Your will.

(SHAKESPEARE, Antony and Cleopatra.)

Bawble and cap no sooner are thrown down,

But ther's a *muss* of more than half the town.

(DRYDEN, Prologue to Shadwell's True Widow.)

**Muss (to)**. To disarrange; to cast into disorder; to rumple, to crumple. Also, to *mux*.

**Mussy**. Disarranged; disordered; tumbled.

**Mussy** (Dutch *morsig*). Smeary, dirty, nasty. For instance a mother, washing her child's dirty little hands, will say of them: "Too *mussy* in all conscience."

**Must**. In newspaper parlance, an article which requires to be published promptly is spoken of as a *must*. Evidently the sole relic of some sentence like: "This must go in to-night."

An intensive form is *dead must*, i. e. an article which cannot be kept out of the paper, on any pretext whatever.

**Mustafina.** A person in whom the proportion of black blood is one sixteenth.

**Mustang** (Sp. *mesteno*). The wild horse of the prairies, especially that of South-Western Texas. The mustang, which is very hard to subdue, is of Spanish and Indian breed, being descended from the stock introduced into America by the first Spanish colonists.

When young and untrained the mustang is also called a *cow-poney*.  
See *broncho*, and *cayuse*.

**Mustangers.** Men who catch and train mustangs.

**Mustang-grape** (*Vitis rotundiflora*). A grape, indigenous to Texas, carrying small bunches, and from which is made a wine somewhat similar to Burgundy.

**Mutton-head.** A stupid, or dull-witted person ; a *chowder-head*.

**Mux.** In parts of New Jersey, a synonym for disorder, confusion  
Provincial, in West of England, for dirt.

## N

**Nahoo** (*Ulmus alata*). A common species of elm, of peculiar beauty of form and foliage.

**Nagane** (Fr. C.). A word of Indian origin, designating, among the French-Canadians, a sort of primitive cradle which squaws tie over their back, and in which they carry their nurslings.

**Naked.** In Newfoundland and the Canadian Maritime provinces, often heard for pure, undiluted, as of tea without milk or sugar.

**Naked possessor.** In the South-West, the occupant of a plot of land during a long period, without a title.

**Namayeush** (*Salmo namaycush*). The well-known trout of the Northern Lakes.

**Narragansett pacer.** A breed of horses once very famous for their speed and other good points, and so called from the region of Narragansett bay, R. I., which was the principal breeding centre.

**Narrow gauge mule.** An animal of no, or little account.

**Nary.** As an emphatic negative, *nary* may be classed as a genuine Americanism. As a contraction of "ne' er a one," it is, however, quite as much English as American.

**Naseberry** (*Achras sapota*). A variety of sapodilla.  
Also, *nisberry*.

**Nasty.** Always denotes, in the United States, something disgusting in point of smell, taste, or even moral character, and is never heard, as in England—when they will say, for instance, “nasty weather”—merely in sense of ill-tempered or cross-grained.

**Natick Cobbler.** A nickname applied (1872-76) to Henry Wilson, vice-president of the United States, from his having learned in boyhood the shoemaker's trade in Natick, Mass.

**National Democrats.** A section of the Democrats who, professing to entertain no sectional preference, deal with American affairs upon a national basis, and not from the standpoint of any one State or group of States.

**Native Americans.** See *Know-Nothings*.

**Nativism.** The principles advocated by the Native American party, otherwise *Know-Nothings*.

**Natural.** (1) Fierce, savage, prone to anger, cruel in disposition.

Often said of one whose actions and impulses are dominated by his lower or animal nature, as suggested in the words: “The *natural* man receiveth not the things of the spirit of God.” (I. Corinthians ii. 14.)

Also applied to animals. “A *natural* horse.”

(2) Also employed instead of “native.” Thus, a *natural* born American is one who is born within the precincts of the United States, and the word, in that case, would have no reference to the question of legitimacy.

It must be said that *natural*, for native, has old English usage to excuse it, for an old book, printed in 1536, has this title: “The Complaynt of Roderyck More. . . unto the parliament howse of England, his *natural* country.”

(3) Not given to squeamishness.

(4) Clever; quick-witted; generously inclined.

In England, the thieving fraternity would mean, on the contrary, by a *natural* fellow, a dull, stupid, or chowder-head fellow.

**Neap.** In some parts of New England, the tongue or pole of a cart or wagon.

In Bailey's Dictionary, “neap” is a prop for staying up the tongue or pole.

**Neck.** In old colony days, a strip of land between rivers.

**Neck of the woods.** In the South-West, any settlement or plantation situated in woodland districts.

**Neck-tie sociable.** In the West, a Vigilance Committee's execution carried out by hanging.

**Ned.** A cant word for a ten dollar gold piece.

In English slang, a guinea.

**Negro cloth.** A light fabric of cotton and wool, manufactured exclusively for negro use.

**Negro-corn.** In the West Indies, the Indian millet or durra.

**Negro fellow.** An opprobrious term for a black man, supposed to carry intensive contempt with it.

**Negro-head.** (1) A well-known brand of tobacco, prepared by softening in molasses, and pressing into hard cakes.

Also called *Cavendish*.

(2) A clump of roots of trees or ferns in the swamps of the South.

**Negroism.** (1) A negro peculiarity of speech.

(2) Pro-slaveryism ; opinions favorable to slavery, or negroes.

**Neighborhood.** Often used, or more properly misused, to signify approximation to a given quantity.

“ *In the neighborhood* of twenty miles.”

In England, the meaning of that word, i. e. near by, in the vicinity of, is more strictly confined to places.

**Nervy.** (1) Robust; pithy; vigorous; having strong nerves.

(2) Pungent; spirited; as applied to style of writing.

**Netop** (Ind.). An Indian word (Narragansett) for friend, crony, now obsolete, and formerly in use in some towns of the interior of Massachusetts.

**New-Englander.** An inhabitant of New England.

*New-Englander* was used by Increase Mather in 1689. In 1646, the Cobler of Agawam said : “ Unfriendly reports of us New English.”

**New-Jersey tea** (*Ceanothus americanus*). The leaves of a plant used during the Revolution, after the Boston tea riots, as a poor substitute for imported tea.

See *red-root*.

**New-Lights.** A name given, in 1801, to an offshoot of the Presbyterian Church, composed of ministers who, after having renounced the Westminster Confession of Faith and church discipline, professed to take the New Testament for their sole church discipline.

**New Netherlands.** The State of New York, through a grateful remembrance of its obligations to the Dutch.

**New-Orleans moss.** A mossy parasite of trees, in Louisiana and Texas.

Also known as *old-man's-beard*.

**Newsy.** Abounding in news ; racy, bold, and sparkling, in newspaper parlance.

**Niassy.** Occasionally heard, especially in the West, in sense of odd or excentric, as in the case of a person who will do or say the most unexpected things.

Probably derived from "nias" (Fr. niais), which in England means a ninny, a simpleton.

**Nick** (abb. of nickel, to distinguish from 5c piece). A cent piece. These coins were formerly made of nickel.

**Nickel**. A five-cent piece.

**Nicker**. At game of marbles, the marble to be knocked out of the ring.

**Nicklehawk**. Often heard, in New York, in sense of a triangular rent or tear in cloth. A variant of *winklehawk* (q. v.).

**Nigger-babies**. A facetious name given by General Hardee, of the Confederate Army, to the monster cannon balls hurled into Charleston, during its siege by General Gilmore.

Not less wanting in sarcastic allusion was the qualification of *swamp angel*, bestowed on the gun from which these huge projectiles were driven.

**Nigger-head**. (1) A tuft of grass, or clump of fern-roots appearing above the waters of a swamp, and so called from its fancied resemblance to a negro's woolly head.

(2) An opprobrious epithet applied, during the Civil War, by the *Copperheads* (q. v.) to the Union men who were inclined to violent measures in dealing with the slavery question.

Also, *nigger worshipper*.

(3) A kind of heavy navy-blue cloth.

**Nigger-heads**. Nuts resembling small chestnuts, found in South Carolina.

**Nigger-head stone**. A hard, heavy, black stone, abounding in the neighborhood of Baltimore, and much used for metalling roads.

**Nigger-luck**. A slang expression, synonymous of extraordinary good luck. Obviously from the fact that whenever good fortune comes to a negro, it is, generally speaking, without the slightest effort on his part.

**Nigger-night**. A New-England term applied by white young people to Saturday night courting.

**Nigger-out**. To *nigger-out land*, to exhaust land by improvident working, in allusion to the disastrous methods of negro tillage in the South.

**Night**. In Pennsylvania and some of the border States, commonly used for the hours of the afternoon.

*After night*, after night-fall, in the evening.

**Night-key**. A latch-key.

**Nigog** (Ind.). In the Gulf of St. Lawrence region, a sort of spear for eel or salmon fishing.

The francized form *nigogue* is also used.



**Nimshi.** A foolish fellow, a nincompoop. The use of this word is confined to New England, especially Connecticut, or to speakers of New-England origin, among whom it is recognized religious cant.

Nimshi, as we are told in the Hebrew chronicles of the Bible, was the grand-father of Jehu, who revolted against Jehoram and became king of Israel. But why the name of the grand-father of this successful rebel has now become a synonym for a fool, is surely one of those things that cannot be found out.

**Nine-bark** (*Spirea opulifolia*). A dwarf-growing shrub, so called from its old bark peeling off rapidly, the word "nine," however, bearing no actual relation to the number of layers.

**Ninepence.** Formerly used in New England and Virginia for 12½ cents.

**Nip and tuck.** Neek and neck; on an equality. An even chance, a narrow escape.

Also, *nip and frizzle*.

**Nippent.** In Cape Breton, flighty, merry.

**Nipper.** A dram; a small quantity of liquor.

Hence, also, *nipperkin*, a tumbler.

**Nippers.** (1) Handcuffs.

(2) A burglar's instrument, mainly utilized by hotel thieves, for turning an inside key on the outside of a door.

Also called *American tweezers*.

**Nocake** (Ind.). Parched Indian meal. Now obsolete, but once familiar in New England.

See *rokeage*.

**No fair.** An expression often used, when a player acts contrary to the rules of a game.

**Nogada**, no-gah'-dah (Sp.). In Southern Texas, pecan candy.

**Nogal** (Sp.). In Texas, a common name for the pecan tree (*Carya olivæ formis*.)

In Spain, *nogal* is properly the walnut tree.

**Noggin** (Old Eng.). A small quantity of drink. An old English survival.

**Noodlehead** (Ger. *nudeln*). A term of reproach, which has originated in the fact that "nudeln" are apt to be considered, in Germany, the favorite food of fools.

**Noodlejees** (Dutch). A term hardly known outside of New York city, and designating strips of dough cut like vermicelli, and used in dumplings and in soup.

**Noodles** (Ger. *nudeln*). A kind of vermicelli, differing from the Italian only in the addition of eggs.

**Nooning.** (1) The middle of the day.

(2) Dinner-time in the hayfield; an interval for rest and refreshment at midday.

Also, *nooning-time*.

**Nopal** (Mex. *nopalli*). In the formerly Spanish States, a common name for all cactaceous plants of the "Opuntia" tribe, and, more specifically, the "Opuntia coccinellifera."

**Norther.** A north wind of extreme violence, blowing at certain seasons in the Gulf of Mexico.

**No-see-ums** (*Simulium nocivum*). A nidge or sand-fly.

**Notch.** A gorge or narrow passage through mountains, as the "Crawford Notch" of the White Mountains.

Also, *cove* and *gap*.

**Not for Joseph.** An exclamation of dissent, equivalent to "not if I know myself."

Also, *not for Joe*.

**Notice.** An announcement of a claim being taken up.

We liked the appearance of the place, and so we claimed some three hundred acres of it, and stuck our *notices* on a tree.

(MARK TWAIN, *Roughing it*.)

**Notify.** To give information or notice to a person. In England they notify a thing to a person, but they do not generally notify a person of a thing, thereby being in accordance with the French use of the verb "notifier."

**Not in it.** One of the many expressions of Shakespeare which have drifted into modern speech and slang usage. For instance, we read in scene 3, act 4, of "The Winter's Tale," where the servant brings the rustics clothed as satyrs to Polixenis:

And they have a dance, which the wenches say is a gallimaufry of gambols, because they are *not in it*."

Indeed, there would seem to be few phrases of human thought or speech in which the immortal bard was not himself *in it*.

**Notional.** Fanciful or whimsical. A New-England term, which, in the West, takes sometimes the form of *notionate*.

**Notions.** Such small wares as needles, buttons, pins, threads, etc. often carried by peddlers, and which have come to be regarded so exclusively the speciality of the New-England States that they are advertised in shops and newspapers as *Yankee notions*.

The word is not new, and even so grave and didactic a poet as Young used it over a hundred and fifty years ago exactly in the sense in which it is now used in New England :

And other worlds send odours, sauce, and song,  
And robes, and *notions* framed in foreign looms.

(Night Thoughts, Night II.)

**Nubbins.** Imperfectly formed ears of Indian corn.

Thought to be a corruption of "nuffin," a negro pronunciation of "nothing."

**Nunny-bag.** In Newfoundland, and the Gulf of St. Lawrence region, a lunch bag, usually made of a piece of sealskin.

**Nut-cake.** In New England, a doughnut.

**Nutmeg.** A muskmelon, in south of New Jersey.

**Nutmeg State.** The State of Connecticut, from the famous speculation in wooden nutmegs, immortalized by Sam Slick.

*Wooden Nutmegs*, a name sometimes applied to the inhabitants of Connecticut.



**O.** Apt, in many States, to get an unnecessary *r* attached to it: dorlls, parasorls, etc.

**Oak.** Used adjectively for strong, rich, of good reputation.

Obviously drawn from the notable qualities of the tree.

**Oak-barrens.** Clusters of scrub-oak timber on the prairies, where the soil is very poor.

**Oak-openings.** Groups of short, thinly scattered oak-trees, growing on the rich undulating plains of the North-West.

Also, simply *openings*, so called to distinguish them from the forests which are thickly wooded.

**Oatmeal-mush.** Porridge, made of oat meal.

Also, simply *oatmeal*.

**Obeya-man.** Among negroes, a sorcerer of a particular kind.

Also, *obeya-woman*.

From "obeah," a secret species of witchcraft practised by the negroes in the West Indies.

**Occasion.** A Maryland term, signifying to go round seeking for employment, i. e. looking for persons who might have "occasion" to employ them.

**Occupying claimant.** A settler who bases his title to land upon the fact of occupation.

**Occurrings.** Incidents, occurrences, in newspaper slang. Compare with *happenings*.

**Ocelot** (Mex. *ocelotl*). The tiger-cat of Texas (*Felix pardalis*). The ocelot is a beautiful and savage animal, somewhat cat-like, but with also the appearance of a small leopard, whose species has now reached us as far north as Texas from various parts of South America.

**Ocotillo**, o-co-til'-yo (Sp.). In Texas, a name applied to a shrub of the tamarisk family (*Fouquieria splendens*), bearing bright scarlet flowers.

**Octoroon.** The offspring of white and quadroon parents, the proportion being  $\frac{1}{2}$  black.

Another name is *mestee*.

**Offal.** This word, which in England means "refuse meat," resumes in America its ancient signification of those parts of a butchered animal which are small in size and not worth salting, as the liver and lights, the head, etc.

In New Jersey the word is commonly pronounced with accent on last syllable, and in the plural "off-falls." This, indeed, may be also the original form, the word being compounded of "off" and "fall."

**Office.** In the South, a common name for a small house or hut of one or two rooms, built to accommodate overflow of large family.

**Officer-bird.** A common name, especially in Canada and the Northern States, for the red-winged starling (*Agelæus phœniceus*).

**Off-ox.** An unmanageable, cross-grained fellow.

So quoted by Lowell, in his introduction to the second series of the "Biglow Papers."

**Offset.** (1) In comparison of quantities, the equivalent of the English "set-off," on debit or credit side of an account.

(2) Formerly colloquial, in New England, for a terrace laid out on the side of a hill or on rising ground.

**Offset (to).** To settle accounts by contra; to set or compare one sum or quantity against or with another.

**Oldom.** The oil-producing districts of Pennsylvania, the principal centre of this industry.

**Ojo**, o-ho (Sp. for eye). In the arid plains of the South-West, a spring of water, or a tuft of rank grass giving promise of a spring.

See *pozo*.

**O. K.** An alleged condensation of "oll korrekt," a mis-spelling of "all correct," which has now become a common catch-word for "all right."

Hence, to *o. k.* an account, in business circles, is to initial it in evidence of its correctness.

**Okra** (*Hibiscus esculentus*). A tropical plant, the pods of which are largely used in gumbo-soup.

**Old Bullion.** A nickname applied to Hon. T. H. Benton, senator from Missonri (1821-51), for his strenuous efforts in congress and through the press to introduce a gold currency.

**Old colony.** The name of the first Plymouth settlement, in Massachusetts bay, and perhaps the oldest historical name of locality yet surviving in the United States.

**Old coon.** A sharp, shrewd man, from the alleged reputation of a raccoon of some experience, as a wily, cunning animal.

Also, a political manager or boss.

**Old Country.** At first, applied solely to England, but now meaning the Old World generally, and of course more especially Europe.

Thence also, *old country-man*, meaning a person who was born in Europe.

**Old Dominion.** The State of Virginia, from having been once the original name for all the English colonies in America, and from the State's loyalty in times of great peril to her legitimate sovereign Charles II.

**Old driver.** The devil.

Also *old poyer, old scratch, old split-foot, old toast or toaster.*

**Old Glory.** The flag of the United States ; the Stars and Stripes itself.

**Old Hickory.** The military and political nickname of Gen. Andrew Jackson, presumably from his moral and physical toughness and strength.

See *hickory.*

**Old Line State.** The State of Maryland, from the "Old Line" regiments contributed by Maryland during the War of the Revolution, she being then the only State that had regular troops of "the line."

**Old North State.** The State of North Carolina.

**Old Planters.** The oldest and most distinguished families among the early settlers in New England.

**Old Probabilities.** A nickname for the weather clerk, or chief of the Signal Service of Washington.

Also, *Old Probs.*

**Old Put.** A familiar name given to the Revolutionary hero Israel Putnam, of Connecticut.

**Old sledge.** In the South and West, the card game of All Fours.

**Old soldier** (pron. old sojer). A quid of tobacco. Also, a common name for the ends of cigars collected in the streets.

**Old squaw.** A New-England name for the brown duck known to science as "*Harelda glacialis*."

Also called *old-wife*, this last name being moreover applied along the coast of South Carolina to a species of sea-gull.

**Olla ol'lyah** (Sp.). In the South-West, a large earthenware pot for holding and cooling drinking-water.

**Olycook** (Dutch *oly-coek*, oil-cake). A cake fried in lard, or, as W. Irving describes it, "a ball of sweetened dough fried in hog's fat." The term is particular to New York, although the delicacy itself is pretty generally well known as a *dougnut*, or a *cruller*.

**On.** (1) This preposition is employed, instead of "in," in what at first seem to an Englishman very odd meanings, although yet in many cases very appropriate, as "living *on* such and such a street, coming to Europe *on* a steamer, writing *on* newspapers, etc."

Curiously enough, Thomas Carlyle uses the same expression in his translation of Wilhelm Meister :

Their soft, sweet dreams were broken in upon by a noise which arose on the street.....

(Book I, chap. III.)

On the street, he heard the cry of fire.

(Book V, chap. XIII.)

(2) *On it* for *of it*, as in Shakespeare, is common enough. Also, often used redundantly with verbs and present participles. "What ye duin' *on*?"

**Once** (Ger. *einmal*). In parts of Pennsylvania settled by Germans, used as an expletive : "Sit down *once*," i. e. once for all.

**Ondatra.** The Indian Iroquois name of the musk-rat.

**One-eyed scribe.** A Texan term for a revolver, whose argument is generally of a persuasive, and even oftentimes also of an unanswerable nature.

**One-horse.** Applied adjectively, in the West, to anything strikingly mean or insignificant in character, whether it be man, a church, a bank, or a town. Obviously the outcome of the intense love of horses so characteristic of the Yankee.

A variant is *one-goat*, with a spice of suggestive meaning somewhat different, in a pejorative sense, from that attached to *one-horse*.

The popularity of *one horse* led to the coinage of *team* and *whole team*, to describe anything great or magnificent. For instance, the New York Herald had the following, at the time of the first candidacy of Gen. Grant for the Presidency :

Let us have no one-horse candidate for the Presidency. Gen. Grant is the man. He is a whole team, and a horse extra, and a dog under the waggon.

Here, as anybody can see, the "ne plus ultra" of recommendation is graphically conveyed by a charming completeness of the original figure of speech.

**On end.** *To be on end* is to be filled with anger or astonishment.

Probably a corruption of the old saying "to have one's hair stand on end."

Also, *on eend*.

**On hand.** At hand, present, in speaking of persons who are present, or of objects which are at hand.

*On hand*, in England, is more strictly limited to objects.

**On herd.** A cowboy's term for being "on duty."

Similarly, *off herd*, for "off duty."

**Onhitch.** In New England, sometimes heard in sense of to pull the trigger of a gun; to fire.

The Spaniards have, in same sense, the verb "disparar."

**On it.** *To be on it*. To be about a thing. Also, to be ready for a fight or brawl.

**Onto** (Old Eng.). Still retained in the United States in sense of "on," it bearing then the same relation to "on" as "into" does to "in."

Now obsolete in England.

**On to one.** *To be on to one*, to be able to give blow for blow, to return tit for tat.

**Oodles.** A Tennessee expression signifying abundance, plenty, as in "oodles of money."

**Oodlins.** In Tennessee and Kentucky, used in sense of abundance, a large quantity.

*Dead oodlins*, a very great quantity.

**Operate.** To manage, to conduct any piece of business. "To operate in stocks. To operate in sewing-machines."

Also used transitively, as "operating a pool-room or a saloon."

**Opinuated.** A Southern form for conceited, opinionative, and sometimes, especially among negroes, meaning obstinate and tricky, as an *opinuated* mule.

**Opossum** (Ind. *opassum*). A marsupial mammal of nocturnal habits (*Didelphys virginiana*), with a white and palatable flesh and a coarse but much esteemed pelage.

Also abbreviated in *possum*.

An opossum hath a head like a swine, and a taile like a rat, and is of the bignesse of a cat...

(SMITH'S Generall Historie of Virginia.)

**Order.** A thing is ordered done, in America, with the auxiliary "to be" omitted.

**Ordinary.** (1) Ill-looking, worthless, shabby. (Connecticut.)

(2) Mean, insignificant. (West.)

Generally contracted into *or'nery*.

**Original hand.** At game of poker, the first five cards dealt to any player.

**Orignal** (Fr. C.). Among the French-Canadians, the common name of the moose (*Alces canadensis*).

**Ortolan** (Fr.). In the lower St. Lawrence region, a common name for the shore-lark.

In France, the word is more specially limited to the "Emberya."

**Orts.** Fodder left in crib. (Nfld. N. S. and N. B.)

**Oswego-tea** (*Monarda didyma*). A medicinal plant, prepared by the Shakers for its aromatic and stomachic properties.

**Otsitso.** In French-Canadian folk-lore, a name given to a kind of hobgoblin, who was especially wont to play tricks to the "coureurs des bois."

**Ouananiche** (Ind. Montagnais *wananoushou*, salmon). The name of an exceedingly combative fresh water salmon (*Salmo amethystus*), which abounds in the Lake St-John region, province of Quebec.

Also, *wananiche*, *wananish*.

**Ouaouaron.** See *wawaron*.

**Ouch.** A Southern exclamation of pain, disgust, or annoyance, which appears to be a survival, for it is quoted in ancient glossaries.

**Ouragane.** A word of Indian origin designating, among the French Canadians, a vessel or dish of birch-bark.

**Out.** (1) Used in Massachusetts and Connecticut for outward, meaning coming from the sea, as "the wind *is out*."

(2) Among politicians, a term applied to a member of a political party not in power. These are collectively called the *outs*, the opposite side being the *ins*.

**Out (to).** To put out, as "out the fire." (South.)



**Outery** (Old Eng.). Until recently this old Saxon synonym for "public auction" was current in some of the remoter districts.

**Outfit.** (1) A comprehensive term applied to everything belonging to any particular pursuit. "A shooting *outfit*. An agent's *outfit*."

Also, *to outfit*, to fit out for any purpose whatsoever.

(5) Allowance to a public minister of the United States, on going to a foreign country, which cannot exceed a year's salary. (Worcester.)

**Outiko** (Ind. Alg. *uindiko*). In the Indian mythology of Canada, a name applied to a particularly ferocious giant and man-eater.

**Outlandish.** The name "Uitlanders," which the citizens of the Transvaal have given to the immigrants and foreigners in the republic has exactly the same derivation and signification as the word "outlandishmen," so commonly in use in the country towns in Maine. The Oxford county farmer for instance, may not be able to distinguish by his speech a Swede from an Italian; he calls him an "outlandishman," and refers to manners and customs as "outlandish."

**Out of fox.** Out of order; not fitting; unsettled.

Off the level; out of sorts.

Also, *out of kilter*.

Similarly, in Virginia, machinery out of repair is said to be "out of whack."

**Out of ride.** Said, in the South, of a river that is unfordable on horseback.

See *riding rock*, and *riding way*.

**Outquash.** A superlative form of "to quash," in the sense of to upset.

**Outside.** A vulgarism for beside or except, which is even frequently applied to persons.

*To get outside a thing*, is to understand it.

**Over.** (1) Used in a very appropriate manner, as "to write a letter *over* one's signature."

(2) Used adverbially, for over again. "A dress made *over*," i. e. re-made, or made over again.

**Overly.** Sense of very, and generally used negatively, as "not *overly* polite."

**Overslaught** (Dutch *overslag*, a bar). A sand-bar interrupting the free navigation of rivers. This word still survives in a few local names, and we may especially mention here the famous *overslaugh* in the Hudson, below Albany, which has been so long the dread of all skippers.

Also, by extension, a skipping over.

**Overslaught (to)** (Dutch *over slaan*, to skip over). To skip, to premit.

This term is almost entirely limited, as a verb, to political language, and means the act of rewarding an outsider at the expense of the proper person entitled by right of seniority to the office. "There is no danger that General Grant can be *overlaughed*," said the New York *Tribune* of Jan. 19, 1871, whilst then at the approach of a presidential election.

**Over the bay.** Drunk, intoxicated.

**Oyster-fish.** See *toad-fish*

**Oyster-grass.** In New Jersey, kelp found in oyster-beds.

**Oyster-knockers.** In New Jersey, culling tools used to separate bunches of oysters.

**Oyster-plant.** The salsify.

Also called *vegetable oyster*.

## P

**Paas** (Duth *Paash*). Still lingering for Easter in many families of New York city.

Similarly, the common yellow Daffodill, or Easter flower (*Narcissus pseudo-narcissus*) is still called in New York and along the Hudson *Paas-blummachee*, and *Paas-eggs* are the bright-colored Easter eggs which New-York children are so fond of cracking against each other on Easter Day.

**Pack.** In parts of the West and South, used in sense of to transport in packs or packages, as things are carried through the woods or over rough roads.

Hence, also, simply to carry, to transport.

**Packing.** Said of snow that can be made into snowballs. "It's good *packing*."

**Paddle.** A wooden instrument, shaped like a paddle, and used to punish boys and negroes.

Hence, also, to *paddle*, meaning to thrash, to punish.

**Paddle one's own canoe.** To make one's way in life, to go it alone as a canoeist does.

Also, to *bail one's own boat*.

**Pail (to).** Sometimes heard in sense of to milk. "*Pail* the cow."

**Paint.** In the South and South-West, used as a noun for a horse or other animal which is spotted.

**Paint the town red.** To go on an drunken spree, and generally "to act the fool."

**Pair-off.** Said of two members of different parties, in a legislature or other body, who agree to absent themselves from voting, the one thus neutralizing the other.

**Palm** (pron. paum). In New England, to smear, blot, or smudge with the hands.

**Palmetto City.** The city of Augusta, South Carolina, from the arms of that State which contain a palmetto.

**Palmetto State.** The State of South Carolina, from the palmetto-tree growing abundantly on her shores, and hence furnishing the emblem on her coat of arms.

**Palmilla** (Sp.). The *soap-plant*, or amole (*Chlorogalum pomeridianum*), of California and New-Mexico.

Palmilla, as a Spanish word, is a sort of bluish cloth.

**Panel-game.** A game worked by a thief in connection with a woman, who lures men to a prepared room, the thief entering by a concealed door or a moveable panel.

Hence, also, a *panel-crib*, a *panel-den*, or *panel-house*, meaning a house of prostitution and theft combined, and a *panel-thief*, or *panel-worker*, to designate the operator in that infamous game.

Other variants, for a "panel-house", are *badger-crib*, *shake-down*, *touch-crib*.

**Panhandle.** (1) A district of West Virginia, so called from its running up in a strip affecting the form of a pan-handle, between Pennsylvania and Ohio.

(2) A similar division of Texas and Nevada.

(3) A railroad of same name.

**Panhandler.** Along the Pacific coast, an undeserving beggar, and, more specifically, any tough character who is out of a job, and is ready to go into the "holdup" business.

It is as a rule an easy matter to trace the origin of the slang terms used by tramps, actors of the variety stages, circus employees and criminals, but the expression "panhandler," as applied to the worthless and undeserving beggar and chronic borrower of small sums which are never repaid, is surrounded in mystery.

The term was not born among the railroad tramps, who travel over the "Panhandle Route," for the hardy wandering Willie has a great contempt for the vagrant who lives by fall pretences. The term as certainly did not originate in the "Pan Handle" of Texas, for the gentry of "panhandlers" would meet but short shrift in that section.

An industrious member of the newspaper fraternity has ventured that the idea of panhandling, or getting contributions of money with little labor, was taken from these long-handled arrangements shaped like a frying pan, which they push at you in churches. This explanation is perhaps as good as any.

**Pankake.** A common name for the various kinds of hot cakes prepared on a griddle.

**Pan-mill.** A miner's apparatus used in separating gold from the alloy of earth, with which it is found mingled. (Farmer.)

Hence, to *pan out*, to *pan*, meaning the process by which, the "pay-dirt" with water being put in a pan and then shook, it becomes possible to ascertain the out-turn of gold or other mining products.

**Pansage**, pan-sah'-hay (Sp.). In Texas, a feast or "barbecue" for men exclusively, in which the "pauza," or body of the animal is barbecued.

**Panther.** The popular name of the cougar, or puma.

A familiar corruption of the term is *Painter*, or *Panter*.

**Pants.** An abbreviation of "pantaloons," universally used for trousers.

**Papabotte.** A delicious specimen of the plover family, which visits the Western prairies in large numbers.

**Papaw** (Ind.). A wild and fair-sized shrub of the Annona family (*Asimina triloba*), with a sweet, edible fruit in the shape of long, fleshy pods, and so called from its fancied resemblance to the genuine papaw-tree of the tropics (*Carica papaya*).

**Papaws.** A term, current in Missouri, for political "free lances," and equivalent to "bushwhackers," from the fact that bushwhackers are supposed to subsist on "papaws."

**Paper city.** Literally "a city on paper," i. e. a city in embryo so described on paper, by unprincipled adventurers, that emigrants and settlers will repair thither in large numbers, only to find sometimes that the thriving city of their dreams contains nothing but "castles in Spain," and has not even a log shanty to boast of.

**Pappoose.** A sort of pidgin-English attempt at "babies," as "Yengees" was the best the Indians could do at pronouncing the word English.

Now applied by the whites to Indian infants in general.

**Pappoose-root.** See *blue cohosh*.

**Parish.** In Louisiana, synonymous with county.

**Parlor.** (1) Uniformly used, in the United States, for the English "drawing-room."

(2) A reception-room of any kind affected to several trades. "A dentist's *parlor*, a manicure's, etc."

**Parole (to).** To release or remand on bail.

Obviously an extension of the military usage of liberating a prisoner, on his giving his "parole d'honneur."

**Parquet.** The American equivalent for the "pit" of English theatres, or play-houses.

**Particularists.** A name applied, shortly after the Revolution, to an offshoot of the Whig party, whose distinctive platform was the advocacy of States' Rights, as opposed to the Whigs favoring the doctrine of the supremacy of Federal interests.

The *Particularists* were also subsequently known as the *Anti-Federals*.

**Partida,** par-tee'-dah (Sp.). In Texas and New Mexico, a drove of cattle.

**Partridge-berry** (*Mitchella repens* and *Gaultheria procumbens*). A name applied to both species, from the scarlet fruits of both being similar in appearance. The resemblance, however, ends there, for while the berries of the former are tasteless, those of the latter are highly flavored and pleasant to the palate.

Also called *checkerberry*, *chickberry*, *twinberry*, and in New England *pigeon-berry*.

**Pass.** At game of draw poker, to throw up one's hand and retire from the game.

Hence, also, to decline an offer, to refuse.

**Passageway.** A passage, asile, or gangway.

**Patented.** An article *patented* is one for whose manufacture a legal monopoly is secured.

In England, an article patent.

**Patent outsides.** Partly printed newspapers, supplied wholesale to country editors, and whose blank sides or spaces are subsequently filled with local matter.

**Pat hand.** At game of draw poker, one which is satisfactory to the holder from the first, such as full straight, flush, or pairs.

To *stand pat* is to keep such a hand without drawing or discarding.

**Path-finder.** A nickname applied to general John C. Fremont, from having been one of the first pioneers and discoverers in the Far West.

**Patrolman.** A police constable.

**Patron,** pah-tro-né (Sp.). In Texas and New Mexico, the man in charge of the pack train.

See *cargador*.

**Patroon** (Dutch). A grantee of land to be settled, under the old Dutch governments of New York and New Jersey.

**Patroonship**. Under the old Dutch regime of New York and New Jersey, a landed aristocracy somewhat similar to that of the "Seigneurs" of French Canada.

Also, the office of a patroon.

**Paugie**. See *pogy*.

**Pauhagen** (Ind.). A variant for *menhaden* or *bony fish* in Massachusetts and Rhode Island.

Also, *powhagen*.

**Paunch**. A plainman's term, meaning to shoot a refractory steer through the "paunch," producing a temporary quietude.

**Pawky**. Sometimes heard in sense of in poor health.

**Pay dirt**. In mining phraseology, earth which yields sufficient of the precious metals to pay the miner for his trouble.

Similarly, miners will talk of *poor dirt*, *rich dirt* and *top dirt*.

Hence, also, *on top of dirt*, i. e. this side of the grave; *below dirt*, the last resting place.

**Pay rock**. In mining parlance, the quartz or other rock that will pay for mining.

Also, *paying-rock*, *pay-streak*.

**Peabug**. The small beetle which lives and feeds upon pease.

**Peac** (Ind.). A variety of Indian shell specie.

Also, *peage*, *peak*.

See *cohog*, *seawan*, *wampum*.

**Peach-butter**. Stewed peaches.

Compare with *apple-butter*.

**Peach-leather**. Peaches treated in the same way as apples in the production of *apple leather*.

**Pealer**. A dashing, energetic, go-ahead individual.

Other variants are *hammer*, *rouser*, *rustler*.

**Pea-nut** (*Arachnis hypogea*). The common name of the *ground-nut* or *earth-nut*.

Among negroes, in Florida, called *pintler*, and in Texas and Louisiana *goober* and *goober-pea*.

**Pea-nut politics**. A familiar phrase for underhand or secret politics, an allusion to the peculiar habit of the pea-nut of burying its pods underground after flowering.

**Pearl-tapioca.** A substitute for the tapioca of commerce, made from potatoes.

**Pecan-nut** (pron. pecawn). A variety of hickory (*Carya olivæformis*), the fruit of which, long and olive-shaped, is a great favorite throughout the Union, whilst the tree itself has a superb appearance and produces a timber very useful for building.

So called from the French "pacane," and often so written.

**Peccary.** The native American hog, common in South and Central America, and found as far north as New Mexico and Texas. Its chief peculiarity is in the secretion of a fluid of very offensive smell which, when enraged, it expels.

**Peekish.** In Virginia, often heard in sense of easily offended.

**Peddle.** To sell anything in small quantities.

Hence also, the subst. *peddler*.

*Peddle* is re-derived from *pedlar*, which latter word, in sympathy, is now usually written *peddler*, one who peddles. Mr. Lowell spells it *pedler*. There is, however, a certain sanction for *peddle* in the long obsolete English verb, although, oddly enough, the American word has been independently coined.

**Peert** (Old Eng.). Brisk, lively. "As *peert* as a lizard.... The wind blows quite *peert*."

Also, *peart*, *peark*.

This old word, already used by Chaucer in the American sense, is now nearly obsolete in England, although we must say that we have seen it given as "lively" in that thoroughly English romance called "Lorna Doone." The Welsh have also the form "pert," for smart, fine, or pretty.

Pickering quotes "perk" as being an archaic form known to him at the time he wrote his dictionary.

Also occasionally used in the modified sense of "healthy."

**Pegged out.** Ruined, or used up. Said of both men and things.

**Pelican State.** The State of Louisiana, from the pelican having been chosen as the emblem of its coat of arms.

**Pelter.** In parts of New England, an old, worn-out horse.

**Pelu** (Fr. C.). Among the old French traders and trappers, in the Canadian North-West and Hudson Bay region, a *pelu* was a beaver-skin, with the hair on, and was considered as the money unit of the country.

**Pembina** (Ind. Cree *nipimina*, watery berries, from *nipi*, water, and *mina*, berries, fruits). A French-Canadian term for the *Viburnum edule*, thought by some to be a variety of the *cranberry-tree* (*Viburnum opulus*), or *cramp-bark* of Maine and Canada.

Also, *pimbina*.

**Pemmican** (Ind. Cree *pimikkán*, the ultimate root of which is *pimiy*, meaning grease, oil, tallow). A far-famed provender of hunters, voyageurs, and Arctic explorers, consisting of choice meat well pounded and dried, and next put into bags mixed up with melted fat.

**Pena**, pay'-nah (Sp.). In Texas and New Mexico, a common name for a rock or cliff.

**Pencil-pusher**. In newspaper slang, a reporter.

Also, *pencil-shover*.

**Pennsylvania Dutch**. A South German patois composed of dialects of Franconia, the Rhenish Palatinate, and Swabian and Allemanian districts, more or less interspersed with Germanised English words, according to the locality of settlement. (Farmer.)

**Penny**. A cent, the hundredth part of a dollar.

**Pennyroyal** (*Hedeoma pulegioides*). A common weed, which is nearly alike, in color and taste, to the true English *pennyroyal* or mint.

**Pennyroyal**. In the West, used adjectively to describe inferior stock. "A *pennyroyal* steer or bull."

**Pentway**. A semi-public road, generally kept closed, although open to foot passengers.

These ways have now almost entirely disappeared from New England, where once they were frequently met with.

**Peon-dog**. In Texas, a name sometimes given to the hairless Mexican dog.

**People**. *He is great people*, is used in a commendatory sense of anyone. (Maitland.)

"I know that you are the *people*," as Job said of his friends who gave him so much good advice.

**Pepperidge** (*Nyssa multiflora*). The popular name, in the South and West, for the *black* or *sour gum*, otherwise called *tupelo*.

**Persimmon** (*Diospyros virginiana*). A tree growing as high as a palmeta, and producing a plum of a decided vinous taste, and, when ripe, very sweet and luscious.

*Persimmon beer*, a beverage made from the plum of the persimmon, and dearly loved by negroes.

*To rake up the persimmons*, a frequent expression for "pocketing the stakes."

*Huckleberry above the persimmons*, a Southern phrase expressing that something apparently simple and easy is far above the ability of the person who makes the attempt.

**Persuasion**. Jocularly adapted from religious use, for class, category, as in "persons of same persuasion," meaning same religious belief.



**Periauger** (Fr. *piroque*). In New Jersey, a name formerly applied to a kind of oyster-boat.

**Pervade**. To pass through. Thus, travellers *pervade* a town when making a temporary stay.

**Peter Funk**. A decoy, at a mock auction, employed as a "by-bidder" or "puffer," in order to raise the price of the article offered for sale.

As the story goes, Peter Funk was once the name of a person who got to be quite famous, through his skill in inciting buyers to part with their money, and paying inflated prices, at auction sales. On the other hand, the term is perhaps also a simple manufacture.

Hence, to *peter*, to run up prices at auction sales.

**Peter (to) out**. To exhaust, or be exhausted; to run or dribble out; to escape.

**Petouane** (Ind.). A French-Canadian term applied to the "Aster macrophyllus," a shrub of the Composite order bearing particularly rough and thick leaves.

**Petticoat-trousers**. In Massachusetts, wide, baggy trousers worn by fishermen.

**Pettifog**. Used transitively, in newspaper parlance, in sense of to advocate in a mean, paltry manner, or to take up petty cases. "He *pettifogs* his client's cause."

**Pewit** (*Sayornis fuscus*). A familiar name for the fly-catcher, from the peculiar cry of that bird.

Also, *pe-wee* and *Phoebe-bird*.

In England, pewit is the common name of the lapwing, which is not at all known in America.

**Peyote**. A term of Mexican origin, and designating, in Texas, a plant of the cactus family, otherwise called "dry whiskey," as it is said to produce intoxication when chewed.

**Pheasant**. The popular name, in some States, for the *ruffled grouse*.

**Picacho** (Sp.). An augmentative of the Spanish *pico* (a peak), applied in New Mexico and Arizona to a peak or summit of a mountain standing out abruptly.

**Picayune**. Formerly long used, in the Southern States, especially Louisiana and Florida, at first for the Spanish half-real, and afterwards the American sixpence, which no longer exist in currency.

The term is now used, adjectively, of anything small, mean, or insignificant, obviously from the comparatively insignificant value of the coin in question. Also, *picayunish*.

*Picayune* was originally a Carib word, which has come down through the French "pécune."

See *pistareen*.

- Pick.** A gauge of measurement in the cotton trade, a *pick* being a thread  
Cotton cloth has so many *picks* to the inch.
- Pick (to).** When used in reference to the banjo or guitar, to pick means "to play," in the South.  
Similarly, the French have "pincer."
- Pickaninny** (Sp. *pequeno nino*, little child). A term applied in the Southern States to the offspring of colored parents.  
A diminutive form of the above is *pickney*, especially current in South Carolina.  
Also frequently used, in the North and throughout the West Indies, for any young child.
- Pickereel-weed** (*Pontideria cordata*). A common wayside and ditch plant of the North and Middle States, which bears a spike of blue flowers.
- Pick-me-up.** A tonic; a restorative; a drink of a spirituous kind taken after a debauch.
- Pick off.** To kill by shooting.
- Pick on.** To disturb; to nag.
- Pick-up.** An impromptu meal of an "olla podrida" description, i. e. made up of such fragments as have been left by others.  
Also, *pick-up dinner*.
- Pick up (to).** In New England, to put in order, as when *picking up a room*.
- Piece.** In New Jersey, and Pennsylvania, an addition to the regular meals, prepared at short notice in time of harvest, and sent out to the fields generally at ten o'clock, and again at three. A "piece" ordinarily consists of hot coffee, bread and butter, cold meat, and whatever a generous talent for providing may furnish.  
Hence, to *piece*, to take an irregular snack between meals.
- Pie-plant.** A curious name often applied to the rhubarb.
- Pier.** See *dock*.
- Pig-nut** (*Carya glabra* or *porcina*). A small species of bitter hickory nut.
- Pig-plum.** See *hog-plum*.
- Pig-weed.** A rank weed, so called from its being generally found near pig-styes.
- Pig-wick.** A species of duck, with red eyes, found in the coves and rivers of Maryland.

**Pike.** (1) A Californian name for a poor white from the Southern States, said to have originated from the supposition that the first of the class came from Pike county, Missouri.

(2) In the lumber region of Canada, a shaft of wood armed with an iron prong, used by river-drivers to move or guide logs.

**Pike (to).** In gambling parlance, to play cautiously and for small amounts, never advancing the value of the stake.

In old Eng. cant, to run away, which is, indeed, among thieves, exercising caution.

Hence, also, *piker*, for a cautious gambler.

**Pile.** (1) One's stock of money; one's fortune. A term first used at the gaming table, signifying one's actual "pile" of coins, but soon extended to mean a man's available means, his fortune.

Hence, to *make one's pile*, to make his fortune, to accumulate money.

Also, to *go one's pile*, to spend the same.

To *pile in*, to make a beginning.

(2) A word still retained for an arrow by boys, in New York city, from Dutch *pyl*.

**Pile on the agony.** In newspaper slang, to intensify the effect of a sensational article by exaggerated or blood curdling details.

To *put all the pile on*, is said of anything very much fancied.

**Pilgrim.** A traveller; a new arrival; especially a greenhorn, about equiv. to a tenderfoot.

**Pilgrims.** A cattle breeder's term for cattle on the march.

**Pill.** (1) A bore; a conceited coxcomb.

(2) At Yale college, a silly, disagreeable fellow.

**Pilon.** *pe-lone'* (Sp.). In southern Texas, the gratuity given by merchants to customers, whenever accounts are settled. Somewhat equivalent to *lagniappe* (q. v.).

In Spain, *pilon* is a small loaf of sugar formed in a mould.

**Pimbina.** A word of Indian origin applied, among the French-Canadians, to the fruit of the "*Viburnum edule*."

**Pimping.** In remote parts of New England, often heard in sense of small, pretty, mean.

Still provincial in England.

**Pinch.** In gambling parlance, to "ring the changes," i. e. to substitute bad money for good, on pretence of changing coins of a high denomination.

**Pinch (in a).** In a tight place; hard up for money.

**Pinch (on a).** In an emergency.

**Pinch-bug.** An insect pest, otherwise called *petz-keffer* in Pennsylvania.

**Pincher.** A curious name applied, in political slang, to a bill calculated to secure a pecuniary reward from those who are interested in its defeat.

**Pine-barrens.** In the South, poor tracts of land covered with pine trees of a wretchedly stunted growth. (Farmer.)

Also *piney-woods*, a name more especially applied to large tracks covered with pines, in the low country.

**Pine-knots.** Knotty chips or chunks of the pitch-pine tree (*Pinus rigida*) which, when burning, give a very brilliant light. These torches are still much used by negroes and the poorer classes in the South.

**Pine-needles.** Fir cones.

**Pine-nut** (*Pinus edulis*). The edible nut of the *pinion*, a variety of pine-tree.

**Piners.** In New Jersey, a name applied to those living in the Jersey pines, which are the "ridge" sections of that State.

**Pinery.** Unlike the *pine-barren*, a *pinery* is a forest of pines, in the North and North-West, which contain the pick of timber used in the country.

**Pine-straw.** The annual castings of pine-trees. The fallen leaves of all the evergreen trees.

Also, *pine-tags*.

**Pine-top.** A Maryland name for common whiskey, obviously from its resemblance to turpentine.

**Pine-tree money.** Money coined in Massachusetts in the 17th century, and so called from its bearing a figure resembling a pine-tree. (Webster.)

**Pine-tree State.** The State of Maine, from the extensive pine-forests which cover its central and northern parts, and from the pine-tree being one of the symbols on the State Seal.

**Pinion** (Sp. *pinon*). A species of pine-tree (*Pinus edulis*), found in Arkansas, New-Mexico, the Rocky Mountains, etc. the nuts of which are sweet and palatable.

**Pink** (Dutch *Pinkster*, Whitsuntide). In New York city, a flower owing its name to the season of its blooming, i. e. Whitsuntide.

**Pink tea.** Whiskey of any kind, good, bad, or indifferent.

**Pinky** (Dutch *pink*). A familiar term, among New York boys, to designate the little finger.

**Pinole** (Mex. *pinolli*). In Texas and New Mexico, a preparation of parched corn-meal, sugar and spice.

Also, *cold flour*.

**Pinto** (Sp.). In Texas and New-Mexico, spotted, stained, mottled, as of horses.

**Pinxter** (Dutch *Pinkster*). A familiar name for Whitsuntide in the States of New York and New Jersey, where *Pinxter Monday* is specially well known as a day of great rejoicings.

Several Whitsuntide flowers, and especially the early azalea of our woods (*Azalea nudiflora*) are similarly called *Pinxter blummachees*, or *blumachies*.

**Piou-piou** (pron. pew-pew). Among the French-Canadians, a name applied to the tawny-thrush (*Turdus Wilsonii*), from its peculiar cry.

**Pipe**. (1) In the language of the old French "voyageurs," a *pipe* meant two leagues, i. e. the time of smoking a pipe.

Still in use, among the French-Canadians, to mean a good distance.

(2) In newspaper parlance, an assignment which a reporter knows will fail.

An intensified form is a *pipe dream*, which gives the slang phrase in its completeness.

**Pipe (to)**. To follow ; to watch ; to waylay ; to intercept.

Also, to *pipe off*.

**Pipe-laying**. In a general sense, *pipe laying* is making arrangements for a political success, without much consideration as to the means employed. But the phrase is, however, more especially applied to the practice of procuring fraudulent votes, towards the close of a popular election, in sufficient number to turn the scale.

*Pipe-laying* is derived from a fraudulent scheme, once concocted by unscrupulous politicians, to bring illegal voters from Philadelphia to New York, under the concealment of a form of contract for the laying of water-pipes for the Croton aqueduct.

Hence, *pipe-layer*, a politician trickster.

**Pipi** (pron. pee-pee). A name given by the French-Canadians to the titlark (*Anthus spinoletta*), from its peculiar cry.

**Pipsisewa** (*Chimaphila umbellata*). An Indian simple, and a popular domestic remedy whose medicinal qualities are much esteemed.

Also known as *prince's pride* and *wintergreen*.

**Pique-bois jaune** (Fr.). The common name, in Louisiana, of the golden-winged wood-pecker (*Picus amatus*), the most beautiful American bird of the genus.

See *clape*.

**Pirate**. To infringe an invention or a copyright ; to appropriate without making acknowledgement or payment.

**Pirogue** (Fr.). A generic name for a small boat or canoe. Primarily, a canoe formed out of a single large tree.

The word is in Littré and Scheler, and occurs often in the old writers: "Pirogues ou canots de bois" (Hennepin, *Descript. de la Louisiane*, p. 122). The derivation is English and French from Spanish, which in its turn is from the Carib dialect.

**Pisque** (pron. pisk). A name given, by the French-Canadians, to the golden-eye duck (*Bucephala clangula*), frequenting the lower St. Lawrence region.

Also applied to the *Bucephala Islandica*.

**Pissybed.** Often heard for the dandelion.

Also, *piss-abad*.

**Pistareen.** A silver coin (the Spanish "peseta Sevillana") formerly current, and now out of use, of the value of one fifth of a dollar.

Now synonymous, like *picayune* or *one-horse*, with small-minded, mean, depreciated, of little value, etc.

**Pit.** A New York term for the hard kernel of a fruit, as of a cherry or a peach. From Dutch *pit*, a kernel.

**Pita**, pee-tah (Sp.). In Texas and New Mexico, the name of an agave furnishing a fine fibre utilized for sewing and kindred purposes.

**Pitahaya** (Sp.). A gigantic cactus of New Mexico (*Cereus giganteus*), which bears the luscious fruit called Indian fig.

**Pitch.** *To pitch it strong*, to make a strong effort; to apply oneself strenuously to a task; to talk exaggeratingly or boastingly.

Other forms are *to pitch too strong* and *to pitch it wild*, this last one esp. in relation to a narrative or story which passes all legitimate bounds.

Of Western origin.

**Pivart** (pron. pee-var). A name applied, by the French-Canadians, to the golden-winged wood-pecker (*Colaptes auratus*).

**Pivotal State.** A State, the vote of which in any election is of great importance, being likely to turn the scale one way or the other.

**Place (to).** When applied to a person, this means to remember or call to mind the place of his birth.

**Placee.** A name formerly given, in the South, to the colored mistress of a white man. (Maitland.)

**Placer**, plah-ser (Sp.). A word first applied, by Hispano-Americans, to deposits of drift-sand in which gold was found, and subsequently extended to mean, not only rich mines of minerals, but also the discoveries of any good things promising large rewards.

*Placer-diggings*, localities where gold is found scattered in the surface dirt.

*Placer-mining*, mining operations carried on in ravines or gulches.

**Plain-folks.** A negro term for white men or women, as opposed to colored people.

Also, *plain people*.

In England, "plain people" would mean persons lacking in personal attractions.

**Planchment.** In parts of New England, often heard for ceiling.

**Planing-machine.** A plane worked by steam or other power, for smoothing boards.

**Plank.** One of the principles of which a political "platform" is constructed, the divisions of a plank being sometimes in their turn split up into *splinters*.

**Plank (to).** To lay down, to pay out money.

Also, to *plank down*, to *plank up*.

**Planked shad.** A shad fastened to a plank and roasted, a mode of cooking said to be much esteemed by epicures.

**Plantain** (Sp. *platano*). A well-known West-Indian substitute for ordinary bread (*Musa paradisiaca*), which is peeled and roasted in hot ashes.

**Plantain-patch.** See *potato-grant*.

**Plantation.** (1) At first a term primarily associated, in the West-Indies and Southern States, with properties upon which slave labor was used, and afterwards given to estates or large farms appropriated to the production of staple crops.

(2) In Newfoundland, ground with buildings and improvements for fishing purposes.

**Planter.** (1) In the West Indies and Southern States, the proprietor of an estate for the cultivation of staple crops. In the case of absentees, the manager or overseer.

(2) In Newfoundland, a person engaged in the fishery business.

(3) At the origin of the first settlements, a name given to the founders of the colony of Massachusetts, to distinguish them from the Pilgrim Fathers of Plymouth Colony.

**Plat (to).** To divide into plats; to lay<sup>o</sup>ut in sections or plots.

**Platform.** (1) A metaphorical term embodying the principles on which a public man takes his stand. A declaration of principles—each of which is described as a "plank"—by a political party, convention, or candidate.

The word *platform*, as applied to ecclesiastical constitutions or plans for the government of churches, is however by no means an Americanism.

Lord Bacon speaks of "the Exemplar or *Platform* of God," while Hooker mentions views "comformable to the *platform* of Geneva." "A *Platform* of Church Discipline" is also the title of a book printed in London as early as 1653.

(2) Along the New-Jersey coast, a planked floor where oysters are freshened.

**Playa**, plah'-yah (Sp.). In the South-West a name applied to the vast level plains of a saline surface, which are prominent features of the topography of that region. Further North, same are called *salt* or *water-prairies*.

*Playa* is also said of the dried-up bed of some shallow lake or lagoon. In Spain, the term means a sea-shore or beach.

**Played out (to be)**. A slang phrase taken from the gambler's language, and meaning to be without resource, as when one's last card has been played and failed.

To be exhausted, to be used up.

**Playing up**. In newspaper parlance, said of the presentation of news in general. "To *play up* the exclusive news....."

**Play off**. To make a start.

Borrowed from the card-table.

**Play on velvet**. Among gamblers, to stake the money won from the bank.

**Play possum**. To act a part, to deceive.

The equivalent of the old London trick, among thieves, of "shamming Abraham," or pretending to be dead, as the opossum does when escape seems impossible.

Also, simply, to *possum*.

**Play spell**. A time for recreation or amusement.

**Play the sovereign**. In Pennsylvania, a candidate for office is said to be playing the sovereign when, a short time before an election, he puts on shabby clothes, drinks whiskey with everybody, and shakes hands with everyone.

**Pleurisy-root** (*Asclepias tuberosa*). A root used as a mild tonic and stimulant.

**Pluck**. The heart, liver, lungs, etc. of a slaughtered animal.

**Plug**. (1) A tall silk hat. Also, *plug-hat*.

An old worthless horse. Also, a *plug-horse*.

(2) A poor hand at telegraphy. Also an operator at a small "plug" station. In those two senses, the term is of course restricted to telegraphic operators.

(3) A local accommodation train.



**Plugger.** (1) One who plays in a gambling house, to induce the belief that a game is going on.

(2) In college slang, a hard student.

**Plug-ugly.** A term assumed by a gang of rowdies in Baltimore, and originally belonging to certain fire companies.

**Plum.** A generic name, in New England, for all berries, being thus used for the brilliant berries of the "*Diaœna borealis*," the partridge-berries, the mountain cranberries, and some other species.

*To go plumping*, to go huckleberrying.

**Plum, Plumb.** Often used as an adjective, with the meaning of quite, exactly, directly, in which case it is an Old Eng. survival. "He ought to be here *plum* soon."

**Plumb-centre.** A peculiar Western phrase, expressive of a crack shot at a shooting match, being thus equivalent to making a bull's eye.

**Plumed knights.** An appellation applied, during the Presidential campaign of 1884, to the Republican electioneering organization which was "booming" the candidacy of Mr. Blaine. The phrase arose of Mr. Blaine having himself been termed "The Plumed Knight" by Robert Ingersoll.

**Plum-muss.** Boiled and mashed plums, which are rolled out into layers and then dried.

**Plunder** (Old Eng.). Often heard in the South and South-West for luggage, i. e. personal effects packed for carrying; goods; furniture.

The elder D'Israeli, in his "Curiosities of Literature," says that *plunder*, in sense of baggage, is an old word long known and used in England; and the fact is that the term is a Dutch or Flemish word (meaning property of any kind) brought home by the English troops which fought under the banner of the great Swedish King, Gustavus Adolphus.

Cf. with the French "*butin*," still used in Canada in same sense.

**Poach.** Said, in New England, especially of cattle who tread soft ground, or snow and water, and churn up mud by repeated passing to and fro.

Also, to *podge*.

**Pocket.** (1) In mining parlance, a small deposit of the precious metal, the word not applying however to a true fissure vein.

(2) The extreme Southern part of the State of Indiana is called "The Pocket," from the form and position of said part.

**Pocket-book.** A general term for a purse.

**Pocoson** (Ind. *pocasan*). A term particular to North Carolina and further South, to denote a low-wooded swamp, generally dry in summer, and filled with water during the winter and spring months.

A very near equivalent of the word exists in the North in the *pokeloken* of Maine and the North-West.

Also, *poquoson*.

**Poggy** (*Pagrus argyrops*). The New-York name of a fish of the gilt-head kind, which is much esteemed for its flavor. Also called *paugie* or *porgie*.

In Rhode-Island, *scup*.

The entire Indian name *Mishescuppaug* (Narragansett, for "large-scaled") is still common enough, according to Bartlett, in many parts of New England.

**Point.** (1) A hint ; a piece of practical information.

(2) A private information about stocks,

(3) A "unit of change" in the market rate of any given commodity, whether gold or cotton.

(4) A special characteristic, as the *points* of a horse.

Hence, to *give anyone points*, to be superior to any one,

**Pointer.** (1) An item of general information. More generally colloquial than *point*, in that sense.

(2) Among ranchmen, a herdsman who rides at the head of a straggling herd of cattle when on the march.

**Poke.** (1) In New England, a contrivance to prevent unruly beasts from leaping fences, consisting of a yoke with a pole inserted pointing forward, thus naturally suggesting the meaning of the verb "to poke."

(2) A stupid person, a bore, generally in the sense of lazyness and dawdling, and probably on the plea that "a slow poke" annoys us continually, as if we were "poked" at by a thorn in the side.

Hence, to *poke*, to dawdle, to travel slowly; and *poky*, dull, stupid, slow.

**Poke-berry** (*Phytolacca decandra*). One of the most useful plants of the South, the roots possessing valuable emetic properties, whilst the young shoots are eaten like asparagus, and the berries afford a rich purple dye, and a favorite food for caged birds.

Also, *poke-weed*, or simply *poke*.

Other variants are *pocan* (Virginia), the Indian name from which poke is derived; and *cocum*, *guryet*, and *pigeon-berry* (Northern States and New England).

**Pokeloken** (Ind.). A term in use among lumbermen of Maine, and their kinsmen in the North-West, to denote a marshy ground extending inland from a stream or lake.

The form *popelogan* is also used.

**Poker.** The American equivalent, for popularity, of the game of whist of England, although it must be conceded that this last one is now making great strides in trying to supplant its rival.

**Poker.** This old Danish name (*pokker*) for the devil still retains its use in America, although here more as a child's word for any frightful object, esp. in the dark ; a hobgoblin ; a bugbear.

Hence, also, *pokerish*, gruesome, frightful, causing fear, especially to children.

**Policy (to).** To gamble with the numbers of lottery tickets, two numbers being called a "saddle," three numbers a "gig," and four numbers a "horse."

**Political capital.** The sum of events, in the career of a candidate for election, which can be used either in furthering or opposing his candidature.

Now also current in the political slang of England.

**Political Union.** Said, in Canada, of the absorption of the Dominion by the United States. A less offensive term than annexation.

**Politicate.** To make a trade of politics.

**Pollack** (*Merlangus purperus*). The popular name, in New England, of an important food-fish abounding in the waters of Massachusetts and Connecticut.

**Polt, Polter** (Old Eng.). This word, now quite obsolete in England, and which dates back from the first English settlers in Virginia, is still often heard in New England and the South in the sense of a blow, a thump. "Give him a *polt*."

Similarly, to *polt*, to beat, to knock, to deal blows.

Oh, whack! Cupid's a mannikin,

Smack on my heart he hit me a *potter*.

GEORGE COLEMAN, *The Review*, act II, s. I.)

**Pomme blanche** (Fr.). The Indian turnip (*Psoralea esculenta*), a native of the prairies and mountains. Also called *pomme de prairie*.

Other names are *Jack-in-the pulpit*, *kamas-root*, *one-berry*.

**Pompano** (Sp.). A fish of the herring family found in the Gulf of Mexico.

**Pompon.** And old form for pumpkin.

**Pond.** A sheet of water, in the interior, smaller than a lake, also sometimes of considerable size, and the nearest approach to what, in England, would be called a "mere," a word almost unknown in the United States.

Hence, also, to *pond*, to accumulate water in a pond, or so as to form a pond.

In England, the word pond is generally applied to small pieces of water by the roadside, in a field, or other restricted space.

**Pone** (Ind. Powhatan *apohn*). In Virginia and further South, a maize-cake, or bread of corn-meal.

**Ponhaws.** A Pennsylvania German term designating a dish made of buckwheat flour, cornmeal and scraps of pork, all boiled together, then cut into slices and fried.

**Pony.** (1) In college slang, a literal translation used unfairly in the preparation of lessons. Also, a key to mathematical problems.

Hence, to *pony*, to translate with the help of a pony.

(2) A small glass or draught of beer.

**Pony-purse.** An impromptu subscription or collection, especially one collected upon the spot.

**Pony-rider.** An agent of the Pony-Express of the Far West, before the advent of railways.

**Pony up (to).** To pay money ; to settle accounts, by the payment of money due.

Pony was formerly an old flash term, for money, in England, and in sporting slang is still used to signify £15.

**Pool (to).** To join forces ; to act in unison ; to combine with another for commercial purposes ; to agree on a common tariff.

In Wall street slang, to form a combination of speculators, for the purpose of buying up any particular stock

Hence, to *pool one's issues*, to come to an understanding for mutual advantage.

**Pool holes.** In New Jersey, holes two to six feet deep, full of "mucky" water, found on meadows.

Also, *spool holes*.

**Pooquaw** (Ind. *poquauhock*). The round or hard clam (*Venus mercenaria*), so called in Nantucket.

See *quahaug*.

**Poor** (Old Eng.). A favorite term, in the South, in the sense of lean, and so quoted in Middleton's plays.

Modern Eng. usage rather restricts the employment of this word, in the case of meat, to an article of indifferent quality, whilst in America the term poor, when so used, merely implies leanness.

**Poor-folksy.** A common phrase, used adjectively in the South, whenever an idea of poverty needs to be conveyed. "A *poor-folksy* arrangement," i. e. an arrangement after the fashion of poor people.

**Poor-will.** A Western variation of "whip-poor-will," from a supposed curtailment in the note of the species found on the plains.

**Poose-back.** Pig-a-back. Said of carrying a child on the back. Probably from "pappoose."

**Pooster about.** To get up in the night and walk around.

**Pop-corn.** (1) A variety of Indian corn of a dark color, with small grains, and so called because those grains easily pop or burst open, when held in a wire-gauze over a brisk fire.

Hence, to *pop* corn, to parch or roast "pop corp" till it bursts open.

(2) The dish itself of pop-corn, being the grains which have been burst open over a brisk fire. A very popular dainty, eaten with salt or sugar.

**Pop-eyed.** A Southern term for a person with protruding or prominent eyes.

**Poplar.** See *tulip-tree*.

**Popocrat.** In the campaign of 1896, an adherent of the Chicago, or free silver, wing of the Democratic party.

**Pop open.** In Charleston, S. C. used of the rending, or tearing, or wearing through of a dress.

**Poppy-cock.** A term of contemptuous incredulity applied to bombast; false representation; gasconade. "Oh! that's all *poppy-cock*."

**Pop-squirt.** A jackanapes; an insignificant, but pretentious fellow.

**Popular.** (1) In New England, has the sense of conceited, fussy, aristocratic. Thus, the Yankee simile: "As *pop'lar* as a hen with one chicken."

Compare with *cunning*, *clever*, etc.

(2) In parts of the South, sense of stylish.

**Porcion, por-see-on** (Sp.). In Texas and New Mexico, a certain tract of land, and, more specifically, a quantity of land apportioned to primitive settlers when organizing new towns.

The primary meaning of the word is a portion or share.

**Porkopolis.** The city of Cincinnati, Ohio, from its being a large centre of the pork-packing industry.

**Portaal** (Dutch). An ante-room, lobby, or passage. Restricted to settlements of Dutch descent, in New Jersey and New York.

**Portage** (Fr.). A strip of land between rapids or water-falls, or between two navigable rivers, over which canoes, stores, and "impedimenta" have to be carried on the men's backs.

A word dating back from the first "voyageurs."

Hence, also, to *portage*, to carry or convey boats and outfit overland.

**Porterhouse steak.** A beefsteak consisting of a choice cut of the beef between the sirloin and the tenderloin, the latter being the under cut.

The origin of the term is said to be as follows. In the old coaching days there was a tavern in New York, kept by a man named Porter, famous for its steaks; to which house one Saturday night there arrived a traveller who called for a steak. Not one was left; but the hungry traveller called and called again for a steak. Finally the innkeeper, in

his distress, took from his larder a large piece of sirloin put there for roasting, and cut from it a piece to broil. It was found so delicious that the same piece was often called for after that, and was christened after the house and its proprietor, "Porter House Steak." Up to that time this piece of meat had been used for roasting only, and the discovery of its virtues for broiling may be said to have been quite accidental.

**Posey-yard.** A flower-garden attached to a dwelling-house, "posey" being of course the old English term for a bouquet or bunch of flowers, and "yard" being, in reality, derived from the same root as garden.

**Postal.** An abb. of postal card, which is the usual American term for post-card.

**Postal currency.** Postage stamps in circulation as currency, during the early part of the Civil War.

**Post-and-railing** (pron. post-an-railin'). A kind of fence, consisting mainly of posts and rails.

**Posted.** Well informed.

Also, *posted up*.

Now current in England.

**Post-note.** In commerce, a bill of exchange drawn to order.

**Post-oak** (*Quercus obtusitoba*). A variety of oak found in the Middle States, and furnishing a wood much used in ship-building.

**Pot.** The accumulated bets in a game of poker.

**Potato-grant.** In the West Indies, a patch of land for growing vegetables, allotted to resident laborers on estates.

Also, *plantain patch*.

**Pot-holes.** Naturally formed depressions in rock, due to the action of water, and which, from being circular in shape, were at one time thought to have been made by the early aborigines, for grinding and pounding corn in.

Also called *Indian Mortars*.

**Pot-pie.** A rough and ready sort of meat pie, made by spreading the crust over the bottom and sides of a pot, and filling up the inside with meat.

**Potty-baker** (Dutch *pott-bakker*). A term still common in New York to designate a potter.

**Pot-walloper.** Also a dish-washer. A scullion, or a slovenly person. A figure evidently taken from the manner in which such an unfortunate being would be apt to knock the kitchen-pots about.

The Eng. word "pot-walloper" denotes a householder qualified for voting, literally a "pot-boiler."

In Pennsylvania, they use *pot-wrestler*.

- Poulis**, poo-lee (Fr. C.). In the lower St. Lawrence region, a name applied to the Labrador herring.
- Pourel**, poor-sill (Fr. C.). In the lower St. Lawrence region, a name applied to a species of dolphin (*Phocera communis*), which has been also called the dolphin of the American seas.
- Pout**. The popular New England name of the catfish (*Pimelodus*), *eel-pout* being the common name of the *Lota Maculosa* of the lakes.
- Poverty-grass** (*Hudsonia tomentosa*). A poor sort of herbage, almost approaching the nature of a moss, which is common in New England and grows in scanty bunches on soil that refuses to produce anything else.
- Powder-post**. Worm-eaten, i. e. eaten by a worm which leaves its holes full of powder, as is generally the case in sapwood and hickory.
- Pow-wow** (Ind. *powan*, a prophet, a conjuror, in the New England dialects). A term originally adopted by the early settlers to designate any great assembly among the Indians, and now extended to the political world in the sense of a public meeting where much parley is indulged in.
- Pow-wow (to)**. To perform a ceremony, among the Indians, with conjurations, dances. To cure by exorcising evil spirits. "She had the doctor *pow-wow* her arm, and it got well."
- The *pow-wow* doctor, more often a woman, is a person of importance among ignorant farming people, in Pennsylvania German communities. She mutters words over the afflicted spot, makes the sign of the cross, and often gives the patient relief.
- To *pow-wow* is also extended in the sense of to hold a political meeting.
- Pozo** (Sp.). A word current on the frontier of Mexico, for a spring or well, generally issuing from a hole in the ground.
- Prairie** (Fr.). An extensive tract of land, level or rolling, covered with coarse grass, and generally characterized by a rich soil of great depth.
- Prairie-bitters**. A mixture of buffalo gall and water, to which great medicinal powers are ascribed by hunters and border-settlers.
- Prairie dog** (*Cynomys ludovicianus*). A variety of the marmot, so called from the supposed similarity between its warning cry and the short, sharp bark of a small dog.
- Also called *gopher*, in the West.
- Prairie-hen** (*Tetrao pratensis*). A beautiful game-bird, whose flight somewhat resembles that of the pheasant or partridge, and is especially seen in great numbers in the prairies of Missouri and Illinois.
- Also called *heath-hen* and *pinnated grouse* (West), *partridge* (North), *pheasant* (Delaware).
- Prairie-itch**. A skin eruption, caused by the fine red dust of the prairies, in summer.

**Prairie-schooner.** A huge covered waggon, used in crossing the plains before the Pacific railway was completed.

These vehicles are by no means extinct, as the railroad, even at the present time, only taps but a small portion of the Great West.

**Prairie-State.** The State of Illinois.

**Prairie-wolf.** See *coyote*.

**Prawchey** (Dutch *praatje*). A painful corruption of the original, and designating a gossip, in the sense of a pleasant neighborly talk. This word now retains only an antiquarian interest, being at present almost entirely extinct.

**Preach.** A preaching, a sermon.

**Preacher's-stand.** A Western word for a pulpit, and especially much used at camp meetings and similar gatherings.

**Precinct.** In electoral matters, a subdivision of a county or city; a ward; a district.

**Pre-empt.** To secure land, by being the first settler or occupant of it, according to a legal form set out in the "Pre-emption Law" of 1841.

This enactment has since been somewhat modified by the "Homestead Act" of 1862.

Hence, also, colloquially, to *pre-empt*, to take possession, to qualify for.

**Pre-emption right.** The right which an original settler or squatter has to pre-empt or secure a title to Government lands.

**Pre-emptor.** One who has the right to pre-empt.

**Prekel** (Ger.). In Pennsylvania, a small, flat, sugar-coated cake.

**Presidio** (Sp.). In the former provinces of Mexico, now within the Union, a village which is built on the site of an old Mexican military post, formerly called a "presidio."

Also, a military post proper, and, more specifically, a place of confinement for convicts.

**Pretty.** In North Carolina, and parts of Virginia and Pennsylvania, this word is often heard in conjunction with weather, in sense of pleasant, agreeable.

**Pretzel** (Ger.). A kind of biscuit, which has an incrustation of salt, and is supposed to excite thirst.

Also, *pretzel-bread*.

**Prickly-pear** (*Opuntia vulgaris*). A sort of flat, jointed cactus, with an insipid fruit, which grows along the Atlantic coast, from Massachusetts southward, in sandy fields and about dry rocks.

One variety is also called *Indian-fig*.



**Primary meeting.** A preliminary meeting held by the voters of a district, usually for the purpose of making nominations or electing delegates to nominating conventions.

**Priminary.** In the South, a predicament, a dilemma, a difficulty.  
Provincial in North of England.

**Priming.** *Not a priming to*, of no account; not to be compared to.  
See *circumstance*.

A backwood's term, in allusion to the old fashioned "priming," before the days of the breech-loaders.

**Primp.** A woman's word meaning to linger over one's toilet; to seek to enhance one's personal appearance by various little arts and devices.

Hence, *primpy*, meaning a woman given to the adornment of her person, by dress, jewels, cosmetics, etc.

**Prince-Albert.** What is known, in England, as a frock-coat.

**Prink** (Old Eng.). Still persisting, in the Eastern States, in sense of to ornament, to adorn.

This word is found in Spencer, and other writers of the Elizabethan period.

**Probate.** A legist's word, meaning to prove (with regard to wills).

**Procession (to).** In colonial times, to go about in order to settle the boundaries of, as land. The word is still used in North Carolina and Tennessee.

**Produce.** A generic name for crops.

**Professor.** (1) Applied indiscriminately to any one who makes a profession of anything.

(2) One who has made a public profession of a religion, and has been admitted to membership in the form peculiar to each church, wherever such a rite prevails instead of confirmation.

In this sense, professor is a usage of the 17th century, if indeed it does not belong to an earlier period, as it can be found with the above meaning, besides other places, in the greatest of Milton's prose treatises.

**Progress.** To move forward; to advance.

This old form, now obsolete in England, was long used in Devonshire, from which county came a great number of the early settlers of the colonies.

**Progue.** In New Jersey, to search for anything imbedded in the mud, as clams, terrapins, etc. by means of a sounding rod.

**Prohibition.** The prohibition, by law, of the sale of intoxicating liquors; the political doctrine which would forbid, by law, the sale of alcoholic beverages.

Hence, also, a *prohibitionist*, meaning one in favor of such prohibition.

**Pronghorn.** A species of antelope (*Antilocapre americana*) found on the plains west of the Missouri river, and so called from the fact that each horn has a prong jutting out of it.

See *cabrée*.

**Pronounce.** To turn out ; to prove. A curious usage, current in Nantucket, where a horse, for instance, when being put through his paces, will *pronounce* well or ill, as the case may be.

**Proper.** In parts of the South, especially North Carolina, often heard in sense of handsome.

**Propio**, pro-'pe-o (Sp.). In the formerly Spanish States, a word applied to a common or land owned by a municipality, and reserved, under the Spanish American law, for the benefit of the community at large, such as the erection of public buildings, markets, etc.

**Prospect.** In mining phraseology, the out-turn of the first panful of earth washed. Upon its result, the miner decides whether it is good or bad prospect, and governs himself accordingly.

**Proven.** This old participle, originally a Scotticism, still survives amongst most American writers.

**Provider.** A husband ; a mate. A very sarcastic allusion, indeed, to the dull submission of the average American husband, whose sole object must be to provide for all the wishes of his wife.

**Provincialist.** In Canada, an upholder of State's rights.

**Provincials.** A name given in Canada, in 1775, to the American insurgents in active campaign against the authority of England.

The American armies, at the outbreak of the War of the Revolution, were also called, in Canada, *Provincial troops*.

**Prox.** Formerly used in Rhode Island and Connecticut, in electoral contests, but now obsolete or nearly so. The meaning of *prox* was a list of candidates, or a ticket, handed to the voter.

Hence, *proxy*, meaning the day of election itself.

**Pry.** A large lever employed to raise or move heavy substances. (Worcester.)

Also, to *pry*, to force open with a tool used as a lever ; to move or raise by means of a large lever.

Still provincial in some parts of England.

**Publishment.** In New England, publication, especially of banns of marriage.

**Puck.** In the North, often heard for a blow.

**Pueblo** (Sp.). (1) A town or village, in the formerly Spanish States, especially New Mexico. Also, a village of the semi-civilized Catholic Indians of New Mexico, whence their name of Pueblo Indians.

(2) A name applied, in New Mexico and Arizona, to some very peculiar ruins pertaining to the early aborigines, who are said to have been the legitimate descendants of the ancient *Asteecs*, the former rulers of the country. These ruins, or *Pueblo remains*, are especially numerous in the region between the Rio Grande, Colorado, and Gila rivers.

**Puff-workers.** In newspaper slang, reporters who make a business of writing paragraphs puffing theatrical performers.

**Pukes.** (1) Nausea, attack of vomiting. "The baby has the *pukes*."

(2) A nickname applied to the inhabitants of Missouri.

**Pull.** (1) A profit, in business or industry.

(2) An advantage held over another person.

(3) Influence or favor with anyone, especially in politics.

**Pull (to).** (1) To fire on any one, i. e. to pull trigger.

(2) To arrest; to raid a gambling-house or house of ill-fame.

**Pull-back-dress.** A woman's gown tightly draped in front, which first came in vogue about 1876 or 1877, and was so called from all the fulness of it being taken to the back.

**Pull-doo** (Fr. *poule d'eau*, water-hen). A small black duck found in the bays and inlets of the Gulf of Mexico.

**Pullikins.** A Kentucky word for a dentist's forceps.

**Pullman.** A drawing-room, or sleeping-car, so called from the name of the first constructor of these luxurious vehicles.

Now, also, a name thoroughly naturalized in England.

**Pull out.** To abandon; to withdraw.

**Pull up stakes.** To remove; to change one's quarters; to pack up one's furniture or baggage, preparatory to a removal.

The allusion, of course, is to pulling up the stakes of a tent, and is a vivid reminiscence of a nomad life amid the pathless wildernesses of the Far West.

**Pulque, pool'-kay** (Sp.). In the South-West, a well known intoxicating beverage, prepared from the sap of the maguay (*Agave americana*).

**Pumpkins.** See *some pumpkins*.

**Puncheons.** In Georgia, and adjoining States, rough-hewn logs, which being smoothed on one side are laid upon sleepers as flooring.

**Punish.** To hurt or annoy. "My sore *punished* me all day."

Also used, intransitively, in sense of suffering for lack of something.

More especially current in Pennsylvania and Kentucky.

**Punk.** In Canada and New England, rotten-wood, or touchwood, used as tinder.

**Punk (to).** To push, or strike with the fist. Probably, a corruption of to punch, with which it is identical in meaning.

**Punk-pudding.** In the Adirondacks, a name applied to the bittern.  
Also, *stake-driver*.

**Punky** (Ind. *ponk*). An almost invisible but fierce little gnat that bedevils all travelers in Northern woods, and whose bite is much like the stinging of a spark of fire.

**Punt.** In Maryland, Virginia, and other States, a canoe-like boat, hollowed out of a large tree.

In England, a *punt* is a flat-bottomed boat.

**Pupelo.** A whilom term for cider-brandy, formerly manufactured to a great extent in New England.

**Push.** The latest addition to current slang is the use of the word "push," in the sense that "the fancy" and "the talent" have been employed to designate the followers or admirers of some form of sport. How long the term has been thus used orally it is impossible to say; its first appearance in print, however, was synchronal with the big cycle shows of a few years ago in Chicago, New York and Boston, when it was applied to the army of agents, advertisers and others engaged in pushing the sales of the various makes of wheels.

From that restricted application its scope was gradually broadened to include all devotees of the bicycle, and now it is in quite common use to characterize the followers of racing, base ball, rowing, athletics, etc.

**Push-buggy.** Baby-carriage.

**Push-cart.** A truck or barrow, pushed by hand.

**Pussy.** In New England, often heard for fat, corpulent.

**Pussy-willow** (*Salix discolor*). The swamp-willow, so called from the softness of its expanding cat-kins in early spring.

**Put.** To start or go away, to be off.

Hence, the common imperative *put*, used for *Begone!*

Also, to *put off*, to *put out*.

**Put a head on one.** To punch or assault another, and figuratively to silence, or shut up another.

**Put down one's foot.** To be very decided, very determined in a course of action.

President Lincoln was continually represented, by the Northern papers, as *putting his foot down* for the removal of Gen. McClellan or Gen. Hooker, or some other object, popular at the time.

**Put it in strong.** To speak or act with emphasis; to express oneself strongly, or in strong language.

**Put it on ice.** To charge it up.

**Put on style.** To give oneself airs; to make a boastful or showy parade, specially referring to singularity in one's speech, dress, or habit.

**Putten** (Old Eng.). The old participle of to put, still surviving in parts of New England and New York.

**Putter.** To needlessly engage in fussy work of no special benefit to any one.

In England, "to potter" means to trifle, to busy or perplex oneself about trifles.

**Putto** (Fr. *poteau*, a stake). A familiar term, among South-Western settlers, for a stake firmly set in the ground, to which horses and cattle are fastened.

**Put up.** A forcible injunction to silence, somewhat equivalent to "shut up!"

## Q

**Quackle.** To suffocate, to choke.  
Still provincial in England.

**Quadroon** (Sp. *cuarteron*). The offspring of a mulatto and a white man.

**Quahaug** (Ind.). The popular name of the hard clam in New England, New York, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania.

The name "Venus Mercenaria" was applied to the *quahaug* on account of its having been once in general use as currency, among the Indians.

Also, *quahog*.

**Quaker.** An imitation gun made of wood or other material, and so called from its inoffensive character.

Also, *quaker gun*.

**Quaker City.** The city of Philadelphia, from association with William Penn, a Quaker, and settlement of Quakers.

**Quamish** (*Phalangium esculentum*). A variety of kamas root (q. v.) much relished by Indians, in the West.

Also, *camus plant*.

**Quarter.** A twenty-five cent piece, or a quarter of a dollar.

**Quarter-horse.** A horse that runs the first quarter better than the rest of the race.

Hence, also, figuratively, a person that begins well, but has little staying power.

**Quarters.** In the South, a name formerly applied to the negro-huts on a plantation, and still surviving in some places to designate the houses of black people.

**Quashee.** A nickname for a negro.

**Quate.** A common name for a quoit.

**Quawk.** In parts of New England, the night-heron.

**Quebrada,** kay-brah'-dah (Sp. *quebrar*, to break). In Texas and New Mexico, a strip of broken country, cut up by ravines.

**Queer.** Mildly insane, with a connotation of ludicrousness.

In England, queer serves to express the sensation of being a little "out of sorts," as when one does not feel very well.

In Old English, "queer" or "quier" was a common prefix, meaning bad or wicked.

**Quemado,** kay-mah'-doh (Sp. *quemar*, to burn). In Texas, a burnt district. Compare with Fr. *brûlé*.

**Quick-hatch.** In the Hudson's Bay region, a name applied to the wolverine, being a corruption of the Cree Indian name of that animal.

Noted by Ellis in 1748.

**Quiddling.** Uncertain; unsteady.

**Quiler.** A New-Jerseyism for a holdback strap.

See *side-strap*.

**Quiliou,** pron. kee-lee-oo (Ind. Ojibway *kiniou*, or *kiniv*, the great or war-eagle). A word used by the voyageurs to designate the eagle, and especially the great or war-eagle. The eagle called *piskiniou* by the Ojibways of Lake Superior, is named by the French voyagers "quiliou bâtarde," or *bastard quiliou*.

**Quiode,** kee-odd (Fr. C.). A species of dish, prepared with the heads of the cod-fish, and of which the fishermen of Gaspé, in the Gulf of St Lawrence, are particularly fond.

**Quote,** ke-oh'-tay (Mex. *quiote*). In Texas and New Mexico, the fruit of the maguey, which is always baked before being eaten.

**Quirt** (Sp. *cuarta*). In Texas and New Mexico, a riding-whip, made of raw hide and leather plaited together, with a piece of iron in the handle.

Hence, to *quirt*, to break in wild horses.

## R

**R.** The pure Yankee curiously misplaces his "r's", and even omits them when they ought to be heard, as in *ater*, *arter*, for after. With him this letter is subjected to as many indignities as the letter "h" is among uneducated people in England.

**Rababou** (Fr. C.). Among the old voyageurs, a name formerly applied to a concoction of flour and pemican.

**Raccoon** (Ind. Alg. *aroughcun*, meaning scratcher). A well-known fur bearing animal allied to the opossum (Proeyon lotor), and found in nearly all over North America. In folk-speech, generally cut down to *coon*.

*Aroughcun*—to spell it in the form used by captain John Smith (1624)—had already got down to *rackoon* in the writings of Roger Williams (1643), though at a later period we find it called *aroughena*. It is, afterwards, *roscone*, *roacon*, *racoune*. It appears as *raccon* in "Josselyn" (1675), and at last as *raccoon* in Beverly's Virginia (1705).

In view of such overwhelming evidence for the aboriginal origin of the word, it must seem strange that so austere an etymologist as Mr. Skeat, in England, and even Worcester and Webster, on this side of the ocean, should have fallen into the error of considering *raccoon* as merely a singular corruption of the French *raton*. Indeed, all we can afford here to give to those scholars is the benefit of the spelling *ratoon*, found in Wilson's "Account of Carolina" (1682), and which suggests that a mistake in its etymology may have been made very early.

**Rackabones.** Applied either to a wreck of a horse, or to an emaciated human being.

In England, "racks" is the name given by horse-copers to the bones of a dead horse.

**Radicals.** A name given, at the time of the anti-slavery crisis, to the most advanced among the Republicans, who were willing to sacrifice every constitutional right, rather than give up the Union.

Also, contemptuously shortened to *Rads*.

**Raft.** (1) A float of wood, boards, or logs, often of a gigantic size, which is floated down from the interior to the tide-waters.

In no sense, however, distinctively American, except so far as size is concerned. The log rafts formed in the head-waters, flowing into the Mississippi, are especially of almost incredible dimensions.

Hence, also, to *raft*, to transport on a raft; *rafting*, the business of constructing and floating rafts; *raftsman*, one who follows the business of rafting.

(2) The accumulation of timber or fallen trees which, floating down the great rivers of the West, are arrested by flats or shallow places, sometimes forming a formidable obstacle to navigation.

(3) A vulgar expression for a host, a large number or quantity, from the immense size of some rafts of timber or logs. "A whole *raft* of children."

**Rag.** (1) A cant term for a dollar.

Similarly, *rag money*, meaning paper money.

(2) In the South, a common term for any piece of linen or cotton-cloth. Also, a towel, a sheet, and even, vulgarly, a pocket-handkerchief.

A similar divergence exists in respect to rocks, for stones; dirt, for earth, etc.

**Rag carpet.** A carpet of home manufacture, made from strips of cloth knitted or sewn together.

In England, a "serap hearthrug."

**Raid.** A predatory incursion, and especially a warlike invasion on horseback into the enemy's country.

"Raid," derived from the verb to ride, is an old Scotch word, well known to all readers of Scott's poems, from the lines:

Widow and Saxon maid  
Long shall lament our *raid*.

(Lady of the Lake.)

Hence, also, to *raid*, to roust out, to make legal search.

**Rail.** A piece of timber, used in fencing, whether cleft, hewn or sawn.

In England, the word means necessarily a round piece.

**Rail (to).** To travel by railway.

**Rail-riding.** A savage punishment, which consists, when popular resentment against a person is fairly aroused, in placing the culprit upon the sharp edge of a rail, to be carried through the streets, the finals being generally reached in a ducking, or tarring and feathering.

**Railroad.** The modern method of transportation by rail, though first introduced in England, was so speedily adopted and so widely used in the United States, that a different terminology seems to have arisen at once in the two countries, and to have maintained itself since. It may also be remarked that whilst the English railway was a development of the old stage-coach, the American railroad was a substitute for a steamboat, a fact which may account, in a certain measure, for the striking difference of the technicalities, in use on both sides of the ocean.

The following list comprises the more important variations;

UNITED STATES,	ENGLAND
Baggage.	Luggage.
Baggage car.	Luggage van.



Buffer.	Bumper.
Car.	Carriage.
Check rails.	Guard rails.
Conductor.	Guard.
Cow-catcher, or pilot.	Plough.
Depot.	Station.
Engineer.	Driver, or engine-driver.
Fireman.	Stoker.
Freight train.	Goods train.
Frog.	Crossing plate.
Grade.	Gradient.
Railroad.	Railway.
Switches.	Points.
Switching off.	Shunting.
Ticket office.	Booking office.
Track, or roadbed.	Line.
Trucks (under the cars).	Bogies.
Turn-out.	Siding.

**Railroad (to).** (1) As an intransitive verb, to work on a railroad, to be attached to a railroad.

Hence, *railroader*, an employé on a railway.

(2) Transitive, to do a thing hastily; to push through at a rapid pace. "He was *railroaded* to the penitentiary."

**Railroad City.** The city of Indianapolis, Indiana, from its being a centre for many lines of railway.

**Rail-splitter.** One of the many nicknames applied to Abraham Lincoln.

**Raincloak.** In the West, a waterproof cloak.

**Raise.** (1) To grow crops. To bring up, to rear from childhood. This use of the word is legitimate English of the 17th century, as witness the following sentence, from the Memoirs of Lord Hertbert of Chertbury, written about 1645:

My grandfather's power....was so great, that divers ancestors....were his servants, and *raised* by him.

Also applied, in the Southern States, to the breeding of negroes.

(2) To breed cattle, horses, etc.

(3) To fraudulently increase the amount of a cheque or bank-bill.

(4) To stake a higher amount than one's opponent, at cards. "To *raise* a bet," same as to *go better* (q. v.).

(5) To procure, or obtain, with a connotation of difficulty or discreditable manner. "To *raise* money."

Also to *make a raise*, i. e. to make a haul, to raise the wind.

(6) To make up, fabricate, invent, as when a tale is *raised* against somebody.

(7) To build, to erect, as when neighbors assemble at a *raising*, or *raising bee*, to help erecting a house, a barn, etc. in sense of setting up the frame of a building.

**Raise Cain.** To have a "high old time." To make a disturbance or commotion.

Also, to *raise a racket*.

**Raise hail.** To cause a disturbance; to kick up a row. Used in a somewhat milder sense than "to raise Cain," which expression indicates more heat and passion.

**Raise hair.** To scalp, in the vernacular of trappers and frontiersmen, and hence, idiomatically, to defeat, to overwhelm, as when one is said of having succeeded in "raising his opponent's hair."

Also, to *lift hair*.

**Raise one's Ebenezer.** A phrase of Puritan origin, meaning to put oneself in evidence, that is, in Biblical parlance, to set one's light on top of a hill.

**Raise sand.** To get furiously angry.

**Raising** (Old Eng.). A favorite term still surviving, in New England, for yeast. This old word, which is a literal translation of the French "levain," was thus used by Gayton in his "Festivous Notes on Don Quixote."

**Rake up the persimmons.** To pocket the stakes or spoils. The equivalent of the English slang "to pull in the pieces."

**Rampick.** Any dead tree, and, more especially, a trunk of a dead tree standing after the top has fallen. (Nfld. N. B. and N. S.)

Also, *rampike*, *rampole*.

**Ranch** (Sp. *rancho*). In the West, and on the Pacific coast, a term which has become very popular for an estate, a farm, and especially a cattle station, comprising the industry itself, with its outfit.

In Northern Mexico, a *rancho* is a rude hut of posts and boughs of trees, in which vaqueros or herdsmen seek shelter, and a collection of which form a village.

Hence, to *ranch*, to engage in the cattle-raising industry; *rancher*, *ranchman*, a cattle-raiser; *ranchero*, one who keeps a ranch, or lives in a ranch; also, in the extreme South-West, a peasant.

**Randy.** In Newfoundland and parts of the Canadian Maritime provinces, used both as a noun and verb for the amusement of coasting, or sliding down hill, as in the phrases: "Give us a *randy*. The boys are *randying*."

To *raise randy*, to create a disturbance.

**Range.** In the South-West, a cattleman's term, for the ground or prairie over which cattle are allowed to pasture.

A distinct word from ranch.

Hence, colloquially, to *go over the range*, to die, a simile drawn from the fact that, originally, the phrase was at first applied to beasts which, having strayed from the main herd, were apt to meet with fatal mishap.

**Rangy.** (1) Roomy, commodious; having or permitting range or scope.

(2) In stock-breeding, used in sense of a roving character, adapted for ranging or running about. Also said of an animal which is large, or loosely built.

**Rantankerous.** Given to quarrelsomeness.

Probably derived from "rantan" which, in Old English, signified a drunken row, or else it may be only a variant of *cantankerous*.

**Rapper.** A contemptuous term for a spiritualist.

**Rare.** An epithet applied to half-cooked meat, and employed here so generally that, as contrasted with "underdone," the corresponding expression in modern England, its use may be looked upon, under ordinary circumstances, as a test of nationality.

*Rare* has never been common in the literary language; but its use has been widely spread in the dialects of the North of England, and in those of the Eastern counties. Dryden speaks of new-laid eggs:

Turned by a gentle fire and roasted *rare*.

The word is not derived, as commonly stated, from the Anglo-Saxon "hrere," meaning raw or crude, but from the old Eng. "rear" of which Grose says: "Rear," early, soon. Meat under-roasted is said to be "rear," from being taken too soon from the fire."

**Rat.** (1) Among trade unions, a "blackleg" or "turncoat," i. e. a workman deserting the common cause. Also, a workman who works under price.

Hence, to *rat*, to work under price.

(2) In the South, a contemptuous epithet once applied to those who, having fled during the war, dared not return for fear of consequences.

**Rating.** The estimated wealth or credit of a person, as stated on the lists of a Commercial Agency.

**Ratoons** (Sp. *retono*, a sprout or shoot). The cuttings of sugar-cane of the second and third year's growth, which serve for planting new fields.

Hence, also, to *ratoon*.

**Rats.** An ejaculation, expressive of contemptuous sarcasm or indifference.

**Rat-thieving.** Sneak-thieving; petty pilfering from carriages, etc.

**Rattled.** Confused ; nervous ; perplexed.

From the ordinary signification of "rattle," to shake.

(2) In California, said of horses sick from eating *rattleweed*.

**Rattlers.** In New Jersey, said of the poorest kind of oysters, because they rattle in their shells.

**Ravage** (Fr. C.). The destruction of leaves and young shrubs, made by the original when feeding.

**Rawhide.** A whip made of raw cowhide, and mainly used by cowboys and plainsmen on the cattle ranges of the West.

**Reach.** In the tide-water district of New Jersey, said of a stretch of a circuitous creek between two sharp bends. Such *reaches* are from 200 feet to a mile or more in length.

**Ready (to).** An old Scotch idiom still surviving in our speech, and meaning to make ready, to set to rights or in order.

The term is, however, mainly used in its original form of *redd*, of which Grose says : *Redd*, to untangle or separate. "To *red* up a room" is a marked provincialism in Pennsylvania, from whence it has passed into Ohio, and the well-known following old proverb may fitfully here be recalled :

A seamstress that sews and would make her work *redde*,  
Must use a long needle and a short thread.

**Real.** In general use for very. "I'm *real* glad to see you."

**Real estate.** A common phrase for land, house property, and the like.

In England, "real estate" is strictly restricted to the technical province of law.

.... a mere big sounding, vulgar phrase for houses and land, and so used is a marked and unjustifiable Americanism.

(R. G. WHITE, Words and their Uses.)

**Reboso**, ray-boh'-so (Sp.). In formerly Spanish States a long veil worn by women over the head and shoulders.

**Reciprocity.** Among Canadian politicians, that which lies between free trade and "commercial union."

A variant is *unrestricted reciprocity*.

**Reckon** (Old Eng.). To calculate ; to conjecture ; to form a judgment.

The Southern equivalent of the Northern "guess," and the New-England "calculate."

This word, which is still provincial in some counties of the North of England, in sense of to think, to believe, etc. is a survival of an old English usage :

For I *reckon* that the sufferings of this time.....

(St Paul, Romans, VIII, 18.)

- Recommend.** An abbreviated form of recommendation, current in New England in sense of a commendatory notice.
- Reconstruction.** At the close of the Civil War, a term applied by Northern statesmen to the building up anew of the shattered edifice of the South.
- Record.** (1) Any higher success, in any particular pursuit, than has previously been authenticated.  
 (2) The aggregate of actions and doings in the past of a man, which can furnish arguments for or against him, as the case may be.
- Red (to).** See *ready*.
- Red brush.** The part of Kentucky between the mountains and the Ohio river. Also, an inhabitant of that region.
- Red cent.** The smallest copper coin, the equivalent of the English "copper farthing."  
 "Not a red cent," out of money.  
 Also, simply, *red*. "He is not worth a *red*."
- Red eye.** In the West, a well-known term for whiskey of a raw and fiery nature.
- Red-head** (*Fuligula ferina*). A species of duck much esteemed for its flesh, and so called from the color of its head.
- Red-horse.** (1) A species of sucker (*Catostomus duquesnii*), found in the Ohio and its tributaries, and so called from its red color and large size.  
 (2) A nickname applied to an inhabitant of Kentucky.
- Red-hot.** A common intensitive. "A *red-hot* time, a *red-hot* temper, etc.
- Red-root.** A shrub of the Far West, in the Rocky Mountains, producing a tea not unlike the genuine article.  
 See *New Jersey tea*.
- Red sumac.** A tree, the leaves of which are largely used, by Indians and trappers, as a substitute for tobacco. See *kini-kinik*.  
 Also, *red-willow*.
- Red tape.** Official routine, from color of string tying official papers.
- Redemptioners.** In the early colony days, a name given, in Virginia, to emigrants from Europe who had agreed to sell their services for a given time, in order to pay or "redeem" their passage-money and other expenses.
- Reformists.** In Canadian history, the name of the political party, formed by Papineau in 1820, on the basis of the reform of the constitution, and which was the chief factor in bringing the insurrection of 1837-38.

**Regent.** In the State of New York, a member of the governing body which is invested with the superintendence of all colleges, academies, and schools in the State.

**Regret.** A note of apology declining an invitation.

**Regular.** In newspaper parlance, a general news dispatch, i. e. one coming from one of the usual news or press associations.

**Regulators.** In those States where Lynch law reigns supreme, a name applied to those self-constituted guardians of public virtue and morality, who form "Vigilance Committees" and join in lynching parties.

**Religious.** In the West, often said of a horse who is free from vice.

**Remonta** (Sp.). A Spanish word in use on the plains of the South-West, to signify a group of saddle-horses.

**Remuda**, ray-moo'-dah (Sp.). In Texas, a "bunch" of horses, about a score. Usually applied to geldings only.

In Spain, *remuda* is more especially applied to a change or relay of horses.

**Renversé** (Fr. C.). Among the French-Canadians, a tract of forest covered with trees blown down by storms.

Compare with *brûlé*.

**Reparadero**, ray-par-ah-der'-o (Sp.). In Texas, a part of a pasture fenced in, into which herders run cattle or horses.

**Repeater.** A voter who registers his vote more than once at an election.

**Reportorial.** Pertaining to the duties or functions of a reporter.

**Republicans.** One of the two great political parties of the United States, and a party name which has been several times adopted in the history of American politics.

The name Democratic Republicans was first suggested, in 1793, as a desirable substitute for Anti-Federalists, but in 1805 the appellation Democratic was dropped, a marked distinction being thenceforward observable between Republicans and Democrats. The name subsequently fell into disuetude, but was permanently revived, in 1856, as a political cognomen, through the opposition of the Republicans to the extension of slavery. Four years later the party came into power, and after having abolished slavery and subdued the rebellion, enjoyed an uninterrupted lease of power until 1884, on the election of Grover Cleveland.

**Reservation.** Land set apart or reserved for some public use, as for schools, the Indians, etc.

Also, *reserve*.

**Resolve.** A resolution ; a determination. Generally used in sense of a legal or official determination, and in connection with the transactions of public bodies.

**Restitutionists.** A religious sect of Massachusetts, whose chief article of faith is a belief in an immediate return of all things to their original form and purity.

**Restrictionist.** In Canada, an advocate of a Protective Tariff.

**Result.** In New England, the decision or determination of a council or deliberative assembly. (Webster.)

**Resurrect.** To engage in body-snatching, and, figuratively, to revive or bring to light a second time.

Also, to *resurrectionize*.

**Retiracy.** (1) Retirement.

(2) A competency, on which a man may retire.

**Retirement.** Withdrawal ; removal. "The *retirement* of the resolutions from the Senate."

**Revamp.** To mend ; to repair ; to patch up. Originally an exclusively shoemaker's term, derived from "to wamp," which meant to put new upper leather to shoes.

**Reventon,** ray-ven-tone', (Sp. *reventar*, to burst). In Texas and New Mexico, a spring bursting forth from the earth.

See *charco*.

**Reverent.** In Georgia, and adjoining States, used in sense of strong, potent, as *reverent* whiskey.

**Rewrite man.** In newspaper parlance, an experienced reporter who has the gift of unerringly seeing what is valuable in a story, and rewriting it into terse and picturesque style, so that it stands out. This is a development of the last two years.

**Rice-birds.** A nickname for the inhabitants of South Carolina, from their alleged fondness for boiled rice.

**Rich-weed.** See *stone-root*.

**Ride.** To carry ; to transport ; to convey by cart. Often heard especially in city of New York. "To *ride* a box or a bale of goods."

**Rider.** In legislative practice, a bill added to another bill, so that the two may be passed together as one bill, as when, for instance, a measure which would be vetoed if presented by itself, is attached to some important appropriation bill.

In common speech, a rider is the top-rail of a zig-zag fence.

**Ride up.** Said of a collar. "Your collar *rides up* behind."

**Ridiculous.** Often heard, especially in remote parts of New England, in sense of detestable, abominable, scandalous.

**Riding-rock.** In the South, a conspicuous rock or land-mark in the middle of a stream which is used to show the depth of the water, and as an indication that the river is fordable or not.

**Riding-way.** A ford.  
See *out of ride*.

**Rifle.** (1) An old corruption of "ripple" primarily applied, in Pennsylvania, to the rocky obstructions of the Susquehanna river, and afterwards extended to any obstruction, or obstacle, and metaphorically to any misunderstanding or quarrel.

(2) A rapid, or place in a stream where a swift current, striking upon rocks, produces a boiling motion in the water.

**Riffles.** In mining, parallel strips at the bottom of a sluice, so arranged that they can be easily taken out when the time comes to "clean up." These riffles cause the separation of the gold from the lighter pebbles by setting up little cross currents in the sluice stream, in the eddies of which the grains of precious metal are dropped, only to be recovered by the use of quicksilver during the *clean-up*.

**Riffs.** People of the slums, the "riff-raff." Especially current in New York city.

**Rig.** A common wood for a horse and wagon, i. e. a team.

**Right.** Fully, well. "I couldn't hear him *right*. I don't like it *right*."

**Right along.** Without cessation, continuously.

**Right away.** Directly, immediately.

**Right here.** Here, at this spot, at this time.

**Right now.** Immediately.

**Right smart,** Many, a great quantity. "We raised *right smart* of potatoes this year."

**Rile.** To render a liquid turbid by stirring up the sediment, and metaphorically to make angry, to stir up anger.

It *riled* me so, that I just steps up to him. ....intending to kick him down stairs.

(Sam Slick, Human Nature.)

Now nearly obsolete in England, its use being restricted to some country people in Norfolk and Essex, but said to be current in New England, to which region it was probably transported, in early colonial times, in the person of some East Anglican thieves.



Hence, *rily*, or *riley*, turbid, excited to resentment, vexed. This form is exclusively confined to the New World.

**Ring.** A combination of politicians, speculators, etc. who play into each other's hands for mutual advantage; a coterie of men banded together for their own advantage, pecuniary or otherwise; a combination of merchants or manufacturers to raise prices, or to secure other advantages.

Curiously enough, the origin of the word is not to be found in the usual sense of "ring," as given by the dictionaries, but is said to be as follows. Fifty years ago a New York druggist, who was a member of the board of aldermen, formed what would now be called a "boodling combine," which created no little scandal at the time, but has long since been forgotten. His name was Charles H. Ring, and thus originated the use of the word "ring" as applied to a syndicate of political spoilsmen.

**Ringer.** (1) A member of a *ring*.

(2) A name given to a horse entered in a race with others far below his class in speed, by a ring of dishonest turfmen.

**Ring-snake.** A species of black snake once common in New England, and which was so called from a yellow ring around its neck.

**Rip.** To go at a great pace. "Let her *rip*."

**Rip out.** To utter with vehemence. An energetic slang phrase, rarely ever used except with the addition of an oath. "*To rip out an oath*".

**Ripper.** (1) An active, brisk, or lively person.

Also, *rip-roaring*.

(2) A new and ingenious implement of burglars, used in opening safes or vaults with iron surfaces.

**Rip-rap** (to). In river embankments, to throw down stone for foundations, allowing it to find its own level.

**Rip-roaring.** A commonly colloquial intensitive for brisk, lively, in sense of an active, dashing individual or thing; a tearer, or driver.

Also, *rip-snorter*, *rip-snorting*, *rip-staver*.

See *ripper*, *roarer*.

**Ripsnorter.** A tearing, driving fellow.

**Rip tail snorter.** One who creates a sensation, who attracts much attention.

**Rising.** Exceeding; more than; upwards of. "There were *rising* five thousand bushels."

Also, *rising of*.

In some parts of the South, they use the phrase *and the rise* to mean and more, more than that.

**Riz bread.** In New Jersey, said of yeast bread, i. e. not raised with soda.

**Roach.** A cockroach.

**Roach (to).** Denotes the trimming or cutting of horses' manes, what in England is called "to hog."

A figure probably taken from the peculiar curve in some square sails, which, in nautical language, is called a roach."

**Road-beat.** In Canada and the north of New York State, said of the part of a highway under the control of a single path-master.

**Roanoke.** A Virginian generic name for Indian shell-money.

See *sewan* and *wampum*.

**Roarer.** A noisy self-assertive individual.

Other intensive variants are *ring-tailed roarer*, *ringclipper*.

**Roasting-ears.** A popular name, in the South and West, for half-ripe Indian corn, either raw or roasted before a fire or in hot ashes.

**Robber.** Any kind of thief.

In England, the word has always a connotation of violence.

**Robe (Fr.).** The dressed skin of a buffalo, among trappers and hunters, a *pack of robes* being ten skins tied in a pack. This term is especially limited to the skin of the buffalo, those of other animals being simply called skins.

*Buffalo robe*, a skin ornamented and lined, and used as a covering in a sleigh.

**Robin.** (*Turdus migratorius*). A species of \*thrush, destroying incredible numbers of grubs, and which bears only a slight resemblance to the robin redbreast of England.

**Rock.** (1) Often heard, especially in the South and West, in sense of stone.

*Door rock*, in the West, the door-stone or step.

(2) In the South, a slang term for a piece of money.

Hence, to *rock*, to throw stones at.

**Rockaway.** A light one-horse vehicle, which originally was probably a "Rockaway wagon," so called from the famous Rockaway beach, near New York city.

**Rock bed.** A foundation, and metaphorically the root of a matter, the gist of a question.

Also, *rock-bottom*, which, in sense of "lowest," is often used in speaking of prices, as *rock-bottom prices*.

See *bed-rock*, and *bottom-rock*.

**Rock-cod.** In Massachusetts, a red colored variety of cod-fish.

**Rock-er.** (1) A rocking-chair.

(2) A miner's contrivance for washing gold, being a box set upon rockers, and divided into two spaces, separated by a mesh. The gravel is thrown into the upper, the apparatus is rocked gently back and forth, the finer particles, sand and gold, pass through the netting and are caught below in a cloth. The separation is then completed by panning, and the gold is recovered by amalgamation with quick-silver.

See *cradle*.

**Rock fence.** Often heard for stone wall.

**Rock-rooted.** A qualification applied to the Democratic party, fondly by its members, and in derision by its foes.

**Rockeage.** Parched and pulverized Indian corn, mixed with sugar.

Also, *yokeage*.

See *nocake*.

**Rocky.** Shaky, either financially and physically.

**Rodeo,** ro-day'-o (Sp.). In Texas, a term for a *round-up* (q. v.).

**Rogne.** (Fr.). In the Gulf of St. Lawrence, and on the fishing-banks of Newfoundland, a word applied to the eggs of the cod, used in France as baits for sardines. The same word as our English "roe," which was formerly spelled "roan."

**Rollejees.** (Dutch *rolletje*, little roll). And old and favorite dish of the descendants of the Dutch, in New York and New Jersey, made up of small sausages stuffed with mince meat, which are cut into slices and fried.

Also, *rullichies*.

**Rolling.** Has in the West the peculiar meaning of undulating. Hence, *rolling country*, *rolling lands*, *rolling prairies*, for a country, lands, etc. which present to the eye a succession of elevations and depressions.

**Rolling roads.** Public roads, in Maryland and Virginia, so called from the old custom of rolling tobacco to market in hogsheads.

**Rolling-weed.** See *tumble-weed*.

**Roll out.** In the South-West, to begin a journey, or commence an undertaking, from the fact that for many years the ox-wagon was the only means of transportation in Texas.

**Roly-poly.** A game played with a rubber ball and small holes dug in the ground.

**Roncher.** A generic name closely associated with any thing of great size or superlativeness. Thus an overwhelming calamity, or a blow of great force, would be apt to be called a *roncher*.

See *sockdolager*

**Rookery.** In California, said of a school of seals.

**Room (to).** To lodge ; to occupy a room, either single or with another. Hence, *roomer*, a lodger, one who lives in a room.

**Roomkeeping.** Living in a room.

**Roorback.** A falsehood ; a bogus newspaper article ; especially a false allegation issued for political purposes, and now a general term for any political forgery or fiction.

The word was derived from the fact that, in 1844, a Whig newspaper, the "Ithaca ( N. Y. ) Chronicle," published for political purposes alleged extracts from the *Travels of Baron Roorback*, which were proved almost on their appearance to have been a set up scheme to deceive the public. Thereafter, it was easy to reply to every charge preferred against the Democratic candidate, by pronouncing it another *roorback*.

**Rooster.** A male fowl ; a cock.

**Rope (to).** To catch and secure an animal by means of a lasso, or lariat, and, figuratively, to swindle, to induce one to enter a scheme in which there is strong probability that he will be cheated.

It may be here interesting to note that Shakespeare has already used "ropery" for "roguery."

Also, to *rope in*.

**Roper, Roper in.** One who ropes in, in either sense of the word.

Also, a decoy or "capper," for a gambling-house or for any other swindle.

**Rose-apple** (*Jambosa vulgaris*). A West-Indian fruit, which derives its name from its perfume.

**Ross.** In New England and the Middle States, applied to the parasitic scaly excrescence found on trees.

Still provincial in England.

**Rote.** In New England and the Canadian Maritime provinces, said of the noise of waves on the shore. More particularly, the sound of surf before a storm.

Also, *rut*.

**Rot-gut.** In the West, a word often applied to particularly bad and fiery whiskey.

This word is an Old English term, used as far back as in Heywood's "English Traveller" for a poor kind of drink, and still often heard in England in speaking of small beer.

**Roughness.** In the South, a term primarily applied to cornhusks used as fodder, from the roughness of the serrated blades, but now denoting any kind of coarse fodder as distinguished from grain.

**Roundabout.** In parts of the West, a boy's jacket reaching only to the waist.

**Rounder.** A New York slang term for a man given to the company of the "demi-monde."

One who is well acquainted with the town, especially the shady side of it.

**Roundhead.** In the North-West, frequently said of a Swede.

**Round snow.** Hard, hail-like snow which falls when a snow-storm is just turning to rain.

**Round-up.** On the cattle ranges of the West and South-West, the periodical stock-taking or collection of cattle for the purpose of branding.

Hence, to *round-up*, to collect, bring together.

**Round-wood.** A Maine term for the "Mountain ash."

**Rouser.** (1) Anything startling or abnormal, as a startling piece of news, or an exciting sermon.

(2) A dissipated man; a great talker, especially one who talks very loud and occasionally yells.

**Roustabout.** A dock laborer, or a steamboat hand in the Mississippi region. Somewhat equivalent to rough, although the roustabout, who is generally noisy, is not necessarily a rowdy.

Evidently derived from the old Eng. "roust," quoted by Jamieson as meaning to disturb.

**Rovers.** A nickname applied to the inhabitants of Colorado.

**Rowdy.** A street loafer and thumper; a species of blackguard disagreeably prevalent in large cities.

Derived from "row," in which the rowdy loves so much to engage.

**Row up.** To rebuke; to punish or scold severely.

An essentially Western phrase, dating back to the days when slaves, who had been delinquent in their work or disrespectful in their manners, were ordered to row up against the current the heavy keel-boats of early navigation on the Western rivers.

**Row up Salt river.** To court political defeat, discomfiture, oblivion.

A simile drawn from the fact that Salt River—a small tributary of the Ohio, in Kentucky—is especially difficult and painful to row up, from its tortuous channel, and from the abundance of its shallows and bars. A congressman from Kentucky having once made a happy allusion to the hardships connected with the navigation of Salt River, the word took the fancy of his audience and soon became very popular.

*To be rowed up Salt river*, to be politically defeated, whilst, if the defeat is very overwhelming, the unsuccessful party is said to be *rowed up to the very head-waters of Salt river*.

**Rubbed out.** Killed, or dead. A word akin to *wiped out*, whose signification is extended from the English slang use of the same term, meaning the fashion of rubbing out the names of friends on a slate or visiting list.

See *wiped out*.

**Rubber ice.** Thin ice that bends when skated upon.

**Rubber neck.** (1) A word of teasing repeated several times by one child to another, whom he has duped. Also, a person looking in vain for some one or something may be saluted, humorously, with *Rubber neck*.

(2) One who turns and stares or gazes with attention. Used with a certain connotation of contempt.

**Rubbers.** India-rubber over-shoes.

**Rudder-fish** (*Palinurus periformis*). A beautiful fish, abounding in the Southern waters, along the Atlantic coast.

**Rum.** A generic name for all kinds of spirits, or strong intoxicants, from the fact that, formerly, rum was the favorite liquor.

**Rum-bud.** A pimpy eruption on the face, caused by excessive tipping.

**Rum-hole.** A low drinking shop, or groggery.

Also, *rum-mill*.

**Rum-sucker.** An habitual toper.

**Run.** (1) In the South, a brook or small stream.

The word is, of course, akin to the verb to run, and corresponds, in this sense, to the Scottish "runnock," a drain or small stream.

(2) In railway parlance, the distance which an engine or a train has run in a given time.

**Run (to).** Used transitively in the sense of to have charge; to conduct, to manage a business or concern, from the government of a country to a newspaper or shop of any kind. It may even be said of a minister that he "runs" his church in such or such a way.

Also, intransitively, in sense of to stand for election to any elective office; to seek an appointment; to contend for a situation or position.

**Runagate.** In parts of the West, said of a woman who neglects her household affairs to go gossiping about the neighborhood.

**Run into the ground.** To overdo a thing, to go to excess, a metaphor borrowed from forcing burrowing animals to seek refuge underground, and well expressive of constant and close persecution, ending in destruction.

To mar a cause, action, or speech by overdoing it.

**Runner.** (1) A person whose business it is to solicit passengers for steam-boats and railroads.

(2) A ticket scalper.

(3) An engine driver.

**Run one's face.** To get goods on credit ; to swindle, on the strength of one's personal appearance, and plausible address.

Also, to *run one's shape*.

**Runt.** Very generally applied to cattle or to men inferior in size, and, by extension, to any contemptible or miserable creature. "Every family has its *runt*" is a familiar Yankee proverb arising from the fact that in every litter of pigs there is, almost invariably, one diminutive in size, what in England is called the "titman pig."

In England, "runt" is rarely used except among farmers, butchers, and like people.

**Run upon.** To make fun of ; to quiz.

**Rushers.** A miner's term for persons proceeding to the gold diggings, from the rush which generally takes place when a profitable "find" is announced.

**Rusticrat.** A newly-coined word applied, in summer resorts, to a visitor of the richer class.

**Rustle.** (1) To be active, quick, expeditious.

(2) To grapple with circumstances ; to rise superior to all contingencies.

A simile borrowed from the fact that cattle, in winter, will "rustle" for food, by "nosing" through the snow to the dried grass beneath.

**Rustler.** An active, busy individual, and especially one who never succumbs to circumstances.

Formerly, a ranchman's term for a cook, on a ranch, from the fact that the work incumbent to it requires considerable activity and energy.

Has lately, also, got to mean a thief, or swindler, from the abuse of the powers of activity and craft necessary to succeed in that "profession."

**Rusty-dab** (*Platessa ferruginea*). The popular name of one of the flat-fishes of the coast of Massachusetts and New York.

Also, *rusty flat-fish*.

**Rut.** See *rote*.

**Rye.** A curtailed form, for whiskey distilled from rye.

**Rye-and-Indian.** In New England, brown bread made of Indian-and-rye meal.

## S

**Sabane** (Fr. C.). A word of Indian origin designating, among the French-Canadians, a species of dish made of flour, molasses, and the guts of partridges or hares.

**Sabbaday.** A corruption of "Sabbath-day" occasionally heard in rural districts of New England.

**Sabbaday-houses.** Formerly, when population was scarce, houses near a church or meeting-houses, used as places of recess by worshipper coming from long distances.

**Sabe** (Sp. interrogative form, from *saber*, to know). In Texas, and the South-West, said of shrewdness, thoughtful care, common sense; what in colloquial English is called gumption.

Also used as a verb, interrogatively, in sense of do you know? do you understand? do you see?

**Sacate**, sah-cah'-tay (Mex. *zacatl*). In Texas and New-Mexico, grass, fodder.

Also, *zacate*.

**Sacacomi** (Ind. Algonkin *sakakomin*). Among the French-Canadians, a plant or shrub commonly called the bear-berry (*Arctostaphylos uva ursi*), the leaves of which are used to mix with tobacco, for smoking.

Also, *sagakomi*.

**Sachem.** (1) A chief or a king, among the Indians. The term has also become prominent as the name of the presiding officer of the celebrated fraction of the Democratic party, called the *Tanmany*.

See *sagamore*.

(2) A bird of passage (*Tyrannus carolinensis*), also known in the South under the name of *field-martin*.

**Sack.** A coat, a jacket.

Also, a *sack-coat*.

In *Roderick Random* we read of a "divine creature dressed in a sack of white satin," an expression which every American will understand, though an Englishman would require to be told that she was arrayed in a "jacket."

**Sad.** In Maryland and New Jersey, heavy as applied to bread.



- Safe.** A box or cupboard in which provisions are kept.  
In England, a "larder."
- Sag.** (1) To bend; to yield; to hang down. Used especially of a door which drags its hinges out of place.  
(2) To swerve; to warp; to sink.  
(3) To fall in price (a trade word).  
Shall never *sag* with doubt, nor shake with fear.  
(Shakespeare, Macbeth.)
- Sagamitë,** sah-gah-mee-tay (Ind. Cree *kisâgamitew*). Among the French-Canadians, a name applied to a sort of porridge made of corn-meal, sometimes mixed up with meat.
- Sagamore** (Ind. *sakemo* or *sakima*, a chief). A chief or a king, among the Indians, the original term having originated among the New-England Indians.  
Another form is *sachem*, which, often considered a distinct term, means in reality the same thing as *sagamore*.
- Sage-brush.** A hardy plant of the mountains and regions of the Far West, with a foliage of a grayish green, and furnishing a sound, hard wood, very like oak.
- Sage-hens.** A nickname applied to the inhabitants of Nevada.
- Sagnichts** (Ger. literally, say-nothings). A derisive political term applied by Germans, with a fine instinct of irony, to the *Know-Nothings* or *Native Americans*.
- Salamander.** (1) In Florida and Georgia, a species of pouched-rat (*Geomys pinetis*).  
(2) An animal with a broad, flattened head (*Menopoma alleghaniensis*), allied to the salamander proper, found in the Ohio and some of the Southern rivers.
- Salea,** sah-lay'-ah (Sp.). In Texas, said of a sheep or goatskin, curried and stained or dyed.
- Saloon.** A bar-room; a public-house or drinking-place.  
Also, *sample-room*.
- Salt-bottom.** Bottom land of a saline nature.  
See *salt lick*.
- Salt-grass.** Grass or hay from salt marshes.
- Salt-holes.** Pool holes of small size filled with salt water, and frequent in marshes along the coast.
- Salt-horse.** A slang term, for the salted beef, supplied in the rations of the United States army.

**Salt-meadow.** A kind of boggy grass-land, on some parts of the New-England coast.

**Saltwater tailor** (*Temnodon saltator*). The Blue fish of the lower Potomac, *tailor* being a contemptuous term for a small shad of inferior quality.

See *tailor*.

**Sambo** (Sp. *zambo*, bandy-legged). A term first applied to the offspring of a negro and a mulatto, and afterwards, in the South American colonies, to the child of a negro and an Indian woman, but now simply a generic name for all colored persons.

Variants are *cuffy*, *quashie*, etc.

**Sammy.** Often heard in sense of soft, as of leather soaked till soft enough to make into soles.

**Sams.** At one time the sobriquet of the *Native Americans* or *Know-Nothings*, the allusion being to Uncle Sam, from the Know-Nothings claiming that, in the United States, only the real Americans or native-born citizens should possess and exercise privileges and power.

**Sand.** Grit, courage.

Hence, also, *sandy*, meaning plucky, determined.

**Sand-auger.** A miniature cyclone or rotary storm to which the wide plains of the West and South-West are subject, and in which the wind, keeping close to the ground, sweeps with terrific force, driving before it thick clouds of dust and sand.

**Sand-bag.** A weapon used by highwaymen, and consisting in a cloth bag in which some sand has been packed.

**Sand-bag (to).** To strike with a sand-bag; to commit robbery with violence, the victim being first stunned with a blow from a sand-bag.

Also, metaphorically, to blackmail.

**Sand-bagger.** A highwayman who stuns his victim with a blow from behind with a sand-bag.

Also, a blackmailer.

**Sand-cherry** (*Cerasus pumila*). A reclining shrub of the North and West, growing on sandy soil, and bearing a black fruit of a disagreeable taste.

**Sand-hillers.** White people of the lowest class, in the South, especially Georgia and South Carolina, mainly found in the "pine barrens," where they live an idle and wretched existence.

Also, a nickname applied to the inhabitants of South Carolina.

**Sand-plum** (*Prunus maritima*). A wild plum growing in sandy localities.

**Sang** (*Panax quinquefolium*). A curtailed form of the Chinese gen-seng, or gin-seng, designating a valuable herb much esteemed for its medicinal virtues, and which abounds in Virginia and North Carolina.

Hence, to *go a sanging*, to gather sang, and *sang-hoe*, an implement employed by gatherers of sang.

**Santa-Fe tea.** In Texas, New Mexico, and adjoining territories, a substitute for the real tea, made of the leaves of the "*Alstonia theaformis*," which is a shrub closely resembling the tea plant of commerce.

**Sapinette** (Fr. C.). See *épinette*.

In St. Pierre and Miquelon, off Newfoundland, *sapinette*, which, in French, should signify "little fir," is there a common word, by a curious turn of the linguistic instinct, for "spruce beer."

**Sapsucker** (*Picus varius*, etc.). A bird of the woodpecker tribe, so called from an absurd belief that it feeds on the sap of trees, thus causing them to die.

**Saratoga trunk.** A commodious and colossal trunk, in which ladies' dresses find ample room for expansion, and so called from the celebrated watering-place of that name.

Also, simply, *Saratoga*.

**Sarcophagus.** A leaden coffin, or metallic burying-case, and a striking instance of the American tendency to high-sounding terms, however inappropriate they may be.

**Sardine.** (1) A jocular term for a sailor.

(2) A term of reproach, signifying a dullard.

**Sass.** In New England, stewed or preserved fruit.

Also, figuratively, effrontery, impertinence.

**Sass-tea.** Sassafras tea, a decoction made of the tender shoots and the roots of a laurel (*Sassafras officinale*).

**Sauce** (pron. sass.). Vegetables, especially those eaten with flesh meat, are sometimes called *sauce* in New England.

Also sometimes used in sense of preserved or stewed fruits.

This word is an undoubted survival of Old Eng. usage, and is so quoted in Forby and other glossaries, as meaning vegetables eaten with flesh meat.

In the Southern States, *sauce*, for vegetables, is almost unknown, its place being supplied by *greens*.

Beaumont and Fletcher use "green sauce" for vegetables.

*Long sauce* : carrots, parsnips, etc.

*Short sauce* : potatoes, turnips.

*Sauce-man*, a greengrocer or other dealer in market produce.

*Sauce-marketer*, a market gardener.

**Sault**, pron. soo (Fr. *saut*, a leap, a jumping). A name now venerable with old age, since it dates from the first French missionaries and "voyageurs" of the West, but which still firmly adheres to the rivers of Canada and those connecting the Upper Lakes, in order to designate their low waterfalls or "rapids."

**Savage as a meat axe.** (1) Very angry and violent; ferociously savage.

(2) Exceedingly hungry.

It riled me so, that I just steps up to him, as *savage as a meat axe*:

(Sam Slick, Human Nature.)

**Savane** (Fr.). Among the French-Canadians, this word signifies a swamp rather than a meadow or plain, as in French and Spanish.

**Savannah.** In Nova-Scotia, often said of a stretch of bog or moorland.

**Save.** A Western metaphor of former times, meaning to shoot, to kill. In early times, on the frontier, when ammunition was scarce, even a single load of powder and shot was important, and so it was common for a hunter to say of a deer he had shot, that he had *saved* it, and hence, also, the Red Men he had killed, he naturally boasted of having *saved*.

**Savoyane** (Fr. C.). A word of Indian origin applied, among the French-Canadians, to a species of hellebore (*Coptis trifoliata*), possessing medicinal properties.

Also, *savouillane*.

**Saw.** To play a joke, to hoax. Also, to scold.

**Saw-horse.** In New England, the frame or stand on which wood is sawed for fuel.

See *buck*.

**Saw-log.** A log of wood cut to suitable dimensions for sawing into planks.

**Saw-whet** (*Ulula acadia*). A small owl, so named from the resemblance of its cry to the sharp rasping or grinding of a saw.

**Sawyer.** In the Mississippi region, a tree washed away by the current, and becoming so embedded in the river bottom as to move in a "sawing" manner.

Compare with *snag*.

**Say.** One's turn, at game of poker, either to bet or pass.

**Scab.** A workman who does not belong to a trades-union or similar organization.

**Scads.** In parts of the West, said for a great quantity. "He has *scads* of money."

- Scallawag.** A very pithy designation for one who is a loafer, vagabond, and scamp combined.
- Scallyhoot.** A Texas word for to be off, to skedaddle.
- Scalp.** (1) To remove the hair and scalp of a fallen foe, and, by extension, to capture, to defeat, to annihilate.  
 (2) To drive a hard bargain.  
 (3) To speculate in unused railway tickets.
- Scalp lock.** The long tuft of hair worn by Indians.
- Scalper.** (1) A railway ticket broker.  
 (2) An operator on the Board of Trade or Stock Exchange, who deals in small lots and in an irregular way.
- Scaly ice.** Ice through which the skate cuts.
- Scare.** (1) A fight.  
 (2) In the West, a stampede of cattle or horses.  
 (3) In newspaper parlance, a heading in large type, to announce some important news.
- Scare up.** To hunt for, to find, to pick up. A word adopted from the hunter's vocabulary.
- Scart.** A not uncommon form of "scared," inherited from Old English writers.
- Scary.** Frightened, timid, easily scared.  
 Also, *skeery*.
- Scat.** An abbreviation of scatter, used as an energetic variant of Be off!  
 Be gone!
- Scatter-gun.** A double bore rifle is called a "two pipe scatter-gun."
- Schedule.** In newspaper parlance, a list of topics with estimate of quantity, which a correspondent sends to his paper in advance.
- School,** pron. like shoal. A school of fish. This word, only provincial in England, but universally used in the United States, belongs to the Dutch language when designating a large quantity or number of fishes swimming together.
- Schooner.** A large glass, holding a pint, used for drinking beer.
- Scions.** In New Jersey, a name given to young growth of oak timber.
- Scoot.** To leave suddenly.  
 Also, to *scoot*, to *skeet*.
- Scoldenore.** A water-fowl, on the coast of Maine.

**Scooch.** To crouch. "To *scooch* down in the corner."

Also, to *scrooch*.

**Scoop.** Much used especially amongst the newspaper fraternity in sense of an advantage, a good thing, i. e. some extraordinary event or occurrence furnishing plenty "copy."

Somewhat equiv. to the English slang "rise."

Hence, also, to *scoop*, meaning to obtain an advantage, to defeat anyone.

**Scoot.** In parts of New England, to move or run swiftly. To slide or glide; to dart. No idea of running away, and by no means limited to persons.

Also used as a noun and adjective.

Other forms are *skoot*, *skute*.

Evidently connected with to *skeat*, or to *skeet*, which are old forms still preserved in the South for "to skate."

**Scoot train.** An express train; one that omits stopping at a particular station.

**Scopet** (Sp. *escopeta*). In Texas, and the South-West, a short musket or carbine.

Compare with Fr. *escopette*.

**Scoreh.** In bicycle parlance, to ride very rapidly

**Scorcher.** A bicyclist who rides very rapidly.

**Scorpion.** In Virginia and the Southern States, almost all active wood-lizards are called *scorpions*, the name being especially applied to the species "*Agama undulata*."

**Scow** (Dutch *schouw*). A large flat-bottomed boat, quite familiar in the harbors of great cities, and used as a ferry-boat, a dredger, or a lighter. In the Northern Lakes, the *scow* is also often rigged up so as to become a tolerably fast sailer.

**Seranny.** A woman's word for thin, lean, or bony; low in flesh, scraggy.

The term, which is the "serannel" of Milton, is still provincial in England.

Also, *scrawny*.

In Somerset, England, they have the word "scrawv'lin," for poor and mean.

**Scrap.** Of frequent use in Charleston, S. C., in sense of small portion.

**Scrape.** A technical term for the inferior turpentine gathered from the surface of the pine, a superior product being obtained by incisions in the bark.

- Serape (to).** "To serape cotton," to hoe the growing plants. A Southern expression.
- Scrapple.** A favorite Philadelphia dish, consisting of bacon chopped up and mixed with cornmeal, and fried in cakes.
- Scratch.** In political parlance, to strike a man's name from the printed ticket of the "regular nomination."
- Scratched ticket.** An election ticket with one or more names of candidates erased.
- Scratching.** An electioneering dodge, which consists in distributing narrow slips of paper gummed on the back, and bearing printed names of candidates, so that voters may readily re-arrange the ballots to suit their own preferences.
- Scrawl.** In New England, brushwood, or ragged, broken branches of a tree.  
Evidently connected with scroll.
- Screamer.** (1) A bouncing fellow or girl; a fine strapping man or woman with connotation of tallness. A word of Western origin, equivalent to "roarer."  
Also, *scrouger*.  
(2) A humorous story.
- Screw-bean** (*Strombocarpus pubescens*). A tree of the locust family, common in Texas and the West, and so called from its pods being twisted like a screw.
- Scroof.** To live with a friend at the latter's expense.
- Scrouge.** In New England, to drive a hard bargain, to overreach one in trade.  
Also used as a noun.  
In Tennessee and Kentucky, to *scrouge* means to crowd. "Don't *scrouge* me so," i. e. give me more room.
- Scrub oak.** In New Jersey, a name applied to a low-growing species, usually the first timber growth on a burned district.
- Scud-grass.** A Florida grass, growing to a height of nearly three feet.  
Otherwise, *Scots' grass*.
- Seuff.** In New-England a light shoe, or slipper, without a heel, or without quarters, turned down.
- Seulduggery.** A Western opprobrious political term, signifying profligacy in the art of "wire-pulling."
- Seullion.** Small onion, or leek. Also used, especially in the plural, to designate poor onions that grow up to stalk, with no bulbs.

**Scunner.** Sometimes heard for aversion. "To have a *scunner* towards one."

De Vere suggests a corruption of "scorner" as a possible etymology.

**Scup** (Dutch *schoppen*). A boy's term, in New-York, generally used for "to swing."

Also, a *scup*, the swing proper.

**Sea-bass** (*Contropristes nigricans*). An excellent fish, of the perch variety, abounding in the Atlantic.

**Sea-island cotton.** A once celebrated variety of cotton, grown along the sea shore in the South, and which has now been replaced by what is known as *upland-cotton*.

**Sealer.** In New England, an official appointed to test and stamp weights and measures; also leather.

**Sealing.** The ceremony of spiritual marriage amongst polygamous Mormons, each succeeding wife being supposed to enjoy the same rights and privileges to the man who has "sealed" her to himself, as the first lawfully married wife. (Farmer.)

Also, *scaling*.

**Searcher.** In New England, an instrument used in testing butter.

**Sea-side grape.** A West-Indian name for the "*Cocoloba uvifera*."

**Season.** In the South, often employed for weather, and, by extension, for a spell of rain, a usage probably attributable to the fact of rain, in its proper season, being indispensable to agricultural operations, especially for setting out tobacco.

**Seawan, Sewant** (Ind. Alg.). A variety of specie formerly in use amongst the Indians of North America.

Other varieties are *cohog*, *wampum*.

**Secessiondom.** A once familiar appellation for the Confederate States.

**Secessioner, Secessionist.** Applied to those who, in the South, favored secession from the Union.

**Secondary.** Often said, in the Eastern States, of the second formation of a storm, especially one of the blizzard-type, off the Atlantic coast.

**Second Christmas.** Day after Christmas, often a holiday too.

Similarly, *Second New Years*, January 2.

**Second-day-wedding.** A reception given by newly-married couples on their return from the honeymoon.

**Second last.** Next to last. "They live on the *second last* house on the street." Particularly heard in parts of Pennsylvania.



**Section.** A horrible Americanism, says R. G. White, in "Words and their Uses," for neighborhood, vicinity, quarter, region; a distinct part of a city, town, country, or people.

This word is the result of the division of the unoccupied lands in the West, for purposes of sale, into sections (640 acres) based upon parallels of latitude and longitude.

**Sectional, Sectionary.** Pertaining to a section or portion of a country; local.

Also frequently employed as the antithesis of "national."

**Sectionalism.** The acts, practices, means, and results of those who favor the claims of one portion of the country in preference to those of the nation at large.

**Sectionize.** To survey land and map it out into sections of 640 acres, which is done before they are offered for sale.

See *Homestead Act*.

**See the elephant.** A slang phrase meaning to see the world, to gain knowledge by experience, generally at some cost to the investigator.

To "do the town," to see the sights, especially those of an immoral character.

"To see the elephant" is of course taken from wandering menageries, in which the elephant generally closes the exhibition or show.

**Seem.** The New-Englander often puts this verb to strange uses, as when he says: "I can't *seem* to be suited. I couldn't *seem* to know him."

**Seep.** Used in New England to signify the process of straining, or running through fine pores, as when coffee is run through muslin to clear it.

Hence, also, *seepy*, meaning undrained, wet. "Land is *seepy*."

Evidently but an altered form of "sipe," as quoted by Grose with same meaning.

**Seigneurs (Fr.).** Formerly, in Canada, the feudal landowners.

**Seignories.** Formerly, in Canada, the feudal townships of the province of Quebec.

**Seine (Fr.).** In Louisiana and Quebec, a net, a fishing-net.

**Seldom.** Often used adjectively in sense of rare.

**Selectman.** An abbreviation of "Select Townsman" applied, in New-England towns and villages, to those performing the duties of councilors, i. e. managing the affairs and government of a town.

**Selva** (Sp.). In Southern Texas, a shrub used in infusion as a substitute for tea.

**Send-off.** In newspaper parlance a notice, an item of news.

Also, *send-off notice*.

**Send up Green River.** Among the mountaineers of wild parts of the South-West, to kill a man is "to send him up Green River." This curious phrase had its origin in a once famous factory on Green River, celebrated for a superior kind of large knives, which had engraved on their blades the words "Green River Works." Hence, despatching an adversary with one of those knives, meant literally to send his blood up Green River.

**Sense.** Common, in New England, in sense of to comprehend, to grasp intuitively.

**Serape,** ser-ah'-pay (Sp.). In the formerly Spanish States, especially Texas, a kind of blanket, with stripes of variegated colors, worn by men as a cloak, and thrown across the shoulders.

**Set-back.** A reverse; a discomfiture a simile taken from the reflux of water made by a counter-current.

**Set-offs.** In New Jersey, said of sugar and cream in coffee, i. e. "trimmings."

**Set plate.** In parts of Pennsylvania, used in sense of to make preparations for Christmas. It means the same as to hang up one's stocking, but in certain neighborhoods, instead of hanging up stockings, children place a plate to receive gifts.

**Setting-pole.** A punting pole, the end of which is shod with iron.

**Set up.** To pay for the drinks.

**Set up (to be).** To be conceited; to give oneself airs.

**Seven-up.** The game of "all fours," from the number of points that have to be made to win.

**Shack.** (1) A log cabin, usually comprising but one room, the whole being roofed with earth supported by poles.

Hence, to *shack*, to live in a shack.

(2) A loafer, beggar, or vagabond. In this sense, used as a slang word in England. "He's a poor *shack* of a fellow."

(3) Among people of New England derivation, often heard for nuts considered as food for swine, squirrels, etc.

See *mast*.

In provincial English, *shack* means the waste of grain "shaken" upon the ground.

(4) In college slang, a small boy employed to attend tennis players and retrieve stray balls.

Hence, to *shack*, to gather tennis balls as above.

**Shacklin'.** In New Jersey, shiftless, lazy, going from one job to another.

**Shackly.** Ricketty; shaky. Still provincial in England.

**Shad-bellies.** A nickname given to the Quakers, from the old style "shad-belly coat" having been associated during a long while as the most popular article of dress among the Quakers.

**Shad-belly coat.** A morning coat, sloping gradually from the front to the tails, and so called from its alleged resemblance to the contour of the shad.

The old style shad-belly coat was similar in character to that of the dress-coat.

**Shadow.** To watch, after the manner of a detective.

*To be shadowed:* to be followed by detectives; to be subject to police supervision.

**Shag-bark** (*Carya alba*). A variety of hickory, furnishing a valuable timber, and so called from the roughness of its bark.

Also called *shell-bark*.

**Shake.** (1) See *clapboard*.

(2) A *fair shake*, a fair trade, a satisfactory bargain.

"To give one a *fair shake*," i. e. to use him properly, to give him a fair chance.

**Shake (to).** (1) To abandon; to discard; to turn one's back upon.

Originally, mining slang.

(2) Elliptically, for to shake hands.

(3) To jilt, as in sense of discarding a lover. "She *shook* him," i. e. she gave him the shake.

**Shakers.** A religious sect, very different to the body of people of same name in England, and which derives its distinctive appellation from the importance it attaches to the sacred or "shaking" dance, which is attributed to spiritual influence.

The Shakers are an offshoot of the Quakers, from whom they seceded in 1770. They practice celibacy, live in communities, and apart from their peculiar doctrines, are much esteemed.

**Shaker yarbs.** Well-known medicines prepared by the Shakers from herbs.

**Shakes.** (1) The *ague*, or fever and *ague*.

Also, *shaking ague*.

(2) An earthquake.

(3) In the West, long undressed shingles cut from the upper branches of a tree, and used as roofing tiles.

**Shake the cross.** In thief's argot, to quit stealing.

**Shake the elbow.** To gamble with dice.

**Shaking prairie.** A low, level, treeless tract of delta land, having a top soil of vegetable mould overlying immense beds of quicksand.

Otherwise, trembling prairie, from the Fr. "prairie tremblante."

**Sham-leggers.** Men who work the confidence game by pretending to sell smuggled goods.

**Shamocrat.** A factitious word, designating one who pretends to be possessed of wealth, influence, rank, or indeed any quality, which is only conspicuous by its absence.

**Shangai.** An old term for a tall, lanky dude; a swell; a masher.

Shangai fowls were a long-legged variety introduced from China.

Originally applied to dandies who wore the fashionable plaid shawl, wrapped about the upper part of the person, leaving the legs unprotected. (Bartlett.)

**Shangai (to).** To drug a sailor, and convey him on board a vessel about to sail, thus pressing him into service unwillingly.

The practice is said to have originated and been extensively carried out at Shangai.

**Shank.** (1) A Virginia expression, meaning the remainder, the rest.

(2) In the South, the negroes will often say: "The *shank* of the evening," for late in the afternoon, what in New England would be called "just the edge of the evening."

**Shanty** (Fr. C. *chantier*, a lumbering-camp).

(1) A rude hut or shed.

(2) A wooden hut inhabited by railway laborers, and similar classes of men.

Hence, to *shanty*, to dwell in a "shanty," or temporary hut.

**Shanty-boat.** A temporary hut on a boat, erected on the immense rafts of logs frequently met with on all American waterways.

**Shantying-ground.** The place where *shanties* are erected.

**Shape.** In sporting parlance, what the English call form. "To be in good *shape*."

**Shark.** In the West, a lean, hungry hog, from its voracity.

**Shark (to).** To fish for this sea monster, and, idiomatically, to prey upon others.

**Sharpset.** Generally applied to the appetite, and signifying very hungry.

**Sharpsin.** Applied to value or quantity.

*Not a sharpsin*, i. e. a value or measure reduced almost to vanishing point.

**Shats.** In parts of the South, said of dry pine leaves or needles.

**Shave.** To extort an illegal interest, in discounting a security; to practice usury; and, metaphorically, to fleece, to defraud, or be otherwise unfair in bargains.

Hence, *shaver*, an usurious money-lender or discounter, and, by extension, a sharp dealer, one who is close or fraudulent in bargaining; *shaving-shop*, a money lender's establishment.

**Shay.** A corruption of "chaise" used in the United States for a two-wheeled vehicle drawn by one horse. Hence, a "one horse shay," made famous by O. W. Holmes as applying to anything small and insignificant.

In England, "shay" means a post-chaise.

**Sheave.** In Newfoundland, to hold water with the oar, so as to stop the boat or turn more quickly.

**Shebang.** (1) Any low establishment, or place.

(2) A room; a shop; a hut; a tent; a cabin.

Probably derived from the Irish "shebeen," meaning a grog shop, although some etymologists assert that it is merely a corruption of the Fr. "cabane."

**She-corn.** A variety of maize considered the most prolific for planting.

**Shedder-crab.** A crab, when "shedding" its shell is so named.

Also, *soft crab*, *soft-shell crab*, or simply *shedder*.

**Sheep's head** (*Sparus ovis*). A highly esteemed salt-water fish, so called from the resemblance of its head to that of a sheep.

**Sheer.** Thin; clear; diaphanous; esp. applied to fabrics of cotton or silk.

**Shell.** To take the corn out of the husk, by analogy with the shelling of peas; that is, removing the shell.

See *shuck*.

**Shell bed.** In parts of New Jersey, said of a collection of oyster shells, or dried bivalves for food.

**Shellers.** In New Jersey, those who open clams for market.

**Shell-game.** A swindling game played with walnut-shells and a pea, analogous to thimble-rigging.

Hence, *shell-worker*, one who works the shell-game, and by extension, a swindler, a confidence man.

**Shenanigan.** A curious factitious word for bounce; chaff; nonsense.

Also, fooling or playfulness.

**Shenkbeer** (Ger. *schenkbier*). A variety of beer of exceedingly weak qualities.

**Sherryvallies** (Fr. *chevaliers*). An amusing corruption of the old voyageur's *chevaliers*, or horseman's overalls, by which travellers, in former days, were wont to protect their trousers against mud and thorny bushes on long journeys on horseback.

**Shift.** When a boxer purposely falls to escape a knock-down blow, he is said to make a *shift*.

**Shilling.** Still frequently heard for 12½ cents. Also called *York shilling*. Another denomination is a *long* or *Yankee shilling*, of the value of 16¾ cents.

In central New York, a quarter eagle is almost invariably spoken of as a "twenty *shilling* gold piece.

**Shim.** In stone-working, said, in parts of New England, of small, flat, wedge-shaped stones used in levelling up a sill on a wall.

**Shimney** (Fr. *chemise*, a shirt). A woman's undergarment, as Bartlett calls it, in his Dictionary, through a kind of prudery.

**Shin.** Primarily to walk quickly, to hustle, but now specially used, in mercantile phraseology, in speaking of a man who, finding himself short of funds to meet his engagements, goes round to his friends to borrow what he requires.

Hence, a *shinner*, meaning one who runs hither and thither to borrow money in an emergency.

**Shin around.** To gad about ; to hustle ; to move about briskly.

To *shin up*, to climb a tree by using the hands and feet only, a process which is apt to endanger the safety of one's shins.

**Shin-dig.** A Western term for a ball or dance.

Bartlett thinks the word is only another form of "shindy," meaning a row or disturbance.

**Shindy.** Besides English meaning of row or disturbance, shindy answers to :

(1) A ball game, generally called "bandy ;"

(2) A liking or fancy, as in the case of people taking a great *shindy* to others.

Similarly, to *take a shine to*, meaning to take a liking to. Also, to *take a shot to one*.

**Shine.** In the South and West, a method of still-hunting by means of a pan with fire, which "shines" in the eyes of the deer and holds it spell-bound.

See *fire-hunt*.

**Shiner.** A name given to several fishes of glittering appearance. The dace, however, is usually understood by the term.

**Shingle.** (1) A wooden tile, used for roofing.

*To be short of a shingle, to be cranky ; silly ; in fact, as the English would say, to have a tile loose.*

(2) A plank, and often a signboard. Hence, "to swing, to hang out one's shingle," to put up a sign, and, metaphorically, to start in business, to commence operations.

**Shingle (to).** (1) To whip ; to chastise ; presumably from shingles being often employed in chastising children.

(2) To crop the hair close in imitation of a shingle-roof.

**Shingle-oak** (*Quercus unbricaria*). A species of oak found in the Middle States, and so called from the special use to which its timber is put.

**Shingle-weaver.** One who prepares and dresses shingles.

**Shinny.** (1) A game generally played on ice, with sticks and a ball, by a large party. The aim is to knock the ball into the enemy's camp.

Still used in the North of England for the game "hurl" or "hockey."

(2) Used adjectively for intoxicated, drunk.

So quoted in Halliwell.

**Shinplaster.** Formerly a slang term for all paper-money, but now mostly applied to small notes of less value than a dollar.

Shinplaster is said to be an allusion to the utter worthlessness of the continental currency after the war of the Revolution.

**Shirt-tail dash.** In newspaper offices, a kind of dash or manuscript sign specially used to separate a news paragraph from explanatory matter added to it.

Also, by extension, the explanatory matter itself, with the result that the novice will be astonished by having a dispatch thrust at him with the injunction : "Put a *shirt-tail* to that."

**Shock.** (1) A dialectal variant of *shuck* (q. v.).

(2) A group of stalks of Indian corn, placed singly, and bound together at the top in a conical form.

**Shoddy.** Applied to an inferior kind of cloth, made from old stuff worked over ; also, to anything at once pretentious and inferior. Derived from "shreddy", as made up of rotten shreds.

The term was first applied to bad clothing furnished by Government contractors.

**Shoddyocracy.** People who have become rich by making contracts for shoddy goods, or in any other disreputable way.

**Shoot.** (1) A shooting match, or rifle practice at fixed targets. "A pigeon shoot."

(2) A passage-way, by which logs, coal, grain, etc. are shot down the hill sides or overboard from a ship.

(3) A river-fall or rapid, especially one over which timber is floated, or through which boats or canoes can shoot.

Hence, to *shoot*, to go over a waterfall in a boat, and, figuratively, to successfully encounter a difficulty.

(4) An artificial contraction of the channel of a stream, in order to increase the depth of the water.

(5) In the West, said metaphorically for ardent pursuit of any object, or thorough enthusiasm in the performance of any action. For instance, a man passionately in love is said "to take a *shoot* after the object of his affections." Allusion is no doubt to the exhilarating spice of excitement in "shooting" rapids.

**Shooter.** A revolver, or gun of any kind. Of Western origin. Also, *shooting-iron*.

**Shootist.** A marksman; an adept in shooting.

**Shoot one's grandmother.** To make a great mistake; to be much disappointed; to do what one does not intend.

Equivalent to the English phrase "to find a mare's nest."

**Shoots.** In New Jersey, said of spaces between concentric rings of oyster shells, showing years of growth.

**Shop.** A term confined, in the United States, to a workshop, the ordinary English shop being called a *store*.

**Shop (to).** In railroad parlance, a car turned or sent to the repair-shop is said to be *shopped*.

**Short.** A shortage; a deficit.

**Short-hairs.** A descriptive term for low-grade politicians and ward bummers.

Its opposite is *swallow-tails* (q. v.).

**Short-metre.** A brief spell of study, work, etc. A New-England idiom derived from the psalm-singing propensities fostered in the Puritan communities of that region. (Farmer.)

And if it warn't for wakin' snakes, I'd be home again *short-metre*.

(J. R. LOWELL, Biglow Papers.)

Similarly, to do a thing in *short metre* is to it quickly, or without delay.

**Shorts.** Breeches; a variation of small-clothes.

**Shot-bush** (*Aralia spinosa*). A prickly tree shrub, also humorously called *tear-coat*. A Southern term.



**Shot-gun.** A smooth bore gun, as distinguished from a rifle.

**Shoutin' member.** A member of a religious body, who takes an active part in church exercises.

A *Shoutin' Methodist* is a phrase especially frequently heard.

**Shove.** (1) The stalk of hemp.

(2) On the St Lawrence river, the piling up of the ice through expansion.

**Shoveller** (*Anas clypeata*). A species of duck found in the Rocky Mountains and Texas.

**Show.** An opportunity, or a chance to exhibit one's powers. "Give him a *show*."

**Shuck.** The outer covering, or husk, as of a walnut or an ear of corn.

The word is well known in England, although shell is more frequently used.

*Not worth shucks*, worthless, of no value.

An even greater depth of worthlessness is represented by *shuckless*, meaning without even a shuck.

**Shuck (to).** (1) To strip off the husks which envelope ears of corn. See *husking*.

(2) In New Jersey, to open oysters.

**Shuck-bottom.** A chair seat made up of the outer shell or shuck of the maize ear.

**Shyster.** A shady legal practitioner, i. e. a low-class lawyer who makes a specialty of shady cases.

Also, by extension, any kind of scheming rogue of bad repute.

De Vere suggests that the term may be attributed to the fact that a *shyster* sometimes finds it advisable to fight shy of his clients. But this definition is, we venture, plainly inadequate, and it is quite easy, besides, to suggest a derivation looking more probable, at least in the admitted absence of any direct evidence. Why should not *shyster* be really *chichester* (Anglo-Saxon *chiche*, stingy; *ster*, a suffix having a sinister sense)? "Chiche" occurs at least twice in Wycliffe's Bible, and also in the "Romaunt of the Rose," and the suffix "ster" is also very old and had a sinister sense, as "gamester" in Skeat, *Merry Wives*. It must then be seen that *chiche-ster* is at least as suggestive of the euphonious term *shyster*, as the vague notion of a rogue shyly stirring from the neighborhood of his victims.

**Sic-a-nine-ten.** An outdoor game very similar to hi-spy, but somewhat more complicated.

**Sick.** (1) Ill, afflicted with disease, without connotation of nausea. This usage of sick is found in the English liturgy, and is also sanctioned by the best Old English writers.

In England, sick is now only applied to express sickness of the stomach or nausea, whilst in the United States a person in bad health is always sick, even if his trouble arises from a broken leg.

*To feel sick*, to be disgusted with one's self.

(2) Used contemptuously in sense of very indifferent, contemptible: "He's a *sick* fellow at best." In that case, in England, they would say "a sorry fellow."

**Sidehill.** A common expression for hillside; the slope of a hill; sloping ground.

**Sideline.** (1) In Canada, a by-road running at right angles to the main or concession roads.

(2) Among plainsmen, horses are hobbled by means of *sidelines*. Hence, to *sideline*.

**Side-strap.** In Connecticut, a holdback strap,

**Side-track.** To divert the attention; to turn from one's purpose; or to precede others in the battle of life.

**Side up.** To clean up, put in order, as a room. (Nfld. N. B. and N. S.)

**Sidewalk.** In England, a footpath or pavement.

**Side-wheeler.** A pacing horse.

**Side-winder.** A New-York term for a violent blow with the fist.

In the South, they say *side-wipe*

**Sight.** Amount, and, more specifically, a large amount. "It has done him a *sight* of good."

**Sightly.** Said of a place which affords a fine view (from the place).

**Sight unseen.** Blind swap, i. e. without seeing articles beforehand.

**Sign.** (1) A trapper's term for a spoor or trail, i. e. traces of the recent presence of men or animals. A *buffalo-sign*, a *bear-sign*, an *Indian-sign*, etc."

(2) A signboard.

**Signalize.** In addition to ordinary use, often means "to make signals."

**Silk-grass** (*Yuca filamentosa*). A lilaceous plant, so called from the silky filaments that appear on the edges of its leaves.

Cartier's word "chanvre" (old time spelling of "chanvre") was without doubt the product noted by nearly all the early travellers and called by them in English *silk-grass*. On Dec. 23, 1640, Thomas Gorges

wrote to John Winthrop for "some of that stuffe that with us supplies the want of hempe. Our Indyans make theyr Snow Shoes, nets and bags of it. Also of a bigger stalke called Silke-grass, which makes very fine hempe." Francis Higginson refers to it in 1630, and we also read of it in the "True Relation Concerning the State of New England, 1634." In the Boston News Letter, May, 23, 1727, we read "Good Silk Grass, suitable for cordwainers." Again, on Dec. 26, 1728, "Very good Silk Grass, for shoemakers." Both cordwainers and braziers had it for sale in Boston and, as very one knows, it needs a very tough cord to make net-work for snow-shoes.

**Silk-stockings.** The moneyed class, commonly accredited with wearing silken hose.

Also a phrase applied to a section of the Democratic party.

**Silver fox** (*Canis argentatus*). A rare black fox, much esteemed for its fur, and so called from its being mottled with white.

**Silver Grays.** A name applied, some forty years ago, to the Conservative wing of the Whig party. The term originated in the State of New York, and was in allusion to the white hair of some dissidents who, at a political convention, "bolted the ticket" of their party, and at once withdrew. As those dissidents were leaving the hall, it was observed that the majority of them were men well advanced in years, which drew forth the remark from a bystander, "there go the silver grays."

**Silver thaw.** A sleet storm leaving tross coated with ice. (Nfld. N. B. and N. S.)

**Silver tip.** A name given, in the Canadian North West and Alaska, to a black bear having a white breast.

**Silver wedding.** The 25th anniversary of a wedding.

**Simball.** In parts of New England, a name given to a variety of doughnut.

**Simlin.** In the South, a variety of squash having a round flattish head with a scalloped edge.

The word comes from "cymnel," the name of a lenten-cake of oval form, like a squash, used primarily in the offices of the Catholic church. Lenten simnels are to this day quite common in many parts of England, and "simblin" is even now the local pronunciation in Lancashire, the *b* having crept between *m* and *n* as into "chimbly" and all words of that sort.

**Singing sand.** A name given, in New Jersey, to sand found on Long Beach, Ocean county, which emits a peculiar musical tone when the wind passes over it rapidly.

**Singlebob.** A mark used in branding cattle, meaning a slit ear dropping down.

**Sing-sing** (Ind. Alg. *asingsing*, a place of stones). The celebrated penitentiary of New York, recalling its Indian origin with all the greater force that it is now, as Artemus Ward rightly says, "the residence of gentlemen who spend their days in poundin' stun."

**Sink-hole.** A depression or hole in limestone formations, in which streams sink and are lost.

Common in Kentucky, and in the Middle and Western States.

Also, simply *sink*.

Sink-holes are low depressions in the surface, from which powerful springs gush forth, often forming large ponds on the spot, or flowing off in the shape of broad rivers, capable of turning mills and driving machinery. (De Vere.)

**Sirree.** An emphatic assent or negative.

*Yes, sir!* first form.

*Yes, sirree!* more emphatic.

*Yes, sirree, Bob!* most emphatic of all.

**Sisal hemp.** The prepared fibre of an agave, very common on the Florida Keys, from Sisal, the Indian name of a town in Yucatan.

**Sitio,** see'-te-o (Sp.). A Spanish superficial measure, equal to a square league of land (4,428 acres), still in use in formerly Spanish States.

**Size up.** To form an opinion concerning a person or thing.  
The equiv. of to take one's measure.

**Sizzle** (Old Eng.). To hiss from the action of fire; to make a hissing sound; to shrivel up with a hissing sound.

Also, to *sizz*.

An old English word, quoted by Forby, which is now almost forgotten in England.

**Skanes.** Iron plates, for reducing friction upon axle-trees.  
In England, called "clouts."

**Skate.** In parts of New England, said of a worn-out horse.

**Skedaddle.** To depart hurriedly; to run away.

This very inelegant word, which has set in a kind of interlingual competition for its paternity, has already been the subject of a succession of learned theories. The word has been in use for many years in the West of Scotland and North of England, in sense of to spill or to scatter,

as "to skeddadle the milk," and on the other hand Irishmen have reasons to claim it as their own, deriving it from their "sgedlad-ol," a term occurring in an old Irish Bible, and meaning "scattered all."

The word is said to have first appeared in print, in the United States, after the battle of Bull's Run, and, wherever it may originally come from, is sure to be retained, at least in the American sense, because of its odd and eminently descriptive sound.

**Skeezix** (prob. of Dutch origin). Slang about New York city, in sense of an idle, mean, or contemptible fellow; a ne'er-do-weel; a good-for-nothing; a paltry little fellow. One not to be trusted, with a connotation of uncouth.

Also, *skeezicks*, *skesicks*.

**Skimpy**. In New England, often applied to a stingy or parsimonious person.

**Skin**. (1) A sharper; a blackleg.

(2) A purse; a pocket-book.

**Skin (to)**. (1) To get the best of; to impose upon; to cheat; to extort; to rob one of his very skin.

In sense of to extort, i. e. of illtreating and pressing a man "to his skin," the term is not unknown in England, as is shown by the word "skinflint"

(2) To ill-treat; to press any one to his skin.

(3) In college parlance, to use a translation or crib.

**Skin-game**. Fraud; chicanery.

**Skin one's own skunk**. To do one's own dirty work, a phrase of pungent meaning equivalent to "washing one's own dirty linen at home."

**Skin out**. To depart secretly and hastily, as when pursued by an enemy.

**Skip**. A popular exclamation for Begone! equiv. to Git! skeddadle! light-out! etc.

**Skip-jack** (*Sarda pelamys*). A popular name in Boston for the bonito or blue-fish.

Also applied to the species "*Scomberesox scutellatus*" of Lesueur.

Other variants are *sawry*, and *skipper*.

**Skipper**. The cheese-mite. In England, cheese-hopper.

Hence, *skippery*, abounding in cheese-mites.

**Skite**. To go running about; to move about energetically.

**Skive (to)**. In New-England, to pare leather or skin, so as to leave a bevelled edge.

Hence, *skivings*, parings or waste pieces of leather.

**Skoot away.** To disappear suddenly.

**Skunk** (Ind. Abenaki *seganku*). A small mammifer, allied to the weasel and badger (*Mephitis mephitica*), and which, when irritated, emits a very fetid secretion.

Metaphorically, a mean, despicable fellow.

Hence, to *skunk*, used in political and college slang, in sense of to act dishonestly or with disgraceful deceit. Also, to utterly defeat, to beat out of sight, as at cards or other games, when the player fails to reach a certain point.

To *skunk one's bills*, to leave college without settling up.

**Skunk-bear** (*Gulo luscus*). A Western name for the wolverine or carcajou.

**Skunk-blackbird.** A popular name, in Canada, New-York and New England, for the common marsh-bird.

So called from its colouring—black mixed with white—which remotely resembles that of the ill-smelling animal.

**Skunk-cabbage** (*Symplocarpus foetidus*). The well known strong-scented and early growing plant of New England. Of medicinal value in asthma and other disorders.

**Skunk-head** (*Anas labradora*). A popular name, on the sea-coast, for the Pied Duck of ornithologists.

**Skwy.** In parts of New England, said for askew. "The picture hangs *skwy*."

Also, *skwywise*.

**Sky-scraper.** Especially applied to a very tall building of the kind now in vogue in lower Broadway, New-York city.

Also, one who reaches high, one who is exalted in his own estimation.

*Sky-scraping*, tall, literally touching the sky.

**Slab.** The outside of logs of wood, which is generally cast aside as useless, and idiomatically a shaky or worthless character.

Hence, to *slab off*, to cast on one side as useless, like the outside piece of a log, or slab.

**Slab (to).** To make roads round the sides of mountains.

**Slab-bridged.** A contemptuous epithet applied to a fellow of worthless character.

**Slab-sided.** Wall-sided; having perpendicular sides. Often applied, especially, to men and women of angular appearance.

**Slack.** Lazy; shiftless.

Hence, *slack-twisted*, used in parts of the South in sense of mentally weak, shiftless.

**Slack-water navigation.** An arrangement of dams and locks for keeping a sufficient supply of water in a river not otherwise navigable at all seasons. (Farmer.)

Almost all the larger rivers, in the Eastern States, are thus made navigable high above their original limits.

**Slang-whanger.** A long-winded speaker, and especially a noisy political talker. Derived from slang, and to whang, to beat.

*Slang-whanger* is said to be not unknown as a provincial word in England, though it attracted much attention there, when W. Irving first used it in his early writings to designate a noisy politician.

**Slank,** In New Jersey, a low place at side of river, bay or cove, filled with water at freshet.

**Slap-dab.** In parts of New York state, used for violently or awkwardly.

**Slash.** In parts of New Jersey, a swale filled with water.

**Slashes.** In several parts of the Union, especially in the South and the West, low swampy grounds overgrown with bushes.

Also, openings in the woods.

**Slash ground.** In New York, ground on which the brushwood has been cut and left lying.

**Slate.** In political parlance, a programme, or list of appointments; a list of people recommended to office by a political party, as a reward for political services, real or imaginary.

Hence, *slated*, placed on a list, as one who is *slated* for a special position.

**Slate smasher.** A President or high official who will not give place to the nominees of a party.

Let Gen. Grant be encouraged to smash the slate. He is a great *slate-smasher*.

(Cincinnati Enquirer, March 1869.)

**Slathers.** A large quantity; a lot. "*Slathers* of money."

**Sleep.** Used transitively in the sense of giving, or affording sleeping accommodation. Thus a sleeping-car, on a railway, *sleeps* so many passengers.

To accommodate, to supply with a bed, or berth.

**Sleeper.** A sleeping-car, on a railway.

In England, a "sleeper" is what we call here a "crosstie."

**Sleepers.** (1) One of the nicknames assumed by, or given to the Molly Maguires.

(2) Drunken men in the gutter. "Laying for *sleepers*" is the occupation of street thieves.

- Sleuth.** A detective ; a professional thief-catcher.
- Slice.** In New England, New-York and Canada, a large fire-shovel.  
Still provincial in England.
- Slick.** In New England, a smooth place in the water, where fish abound.  
*See gray slick.*  
Also used, adjectively, in sense of dexterous, acute, quick, with connotation of unprincipled. "He is a *slick* fellow."  
*Slick* is somewhat prevalent in the West of England, esp. in Kent, but only in the sense of sleek, i. e. smooth, glossy.
- Slicker.** On the plains and in the West, a water-proof oil coat, a mackintosh.
- Slick off.** To turn out quickly ; to execute with ease.
- Slick up.** To make sleek ; to make fine. "The house was all *slicked up* as neat as a pin."  
Also, to smooth ; to render glossy and sleek. Here, it will be remarked, the original meaning is retained.
- Slide.** In the Northern States and Canada, a passage down which the water glides in a dam, used for the descent of timber, logs, etc.
- Slide (to).** To go away ; to be off.  
To slide out. To depart stealthily ; to shirk responsibility or labor.
- Slim.** Besides original meaning of "thin," also used of a person poor in health, thin in face or figure ; also, idiomatically, for one of indifferent standing in the community, either as regards social position, morals, or politics. (Farmer.)
- Slimsy.** Flimsy in texture ; slightly made ; frail in build. (Farmer.)  
Frequently applied to cotton or other cloth.
- Sling.** A drink composed of soda-water, ice, lemon and sugar, with the addition of either gin, whiskey, or brandy. Gin-slings are more commonly drunk.
- Sling (to).** To wield, or use, with a connotation of ease and rapidity of action.  
Said generally in a semi-contemptuous way :— Leg-slipping, for dancing ; ink-slipping, for writing, in newspaper slang.
- Slink.** A sneak ; one who acts in an underhand manner ; a sneaking fellow.
- Slinky.** Thin ; lanky.
- Slip.** In phrase "to give the *slip* : to jilt one



- Slipe.** (1) A piece or slice. "A slipe of bacon."  
 (2) A distance. "Well, I've got a long *slipe* off my steamboat."  
 (Crockett, Tour, p. 145.)
- Slipper-down.** In parts of Connecticut, a vulgar name for *hasty-pudding*.
- Slippery-elm.** A name applied to the inner bark of the elm.  
 Also, the name of a dwarf species of elm.
- Slipping.** Sometimes used for sleighing. "The *slipping* is pretty good."
- Slippy-noose.** In Connecticut, a running knot ; a slip knot.
- Slob.** In Newfoundland, said of soft snow or ice.
- Sloonly.** Badly attired ; slovenly dressed. "He's sloonly."
- Slop over.** To miss one's mark ; to make a blunder, particularly from excess of emotion.
- Slosh.** Slush, i. e. snow in a soft state.
- Slosh about.** In the West, to wander aimlessly from place to place ; generally getting more and more intoxicated, and becoming more and more objectionable.  
 Also, to *slosh around*.
- Slough.** In parts of the West and South, a swamp, a bog.
- Slough grass.** A coarse grass growing in sloughs or wet places.
- Sloven.** A low truck wagon. (Nfld. N. B. and N. S.)
- Slug.** (1) A name applied, in the beginnings of California, to a conventional gold piece or counter, having a value of about forty dollars.  
 (2) In New Jersey, a slang term for a big drink of whiskey.
- Slug (to).** An alternative form of to slog, to beat ; as also is slugger, o slogger, a prize-fighter.
- Sluice.** In mining districts, a trough used in washing earth for gold.  
*Ground-sluice*, a trough in the ground.  
*Tail-sluice*, a trough below other ones, through which the earth and water passes.  
*Sluice-box*, a box placed at the lower end of the sluice to catch the gold.
- Sluice (to).** To separate gold from earth, by the aid of a sluice.  
 Hence, to *sluice off*, to divert, to lay aside.
- Slum.** Mean, dirty, as in a *slum* trick. Especially common in Philadelphia, and probably owing its origin to the *slums*.

**Slummock.** In New Jersey, said of a dirty, untidy woman.

**Slump** (Old Eng.). In New England, to fall or sink through ice or mud.

**Slump off.** To veer ; to move away from ; and idiomatically, to fall in value, in speaking of stocks and shares. (Farmer.)

**Slumpy.** In New England and Canada, applied to wet, loose snow.

Quoted in Jamieson, for swampy, marshy.

**Slung-shot.** A weapon of offense, made by placing a stone or piece of lead in a bag.

Also called *sling-shot*.

**Slunk** (Old Eng.). Said of the young of an animal which is prematurely brought forth. "A *slunk* calf."

Still provincial in Eastern counties of England.

**Slunk (to).** "To *slunk* school," to play truant. (Nfld. N. B. and N. S.)

**Slush.** A newspaper's term for reporter's copy.

**Small potatoes.** A contemptuous epithet applied to persons or things, in sense of petty, mean, or contemptible.

**Smart.** Shrewd, clever, active, quick, intelligent.

In England, apart from its application to dress (elegant in dress, dressy), used in the sense of superficial showiness of character, or ability, continued with more or less wit. In short, in England, a smart man is generally only showy or witty, whilst in America a smart man's smartness, especially in the course of business, will always be looked upon with more or less apprehension.

Hence, *smartness*, for shrewdness, keenness.

**Smart chance.** (1) A fair chance ; a good opportunity.

(2) In the South and West, a good deal, a considerable quantity of anything. "We have just had a *smart chance* of snow."

Other variants are *right smart*, *right smart chance*, and *mighty smart chance*.

**Smearease** (Dutch *smeer-kaas*). A preparation of curds spread on a flat surface to make into cheese. Otherwise known as *cottage-cheese*. In New York city, also called *pot-cheese*.

**Smell-lemon** (*Cucurbita ovifera*). A beautiful plant, so called in some States from its fragrant and yellow-striped orange-like fruit.

**Smelling committee.** An investigating committee where the matter to be inquired into is in the form of unpopular, or unsavoury details which are expected to be brought to light. (Farmer.)

The phrase originated in the examination of a convent, in Massachusetts, by legislation order.

**Smile.** A nip ; dram ; or small glass of spirits.

Hence, to *smile*, to take a drink, to tipple.

One of the oddest conversions of terms imaginable, though the process of transition is sufficiently obvious.

**Smit.** In New England, to crock, rub off (of dye-stuff).

**Smitch.** A very small quantity.

**Smoke.** To befool one ; to make game of. Figuratively, to so becloud one with clouds of smoke that he cannot detect the game which is played upon him.

In English detective slang, to smoke is to detect or penetrate an artifice.

**Smoke-stack.** A chimney ; a funnel of a steamer.

**Smoky City.** The city of Pittsburg, Pennsylvania, from its being the American Birmingham, the centre of the iron and hardware industries.

**Smouch.** (1) In Pennsylvania, to steal a kiss, to take a kiss by stealth. From smouch, or smoucher, which are Old English forms for a loud, sounding kiss.

(2) To steal ; to crib ; to plagiarize, in which sense it was used by Milton.

**Smouze.** In Ohio, to demolish, as with a blow ; to make a clean sweep of.

**Smudge.** A heap of damp combustibles, or smothered fire, used by back-woodsmen for the purpose of keeping off flies and mosquitoes.

Provincial in north of England, and already used by Gray, an old English writer, in a somewhat similar sense.

**Smut-mill.** Among farmers, a contrivance for dealing with "smutty" wheat.

Also, *smut-machine*.

**Snab.** In college slang, a good-looking, stylish man or woman.

Hence, *snabby*, stylish, tasteful, good-looking.

**Snacked.** Drunk ; intoxicated. A Southern equiv. of the more common snapped. (Farmer.)

**Snack-house.** A slang term for a restaurant.

**Snag** (Old Eng.). In the Mississippi region, a partly sunken tree in the bed of a river.

The word, although American in the above application, has never lost currency in England, it having been defined by Halliwell as a "tooth standing alone," and by Johnson as a "jag, or sharp protuberance."

Hence, to *snag*, to strike a snag, to run against a sunken tree, and figuratively to meet with an obstacle of any sort.

**Snag-boat.** A steamer fitted up with a contrivance for removing snags.

**Snaggle.** "To snaggle on to a thing," to comprehend it, to catch on. Especially common in Philadelphia.

**Snake.** Used, in the plural form, in connection with several phrases, of which the following are among the most characteristic :

*To have the snakes in one's boots,* to be fidgetty, uneasy, and, more forcibly, to have delirium tremens.

*To see snakes,* to have the horrors, as in delirium tremens.

*To wake snakes :* (1) to get oneself into trouble, the equiv. of to rouse sleeping dogs ; (2) to make a rousing noise, and hence to rouse up, get into action ; (3) to run with alacrity, to bolt away, from the alleged speed with which one is apt to run away from a snake.

**Snake (to).** In the West, to crawl or creep along on the stomach after the manner of snakes, and idiomatically to proceed stealthily, to act deceitfully. Also, and especially in political parlance, to use secret or underhand methods in striving to gain an advantage.

Another form is to *snake along*.

(2) In the South, to beat or flog ; to give a drubbing.

(3) To proceed quickly from place to place, as when a snake is disturbed and has been put to flight.

**Snake-doctor.** A common term, in Pennsylvania, Ohio, and the South-West, for the dragon-fly.

Also, *snake-feeder*.

**Snake-head.** Formerly an upturned broken rail, on a railroad, which was apt to pierce through the bottom of a car and often caused serious accidents.

**Snake out.** To drag or haul out, as stumps of trees dragged out.

**Snake-rail.** On the early railways, a rail occasioning snake-heads.

**Snake-root.** A name applied to various Indian remedies for snake bites.

**Snake-story.** An incredible or improbable narration of the sea-serpent kind.

**Snake-sure.** Quite sure ; certain ; without doubt.

**Snap.** (1) Applied to weather, a period, a spell, as in a cold snap.

(2) Anything good. "A soft snap," an easy and well paying job.

(3) Energy, smartness ; an idiomatic extension of the legitimate meaning of "to break short," as when crisp.

Also used adjectively for rapid, quick, off hand. "A snap bargain, a snap vote."

**Snap-neck.** A New-Jersey name for *apple-brandy*.

**Snapper.** A species of tortoise, common throughout the Union, and so called from its pugnacious habits.

Also, *snapping turtle*.

**Snarl.** (1) A quarrel ; an angry disputation.

Provincial in England.

(2) A "tight place," as regards money matters.

**Snatched.** In the South-West, said of being flurried, put out of countenance.

**Sneak-thief.** A pilferer ; a petty cowardly thief.

In England, same is called a "sneaksman."

**Sneezer.** A dashing, out-and-out, thorough going man. Allusion to a horse's snorting.

**Snifter.** A drink, or dram of liquor ; a nip of something neat.

**Snip.** Often used contemptuously, in speaking of a young person. "I don't care what the little *snip* does."

**Snipe.** In Wall Street parlance, a bucket-shop man, or curbstone broker.

**Snippy.** Overdressed ; foppish ; finical ; gaily attired. From snip, an English slang term for a tailor.

Another form is *snipitious*, especially used in the South.

**Snips.** Often heard for shears, especially among tanners and hardware dealers.

**Snits** (Ger. *schuitzel*). A Pennsylvania German contraction for quartered fruit, usually dried. "We made apple *snits* yesterday."

Also, *snitz*.

**Snob** (Old Eng.). A journeyman shoemaker. An old English usage still prevalent in Massachusetts and Pennsylvania.

**Snoop** (Dutch *snoepen*). (1) In New-York, to eat by stealth ; to pilfer delicacies after the manner of some domestics.

Hence, to *snoop along*, to put in an appearance, generally by stealth.

(2) In New Jersey, to pry into another's affairs ; to sneak.

**Snooser.** A thief, whose specialty is committing depredations in hotels among boarders

**Snoot.** A vulgar word, for the human face or nose, apparently the same word as snout. "Hit him on the *snoot*."

**Snore** (Dutch *snoer*, a string). In New-York State, a boy's word for a top string.

**Snort.** Used in low language in sense of to laugh derisively ; to pooh !  
pooh !

**Snorter.** In the West, a man of a wild disposition, as a rip-roaring snorter, and, idiomatically, anybody or anything out of the common, from a dashing riotous fellow to a gale of wind.

**Snot-rag.** A vulgar word for a handkerchief, common among school boys.

**Snub up.** To tie up, to secure.

Hence, *snubbing post*, a post to which horses and cattle are secured, or a post around which rope of boat is fastened in lock.

**Snug.** To conceal from the owner ; to hide from view.

In England, boys use the word smug in the same sense.

**Soak.** In college slang : (1) A very hard task ; (2) A drunken fellow ; (3) An unpopular fellow ; (4) An instructor hard to work under.

**Soak (to).** In college slang : (1) to inflict hard work upon ; (2) to overcharge ; (3) to hit or to strike ; (4) to drink to excess.

Hence, to *get soaked*, to be asked a hard question, to get drunk.

**Soap.** Used by the Republicans, as a telegraphic cipher for money, during the Presidential campaign of 1880.

In 1884, employed by the Democrats as a derisive party-cry, aimed at their opponents.

**Soap-berry** (*Sapindus marginatus*). A tree common in the South and South-West, bearing hard black nuts, which are strung for beads and various kinds of knick-knacks.

**Soap-lock.** A lock of hair plastered over the temple.

A lock of hair made to keep in place by soaping it, what in England is called a "bow-catcher" or kiss-curl.

The feminine counterpart is called a *spit-curl*.

Hence, *soap-locks*, a name formerly applied to a gang of New-York rowdies, from their being addicted to the peculiarity in their appearance above described.

**Socdolager.** (1) A conclusive argument ; a winding up ; in a fight, a heavy blow, a final knock-down.

This strange word is supposed to have been humorously corrupted from doxology, a stanza sung at the close of religious services as a signal for dismissal.

(2) A fish-hook, having two hooks which close upon each other with a spring, after the fish has swallowed it.

**Social.** A social function of any sort.

**Sociable.** (1) A church festival.

(2) In New England, a party, a gathering of people for sociable purposes.

**Society.** In parts of New England, a congregation, or small assembly for worship.

**Sock.** Generally used to emphasize an opinion or action. "To *sock* an argument," to state it conclusively, to drive it to the hilt.

In another sense, to charge a high price for any article; or, in a narration, to exaggerate, to "pile on the agony."

In a strike, the strikers who have given in and have returned to work, are said to *sock* it to the others.

In England, to *sock* is a provincialism, signifying to strike a hard blow.

**Socketer.** Something of great size. "That fish was an old *socketer*."

Hence, *socketing*, in sense of very. "That was a *socketing* big fish."

**Soda.** A corrupted form of "zodiac" used, among gamblers, for the top card in the box at taro.

**Soda prairie.** A vast arid plain covered with a deposit of natron or soda.

These plains, often of great extent, are especially found in New-Mexico, Texas, and Arizona.

**So fashion.** An old form, still common, especially in New England, in sense of so, in that way.

**Soft-back** (*Trionyx ferox*). A tortoise, large in size, and of considerable ferocity.

**Soft-crab.** See *shedder*.

**Soft-corn.** Overt and perceptible flattery.

Also, *soft-sawder*, *soft-soup*.

Hence, to *soft-sawder*, to *soft-soap*, to flatter, to blarney.

**Soft money.** In the contest of 1876, for the resumption of specie payments, paper money was so called, whilst the term "hard money" was applied to the issues of gold and silver.

**Soft thing.** An easy time; a stroke of luck.

**Soft woodlands.** In British North America, pine forests.

**Soldier (to).** Common throughout New England in sense of to loiter, lounge, shirk work, waste time.

Also, to *sojer*, which of course is only a corrupted form of the above.

To play old soldier is still a common phrase in England in sense of to shirk work, to sham illness or other disability.

**Solicitor.** A canvasser ; one who solicits orders.

In England, a solicitor is a lawyer.

**Solid.** (1) Often used in a sense of thoroughness, or complete agreement with. Thus, electors get solid with a candidate when they plump in voting for him.

(2) Responsible ; wealthy. " All the *solid* men of the community."

**Solid-colored.** All of the same color. Common among cattle-breeders and dry-goods dealers.

**So long.** Good bye !

An English provincialism, common in Louisiana.

**Sombrero,** som-bray'-ro (Sp.). In Texas and New Mexico, more specifically a Mexican hat with high tapering crown and wide brim, either of felt or straw, and often profusely adorned with silver bands, medals and embroidery.

**Some.** Somewhat, or something. " Jones is *some* on shooting. The storm hurt us *some*."

(2) Used emphatically for a good deal ; very much ; notable ; famous.

**Some pumpkins** (usually pronounced "punkins"). A current phrase, in New England, expressive of high appreciation, or denoting something great and important, from the alleged attachment of New-Englanders to the pumpkin.

The equivalent of the English " no small beer."

The antithesis is *small potatoes*.

Franklin was a poor printer-boy and Washington a land-surveyor, yet they grewed to be *some pumpkins*. (Sam Slick.)

**Soon.** (1) A Southern substitute for early. " We'll have a *soon* supper."

(2) Also heard in sense of shrewd. " He is a *soon* man."

**Sophers.** A nickname applied to the inhabitants of Arkansas.

**Sophomore.** In college parlance, a regular college student, candidate for a literary degree, in the second year of a four years' course.

An abbreviated form is *soph*.

**Sora** (*Rallus carolinus*). The Carolina rail, much esteemed for its plumpness and flavor.

Also, *soree*.

**Sorrel-tree** (*Andromeda arborea*). A beautiful tree, otherwise called *sour-wood* from the acidity of its sap.

**Sossle.** (1) To lounge about.

Derived from the obsolete English verb to soss, used by Swift in the sense of sitting in a lazy, careless manner



(2) To splash, or spill, in speaking of water spilt for want of attention. Also, to *sozzle*.

**Sot.** Vulgarly used as past tense of to set, or to sit.

**Sotole**, so'-toe-lay (Sp.). A species of cactus found in Texas. Also, a species of yucca, found in same State, and from which a vile liquor is distilled.

In Arizona, the name applies to soap weed.

See *tequila*.

**Sots.** Yeast is so called, in Virginia and Pennsylvania.

**Sot-weed.** A former term for tobacco in Maryland.

**Soufflé** (Fr. Can.). A French-Canadian name applied to the Sable Island bloater.

**Sound.** A contracted form, for sound asleep, used in parts of New England. "The child is *sound*."

**Soupane** (Ind. *sappaen*). A word in use among the French-Canadians to designate a sort of corn-meal porridge, eaten with milk or molasses.

**Sour.** Used for pickles in parts of Pennsylvania. "Pass the *sour*."

**Sourerout** (Ger. *suerkrant*). A dish consisting of cabbage, cut fine, pressed into casks, and allowed to ferment.

**Sour on.** The American fondness of sweet things has led to the curious expression of *souring on* an unpleasant task or occupation. As the English swain is said to be sweet on his lady-love, so the Texas youth *sours on* the beauty that will not listen to his addresses, and the man who abandons his plantations to take up some other business, is said to have *soured on* planting. (De Vere.)

**Sour-sop** (*Anona muricata*). A West Indian fruit, whose name is said to be a corruption of the Indian word "Suirsaak."

**Sovereigns of Industry.** An organization of the laboring classes, who by co-operation seek to obtain a more equal division of the fruits of labor than is possible when a middleman stands between a capitalist and the real producers of wealth. (Farmer.)

**Sowbelly.** A soldier's name for salt pork, which largely consisted of back and belly pieces.

**Sozzle.** In parts of New England, a lazy, slatternly woman.

**Space-grabber.** In newspaper parlance, a reporter, from his alleged ambition to enhance his weekly bill by every variety of device that will give him "copy."

**Span** (Dutch). More properly a yoke, but mostly used in the United States when speaking of a pair of horses who match in color and appearance.

Hence, to *span*, to agree in color, or in color and size.

The word may also have come to us from the German "gespann."

**Spanceel**. (1) To hobble an animal by its hind legs, particularly a cow when milking.

Still provincial in that sense in England.

(2) To spanceel a crab is to prevent it from biting by sticking one of its legs into each of its movable claws.

**Spandy**. In parts of New England, clean, spick-span, in speaking of linen.

**Spanish-bayonet** (*Yucca treculiana*). In Texas, New Mexico, and Arizona, a common name for a variety of yucca with sharp-pointed leaves, and producing an edible fruit resembling the papaw.

**Spark**. In the Northern States, to court, probably in allusion to the spick and span appearance of a lover under such circumstances. "What girl were you *sparkin'* last sunday?"

In England, *spark* is a sweetheart.

**Spat**. A petty quarrel, as one between lovers. Derived from the use of the word for a slap or blow.

Hence, also, to *spat*.

**Special**. In newspaper parlance, an article sent by mail, express or telegraph to a newspaper by one of its own writers.

**Speck** (Ger.). In parts of Pennsylvania, a generic name for fat meat, usually pork.

**Speedway**. A public way for driving faster than is proper on general highways.

**Spice-berry**. A variety of hack-berry (q. v.).

**Spice-bush**. See *fever-bush*.

**Spice-tea**. A beverage made from the leaves of the spice-bush and valuable as a febrifuge.

**Spider**. A cast-iron frying-pan standing on three long legs.

**Spike**. A casual ward.

Hence, to *spike*, to go to or frequent the same.

**Spike team**. A team of three horses, or of two oxen and a horse, the latter leading the oxen or span of horses.

**Spike tail**. A dress-coat, or swallow-tail.

**Spiritual wife.** A Mormon term for all wives other than the first one. These concubines are also called *sea'ed ones*, while the jocosely inclined call them *fixin's*.

**Splurge.** To make a great display ; to swagger pompously ; to indulge in noisy demonstration.

Also, to *cut* or *make a splurge*.

**Spoils system.** That under which the successful party, at an election, fills all the offices with men of its own political faith. The spoils system was first used, in American politics, by Wm. S. Marey, of New York, in the U. S. Senate in 1832.

As a matter of fact, this particular application of the doctrine of "Væ victis" is not particular to any country, and may be said to be the watchword of all politicians, the world over.

**Spook** (Ger. *spuck*). A ghost, a hobgoblin. The fact that *spooks* mostly prevail where German settlers abound, as in some parts of Virginia and in the North-West, would seem to indicate that the word might perhaps be derived from the German *spuck*, meaning a phantom or a vision.

Oddly enough this word is now knocking at the door of the English language from two sides, from America and from South Africa, as all readers of Mr. Rider Haggard's stirring tales will remember.

**Spool holes.** See *pool-holes*.

**Spoom.** On the coast of New Jersey, used in sense of to run before the wind.

**Spoons.** In New England, a silly fellow ; a nincompoop.

Also, *spooosy*

**Sport.** A gambler, a betting man. One addicted to sports.

In England, the form "sporting man" is used in preference.

**Sposh.** Slush, or half-melted snow and mud.

**Spots (in).** A curious Western phrase meaning by intervals ; by snatches by fits and starts.

**Spotter.** (1) A private detective employed to spy on and report the shortcomings of employees on railroads, etc.

(2) A spy, in temperance towns, who seeks to become an informant

**Sprawl.** In parts of New England, use in sense of animation, vigor, energy. "I haven't any *sprawl* to-day."

**Spread-eagle.** Used adjectively, in sense of bombastic, extravagant. "*Spread-eagle* rhetoric."

**Spread-Eagleism.** Flamboyant rhetoric ; exaggerate bombast ; exaltation of the great American bird and the land of freedom.

**Spread oneself.** To assume airs ; to make ostentatious show of oneself.

**Sprightly.** In New England, used for tart, high-flavored. " A *sprightly* apple."

**Spring-bag (to).** A New-Eng. farmer's term used of the filling udders of cows when about to calve. (Farmer.)

**Springers.** In New Jersey, said of cows about to calve.

**Spritz.** In parts of Pennsylvania, inhabited by people of German descent, used for sprinkle, squirt water on. "Look out, or I'll *spritz* you."

**Sprouts.** A bunch of twigs.

Hence, " to put one through a course of sprouts," to thrash, to give him a good drubbing.

**Spry.** Nimble, active, quick.

**Spuds.** Often heard for potatoes, in Newfoundland and the Canadian Maritime Provinces.

**Spung.** In the tide-water district of New-Jersey, said of a piece of low ground at the head of a stream.

Hence, *spungy*, the land between a swamp and hard ground.

**Spunk.** Still preserved, in America, with the Old Eng. meaning of spirit, fire, mettle, courage, with connotation of manly. This usage is still also current in Scotland.

Hence, *spunky*, mettlesome, spirited, vivacious, and even angry, irritated ; also, to *spunk up*, to show pluck and spirit.

**Squail.** In parts of New England, to throw stones at, and more particularly, to throw an object so that it skims along the ground.

This is a survival of "squoil," an Old English term for a similar action.

Also to *squale*.

**Squantum.** (1) Among the Naumkeag Indians of Massachusetts, a name for an evil spirit.

(2) Among Nantucket folks, and parts of Rhode Island, a free and easy jollification, where the food generally consists of chowder and baked clams and in which everyone says and does as he pleases without restraint.

**Square.** (1) Honourable, upright : a square man.

(2) Hearty ; vigorous ; fair : a square meal.

This use of square in both the above meanings, dates back for several hundred years, as witness the following :

By heavens square eaters

More meat I say.

(Beaumont and Fletcher's tragedy of Bondina, II, iii.)

**Square (to).** This word has now ill-sorted. For instance to act square, or to do the square thing are evidently right and proper. But when a man is squared it often means that he has been "seen" or "made right;" that is that he has accepted a bribe to connive at some illegal or immoral action. (Maitland.)

**Squares.** Often used as unit of distance in cities, like "blocks" in New York and elsewhere.

**Squash** (Ind. Alg. *asquash*, signifying green). (1) A culinary vegetable of the genus *Cucurbita*, similar to vegetable marrow.

(2) A name formerly applied to the skunk on stinkard.

**Squash-bug** (*Coreus tristis*). A small yellow insect pest infesting vines, squashes, melons, and cucumbers.

In Connecticut, called *stink-bug*, from its peculiar odor, akin to that of an over-ripe pear.

**Squat.** (To settle upon land without possessing a title.

(2) In parts of New England, common in sense of to squeeze, crush, or pinch. "I *squat* my finger in the door."

**Squatter.** One who settles on land to which he has no title.

**Squatter sovereignty.** A political phrase signifying the right of actual settlers of territories in the United States to make their own laws, without reference to the common weal. The phrase was especially much used, about 1856, by Stephen A. Douglas and his followers.

**Squatter State.** The State of Kansas, from its having been the battleground of one of the severest fights in connection with the doctrine of squatter sovereignty.

**Squaw.** An Indian woman.

This word came into the language of English America at a very early period, and is probably derived from "sequa" or "esqua" which, in the Algonkin languages, is a common termination of words implying the female gender.

**Squawk.** To squeak, but with a deeper tone. Still provincial in England.

**Squaw-man.** A white man married to an Indian woman, and sharing tribal rights and privileges.

**Squawmish.** In parts of New England, said for queasy.

**Squaw-root** (*Conopholis americana*). A medicinal plant possessing narcotic properties, and much recommended for correcting the secretions.

Also called *cancer-root*.

**Squeaky.** In New England and the West, used for creaky.

**Squeal.** To inform, or tell tales ; to betray. A term well known to the police.

**Squealer.** An informer ; a betrayer. The word especially came into notoriety during the whisky ring exposures.

**Squeeze.** In New England, fret, whimper.  
Hence, *squeazy*, fretful.

**Squeeze (to).** A Stock Exchange term, meaning to embarrass.

**Squeezers.** Playing cards, whose peculiarities are rounded corners, and a smaller and handlier size.

**Squeleh.** Th crush. Now nearly obsolete in England, where its place has been taken by squash.

**Squeteague** (Labrus squeteague). An Indian Narragansett name for a fish common in the waters of Long Island sound and adjacent bays.

Also, *squetee*.

In New-York, called *weak fish*, from its feeble exertion and resistance in being drawn in by a hook.

**Squiggle.** To writhe ; to squirm ; to move about like an eel ; and, idiomatically, used in speaking of a shifty, unreliable man, who seeks to evade responsibility, as an eel eludes the grasp.

Forby's Glossary of Norfolk quotes the word in the sense of "to shake a fluid about the mouth."

**Squire.** In New England, a title given particularly to justices of the peace and judges, and in Pennsylvania to justices of the peace only.

In England, squire is a title customarily given to a man of property, living on his own estate.

**Squirm** (Old Eng.). To writhe or wriggle like an eel.

This verb, which has only lately been revived in England, is a good Old English word which Grose, in 1825, reported obsolete.

Hence *squirmy*, crooked, having a squirming shape.

**Squirt.** A fop ; a dandy ; a contemptible puppy.

Hence, *squirtish*, dandified.

**Squitters.** The diarrhœa.

Provincial in England.

**Stab (to) the law.** To rail against any duly authorized authority, or the "powers that be." (Farmer.)

**Staddle.** An old English word still used in New England and New-York for a sapling or young tree.

**Staddle.** In the Eastern States, applied to the stakes upon which hayricks are set.

Also, the name for a young tree or sapling. Staddle is an old English term which was once applied, in England, to the bottom of a haystack.

**Stag.** (1) A technical name, in the New-York law courts, for a man who is always ready, for the sake of a consideration, to aid in proving an "alibi."

(2) A bullock, in which sense the word is still provincial in England. In Louisiana, more especially applied to an ox that has been castrated late in life, after running as a bull for a while.

**Stag-dance.** A dance performed by men only.

Similarly, *stag-party*, a party composed entirely of men.

**Stake.** In New England, used for balk, balky. Especially said of a horse that jibs, when in harness.

Also, *staky*.

**Stake (to).** To mark out the limits of one's holding, as in the case of a new settler.

*To move or pull up one's stakes*, to abandon a position.

*To stick one's stakes*, to take up a position.

*To stake out*, to picket or to lariat (q. v.)

**Stake and rider.** A species of fence higher and stronger than a "worm fence."

**Stake-driver.** In the Adirondacks, the bittern, so called from its booming.

Also called *punk-pudding*.

**Stake-rope.** A lasso, or lariat.

**Stale.** In parts of New England, used to designate the handle of a tool, as in *rake-stale*. Less common in *fork-stale*, while *pipe-stale* is very rare.

**Stall.** To stick fast in mire or snow.

Still provincial in England.

In New England, to set is used in the same sense.

**Stalwarts.** A certain section of the Republican party who hold to the doctrine that "the king (their party) can do no wrong," and who stick to it through thick and thin.

The term acquired its special significance, among Republicans, in 1878-79, under Roscoe Conkling's leadership.

**Stamping ground.** The scene of one's exploits; a favorite place of resort. South and South-West.

**Stand.** (1) A locality, or situation.

(2) Among sugar planters, growing canes are spoken of as a stand of canes.

**Standee.** Standing place at a theatre, concert, etc.

A standing bed-place in a steamer.

**Stand in hand.** Often heard for behoove, beseem. "It *stands you r hand* to be careful."

**Standing full.** In parts of Pennsylvania, used in sense of full of upright objects. "The hall was *standing full* of people."

**Stand off.** To hold at a distance. "To *stand off* one's creditors."

Originally, the term was first used in sense of keeping an enemy at a distance with a rifle.

**Stand up to the rack.** To be up to the mark or point; to do what is expected of one, or what one has promised.

**Starigan.** A small green fir or spruce tree, cut for firewood. (Nfld. N. B. and N. S.)

**Star-routes.** In the United States Postal Guide, certain non-remunerative routes are designated by an asterisk or star. Hence their name of *star-routes*.

It will be remembered that grave scandals arose in connection with these star-routes from 1876 to 1884.

**Stars.** A name given, in New-York city, to the officers of the police, from these wearing a brass badge in the shape of a star.

**Stars and bars.** A name applied, during the Civil War, to the flag of the Confederate States.

**Stars and Stripes.** The flag of the United States, adopted by act of Congress on the 14th June 1777.

It is held, by some authorities, that general Washington's escutcheon, which contained three bars and three five-pointed stars, suggested the National Standard of the United States.

Also, *Star Spangled Banner*, a name first applied to the American flag by Francis S. Key, in the beautiful song which has now become the National Anthem. As a matter of fact, however, the melody itself was an old convivial song, familiar in England and America before Key was born.

**Start out.** To start, to send off, to dispatch.

**State House.** The legislative meeting-place of a State.

**State's rights.** The individual powers of each State, as opposed to the authority of the Federal government.



**State-room.** The cabin of a passenger steamer ; the private room of a sleeping-car.

**State ticket.** The list of candidates agreed upon by the leaders of a party for State's offices.

The committee choosing such candidates are called State fixers.

**Staver.** A go-ahead, dashing, active person or thing. Equivalent to rustler, rouser, etc.

**Staving.** Great ; strong. Also, very. "That is a *staving* fine horse."

**Stay with.** In the United States, lovers are said to *stay with* one another. *To be stayed with*, to be courted.

This curious phrase may be compared with *to sit up with*, and the equally curious English to "walk out with."

**Steamboat.** In the West, said metaphorically of a dashing, go-ahead character.

**Steamboat (to).** To work upon a steamer. A term confined to the hands employed on board river-boats.

*Steamboating*, the business of working on board a steamboat.

**Steep.** (1) A slang equivalent of almost every adjective of superlative degree, as great, magnificent, extravagant.

(2) High in price.

(3) Difficult to believe.

**Steeple.** Universally used instead of spire.

**Steer.** Among gamblers, to steer one against a game is to induce him to play or speculate by false pretenses.

**Steerer.** (1) A tout ; an outside salesman ; a doctor's tout.

(2) A gambler's decoy ; one who lays in wait for "suckers," and shows them where they can find a little game in which he has an interest.

**Steering committee.** A committee appointed to take charge of a political campaign.

**Steers.** The universal name, in Texas, for cattle. There are *lead-steers*, *swing-steers*, and *wheel-steers*.

**Steeve.** To pass through the hands of a stevedore, in loading or unloading vessels.

**Stemmery.** In Kentucky and Missouri, a place where tobacco is stemmed ; that is, where the leaves are stripped by being stemmed.

**Stem-winder.** A keyless watch.

**Stent** (Old Eng.). In New England, an allotted task or portion, and so used by Shakespeare.

The idea still partially survives in England in the verb "to stint."

**Stepmother.** A slang term, in New Jersey, for a ragged nail or a roughness of the skin.

**Step out.** To die; a Western idiom which is graphically descriptive, death being, indeed, but a stepping, as it were, from one room to another.

**Stepping.** Sometimes heard for stair carpeting.

**Stern-wheeler.** On the Ohio and Mississippi rivers, a small steamboat with only one paddle-wheel placed at the rear.

Hence, the adjective stern-wheel, applied to anything small, mean, or contemptible.

**Stick-chimney.** In newly settled districts, a temporary contrivance for conveying smoke out of a log hut, or other roughly-made building.

In Massachusetts, formerly called *cattel chimney*.

**Stick out.** To hold on to the end; to endure unflinchingly.

**Stick-up.** In the oyster district of New Jersey, said of a long, thin oyster, so called from the fact that it "stickups," as oystermen say, in the mud.

**Stick-wagon.** In parts of Pennsylvania, a carriage with open bed.

Also called *road-wagon*, and *spindle-wagon*.

**Stiddiment.** Sometimes heard for steadiness.

**Stiff.** (1) A metaphorical expression for a corpse. More especially, a body for dissection.

(2) A lie; a fake.

(3) A worthless fellow. "An old *stiff*."

(4) A person whose manners or opinions are stiff and rigid; or one who is obstinate or lacking in social qualities.

(5) A bore, one whose company is undesirable.

**Stiffen.** A sporting word, signifying to tamper with.

**Still.** In parts of Pennsylvania inhabited by people of German descent, often used redundantly, as in the following phrases: "I have been there *still*. I want you to stop *still*."

Cf. the use of the Ger. *schon*, *noch*, *doch*.

**Still-hunter.** A Western term for a stalker of game.

**Still-hunting.** Originally a Western sporting term, signifying walking or crawling noiselessly through the woods or prairie herbs, in search of game.

Now a well known political phrase applied to secret or under-handed political methods.

**Stinkard.** A former New-England name for the skunk.

**Stink-stone.** A variety of limestone, so called from the unpleasant smell it emits when broken.

Also called *swine-stone*.

**Stitch.** In New England, to form land into ridges.

**Stiver.** To decamp; to move on. A low word used in the Northern States.

**Stock.** Domesticated, or half-tamed cattle. Now also common in England.

*Stock dealer*, a cattle dealer.

*Stock raiser*, a cattle farmer.

*Stock train*, a cattle train.

**Stock (to).** At card playing, to stock cards is to arrange them for cheating purposes.

**Stokey.** (1) Firm, tough, in speaking of cloth.

(2) Short and stoutly built. In this sense, still provincial in England.

**Stogies.** In parts of the West, said of coarse, rough shoes or boots.

Also, cheap cigars.

**Stone-boat.** See *drag*.

**Stone-horse.** Often used for stallion.

**Stone-root** (*Collinsonia canadensis*). A medicinal root, having diuretic and stomachic properties.

Also called *rich-weed*.

**Stoop** (Dutch *stoep*). A porch, a piazza. Also, the steps at the entrance of a house, or any open porch with seats. On account of the uniform style of building, the term has spread all over the country, even as far north as the back-woods of Canada.

In the West, the word is occasionally written *stoup*, and in Canada as *stoup*.

**Store.** A shop of any kind, for the sale of goods. Thus, there are book stores, clothing stores, dry-goods stores, drug stores, vegetable stores (vegetables and fruits), but strangely enough, however, a butcher keeps a meat market.

Hence, *storekeeper*, for shopkeeper.

**Store-clothes.** Store goods of any kind, as opposed to those which are home-made.

See *boughten*.

- Store-pay.** Payment in kind instead of cash.
- Store-sugar.** Cane sugar, as distinguished from maple-sugar.
- Store-tea.** A term often applied to the real article from China, as distinct from herb-teas.
- Story.** In newspaper parlance, a generic term used to designate anything published in the news columns.  
See *beat*.
- Stout.** In New England, often used for strong, in speaking of muscle.
- Straddle.** A stock-broker's term which has found its way into the political vocabulary. In 1884, "the straddle in the platform" designated measures taken to meet any contingency, whether as regards contrary voters or opposition tactics. (Farmer.)
- Straight.** (1) Unmixed, undiluted, as applied to liquors. "A *straight* drink, a whisky *straight*." In England they would say "neat" whisky.  
(2) Honest, fair. "A *straight* victory," a victory gained in fair encounter.  
(3) A fixed price, without connotation of a possible rebate. "10 cents *straight*."  
(4) Even, or uniform in quality. "100 barrels of Rochester flour, *straight*."  
(5) At game of poker; a sequence of five cards.  
Thus, it appears that all the above connections may easily be traced to the primary meaning of the word, i. e. not deviating nor crooked.
- Straight ticket.** The ticket nominated by a political party, caucus, or convention, and voted as a whole without scratching.
- Straight up and down.** Plain and fair in dealing; honest to the backbone.
- Stram.** In New England, used in two ways:  
(1) To flourish the limbs. "To go *stramming* along the street."  
(2) To flounder, kick about. "To *stram* about in bed."
- Strand wood.** In parts of the South, especially Florida, pine wood cut into lengths of about 32 inches for burning in locomotives.
- Strapped.** Tightly pushed for money; hard up.
- Strap railroad.** A railroad in which the tracks are made by fastening a "strap" of iron to a board.
- Straw.** In North Carolina, used for pine needles; the foliage of the pine-tree.
- Straw-bail.** Worthless bail; one offered by men of no standing.  
Similarly, *straw bid* a not intended to be taken up.

**Streak.** A miner's term for a vein of ore, and, idiomatically, a mental peculiarity.

**Streak (to).** To run away; to decamp; to "make tracks" with the utmost expedition.

**Streaky.** Full of apprehension; alarmed; anxious.

**Street-car.** A tramway.

**Stricken** (Old Eng.). An old preterite form, still generally colloquial.

**Strike.** (1) In the West Indies, a *strike* of sugar is the quantity dealt with at one boiling.

(2) An instrument with a straight edge for levelling a measure, as in selling grain, salt, or the like.

(3) A stroke of luck; an achievement; a success. From the game of nine pins, where, to make a strike is to knock down all the pins with one ball.

**Strike (to).** To meet or to find. "Be sure to *strike* Main street, and you will be in the right way."

**Striker.** (1) A bruiser; a ruffian; especially the tout or bully of a gambling den.

(2) An apprentice engineer on a Mississippi steamboat.

(3) Among politicians, a ward *striker* is a man who possesses some political influence in his neighborhood, and uses it for all it is worth in "striking" his candidate for money. (Maitland.)

**Strike oil.** To make a hit, to be successful. To make a successful venture, especially one that brings much money in its wake. A metaphor from the vast wealth of some "oil kings" in Pennsylvania, who suddenly became rich through *striking oil* on their otherwise sterile lands.

Also, to *strike it*, to *strike luck*, or to *strike it rich*.

**String.** (1) An impeachment of some kind. For instance, an offer, promise, or donation, "with a *string* to it," is one made contingent on something else being done, or subject to recall.

(2) In newspaper parlance, the aggregate of the articles written or put in type, either by reporters or compositors, for a given period, and which are pasted together end to end.

**Stripe.** Pattern; kind; sort. "A man of the right *stripe*," i. e. of the right kind. "Two men of the same *stripe*," i. e. resembling each other in character.

"Every *stripe* of absurdity" occurs in Emerson's Essay on Behaviour, and there is no questioning the word to be an Americanism of the truest ring.

**Striped-bass** (*Labrax lineatus*). An Atlantic fish, highly esteemed for its delicacy, and deriving its name from being beautifully marked with seven or eight black lines on a silver-bright ground.

Also called *rock-fish* or simply *rock*, and *streaked bass*.

**Stripper**. A Pennsylvania name for a cow which has nearly run dry of milk. (Farmer.)

**Strippers**. Among the gambling fraternity, cards cut at the sides to allow of easy swindling.

**Struck under conviction**. Convinced of sin, impressed with a sense of personal sinfulness.

This and many similar phrases, as to *experience religion*, to *meet with a change*, are the outcome of the plain and simple phraseology which at first, in America, characterized all religious life.

**Stub** (Ger. *stubben*). To knock one's toes against an obstacle.

**Stud**. Sometimes heard, in the North, for stallion.

**Stuff**. Of frequent use, in newspaper offices, generally in allusion to completed work; as, for example, a man might say: "That was pretty good *stuff*," meaning that the writing was of some value.

**Stuffening**. A Western variant of stuffing, in sense of seasoning.

**Stuffy**. (1) Close and sultry, like a "Gulf weather" day.

(2) In parts of New England, angry, sulky, obstinate, ill-humored.

**Stump**. To *go on the stump*, to *take the stump*, a political electioneering phrase, meaning to deliver speeches in various places during an electoral campaign.

Public meetings are often held in the open air in newly-cleared districts, and the stumps of felled trees offer convenient platforms or rostrums for the speakers.

Hence, *stump speech*, an election address; *stump speaker*, *stump orator*, *stump oratory*, all of obvious meaning; *stump prayer*, an extemporaneous prayer.

**Stumpage**. In Maine, a fee paid for the right of felling trees.

**Stump-tail currency**. Before the war of secession, a term applied, in the West, to bank-notes of doubtful value, or depreciated paper currency.

**Stunts**. To *do stunts*, used in New-York City by boys, in the sense of performing some feat in rivalry, a long jump for instance, one boy "stumping" or challenging another.

**Subs**. In newspaper offices, an abbreviated form for "suburban news."

**Succotash** (Ind. Narragansett *mesicwotash*). A preparation of green corn and beans boiled together, and to which experts add, in true Indian style, a small allowance of venison.

**Sucker.** (1) A common name for a dupe ; a victim of sharpers ; a green-horn.

(2) A hard drinker ; a drunkard. Hence, *suckerdom*, for inebriates and drunkards taken collectively.

(3) A tube used for imbibing "long drinks."

(4) A despicable person, and especially a sponger, i. e. one who lives on another.

(5) A native of Illinois, where, in the West, the people are said not to be overbright.

**Sucker State.** A nickname applied, in the West, to the State of Illinois.

**Sudadero**, soo-dah-der'o (Sp.). In Texas and New Mexico, a fissure in a well or water-tank, from which the water is flowing.

**Suerte**, soo-er'-tay (Sp.). Originally applied, in Texas, to a specified quantity of land (27 acres), for which the settlers drew lots, but now said of any small lot of land.

**Sugar.** *Sugar bush*, *sugar camp*, *sugar orchard*, various names applied to a group a sugar-making-trees. Sugar camp is more restricted to the West.

**Sugar-game.** Among boys, the deciding game at marbles.

**Sugaring time.** The season of the year (March or April) when maple-sugar is made.

**Sugar-licks.** In New England, the gatherings of young people in the maple groves, to eat warm sugar.

**Sugar maple** (*Acer saccharinum*). The variety of maple, from the sap of which is obtained the maple sugar of commerce.

Also, *sugar-tree*, and even, in parts of the West, simply *sugar*.

**Sugar off.** To approach granulation, in making maple sugar. Also, to eat maple sugar poured on snow in a heated state.

**Sugar-tit.** Sugar tied up, in a piece of cotton cloth for the fretful child to suck.

**Sulky.** A two-wheeled carriage for a single person. In French, a "désobligeante."

**Sundown.** Sunset. A survival of old English usage still very common.

**Sunfish (to).** Among cowboys and plainsmen, said of the broncho, when

he brings first one shoulder down almost to the ground and then the other.

**Sun-shower.** A shower occurring while the sun continues to shine.

**Sun-squall.** On the coast of New England, a term applied to the Medusæ or Sea-Nettles.

**Sun-up.** A form especially current in the South for sunrise or early morning.

**Supawn** (Ind. *asapahn*, a Lenape or Delaware name for "boiled Indian meal"). A preparation of Indian meal stirred into a thick batter, and eaten with milk and sugar, or molasses. (N. Eng. N. Y. and other northern States.)

Also known under the familiar name of *hasty pudding*.

In Pennsylvania, and other States, called *mush*.

Probably also the *samp* mentioned by Roger Williams, and the *sagumity* of Father Marquette.

See *soupane*.

**Sure-enough.** Used adjectively, in the South and West, in sense of real, genuine, or fair. "A *sure-enough* man or investment."

**Surface-washer.** A term of opprobrium, among the '49 miners of California, for an indolent or lazy man, from the preference of some miners for trudging about in search of surface gold, rather than delving, down to bottom rock to find the true deposit.

**Surprise-party.** A party of friends descending unexpectedly upon the house of a mutual friend, each bringing some contribution toward a jollification.

In the South, there are surprise parties of a more disagreeable kind, as when a knot of people visit a negro who has had the audacity to make love to or insult a white girl, for the purpose of tarring and feathering, or driving him out of the town, with the menace of death, if he dare to return to it.

**Suspenders.** The American substitute for the English braces, and a delicate improvement upon the old word gallowsses, which used to be common in New England.

In England, suspenders are only used by women and children to secure the stockings.

**Suspicion (ts).** Common in the South for to suspect. Once also current in England.

**Swad** (Old Eng.). A lump; a mass; a crowd. An Old English colloquialism frequently heard in New England.



**Swag.** A depression caused by shrinking or settling down, as of earth, etc.

Hence, to *swag*, to shrink or collapse.

**Swale.** A valley, a tract of low land. Applied especially to low land between sand ridges on the coast beaches.

Provincial in Norfolk, England, with a connotation of shade, in opposition to sunshine.

**Swallow-tails.** A nickname applied, during the campaign of 1876, to a considerable number of Democrats, who moved in fashionable New-York circles.

Their opponents were called *short-hairs*.

**Swamp-apple.** An excrescence of the swamp honeysuckle, and so named from a similarity of taste between it and the well-known fruit.

**Swamp-honeysuckle** (*Azalea nudiflora*). A plant flowering in April and May, and growing in the swamps from Massachusetts to Virginia.

Also called *May-apple*, *Pinxter blummachy*, and *swamp-pink*.

**Swampers.** In State of Maine, said of men who make roads for lumberers to convey logs to the water's edge.

**Swankey.** A favorite beverage with the fishermen of Newfoundland, which is a compound of molasses, vinegar and water.

**Swash.** In the Southern States, a name given to a narrow sound or channel of water lying within a sand bank, or between that and the shore. (Webster.)

Also, *swash*.

**Swat.** A low word, meaning to deliver a blow, to strike.

Also, to *svot*.

**Swatch.** In Newfoundland, a hole in the ice, through which seals come up.

Hence, to *swatch*, to watch for seals at the holes in order to shoot them.

**Swear off.** To renounce ; to give up ; to abandon, and, particularly, to abandon drinking.

**Sweat-house.** (1) Among the aboriginal tribes of California, a super-heated vault also used as a sort of religious temple, where the braves were kept sweltering all night, thence to plunge into an ice-cold river.

(2) A cell in which suspected persons are confined, and subjected to examination, for the purpose of extorting confessions from them.

**Swip.** Among Canadian lumbermen, the great oar of a barge.

**Swipe (to).** Used in college parlance, in a variety of ways: (1) to steal; (2) to take without permission, not necessarily with intent to steal; (3) to strike; (4) to strike the ball hard, as in baseball.

**Switch.** A movable rail, by which process of shunting is effected.  
In England, "points."

**Switch (to).** To turn cars from one line of rails to another.  
In England, to "shunt."

**Switchel.** A New-England beverage of molasses, water, and ginger, with or without molasses.

**Swoils.** In Newfoundland, applied to seals.  
Hence, to go *swoiling*.

**Sword,** In South Jersey, the coupling-pole of a wagon.

## T

**Tabagane.** See *tobogan*.

**Tabby-cat.** (1) Female cat; (2) cat of yellow or yellow-striped color; (3) general word, like "pussy-cat," with no special significance.

**Table-spread.** A table cloth.

**Table-stakes.** At game of poker, stakes placed where they may be seen. Each player cannot then be raised more than he has upon the table.

**Table-ware.** The appointments of a dinner table.

**Tacker.** A small child. The adjective "little" generally precedes the noun.

**Tackey.** In the South, a jade of a horse; a sorry beast; and idiomatically a man neglectful of personal appearance, one who is slovenly, shabby.

Hence, *tacky parties*, where the guests are dressed in the commonest and most unfashionable costumes.

**Tad.** A human being. "Little tads" are small boys, and "old tads" are old men.

Cf. "little toad" as a term of endearment.

**Taffy.** A common corruption of toffy for candy; also, idiomatically, flattery.

**Tag.** (1) A slight touch.

(2) The name of a boy's game.

(3) A ticket.

**Tags.** The foliage of a pine-tree. A shortened form of *pine-tags*.

**Tail (to).** Among cowboys, to hold a steer down by the tail after it is lassoed and heeled.

**Tailings.** Among miners, a term applied to refuse ore.

**Tailor** (Pomoolbus mediocris). The popular name of a small-sized shad of inferior flavor, peculiar to the Mississippi.

See *salt-water-tailor*.

**Tajo**, tah'-ho (Sp.). In Texas and New-Mexico, a deep cut or trench to collect water in time of drought.

**Take.** In newspaper parlance, a reporter's *assignment* (q. v.). There are *fat-takes* and *lean takes*, i. e. those by which good pay is easily obtained and those which cost much labor and give small returns.

**Take (to).** In Canada, said of water when it freezes. "The river *took* last night."

**Take a walk.** To be dismissed; to receive one's walking papers.

**Take off.** To endure from. "I would'nt *take that off* him."

**Take the bun.** Said of a tall fish story, or of anything superlative.

Also, *take the cake*, *take the bakery*.

To "take the cake" is a phrase of great antiquity. The idea of a cake being given as a prize seems so obvious that it is perhaps lost labor to trace it back in literature. Athenaeus, in his "Deipnosophistae" (book 14, chap. 56) speaks of a certain kind of cake which was given as a prize at the "all-night" festivals to whomsoever kept awake through the solemnities. So the expression "hemeteros ho puramous"—"we take the cake"—would seem to have become proverbial. It occurs in two passages in Aristophanes ("Thesm." 94, and "Eq." 277).

**Take the rag' off the bush.** To bear away the palm; to outvie; to outdo. From the fact that, not unfrequently, at shooting matches, in the West, a target is improvised with a rag hung on a bush.

Also, simply, to *take the rag off*.

**Take the starch out of one.** To take the style and stiffness out of one; to humble; to snub. Westerners of the far-off States are especially apt to indulge in that enjoyment at the expense of newcomers or tenderfoots.

**Take up.** (1) In the language of the prairies, to saddle or harness a horse, or an ox team, at the beginning of a day's journey.

(2) In the South, to put up at an inn.

**Take water.** To back down; to make off; to run away.

**Talk.** Among Indians, a conference, negotiation, or official communication.

**Talking-iron.** A comical name for a gun or rifle.

Also, *shooting-iron*.

**Talk to.** In parts of the South, said in sense of to court. "Judge Jackson's son has been *talkin'* to my daughter nigh on a year."

**Talk round a five-cornered stump.** To indulge in loquacious talk, of a more or less exaggerated character. To engage in metaphysical reasoning of a very abstract nature.

Another variant is to *talk the hind leg off a cow*.

**Talk turkey.** To indulge in grandiloquent periods; to use high-sounding words. An allusion to the manner in which the male bird spreads and plumes itself. (Farmer.)

**Tall.** An intensitive, synonym of great, fine, exceedingly, etc. "*Tall* whiskey," excellent or splendid whiskey. "*Tall* talk," bombastic and high-sounding *talk*."

This word was formerly the recognised slang for the talk of a braggart or a liar, but may be applied in every case where inordinateness, excessiveness, and great magnitude enter into the idea of the speaker. "He is the greatest pedestrian mentioned in the annals of *tall* walks."

**Talqual.** In Newfoundland, said of fish sold without sorting, i. e. just as they come.

The variant *all qualls* is also said, substantively, of fish bought without culling.

**Tamal** (Mex. *tamalli*). A preparation of maize, common in Spanish America, as far north as Texas, New Mexico and Arizona.

The tamal is made of maize crushed on the "metate," mixed with minced meat and a liberal quantity of red pepper. The mass is then rolled in pieces of corn shucks, and after being dipped in oil is cooked in the steam of water.

**Tamarac.** In the Northern States, an Indian Algonkin word sometimes heard for the species of spruce, otherwise called in French "*épinette rouge*" (*Larix americana*).

**Tammany.** Said to come from *Tammenund*, a famous chief of the Lenni-Lenape or Delaware Indians, who flourished about the middle of the 17th century. Cooper has introduced him in "The Last of the Mohi-

cans," chap. 28-29, where he presides at a council of his nation. Owing to his many virtues, he was facetiously canonized as the tutelary saint of the new American Republic, which fact led to a benevolent society, started in New-York in 1789, being called after his name. The new Society soon developed into a political club of powerful influence, and St. Tammany degenerated in a few years from the patronage of the Republic to that of a mere wing of the Democratic party, which position he has held since.

**Tangenty.** Erratic ; capricious ; crotchety in temper ; i. e. apt to fly off at a tangent.

Also, *tangential*.

**Tan-toaster.** The singular name, at the Isles of Shoals, Maine, for a great gale or storm.

**Tapadero,** tah-pah-der'-o (Sp.). In the formerly Spanish States, a leather covering for the protection of the feet, and, more specifically, the "toe-fender" of the Mexican stirrup.

Also used for *reboso* (q. v.).

**Tapalo,** tah'-pal-o (Sp.). In the formerly Spanish States, a coarse piece of cloth which serves as a substitute among the lower classes for the finer and costlier *reboso*.

**Taps.** A military term for the evening bugle-call.

**Taps.** *To be on one's taps*, to be on the alert ; ready for action. Literally, to be on one's soles, a metaphor borrowed from the shoemaker.

**Tapujo,** tah-poo'-ho (Sp.). In Texas and New Mexico, applied to the blinders used on mules in pack trains.

**Tarheels.** A name given in derision by Mississippians to a brigade of North Carolinians, who, in one of the great battles of the Civil War, failed to hold their position on a certain hill. They were then taunted with having forgotten to tar their heels that morning, and hence the cant name. (Farmer.)

**Tar kiln.** In New Jersey, applied to a place where tar is tried out of pine knots.

**Tarrify.** To exercise undue pressure. A Southern colloquialism, used in reference to coercive measures instituted by the authorities.

**Tarry** (Old Eng.). Time of tarrying.

**Tarry (to).** To delay ; to remain ; to stay.

This verb is now nearly obsolete in England.

**Tarve.** A turn ; bend ; or curve.

Hence, to *tarve*, to turn to the right or left. "The road *tarves off* to the eastward."

In Old English, "torve" signified twisted, from the latin "torvus."

**Tautaug** (Tautoga Americana). The name of the Black-fish caught in the waters of Rhode Island. The word belongs to the Algonkin language, and may be found in Roger William's Key to the Indian language.

**Tax.** In New England, to charge, in the sense of charging a price. "What will you *tax* me a yard for this cloth?"

**Tax-eater.** One who holds political office, elective or appointive ; a feeder at the public crib.

**Team.** (1) A term first adopted in sporting or athletic parlance, and meaning an assemblage of people for any object : "A base-ball team."

(2) An array of people or things ; and idiomatically applied as the sincerest and highest form of praise. "He's a whole *team*," meaning a man whose energy and pluck can be depended on.

**Tea-pomp.** Among the old colonists, a term applied to a pump whose water had stood the test of making good tea.

**Tear.** A jollification, with connotation of noisy boisterousness produced by intoxication.

Also, *tear-round*.

*On a tear*, on a spree, or debauch.

**Tear (to) round.** To make a fuss : to create a disturbance.

**Tea-squall.** A tea-party. An American slang equivalent of the English tea-fight.

**Tecolote** (Mex. *tecolott*). In Texas, the name of a species of owl. (Bubo Virginianus subarcticus.)

**Teeter.** In New England, to see-saw, oscillate up and down. Used of the children's sport with plank and fulcrum.

**Teetsook.** A saddle-bag, made of buffalo hide, from which the hair has been removed. In use on the plains.

**Tell.** A witty story or saying ; a compliment.

The equiv. of the French "bon-mot."

**Tell good bye.** In the South, to bid farewell or good-bye.

**Tempest.** Often heard, in New England, for thunder storm

**Tend.** (1) To attend. "To *tend* a convention."

Tend, for attend, is good Old English.

(2) To keep "To *tend* a shop, a store."

**Tenderfoot.** In the wild regions of the Far West, a new comer fresh from civilization ; one who has not been long enough on the tramp to be hardened.

**Tend out on.** In parts of New England, used for attend, attend to. One *tends out on* church, or *tends out on* the public library for the first opportunity to take the new magazines. Indeed, any one on the alert for any purpose whatever, is said to be *tending out*.

**Tenement.** A lodging, or flat, in a tenement house.

**Tenement-house.** A house, let out in rooms or flats to families.

**Ten-strike.** A successful stroke ; a fortunate occurrence ; a thorough piece of work. From game of ten-pins, where it means to knock down all the balls at one throw.

**Tepee.** An Indian tent, or wigwam, in the far West.

**Tepocate** (Mex. *tepcatl*). A peculiar, small, black fish, found in the pools and lagunas of southwestern Texas.

**Tequila**, tay-kee'-lah (Sp.). In Texas, the name of a Mexican alcoholic drink, made from the "sotole," and so called from a small city in Mexico, where that liquor is principally distilled.

**Terawchey** (Dutch *te-ratje*). A familiar word still lingering in New York nurseries, and the equivalent for the "creep-mouse." This word, as will be seen, is made up exactly like *prawchey*, from *praatje*.

**Terrapin** (Palustris). A species of salt-water turtle, abounding south of New York, whose flesh is considered a great delicacy.

The word is clearly a corrupt form of the Algonkin name, which is quoted by Rasles as "toarebe, tortue."

**Terres folles** (Fr.). The district on the south shore of Lake Superior.

**Terres jaunes** (Fr.). The yellow stone country of Missouri.

**Terres tremblantes** (Fr.). In the Canadian North-West, savanes made of shakey ground.

**Terret.** In New England, the guiding ring for the reins of the harness of a horse.

Bailey, in his Dictionary, gives "Tyerets," ornaments for horses.

**Tesquite** (Mex. *tequezquitl*). The alkaline efflorescence or incrustation found on the alkali deserts of New Mexico, California and Arizona.

**Test-paper.** In Pennsylvania law courts, a document shown to a jury as evidence.

**Tetchy** (Old Eng.). Irritable ; fractious ; touchy, when speaking of children.

This word may be found in Shakespeare (Romeo and Juliet) and is still current in the western counties of England.

**Têtes-de-femmes** (Fr.). A name given, by the half-breeds of the Canadian North-West, to the little clumps of moss on the prairies.

**Tew.** To fume ; to fuss ; to fret.

To *tew round*, to make a pretence of work without performing anything. Generally applied to a busybody in household affairs.

In the north of England, "tew" means to labor, to work hard.

**Texas.** The upper deck of a Mississippi river steamboat.

*Texas tender*, waiter on the texas or upper deck of a Mississippi steamboat.

**Thank ye ma'ams.** Hollows or depressions in a road which cause vehicles to bump up and down. A young man driving his sweetheart in a sleigh, is then permitted to take a kiss at each of these.

**Thatch.** A long, coarse grass, growing in the salt marshes on the New Hampshire and Massachusetts seacoast.

Hence, *thatchy*, said of milk. The milk tastes *thatchy* when the cows have eaten thatch.

**Thimble-berry** (*Rubus occidentalis*). The wild black raspberry, so called from its naked receptacle having the shape of a thimble.

**Thimble-weed** (*Rudbeckia*). A medicinal plant, having diuretic and tonic properties, and so called from its receptacle resembling a thimble.

**Thirds** (Old Eng.). Commonly colloquial in sense of dower.

So used in Middleton's plays.

**Thoroughfare.** In the South, a low gap in a range of hills, or between mountains.

**Three-square.** A kind of grass found on the South Jersey meadows.

**Through.** In Kentucky, the number of rows worked by a set of hands through a tobacco field.

**Throw up.** A euphemism used for to vomit.

*Throw up one's socks*, or *one's boots*, to vomit vehemently and copiously.

**Thumper.** A rough ; a bully ; a pugilist.

**Thunder-heads.** Heavy cumulus clouds piled above the black mass of a storm.

**Thwart.** On the New-England coast, sometimes heard for a rower's seat, in a boat.

**Ticker.** In stock-broking circles, a "tape."



**Ticket.** A list of candidates for election, as prepared by the party leaders, or by caucus or convention.

*Mixed ticket*, one combining the nominees of different parties.

*Scratch ticket*, one from which one or more names have been erased.

*Split ticket*, one representing different divisions of a party.

*Straight ticket*, one containing the "regular nomination" without change.

**Tickler.** (1) A cash-balance book; also, a memorandum in which a register of debts and payments is kept.

(2) A pocket flask, in which to carry liquor.

**Tidy.** An ornamental cover for a sofa or chair.

From the Old English word "tide," meaning time as eventide, from which "tidy," in sense of timely or seasonable.

**Tie away.** Sometimes heard for to untie. "To tie away the boat."

Cf. lock open.

**Tiger.** (1) The ordinary faro game is generally veiled under the term of "Ye Tiger," a curious name quite adequate to express the destructive and voracious nature of the game.

To *buck*, or *fight the tiger*, to gamble, and, more particularly, to play faro.

(2) A final cheer, or yell of a particularly great volume.

After the usual three cheers at a convivial or other party, when in England there would be a call for the Kentish fire, or one cheer more, there is in America a call for the *tiger*, a growl, like that of a wild animal, in which all the company take part. The *tiger* is very effective for its purpose.

**Tilpah** (Ind.). A plain's term for a parti-colored rug, woven and dyed by the Navajo Indians, and used under the saddle and over the true saddle blanket.

**Tilt.** In Newfoundland, a poor one-story house, built of small hewn sticks, set vertically.

Also, *clotten house*.

**Timber.** A generic name, in the South and West, for woodland, forests.

*Timbered lands*, land covered with woods.

**Timberheels.** A slouching, slovenly walker.

**Time.** A *good time* may mean anything, from simple, innocent enjoyment to a drunken spree or debauch.

Has been used by sundry Old English writers, and is still a favourite with the good folks of many English villages, only not exactly in the American sense.

A *high old time*, a spree or debauch of the first class.

*All the time*, always.

*In time*, at the exact hour or time.

*To make time*, to be punctual.

**Timothy** (*Phleum pratense*). The popular name of the Herd's Grass, said to be derived from Timothy Hanson, who first introduced it into cultivation.

**Tinaja**, *te-nah'-hah* (Sp.). Primarily a large earthenware vessel, but now applied on the Mexican frontier to holes or cavities in rocks forming receptacles for water.

**Tinajera**, *te-nah-her'-ah* (Sp.). On the Mexican frontier, the stand upon which the *tinaja* is kept, usually the three-pronged fork of a tree. Also a weed, not identified, covering miles of country in Southern Texas, whose leaves are used as a substitute for tea.

**Tinclads**. A facetious name given by the Confederates, during the Civil War, to their own war cruisers. The Northern men-of-war they called *cheese boxes*.

**Tinker**. A New-England name for a small mackerel.

**Tinner**. A tin-plate worker.

**Tin-wedding**. Celebration of the 10th anniversary of a marriage.

**Tippecance**. A nickname given to Wm. Henry Harrison, ninth president of the United States, because of his victory over the Indians of the North-West, under Tecumseh, in 1811.

**Tipple**. A drink of liquor, and especially a "fancy drink."

To tipple is familiar enough in England for to drink.

**Tippybobs**. A term of utmost contempt designating the upper or wealthy classes.

**Tipteer**. To walk in a mincing manner.

**Tisanne** (Fr.). In French Canada, a decoction of spruce-tops supposed, like sarsaparilla, to be a blood purifier.

**Thithing-man**. In New England, a parish officer appointed to preserve order at public worship, and enforce the proper observance of the Sabbath. (Worcester.)

**Tlaco** (Mex. *tlacotaloni*). In Texas, a copper coin, about the size of an old style United States copper cent. Two *tlacos* are equivalent to two and a quarter cents of our money.

Other forms are *tlac*, *thlack*.

**Toad-fish** (*Batrachus variegatus*). An ugly fish, and fisherman's pest, otherwise called *grubby* and *oyster-fish*.

Also, *toad-grunter*, from the noise it makes.

**Toad-sticker**. A soldier's term for a sword, which was almost universal during the Civil War.

**Tobagan** (Ind. Alg. *tubagun*, a sled. In the dialect of the Crees, *otobanask*). A sleigh or sledge, drawn by dogs in the extreme north of Canada, and used for travelling over snow. This sledge is made of thin wood, bent upward at one end, and without runners.

Also, a pleasure sled used in sliding on the snow from great heights.

Other forms are *tobagin*, *tobagan*, *tabagane* (Ferland, Hist. du Canada, p. 113), *tabaganne* (Leclercq, Relation de la Gaspésie, 1691, p. 70), *tabogine* (Lemoine, Monographies et Esquisses, p. 70).

*Toboganing*, sliding down hill on the snow on a tobogan.

*Toboganist*, one who indulges in the sport of toboganing.

**Tole**. In parts of Pennsylvania, said of a drain or ditch.

**Tole (to)**. An Old English form still persisting in sense of to allure, to draw or cause to follow. Only used, however, in connection with animals.

**Toloache** (Mex. *toloatzin*). In Texas, the name of a plant bearing purple, sweet scented flowers. This plant is a strong narcotic, and the Mexicans even think it has the property of developing gradual and permanent insanity.

**Tomahawk** (Ind. Powhattan *tomahack*, or *tamohake*. In the Algonkin dialect, *otamaha-egan*, whence the contracted form *tahmahakan*, meaning literally a "beating-thing." Lacombe gives the Cree *otamahuk*). A common name for every form of Indian war club, generally a hatchet with a hollow handle, so that it can serve also as a pipe.

**Tom-dog**. In some parts of the West, a dog as distinguished from a bitch.

This usage follows, with regard to dogs, that usually connected with cats only in England.

**Tommy cod**. The popular name, in Canada, of a small fish much esteemed for its delicacy, and which is caught in great quantities in winter, especially in the St Lawrence river. Fishing through the ice for *tommy cod* is an old time Canadian sport, which is now more popular than ever. On the St Charles river, near the city of Quebec, fishing parties lease "cabanes" on the ice and enjoy the sport for several days and nights.

**Toney**. High-toned; possessing good style; fancy; swellish.

**Tongue**. The pole of a waggon or omnibus.

**Toot** (Ger. *diite*). In Eastern Pennsylvania, a conical paper bag used among grocers.

**Toot (on a)**. On a drunken spree.

**Toothache-bush** (*Xanthoxylum fraxineum*). The prickly ash, so called from its being a specific for toothache.

**Toothache-grass** (*Monocera aromatica*). A singular kind of grass growing in Florida, whose root affects the salivary glands, and is said to be a specific for toothache.

**Tooth-picks.** A nickname applied to the inhabitants of Arkansas.

**Toozer.** A boy's term for a marble.

Also, *twozer*.

**Top (to).** In Pennsylvania, to snuff (a candle).

**Tormentation.** In New England, torment, pain, trouble.

**Tormented.** In New England, a euphemism for damned.

**Tornillo, tor-neel'-lyo** (Sp.). In Texas, the name of a tree or large shrub closely related to the *mesquite*, and bearing beans which are used as food by men and animals.

**Tortience.** In parts of New England, some old people call the youngest child or pet of a family a *tortience*.

**Tortilla, tor-til'-lyah** (Sp.). In Mexico, and the formerly Spanish States, a pankake made of Indian meal, mashed and baked on an earthen pan.

**Tory.** A royalist sympathiser during the war of the Revolution, in opposition to whig. Subsequently the term dropped out of popular usage, save as a contemptuous word synonym with retrograde.

**Tote.** Much used in the South, in sense of to carry a load. There seems also to be a general use of the word among the Maine lumbermen, in the sense of haul (with team).

*Tote load*, as much as one can carry.

*Tote-team*, team used in hauling.

*Toting up*, going from one place to another.

**Totem** (Ind. Alg. Baraga has the word from *ni totem*, my parent, my relation). A tribal mark or badge, among the Indians, represented by a device of some animal on his breast, and which is drawn in paint, or engraved in the skin of his body.

Hence *totemic*, relating or belonging to the totem.

**Tottlish.** Shaking; vacillating; unsteadily. From "totter," to reel, to shake.

Sir Walter Scott used the word "totty" in the same manner;

I was somewhat totty when I received the good knight's blow

(Ivanhoe, ch. XXXIII)

**Touch.** (1) To obtain money from one. For instance, a political worker will *touch* a candidate for anything, from a dollar up.

(2) A cant word, synonym of to steal.

**Touching committee.** A self-appointed gang of politicians and ward-workers who "bleed" candidates for office.

**Tough.** A street loafer and bar-room bully.

Also used adjectively in sense of strong, healthy.

**Tough it out.** To endure to the end. Much used among the uneducated.

**Touladi.** An Indian word designating a species of trout particular to the lakes of the north of the province of Quebec.

**Toulibi** (Fr. Can.). Among the French-Canadians, the name of a species of fish (*Coregonus quadrilateralis*) found in the lower St. Lawrence region.

**Tow.** That which is towed, as a boat or scow.

**Tow-boat.** A freight boat; a barge or canal boat.

**Tow-head.** (1) In the Mississippi region, a small tuft-like island, formed by the silting up of mud round sunken trees and through other causes.

(2) A Western term for a man of dandified appearance.

**Town.** (1) In New England, a small territorial district or township, whether densely or thinly inhabited. Miss Leslie says it will explain Jonathan's perplexity;

He said he couldn't see the *town*,  
There were so many houses.

(2) In New England, one of the portions into which every county is divided, and generally containing a village to which the surrounding farmers come to do their trading. This meaning is closely allied to its use in Wycliffe's time, who evidently regards the "town" as the agricultural district outside the village, when he translates Luke XVI. 15: "He sent him into his 'toun' to feed swine."

(3) In New England, a body of voters within a township, district, or parish.

**Town-house.** (1) A house where the public business of the town is transacted. This house has the same relation to a township, as a "town hall" has to an English borough.

(2) In Connecticut, an almshouse.

**Township.** (1) The district or territory of a town, comprising from five to ten miles square, and subordinate to the county.

(2) In the province of Quebec (Canada) the district or parts that were exempt from feudal laws, at the time of the "seigniories," are still called townships.

**Tow-row.** A shindy; a noise; a racket.

**Tow-tail.** Among the mill operatives, in New England, the name of a coarse kind of cloth.

**Track.** The spoor, or foot-marks of a man, or any animal.

The "permanent way" of a railroad.

To *clear the track*, the Am. equiv. of the English "to clear the deck."

To *get off the track*, to derail.

To *have the inside track*, to be in possession of all available influence on a given subject, to be in a commanding position.

To *cover up one's tracks*, to adopt measures of concealment.

To *make tracks*, to run away.

In *one's tracks*, immediately. Lowell says this expression is an importation from the Latin "e vestigio," or the Norman French "enes les pas."

**Trade.** A commercial transaction, and especially an exchange of any kind. In England, trade is applied exclusively to an avocation.

**Trade (to).** To sell; to barter; to exchange; to dicker. The equiv. of the English "to shop."

This use of the word is good old legitimate English, as in Ezek. xxvii. 13, where we read: "They *traded* the persons of men and vessels of brass in thy market."

**Trade-last.** In college parlance, an exchange of compliments, or a quoted compliment.

Also used as a verb, in sense of to exchange compliments.

**Trader.** In Newfoundland, a stranger who comes to barter.

**Trail.** The spoor, or foot-marks of any animal.

A path; the track left by men or animals.

On *the trail*, said of cattle while being driven from one range to another, or to a shipping point for beef.

To *blind a trail*, in the days of Indian warfare, to obliterate the traces of a trail; and hence, figuratively, to remove the traces of one's actions.

To *camp on the trail*, to follow in close pursuit.

**Trailer.** The street car on the cable lines which is drawn by the "grip."

**Train.** In New England, to carry on, to act wild. Almost peculiar to girls. "She's an awful one to *train*."

Also used substantively for frolic, romp.

**Traine** (Fr.). Among the French-Canadians, a peculiar low sleigh used for the transport of merchandise, wood, etc.

**Trainers.** In New England, militia when in training. Also, a general word for soldiers.

**Training-day.** The day when the militia are called out to be reviewed.

**Tramp.** A travelling or strolling vagabond who works when he must, steals when he can, and begs at all times.

Quoted in Halliwell.

In England, a tramp is now a foot traveller.

**Transient.** In hotel and boarding-house parlance, a temporary visitor, as distinguished from a permanent boarder.

**Trap-door.** In New England, a triangular rent in cloth.

Also, *trappatch*.

See *winklehawk*.

**Trash.** (1) In the West Indies and Louisiana, the leaves when stripped from the sugar-cane, in order to allow it to ripen more readily.

Hence, to *trash*, to strip the leaves from the sugar-cane.

(2) The leaves, sticks, and compact foam which accumulate by the side of a stream.

(3) A contemptuous term applied by the negroes, in the South, to poor white people.

**Trash-basket.** Waste-paper basket.

**Tree.** As an intransitive verb, to take refuge in a tree, in speaking of a wild animal, and figuratively to get out of harm's way.

In a transitive sense, to corner, to have at one's mercy, in speaking of game which has taken refuge in a tree. Hence a coon is "treed" when compelled to seek refuge in a tree.

To *tree oneself*, to hide behind a tree, as in hunting or fighting.

*Up a tree*, in difficulties, the allusion being to the uncomfortable position in which the racoon or opossum sometimes finds himself, with his enemies looking out for him at the bottom of a tree.

**Tree-molasses.** In the West, molasses and sugar which are the products of the sugar maple.

Also, *tree-sugar*.

**Tree-primrose.** (*Enothera fruticosa*). A beautiful and fleeting flower, having a brilliant yellow hue.

**Trick.** In parts of the South, a small object or chattel.

**Tricksy** (Old Eng.). Still surviving, in the South and West, for trickish, practicing tricks. "A *tricksy* horse" is especially a common expression.

**Trig** (Old Eng.). Trim, neat, smart. An old form still surviving in Virginia, related to "trick," in the sense of "tricked out," decorated.

**Trigness** (Old Eng.). Smart appearance. Still often heard in Virginia.

**Trimnings.** (1) The accessories of any dish, such as flavorings, sauces, etc.

(2) A woman's frills and furbelows; the trappings of a horse; the decorations of a house.

**Tri-Mountain City.** A name applied to the city of Boston, Mass., from the three hills on which it was originally built.

**Tri-tri.** A name applied, in Canada, to the King-bird (*Tyrannus carolinensis*), from its peculiar cry.

**Trocha.** tro'-tchah (Sp.). Now used, figuratively, in the sense of a barrier, an obstacle, from the famous *trocha* imagined by general Weyler, in Cuba, to keep off the insurgents.

**Trolley.** An electric street car.

**Trompillo,** trom-peel-yo (Sp.). A common weed of the nightshad family in southern and western Texas.

**Trot.** In college parlance, a translation.

**Trot (to).** In college parlance, to make use of a translation. To use a pony or similar means in studying.

**Trout.** A name generally given to the "gamest" fish, according to the section of the country.

Thus, in parts of the South, the "trout" is the black perch; in Texas, Indian Territory, and as far up as Canada, a bass resembling the striped sea bass is so called; and in the Rio Azul of New-Mexico, and other pure streams, the "trout" is a dace.

**Truck.** (1) Primarily meaning "stuff," but now applied to vegetables of the kind specified as market produce.

*Truck patch,* a plot of ground devoted to the raising of vegetables.

(2) A cart for transporting merchandise.

**Truck (to).** To barter or to trade.

**Truckage.** Cartage.

**Truckman.** Cart-man.

**Trummel.** An old word, derived from the Dutch, and still lingering in New York city and surroundings in sense of a round tin box used for cake or bread.

**Trumpeter-swan** (*Cygnus buccinator*). A magnificent bird, as white as snow, measuring about seven feet from tip of tip of wing, and whose range is chiefly from the Mississippi valley, extending northward as far as the Pacific. So named from the trumpet tones of its call, when calling to one another.

**Trust.** A combination of merchants or manufacturers in same line of business, for controlling the manufacture and sale of various articles of necessity.



**Tuckahoe** (an Indian name said to designate bread). A tuberous root (*Sclerotium giganteum*) of the truffle variety, growing in Virginia, and, like the truffle of Europe, sought for by dogs and hogs trained for the purpose. The Indians can manage it so as, in case of necessity, to make bread of it. Hence the name of *Indian bread* or *Indian loaf*, under which it is also known.

Another form is *lockwogh*.

*Tuckahoe* is also a nickname given to the inhabitants of the lower Virginia, whose poverty might drive them to eat tuckahoe. Thus it was also often heard during the Civil War, of a peculiarly sad looking conscript coming from the Lower James, that "he was nothing but a poor Tuckahoe."

**Tuckered out.** Wearied ; tired out.

**Tucket.** The young green ear of Indian corn.

**Tule, too-lay** (Mex. *tollin*). A reed-like grass or bulrush (*Scirpus lacustris*), covering immense areas in the South-Western States, especially Texas and California.

In Texas, the name is also applied to several species of yucca, and to certain kinds of reeds not identified.

**Tulip-tree** (*Liriodendron tulipifera*). A large tree, bearing tulip-shaped flowers.

Also called white-wood, and in the South poplar.

**Tumble.** In Connecticut, a hay-cock, a heap.

**Tumble-bug** (*Canthon lolvis*). A common insect, otherwise known as the *dung beetle*. In England called the "straddle bob." Akin to the sacred scarabeus of the Egyptians, who so industriously rolls his balls of dung on dusty roads and lonely paths.

**Tumble-weed.** One of the globular perennials of the plains, which, when dead, is pulled up by the wind, and goes rolling over the plains at the mercy of the blast. (Farmer.)

Also called *rolling-weed*.

**Tump.** In Maine, to drag home game.

**Tumpline.** In Maine, a peculiar contrivance consisting of a strap so placed across the forehead as to assist in carrying a pack upon the back.

**Tuna, too'nah** (Sp.). The Spanish name of the prickly pear cactus (*Cactus opuntia*) or Indian fig, bearing a purplish pear-shaped fruit which, in Southern countries, is considered very luscious.

Also the name of the pleasant beverage made from the fruit of the Indian fig.

**Tunk.** In New England, a stroke, a blow with the fist.

Still provincial in England.

**Tupelo.** The Indian name of the pepperidge (q. v.), a word especially well known in New England.

**Turkey-buzzard** (*Cathartes aura*). An American species of vulture, so called from its distant resemblance to a turkey, and which is remarkable for its graceful flight in the higher regions of the air.

**Turn.** (1) In Newfoundland, a stick of wood for fuel.

Curiously enough, a *turn of wood* is heard of from Louisiana in sense of an arm-load or a cart-load of wood, or indeed of any other quantity that can be transported at one return.

See *billet*, *breastner*, *burn*.

(2) In Tennessee, the quantity of corn sent at one time to the mill is termed a "*turn of meal*."

**Turner** (Ger.). A gymnast, belonging to a club of gymnastics.

**Turnerfeste** (Ger.). The annual festival of a club of gymnastics.

**Turning-row.** In Kentucky, a row unplanted in a corn or tobacco field, where the horses turn around in plowing.

**Turn-vereine** (Ger.). A club, or society, who makes gymnastics a subject of pleasure as well as of health.

**Turpentine State.** The state of North Carolina, from its extensive pine-forests.

**Twistical.** A factitious word meaning unfair, perverse, with connotation of oblique moral vision.

**Twitch.** Among Maine lumber-men, to drag timber by means of a chain.

**Two-forty pace.** With great speed, the allusion being to the 2.40 gait for a trotting horse, which, not long ago, was considered very good.

**Two-pipe scatter gun.** A double barrelled-rifle, or fowling-piece.

Also, *two-shoot scatter gun*.

**Tyke.** In Maryland, a term of reproach applied to an ugly or noisy child.

**Typo.** A printer's abbreviation of typographer.

The Eng. equivalent is "comp."

## U

**Umbrella-tree** (*Magnolia tripeolata*). A Southern tree, so called from its resemblance to an umbrella, the leaves radiating from the ends of the branches to a distance of three feet in diameter.

**Uncle Sam.** The tutelary genius of the United States. A nickname given to the American people as a whole, or to the United States government as representing the American nation.

The nickname "Uncle Sam," as applied to the United States government, is said to have originated as follows. Samuel Wilson, commonly called "Uncle Sam," was a government inspector of beef and pork at Troy, New York, about 1812. A contractor, Elbert Anderson, purchased a quantity of provisions, and the barrels were marked "E. A., Anderson's initials, and U. S.," for United States. The latter initials were not familiar to Wilson's workmen, who required what they meant. A facetious fellow answered: "I don't know, unless they mean "Uncle Sam." A vast amount of property afterward passed through Wilson's hands marked in the same manner, and he was often joked upon the extent of his possessions. The joke spread through all the departments of the government, and before long the United States was popularly referred to as "Uncle Sam."

**Under-coat.** In North Carolina, a petticoat. Compare with coat.

**Underground railroad.** At the time of the agitation for the abolition of slavery, a name applied to a very energetic organization for enabling fugitive slaves to escape to the free States and Canada.

**Under-hatches.** A simile from sea-faring life, and meaning, in thieve's parlance, in trouble or in distress.

**Unhouse.** To render homeless, as in the case of a cyclone which destroys houses.

**Union.** The Confederacy of States known as the United States of America.

**Union men.** Those who, at the time of the Civil War, stood out against secession.

**Unlaundered.** Undressed, as applied, for example, to shirts.

**Up and dust.** Hurry up! move fast! look alive! make the dust fly!

**Up country.** The interior, or backwoods (q. v.) as opposed to the seashore.

Also used adjectively, as an *up-country* man, and with connotation of a certain inferiority to the seaboard population.

**Up-dump.** Sometimes heard for tip over. "Be careful or you'll *updump* the boat.

**Upheader.** A horse that holds its head high. Also applied, figuratively, to men.

**Upper house.** The Senate, either National or State, as distinct from the House of Representatives, which is called Lower House.

**Uppertendom.** The fashionable world ; the aristocracy.

**Use.** To live, make one's house. "These chickens *uses* round the place."

**U. S. plate.** Among thieves, said of fetters or hand-cuffs.

V

**V.** Often pronounced like *w*, especially by the older people. "Weal and winegar are good wittles to take aboard a wessel."

**Vacher** (Fr.). A herdsman, or cattle-keeper ; a cowboy. The Spanish equivalent of *vacher*, *vaquero*, is also sometimes used.

**Valedictorian.** In American colleges, the student who pronounces the valedictory oration at the annual commencement.

**Valentine.** In college parlance, an official written communication from secretary of faculty, generally of warning or dismissal.

**Vamosé** (Sp.  *vamos*, let us go). A curious grammatical perversion of the above Spanish imperative, used chiefly in the South-West in sense of to be off, to decamp, to sneak away.

*Vamosé (to) the ranch*, a familiar phrase on the western frontier, and in the South-West, meaning to leave the house, to quit the spot.

**Vaquero**, vah-ker'-o (Sp.) (1) A herdsman, or cattle-tender. The equivalent of the French *vacher*.

(2) A man who has charge of cattle, horses, and mules ; a horseman.

**Vara** (Sp.). A word still heard in California, and other formerly Spanish States, and designating a lineal measure equal to 39 inches.

In Texas, the *vara* is still the only measure in use.

**Varmints.** Often heard in the West and South West for wild animals. "He lay out among the *varmint*."

**Vendue** (Fr.) (1) Still heard occasionally, in some States, and the West Indies, in sense of an auction sale. *Vendue-crier* is especially in constant use in Pennsylvania, where it began to be current as early as 1754 (see Mittelberger's *Travels*, p. 22).

(2) In political parlance, a shameless assignment of offices to the highest bidders.

**Vertical saw.** An outrageous joke ; a dangerous piece of horse-play. A serious, and even perhaps dangerous joke.

**Vexed.** Sorry, disappointed. "I'm terribly *vexed* about the boy."

**Vigilance committee.** A self-appointed body of persons for the purpose of punishing, and especially of lynching, who have gone unwhipped of justice.

The name originated in California, and was in all probability derived from the familiar Spanish term "vigilante." The French "vigilance" is of course the same word, but the connection with the custom is not so evident.

**Vim.** Spirit ; activity ; energy.

**Virgalieu** (Fr.). A New-York name for a much esteemed species of pear. It is the "Doyenné Blanc" of French authors.

A ludicrous corruption of the above is "Burgaloo," which is the name under which the "Virgalieu" is known in other parts of the country.

**Virgin-dip.** In North Carolina, the flow of turpentine from pine-trees, during the first year of cutting.

**Virginia-poke.** At game of cards, to push one card out of the middle of the pack, and put it at the back, which is done, in a superstitious way, for the sake of trying to change one's bad luck.

**Virginia-reel.** A common name for the old English "country-dance" (Fr. *contre-danse*).

**Voodooism.** A kind of negro-witchcraft, in Louisiana, Hayti and San Domingo, said to be accompanied, in some places, by barbarous rites, and even by human sacrifices.

**Voyageur** (Fr.). The old "coureur-des-bois" and trader of New France, so often spoken of by Parkman, and other historians.

## W

**Wabash (to.)** To cheat, to defraud ; a term still common enough, in that sense, in Indiana and the West generally, although it is difficult to comprehend how the inoffensive *ouabache* of old (Wabash, a tributary of the Ohio) should have come to receive such a stigma.

**Wabble.** In the West, to clatter with the tongue ; to be given to excessive talking ; to be a ready speaker.

**Wad.** A slang term for a roll of bank notes.

**Wagged out.** A Massachusetts term for tired out, exhausted.

**Waggletail.** The larva of the mosquito.  
Also called a *wiggler*.

**Wagon.** To convey or transport by wagon.

**Wain** (Old Eng.). An old and obsolete word still used for wagon in parts of the United States.

We read, in Tennyson's *May Queen*, "Charles' Wain" for the constellation of the Great Bear.

**Waist.** The upper portion of a lady's gown.  
In England, bodice.

**Wait-a-bit trees.** A facetious name given to a sort of jungle or thicket almost impenetrable from the innumerable thorns of its branches.

**Wait upon.** To court; to pay attention to a lady with a view to matrimony.

**Wake up the wrong passenger.** To be mistaken in a man, that is "to catch a Tartar;" to interfere with a man who is capable of making an effective resistance.

A phrase borrowed from railroad thieving, as also from frequent mistakes made at hotels in waking up passengers who are to start early in the morning.

A variant is to *get the wrong pig by the tail*, the Yankee equivalent of the Eng. to *get the wrong sow by the ear*.

**Walking papers.** Letters of dismissal, generally employed with a political bearing, as if in derisive allusion to the liberty granted to an official to walk out of office.

**Walk out.** Among trades' unions, a *walk out* is a strike.

**Walk Spanish.** To strut; and, idiomatically, to be unsteady in gait.

In New England, a boy is said to *walk Spanish* when he is lifted from behind by the seat of his trousers, so that he has to walk on his toes.

Another form is to *walk turkey*.

**Walk upon one's shoe strings.** An idiom indicative of poverty and destitution; a variant of the English "down at heels."

**Wall street.**—The financial centre of the United States. The name of Wall street, in New York city, which dates back to 1653, is derived from the wall or the fence erected at that time by the Dutch to protect themselves against the inroads of the Indians.

**Wallop.** This word was a subject of discussion lately when a woman of refinement as hostess asked her guest to have another "wallop" of tea. The woman who was addressed had always associated the word with a vulgar expression meaning to punish, and was naturally a bit startled. Her hostess explained the word as meaning "a little bit." But no such significance is given in the Century dictionary. The first meaning there given is "to boil with a continued bubbling," and the noun, "a quick motion with agitation." There appears to be no authority for a "wallop of tea" unless, possibly, it be used to signify a bubble—one of those precious bubbles which, if you can catch it, is said to be a talisman of wealth and good fortune.

**Wallows.** On some of the Western prairies, the ground has every appearance of having been rooted or torn up by bears, buffalos, or hogs. Hence, bear, buffalo, or hog *wallows*. These wallows are, however, purely natural phenomenas.

In Texas, *hog-wallows* are particularly abundant.

**Walt.** Lop-sided ; said of ships with a list. A *walt-sided* ship, or simply a *walt* ship.

**Waltzing-giants.** A Nevada term for the great cylinders of sand, which, during what is called a sand-storm, go rearing across the desert with a kind of whirling and waltzing motion.

**Wamble-cropped.** A curious New-England expression meaning sick at the stomach ; and, figuratively, humiliated, crest-fallen.

**Wampum** (Ind. *wompam*, meaning "white" in the New-England dialects, says Roger Williams, white being the color of the shells most frequent in wampum belts). An inferior shell currency, formerly in use among the aborigines, consisting of strings of shells, which were also frequently united into a broad belt, worn as an ornament or a girdle.

See *coloj*, *sewan*.

**Wananish** (Ind. Montagnais *wananoushou*, salmon). A species of land-locked salmon, which abounds in the Lake St. John region of the Province of Quebec.

**Wangan** (Ind.). A peculiar kind of boat used in the lumbering districts of Maine to carry tools and provisions.

**Wapatoo** (Ind.). A name given by the Indians, in Oregon, to the bulb "Sagittaria variabilis," which is used as an article of food.

**Wapiti** (Ind. Cree *wapitew*, grayish or pale. Also, *wapit*, Ind. Shoshone or Utah, meaning yellowish). The elk or stag of America (*Cervus canadensis*). The yellowish or grayish color of the *wapiti* being quite peculiar, the Shoshone *wapit* stands a good chance of being the original term, and this presumption is the more strengthened that the *wapiti* is very common in the Shoshone country, and of great importance to its inhabitants.

**Warni cootai** (*Somateria spectabilis*). A species of eider-duck, formerly very abundant in the region of the Gulf of St. Lawrence, but which is now only found in the north of Labrador.

**Warou.** A hobgoblin, in the mythology of some Indian tribes of Canada.

**War-path.** A march to battle. An expression borrowed from the Indians. *On the war-path*, ready for a fight ; in fighting mood.

**War-horse.** (1) Among politicians, a term applied to any energetic political leader.

(2) A nickname applied to general Longstreet, of the Confederate army.

**Washoe-zephyr.** A peculiar wind blowing regularly in the summer time, in Nevada, and so called from Washoe being a pet nickname for that State.

**Washout.** A flood, especially one when a roadway, bridge, or railroad embankment is carried away.

**Watap** (Ind. Alg.). The root of pine or tamarack, used to sew bark canoes and the like.

**Watch one's corners.** To keep a sharp look out, to be shrewdly attentive. The expression comes in this way : when a man is ploughing and reaches the corners of his land, he must be careful in turning his team and plough, or he will not break up the land thoroughly at the corners.

**Watch out.** In Pennsylvania, to look out. "To *watch out* for the train."

**Water.** To create fictitious stock, without its being a representative of industry expended, or work done.

The issue of fictitious railroad stock, for speculative or gambling purposes, is known as "watering the stock," a term derived from the practice of Daniel Drew when a boy, who sold cattle by weight, and gave them salt to eat to induce thirst, and then let them drink copiously just before they were sold by live weight.

**Water-horse.** In Newfoundland, after the fish has been salted long enough it is washed to remove superfluous salt and dirt. This is the *water-horse*, and fish so washed and spread on the flakes to dry is called *water-horse fish*.

**Water-lot.** A building lot over which water has already taken a heavy mortgage.

A building lot which is swamp or morass, and half the year under water.

**Water-privilege.** The advantage of a water-fall for driving water-wheels, or a place affording such advantage.

**Waterspout.** On the high plains of the West, a name applied to the terrific rain-storms prevalent in those regions.

**Water-witch.** A diviner of the presence of water, in subterranean wells, by means of the divining rod.

**Wawaron.** The bull-frog. Also called by that name in French Canada.

The word is from the Indian *ouaraon* or *ouaouaron*. Sagard translates "crapeau vert" into Huron by *ouaraon*.



**Wax.** To overcome another ; to surmount difficulties ; to obtain an advantage by diplomatic measures.

**Wax-myrtle.** A shrub bearing a berry covered with a shining wax.

Also called *candle-berry myrtle*, candles being made from the wax it supplies.

**Weaken.** To grow weak ; to give way ; to abandon an undertaking.

**Weak sister.** An unreliable person.

**Wearables.** Clothes ; wearing apparel.

**Wear out.** To beat, to chastise.

**Wear the collar.** To be subject to authority, such control not being altogether to one's taste.

The antithesis of sense contained in "to wear the breeches."

In political parlance, to be directed by another in political matters.

**Weasels.** A nickname applied to the inhabitants of South Carolina.

**Weather-strips.** Sandbags ; draught excluders.

**Weddiners.** The bride and groom, with the wedding party.

**Weeding.** In thieve's parlance, taking a part and leaving the balance in such a manner as not to excite suspicion.

Similarly, when a thief abstracts a portion from the plunder without the knowledge of his pals, and then receives an equal proportion of the remainder, it is called *weeding the swag*. (Farmer.)

**Weeny.** In parts of New England, said of board or timbers, not of full width throughout, because the saw in cutting ran out into the bark.

**Well.** Used adjectively in sense of healthy, as for instance : "He is now a *well* man."

**Wench.** A negro woman.

Provincial in England for a young girl or servant-man.

**Wendigo.** A hobgoblin, among the Northern Indians.

**Werowance.** A chief of the Indian tribes of Virginia and Maryland.

**West Pointer.** A cadet at the U. S. Military Academy at West Point.

**Whale away.** To talk vehemently, or without hindrance.

**Whaler.** A big, strapping fellow.

Primarily a sailor's word, from the huge size of a whale.

**Whap over.** In New England, to knock over ; to overturn with violence.

**Whapper-jaw.** A protruding under-jaw.  
The adjective whapper-jawed is also used.  
See *jimber-jaw*.

**Wharf-boat.** A rectangular float, on the Western rivers, for the reception of goods, or for a dram-shop, which is generally moored to the shoreside to take the place of a regular fixed wharf.

**Wharf up.** In New England, to embank, to pile up earth.

**Wheal.** To swell ; to pout. An obvious relation exists between this idiom and the weals or swellings raised by beating. (Farmer.)

**Wheat and Indian.** A mixture of wheaten flour and maize meal.

**Wheel-horse.** (1) In the West, one's crony or best friend.  
(2) A leading man ; a political leader ; a political party's main prop and support.

**Wheik.** A wale ; a sore ; a swelling ; a pustule.

**Whiffet.** A small insignificant man ; a whipper-snapper. (Farmer.)

**Whiffle-tree.** The bar to which the traces of a leader or dragging horse are attached.  
In England, a whipple-tree.

**Whiggiggin** (Ind. Abenaki *awikhigan*, something written). A term sprung into existence among hunters of Maine, Canada and the North West and designating the written permit to hunt, which has to be obtained from the local authorities, often represented by Indian chiefs.

**Whigs.** During the revolutionary period, the Whigs were those favoring independence, while the Tories remained loyal to the Crown. After independence was achieved, the Whigs divided, on the then young State-rights question, into "Particularists" and "Strong Government Whigs," or, as they were subsequently called, "Federalists." The Whig name then temporarily disappeared, to be revived in 1820, when it again commanded a considerable following ; but it was, nevertheless, only in 1848, that it could achieve success when it elected general Zachary Taylor to the presidency, defeating the Democrats for the first time in nearly half a century. The last appearance of the Whigs, on the political battlefield, was in 1852.

**Whip.** To beat, without connotation of instrumental assistance ; to defeat, to surpass, to outvie in any respect. "That *whips* all creation" is a well known phrase.

**Whip-poor-will** (*Antrostomus vociferus*) generally pronounced "Whipperwill." A common Southern bird with many names, amongst which may be mentioned *chuck-will's-widow* and *bull-bat*.

Other species sometimes also receive these names.

**Whipstock.** In parts of New England, often heard for whip-socket.

**Whip-sawing.** The acceptance of fees or bribes from two opposing persons or parties.

The word is said to have originated in the N. Y. State Assembly, and is evidently derived from the whip-saw of mechanics, which cuts both ways.

Hence, *whipsawed*, left in the lurch.

**Whip the devil around the stump.** To enjoy the sweets of wickedness, and yet escape the penalty.

To make false excuses to one's self and others for doing what one likes.

**Whiskey-bloat.** A confirmed whiskey tippler.

**Whiskey-jack** (*Garrulus cristatus*). The Blue Jay. (Canada and parts of N. Eng.)

The name is a corruption of the Indian *ouishcatchan*.

See *moose-bird*.

**Whiskey-mill.** A grog-shop, in the West.

**Whiskey plant.** A cactus growing in Southern Texas, on the range of sand-hills bordering on the Rio-Grande, and known to the Indians as "Pieoke." The Indians dig up the root, and take great delight in chewing it, the juice possessing a powerful intoxicating effect.

Also called *whiskey-root*.

**Whiskey-ring.** A ring of whiskey dealers who, through the connivance of Government officials, were enabled to evade the revenue laws, and amass large fortunes. The ring was temporarily broken up in 1875.

**Whiskey-skin.** A concocted drink of whiskey, sugar, crushed ice, and mint.

Otherwise called *whiskey-smash*.

**White.** Often heard for good, with connotation of straightness, in a man or thing.

This usage is doubtless derived from the "white" of an archery-butt, which was the bull's eye. Thus, a *white man* would be a man who always shot straight, and, figuratively, a straightforward man.

**White-caps.** A sort of Northern Ku-Klux organization, who take it upon themselves to regulate public morals, and to administer justice to offenders independent of the law.

**White folks.** In Virginia and the South, a common name given to the whites by the negroes, who even also use the derivative adjective *folksy*.

**White-frost.** The universal term when speaking of hoar-frost.

**White league.** A military organization formed in New Orleans in 1874, ostensibly for a purpose of protection against armed uprisings of negroes but in reality to check the growth of political power among the blacks.

**White Liners.** A political party, in Louisiana, opposed to negro domination.

**White-man's-fly.** An Indian name for the honey-bee, which insect is not indigenous to America and was imported by the early settlers.

**White-oak-cheese.** Tough, hard cheese made from skimmed milk.

**White-walnut** (*Inglau cinerea*). A beautiful tree with wide-spreading branches, and so called from the color of the wood. The juice of the fruit, rich in oil, serves as a dye, and hence its popular name of *butter-nut* (q. v.).

Also called *long wa'nut*.

**Whole cloth.** Used with an idea of thoroughness, as a lie or a truth made out of whole cloth.

**Whole-footed.** Sound ; hearty.

**Whole-souled.** Noble minded ; possessing a noble heart.

**Wicopy** (Ind. *wighebi*, quoted by Rasles as Abenaki for bass-wood). In New England, the name of the leather-wood or moose-wood (*Dirca palustris*).

**Wide-awake.** A kind of broad-brimmed soft hat. In England, a billy-cock.

**Wide-awakes.** A political organization, largely composed of machinery clubs, and so named from the slouch hats worn by its members.

This organization, which has been a prominent factor in Republican politics, was formed in 1859, with the object of promoting the election of Abraham Lincoln to the Presidency.

The name wide-awake was, however, as early as 1853, applied to the Know-Nothings, and the light-colored soft felt hats, which they were supposed to wear, were termed wide-awake hats.

**Wiggle (to).** To bend the body rapidly from side to side ; to wriggle.

**Wigwam** (Ind.). An Indian cabin or hut, usually made of skins.

The Tammany Society of Philadelphia called its place of meeting a wigwam as early as 1789, and during the Harrison campaign log cabins were used under the same name as campaign meeting places. In 1859-60, huge buildings of rough boards, known as wigwams, were erected for political purposes in large towns, and the practice has been kept up ever since.

**Wild-cat.** During many years, in Michigan and surrounding States, all irresponsible banks and country bank-notes of doubtful reputation were called *wild-cat banks* and *wild-cat bills* or simply *wild-cats*. The term arose from an insolvent bank of Michigan having had represented on its notes the vignette of a panther, familiarly called a wild-cat.

Subsequently, the term was also applied to all bogus and swindling concerns, such as *wild-cat mines*, *wild-cat whiskey*, etc.

**Wild-cat train.** A train not scheduled on the time-table.

Also simply *wild train*.

**Wild cattle.** A strange breed of cattle found in the hills skirting the Umpqua valley, Oregon, and whose chief peculiarity consists in their eyes and horns being jet black.

**Wild-land.** A Western term for unsettled land, or land which has never been cultivated.

Land not yet appropriated, i. e. not owned by special grant or actual occupancy, though generally meaning the forest, by preference.

**Wilmot-proviso.** An anti-slavery measure introduced into Congress, in 1846, by David Wilmot, of Pennsylvania, which led to a great deal of agitation, and finally culminated in the formation of the *Free Soil Party* (q. v.).

**Wind breaker.** In New Jersey, a screen or the like used to break the force of the wind.

**Winder.** In college parlance, a "crib" constructed of a long strip of paper rolled on two pencils for convenient manipulation.

**Winders.** On the New Jersey coast, an instrument used on the oyster boats for winding the dredge line.

**Windigo.** See *wendigo*.

**Wind up.** To give a quietus to an antagonist. Also, intransitively, to stop business, to close up a place of business. In this last sense, it is especially an Americanism.

**Winklehawk.** A triangular tear in cloth.

**Winkum.** In parts of New England, used for cider brandy.

**Wind up one's worsted.** To give the last turn of which an undertaking is capable.

**Winter-killed.** Killed by winter frosts.

A verb made for the sake of brevity and convenience.

**Wipe off.** To wipe. Thus, to wipe off a table is simply to wipe it, without necessarily removing anything from it.

**Wipe out.** To kill ; to destroy ; to annihilate. Borrowed from hunter's life.

**Wipe up the ground.** "To wipe up the ground with one" is a ruffian's way of saying he will knock a person down.

**Wire-puller.** A political "worker" who sets up plans for the election of candidates, and the passage or defeat of legislative measures.

Hence, *wire-pulling*, or *working*, political managing or manipulation.

Wire-pulling, of course, is not an American custom exclusively, as this figure of speech is as old as the "marionettes" of Italy and France, on whose miniature stage the actors were set in motion by wires, which the exhibitor pulled from above.

**Wolverine State.** The State of Michigan, so called because of the vast number of wolves which once abounded within its limits.

Hence, *wolverines*, a nickname applied to the inhabitants of Michigan.

**Wood up.** To load a steamboat with wood for fuel. A term connected with the Mississippi river traffic.

Also, figuratively, to take a drink.

Hence, *wooding-place*, a station where the steamers take in supplies of wood.

**Wood skin.** The bark from which a canoe is made, and, by extension, the canoe itself.

**Wooden Nutmegs.** A current slang phrase, esp. among politicians, for any cunning deception, forged telegrams, political tricks, and falsified election-returns, from the well-known story of Sam Slick about the wooden nutmegs manufactured in Connecticut.

**Worrliment.** Worry ; trouble ; anxiety.

Made after the manner of wonderment.

**Worrisome.** Worrying ; annoying.

**Worst way.** In parts of Pennsylvania, used for very strongly, as in the following : "He wants to see you the *worst way*."

**Wrench.** Common for "rinse," in the neighborhood of Philadelphia. "Wrench your mouth out."

Evidently the same word as the New-England *rense* for rinse.

**Wudge.** A little bunch.

**Wung out.** Said for wing-and-wing, as of a schooner before the wind.



**Yafful.** In the Northern States and the Canadian Maritime provinces, often heard for armful.

Still provincial in England.

**Yam** (West Ind. *Ithome*). A large and palatable root or tuber (*Dioscorea alba*), common in the Southern States.

**Yang.** Hurry. "To be in a great *yang*."

**Yank.** In New England, a jerk.

Hence to *yank*, to yerk ; to snatch away unexpectedly.

An attempt has been made to find in this slang term an allusion to the energy and ingenuity with which the Yank, or Yankee, overcomes all difficulties.

**Yankee.** In New England, a glass of whiskey sweetened with molasses ; a common beverage in the country.

**Yankees.** A name particularly applied, in the States, to the citizens of New England. The term originated with the Massachusetts Indians who, in their imperfect efforts to name the first English colonists, could not get any nearer to the sound of "English" than by saying *Yengees*, or perhaps also *Yenkees*. The term is also often used in a disparaging sense by political or personal antagonists of the bold pioneers and puritans of old.

**Yanks.** The universal designation of federal soldiers, during the war, in the Southern Confederacy.

**Yankee (galvanized).** A Confederate soldier having enlisted in the United States Army.

**Yankeedom.** New England.

**Yap.** In college parlance : (1) a contemptible person ; (2) the mouth ; (3) a countryman.

**Yard.** In New England, the garden attached to a house, whether in front or behind.

**Yarry.** In Newfoundland, smart, quick. "You'll have to be pretty *yarry* to catch up with him."

**Yearling.** The young of a cow. Applied often indiscriminately whether the animal be two days old or three years.

**Yellow cover.** A slang term for a note of dismissal from Government employ. In the public offices yellow-tinted envelopes are largely used.

**Yellow Jack.** The popular name for yellow fever.

**Yellow Journalism.** Consists principally of huge head-lines of a startling nature, big and striking illustrations, and heavily leaded type in which the facts are presented in the most interesting style.

**Yonkers.** The old Dutch word *yonker* (a cadet) still survives in the name of the town of *Yonkers*, which has grown up around the old manor-house of the Phillipse family, standing in Westchester on the Hudson. Before the Revolution, Mr. Phillipse was always spoken of, by his tenantry, as the *Yonker*, that is the gentleman by excellence, he being then the only person of social rank in that part of the country.

**Young Hickory.** Martin Van Buren, eighth president of the United States, so called because the political mantle of "Old Hickory" (Jackson) was said to have fallen upon his shoulders.

## Z

**Zenith City of the Unsalted Seas.** The city of Duluth, Minnesota, so christened by the great humorist hon. Proctor Knott, late governor of Kentucky.

**Zit.** An onomatopoetic verb, frequently heard in the West, to describe vocally the peculiar hissing of bullets when striking water.

**Zopilote** (Mex. *tzopilotl*). In Texas, a name applied to a species of turkey buzzard, black vulture (*Cathartes atratus*).





## APPENDIX I

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Foreign words, either used in their original integrity, or derived from foreign languages, which may be classed as Americanisms

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### I.—WORDS CONTRIBUTED BY THE INDIANS

Achigan	Cassareep
Agohana	Catawba
Almouchiche	Cayuse
Apishamore	Chetowalk
Apola	Chiben
Assinabe	Chickwit
Atosset	Chincapin
Atshen	Chinook
Awadosi	Chogset
Booma	Chunk-yard
Cacaoui	Ciscovet
Canticoy	Cocash
Cashaw	Cohog

Cohosh	Opossum
Comitiek	Otsitso
Coontie	Ouananiche
Hackmatack	Ouaouaron
Haiqua	Outiko
Hickory	Papaw
Hominy	Pappoose
Hoolikan	Pauhagen
Killhag	Peac
Kini-kinik	Pimbina
Kiskitomas	Pemmican
Kooyah	Petouane
Mananosay	Pipsissewa
Manitou	Pocoson
Maskeg, Muskeg	Poggy
Maskinongé	Pokeloken
Maskouabina	Pone
Matachias	Pooquaw
Mechoacan	Pow-wow
Menhaden	Punky
Michigouen	Quahaug
Moccasin	Quiliou
Mokok	Raccoon
Moose	Sacacomi
Moskoui	Sagamité
Mugwump	Sagamore
Mummachog	Seawan
Namaycush	Sing-Sing
Netop	Skunk
Nigog	Soupane
Nocake	Squash
Ondatra	Succotash

Supawn	Wangan
Tammany	Wapatoo
Tautaug	Wapiti
Tilpah	Watap
Tomahawk	Wawaron
Totem	Wendigo
Tuckahoo	Whiggiggin
Tupelo	Whiskey-jack
Wampum	Wicopy
Wananish	Wigwam

II.—WORDS CONTRIBUTED BY THE FRENCH.

Aboideau	Black-fish
Adocté	Black-harry
Aiguille	Bodark
Arpent	Bodewash
Babiche	Bois barré
Bacayère	Bois blanc
Bagasse	Bois-brûlé
Banquette	Bois de fer
Barachois	Bois-forts
Barbecue	Bois pourri
Basque	Bosculis
Bateau	Bourdignons
Batture	Bourgeois
Bayou	Brasseur
Becci	Brave
Bill-fish	Bureau
Black bass	Bureaucrate

Butte	Depot
Cabrée	Desert
Cache	Epinette
Cageot	Folle-avoine
Calash	Gasparau
Calumet	Gazon
Canard branchu	Godet
Canne-de-roche	Gofer
Carcajou	Grasset
Caribou	Griffin
Carouge	Habitant
Carryal	Jetée
Cazagot	Lave
Chafaud	Levee
Chasse-galerie	Lodge
Chauffant	Lucivee
Chivaree	Macreuse
Choque-mort	Mahoumet
Chowder	Marabou
Chute	Margot
Claireur	Marmette
Corbigeau	Matachias
Cordelle	Meamelonc
Cossade	Mitasse
Cou blanc	Moniac
Coulée	Motte
Coup	Movey star
Crapais	Nagane
Crevasse	Orignal
Crosse	Ortolan
Cuttoe	Pelu
Department	Pique-bois jaune

Pirogue	Sault
Pisque	Savane
Pivart	Savoyane
Pomme blanche.	Seine
Portage	Shanty
Poulis	Sherryvallies
Pourcil	Shimney
Prairie	Soufflé
Pull-doo	Soupane
Putte	Terres folles, jaunes, etc.
Quiode	Têtes-de-femmes
Rababou	Tisanne
Ravage	Toulibi
Renversé	Traîne
Robe	Vacher
Rogne	Vendue
Sabane	Virgalieu
Sapinette	

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 III.—WORDS CONTRIBUTED BY THE DUTCH

Applejees	Clockmutch
Barraclade	Clove
Blauser	Cold-slaw
Blick, Blickey	Cookey
Blummie	Cruller
Bockey	Droger
Boodle	Fattikows
Boonder	Fike
Boss	Fly

Frowchey	Pink
Gist	Pinky
Hay-barrack	Pit
Hook	Portaal
Hoople	Potty-baker
Hunk	Prawchey
Kill	Rollejees
Logy	Scow
Noodlejees	Smearcase
Olycook	Snore
Overslaugh	Span
Paas	Stoop
Patroon	Terawchey
Pile	Trummel

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 IV.—WORDS CONTRIBUTED BY THE GERMANS.

Blootworscht	Noodlehead
Bower	Noodles
Bretsel	Prekel
Buckbeer	Pretzel
Dummerhead	Sagnichts
Dutch	Snits
Flip	Sourerout
Katoose	Speck
Kriss-Kringle	Toot
Leverworscht	Turnerfeste
Metsel-soup	Turn-vereine
Muley saw	

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## V.—WORDS CONTRIBUTED BY THE SPANIARDS

Abra	Arado
Aceite	Arrastra
Acequia	Arriero
Acequiador	Arroba
Adobe	Arroyo
Agostadero	Atajo
Agrito	Aura
Agua	Ayudante
Aguardiente	Azote
Alacran	Bailee
Alameda	Barra
Alamo	Barranea
Alberca	Barranco
Albur	Belduque
Alcalde	Berrendo
Alfalfa	Bezugo
Alfargas	Bisagre
Alflaria	Biznaga
Aljibar	Bonanza
Almud	Bosaal
Alto	Boton
Amargoso	Braguero
Amole	Brasero
Amparo	Briago
Anacahuita	Broncho
Anaqua	Burro
Ancon	Caballad
Annatto	Cabestro
Aparejo	Cachupin

Calabacilla	Chile
Calabash	Chimisal
Calaboose	Chinch
Camote	Chivarros
Canaigre	Cinch
Candelia	Colima
Canyon	Comprador
Canoncito	Conchas
Cantina	Conducta
Caporal	Copa
Capul	Corona
Casacara	Corral
Carga	Corse
Cargador	Creole
Carreta	Damiana
Casa	Dengue
Cascara	Devisadero
Castanas	Ejido
Cay	Enchilada
Ceja	Fandango
Cencerro	Feria
Cenizo	Fierro
Cerda	Fiesta
Chapa	Frijoles
Chaparago	Frijolillo
Chapparral	Fuste
Cháparros	Gancho
Chaqueta	Ginete
Charco	Grullo
Chicharra	Hackamore
Chicote	Hondou
Chigoc	Horqueta



Jalma	Nogada
Jaquima	Nogal
Jerk	Ocotillo
Joint	Olla
Jornada	Palmilla
Jorra	Pansage
Labor	Partida
Ladino	Patron
Lariat	Pena
Larigo	Pickaninny
Latigo	Pilon
Legaderos	Pinion
Legua	Pinto
Limonillo	Pita
Llano	Pitahaya
Loco-foco	Placer
Loco-weed	Plantain
Loma	Playa
Madre	Pompano
Madrona	Porcion
Maguey	Pozo
Majorano	Presidio
Manada	Propio
Masa	Pueblo
Mesa	Pulque
Mestee	Quadroon
Milpa	Quebrada
Mogote	Quemado
Mulada	Quirt
Mulatto	Ranch
Mustang	Ratoons

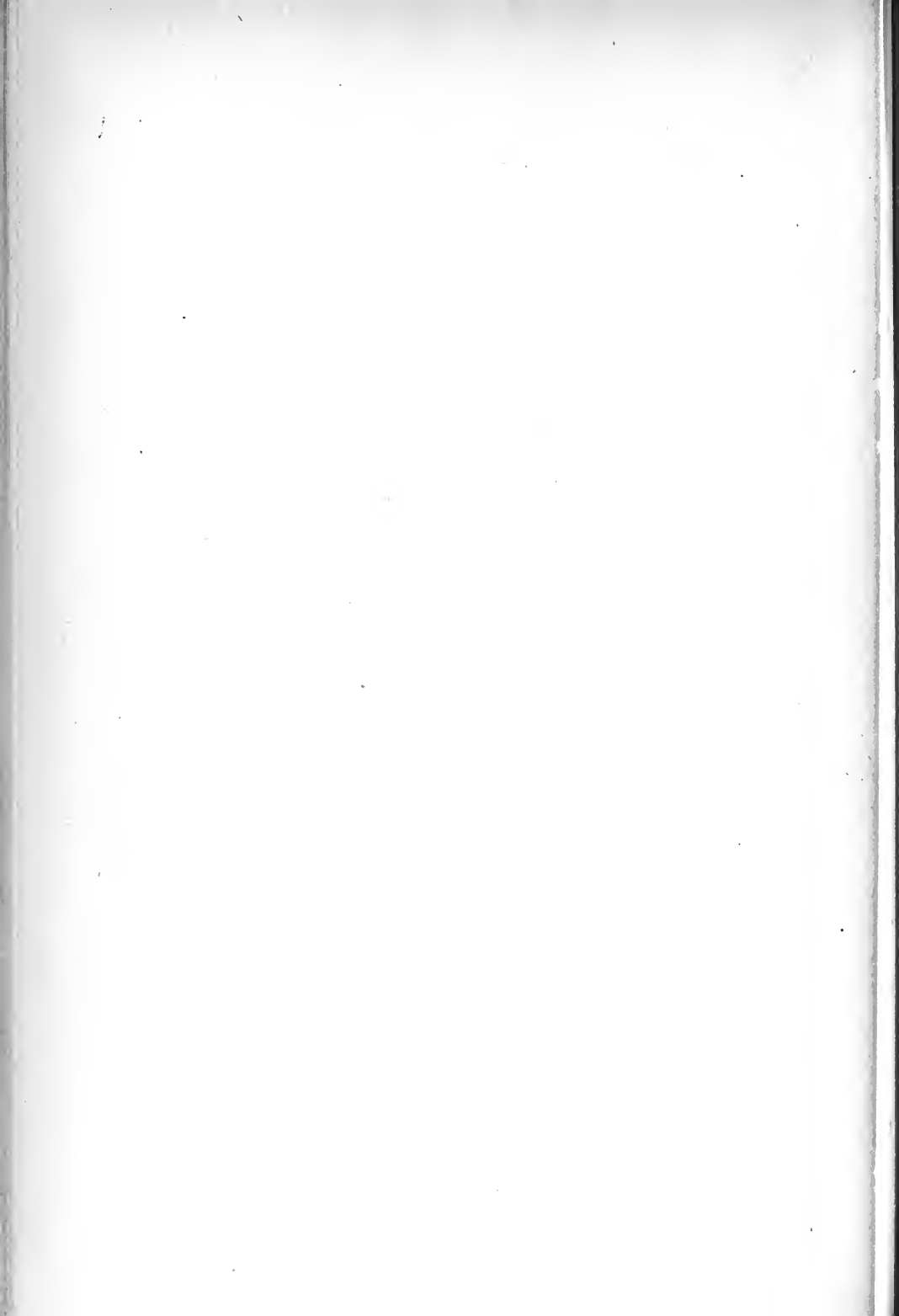
Reboso	Suerte
Remonta	Tajo
Remuda	Tapadero
Reparadero	Tapalo
Reventon	Tapujo
Sabe	Tequila
Sambo	Tinaja.... era
Scopet	Tornillo
Selva	Tortilla
Serape	Trocha
Sitio	Trompillo
Sombrero	Tuna
Sotole	Vaquero
Sudadero	Vara

## VI.—WORDS CONTRIBUTED BY THE MEXICANS

Alonsenel	Iztle
Anacahuita	Jacal
Cacomite	Jacana
Cenzontle	Jicote
Chacate	Jilote
Chilaquiles	Jocoque
Chilchote	Mecate
Chiltapin	Mesquite
Conepate	Metate
Coyote	Mezcal
Esquite	Nopal
Huajolote	Ocelot
Huisache	Peyote
Istle	Pinolo

Quiote	Tesquite
Sacate	Tlaco
Tamal	Toloache
Tecolote	Tule
Tepocate	Zopilote

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## APPENDIX II

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### Substantives classed according to analogy

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#### SUMMARY

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- I.—Buildings, Building materials, etc.
- II.—Geography, Landscape, Topography, etc.
- III.—Household Furniture, Utensils, etc.
- IV.—Instruments, Tools, Weapons.
- V.—Outdoor life :—Farming, Navigation, Fishing, Hunting and Trapping, Cowboys and Ranches, Pioneers, Lumbering, Mining.
- VI.—Clothes, Dresses, Ornaments, etc.
- VII.—Horses, Mules, Vehicles, Harness.
- VIII.—Animal kingdom :—Quadrupeds, Birds, Fishes, Amphibious animals and Reptiles, Insects.
- IX.—Vegetable kingdom :—Trees, Shrubs, Medicinal Plants, Fruits, Nuts, Flowers, Vegetables.
- X.—Food, Provisions, Meals.
- XI.—Coins, Money, Measures.
- XII.—Meteorology, Time, Duration.

- XIII.—Functions, Titles.
- XIV.—Amusements, Gatherings, Games, etc.
- XV.—Diseases, Infirmities.
- XVI.—Legend, Folklore.
- XVII.—Archaisms and Provincialisms.
- XVIII.—The Church.
- XIX.—Congress and Legislatures.
- XX.—The Court House.
- XXI.—History, Politics.
- XXII.—Colleges.
- XXIII.—Words due to relations with the Indians.
- XXIV.—Negroisms.—Words relating to slavery and negroes.
- XXV.—Onomatopies.
- XXVI.—Newspapers, Printing, etc.
- XXVII.—Railways.
- XXVIII.—Banking, Finance, Trade.
- XXIX.—Miscellaneous Industries :—Charcoal, Cotton, Oysters, Sugar, Tobacco.
- XXX.—Miscellaneous appellations.
- XXXI.—Bar-rooms.
- XXXII.—Thieves' slang.

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I.—BUILDINGS, BUILDING MATERIALS, ETC.

I.—BUILDING MATERIALS.

Adobe	Daubin
Bird's eye	Puncheons
Brownstone	Shakes
Chinkin	Shingle
Clapboard	

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## 2.—PARTS OF BUILDINGS.

Bent	Elevator
Breakback	Lenter
Bulkhead, Cellar-case	Mop-board
Dingle	Planchment
Door-rock	Steeple
Driveway	Stoop

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## 3.—ROOMS, ETC.

Best room	Parquet
Cubbyhole	Passageway
Keeping-room	Portaal
Parlor	

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## 4.—BUILDINGS.

Barrack	Grout house
Barracoon	Jacal
Boucanière	Log-cabin
Calaboose	Office
Casa	Shack
Clotten-house	Shanty
Cook-house	Sky-scrapers
Dug-out	Tenement
Frame house	

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## II.—GEOGRAPHY, LANDSCAPE, TOPOGRAPHY, ETC.

## 1.—FORESTS, WOODS, ETC.

Bay-gall	Renversé
Bush	Soft woodlands
Cedar swamp	Tar kiln
Ceja	Timber
Moose-yard	Timbered lands

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## 2. MOUNTAINS.

Abra	Draw
Aiguille	Gulch
Arroyo	Gulf
Barranca	Hub
Break	Notch
Canyon	Pena
Clove	Picacho
Cove	Thoroughfare

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## 3.—PRAIRIES.

Arm	Hog backs
Bay	Hog-wallows
Bluff	Indian mounds
Buffalo wallows	Indian mortars, Pot holes
Butte	Island
Collect	Knob
Coulée	Knob-hick
Cove	Llano
Devisadero	Loma
Gazon	Mesa



Motte	Soda prairie
Mound	Têtes-de-femmes
Playa	Wallows
Shaking prairie	

## 4.—RIVERS, PONDS, ETC. THE SEA-SHORE.

Agua	Levee
Air-hole	Mote
Alberca	Mud lumps
Arroyo	Nigger-heads
Barachois	Overslaugh
Barra	Pool-holes, Spool-holes
Barranca	Portage
Batture	Pozo
Bayou	Reach
Brackwater	Reventon
Branch	Riding-rock
Branch water	Riding-way
Charco	Riffle
Choke	Rua
Chute	Salt-holes
Creek, Dry creek	Sault
Crevasse	Shoot
Cut-off	Slank
Drains	Slash
Drink	Slick
Fresh	Spung
Gat	Sudadero
Hook	Swash
Kill	Tole
Lagoon	

## 5.—LOCALITIES.

Alkali flats	Down country
Arid belt	Down east
Back country	Everglades
Back woods	Garrison
Bad lands	Indian Reservations
Barren grounds	Movay star
Barrens	Panhandle
Bois-forts	Presidio
Bone-pits	Pueblo
Chunk-yards	Red brush
Cross-timbers	

## 6.—MISCELLANEOUS DESIGNATIONS.

Alameda	Glade
Alluvions, Bottom-lands	Green
Ancon	Ground
Arado	Ground-bridge
Bay	Gumbo
Bois-brulé, Burn, Quemado	Hammock
Bottom	Hard pan
Cattle range	Heater piece
Cay	Indian orchards.
Concession	Intervale
Desert	Labor
Divide	Lick
Driveway	Maskeg, Muskeg
Flat	Meadow
Fly	Mokok
Gall	Neck

Pocason	Slough
Pokeloken	Speedway
Portage	Swag
Quebrada	Swale
Rolling roads	Terres folles
Salt-bottom	Terres jaunes
Savane	Terres tremblantes
Savannah	Thank ye ma'ams
Sidehill	Tinaja
Sink-hole	Tow-head
Slashes	

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 III.—HOUSEHOLD FURNITURE, USTENSILS, ETC.

## 1.—HOUSEHOLD FURNITURE.

Base-burner	Plunder
Buck	Push-buggy
Casket	Push-cart
Creep	Rocker
Doge	Safe
Dud-chest	Saratoga trunk
Freezer	Seven-up
Kip	Trash-basket
Mosquito-bar	

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 2.—USTENSILS.

Bail	Bens
Bake-oven	Betty
Battling-stick	Blower
Beaker	Blick

Bockey	Gad
Boonder	Growler
Brasero	Junk-bottle
Bucket	Keeler-tub
Buck-saw	Kettle
Clapper-creamers	Metate
Comal	Monkey-spoon
Corn-popper	Night key
Creeper	Nunny-bag
Cuttoe	Olla
Dipper	Ouragane
Fanner	Spider
File	Trummel
File-pail	

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 IV.—INSTRUMENTS, TOOLS, WEAPONS

## I.—INSTRUMENTS, TOOLS.

Bushwhacker	Muley saw
Buzz-saw	Paddle
Can-opener	Planing-machine
Cant-hook	Pry
Fall	Pullikins
Flume	Saw-horse
Flutter-wheel	Searcher
Gleet	Slice
Glut	Snips
Mud-scoop	

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2.—ARMS, WEAPONS.

Arkansas toothpick	One-eyed scribe
Belduque	Pile
Black-eyed Susan	Quaker
Blue Lightning	Sand-bag
Bowie-knife	Scatter-gun
Buccaneer	Scopet
Bully	Shooter
Gun-shop	Shot gun
Gun-stick	Slung-shot
Hindsight	Talking-iron
Meat in the pot	Toad-sticker
Mr. Speaker	Tomahawk

V.—OUTDOOR LIFE

1.—FARMING.

Aboideau	Derramadero
Acequia	Doodle
Acequiador	Feed
Agostadero	Field
Aljibar	Fisherman-farmer
Ancon	Fog
Arado	Gallows
Brush	Gavel
Bull plough	Gilt
Burden	Gopher
Cradle	Granger....ers
Crawm	Habitant
Cropper	Hayseed
Cropping	Hay-barrack

Hog-minder	Produce
Lintor	Roughness
Lister	Shock
Milk-ranch	Shove
Plantation	Smut-mill
Planter	Tumble
Poke	

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 2.—NAVIGATION.

Ark	Ditty-bag
Barge	Dock
Bateau	Dory
Battery	Droger
Beach-combers	Dug-out
Birch	Dungaree
Broadhorn	Durham boat
Buck-darting	Fantail
Bull-boat	Ferry flat
Bully	Flat
Bum-boat	Flat-boatman
Bungo	Garvey
Bushwhacking	Gundalo
Canoe	Horse-boat
Chebacco-boat	Jigger
Chunker	Keel-boat
Clipper-ship	Kellock
Cooner	Killick
Cordelle	Log-canoe
Crib	Monitor
Dingee	Pier

Pirogue	Snag-boat
Punt	State-room
Raft	Stern-wheeler
Rote, Rut	Texas
Roustabout	Thwart
Runner	Tow-boat
Sardine	Wangan
Scow	Wharf boat
Slack-water navigation	Wood skin
Smoke-stack	

3.—FISHING.

Admiral	Fleet
Assinabe	Fyke
Banker	Gigging
Blind-eel	Gurry
Block-Island turkey	Jig
Bob	Jigger
Cageot	Kibblings
Chafaud	Kid
Chauffant	Leader
Clam-bait	Logie
Dipsy	Nigog
Dory	Plantation
Dunfish	Planter
Eel-spear	Rogne
Fike	School
Fisherman-farmer	Seine
Fish-flake	Slick
Flake	Soedolager

Swoils  
Talqual

Water-horse

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4.—HUNTING, TRAPPING.

Battery  
Blind  
Box  
Cold shut  
Dead-fall  
Fire-hunt  
Gone beaver  
Killhag

Moose-yard  
Mountain-lamb  
Plumb-centre  
Shine  
Still hunter . . . ing  
Track  
Trail  
Whiggiggin

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5.—COWBOYS, RANCHES.

Alfargas  
Apushamore  
Black snake  
Blazing star  
Bodewash, Buffalo chips  
Brand  
Brand-book  
Brand-bunch  
Brand-reader  
Broncho  
Broncho buster  
Bull-tailing  
Bull-wack  
Bull-whacker  
Caballad

Cabestro  
Cache  
Camp  
Cattle mark  
Cattle raiser  
Chaparros  
Chaqueta  
Chicote  
Circle-riding  
Clean-up  
Close-herding  
Conducta  
Copa  
Corral  
Corse



Counterbrand	Manada
Cowhide	Maverick
Cow-pony	Mustang . . ers
Cow-town	Partida
Cow-whip	Pilgrims
Crop	Pointer
Dewlap	Ranch
Doughie	Range
Drag-driver	Reparadero
Drive	Rodeo
Fierro	Round-up
Flying-brand	Scare
Fuste	Singlebob
Gancho	Steers
Ginete	Stock
Judges of the plains	Vacher
Lariat	Vaquero
Line riding	

6.—PIONEERS.

Blaze	Homestead
Caravan	Jumper
Carf	Land-grabber
Carry	Land warrants
Claim	Log-cabin
Claim-jumper	Lot
Clearing	Naked possessor
Corduroy road	Notice
Corner, Corner trees	Occupying claimant
Girdling	Paper city

Pony-rider	Pre-emption right
Porcion	Pre-emptor
Prairie-schooner	Squatter

## 7.—LUMBERING.

Boom	Lumberer
Brow	Lumberman
Bunk	Miss lick
Claireur	Pike
Crib	Raft
Deacon seat	Saw-log
Dingle	Shanty
Drive	Shanty-boat
Driver	Shantying ground
Jetce	Shoot
Kennebunker	Slide
Logger	Stumpage
Logging camp	Swampers
Logging swamp	Swip
Log rolling	

## 8.—MINING.

Amparo	Boom
Arrastra	Bucking iron
Bar diggings	Bunch
Barren gravel	Claim
Bed-rock	Clean up
Black-jack	Coal
Block coal	Color
Bonanza	Cracker boy

Cradle	Pan-mill
Diggings	Pay dirt
Dirt	Pay rock
Dump	Placer
Fluken	Pocket
Flume	Prospect
Fool's gold	Riffles
Forty-niner	Rocker
Ground-slucing	Rushers
Gulch digging	Sluice
Gulch mining	Streak
Hard coal	Surface-washer
Long Tom	Tailings
Muck	

VI.—CLOTHES, DRESSES, ORNAMENTS, ETC.

Alfargas	Bloomer
Arctics	Body
Babiche	Boke
Bald-face shirt	Bosom
Bang	Butternuts
Bang-up	Calash
Barraclade	Calico
Beaters	Chapa
Bed-spread	Chaparajo
Best-bib and tucker	Chaparras
Biled shirt	Chaquita
Bishop	Chitlins
Blanket	Chivarros
Blanket coat	Clockmutch
Blick, Bliokey	Cloud

Coat	Negro-cloth
Conchas	Nicklehawk
Conestogas	Nigger-head
Cowlick	Pants
Crazy-quilt	Petticoat-trousers
Crush-hat	Plug
Dickey	Prince-Albert
Dike	Pull-back dress
Dress	Rag
Duds	Rag carpet
Duster	Raincloak
Factory	Reboso
Factory-cotton	Roundabout
Fix-out	Rubbers
Flat	Sack
Goatee	Salea
Gossamer	Scuff
Gums	Serape
Hat	Shad-belly coat
Hickory-shlrt	Sherryvallies
Hose	Shimmey
Huarachos	Shoddy
Humphrey	Shorts
Jim-swinger	Slicker
Junk	Snot-rag
Larrigan	Soap-lock
Mary-Walkers	Sombrero
Matachias	Spike tail
Mitasse	Stogies
Moccasin	Suspenders
Muslin	Table-dress

Table-ware	Trimmings
Tapadero	Under-coat
Tapalo	Waist
Tidy	Wearables
Totem	Wide-awake
Tow-tail	

VII.—HORSES, MULES, VEHICLES, HARNESS.

I.—HORSES, MULES, ETC. GROUPS OF HORSES, ETC.

Atajo	Mustang
Beast	Narragansett, pacer
Bell-mare	Paint
Conestoga	Remonta
Cow pony	Remuda
Creature, Critter	Ringer
Cuddy	Side-wheeler
Lace horse	Span
Ladino	Spike-team
Morgan-horse	Stone-horse
Mulada	Upheader

2.—TERMS APPLIED TO OLD OR WORN-OUT HORSES.

Durgen	Rackabones
Narrow gauge mule	Skate
Pelter	Tackey
Quarter-horse	

3.—VEHICLES AND PARTS OF VEHICLES.

Ash-cart	Conestoga
Binding-pole	Cracky-wagon
Bobs	Cutter

Dearborn	Prairie-schooner
Dirt car	Rig
Drag	Rockaway
Dump-cart	Shay
Express	Sloven
Hack	Stick-wagon
Horse-car	Stone-boat
Jagger-wagon	Sulky
Jigger	Sword
Jumper	Tongue
Kittereen	Tote-team
Lang	Traine
Mail-stage	Truck
Neap	Wain

## 4.—HARNESS, ETC.

Alfargas	Jaquima
Apishamore	Larigo
Azote	Latigo
Blacksnake	Legaderos
Blinders	Lines
Corona	Mecate
Corse	Quirt
Cow-hide	Rawhide
Cow-whip	Robe
Fuste	Side-line
Hackamore	Side-strap
Head-stall	Stake-rope
Hondou	Tapujo
Horn	Teetsook
Horqueta	Terret
Jalma	Til-pah

## VIII.—ANIMAL KINGDOM.

## 1.—QUADRUPEDS.

Almouchiche	Cross-fox
Bar	Deacon
Barren ground reindeer	Dog-towns
Beef	Essence-peddler
Berrendo	Fice
Big-horn	Goat
Bislings	Gobbler
Blacktail	Gopher
Black-tailed hare	Grizzly
Bob-cat	Ground-hog
Bombo	Ground-squirrel
Booma	Hog
Boss-cow	Jack
Buffalo	Jackass-rabbit
Buffalo-cow	Jorra
Buffalo-wolf	Lucivee
Bun	Manada
Cabrée	Mink
Carcajou	Molly-cotton-tail
Caribou	Mooley
Catamount	Moose
Chickaree	Musk-ox
Chipmonk	Musk-rat
Conepate	Ocelot
Coon	Ondatra
Coyote	Opossum
Cracky	Orignal

Panther	Skunk
Peccary	Skunk-bear
Peon dog	Slunk
Prairie dog	Stag
Prairie-wolf	Stinkard
Pronghorn	Stud
Quick-hatch	Tabby-cat
Raccoon	Varmints
Silver fox	Wapiti
Silver tip	Yearling

## 2. BIRDS.

Aura	Canard-branclu
Bacayère	Canne-de-roche
Baltimore oriole	Canvasback
Basque	Caracara
Becci	Carouge commandeur
Black head	Cat-bird
Black swimmer	Cenzontle
Blue stocking	Chetowaik
Bobolink	Chickadee
Bobwhite	Chuck-will's-widow
Bois-pourri	Clape
Broadbill	Clapper-rail
Brown thrasher	Cock of the plains
Bull-bat	Coot
Burrowing owl	Corbigeau
Butcher-bird	Cossade
Buzzard	Couac
Cacaoui	Cou blanc
Calico-back	Cow-bird



Creepy	Moniac
Croker	Moose-bird
Cronker	Mud-poke
Deedies	Officer-bird
Dipper	Old squaw
Doe-bird	Ortolan
Dusky-grouse	Papabotte
Field-martin	Pewit
Fish crow	Pheasant
Flicker	Pig-wick
Godet	Piou-piou
Golden eye	Pipi
Grasset	Pique-bois jaune
Guinea keet	Pisque
Heath-hen	Pivart
Hen-hawk	Poor-will
Hermit-thrush	Prairie-hen
High holder	Pull-doo
Huajolote	Punk-pudding
Hum-bird	Quawk
Jacana	Quiliou
Kakawi	Red-head
Keet	Rooster
Killdee	Sapsucker
Lawyer	Saw-whet
Loon	Scoldenore
Macreuse	Shoveller
Mango humming bird	Skunk-blackbird
Margot	Skunk-head
Marmette	Sora
Marsh-hen	Stake-driver
Mocking-bird	Tecolote

Tri-tri	Whip-poor-will
Trumpeter-swan	Whiskey-jack
Turkey-buzzard	Zopilote

## 3.—FISHES.

Achigan	Cavalli
Albany beef	Chickwit
Alewife	Chogset
Alligator gar	Choque-mort
Angler	Chub
Atosset	Chub-sucker
Awadosi	Ciscovet
Banded garfish	Clam
Barracouda	Club-tail
Barred killy	Coverclip
Bellow-fish	Crapais
Bezugo	Croaker
Blue cat	Croppie
Blue fish	Cunner
Bony fish	Devil-fish
Bream	Dogfish
Bubbler	Eels-pout
Buckey	Eulachow
Buffalo	Fair-maid
Bull-head	Fishing-frog
Bunker	Flying-fish
Burgall	Fool-fish
Butter-fish	Frost-fish
Cape Cod turkey	Gall
Cape May goody	Gaspareau
Cat, Cat-fish, Catty	Gizzard-shad
Catan	Goody

Groper	Panhagan
Grubby	Poggy
Grunter	Pollack
Hannahill	Pompano
Herring salmon	Poulis
Hog-fish	Pourcil
Holibut	Pout
Hoolikan	Rock-cod
Horse mackerel	Rudder-fish
Killy	Rusty-dab
Lafayette	Saltwater tailor
Lamantin	Sea-bass
Lawyer	Sheep's head
Lunge	Shiner
Maskinongé	Skip-jack
Menhaden	Soufflé
Methy	Squeteague
Mocasson-fish	Striped-bass
Mooneye	Tailor
Mud-cat	Tautaug
Mud-dabbler	Tepocate
Mud-fish	Tinker
Mummachog	Toad-fish
Muskelunge	Tommy-cod
Namaycush	Toulibi
Ouananiche	Trout
Oyster-fish	Wananish
Paugie	

## 4.—AMPHIBIOUS ANIMALS AND REPTILES.

Alligator tortoise	Ground-puppy
Axolotl	Heifers
Blauser	Hill-bender
Box-turtle	Horse-foot
Brasseur	Man-eater
Bull-frog	Marsh-tortoise
Bull-tucker	Moccasin snake
Chunk-head	Mud-devil
Coachwhip	Mud-turtle
Cooter	Ouaouaron
Copperhead	Ring-snake
Corn-snake	Salamander
Cottonmouth	Scorpion
Count	Shedder-crab
Deaf-adder	Snapper
Fast-runner	Soft back
Fiddler	Soft crab
Gila	Terrapin
Gopher	Wawaròn

## 5.—INSECTS.

Alacran	Chicarra
Alligator	Chigoe
Apple-bug	Chinch
Bed-bug	Colorado beetle
Buck fly	Dauber
Buffalo gnat	Doodle bugs
Bug	Dung-beetle
Butterfly	Gallinipper

Greenhead	Moth
Heel-fly	No-see-ums
Hessian fly	Peabug
Hominy-beater	Pinch-bug
Hornbug	Punky
Jicote	Red-horse
Jigger	Roach
Katydid	Skipper
Lightning-bug	Snake-doctor
Midget	Squash-bug
Miller	Tumble-bug
Moose fly	Waggletail
Mosquito	White man's-fly
Mosquito-hawk	

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 IX.—VEGETABLE KINGDOM
 

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## 1. TREES, SHRUBS, MEDICINAL PLANTS, ETC.

Adam and Eve	Amole
Alamo	Anacahuita
Albany hemp	Anaqua
Alder	Annatto
Alfalfa	Apple Peru
Alfilaria	Arrow
Alligator-wood	Arrow-head
Allspice	Arrow-root
Alonsenel	Arrow-wood
Alum-root	Ataca
Amargoso	Atamasco lily
American ivy	Balm of Gilead

Balsam fir	Brake
Balsam poplar	Bread-root
Bamboo briar	Broom corn
Bass-wood	Broom sage
Bay-berry	Brush
Bay-tree	Buckeye
Bear-berry	Buffalo-berry
Bear-grass	Buffalo-bush
Beaver-tree	Buffalo-grass
Bee-tree	Bugleweed
Beggar-ticks	Bull-brier
Big-tree	Bunch-grass
Bilberry	Burr oak
Bird's eye	Bush
Biznaga	Button-bush
Black grass	Buttonwood
Black gum	Cabbage-tree
Black jack	Cacomite
Black-wood	Calf-kill
Bladder-tree	Camus-plant
Blazing-star	Canada rice
Blue curls	Canada-thistle
Blue grass	Canaigre
Bluet	Cancer-root
Blue weed	Candleberry
Bodark	Cane-brake
Bois barré	Canker lettuce
Bois-blanc	Canoe birch
Bois de fer	Capul
Bone set	Carolina allspice
Bowman's root	Carolina pink
Box-elder	Castor-tree

Catalpa	Crab-grass
Cat's claw	Cramp-bark
Cedar	Creosote plant
Cenizo	Cross-vine
Century plant	Cucumber-tree
Chacate	Cudweed
Chapparral	Curled maple
Chapote	Custard apple
Cheat	Cut grass
Checkerberry	Cypress
Chicken-grape	Cypress-brake
Chiltapin	Damiana
Chimisal	Devil's bit
Chincapin	Devil-wood
Choke-berry	Dewberry
Chokc-cherry	Digger-pine
Clear weed	Dittany
Cocash	Dockmackie
Coco-grass	Dogwood
Cocum	Dutch curse
Coffee-tree	Earth almond
Cohosh	Epinette
Colima	Fever-bush
Compass-plant	Flat-top
Cool wort	Flea-bane
Coontie	Folle-avoine
Copse	Frijolillo
Cornel-tree	Frog's hair
Cottonwood	Frostwort
Cow-grass	Gramagrass
Cow-parsnip	Ground-plum
Coyotillo	Guinea-corn

Guinea-grass	Judas-tree
Gum	Kini-kinik
Hackberry	Kooyah
Hackmatack	Labrador tea
Hardhack	Ladies' tresses
Hardwood	Lamb's quarter
Hiekory	Leather-wood
Highbelia	Live-oak
Hobble-bush	Loblolly-bay
Hog plum	Loco-weed
Holly-bay	Long-moss
Honey-locust	Long-walnut
Honey-suckle	Mad-dog
Hop-tree	Madrona
Horse-mint	Maguey
Horse-nettle	Majorano
Huisache	Meadow-grass
Indian bread	Mechoacan
Indian fig	Mesquite
Indian hemp	Mesquit grass
Indian ladder	Mock-orange
Indian millet	Mogote
Indian pipe	Moose-wood
Indian rice	Moskoui
Indian tobacco	Musquash root
Indian turnip	Nahoo
Istle	Naseberry
Ivy	Negro-corn
Iztle	Negro-head
Jack oak	New-Orleans moss
Jilote	Nine-bark
Joe-Pye weed	Nogal



Nopal	Poplar
Oak-barrens	Post-oak
Oak-openings	Poverty-grass
Ocotillo	Prickly-pear
Okra	Pussy-willow
Oswego-tea	Red-root
Oyster-plant	Red-sumac
Palmilla	Rich-weed
Papaw	Rolling-weed
Pappoose root	Ross
Partridge berry	Round-wood
Pecan-nut	Sacate
Pembina	Sacacomi
Pennyroyal	Sage-brush
Pepperidge	Salt-grass
Persimmon	Salt-meadow
Petouane	Sand-cherry
Peyote	Sang
Pickereel-weed	Sapinette
Pig-plum	Savoyane
Pig-weed	Scions
Pimbina	Scrawl
Pine-barrens.	Screw-bean
Pine-knots	Scrub-oak
Pinery	Scud-grass
Pinion	Sea-island cotton
Pipsissewa	Sea-side grape
Pissybed	Shag-bark
Pita	Shaker-yarbs
Pitahaya	Shats
Pleurisy root	Shingle-oak
Pokeberry	Shot-bush

Silk-grass	Three-square
Sisal-hemp	Timothy
Skunk-cabbage	Toothache-bush
Slippery elm	Toothache-grass
Slough grass	Trompillo
Smell lemon	Tuckahoo
Snake-root	Tule
Soap-berry	Tulip-tree
Sorrel-tree	Tumble-weed
Sotole	Tuna
Spanish bayonet	Tupelo
Spice-bush	Umbrella-tree
Squaw-root	Wait-a-bit trees
Staddle	Wapatoo
Starigan	Watap
Stone-root	Wax-myrtle
Straw	Whiskey plant
Swamp-honeysuckle	White-walnut
Tamarac	Wicopy
Thatch	Wood skin
Thimble-weed	Yam

## 2.—FRUITS, NUTS, ETC.

Agrito	Castanas
Alligator pear	Catawba
Achovy pear	Chankings
Bay-berry	Chaparral berry
Bear-berry	Chickasaw plum
Buffalo-nut	Chicken grape
Bull nut	Chile
Butternut	Chincapin

Chompins	May-apple
Citron-melon	Melon-fruit
Cling, Clingstone	Mocker-nut
Coral-berry	Mustang grape
Cowberry	Nigger-heads
Damson-plum	Nutmeg
Dangle-berry	Pea-nut
Dewberry	Pie-plant
Earthnut	Pig-nut
Fox-grape	Pine-nut
Frost-grape	Pit
Goober	Plantain
Ground-cherry	Plum
Ground-nut	Pompion
Hickory-nut	Quote
Huckleberry	Rose-apple
Hull	Sand-plum
Indian peach	Shack
Ivory nut	Simlin
Kiskitomas	Snits
Mam mee apple	Sour-sop
Mam mee sapota	Spice-berry
Mango	Swamp-apple
Mangosteen	Thimble-berry
Maskouabina	Virgalien
Mast	

## 3.—FLOWERS.

Bindweed	Bluet
Blood-root	Blummie
Blow	Chiben

Everlasting	May-blob
Gilly-flower	May-pop
High-blackberry	Pink
Johnies	Tree-primrose
Johny-jump-up	

## 4.—VEGETABLES

Bean	Greens
Beans (Turkish)	Irish potato
ush-be ans	Jack-in the pulpit
Calabash	Kamas-root
Camote	Long-sauce
Carolina potato	Michigouen
Cashaw	Pomme blanche
Chub	Sauce
Cow-pease	Scullion
Crookneck	Spuds
Frejoles	Truck
Garden-truck	

## X.—FOOD, PROVISIONS, MEALS.

Accite	Ash-cake
Apola	Atole
Apple-butter	Bannoek
Apple-jack	Barn
Applejees	Batter-cake
Apple-leather	Bay-truck
Apple-slump	Beef-dodger
Apply-toddy	Belly-guts

Belly-wax	Citron
Belly-whistle	Clam-bake
Biled-cake	Clingjohn
Bird's nest	Cobbler
Blackstrap	Cold flour
Bloated eels	Cold-slaw
Bloodworscht	Common-doings
Bogus	Cookey
Bohea-tea	Corn halls
Boston bread	Corn bread
Breadstuff	Corn-dodger
Bretsel	Corn-fritter
Brewis	Corn-meal
Brown bread	Corn-oyster
Butter	Corn-pone
Butter bread	Cotton-seed oil
Camphene	Crab-lantern
Candy	Cracker
Canned goods	Crackling-bread
Cassareep	Cracklings
Castoria	Cream-soda
Check	Cruller
Chicken fixings	Deef-meat
Chicken gumbo	Dip
Chilaquiles	Dodger
Chilehote	Doings
Chile	Doughnut
Chinaman	Do-ups
Chip beef	Dressing
Chowder	Dunch
Cider-oil	Egg-nog
Cincinnati oysters	Emptins

Enchilada	Indian dab... meal
Esquite	Indian pudding...
Farina	Jerk
Fattikows	Jersey-tea
Feed	Jocoque
Fixings	Johny cake
Flap-jack	Lap-tea
Flumma-daddle	Larrup
Fried cake	Leverworscht
Fudges	Light-bread
Galena	Long-sugar
Gofer	Lunch
Gombo	Marshy milk
Goody bread	Maryland end
Goosebery-fool	Masa
Gravy	Meat
Griddles	Meat biscuits
Grub-stake	Meat victuals
Hand-out	Metsel-soup
Hard tack	Mezcal
Hasty pudding	Middlings
Head-cheese	Mint-stick
Hoe-cake	Mocuck
Hog and hominy	Mosey sugar
Hominy	Mush
Hoosier cake	Nocake
Hopping-John	Nogada
Hot-slaw	Noodlejees
Huggerum buff	Noodles
Hulled corn	Nooning
Hung-beef	Nut-cake
Indian bed... bread	Oatmeal-mush

Ofal	Sabane
Olycook	Sagamité
Pankake	Salt-horse
Peach-butter	Santa-Fe tea
Peach-leather	Sass
Pearl-tapioca	Sass-tea
Pemmican	Scrapple
Pick-up	Set-offs
Piece	Slipper-down
Pinole	Smearcase
Planked shad	Sots
Pluck	Soupane
Plum-muss	Sour
Pone	Sourcrout
Ponhaws	Speck
Pop-corn	Spice-tea
Porterhouse steak	Stuffening
Pot-pie	Succotash
Prekel	Supawn
Pretzel	Swankey
Pulque	Switchel
Quiode	Taffy
Rababou	Tamal
Raising	Tisanne
Riz bread	Tortilla
Roasting ears	Trimmings
Rockeage	Wheat and Indian
Rollejees	White-oak-cheese
Rye-and-Indian	

## XI.—COINS, MONEY, MEASURES.

## 1.—COINS, MONEY.

Bit	Moss
Bluebacks	Ned
Bone	Nick
Bottom dollar	Nickel
Bungtown coppers	Ninepence
Buzzard	Pelu
Cent	Penny
Checks	Picayune
Coney	Pile
Coniacker	Pine-tree money
Dollar	Pistareen
Dollar of the Fathers	Postal currency
Eagle	Quarter
Federal currency	Rag
Fractional currency	Red cent
Grease	Roanoke
Greenbacks	Rock
Green-goods	Seawan
Half-a-hog	Shilling
Hard tack	Shinplaster
Hatchet	Slug
Hogg	Soap
Honey	Soft money
Kone	Stump-tail currency
Koniacker	Tlac, tlaco
Levy	Wad
Long-bit	Wampum
Mill	



## 2.—MEASURES.

Almud	Jornada
Arpent	Legua
Arroba	Milpa
Carga	Pipe
Cord	Sitio
Heft	Suerte
Horn	Vara
Jigger	

## XII.—METEOROLOGY, TIME, DURATION.

## 1.—METEOROLOGY.

Barber	Frost-smoke
Bend-a-bow	Glade
Blizzard	Glare-ice
Bosculis	Glaze
Bourdignons	Grayslick
Candelia	Gulf-weather
Chain-lightning	Hubbles
Chinook	Indian summer
Cloudburst	Killing-time
Conkerbill	Last of pea-time
Cradle-hole	Light and shut
Day-down	Lolly
Dipper	Moondown
Dwy	Moonglade
Fall	Norther
Falling weather	Packing
Freshet	Round snow

## FUNCTIONS, TITLES

Rubber ice	Sposh
Sand-auger	Sun-shower
Scaly ice	Sun-squall
Season	Tan-toaster
Secondary	Tempest
Shakes	Thunder-heads
Shove	Waltzing-giants
Silver thaw	Washoe-zephyr
Slob	Washout
Slosh	Waterspout
Snab	White-frost
Snorter	

## 2.—TIME, DURATION.

Coon's age	Night
Dog's age	Nooning
Evening	Sundown
Flop-up	Sun-up
Fore-day	Taps

## XIII.—FUNCTIONS, TITLES.

Agohana	Bone-setter
Alcalde	Boss
Assistant	Bower
Associé	Boy
Aunt, Aunty	California widow
Ayudante	Canack, Canuck
Backwoods man	Caporal
Bell-boy	Cargador

Chore-boy	Field-driver
Collector	Gal-boy
Collier	Hay-ward
Colonel	Helf
Comprador	Hired-man
Conductor	Hog-reeve
Corder	Judges of the plains
Country-Jakes	Moshay
Dining-room servant	Patron
Dominie	Potty-baker
Door-tender	Regent
Down-easter	Sachem
Driver	Sealer
Dude	Seigneurs
Dutch	Selectman
Dutchman	Snob
Engineer	Solicitor
Esquire	Squire
Excellency	Tithing-man
Feller	Truckman
Fellow	Werowance
Female	

## XIV.—AMUSEMENTS, GATHERINGS, GAMES, ETC.

## I.—AMUSEMENTS, GATHERINGS.

Arbor Day	Bat
Bailee	Bee
Barbecue	Bobbing club
Basket meeting	Bones

Break down	Home-bringing
Buck party	House-raising
Burgoo	Independence-Day
Canticoy	Infare
Chalk talk	Institute
China wedding	Leg drama . . . shop
Chivaree	Marooning
Chowder excursion	Paas
Circle	Pansage
Clambake	Pinxter (Pinkster)
Coasting	Play spell
Coleannon night	Randy
Corn husking	Scoreher
Cornwallis	Second-Christmas
Decoration Day	Second-day-wedding
Donation party	Shin-dig
Double-ripper	Shindy
Evacuation day	Silver wedding
Fandango	Social
Feria	Sociable
Fiesta	Squantum
Fish-fry	Stag-dance
Forefather's day	Sugar-licks
Frolic	Surprise-party
Full feather	Tabagane
Gander-party	Team
Ground-hog day	Tea-squall
Hand-round	Tin-wedding
Hen party	Tobagan
High-dutchers	Training-day
High old time	Turnerfeste
Hi-spy	Virginia-reel
Hoe-down	Weddiners

## 2.—GAMES, SPORTS

Agate	Hock
Age	Hoople
Albur	Hunk
Ante, Anti	Ice-boat
Base-ball	Item
Battery	Jack pot
Blaze	Jack stones
Blind	Jiggling-board
Blind poker	Joker
Bluff	King's ex
Boston	Knucks
Bower	Lamas
Check	Limit
Chip	Little-misery
Chuck-a-chuck	Lock eye
Cold	Look-out
Crak-loo	Monte
Craps	Mumblety pegs
Crisscross	Nicker
Crosse	No fair
Deck	Old sledge
Doggies	Original hand
Draw	Pass
Dumm, Dummy	Pat hand
Euchre	Poker
Foul-hand	Pot
Foul-tip	Roly-poly
Grounder	Say
Haily-over	Shift
Hinny	Shinny

Sic-a-nine-ten	Tag
Snore	Tiger
Soda	Toozer
Squeezers	Virginia poke
Sugar game	

## XV.—DISEASES, INFIRMITIES.

Ager, Ague, Aguy, Agy	Jerks
Big-head	Jim-jams
Blackleg	Kink
Boogie	Milk sickness
Brash, water-brash	Misery
Break bone	Mizzy
Bronze John	Prairie itch
Buck ague, Buck fever	Pukes
Canker rash	Rackabones
Chill	Rum-bud
Chill and fever	Shakes
Connption fit	Squitters
Dengue	Whelk
Grim	Yellow Jack

## XVI.—LEGEND, FOLKLORE.

Adocté	Obeya-man
Atshen	Otsitso
Chasse-galerie	Outiko
Gougou	Poker
Madstone	Squantum
Mahoumet	Voodouism
Manitou	Wendigo

## XVII.—ARCHAISMS AND PROVINCIALISMS

All-out	Check
Anan, anend	Chimley
Applicant	Clabbeck
Appreciation	Deck
Atorny	Declension
Avails	Dight
Bail	Dove
Bait	Fay
Bang-up	Feaze
Bantling	Female
Barm	Fice
Bawcock	Flake
Beaker	Flap-jack
Beau	Flunk
Behindments	Foteh
Bestowments	Fresh
Bile	Freshet
Bilk	Fromety
Blow	Gaum
Blowth	Gavel
Bobbery	Gentle
Body	Gleet
Booze	Glut
Boozy	Goney
Boughten	Gotten
Bowman	Grain
Branch	Guleh
Breachy	Gundalo
Cast	Hack
Casten	Harman

Hay-ward	Offal
Hearn	Outery
Heft	Peert
Het	Plunder
Holden	Polt, Polter
Holp, Holpen	Prink
Hove	Professor
Human	Putten
Jag	Raising
Kellock	Reekon
Ketch	Ross
Kettereen	Sauce
Limekill	Smudge
Long-sauce	Snarl
Lummox	Spunk
Mast	Staddle
Maul and wedges	Stag
Meech....ing	Stent
Mought	Stricken
Mung	Swad
Muss	Thirds
Noggin	Yafful
Notious	

## XVIII.—THE CHURCH

Adventism	Basket meeting
Anxious bench	Bible Christians
Anxious meeting	Big meeting
Anxious mourner	Bush meeting
Backwoods preacher	Camp meeting



Christian Scientists	Mormons
Church house	New-Lights
Church-maul	Outfit
Come-outers	Preach
Desk	Preacher's stand
Dunker	Professor
Exercices	Rapper
Experience	Restitutionists
Faith-curists	Sealing
Fellowship	Shakers
Gentiles	Shoutin' member
Hard Shells	Sociable
Hicksites	Society
Meeting-house	Spiritual wife

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 XIX.—CONGRESS, LEGISLATURES

Buncombe	Lobbyist
Bureau	Message
Congress	Mileage
Congressional	Pincher
Congressman	Red-tape
Court	Resolve
Court-House	Result
Court of Assistants	Retirement
Department	Rider
District courts	State House
Land-office	Upper House
Lobby	Yellow cover

## THE COURT-HOUSE

## XX.—THE COURT-HOUSE

Abutter	Head-rights
Addition	Homestead
Advice and consent	Law-day
Allotment certificate	Locator
Avails	Maidenland
Bestowment	Maine-law
Black Code	Propio
Corn-right	Resolve
Doomage	Shyster
Dooming-board	Stag
Ejido	Straw-bail
Foundation	Test-paper
God fathers	Town-house

## XXI.—HISTORY, POLITICS

## 1. COLONIAL TIMES

Adventurer	Patroonship
Bowman	Plantation
Buccaneer	Planter
Corder	Redemptioners
Corn-right	Tea-pomp
Jersey-blue	Tithing-man
Patroon	

## 2. WAR OF INDEPENDENCE

Continental	Minute-men
Continentials	New-Jersey tea
Hessian	Provincials

## 3. CIVIL WAR.

Bummer	Jayhawkers
Bushwhacker	Jeff Davis-boxes
Butternuts	Johny . . . Reb
Cheese-box	Josh
Confederate	Louisiana Tigers
Contraband	Mossy bank
Copperhead, Copperheadism	Musical box
Double ender	Nigger-babies
Federals	Nigger-heads
Floating-batteries	Secessiondom
Free fighter	Secessioner, ist
Galvanised Yankee	Stars and bars
Golden Circle	Tarheels
Grape-vine telegraph	Tinclads
Gunboats	Yanks
Hell-hounds	Yankee (galvanized)
Hessian	

## 4. POLITICS, POLITICIANS.

Abolitiondom	Anti-negro
Abolitionists	Anti-rentism
Adamites	A. P. A.
Addition, Division and Silence	Apaism
Africanization	Apportionment
Albany regency	Ashlanders
Amalgamation	Ash-pole
American Party	Assemblyman
Amnesty oath	Assistant
Annexationist	Ballot-box stuffing
Anti-federalist	Barnburners
Anti-masonry	Barrel

- |                            |                         |
|----------------------------|-------------------------|
| Black Republicans          | Copperhead . . . . .ism |
| Bloody shirters            | Crawfish                |
| Bobolition, Bobolitionists | Democrats               |
| Bolters                    | Doughface, . . . . .ism |
| Boltocrat                  | Eelskin                 |
| Boomerang                  | Federalists             |
| Border ruffians            | Fence-man               |
| Boss, Bossism              | Fence-riding            |
| Bounty-Jumper              | Filibuster              |
| Bourbon                    | Filibustering           |
| Boys                       | Fire-eaters             |
| Bucker                     | Floater                 |
| Buckshot War               | Fogy                    |
| Bucktails                  | Free-soiler             |
| Buffalo                    | Free-soilism            |
| Bureaucrate                | Gerrymander             |
| Burgoo                     | Grangers                |
| Burrites                   | Graveyard issues        |
| Bushwhacker                | Greenbackers            |
| Campaign                   | Greenback Labor party   |
| Carpet-bagger              | Grit                    |
| Caucus                     | Half-breeds             |
| Cesarism                   | Hard Shells             |
| Cesarist                   | Heelers                 |
| Cipher dispatches          | Hessian                 |
| Civil Service Reform       | High minded Federalists |
| Clear grits                | Hindoos                 |
| Cochranites                | Hunkers                 |
| Confederate States         | Jacksonites             |
| Convention                 | Jayhawkers              |
| Coodies                    | Kearnyites              |
| Coon, Coonery              | Kicker                  |

Know-nothings . . . .ism	Primary meeting
Lecompton Democrats	Provincialist
Lewisites	Prox
Liberals	Pull
Loco-focos	Radicals
Log-rolling	Reciprocity
Machine-politician	Reconstruction
Mahonists	Reformists
Manifest desting	Republicans
Mason and Dixon's line	Restrictionist
Missouri compromise	Ring
Mixed ticket	Ringer
Mossbacks	Sagnichts
Muckrakes	Salt river
Mugwump	Sams
Munroe Doctrine	Scratched ticket
National Democrats	Scratching
Native Americans	Sculduggery
Nativism	Sectionalism
Negroism	Short-hairs
Papaws	Silver Grays
Particularists	Slate
Pea-nut politics	Slate smaskers
Pipe-laying	Soap
Plank	Spoils system
Platform	Spread eagle . . . .ism
Plumed Knights	Squatter Sovereignty
Political capital	Stalwarts
Political Union	State's rights
Popecrat	State ticket
Pow-wow	Steering committee
Precinct	Straddle

Straight ticket	Wheel-horse
Striker	Whigs
Stump	Whip-sawing
Tammany	Whiskey-ring
Tax-eater	White league
Ticket	White liners
Tory	Wide-awakes
Touching committee	Wigwam
Vendue	Wilmot-proviso
War-horse	Wire-puller

## XXII.—COLLEGES

Alumnus	Calico
Animal	Callithump
Babe	Callithumpians
Banger	Campus
Barney	Cane-rush
Beast	Charcoal blossom
Berry	Chum
Bird	Chump
Blob	Class-baby
Blood	Class-day
Blue stocking	Coach
Bohn	Co-ed
Bone	Commencement
Bones	Commons
Bos	Cooler
Bull	Cram
Burn	Crib
Bust	Crush

Cut	Fresh
Dig	Goose-egg
Digging	Gouging
Drag	Grind
Fairy	Mucker
Fellow	Pill
Fellowship	Plugger
Friend	Pony
Flag-rush	Shack
Fluke	Snab
Flummux	Soak
Flunk	Sophomore
Flunker	Stiff
Frat	Valedictorian
Freak	

XXIII.—WORDS DUE TO RELATIONS WITH THE INDIANS

Blanket Indian	Dog-soldiers
Bois-brulé	Ghost-dance
Bone-pits	Haiqua
Brave	Happy hunting ground
Breed	Indian file
Buck	Indian gift . . . liquor
Calumet	Indian mounds
Canaoua	Indian orchards
Cazagot	Indian reservations
Chunk-yard	Indian summer
Copperhead	Lingua Franca
Council fire	Lodge
Coup	Long-Knives
Diggers	Mahala

Manitou	Seawan
Matachias	Squaw
Mound-builders	Squaw-man
Nagane	Sweat-house
Peac	Tepee
Poose-back	Tomahawk
Pow-wow	Totem
Roanoke	Wampum
Sachem	War path
Sagamore	Werowance
Scalp lock	Wigwam

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XXIV.—NEGROISMS. WORDS RELATING TO SLAVERY  
AND NEGROES

Buck	Mason and Dixon's line
Buckra	Massa
Bull nigger	Meamelouc
Colored	Mean-white
Coon	Mestee
Crap-house	Moke
Craps	Mulatto
Cuffey	Mustafina
Darkie	Negro-fellow
Free-soiler	Negroism
Griffin	Obeya-man
Hant	Octoroon
Hell-matter	Pickaninny
Hoe-down	Placee
Hoodoo	Plain-folks
Marabou	Plantation



Quadroon	Underground railroad
Quashee	Voodooism
Sambo	Wench

XXV.—ONOMATOPIES

Chewink	Piou-piou
Chickadee	Pipi
Chickaree	Poor-will
Chuck-will's-widow	Tri-tri
Couac	Whip-poor-will
Pewit	

XXVI.—NEWSPAPERS, PRINTING, ETC.

Accumulatives	Fake
Ad	Fakir
Adjective jerker	Feature
Assignment	Flash
Baalam box	Fudge
Beat	Ghost story
Bill-board	Grind
Butcher	Happenings
Caption	Head
Cutter	Hell-box
Dead-must	Ink-slinger
Desirable	Item
Dog watch	Itemizer
Dupes	King-beat
Editorial	Leg-work
Fairy tale	Lift

Local	Scoop
Making-up	Send-off
Must	Shirt-tail dash
Occurrings	Slush
Patent outsides	Space-grabber
Pencil pusher	Special
Pipe	Story
Playing up	String
Puff workers	Stuff
Regular	Subs
Rewrite man	Take
Scare	Typo
Schedule	Yellow Journalism

## XXVII.—RAILWAYS

Accommodation train	Car-house
Air-line	Check
Baggage	Check rail
Baggage agent	Conductor
Baggage car	Cow-catcher
Baggage check	Depot
Baggage-smasher	Engine
Berth	Engineer
Bogie-engine	Express
Box-car	Fireman
Bull	Flag station
Bumper	Flyer
Caboose	Freight
Cad	Freightage
Car	Freight-car
Car-brake	Freight-train

Frog	Railroad
Grade	Run
Greased lightning	Runner
Horse-railroad	Scalper
House-car	Scout-train
Jumping-off place	Sleeper
Lightning-express	Snake-head
Linemen	Snake-rail
Machine	State-room
Mail . . . car	Strap railroad
Mileage-ticket	Switch
Plug	Track
Pullman	Wild-cat train

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 XXVIII.—BANKING, FINANCE, TRADE
 

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## 1. TRADE, BARTER, ETC.

Bank shaving	Deal
Bill	Dicker
Bindery	Domestics
Brotus	Drummer
By-bidder	Drumming
Cable	Dry-goods . . . store
Cannery	Fakir
Capper	Finding-store
C. O. D.	Fore-pay
Combine	Freight . . . age
Corner	Glibe
Cut	Goner
Dead-duck	House-milliner

Lagniappe	Store
Lay	Store-clothes
Merchant	Store-pay
Notions	Store-tea
Outcry	Tickler
Peter Funk	Tinner
Pilon	Toot
Point	Trade
Post-note	Trader
Ring	Trust
Shake	Vendue
Shop	Walk out
Short	Wild cat....
Sight unseen	

## 2. THE SLANG OF WALL STREET.

Block	Gutter-snipe
Bogus boys	Mud-hen
Break	Point
Bucket-shop	Scalper
Buttoning up	Snipe
Curb-stone broker	Squash
Flunk	Ticker
Flyer	

## XXIX.—MISCELLANEOUS INDUSTRIES.

## 1. CHARCOAL.

Braes	Cubby
Brands	Fergen
Collier	Firing-place
Crib	Float

## 2. COTTON.

Bagging	Cottendom
Blow	Pick
Cotton-bagging	

## 3.—OYSTERS.

Barnacle	Hull
Bateau	Mananosay
Beard	Oyster grass
Blister	Oyster-knockers
Board-bank	Platform
Bull-nose	Pooquaw
Clam-banks	Quahaug
Cluckers	Rattlers
Coon-oyster	Shell bed
Count clams	Shellers
Cullinteens	Shoots
Float	Stick-up
Hen-clam	Winders

## 4.—SUGAR.

Arrow	Molasses
Bagasse	Ratoons
Barring out	Stand
Blackstrap	Sugar bush, camp, orchard
Cane-trash	Sugaring time
Logie	Sugar licks
Long-sugar	Sugar maple
Maple-honey	Trash
Maple-sugar	Tree-molasses

## 5.—TOBACCO.

Break	Negro-head
Cavendish	Old soldier
Chaw	Sot-weed
Cut	Stemmary
Express-office	Stogies
Fid	Through
Ground	Turning-row
Lugs	

## XXX.—MISCELLANEOUS APPELLATIONS

## 1.—NICKNAMES OF PERSONS

Bankers	Celestials
Beagles	Clam-catchers
Blue Bellies	Clay-eaters
Blue Hen Chickens	Cohees
Blue Lights	Conch
Blue Noses	Corn-cracker
Blues	Cracker
Blue skins	Cree-Owls
Bois-brûlé	Dago
Boys in blue	Drys
Brother Jonathan	Flat-boatman
Buckeyes	Goober-grabber
Buckskins	Gopher
Buffaloes	Gothamite
Bug-eaters	Greaser
Butternuts	Hayseed
Buzzards	Heathen Chinese

Hoosier	Piners
Jayhawkers	Pukes
John	Rail-splitter
Johny	Red-horse
Josh	Rice-bird
Knickerbockers	Round-head
Little Giant	Rovers
Little Mac	Sage-hens
Little Magician	Shad-bellies
Lizards	Silk-stockings
Miller boy of the Slashes	Sleepers
Mud-Head	Sophers
Muskrats	Suckers
Natick Cobbler	Swallow-tails
Old Bullion	Tippecanoe
Old Driver	Tooth-picks
Old Hickory	Tuckahoo
Old Planters	Uncle Sam
Old Probabilities	War-horse
Old Put	Weasels
Pathfinder	Young Hickory

## 2.—NICKNAMES OF STATES, COUNTRIES, PLACES.

Badger State	Buckeye State
Bayou State	Bullion State
Bay State	Centennial State
Bear State	Cracker State
Big drink	Creole State
Blue Grass State	Dark and Bloody Ground
Blue Hen State	Diamond State
Blue Law State	Egypt

Empire State	Mud-cat State
Excelsior State	New Netherlands
Freestone State	Nutmeg State
Garden of the West	Old Colony
Garden State	Old Country
Golden State	Old Dominion
Granite State	Old Line State
Green Mountain State	Old North State
Hawk-Eye State	Palmetto State
Hoosier State	Pelican State
Key-stone State	Pine-tree State
Lake State	Pivotal State
Land of steady habits	Poket
Little Rhody	Prairie State
Lone Star State	Sucker State
Lumber State	Turpentine State
Monkey-wrench district	Wolverine State
Mother of States	

## 3.—NICKNAMES OF CITIES.

Athens of America	City of Soles
Bluff City	City of Spindles
Brass City	City of the Straits
Charter-Oak City	City of Witches
City of Brotherly Love	Classic City
City of Churches	Cradle of Liberty
City of Colleges	Crescent City
City of Elms	Crescent City of the West
City of the Golden State	Empire City
City of Magnificent Distances	Executive City
City of Notions	Falls City
City of Rocks	Federal City



Flour City	Monumental City
Flower City	Mound City
Forest City	Palmetto City
Frisco	Porkopolis
Gate City	Quaker City
Golden City	Railroad City
Gotham	Smoky City
Hub of the Universe	Tri-Mountain City
Iron City	Zenith City
Mobtown	

4.—COLLECTIVITIES, SOCIETIES, ORGANIZATIONS.

Boys in blue	Mormons
Cod-fish aristocracy	Moonshiners
Daddyism	Mudsill clubs
Folks	Regulators
Four hundred	Shoddyocracy
Golden Circle	Sovereigns of Industry
Grangers	Turn-Vereine
Highbinder	Uppertendom
Knights of Labour	Vigilance committee
Ku-Klux Klan	White caps
Molly-Magnires	Yankeedom

5.—WORDS EXPRESSING ACKWARDNESS, EXCENTRICITY, FOOLISHNESS, ETC.

Bell-snickle	Dumm, Dummy
Buncombe	Dummerhead
Chowderhead	Gaby
Chucklehead	Gawnicus
Crank	Gilly
Dodunk	Goney
Dough-head	Gump

Horse marine	Momick
Judy	Mutton-head
Kip	Nimshi
Lobscouse	Noodlehead
Logy	Poke
Loon	Sardine
Lummox	Spoons
Lumper	

## 6 —WORDS EXPRESSING ADMIRATION, SMARTNESS, SUPERIORITY, ETC.

Bawcock	Hummer
Beau	Hustler
Bee-line	Keener
Big-bug	Live-beat
Boss	Old coon
Bottom	Oodles
Bottom fact	Oodlins
Bulger	Pull
Bull (prefix)	Recommend
Cap sheaf	Ripper
Chivalry	Ripsnorter
Cleargrit	Roncher
Come out	Rustler
Crackajack	Sand
Cuteness	Screamer
Gilded rooster	Snap
Gism	Sneezer
Go ahead	Snorter
Grit	Socket
Gush	Some pumpkins
Honey	Sprawl

Spunk	Two-forty pace
Staver	Vim
Trigness	Whaler

7.—WORDS EXPRESSING BRAG, SELF-CONCEIT, ETC.

Back talk	Half-way strainer
Banter	High falutin
Billy-noddle	Jack-dandy
Blower	Linguister
Bluff.....er	Pealer
Boomer	Pill
Buck	Poppy-cock
Bushwhacker	Pop-squirt
Flapdoodle	Rouser
Frills	Shenanigan
Gab	Slang-whanger
Gabbey	Snake-story
Gall	Spread-eagle....ism
Gas	

8.—WORDS EXPRESSING CONTEMPT, DERISION, ETC.

Buzzard	Despisement
Cachupin	Dock-walloper
Carpet-bagger	Doughface,—cism
Chippy	Dude
Chippy-chaser	Gripe-fist
Copperhead	Ham, Hamfatter
Cotbetty	Hen-hussy
Crawfish	Hobo
Critter	Jack-leg
Cuss, Cussedness	Jay
Dead-beat	Loafer

Loper	Shack
Masher	Shyster
Muckrakes	Skeezix
Pilgrim	Slink
Plug	Slummock
Pot-walloper	Small potatoes
Rat	Snip
Riffs	Sozzle
Rubber neck	Stiff
Runt	Tenderfoot
Sand-hillers	Tippybobs
Scab	Trash
Scallawag	Whiffet

## 9.—WORDS EXPRESSING DIFFICULTIES, HARM, UNFORTUNE, ETC.

Bad man	Polt, Polter
Bad medicine	Priminary
Bulldose	Puck
Daisy beat	Rail-riding
Dead beat	Scunner
Clip	Side-winder
Cold scald	Socdolager
Come down	Striker
Crooked stick	String
Drag out	Thumper
Hitch	Tormentation
Jim-slinger	Tunk
Kink	Worriment
Lambasting	

10.—WORDS EXPRESSING DISORDER, LAWLESSNESS, ETC.

Bag of nails	Lynch law
Beach-combers	Micky
Bender	Mix
Bobbery	Muss
Briago	Mux
Bun, Bummer,	Neck-tie sociable
Clatter whacking	Off-ox
Dander	Panhandler
Filibuster . . . . ing	Plug-ugly
Fire-bug	Raid
Five-Pointers	Ravage
Highbinder	Rifle
High roller	Roarer
Holdups	Rounder
Hoodlum	Rowdy
Involvement	Runagate
Jake	Snarl
Jamboree	Spat
Jingle-brains	Tear
Katoose	Tough
Low-downer	Tow-row
Lyncher	Tramp
Lynching-bee	

11.—WORDS EXPRESSING FAILURE.

Back down	Flat-out
Bounce	Fluke
Breakdown	Flunk
Bust	Gone case

Gone-coon	Trocha
Goner	Walking papers
Set-back	Yellow cover

## 12.—WORDS EXPRESSING FRAUD, PLUNDER, ETC.

Barney	Gum-game
Bogus	Huly
Boodle	Indian gift
Boomerang	Roorback
Brace game	Skin-game
Chestnut	Squealer
Fake	Stiff
Fish-story	Sucker
Fraud	Wooden Nutmegs

## 13.—WORDS EXPRESSING INFERIORITY

Back seat	Dime-novels
Back track	Jog
Bad egg	Quarter-horse
Bag o'guts	Runt
Bayoo	Serap
Behindments	Tacker
Critter	

## 14.—WORDS EXPRESSING JUDGMENT, SUCCESS

Bonanza	Nigger-luck
Boom	Placer
Boom-belt	Sabe
Booming-squad	Record
Boomlet	Smart chance
Go	Soft thing
Horse sense	Ten strike

## 15.—WORDS EXPRESSING AFFECTION, ENDEARMENT, PLEASURE, ETC.

Bango	Compliment
Birdie	Creature
Bussy	Mammy
Cack	Netop
Cleverness	

## 16.—WORDS EXPRESSING BEWILDERMENT, FRIGHT SURPRISE, ETC.

Boof	Feaze
Daze	Rouser
Eye opener	

## XXXI.—BAR-ROOMS.

Angel	Bug-juice
Bald-face	Bung-starter
Bar	Bust
Barrel boarder	Bust-head
Barrel house	Cantina
Bartender	Chain-lightning
Bender	Cocktail
Black-jack	Confectionery
Bloat	Corn-juice
Boof	Crack-loo
Bottom	Crooked whiskey
Bouncer	Dive
Bourbon	Doggery
Brandy-smash	Drinks
Brusher	Drudge
Buck-beer	Drunk
Bucket shop	Exchange

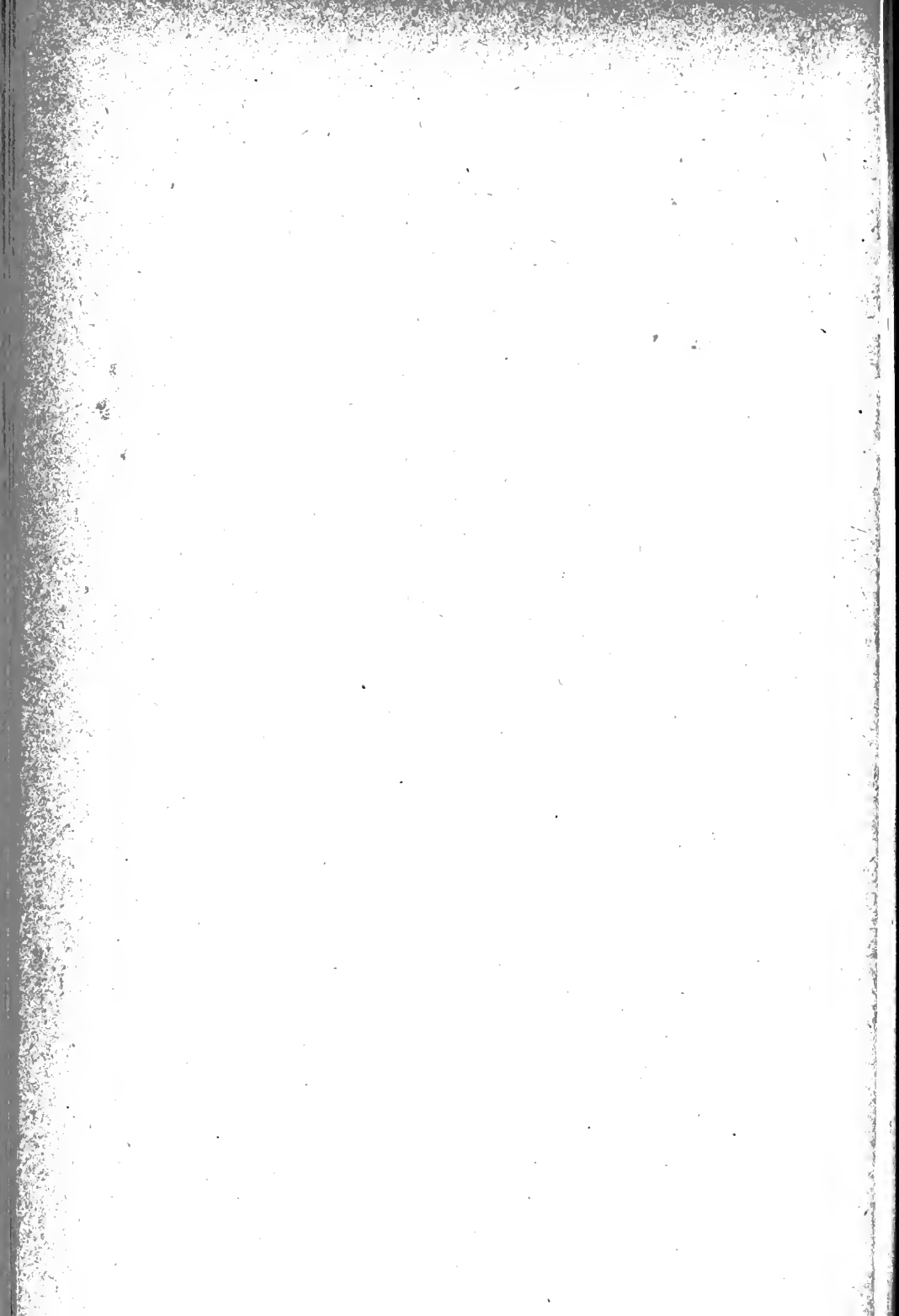
Eye-opener	Red eye
Fip	Rot gut
Fire-copper	Rum
Flip	Rum-hole
Forty-rod lightning	Rum-sucker
Grocery	Rye
Heelers	Saloon
Hopine	Schooner
Indian liquor	Shebang
Jag	Shenkbeer
Jigger	Sleepers
John Collins	Sling
Leg-stretcher	Slug
Mint-julep	Snile
Monongahela	Snifter
Morgue	Sucker
Nipper	Tickler
Pick-me-up	Tipple
Pine-top	Whiskey-bloat
Pink-tea	Whiskey-mill
Pony	Whiskey skin . . . smas
Pupelo	Yankee

## XXXII.—THIEVES' SLANG

American tweezers	Baster
Amusers	Billy
Angler	Bluffer
Auger	Bob
Badger	Bouncer
Badger-game	Brace game



Broady	Horse-cappers
Budge	Hum-box
Bunco-game	Inglor
Bunco-man, Bunco-steerer	Jilt
Buzzer	Joint
Capper	Jug...breaking
Charley	Katey
Chinkers	Kite
Chuck	Koniacker
Clankers	Leather
Come-alongs	Nippers
Crook	Panel-game
Dip	Plugger
Dog	Rat-thieving
Drop game	Ripper
Fence	Robber
Floater	Roper
Gait	Rustler
Glims	Sand-bagger
Gnarler	Sham-leggers
Gobsticks	Shell-game
Groaners	Skin
Harman	Sneak-thief
Hawk	Snooser
Heelers	Steerer
High-bloke	Strippers
High-jinks	U. S. plate
Holdups	



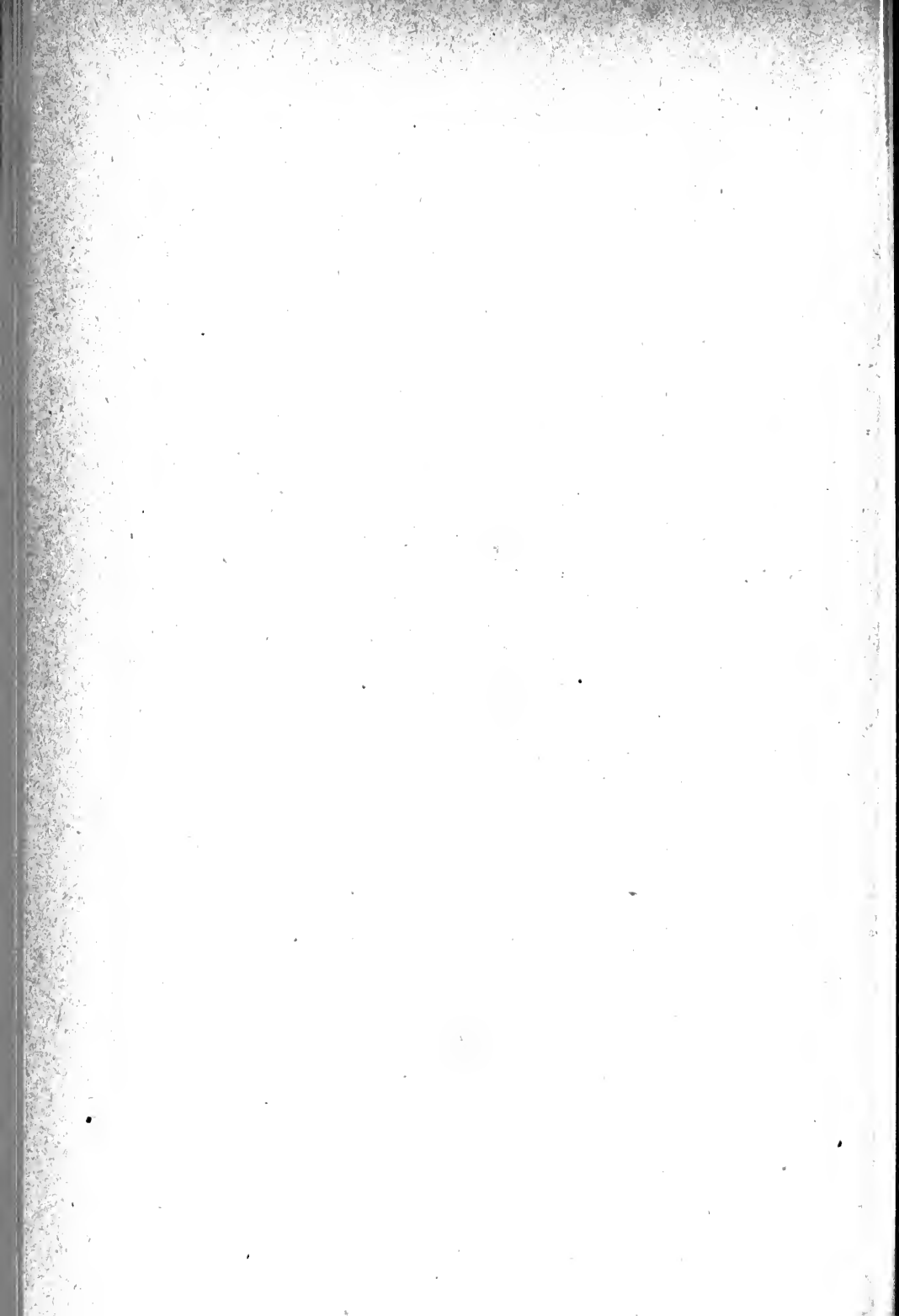
## APPENDIX III

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### Reprints from English and American Periodicals

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- I. Americanisms, by Dr. Aubrey.
- II. Wild Flowers of English speech in America, by Edward Eggleston.
- III. The Philology of slang, by E. B. Tylor.
- IV. The Function of slang, by Brander Matthews.



## AMERICANISMS

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BY DR. AUBREY

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(*From Leisure Hour*)

It is not affectation or mere pedantry to speak of the American language, for it is becoming more and more distinct, not only in matters of pronunciation and in colloquial phrases, but in the novel meanings attached to many old words, and in the fertile invention of new words. Our American cousins not infrequently express themselves as employing our common language in a way superior to the English, and doubtless the insular pronunciation, with its rising inflections, sound as peculiar to them as the more or less nasal twang—if the gentle criticism may be ventured—and the falling inflection sound to us.

Not that uniformity prevails throughout the wide area of the United States. There are marked provincialisms, as is the case with different districts in Great Britain, so that a "down-Easter" from Maine, or the typical "Yankee," or the resident in the Great West, differ from each other in this respect, while all of them are unlike the drawl common in the South. In the older communities there are, of course, to be found many refined and truly cultured persons, to whose conversation it is a pleasure to listen, and who reveal in phraseology and intonation nothing of what are usually understood as Americanisms. It must also be cheerfully admitted that average people in the United States speak with much greater ease and appropriateness than persons of a corresponding position and education in England. This is to be accounted for partly by the system of recita-

tions pursued in the schools, and partly by the social freedom which permits ready talk on almost every subject.

Without drawing undue refinements by way of distinction, and without insisting upon local and accidental peculiarities, and especially without indulging in hypercriticism or ridicule, it may be interesting to indicate some of the meanings in which familiar words are used across the water, and to explain some of the modern phrases which are continually being devised as additions to the received vocabulary.

An ordinary dictionary does not define the peculiar terms and idioms commonly used by Americans. They can be understood, although they prefer to place the accent on the penultimate syllable of "observatory" or "conservatory," or when they make "vase" rhyme with "case," or when they contract "cannot" into a sound exactly like that of Kant, the German metaphysician. They prefer to say "Italian" and "national," and to pronounce "schedule" as if it were "skedule," and to call the last letter of the alphabet "zee," and to spell certain words in a way peculiar to themselves, as "meager," "scepter," "center," "traveler," "unequaled," "plow," "develop," "skepticism," "defense," "offense," "wagon," "check" (a draft on a banker), and many others that might be cited. Public speakers often place undue emphasis upon the articles "a" and "the," particularly on the former, which is made to sound like "ay," thus giving it undue prominence and an odd effect before the noun.

Young ladies are much addicted to the use of the word "verra," as they pronounce "very," and they describe themselves as "mad" when they are slightly vexed; and while they would on no account mention "legs"—which are always "limbs"—they describe all insects under the generic name of "bug;" but the leg of a fowl is the "second wing." Young ladydom also uses the word "awful" for "very" in the Eastern and Middle States, where "awful hungry," "awful handsome," and so on, are continually heard. When she is about to adorn herself, or to trim a bonnet or some article of dress, she says that she

will "fix herself" or "fix it up;" but the same word is used in connection with meals, as "tea and fixings;" or if a guest is in doubt over the bill of fare, the waiter will probably say, "I'll fix you," and he then brings a varied and numerous assortment of dishes.

Other words are employed in a novel or an exaggerated sense. A jug or a mug, however small, is a "pitcher;" wood, sawn into planks, is "lumber;" when a man states, "I feel bad," he refers, not to moral depravity, but to the state of his health, just as "I feel good" means that he is well and happy. "Big" is used not only for size, but as descriptive of quality, and, in a vulgar sense, of persons of supposed consequence, as "big bugs." "Biscuit" is synonymous with hot rolls, in which most Americans indulge twice a day, and then wonder that they suffer from indigestion; whereas "crackers" are what English people usually understand as biscuits. "Real, or clear, or true grit," refers to a person of superior worth or genuineness, as distinguished from one inferior, who is only "chaff." These words evidently come from the miller, as "dough-face" may be traced to the baker; meaning, a man easily moved to change his opinion, and who can be moulded, like dough, to any shape. "Back" is often used instead of "ago;" as "That was a long time back." "Beautiful," and "elegant" are much misused terms, being often applied indiscriminately to anything good, pleasing or even tasty. "Convenient" has assumed a new meaning, and refers to what is near at hand or within easy reach; thus, a farm is advertised as "having wood and water convenient to the house." "Cute," instead of "acute," has become almost a distinct word, being stronger in its peculiar meaning than the original, and is one of the most expressive Americanisms of the day. "Dirt" is generally used for earth, or soil, and "rag" for any piece of linen or cotton cloth. "Dress" has almost superseded the word "gown," as part of a lady's costume, and the upper portion, or "body," as it is termed in England, is the "waist" in America. Instead of "leading article" in a newspaper, "editorial" is always used. "Hoarding" is never applied to a wooden enclosure—

which is always "fence"—but only to accumulating money. "Housekeep," as a verb, has firmly established itself in American speech. A letter or newspaper is not posted, but "mailed." Such a term as "nasty weather" is never heard; and the adjective itself always denotes something disgusting in point of smell, taste, or even moral character, and is never heard in the presence of ladies; but "nice" is used with great freedom, and with wide and varied meanings. The pavement of a street is always called the "sidewalk." The American substitute for "braces" is "suspenders," a delicate improvement upon the older word "gallowsses," common in New England.

Surpassing others in ability is often expressed by the word "whip;" and the phrase, "That whips all creation," is well known. "Few" is used in the sense of "little," as, "I was astonished a few;" and in like manner a man will say that he has "heard considerable" of a person. Prepositions are employed in what at first seem odd meanings, and yet in many cases they are strictly appropriate, such as "on the street;" or a letter written "over his signature." In the South, members are elected to sit "on the legislature." A common phrase is that "he arrived on time." But it sounds strange to hear of a field "planted to corn;" or the phrase "at the north;" or "to be sold at auction." "In" is used for "into" very generally. "Nor" is frequently substituted for "than;" and "outside" for "beside," or "except," as "Outside the Secretary of War, no one knew of the transaction."

As might be expected, certain words which originated as vulgarisms, and which are even now never heard in good society, yet find places in colloquial speech, because of their expressiveness, arising, perhaps, more from the sound than the precise signification. Among these are "absquatulate" and "skedaddle," in the sense of running away; and "all to smash," for an utter wreck. "High falutin" is applied to exaggerated or bombastic speech or writing. A "loafer" is an idler or dawdler. To "cave in" means a collapse.

Public meetings are often held in the open air in newly-cleared districts, and the stump of a tree is a convenient



platform. Hence the expressive phrase "to go on the stump" during some political agitation, or "campaign," which is now the stock phrase. In connection with this, the word "platform" has come to signify a testament of principles or objects, each of which is described as a "plank;" and a man who is supposed to attach undue importance to some particular scheme or notion is styled a "crank." Politicians are said to be engaged in "log-rolling," or to have "their own axes to grind," when they are thought to be seeking personal objects under colour of party zeal. Another opprobrious epithet applied to such is "machine politicians." A "caucus" is a preliminary gathering of a political party to decide upon united action; and "lobbying" means waiting outside the chambers of legislature so as to use influence for the passing of certain measures. Political nomenclature is constantly changing, as new words are invented by speakers or newspaper writers some of which have but transient currency and are soon forgotten, such as "free-soiler," "carpet-bagger," "copper-heads," "hardshells," "softshells," "locofocos," "know-nothings," and many more. One such word, "bolter," was applied during the Presidential election in 1884 to indicate a section of the Republican party who for that time voted with the Democrats. "To be around" is used in the sense of being near, or close by. To "back down" is to yield; to "take the back track" is to retreat; and if a man utters a mistaken charge or wrongfully applies an epithet, he will probably say, by way of apology, "I take that back." A coverlet or counterpane is called a "bed-spread." Where an Englishman would say "as the crow flies," an American speaks of "a bee-line," and a railroad free from tunnels is an "air-line." To be "under the weather" is to suffer from a cold. A speaker is said to "voice the sentiment" of a meeting; and instead of the common English phrase that "it is well to wash dirty linen at home," the Western people have one of pungent meaning, when the offensive odour of the animal is remembered, that "every man should skin his own skunk." To "play' possum" is equivalent to the old London trick among thieves of "shamming Abra-

ham," or pretending to be dead, as the opossum does when escape seems impossible. "It's nuts to him" denotes some difficulty in comprehending, or a task that cannot well be performed; just as nuts are hard to crack. The "given name" is the Christian name, and in the West it is sometimes styled the "front name." A "live man," in the sense of quick, active, or a "live preacher," or "live prayer-meeting," are sufficiently expressive, though somewhat inappropriate terms.

Travelling has given rise to many peculiar phrases. The line is always called "the railroad," or "the roadbed," or "the track;" the carriages are "cars," or "steam-cars;" the locomotive, when not so named, is the "engine," with the "i" long; a siding is a "switch;" the wooden sleepers are known as "ties;" the station is a "dépôt;" luggage is "baggage;" the guard is a "conductor;" and when he gives the signal to start, he shouts, "all aboard;" a passenger riding with a free pass is a "deadhead;" a commercial traveller is a "drummer;" a street carriage on hire is a "hack;" and the street tramway-cars are "horse-cars." If inquiry be made for a certain street, the reply will be, "Go so many blocks, and then turn to the right or left for so many blocks more." When trains meet at junctions without causing delay to the traveller, he is said to "make close connections;" a quick transit is grandiloquently described as "lightning express." The name of a well-known ribbed stuff, "corduroy," has been given in new clearings to a rough kind of road, consisting of loose logs laid across the swamp. A "plankroad" is formed of sawn deals, or boards of considerable thickness, laid even and close, cross-wise. Overshoes are invariably "rubbers," being an abbreviation of the name of the material. A rush of panic-stricken people is a "stampede," as in the case of cattle. In naming the State of Connecticut, the second "c" is never heard; and by many the State of Arkansas is pronounced as if the last syllable were "saw;" while, in New England pumpkins are invariably called "punkins;" and a person of note and wealth is said to be "some punkins." A New Englander will commence most of his sentences with

"Wal," for "well," and will pronounce "can" as if it were written "kin." He will talk of a "potato-patch," or a "wood-lot," or a "section of kintry," or will make inquiries about absent friends by asking, "How's the folks?" He is also fond of saying, "I guess," just as the people in the Northern states say, "I calc'late," and those of the South, "I reckon." A man who can do no more is described as "played out;" the odd jobs around the house are known as "chores;" any one out of health is said to be "sick," but if he suffers from actual vomiting he is "sick in the stomach;" a plot of land chosen for a dwelling is a "location;" anything specially approved of is "real good," or "real nice;" an attack of ague is "chills and fever;" and an attempt to force up or down prices of commodities is "a corner in pork, or in corn, or in oil." The issue of fictitious railroad stock for speculative or gambling purposes is known as "watering the stock," a term derived from the practice of Daniel Drew when a boy, who sold cattle by weight, and gave them salt to eat to induce thirst, and then let them drink copiously just before they were sold by live weight.

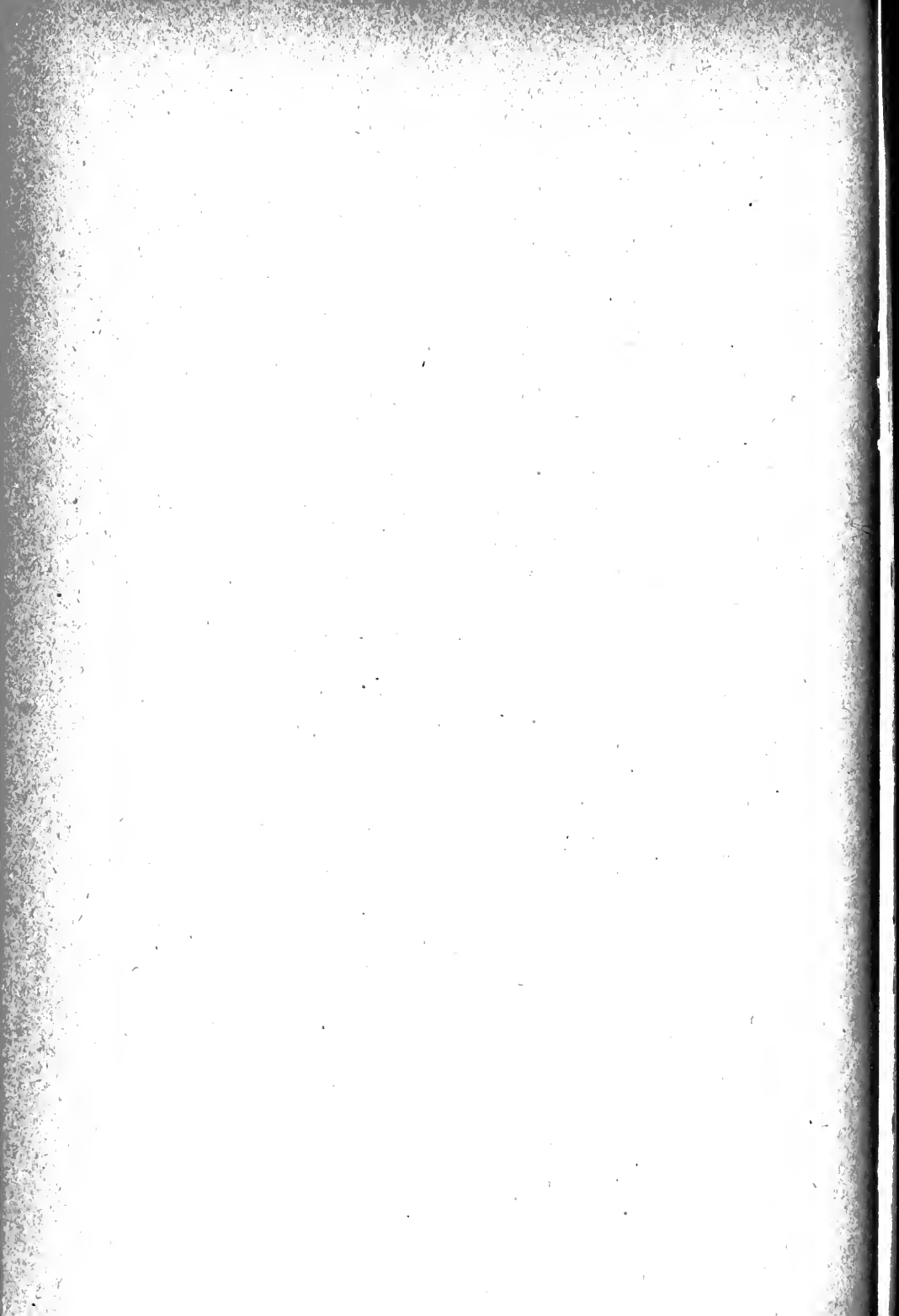
Trade has its own phraseology, as in England. A shop is a "store," and the different kinds of commodities are expressed by "clothing store," "dry-goods store" (*i.e.*, drapery, etc.), "drug store," "grocery store," "book store," and so forth; but a butcher keeps a "meat market," vegetables and fruits are obtained at a "vegetable store." To "make a pile" is to amass large profits. To "foot a bill" means an acceptance or promise to pay; while to "fill that bill," signifies that the person fully comes up to the description, or is able to accomplish what is undertaken. The uniform name for treacle is "molasses," and sweetmeats are "candies." One of the most popular confections is called "molasses candy." If an American is asked whether some one really did such and such a thing, and he wishes to emphasise his reply, he will probably say, "He didn't do anything else." Another intensive phrase is "at that;" probably an abbreviation of "added to that;" as, "He has an ugly wife, and a shrew at that;" the descriptive epithet in this case referring, not to ill-favoured features,

but to character and temper. "Ugly" is always employed in this sense, and not with reference to bad looks. A despicable person is stigmatised as "a mean cuss." If a remark is not clearly heard or understood, the speaker will be interrupted by an abrupt "How?" which is not meant to be rude, though it may appear so to a stranger. It is part of that brevity and point which characterise the American people, who, as a rule, have no time to waste, or who, at any rate, act as if the law of life was ceaseless hurry. Indeed, such phrases as "go ahead;" the "almighty dollar," and "hurry up," are significant indications of this nature. Another is to be found in the use of verbs in a peculiar sense, as, "to collide," "to enthuse," "to erupt," "to resurrect," "to knife," and many more. The burglar's crime has been designated "burglarizing;" when caught, he is "custodized;" and the news of his capture is promptly "itemized" by the penny-a-liner in the newspaper.

It must not be supposed that all the words and phrases quoted are in general use, though most of them are commonly met with; or that they are employed by good speakers and writers. Some of them, and many others that might be given, are unquestionably of English, Dutch, or German origin, although they have become obsolete in these countries, and are much corrupted in America. Many of the provincialisms of the Northern and Eastern counties of England have become naturalised in New England, as was to be expected. A similar transmission may be traced in Virginia through the settlers from the south-western counties of England. The primary meaning is sometimes intended, instead of, as in England, the secondary meaning which has come to be almost universal. Thus, to "admire," or "admire at," is good old English for "wonder," "Bright" means what we should call "clever," but that word, in America, denotes amiability and courtesy; whereas "amiable" applied to a man, is understood in a derogatory sense, as if he were stupid; and "cunning" is ingenious; but a "smart man" would act dishonestly if he could and dared. A "homely" person is one distinguished by great plainness of features. Land or property is spoken of as

likely to "appreciate" in value. The old English sense of nice, or excellent, still attaches to the word "curious," as used by New Englanders. "Fall" is our Autumn season, from the falling of the leaves, and is the revival of a word found in Dryden and other old writers. It is to be regretted that many rich, quaint, and expressive terms have fallen into disuse in England, although they are still employed in America, as might be easily proved, in addition to the instances already given, if this were a paper on philology. Yet many words, now in common use in the United States, belong to the category of cant and slang, which, unfortunately, are to be found in every country and in every age. The most fertile source of this in America is, undoubtedly, the lower class of newspapers, in which originate nearly all the colloquial inelegancies and downright vulgarities of speech. Any sudden excitement, any political event, any popular literary production, creates and gives currency to a number of vulgar words, which often have in them nothing but sound, or a fancied resemblance to the action or character supposed to be expressed. As Mr. Buckle once said, referring to the fondness of the English for burlesque phrases and nicknames, "Many of these words are but serving their apprenticeship, and will eventually become the active strength of our language." There is a morality in the use of speech, whether oral or written, as well as in character and in deeds.

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## WILD-FLOWERS OF ENGLISH SPEECH IN AMERICA

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BY EDWARD EGGLESTON

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*(From the Century Magazine)*

English in the year 1600, though enriched by the glorious group of writers of Elizabeth's reign, was still the speech of a people fond of the chimney-corner, and living shut in by their four seas. In the hundred years that followed, expanding commerce, and the planting of numerous English colonies on the mainland of America and in subtropical West India islands, subjected to a serious strain a language that had hardly ever before encountered the great world. A multitude of things had to be named that hitherto had been unknown and undreamed of even by the seers of the golden age of English imagination, and expressions were to be found for modes of life and action beyond the experience of Saxon or Norman. This exigency was met by taxing old phrases to their utmost through new applications, by giving new meanings and wider currency to provincial words, by borrowing from other European languages, and by plundering the dialects of the barbarians. Every new animal, new plant, new custom, demanded a new word, or, perhaps, a whole set of them. The settlers in different regions supplied identical deficiencies by different devices; and hence came many of the local variations in our American English. If we had the means of tracing the effect of similar crises at the period of Anglo-Saxon migration from the Continent, we might account in the same way for many of the local variations in the mother-English.

But to specific instances. Maize, even before it was cooked, required more than twenty words. The American settler never used the word *maize*, which is a West Indian name imported into book-English through the Spanish. To this day we do not say maize; our illiterate people have never heard it. To Europeans, whose only knowledge of the infidel world was derived from the long conflict with the Turks, all things from beyond Christendom seemed to come from the lands of the Mussulman. An idol was a "maumet"—that is, a Mahomet; a new fowl from America became a "Turkey-cock." In like manner early English comers, as Henry Hudson, for example, called the maize "Turkish wheat." The beans that were found here were called "Turkish beans" by the first Dutch and Swedish writers on America, and the French called maize at first *blé de Turquie*. And the Italians dubbed it *gran turco* or *grano saraceno*—Saracen grain. Even in Pennsylvania the Germans said *Turkisch corn*. Later, the French named it *blé d'Inde*, a name connected with the belief that America was India; and the English settler, accustomed to call all cereals "corn," simply distinguished it among the diverse species as "Indian corn," while all other cereals were called "English corn." (Clayton, the Virginia botanist, usually calls maize "Virginia wheat," but a writer of 1651 has it "Indian wheat.") The American colonists also spoke of their "English harvest" and their "Indian harvest." But in speech, labor-saving processes are ever in request. The New Englander sometimes saved his precious time by dropping the latter half of the new compound. To him Indian corn became "Indian," or, as Governor Winthrop wrote it, "Indean."

Later generations in the up-country have applied the word to the products of corn after cooking, with a somewhat cannibal result. The newcomer from another part of the country, when first he crosses the Connecticut River, is startled at being asked by an innocent-looking girl waiter in a village tavern if he will have some "fried Indian." Even after he grows accustomed to Indian fried, boiled, and baked, the incomer is puzzled by a compound familiarly



called in the hill-country "rine-injun," or "rye and Indian." The French furnishes a parallel to the New England "Indian"; the turkey-cock, from being a *coq-d'Inde*, has become a *dinde*, in the masculine a *dindon*; and what is *dinde* but Indian? And what is our "dandy" but a strutting turkey-cock?—a corruption, let me suggest, of the French *dindon*. In passing, it is worth remarking that in the German propositions made to the Mennonites by George I, turkeys are spoken of as "Indian cocks and hens."

South of New England in the region where maize is more at home, and later in New England also, the first half of the compound was dropped in common speech; and the most widely generic of all English words for a cereal is never used in America except to name a kind of corn unknown to our English ancestors, and hardly known now in England. For, in spite of the dictionaries, the generic sense of the word "corn" is quite lost with us except in rare literary use. In this change the fact that the first generations of English-Americans subsisted mainly on maize has embedded itself in our speech.

Few words in migrating to this country have traveled so far from English usage as "corn," though "meal" from the same historical cause is almost exclusively applied to the meal of Indian corn, the only exception being the compound "oatmeal." There are many other cases of transfer. The panther was long called a "tyger" in the Carolinas, and a "lyon" elsewhere. Our ancestors carried over the traditional sentiment and affection for the English robin to a red-breasted thrush. The brown thrush is called "brown thrasher" by our Northern country people, and was called "thrusher" by Captain John Smith in 1624. The French in Canada gave the name of *rossignol* to the song-sparrow. There are to-day many intelligent French-Canadians who will laugh at you if you try to convince them that the European nightingale does not sing on the St. Lawrence. No doubt the sweetness of the song-sparrow's note is much enhanced in the province of Quebec by the borrowed glory of his name. Some bird—not the mocking-bird—was called "nightingale" in Virginia in 1649, and Josselyn's descrip-

tion of the nightingale of the first New Englanders suggests the Baltimore oriole. In the matter of the American redbreast there seems to have been a suspicion that he was only an upstart robin, for in the North-country our farmers call this same mellifluous Baltimore oriole, "Old-England robin," a correction which must have been made early, and which is as wide of the mark as the original mistake. It may have been by the laxity of our early ornithologists that this same "oriole" got his name; now, by a curious pedantry, some of the dictionaries try to call him only "Baltimore bird," as though popular names once fixed could be changed to accord with scientific classification. There is one advantage about the new name, which is that the naturalists and the cyclopedias have it all to themselves; the "swinging-bird," as they call him in southern Indiana, will hardly cease to be an oriole because he is no longer an *Oriolus*. But let us come back to our "Indian." The blade, the stalk, the ear, were easily named from the homologous parts of English corn. No doubt many of the first-comers said "year" for "ear," as many of their descendants do to-day. The corruption is in the interest of euphony when the word is preceded by the definite article. It is worthy of remark that seed-leaves are called "ears" in the London Philosophical Transactions of the last century, and though etymologists track "ear" in its two principal senses to different sources, a fancied resemblance to the ears of an animal may have acted as an attraction in modifying the English name for an ear of wheat. If so, the resemblance was quite lost when applied to maize.

In the great maize region of the United States, green corn, whether raw or cooked, and whether cooked by roasting in front of the fire or by boiling, is called "roasting ears," shortened in pronunciation to *ro'sin-ears*. The word is in Beverly's "Virginia" (1705), and is current through the whole of the middle belt and the South. The pollen-bearing head of the plant, so graceful while it is green and pliant, was named the "tassel," and to this day our country people, when speaking of the male flower of the maize, preserve the broad vowel of their ancestors: "tossell"

it will remain in spite of the schoolmaster who ignorantly makes war on archaisms of speech. In De Brahm's "History of Georgia," the branches of a certain kind of pine are said to be "bare of Leaves except their Ends, where the Leaves go out in a Bunch and resemble a Tossell." It seems a matter for regret that this ancient orthography has not been retained for the head of the Indian corn. The pistillate flower of the maize, so different from anything ever seen before by the newcomers, was appropriately called the "silk," and these two names for the maize flowers indicate that the pioneers were not without a sense of the beauty of this highly ornamental plant.

But the ear probably puzzled them most, for, except the grains, the parts were very strange. To begin with, English furnished no name for the envelop with which the ear wrapped itself as an indispensable safeguard against drought, birds, and insects. Strachey, secretary to the Virginia colony when it was two years old, calls maize "poketaws," and says that "every ear groweth with a great *hose* about it." The first Dutch clergyman at Albany says that the Indians made shoes of the maize "leaves," by which his translator appears to understand the blades; but no one who knows anything about the Indian-corn plant or savage handicraft will doubt that it was of the "leaves" that envelop the ear that the Mohawks made shoes. So Father Lafitau tells us that the Hurons cooked the corn enveloped in the leaves (*feuilles*), by which I understand the shucks, or husks. I do not know that the French have any other word for the envelop today. (Do I not smile yet in remembering that in translating a story of mine, the "Revue des Deux Mondes" transformed a Hoosier corn-shucking through a whole chapter into a *vannage de blé*?) The Virginians applied to the "great hose" that enveloped the maize a provincial English word used for the covering of nuts, and "shuck" became the only name for the envelop in three fourths of the United States. In a limited region farther south the infelicitous word "corn-trash" is sometimes used for shucks. The people of New England took the authorized English word for many word for many

vegetable coverings, and called the ear-leaves "husks" and though the word is not used in this sense by the majority of American farmers, yet as the first poets were New Englanders, and as the early dictionary-makers had a cultivated ignorance of all parts of the country west of Hartford, "husk" won the lead in literary use, and its more respectable English descent will probably enable it to keep it. Since the irruption of Goths and Vandals from the West and South into metropolitan journalism and literature, "shuck" has found some recognition, and the boisterous "corn-shucking" demands a place alongside his younger, and perhaps more decorous, brother, the "husking-bee" of the Northeast. Both shuck and shucking may yet get into the dictionary carefully labeled "local U. S." Since I wrote this sentence the new "Century Dictionary," with its liberal treatment of Americanisms, has appeared, and "shuck" is there given as used in "parts of the United States." But "husk," not so labeled, is far more provincial in its area. About Lake George, where the speech of the people is rich in archaisms, I find "shuck" used, not for the corn-covering, but for the outer covering of the hickory-nut,—called here and in some other Northern districts "walnut." But the Lake Georgians do not, I believe, speak of "bean-shucks," as people do in parts of England. Perhaps, after all, the apparently American proverbial phrase, "not worth shucks," is older than Jamestown, for the shucks of Indian corn are the only shucks that are valuable. But to "shuck off one's coat" in order to "lick" a man "tell his hide won't hold shucks" smacks of those parts of the United States in which a man so threatened can "take to the tall corn" for concealment. Though the Virginians never "husk" their corn, a Virginia writer of 1666 talks of "unhusking" rice and barley. In the middle region and in the South, "mast," a good English word, is used for nuts considered as food for swine, squirrels, etc. In Coxe's "Carolana" (1722), it even occurs as a plural: "Acorns, chestnuts, and other masts." Among populations of New England derivation one often hears in this sense the word "shack, from the same root, doubtless, as "shake." In provincial English "shack" means the waste

of grain *shaken* upon the ground ; but in the old township or manor communities in England there were common "shack-lands," were the swine might feed on the acorns shaken down.

Husk is applied in the middle belt and in the South to the bran of corn-meal, the *husk* of the grain, a truly English use. In this sense the word has largely lost its final letter. It may have been docked long before it crossed the sea, and it has no final *k* in some other Teutonic languages. Only in Charleston, South Carolina, have I ever heard the corn-bran called "husk" with a *k*. The hard *k* is dropped in some other words in the speech of the common people. The past tense of ask often becomes "ast" and a New York newspaper of a hundred and sixty years ago informs its readers that this pronunciation was then common in York, England. In a particular life of Crockett which I saw in childhood, but of which I can find not a single copy existing to-day, "*huss*" occurs for the bran of corn-meal. The boy Crockett had visited an aunt who had treated him shabbily ; Davy, therefore, let loose his sylvan muse upon her.

She sifted the meal, she gimme the huss ;  
 She baked the bread, she gimme the crus' ;  
 She biled the meat, she gimme the bone ;  
 She gimme a kick, and sent me home ?

But Bartlett, whose book is untrustworthy for middle and Southern speech, is surely wrong in saying that "*huss-bran*" in Indiana is used for "cob." It is dangerous to assert a negative, but I doubt if the compound "*huss-bran*" is ever used by a Hoosier in any sense, nor have I ever heard it elsewhere. This definition appears to be a confused recollection of a fact which I stated in a newspaper article printed about 1869,—namely, that in one part, at least, of eastern Virginia, "hus" (always, so far as I know, without a trace of *k*) was used for the cob of Indian corn. I have heard a schoolboy threaten to throw "a corn-huss" at a companion, and I have heard a glossy-faced negro lad break out with : "Yeh betteh take yeah ! I smack yeh 'n de mouf widda cawn-hus' yeh doan shet up dattah foolin' roun'me."

This use of the word has, I believe, become obsolete since the civil war. If the use of "hus" for "cob" was common in the Virginia colony, we may infer that it was the name given very early to the spike on which the grains of Indian corn grow, though John Smith calls it only "the core of the ears." The empty spike of wheat or other grain with the chaff attached was probably called the "husk," or "hus'" in English rustic speech. I feel very sure that "cob" had some such use, for none of the numerous senses given to "cob" in dictionaries will account for its all but universal application by the colonists along the whole coast to the spike on which the grains of Indian corn grow. I find the expression "cobs of Indian corn" in Increase Mather's "Illustrious Providences."

It is always to be remembered that of the folk-speech of other times only the merest fragments have been preserved; in the loss of a great part of the old *lingua rustica* of England we have lost the pedigree or parts of the pedigree of many an important modern word. The general use of "nubbin" in the North, the South, and the middle country could probably be accounted for if we knew the old folk-speech better. Of course the colloquial word "nub" for knob, as in the saying, "That is the nub of the whole matter,"—the handle by which you grasp it,—gives us the clue, but the diminutive nubbin must have had a use kindred to its present application to a dwarfed ear. In Leicestershire speech it is "the stump of a tree," according to the vocabularies, and I doubt not it was applied to anything short, dwarfed, or stumpy. In order to catch the immigrant English tongue in the very act of shifting and adapting itself to new conditions, we cannot do better than to follow this row of Indian-corn words a little further. In New England the peculiar mode of fertilizing learned from the Indians introduced a new verb; the first-comers "fished" their corn ground, as our Northern mountaineers have made a new verb since the arrival of the Colorado potato-bug, and the use of its well-known antidote. A man tells me that he cannot work for me to-morrow because his potato-field must "be poison-greened right off."

But all of the processes were not so easily named. The late Charles Deane, one of the most learned and judicious of all our historical special students, once asked me whether the corn bought of Powhatan by the settlers was in the ear or shelled. All that I knew of Indian life by observation and reading led me to think that savages would never shell corn until they came to use it, but I had that day seen in "Spilman's Relation" that the Indians assembled to shell Powhatan's corn for him, and I reminded the historian of the passage. Mistakes come home to roost at bedtime; that night I remembered that my Lake George neighbors "shell" out their nuts when they take the "shucks" off them. It was probably only an Indian corn-shucking that Spilman was telling about. He called the taking of corn out of the husk "shelling" by analogy with the shelling of peas—that is, removing the shell. At a later time, perhaps, when the verb "to shuck" became established, the Virginians applied "shell" to rubbing the grains off the cob, because wheat, though not maize, is truly shelled—that is, taken from its shell—when removed from the cob or ear.

When once Indian corn was cooked, English analogues were not sufficient, and Indian names were given to dishes prepared after the method of the Indians. Hominy, samp, pone, succotash, and supawn are Indian names, but some of them are cut down from their polysyllabled aboriginal resonance. Only people with a great deal of leisure to be used up can afford to speak languages so high-stepping as those that flourished in the days of savage oratory and ceremony. The English split "wampumpeak" in twain, using here one section, and there another, for the Indian money. We use three fourths of an aboriginal word in "hickory," and one fourth of another in "squash," and our hominy is from the Indian *ustatahamen*. We have very naturally substituted "musk-rat" for *musquash*. Many of the old writers say "musk-cat," and our frontiersmen will have it "mush-rat," as an early Virginian naturalist wrote it. "Aroughcun"—to spell it in the form used by Captain John Smith (1624)—had already got to "raccoon" in the writings of Roger Williams (1643), though at a later period I find it

called "aroughena, a sort of badger." It is "roscone," "roacon," "arocoun," "racoun," and I know not what besides. It appears as "raccon" in "Josselyn" (1675), and as "raccoon" in Beverly's "Virginia" (1705); while Clayton says, "Rackoon I take to be a species of monkey." In folk-speech it is universally further cut down to "coon." I may be pardoned a wicked delight at finding that so austere an etymologer as Mr. Skeat considers "raccoon" "merely a singular corruption of the French *raton*," and cites his earliest example from a translation of Buffon, in 1792. But it is not to be expected that an English scholar would know anything about our early literature so long as professed philologists on this side of the sea manifest a remarkable ignorance of the origin of our indigenous words. Both Worcester and Webster trace raccoon to *raton*, in the face of Captain Smith's express declaration that *aroughcun* is the Indian name, and in this Smith is supported by Strachey. In view of the overwhelming evidence for its aboriginal origin, I can afford to give the advocate of the opposite opinion the benefit of the spelling "ratoon," which I find in Wilson's "Account of Carolina" (1682), and which only suggests that a mistake in its etymology may have been made very early.

American-English has been somewhat reluctant to borrow from the heathen. Even after maize is in the kitchen, we have the Virginia batter-head and ash-cake, the New England hasty-pudding, the mush of the country at large, besides other adaptations of old English words, or new compounds. The cake which the Indians baked on a hot stone was cooked in New England on a pewter plate, set half on edge before the fire; but the Southern pioneer's wife baked it on a hoe kept for the purpose, calling it a "hoe-cake." The name remained when the four-legged skillet had supplanted the hoe. "Corn-dodger" is a word whose origin is plain enough to any one who has seen a Kentucky cook toss a mass of dough rapidly from hand to hand to give it shape before dropping it into the skillet standing on the coals by the wide fireplace. In parts of North Carolina, however, the word is applied to a dumpling of Indian



corn, which dodges up and down in boiling. At most, maize brought only about half a dozen Indian words into permanent use; tobacco none from North American dialects for the name is West Indian, and was civilized before the English colonies had their beginning. When Raleigh introduced the practice of "sucking the smoke" of it, it was called *uppowoc*, a word brought from North Carolina; but this soon gave way to tobacco, known to the English by the translation of Monardes, before the plant had even been seen in England. With certain Indian articles, such as the tomahawk, the moccasin, and the wigwam, we have taken the names. The almost invisible but fierce little gnat that bedevils all travelers in Northern woods was called by the Lenni-Lenape *ponk*, which Loskiel renders "living ashes." Its bite is much like the stinging of a spark of fire, but the Indians, who were not less ingenious than white men in inventions to make etymology easy, had a pretty and marvelous fable to account for the name. From this Indian name it came that we call the creature a "punky"; the Algonkin word for ashes in Virginia was *punguy*, according to Strachey. The French softened the word to *pugin*. English race pride perhaps made the newcomers call the women and children of the savages by words out of their own tongues. — "squaws" and "papposes,"—much as they called a young bear a "cub" and not a baby; as they called a negro child a "piccaninny," from the Spanish *pequeno nino*, now shortened in South Carolina to "pickney." But the few Indian words that linger among us are all of the Algonkin stock, the family of Indian languages that skirted almost the whole coast, and that thus became known to the English before any others. No Indian words have come permanently into our speech for two hundred years—there are not so many now as there were in the seventeenth century. "Netop," for a friend, or crony, lingered locally in New England until a generation or two ago, as did "mugwump," in a sense different from its present application. In Virginia and Maryland "cockerouse," for captain, or leader, long remained, and in many places Indian salutations were often used by white people after

the Indians had disappeared. In Minnesota, in 1856, we called a moccasin a *hompoo*, and sometimes a house was a *teepee*; but the Dakota words have long since departed from the land of Minnehaha. Except in placenames, and in some generic geographical terms like *pokeloken*, *pocoson*, and *sepoose*, the Indian tongues vanished as utterly as the races that spoke them.

Considering its situation in a new world, American-English has been very conservative. It borrows almost nothing from the avalanche of European immigrants. The forerunners, when our communities were small, got in a few words, as names of things, such as *kraut* and *lager*. There are other German words, like *pretzel*, that linger in Pennsylvania, and some that survive in the States to the west of it. In parts of Indiana the cheese made by straining the whey from bonnyclabber is called "smear-case"; it is German, *Schmierkäse*, come in by way of Pennsylvania. So I have often heard a loose flannel or linsey-woolsey jacket called, on the Ohio River, a "wawmus," with a notion that it had something to do with "warm us." It is the German *wamms*, a doublet, without doubt. And the word "kittern," for a coat, used in one region of New Jersey, is no doubt akin to the German *kittel*, a smock-frock. "Delicatessen-store" is a hybrid used about New York city only. But our speech at large has hardly accepted from the millions of immigrant Germans so many words as it would require the fingers of one hand to count.

The Dutch, having the first chance at the metropolis, have left us hardly more words than the Germans. It is not quite certain that "stoop," for a porch and steps to a house, is of New York Dutch origin. In Stow's "Survey of London" (1633) one finds that it is forbidden to encroach on the public grounds "by land or water, as in walls, pales, stoopes, grieces, doores or cellers." It is of course possible that "stoopes" may here be used in a sense very different from our New York word, for in the humorous old ballad of "Our Gudeman," the wife, sheltering a rebel,

affects to deceive her husband, whose suspicions are aroused by the sight of a pair of jack-boots She declares :

It 's but a pair o' water-stoups  
 The cooper sent to me.  
 ' Water-stoups ! ' quo' he ;  
 " Ay, water-stoups, " quo' she.

That many so-called Americanisms are but survivals of old or provincial English was pointed out by Dr. Belknap in 1792. Later writers on the subject have traced still further the ancient and respectable character of words now forgotten in England, and regarded as interlopers in the home from which they came. But few know how many old English and provincial words brought to this country by our ancestors went down in the struggle for existence under new conditions. The second generation of English colonists were naturally inferior to the first-comers in education, and their vocabulary grew smaller. But the chief loss in colloquial words came from the falling out of use of the things represented by them. The "peale" and the "slyce" appear in early Connecticut inventories; the words have many meanings, and so eminent an authority as Dr. Trumbull explains both of them by fire-shovel. I am inclined to think, however, that the Connecticut "peale" was the oven-peel, the *pelle à four* of the French, a shovel for putting bread into the ancient oven. Miegé's folio "Great French-English Dictionary" of 1788, which is valuable because it is a non-literary work—a veritable "dictionary of the vulgar tongue," and often a dictionary of the vulgarest tongue—so defines peel, and it gives "slice" the sense of *friquet*, "a kind of square skimmer for taking things from a frying-pan." More than one writer of local history, from lack of acquaintance with kitchen-civilization in the fireplace stage, has missed the mark in trying to explain the ancient use of trivet, and the lexicographers are equally astray. In the Southwest, no doubt, one might find the article itself to-day just as I remember it—a little three-legged iron stand on the hearth to uphold

the coffee-boiler or the pipkin while live coals were underneath.

Perhaps no word in the old inventories, accounts, and statutes of the colonial age has made more confusion than the word "plate." Taxes were levied in "ounces of plate," accounts were kept in "plate," the value of paper money was specified in "plate," the salaries of royal governors were sometimes fixed in "ounces of plate," and the word is used by governors in their reports to the Lords of Trade, and it appears in royal proclamations and acts of parliament. Yet no general dictionary, English or American, that I have seen gives any definition that makes clear this use of the word. The first light upon it came to me in a phrase in a New York law of 1720, which fixes the value of currency bills in "Sevil, Pillar or Mexico plate." These designations belong to coins of Spain and her dependencies. Further collation made it pretty clear that in the reign of Queen Anne plate was used generally for Spanish coined silver. In one provincial act "coined plate" is specified. One reads of "round plate-silver buttons" in England at the same time; the buttons may have been made of Spanish coins, or perhaps it is intended to designate them as of the fineness of these coins—"coin silver," as we should say. "Plate" was usually, but not always, of the same fineness. Sir Isaac Newton, in the computation on which Queen Anne's money proclamation of 1704 is based, assigns two values to "Sevill" pieces of eight, according to whether they were "old plate" or "new plate." Halliwell gives "plate" among his "archaic and provincial words," but defines it by "illegal silver money, but often applied to money generally." This definition would give no sense to Sir Isaac Newton's "old plate" and "new plate" for Spanish coins of varying fineness; nor do I find in American documents that any but Spanish silver is ever intended by it; the "Lyon dollars" of Holland, called in ancient slang "dog dollars," are separately named in the same sentences with plate, and their value relative to plate specified. I think Halliwell has confused this sense of plate with a kindred one, which I find in no

dictionary but the "Imperial" and its successor, the "Century." Both quote from Marlowe :

Belike he has some new trick for a purse ;  
And if he has, he 's worth three hundred plates.

Marlowe had in mind not coins generally, but some coin of a value well understood ; it was no doubt the Spanish "piece of eight"—the once familiar large round dollars of "Seville, Mexico, Peru and Flanders." It is to this that Judge Sewell refers in his diary in 1710, where he sets down the cost of a child's coffin at "10 plates." I remember looking on in boyish wonder while some hundreds of these old dollars were counted in columnar piles about the floor and upon the chairs. The word was too picturesque for Shakspeare to miss ; Cleopatra, in her exaggeration of Antony's imperial glory, says :

Realms and islands  
Were as plates dropt from his pocket.

Richardson quotes these very lines without suspecting the true sense and derivation of the word. The double sense of the word plate necessitated the use of an adjective, and the widow of Hull, the first Massachusetts mint-master, was allowed one half of all the "wearing plate ;" by which I suppose the household plate, in distinction from Spanish coin, was intended.

In Increase Mather's "Illustrious Providences"—a magazine of perils and horrors—a thunderbolt is described, "that brake one of the needles of the katted or wooden chimney." Here are words unknown to the dictionary. I suppose this wooden chimney to be what exists yet, in many belated regions, as the "stick chimney," built up of split sticks and daubed with clay ; the "needles" were, perhaps, props or stakes to support it, or the sticks of which it was built, for in the east of England a needle is "a piece of wood put by the side of a post to strengthen it," says Halliwell. But why katted ? We might cheaply derive it, as other words with this sound are derived, from the French *quatre*, four, because it is four-cornered, or four-

sided, if other chimneys were not also usually four sided. None of our lexicographers give "cat-a-cornered" (sometimes, "cat-a-corner-ways"). "Cater-cornered" is given as "local English and United States." But does anybody in this country say cater-cornered? Worcester gives "catty-cornered" in a bashful note in small type. Halliwell derives "cater-cornered" from *quatre*, through the provincial "cater," to cut diagonally. But why go so far? Might not "catter-cornered" be only a corrupt "quarter-cornered"—that is, quartered by lines through the corners instead of in the more usual way, by lines at right angles to the sides? This etymology seems to be confirmed by a curious bit of folk-speech in the upper-Hudson country. Our people, in sawing or nailing anything at an angle other than a right angle, do not place it or cut it "quartering,"—which is the recognized technical term,—but "cattering." I am told that in parts of Vermont "cattering" is used in the sense of bias. For "cattering there is a ludicrous diminutive much oftener used in my neighborhood—namely, "kittering"—that is, somewhat cattering; for is not a kit a little cat?

Before leaving this litter of cat-words, let me suggest that the "cat-stick" noted by Mr. Lowell as meaning a small stick, may have come from the "needles" of the katted chimney, and not from the game of "cat-stick." There is a game of ball played with bats called simply "cat"—sometimes "two-hole cat," "three hole cat," and so on; or, "two old cat," "three old cat," in the East, according to the number of holes, or bases. A passage in "Thalia's Banquet," by Henry Peacham (1620), which Halliwell refers to cat-stick, I have no doubt marks the antiquity of the game of "cat."

"Take them who dares at nine-holes, cardes, or cat." I do not know that "nine-holes" is ever played in America, but Lake George people say of a lucky man, "He has got into the nine-hole."

To come back to cats once more, why should the dictionaries give the go-by to the child's structure of "cat-stairs"? And why *cat*-stairs, and not dog-stairs? Because a cat

climbs, or from the French *quatre* because four-sided? Why not rather because each of the three-cornered steps, or stairs is made "kattering," as a Lake George carpenter would say. And this may throw light on the cater-cup spoken of by a writer in the Marprelate controversy. Think it trifling, if you will, but let me note that the play which I knew in Indiana half a century ago as "Pussy wants a corner," is played differently here in northern New York: the players in the corners calling to one another, "Kit catty-corner, you run, and I'll go." This may be but a corruption of "Kit catch a corner," for the play is known in England, if I am not mistaken, as "catch corner." There are people who think that catter-corner, or catty-corner, comes from the play; but it would grieve an etymologist to confess a derivation so simple; and it is more likely that the game itself has become corrupted by the familiar phrase "catty-cornered," or that the "pussy," in one form, and the "catch-corner" in another, is a misapprehension of the sense of "catty-corner" in the third.

Writers of a non-literary character are much more likely to betray the secrets of the mother-tongue than those who adhere to the conventions recognized by men of letters. Colonial records and books, and the writings of travellers and others about the colonies, would furnish us many curious words if etymologists did not contemn such American sources. "Gripe," a drain or ditch, is in the records of Newark; "most-an-end," for chiefly, I find in Lechford and Josselyn; "towing-sheets," that is, *towen* sheets, or sheets of linen, in the Connecticut records. "Store" for a great quantity is used by many old writers, but "store-hogs" for hogs kept for stock I find only in the Connecticut records. It is in common use in northern New York, and I doubt not, in parts of New England, and is used in Australia in the phrase "store-cattle," that is, cattle for breeding, not for fattening, as in "The Century Dictionary"—the only one in which I find the word.

In one of the witch stories by which Increase Mather unwittingly sowed seed for his son's Salem harvest, "the feeting of cattle," that is, cattle-tracks, are found between

the corn-rows where no cattle have been. But in parts of New Hampshire the women speak of "selling feeting," that is, of disposing of the stockings they have knitted.

"Lean-to" is given as provincial in England; I have seen it in a circular printed in London in 1886. In New England and the whole Northern region, the sloping, shed-like addition to a main building, whether house or barn, is in rustic speech called the "linter," or "lenter," and the pronunciation is as old as the settlement of the Northern colonies. I find it in the earliest writings "linter," "lenter," and "leantor," as well as "lenetoe." So prevalent and ancient is "linter," that if there were any very reasonable way of deducing it from the root of our lintel and the French *linteau*, I should be inclined to think "lean-to" a form growing out of a mistake in derivation. "Reach," or "reaches," was anciently applied to the isthmus connecting a peninsula with the mainland, or "fast-land," as it was sometimes termed—as the "reaches of Nahant." An entire peninsula was commonly called a "neck," and this along the whole coast, from Lynn Neck in Massachusetts, past Cow Neck on Long Island, down to the Northern Neck of Virginia, and farther yet to Charleston Neck in South Carolina. A similar use of the word exists in the Mississippi valley: a peninsula almost inclosed by the meandering of a stream is pretty sure to be named "Horseshoe Neck," and any neighborhood is referred to in proverbial slang as "this neck of woods."

I suspect the attraction of a false etymology in the name of the great vulture of our Southern country. The buzzards familiar to the English were of the falcon family, and it could hardly have been easy to transfer the name to a great raven-colored carrion-eater, as "robin" was transferred to the red-breasted thrush. But the French explorer called our great vulture *dindon bâtard*, the "bastard turkey-cock," as some bird was called a "bastard plover" in the Regulations for Henry VIII. 's household. *Dindon bâtard* was a very descriptive name, since no doubt newcomers often mistook the vulture for the wild turkey. I have myself innocently carried home a pair of its eggs to hatch



wild turkeys from. It would be very easy for an English explorer familiar with the name "buzzard" to misrender the French name into "turkey-buzzard," especially if the *s* still lingered in the word *bâtard* as pronounced by the *voyageur* of the seventeenth century. It is remarkable that Coxe in his "Carolana" (1722) appears to call this bird "bustard," and Clayton called it "turkey-bustard," a name sometimes given to the European bustard. But as early as 1676 Glover, in the "Transactions of the Royal Society," speaks of "turkie buzzards."

It will be interesting if, in scanning the writings of our forefathers, we can catch some word in process of change—a caterpillar butterflying himself. There are ornaments of the bead family worn by ladies down to our own time which are called "bugles." Some etymologists derive this from *bugolus*, or *bugulus*, a Low Latin word of similar meaning. In 1705 Beverly of Virginia described the Indian wampum beads as "commonly much resembling the English *buglas*, but not so transparent, nor so brittle." If we may accept the Low Latin origin of the word, we should here have *bugulus* half way to bugles. But why *buglas*, and not *buglus*? Probably because people two hundred years ago thought that the termination had to do with the glass of which they were then coming to be made. "Sparrow-grass" for asparagus is at least as old as the time of Queen Anne, and I find it called "sparragras" in Bullock's "Virginia" in 1649, and "sparagus" is used by Hammond about the same period.

There is a vegetable mentioned as existing in Pennsylvania in 1682 which puzzles me. "Gallivances and potatoes" are there coupled together. In "A Complete Discovery of the State of Carolina" (1682) a list is made of several sorts of "pulse," of kinds known in Europe that were grown in the colony, to wit: "Beans, Pease, Callavance, Figdlaes, and Bonavist." "Callavance" in Carolina is doubtless the "gallivances" of Pennsylvania. "Pulse" was, in olden time, a vague word. Bailey defines it: "All sorts of grain contained in hoods, husks, or shells," while Richardson, mistaking the derivation, says that it was any

kind of fruit that was pulled, and not cut ; but its ancient meaning was probably pottage, and it included at length all herbs used in making pottage. "Callavance" may have been a polite name for pumpkin, from the Spanish *calabaza*. (I suppose it would be as hard to say why the Spanish woman who jilts a lover "gives him pumpkins," or gourds (*calabazas*), as to tell why young men in this country get the "mitten," or, as our country people often say, "the sack," whence also they have a verb, as "she sacked him.") After considerable search, I have concluded not to deprive the reader of the pleasure of guessing out for himself the meaning of "figdlaes and bonavist." I will not, however, intimate that "every school-boy" knows what they are.

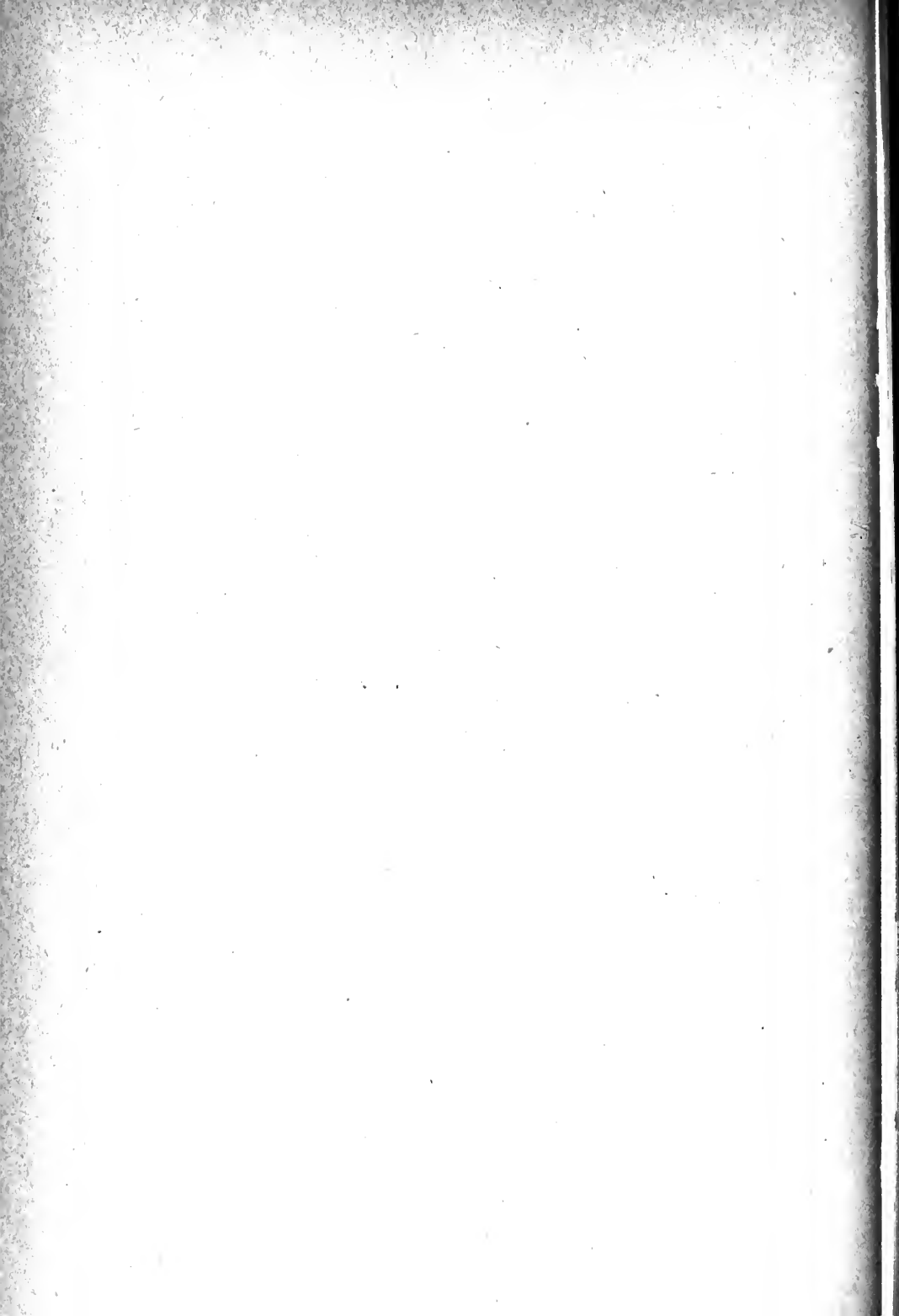
Nor, perhaps, would even Macaulay's school-boy be able to tell us who were the "common coasters" put under the ban in Massachusetts in 1633. That they "spent their time idly" is evident from the records, and they are coupled with such vagrants as unsuccessful bird-hunters and reprobates who smoked pipes, or, as the records put it, "Unprofitable fowlers and tobacco takers." The "common coasters" may have been, but probably were not, men who practised sliding down snowy hills; they probably were aquatic vagrants who lived where the Indian was born, "at Cape Cod, Nantucket and all along the shore." "To coast" in flat-boatman's phrase is to peddle a cargo to the French planters on the lower Mississippi, a region always called "the coast,"—no doubt a corruption of the French *côte*. And what shall I say in exegesis of the Connecticut settler's will, which directs that whatever is lacking to pay a certain debt may be made up "out of the Loder"? As a small vessel is a principal article of property in this will, I think "loder" is here the same as "lodship," a small fishing-craft. In this use, whatever its root, it had perhaps come to have a sense the converse of our "lighter." It was, I suppose, a boat that, running into shallow water, brought down, little by little, a cargo for the sea-going vessel, and thus was a "loader," and perhaps the same that I find elsewhere styled "roader." I doubt if the old

word "lodeship" were not, also, from the verb to load instead of from the "Anglo-Saxon" parentage to which it has been assigned, and which makes it sister to lodestar and lodestone.

This recreation of word-hunting is something more than mere mental play, since it gives us glimpses into the life of other times, and even helps us now and then to "peek"—an Americanism akin to the old English "pike" in the same sense—through the chinking at the human mind in its mysterious workshop. But no recreation will bear pushing too far at one time, and though hundreds of curious examples of word-usage among our "fore-elders," as they call them in Yorkshire, remain behind, and though I have hardly touched the folk-speech of to-day, it is time to desist: only a vulgar pot-hunter would bag all the game in one excursion.

But if any reader, enjoying this study of the evolution of words, will have me, let me commend him to my master in the sport, who many years ago gave the heartiest encouragement to my earliest essays in this direction. From Mr. Lowell the reader will get better than I can give. In the preface to the second series of Biglow Papers one finds a rare combination of linguistic knowledge with careful observation of living speech, the humor indispensable to the study of popular usage united to a clairvoyant intellect. And nowhere does Lowell's prose show to better advantage than in that essay in which it manages to retain a characteristic vivacity while playing packhorse to so much lore.

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## THE PHILOLOGY OF SLANG

BY E. B. TYLOR

(From *Macmillan's Magazine*)

Slang, despised and ignored till lately by the lexicographers, is a genuine and influential branch of speech. It is one of the feeders of what may be called standard language, which with little scruple adopts and adapts the words it happens to want, whether from the technical terms of shopmen and artisans, or out of the quaint vocabularies of costermongers and prize-fighters, schoolboys and fops. This practical importance entitles it to be treated linguistically, like any other working dialect. Nor is its theoretical value inconsiderable to the student. Like other dialects, slang is developed according to the general laws of language, and very striking are some of its illustrations of those laws. Many a philological hint may be gleaned from the talk of factories and stables, music-halls and thieves' kitchens and pawnbrokers' shops, which would be more hardly sought from the super-refined English of the school-room. My present task, *experimentum in corpore vili*, is to choose a few typical examples out of the multitude of slang words in the published vocabularies, \* and to treat them

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\* Among the special dictionaries of Slang here used, are Mr. J. C. Hotten's "Slang Dictionary," (London, 1865); New Ed. 1874 (Chatto and Windus); Captain Grose's "Classical Dictionary of the Vulgar Tongue" (London, 1785, and recently reprinted); and Mons. Francisque-Michel's "Etudes de Philologie comparée sur l'Argot" (Paris 1836). There are many slang words in Mr. J. O. Halliwell's "Dictionary of Archaic and Provincial Words" (4th ed., London 1860); Dr. A. Hoppe's "English-Deutsches Supplement Lexikon" (Berlin, 1871) Mr. J. R. Bartlett's "Dictionary of Americanisms" (Boston, 1859); and Prof. Schelle de Vere's "Americanisms" (New York, 1872).

etymologically in groups, so as to display in each group a philosophical principle, or the operation of a common cause.

Like other dialects, slang increases its store of words by formation at home and adoption from abroad. Looking at its newly-created words first, we shall meet with good cases of a principle which it is really worth while to impress on English philologists—namely, that English is a language in a freely growing state, and capable of adding to itself by almost any process found in any language of the whole world, old or new. Thus, taking examples only from slang, we find operating in modern as in præ-historic ages that elementary process of language, the use of direct imitations of sound to form grammatical words (namely, substantives, adjectives, adverbs, and even full verbroots). Such are *chink* for money, *hubble-bubble* for a hookah, to *hum and haw* for to hesitate, to *te-he* for to titter (“upon this I *te-he’d*,” writes Madame d’Arblay), and *tantwivy*, an imitation of the hunter’s horn, used to mean at full speed (“Away they went *tantwivy*”). There are also good cases of this modern primitive speech to be found in the French *argot*. A puppet is there called a *bouisbouis*, which imitates the well-known squeak of the Punch-and-Judy man. An omnibus is called an *aie-aie*, from the shout which hails it, like the old French term *hay-hay*, the fine levied on those who disturbed the public peace by an outcry in the night. How long ago the natural interjection *fi! fi!* became an adjective, may be seen in the name of “maistre *fifi*” given to the scavengers in an official ordinance of 1350, “De l’estat des vuidangeurs appelez maistres *FIFI*.” The next stage in the origin of language is also represented by slang, where it takes from ordinary speech words which are direct imitations of sound, and turns them to fresh use; thus comes the verb to *fie-fie*—*i.e.* to scold; to *puff*, in the sense of advertising; such terms as *bang-up*, *bang-full*; or such a noun as *ticker* for a watch (French *tocquante*).

The abbreviation or contraction of words, a most effective agent in the development of language, is to be seen at its best in slang. Thus *cab* from *cabriolet*, *bus* from *omnibus*,

*mob* from *mobile*, "the fickle crowd," were originally slang formations, in which primary stage a mass of others remain waiting their promotion; *cure* for *curiosity*, *tench* for *penitentiary*, *sal* for *salary*, *rad* for *radical*, *rit* for *ritualist*, &c. So in French, *démoc*, *soc*, *réac*, are short for three kind of politicians, while *es* and *jar* stand for *escroc* and *jargon*. North American Indians, or Tatars, can hardly run a sentence into a word more polysynthetically than we can, as witness the names of the *hugmeclose*, which is a towl's merrythought; the game of *knockemdowns* played at fairs and races; the fly-papers which streetboys sell under the name of *catchemalivos*, and that general category of things known as *whatdycallens*. It is true that, as to this class of words, our language is much governed by what Dr. Latham aptly calls printer's philology. By a liberal use of hyphens and apostrophes, the printer does in a measure succeed in preventing the full agglutination of such compounds as the above, type thus setting asunder what speech has joined together. So in French, the humorous compound word for an old clothes' shop, a *décroche-moi-ça*, is cut up by hyphens. But some similar formations are left whole, such as *castus* for a hospital, from the doctor's first question, *Qu'as tu?* So the name by which Franz Schubert, the composer, went among his companions was "Kanevas," because of his habit of asking, when he met a man for the first time, "Kann er 'was?"—"What can he do?" Indeed, various words of the same class have come into polite language without being vivisected; such as *affaire*, *affair* (though we divide the English equivalent word, a *to-do*); Italian *saltimbanco*, *montimbanco*, whence French *saltimbanque*, English *mountebank*—that is, simply a "mount-on-the-bench." As if in facetious rivalry of the old Semitic type of language, slang shows an absurd desire to vary its internal vowels. The Winchester schoolboy feels bound in honour to adopt the traditional school dialect, which indeed forms part of the now famous *notions* he must come up for examination in, on pain of *tunding*; one great rule of this jargon is to mispronounce vowels, to call a *twist*-marked stick a *twoster*, a *tallow*-candle a *tolly*, a *chance* a *chintz*, to *sweat* (in the sense of hard work at lessons) to

*swot*, and an *umbrella*, a *brolly*. (The two last have even strayed beyond the college precincts, and been taken up into the general *copia verborum* of English slang.) As for the old English "strong perfect," the tendency of common English to fall away from it has been met by a contrary tendency in slang, especially of the American school, to revive and imitate it; so that while common folks will say *heaved* and *laughed*, rather than *hove* and *lugh*, the facetious classes find an evident pleasure in remarking that it *snew* hard, that the preacher *praught* full forty minutes, or the young man *arrove* and *squoze* tenderly his beloved's hand. Lastly, as might be expected, slang shows examples of difficult or unfamiliar words being altered into shapes better suited to the vulgar ear. Some of these come down to the stupidest jingles, such as *nine-shillings* for *nonchalance*, or *jemmy-john* for *demi-john*, a large wicker-cased bottle, as though this word had not suffered enough already in its transition from Arabic *damagan*, itself taken from the Persian glass-making town of *Damaghan*. Some of these altered words, however, are fitted to new sense, with a touch of humor; such are *have-his-carcase* for *habeas corpus*, and *roratorios* and *uproars* for *oratorios* and *operas*.

In slang, however, as in other dialects, increase is comparatively seldom made by such new creation and altering of words as have just been instanced. The hundredfold more effective means is to take ready-made words and adapt them skilfully to new ideas. For this end, slang uses freely the grammatical devices of general language. To describe a horse as a *prauncer* (a *prigger* of *prauncers* is old thieves' cant for a horse-stealer); a foot as a *trotter* (French, *trottin*); a feather as a *volante*; a biscuit as a *cassant* (like the modern American *cracker*); and the earth as the *produisante*, shows a kind of verbal formation quite after the manner of the Sanskrit dictionary. The converse formation in English is even more instructive, as carrying our minds back to a primitive state of language in which there was little distinction between parts of speech, and any word could be conjugated; for instance, to *knife* is to stab; to *ford out* was originally a kind of pocket-picking by sticking in



two straight fingers forkwise ; to be *cornered* is to be hemmed in a corner ; to be *fullied* is to be fully committed for trial ; to be *county-courted* is to be *summoned*, or to use the exactly descriptive slang term, *summonsed*, *i. e.* served with a *summons* in the *County Court*. Some of the slang adjective-substantives are well-choosen : a *hardy* for a stone, a *fimsy* for a banknote, *milky ones* for white linen rags ; French *dure* for iron, *basse* for the earth, *curieux* for a judge, and *incom-mode* for a lantern ; Italian *dannoso* (the dangerous) for the tongue, *divoti* (the devout ones) for the knees, *perpetua* (the everlasting) for the soul. Thence we come to trope and metaphor, which slang uses much, and often with fair skill. Of course, the case is one of "natural selection." Burlesque-writers, and thimble-riggers, the chaff-grinders of the club smoking-room and the cab-stand, are forever at work on new epithets and similes ; but the percentage of such that even slang will accept and give currency to is infinitesimal —not one success to a thousand failures. The public is, on the whole, no bad judge of point and humour ; and the word or phrase which it thus admits to public life is apt to have its little merits. No one without an ear for a joke would have given to that dirty fluff which gathers on undusted furniture the names of *beggar's velvet* or *slut's wool* ; would have described a rogue set on high in the pillory as an *overseer*, and slave-trading as *black-bird-catching* ; would have applied the expressive term of *horse-godmother* to "a large masculine woman, a gentlemanlike kind of a lady ;" would have named a publican an *ale-draper* or a *beggarmaker*, or solemnly entitled a pack of cards "*The History of the Four Kings ; or, Child's Best Guide to the Gallows.*" There is something neat in the use of the word *granny*, to signify conceit of superior knowledge and importance, as in the remark quoted by Mayhew, "to take the *granny* off them as has white hands." Any one who has watched the tiny girls sent on errands in city streets, stretching up on tiptoe to reach a knocker high above their heads, will appreciate the term "*up to the knocker,*" as describing one well up to his work, or dressed out in the height of fashion. A man is said to marry for *love* who has no fortune with h's wife ; and in

this way the word *love* has come to be equivalent to "nothing." Not only is the phrase used "to play for *love*," but the billiard-marker reckons by it as a numeral in scoring the game, *five-love*, *eight-love*, &c. It was butcher's slang to call the heart, liver, and lights the *pluck*, as being *plucked* out together; then courage came to be called *pluck*, till now everybody talks of *pluck* and *plucky*; and why not indeed?—for they have as good a right to exist as *heart* and *heartily*. There is no need to explain why to *peel* means to strip, why a *'tater trap* is a mouth, why to be *floored* and *gravelled* (French *terrassé*) is to be knocked down metaphorically as well as materially, to die in a *horse's nightcap* is to be hanged, and to be *planted* by the parson is to be buried. A policeman being called a *blue-bottle*, by mere inversion a blue-bottle receives the name of a *policeman*. A crown and a half-crown are known among London cabmen as a *hind-wheel* and a *fore-wheel*, as in Paris a *roue de derrière* and a *roue de devant* are a 5f. and a 2f. piece; so the name of *red rag* for the tongue is French *chiffon rouge*, and "balancer le *chiffon rouge*" is to talk; the French give the name of *accroche-cœur* to the hook-like little curl which Germans call a *buben-trätzerlein*, and English a *beau-catcher*. There is a whole sarcastic homily implied in calling a finger-post by the wayside a *parson*, in that he showeth other men the way they should go, but goeth not himself. Slang is hard on the parson in various ways. He is known as a *devil-driver* or *devil-scolder*, otherwise as the *ungrateful man*, inasmuch as once a week, at least, he abuses his best benefactor, the Devil.

The record of time-honoured jests preserved in Slang Dictionaries must sometimes interfere with good stories of more modern date. Thus with the following famous passage in Carlyle's "Life of Sterling:"—"I have heard one trait of Sterling's eloquence, which survived on the wings of grinning rumour, and had evidently borne upon Church Conservatism in some form: "Have they not?"—or, perhaps it was, "Has she (the Church) not?"—"a black dragoon in every parish, on good pay and rations, horse-meat and man's meat, to patrol and battle for these things?"

Very likely, as Carlyle says, the *black dragoon* "naturally at the moment ruffled the general young imagination into stormy laughter;" but the joke was somewhat elderly, for in Grose's Dictionary, long before Sterling was born, "a review of the *black cuirassiers*" it set down as slang for a visitation of the clergy. The same classical authority (its date is 1785) sets down *Turkey merchant* as slang for a poulterer. I must leave it to more precise antiquaries to settle the question whether the story can be true that Horne Tooke (who was born in 1736) made this joke for the first time when he went to school, and the Eton boys asked him the awful social question, "What's your father?"

It used to be a common habit of etymologists, when a word was troublesome, to alter it a little, so as to put sense into it—to do, in fact, with scientific pretension just what we have noticed the coestermongers doing for colloquial purposes. One of these clever scholars (the great mistake of philologists lies in being too clever) was puzzled that a *Welsh rabbit* should mean a piece of toasted cheese, so he decided that it must be a corruption of *Welsh rare-bit*. The public believed him, and took to spelling it accordingly, so that even now the best edition of Webster's Dictionary (Bell and Daldy's) gives it as "properly *Welsh rare-bit*." Now, the whole of this is stuff and nonsense; the very name *rare-bit* is a fiction, and *Welsh rabbit* is a genuine slang term, belonging to a large group which describe in the same humorous way the special dish or product or peculiarity of a particular district. For examples: an *Essex stile* is a ditch, and an *Essex lion* a calf; a *Field-lane duck* is a baked sheep's head; *Glasgow magistrates*, or *Gourock hams*, or *Norfolk capons*, are red herrings; *Irish apricots* or *Munster plums* are potatoes; *Gravesend sweetmeats* are shrimps; and a *Jerusalem pony* is a donkey.

Puns produce odd new terms, as when the old hangman's machinery of cart and ladder was superseded by the "drop," and the appreciating crowd spoke of its being *autumn* with the criminal, meaning the *fall of the leaf*; or, to take a pleasanter instance, when a vamped-up old shoe came to be called in France a *dix-huit*, as being *deux fois*

*neuf*. The slang-dealer likes wrapping up his meaning in a joke for his customer to unwrap, generally finding something unpleasant inside. You want your money back from him, and he offers a *draught* on Aldgate pump; you confess yourself a fool for trusting him, and he blandly recommends you to go to Battersea (famous for its herb-gardens) to have your *simples* cut. Puns on names of places are a class by themselves. To be off to *Bedforshire* or to the *Scilly Isles* requires no explanation; a *Greenlander* is a novice, and to have a holiday at *Peckham* is to go without your dinner. Just so in France, "aller à *Versailles*" is to be upset, a dunce has "fait son cours à *Asnières*;" and it is a recognized hint of sending a man about his business to promise him a prebend in the Abbey of *Vatan*. Not to dwell on this rather poor stuff, we may look next to the relics of history in slang words which have their origin in the name of some person or place, or carry the record of some event, custom, or idea.

Some of these historical derivations are modern and familiar, such as the names of the *bobby* or *peeler*, or the phrase of *burking* an unpleasant subject. It is not so generally known that there was a General *Martinet*, who left his name to other strict disciplinarians; that the iron door or blower of a stove used to be called a *sacheverel*, after the famous blower of the coals of dissension in Queen Anne's time; that the spotted blue and white neckerchief still called a *belcher* bears the name of a famous prize-fighter; and that the hoisting apparatus called a *derrick*, which ship-builders use in masting vessels, is so styled from a noted hangman, named *Derrick*, the Calcraft of the seventeenth century, whose name passed to this gallows-like machine. The vagrant's word *bastille* for a union work-house; the common name of *Billingsgate* for foul language; and the verb to *chivey*, from the boys' game of *Chevy Chase*, are pieces of obvious history. Others are not so obvious. Thus the thieves' jargon, which describes people in church as "*hums* in the autem," belongs perhaps to the days when the congregation still applauded a favourite preacher with a *hum*; "*the devil to pay, and no pitch hot*" is not the

sheer nonsense landmen make of it, for it applies to a certain seam called by sailors the "devil" for its awkwardness to caulk; the word *cockshy* keeps up a record of the once popular sport of throwing with cudgels at live cocks; and *cock-and-bull-story*, a term now applied to any silly rambling tale, illustrates the contempt which fell on the ancient beast-fables, the very delight of mankind in the lower grades of civilization all round the globe. Many words of this class, had not their origin been noted down by people who happened to know them, might have remained in language thenceforth as undecipherable mysteries. No doubt there are such historical words with lost origins in all languages, which consideration may serve to warn philologists against their besetting sin of expecting to find the etymology of everything.

The purists, conservators of English undefiled, to their best to keep out of the language of literature and polite society the low-lived words which slang brings forth. With praiseworthy sternness they elbow back these linguistic pariahs, when they come up from their native gutter to struggle for a footing among the respectabilities of the pavement. Yet some of the low-bred intruders are strong enough to hold their own, while tolerance on easier terms is given to the technicalities of trades and crafts, and the made-up words of fashionable chit-chat. Thus *donkey*, *conundrum*, *fun*, now unquestioned English, made their first appearance as slang; though how they came into existence there, no etymologist has proved for certain. There is no such doubt about *drag*, now the regular name of a well-appointed private coach-and-four; it was a cant term, quite intelligible as such, for a cart or carriage; and *dragsmen* were a class of thieves who followed carriages to cut away luggage from behind. From the wretches who made a trade of stealing children, polite society has adopted their cant word to *kidnap*—*i. e.* to *nab kids*; the verb to *knab* or *nab*, to snatch, is good provincial English, borrowed by the canting crew; but *kid* for child may possibly be a term of their own devising. Not long since, to take another pair of examples, it was as "slangy" to speak of a *tie* as it now is

to speak of a *choker*. Even the word *drawers* was originally cant, meaning long stockings. Curiously enough, words analogous to this last are found as cant terms in other countries. Thus in the Argot (cant or slang) of France, we find *tirant*, "stocking," and *tirantes*, "breeches," these latter being in like manner called *tirante* in the Furbesco (thieves' jargon) of Italy. Thus, in French as in English, the same word adapted itself to both the breeches or "haut-de-chausses," and the stockings or "bas-de-chausses," which are now for shortness called "bas." But whereas the English term *drawers* was taken up by the hosiers, and made its way into ordinary language, the corresponding French and Italian words were never admitted into society, but were left in the slang vocabularies, to which they originally belonged. When once such a slang word fairly makes its way into the authorized *copia verborum*, it may stay forever and a day. Naturally, however, most newly-coined terms gain but a local and temporary currency, and soon fall out of circulation. What captain Grose says in his Preface is quite true, that favourite expressions of the day, "as they generally originate from some trifling event, or temporary circumstance, on falling into disuse, or being superseded by new ones, vanish without leaving a trace behind." But it is not so easy for a contemporary to *spot* (by the way, this neat verb of the billiard-room is wanted in standard English and will probably hold its own there) the words which will keep their place. In fact, three out of Grose's four examples prove not the transient, but the permanent nature of slang formations. He goes on to say, "Such were the late fashionable words, a Bore and a Twaddle, among the great vulgar, Macaroni and the Barber, among the small." It appears that, much as in our time slangmongers have been apt to express approval by the phrases "that's the *thing*, or the *cheese*," so a century ago they used to say "that's the *barber*;" this silly phrase has certainly been forgotten—no great loss. But, on the other hand, the name of *macaroni*, as denoting a fop, is by no means a silly word. Grose says it "arose from a club called the *Macaroni Club*, instituted by some of the most dressy

travelled gentlemen about town." . So far so good, but can we trust the authority for this neat piece of etymology? Grose, with his antiquarian tastes, his keen sense of humour and his blunt sense of decency, was cut out to be the lexicographer of all vagabonds and roysterers. He was that same "fine, fat, fodgeg wight" of whose visit to Scotland his boon companion Burns warned his countrymen :

A chiel's amang you takin' notes,  
And, faith, he'll prent it !

But burly Grose printed some highly imaginative etymologies for his slang words. Granting the existence of his "*Macaroni Club*," it may have had its name from the very meaning of *pop* or *coxcomb* which he derives from it. It appears from a remark of the sober Archdeacon Nares, that the Italianized form *macaroni* did come into use in England, between 1700 and 1750, but *macaroon* was in use long before, not only as meaning a delicate cake but a delicate *coxcomb*; it occurs in an elegy on Donne, who died in 1631 :

..... a *macaroon*,  
And no way fit to speak to clouted shoon.

Anyhow, the word *macaroni* proves the prevalence of Italian fashion in England at the time it was introduced. Thus the word carries its bit of history about with it; and if it ever falls out of common English, it will at least remain fossil in the song of "Yankee Doodle"—

They stuck a feather in his cap,  
And called him *macaroni*.

As for the word *bore*, it is now established in English, root and branch, verb and noun, and its earliest definition carries its etymology—"a tedious, troublesome man or woman, one who *bores* the ears of his hearers with an uninteresting tale." At first, *twaddle* seems to have meant more nearly the same as "bore" than it now does; but it has long since settled down as one of a group, to express a special kind of talk rather "slower" than *twattle*, and rather less mischievous than *tattle*.

Many a word whose antiquity is proved by its place in literature, or the almost equal testimony from its diffusion in provincial dialects, finds a home for its old age, and sometimes a renewal of its youth, in the Slang Dictionary. This is the case with the verb to *lift* in its old sense of to steal; it has died out of modern talk, and is chiefly known to polite society through tales of the extinct race of Border heroes, who *lifted* droves of cattle. But modern town-thieves retain it in their jargon. According to Hotten, "There's a clock been *lifted*" means that a watch has been stolen. Out of this thieves' slang the word found its way back into common language in the term *shoplifting*—i. e. stealing from the counter on pretence of buying.

To *tout* is a good old word meaning to pry, peep, look out; in old days a man would *tote* in at a tavern, or *toot* for birds in bushes; then it came to be applied specially to the men sent by tradesmen or innkeepers to look out for customers on the high-road; and thus it has sunk to slang. Halliwell sets down the word *tommy*, meaning provisions, as belonging to various dialects. It is now current among the "navvy" class in general, and seems to belong especially to the Irish. A year or so ago, one Hugh Hagan knocked an illegitimate child on the head with a wooden balk, he having told his mother before he killed it, "The child ought not to live, as it is eating good children's *tommy*." Hence we have the name of an institution righteously abhorred by political economists, the store belonging to an employer where his workmen must take out part of their earnings in kind, especially in *tommy* or food, whence the name of *tommy-shop*.\* Again, the clown who declares, "That's a *swinging lie*," and the pleader who demands for his client most "exemplary and *swingeing* damages," are using what is now a slang term carrying a good powerful sound with it, but which they would probably be puzzled to explain the precise sense of. This sense is, really, what modern slang would convey by "a *whopping lie*," "*whacking* damages," for *swinging* or *swingeing* or *swinjin* (the

\* If the word is Keltic, it may belong to Irish *tiomullaim*, I eat, *tiomullas*, eatables.



last two forms give the proper pronunciation) is the participle of the old English verb to *swinge*,—*i.e.*: to beat soundly :

An often dede him sore *swinge*.

For a last example of this antiquarian group, were it not for the slang word *cockney*, we should almost forget the wondrous land of *Cokaygne*, French *Cocagne*, Italian *Cuccagna*, so called because its very houses were roofed with *cakes* (a cake is called in Catalan *coca* ; in Picardy, *couque* ; in Germany, *kuchen* ; in Scotland and America, *cookie*,—all from the Latin *coquere*). Under heaven was no such land as *Cocaigne*, where there was choice meat and drink for every one and welcome, where there was no night and no bad weather, and nobody quarrelled and nobody died, and they all lived happy ever after. The following lines, quoted in Mr. Thomas Wright's "St. Patrick's Purgatory," describe the peculiar architecture to which *Cocaigne* owes its name:—

Ther is wel fair abbei  
 Of white monkes and of grei.  
 Ther beth bowris and halles :  
 Al of pasteis beth the walles,  
 Of fleis, of fisse, and rich met,  
 The likfullist that man mai et ;  
*Fluren cakes beth the schingles alle,*  
 Of cherche, cloister, boure, and halle :  
 The pinnes beth fat podinges,  
 Rich met to princez and kinges.

In our time, the term "Land of Cakes" has been shifted to mean Scotland, and to commemorate oat-cake ; but in old days it was in London that the wondering natives of the English shires localized the city of the *cockneys*, the Lubberland of Old England—that famous but everdistant region where the larks, done to a turn, fly into one's mouth, and the little pigs run about ready roasted, and crying "Come eat me!" A *cockney* is now considered to mean a walled-in kind of *cit*, of narrow ideas and wide conceit. Not long since, I was present at a lecture where the orator,

commenting on certain opinions of mine, accused me by **implication** of the curiously combined offences of "scientific philistinism and cockney impudence."

Among the non-English languages whence slang has drawn words, the Keltic dialects of Scotland, Wales, and Ireland have the first place by right of our common nationality. The Keltic element is not extraordinarily strong in the Slang Dictionary, but it is well marked, and every word of it sets before the historian's eye a lively picture of the meeting of Kelt and Saxon. Thus *bother* seems to me most likely a Keltic word, the original signification of which may be seen in the Welsh root *byddar*, Irish and Gaelic *bodhair*, to deafen; thus, in the latter idiom,—“*Na bodhair mi le d'dhrabhluinn*”—“Don't deafen me with your nonsense!” This first sense is almost lost in modern English, where *bother* has come to mean to tease, annoy, perplex; but examples from the last century show that it was plain enough then. Grose's absurd etymology of it, as being *both ear'd*—that is, talked to by two people at once—at any rate proves that the old sense was not yet forgotten in his day; and this is no less evident in Swift's lines about an ear-trumpet:—

With the din of which tube my head you so *bother*,  
That I scarce can distinguish my right ear from t'other!

The word *galore* sounds picturesque to English ears, as in the line of Dibdin's sea-song, “I'll soon get togs *galore* ;” but it comes down again to plain prose when traced to its origin in Irish *go leor*—*i. e.* enough. The verb to *twig* conveys to our ears a comic notion of 'cuteness and spryness, as in the classical example where Mr. Pickwick is made aware that Dodson and Fogg's clerks are inspecting him over the screen—“‘They're a *twiggin*' of you, sir,” whispered Mr. Weller.” The word seems to have got into English through the ugliest kind of jargon, as in this choice morsel of thieves' cant, “*twig* the cull, he's peery”—*i. e.* “observe the fellow, he is watching.” But there is nothing really roguish about the word, if, as I am disposed to think, it is merely the Irish and Gaelic verb *tuig*, to discern or perceive

Two Keltic words, lastly, have become slang terms, and then good English, to denote peculiar kinds of speech. The Irish *brog*, "a sort of shoe made of the rough hide of any beast, commonly used by the wilder Irish;" came into England first with its proper meaning of a rough shoe or *brogue*; afterwards, by a quaint turn of metaphor, an Irishman's *brogue* came to signify his way of talking English. The other word, *cant*, has been curiously mystified by the etymologists, much too ingenious to work out a plain piece of history. The dictionaries (till Wedgwood's) derive it by corruption from the beggars' *chaunt* or whine, although this is not in the least what beggars mean by *canting*—what they mean by it is to talk jargon among themselves, which is as different a thing as may be. In fact, to *cante* was known in the sixteenth century as a rogue's word meaning to speak, and as such it has its natural origin in Keltic dialect; Irish *caint*, speech, language, vulg. "cant;" Gaelic *cainnt*, language, dialect. From meaning among vagabonds to speak, the word came naturally to the sense of speaking as vagabonds do—that is, in rogues' slang. As naturally, but long afterwards, *cant* took the sense in which we oftenest use it, that of any peculiar jargon, and especially that of sham holiness and windy philanthropy. \*

The stream of French which has poured into English ever since the Norman Conquest has drifted some curious words into our mediæval and modern slang. We still hear used at cards and dice the French numerals which our gamblers borrowed so many ages since:—*ace*, *deuce*, *tray*, *cater*, *cinque*, *size*. It used to be an accepted way of "chaffing" a glazier to call him a *quarrel-picker*; but a modern Englishman, to understand the joke, must go back

\* A third word might probably be added to these two—viz. French *baragouin* = unintelligible jargon, Dutch *bargoensch* = slang, English Slang *barricane*, *barrikin*, as when costermongers will say, confessing themselves "floored" by phrases beyond their comprehension—"we can't tumble to that *barrikin*." Diez, and Littré after him, derive *baragouin* from the words *bara* *guin*, meaning in Breton bread and wine, and so often heard in Breton mouths as to become a French term for talking Breton (" *Baragouinez*, guas de basse Bretagne"), and thence for any jargon. But neither Diez nor Littré seem to be aware (though Pott is) of the Gaelic *beargna* = the vernacular language of a place, which may indicate a Keltic origin for the whole group, and that a less far-fetched one than the bread-and-wine-story.

in memory to the time when the French word for a *carreau*, or square of glass, still remained in its older form *quarrel*, in which form we borrowed it. The word *vamp* was at first a slang word, and even in Grose's time it meant, in general, to refit or rub up old hats, shoes, &c.; while after this is added "likewise to put new feet to old boots." It is to this latter meaning that the curious French origin of the word really belongs, as is proved in Mr. Wedgwood's Dictionary, by the definition from Palsgrave—" *vampey* of a hose, *avant pied*." Thus, *vamp* meant at first the upper leather of a shoe; and to *vamp* was a special cobbler's word for putting new "uppers," as they say; thence, in course of time, it became a recognized dictionary word, meaning to furbish up anything. Captain Grose put on record several French words, which belonged to the slang of his time, but have dropped out since. Such are *nysey*, a simpleton, French *niais*, which pretty word originally meant an unfledged nestling (from Latin *nidus*); also the unsavoury word *hogo* for the smell of tainted meat—"It has a confounded *hogo*" (Fr. *haut goût*). Other words have kept their place: thus shamming sickness is still known in London hospitals as *malingering* (Fr. *malingre*); and *savey* (Fr. *savez*) is current both as verb and noun—"Do you *savey* that?"—"He has plenty of *savey*."

Considering how strong was the influence of Italian fashions in mediæval England, one wonders to find but two Italian words in Harman's Vocabulary of English Slang in the 16th century. One is worth mention, *commission*, a shirt—an amusingly Anglicized form of Italian *camicia*, thus mentioned by Taylor, the water poet, in 1630:—

As from our beds we doe oft caste 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 modern slang, this is cut down to *мыш*. English thus has in the cant word *commission*, and the polite term *chemise*, both Italian and French forms of Low Latin *camisa* or *camisia*, which in the course of its history has also stood for a soldier's linen garment, a linen night-gown, a priest's

alb, and the cover of a book. Of late years, however, the invading swarms of Italian image-sellers and organ-grinders have made their language so familiar to the English streets, that Mr. Hotten has been able to collect a curious list of words, whose Italian nature is disguised under outlandish spelling and the phonetic habits of our native costermongers, tramps, and thieves. Thus the *omey* of the *cassey* is the man of the house (*uomo della casa*); a baker's shop is a *mungarly casa*, properly an eating-house (*mangiare*); to *voker* is to talk (*vocare*); *catever* or *kertever* is bad (*cattivo*). This latter word corresponds with our French form *caitiff*, so that we have in English three derives, two of them curiously shifted in signification, from Latin *captivus*, *captive*. But the most remarkable instance of Italian influence on our language is the adoption among London street folk of a set of Italian numerals wherewith to count pence or *saltee* (*soldi*); they go up to six, *oney*, *dooe*, *tray*, *quarterer*, *chinker*, *say* (*uno*, *due*, *tre*, *quattro*, *cinque*, *sei*;) having reached the limit of the silver sixpence they begin afresh; so that, for instance, *say dooe saltee* is eightpence. There are Spanish words, too, in English slang, but, unlike the Italian, they seem all old. The time of Spain's glory as a seafaring and colonizing nation is brought back to us by words redolent of the Gold Coast and the Spanish Main. Such are *calaboose* for a prison (Sp. *calabozo*); *picaroon*, a pirate, a sharper (Sp. *picaron*); *picaninny* for a child (Sp. *pequenino*, a diminutive of *pequeno*, little); *palaver*, talk (Sp. *palabra*, word). To *box*, a nautical term for to sail round, is up doubt Spanish *boxar*, *boxear*; and this is clearly the meaning of to *box* the compass—that is, to go round and call all the points. From Sir Richard Hawkins' writing of the undisciplined rabble of his crew as *besonios*—a word distinctly Spanish in form—it is evident that he was taking from the Spaniards their term *bisono*, which they used to denote a raw novice, a new-comer to the Indies. But the word is not unknown to Italian, where *bisogno* meant a raw recruit. From whichever origin, it was adopted in English slang as *bezonian*, a beggar or scoundrel, as Ancient Pistol has it—

Under which king, *Bezonian*?—speak, or die!

So close is the kinship between English and other dialects of the Teutonic stock, that the unwary etymologizer of slang is liable to mistake some good old English word for a Dutch or German importation. He will derive the thieves' word for to steal, to *nim* (whence Corporal *Nym* has its name) from the German *nehmen*; whereas, in fact, it goes back directly to Anglo-Saxon *niman*, to take; or the old cant word *cranke*, for the falling sickness, &c., whence "to counterfeit *cranke*," *i.e.* to sham epileptic fits, from German *krank* (sick); whereas it is, no doubt, a genuine English word of old standing. In such cases the connection of the English and High or Low Dutch words is one of ancient collateral descent, not modern adoption. The really borrowed German words that have within the last few centuries found their way into English slang, mostly look as though they had been picked up by our soldiers in the Continental wars, and our sailors at Dutch ports. Such a slang sentence as "He left me without a *stiver*, but I didn't care a *rap*," may, perhaps, keep up the memory of these coins of Dutch and Swiss small change to the time when the originals are only to be seen in old metal shops and collectors' cabinets. Considering how the Germanisms of this class reached England, we need not be surprised to find many of them rather lively than reputable. Among them are *carouse*, from German *garaus* ("all out"), meaning to drink everything dry; *smear gelt*, a bribe, from German *schmiergeld*—*i.e.* "greasing money;" swindle, from German *schwindel*, which originally meant giddiness, then any giddy or extravagant scheme, and lastly, a cheat; *skellum*, a scoundrel or thief, "a Dutch *skelum*," as he is called in Coryat's "crudities" (Dutch and German, *schelm*):

But if a drunkard be unpledged a kan,  
 Draws out his knife, and basely stabs a man,  
 To runne away the rascall shall have scope;  
 None holds him, but all cry, *Lope, scellum, lope!*

It seems to have been from High Dutch that the technical language of flirtation was enriched with the verb to *ogle* (Ger. *äugeln*, *liebäugeln*), to make eyes at one." The word was certainly slang at first, and the noun *ogles*, for eyes,

has never ceased to be so, but seldom reaches a higher literary level than the newspaper report of a prize-fight. The original meaning of the adjective *spooney* no doubt belonged exclusively, as the verb to *spoon* still does, to the happy fatuity of courting; though it has come since to describe the symptoms without reference to the disease. How did our language do so long without the word, and whence did it come at last? I do not quite know, but at any rate the idiom is also Swiss-German. To make love is *Löffeln*, that is, to *spoon*; and the proverb says that Love turns many a proud lad into wood to make a spoon of ("Liebe macht Löffelholz aus manchem jungen Knabe stolz"). I have been amused to hear from an English-woman's mouth, as a facetious bit of German translation "Sie löffelten mit einander," "They were spooning together;" the translator being quite unaware how far she was really going back into the early ages of Alemannic love. For last examples of the German group, we may take those quaint Americanisms which are, after all, only Low or High Dutch words brought by early or late settlers. A *cookey-shine*, which is funny for a tea-party, means a feast where *cookeys*, little cakes (Dutch, *koekje*), are the staple. The American dislikes calling any man his master, wherefore he speaks of his *boss* (pron. *baus*), which is simply Dutch *baas*, and meant and means master all the same. These are both Low Dutch words; for High Dutch or German the two following will serve. In German packs of cards the *bauer*, or peasant, corresponds to our knave; thus it comes to pass that in America the two highest cards in the game of Euchre are called *bowers*. The *right bower* is the knave of trumps, and the *left bower* the knave of the suit of the same colour:—

But the hands that were played  
 By that heathen Chinese,  
 And the points that he made  
 Were quite frightful to see—  
 Till at last he put down a *right bower*,  
 Which the same Nye had dealt unto me.

A good deal has been written—not more, indeed, than an art of such wide prevalence deserved—about the etymology of *loafer*, and its derived verb to *loaf*. There is no difficulty, however, as to the usual view, that they come from German *landläufer*, *läufer*, a vagabond, an unsettled roamer about the country. The etymologists who have sought to derive *loafer* from Dutch *looper*, *landlooper*, or from English slang *loper*, *landloper* (which were very likely borrowed from the Low Countries), might have saved their pains had they borne in mind the essential distinction of Grimm's Law as to *f* and *p* between High German dialects such as the language we call German, and Low German dialects such as Dutch or English. The American *loafer* and the English *loper* no doubt had a common ancestor, but neither is the descendant of the other.

The ways are various by which Latin words, good or bad, have filtered into slang. The sheriff's officer and the attorney's clerk brought their learned technicalities out of Cursitor Street and the Old Bailey, so that now *ipsal dixal* stands for *ipse dixit*, and a *davy* is an *affidavit*. Even the thief demands his *quota*, his share of the plunder, or may be he will be content if his comrade will "tip him some *quids*." This word *quids*, for moneys, the wherewithal (a *quid* stands for a sovereign), may be seen scholastically treated in the following French passage, cited by Francisque Michel :—

*Siméon*.—Quæ veut dire *conquibus* ?

*Thomas*.—J'entends des escus.

The verb to *fake*, meaning to do, is no doubt in some way from Latin *facere* (possibly through Norman French *faict*, done, *faked*). One remembers "pals *fake* away" as the burden of a low street-song years ago ; the word is naturally given over to the kind of *doing* proper to rogues—namely, cheating and stealing. From it is derived *fakement*, a false begging letter or swindling document, such as fallen schoolmasters *screeve* (Law French, *scriver*) for a living in tramps' lodging-houses. Less repulsive in their associations are such Latinisms as *nostrum* for a medicine, from "our own"



private recipe; or *conk* for a nose, no doubt from the spouting *concha* of the classical fountain. And others have positively a pleasant humour, such as the schoolboy class of which *omnium gatherum* may serve as an instance. I like the unsuspecting gravity of old Noah Webster, in his respectable and jokeless Dictionary, where he criticises the term driving *tandem*, with the remark that "*tandem* properly refers to time, and not to length of line."

Certainly it is not by literary dignity that we have to measure languages here. English slang took tribute from the speech of the great Aryan nations, classic and modern; but no Aryan dialect was more congenial to the English vagabond than that of the lowest and wildest of Aryan hordes, the Gipsies, who in the middle ages spread over Europe from the East. Their name for a man—of course, a gipsy man—is *rom*; and *chabo* is a lad, a son. Borrow who knows more about the matter than other people, is probably right in saying that *rum chap*, now such thorough English slang, was originally nothing but a gipsy phrase, meaning *gipsy lad*; in Germany, also, the gipsies call themselves *Romanitschare*—i. e. "sons of men." The word *rum*, when first taken into English cant, meant fine or good; thus, "*rum* booze," or "*a rum* bung," meant good liquor or a full purse. Among the words brought by the gipsies into the slang of other nations, some are very curious. Thus *jockey* is no doubt the gipsy horse-dealer's word for a whip, *chukni*, meaning especially that formidable instrument known as a *jockey-whip*. A *pal* is a brother (Gipsy, *pal*, *plal*). The term *bosh* for a fiddle, a word only used by the lower orders, is Gipsy. "Can you roker Romany, and play on the *bosh*?" means, "Can you talk gipsy, and play on the fiddle?" Of such tramps' words, now fallen to low estate, some have honoured relatives in the sacred language of India. Thus in the French Argot, *chouriner* (to knife a man), whence the name of the *Chourineur* in the "*Mystères de Paris*," goes back through Gipsy *churi* to Sanskrit *chhuri* (a knife). When the London costermonger calls a heavy shower a *dowry of parny*, the gipsy from whom the phrase was learnt meant a river (*doriove*) of *pani* (water); this

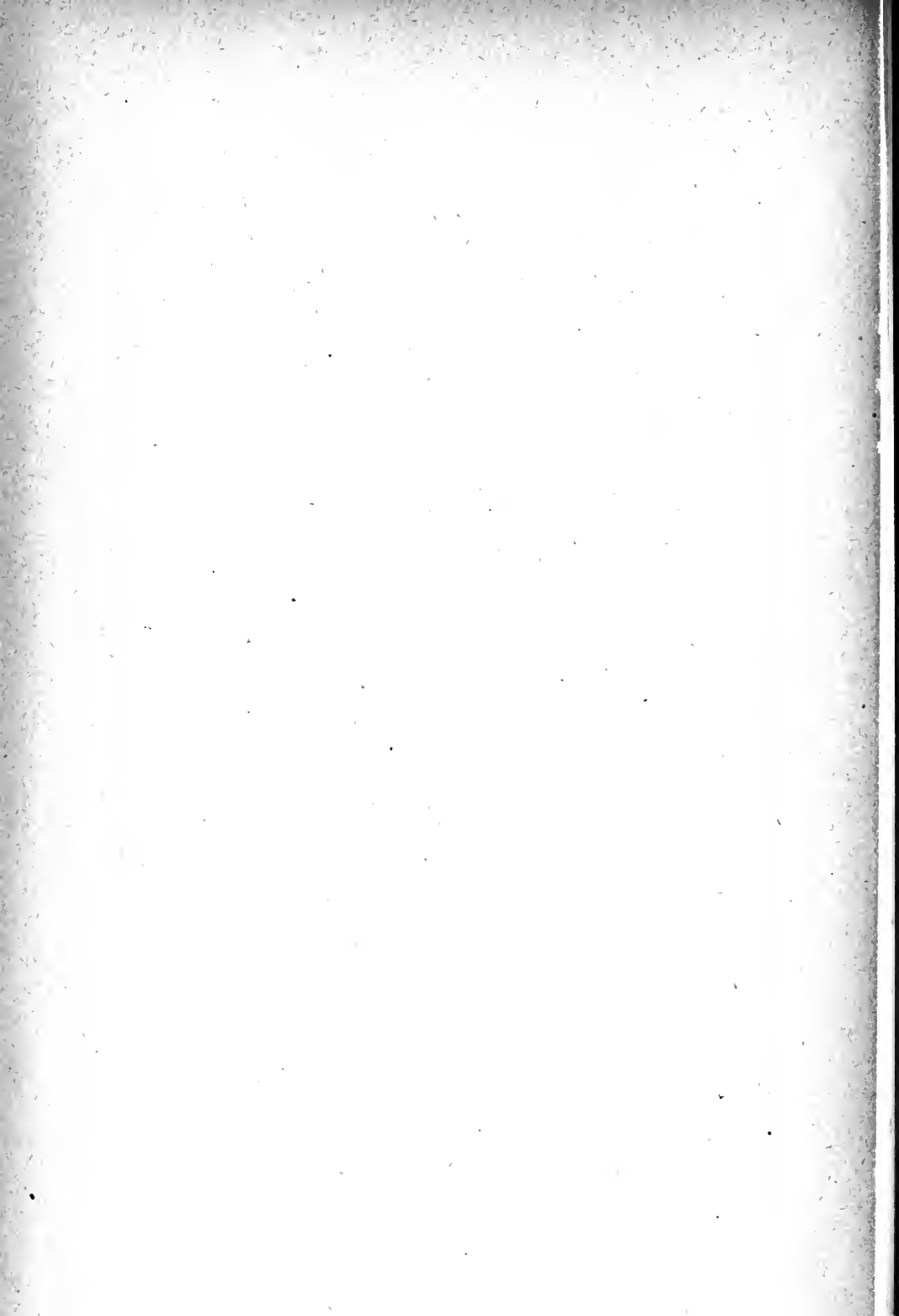
latter word (Sanskrit, *pānīya*) is the same that Anglo-Indians have imported in brandy-*pawnee*. These gipsy words stand linguistically in the same rank as those our soldiers have of late years brought directly from India, such as *batty*, wages, perquisites (Sanskrit, *bhāti*, pay), and *loot* (Sanskrit, *lota*), plunder. If one asks for an instance of a slang word imported by Englishmen from China, the answer will be at once "first-*chop*." Now it is true that we did pick up the term in Chinese ports, but *chop* is no Chinese word for all that; it is Hindi, *chhāpa*, a stamp or seal, especially a Custom-house stamp; thence, in the Chinese trade dialect, a boat-load of teas is call a *chop*; and the quality of teas and things in general is estimated as first-*chop*, second-*chop*, &c.

A real Chinese word in English slang is *kotooing*, or performing the *ko-too*. Everybody knows that to run *a-muck* is Malay, *amuk*; that *bosh* is Turkish for empty; that *chouse* is derived from a certain Turkish *chiaus*, or envoy, who came to England in 1609 and took in our merchants, or as we should say now, *chiselled* them; and that *nabob* for a rich, retired Indian official is Arabic, *nawab*, used for the governor of a province. Mentioning Arabic, it is curious how little influence Hebrew has had on English slang. The Jewish doctors of the Middle Ages, the money-dealers, brokers, pedlars, and oldclothesmen since, have only left in our streets a few such terms as *shoful*, or *show-full*, bad money or sham jewellery (Hebrew, *shafal*, low, base). Positively, the languages of the North American Indians have contributed almost as much to English slang, for we talk quite naturally of a *pow-wow* or a *squaw*; and the street-folk can realize, without having it explained, the desperate condition of a "gone *coon*."

With these outlandish elements, I conclude this sketch of the Philology of Slang. Some of its proper topics, such as that of secret and artificial language, have been omitted for briefness, and others as being too repulsive. Much of the slang-maker's skill is spent on foul ideas, which make the Slang Dictionary, at its best, an unpresentable book; while short of this limit, there is an ugly air about lists of

words so largely coined by vagabonds and criminals, whose grotesque fancy plays fitfully round the real wretchedness of their lives, in sour jests on the "*skilly*" and the "*everlasting staircase*," and half-shrinking, half-defiant "*chaff*" of the hangman and the devil. Such details as I have given, however, are enough for my purpose, to show that whether the English Dictionary acknowledges slang or not, every serious student of English must take it up and treat it seriously. There is much more novelty in this essay than I expected when I began to write it; but the fact is, that hitherto the linguistic examination of newfangled and outcast words has by no means kept pace with their compilation; and it will be some while before fresh students cease to find enough new points left to repay their pains.

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## THE FUNCTION OF SLANG

BY PROFESSOR BRANDER MATTHEWS

(From *Harper's Monthly*)

It is characteristic of the interest which science is now taking in things formerly deemed unworthy of consideration that philologists no longer speak of slang in contemptuous terms. Perhaps, indeed, it was not the scholar, but the amateur philologist, the mere literary man, who affected to despise slang. To the trained investigator into the mutations of language and into the transformations of the vocabulary, no word is too humble for respectful consideration; and it is from the lowly, often, that the most valuable lessons are learned. But until recently few men of letters ever mentioned slang except in disparagement and with a wish for its prompt extirpation. Even professed students of speech, like Trench and Alford (now sadly shorn of their former authority) are abundant in declarations of abhorrent hostility. De Quincey, priding himself on his independence and on his iconoclasm, was almost alone in saying a good word for slang.

There is this excuse for the earlier author who treated slang with contumely, that the differentiation of *slang* from *cant* was not complete in his day. *Cant* is the dialect of a class, often used correctly enough, as far as grammar is concerned, but often also unintelligible to those who do not belong to the class or who are not acquainted with its usages. *Slang* was at first the *cant* of thieves, and this seems to have been its only meaning until well into the

present century, In *Redgauntlet*, for example, published in 1824, Scott speaks of the "thieves' Latin called *slang*." Some time during the middle of the century *slang* lost this narrow limitation, and came to signify a word or a phrase used with a meaning not recognized in polite letters, either because it had just been invented, or because it had passed out of memory. While *cant*, therefore, was a language within a language, so to speak, and not to be understood of the people, *slang* was a collection of colloquialisms gathered from all sources, and all bearing alike the bend sinister of illegitimacy.

Certain of its words were unquestionably of very vulgar origin, being survivals of the "thieves' Latin" Scott wrote about. Among these are *pal* and *cove*, words not yet admitted to the best society. Others were merely arbitrary misapplications of words of good repute, such as the employment of *awfully* and *jolly* as synonymes for *very* — as intensives, in short. Yet others were violent metaphors, like *in the soup*, *kicking the bucket*, *holding up* (a stage-coach). Others, again, were the temporary phrases which spring up, one scarcely knows how, and flourish unaccountably for a few months, and then disappear forever, leaving no sign; such as *shoo-fly* in America and *all serene* in England.

An analysis of modern slang reveals the fact that it is possible to divide the words and phrases of which it is composed into four broad classes, of quite different origin and of very varying value. Toward two of these classes it may be allowable to feel the contempt so often expressed for slang as a whole. Toward the other two classes such a feeling is wholly unjustifiable, for they are performing an inestimable service to the language.

Of the two unworthy classes, the first is that which includes the survivals of the "thieves' Latin," the vulgar terms used by vulgar men to describe vulgar things. This is the slang which the police-court reporter knows and is fond of using profusely. This is the slang which Dickens introduced to literature. This class of slang it is which is mainly responsible for the ill repute of the word. Much of the dislike for slang felt by people of delicate taste is

however, due to the second class, which includes the ephemeral phrases fortuitously popular for a season, and then finally forgotten once for all. These mere catchwords of the moment are rarely foul, as the words and phrases of the first class often are, but they are unfailingly foolish. *There you go with your eye out*, which was accepted as a humorous remark in London, and *where did you get that hat?* which had a like fleeting vogue in New York, are phrases as inoffensive as they are flat. These temporary terms come and go, and are forgotten swiftly. Probably most readers of Forcythe Wilson's *Old Sergeant* need now to have it explained to them that during the war a *grape-vine* meant a lying rumor.

It must be said, however, that even in the terms of the first class there is a striving upward, a tendency to desinfect themselves, as any reader of Grose's *Dictionary of the Vulgar Tongue* must needs remark when he discovers that phrases used now with perfect freedom had a secret significance in the last century. There are also innuendoes not a few in certain of Shakespeare's best-known plays which fortunately escape the notice of all but the special student of the Elizabethan vocabulary.

The other two classes of slang stand on a different footing. Although they suffer from the stigma attached to all slang by the two classes already characterized, they serve a purpose. Indeed their utility is indisputable, and it was never greater than it is to-day. One of these classes consists of old and forgotten phrases or words, which, having long lain dormant, are now struggling again to the surface. The other consists of new words and phrases, often vigorous and expressive, but not yet set down in the literary lexicon, and still on probation. In these two classes we find a justification for the existence of slang, for it is the function of slang to be a feeder of the vocabulary. Words get threadbare and dried up; they come to be like evaporated fruit, juiceless and tasteless. Now it is the duty of slang to provide substitutes for the good words and true which are worn out by hard service. And a many of the recruits slang has enlisted are worthy of enrolment

among the regulars. When a blinded conservative is called a *mossback*, who is so dull as not to perceive the poetry of the word? When an actor tells us how the travelling company in which he was engaged got *stranded*, who does not recognize the force and the felicity of the expression? And when we hear a man declare that he would to-day be rich if only his foresight had been equal to his *hindsight*, who is not aware of the value of the phrase? No wonder is it that the verbal artist hankers after such words which renew the lexicon of youth! No wonder is it that the writer who wishes to present his thought freshly seeks these words with the bloom yet on them, and neglects the elder words desiccated as though for preservation in a herbarium!

The student of slang is surprised that he is able to bring forward an honorable pedigree for many words so long since fallen from their high estate that they are now treated as upstarts when they dare to assert themselves. Words have their fates as well as men and books; and the ups and downs of a phrase are often almost as pathetic as those of a man. It has been said that the changes of fortune are so sudden here in these United States that it is only three generations from shirt sleeves to shirt sleeves. The English language is not quite so fast as the American people, but in the English language it is only three centuries from shirt sleeves to shirt sleeves. What could seem more modern, more Western even, than *deck* for *pack* of cards, than to *lay out* or to *lay out cold* for *knockdown*, than to *fire out* for to *expel forcibly*? Yet these are all good old expressions, in decay no longer, but now insisting on their right to a renewed life. *Deck* is Elizabethan, and we find in Shakespeare's *King Henry VI.* (p. iii., a. v., sc. i.) that.

“ The king was slyly finger'd from the deck.”

To *lay out* in its most modern sense is very early English. And *fire out* is in Shakespeare's 144th sonnet :

“ Till my good angel fire my bad one out.”

And it is also in the earliest of English comedies, *Ralph Roister Doister*—acted before 1553.



Even more important than this third class of slang expressions is the fourth, containing the terms which are, so to speak, serving their apprenticeship, and as yet uncertain whether or not they will be admitted finally into the guild of good English. These terms are either useful or useless; they either satisfy a need or they do not; they therefore live or die according to the popular appreciation of their value. If they expire, they pass into the limbo of dead and gone slang than which there is no blacker oblivion. If they survive, it is because they have been received into the literary language, having appealed to the perceptions of some master of the art and craft of speech, under whose sponsorship they are admitted to full rights. Thus we see that slang is a training-school for new expressions, only the best scholars getting the diploma which confers longevity, the others going surely to their fate.

Sometimes these new expressions are words only, sometimes they are phrases. To *go back on*, for instance, and to *give one's self away* are specimens of the phrase characteristic of this fourth and most interesting class of slang at its best. In its creation of phrases like these, slang is what idiom was before language stiffened into literature, and so killed its earlier habit of idiom-making. After literature has arrived, and after the school-master is abroad, and after the printing-press has been set up in every hamlet, the idiom-making faculty of a language is atrophied by disuse. Slang is sometimes, and to a certain extent, a survival of this faculty, or at least a substitute for its exercise. In other words (and here I take the liberty of quoting from a private letter of one of the foremost authorities on the history of English, Professor Lounsbury), "slang is an effort on the part of the users of language to say something more vividly, strongly, concisely than the language as existing permits it to be said"; and he adds that slang is therefore "the source from which the decaying energies of speech are constantly refreshed."

Being contrary to the recognized standards of speech, slang finds no mercy at the hands of those who think it their duty to uphold the strict letter of the law. Nothing

amazes an investigator more, and nothing more amuses him, than to discover that thousands of words now secure in our speech were once denounced as interlopers. "There is death in the dictionary," said Lowell, in his memorable linguistic essay prefixed to the second series of the *Biglow Papers*; "and where language is too strictly limited by convention, the ground for expression to grow in is limited also, and we get a *potted* literature—Chinese dwarfs instead of healthy trees." And in the paper on Dryden he declared that "a language grows and is not made," noting that "almost all the new-fangled words with which Jonson taxes Marston.... are now current." Pedants are ever building the language about with rules of iron in a vain effort to keep it from growing naturally and according to its needs. *Mob* was once thought to be a low word; and *cab* was a vulgar word; and *humbug* was no word at all—though it was even then most useful to characterize the attempt its contemners were making.

It is true that *cab* and *mob* are clipped words, and there is always a healthy dislike of any clipping of the verbal currency. *Cycle* for *bicycle* has not yet been accepted, although its derivative *cyclist*, seems to have made good its position. And who can say whether or not *photo* will succeed in supplanting *photograph*? But *consols* is firmly established. Two clipped words there are which have no friends—*gents* and *pants*. Dr. Holmes has put them in the pillory of a couplet:

"The things named *pants*, in certain documents,  
A word not made for gentlemen, but *gents*."

And I saw recently a sign, suspended outside a big Broadway building, announcing that there were "Hands wanted on pants," the building being a clothing-factory, and not, as one might suppose, a boys' school.

The slang of a metropolis, be that where you will, in the United States or in Great Britain, in France or in Germany, is nearly stupid. There is neither fancy nor fun in the Parisian's *Ohé Lambert* or *on dirait du veau*, nor in the Londoner's *all serene* or *there you go with your eye out*—catch-

words which are humorous, if humorous they are, only by general consent and for some esoteric reason. It is to such stupid phrases of a fleeting popularity that Dr. Holmes refers, no doubt, when he declares that "the use of slang, or cheap generic terms, as a substitute for differentiated specific expressions is at once a sign and a cause of mental atrophy." And this use of slang is far more frequent in cities, where people often talk without having anything to say, than in the country, where speech flows slowly.

Perhaps the more highly civilized a population is, the more it has parted with the power of pictorial phrase-making. It may be that a certain lawlessness of life is the cause of a lawlessness of language. Of all metropolitan slang that of the outlaws is most vigorous. It was after Vidocq had introduced thieves' slang into polite society that Balzac, always a keen observer and always alert to pick up unworn words, ventured to say, perhaps to the astonishment of many, "that there is no speech more energetic, more colored, than that of these people." Balzac was not academic in his vocabulary, and he owed not a little of the sharpness of his descriptions to his hatred of the cut-and-dried phrases of his fellow-novelists. He would willingly have agreed with Montaigne when the essayist declared that the language he liked, written or spoken, was "a succulent and nervous speech, short and compact, not so much delicately and combed out as vehement and brusque, rather arbitrary than monotonous.....not pedantic, but soldierly rather, as Suetonius called Cæsar's." And this brings us exactly to Mr. Bret Harte's

" Phrases such as camps may teach,  
Sabre-cuts of Saxon speech."

There is a more soldierly frankness, a greater freedom, less restraint, less respect for law and order, in the West than in the East; and this may be a reason why American slang is superior to British and to French. The catchwords of New-York may be as inept and as cheap as the catchwords of London and of Paris, but New-York is not as important to the United States as London is to Great Britain and as

Paris is to France; it is not as dominating, not as absorbing. So it is that in America the feebler catchwords of the city give way before the virile phrases of the West. There is little to choose between the *how's your poor feet?* of London and the *well, I should smile*, of New York, for neither phrase had any excuse for existence and neither had any hope of survival. The city phrase is often doubtful in meaning and obscure in origin. In London, for example, the four-wheel cab is called a *growler*; why? In New-York a can brought in filled with beer at a bar-room is called a *growler*, and the act of sending this can from the private house to the public-house and back is called *working the growler*;—why?

But when we find a Western writer describing the effects of *tangle-foot* whiskey, the adjective explains itself, and is justified at once. And we discover immediately the daringly condensed methaphor in the sign, "*Don't monkey with the buzz-saw*"; the picturesqueness of the word *buzz-saw* and its fitness for service are visible at a glance. So we understand the phrase readily and appreciate its force when we read the story of "Buck Fanshaw's Funeral," and are told "that he never *went back on* his mother," or when we hear the defender of "Banty Tim" declare that

"Ef one of you teches the boy  
He'll *wresle his hash* to-night in hell,  
Or my name's not Tilman Joy."

*To wrestle one's hash* is not an elegant expression, one must admit, and it is not likely to be adopted into the literary language; but it is forcible at least, and not stupid. *To go back on*, however, bids fair to take its place in our speech as a phrase at once useful and vigorous.

From the wide and wind-swept plains of the West came *blizzard*, and although it has been suggested that the word is a survival from some local British dialect, the West still deserves the credit of having rescued it from desuetude. From the logging camps of the Northwest came *boom*, an old word again, but with a new meaning, which the language promptly accepted. From still further west came the

use of *sand*, to indicate staying power, backbone—what New England knows as *grit*, and old England as *pluck* (a far less expressive word). From the Southwest came *cinch*, from the tightening of the girths of the pack-mules, and so by extension indicating a grasp of anything so firm that it cannot get away.

Just why a *dead cinch* should be the securest of any, I confess I do not know. *Dead* is here used as an intensive; and the study of intensives is as yet in its infancy. In all parts of Great Britain and the United States we find certain words wrenched from their true meaning and most arbitrarily employed to heighten the value of other words. Thus we have a *dead cinch*, or a *dead sure thing*, a *dead shot*, a *dead level*—and for this last term we can discover perhaps a reason. Lowell noted in New England a use of *tormented* as a euphemism for *darned*, as “not a tormented cent.” Every American traveller in England must have remarked with surprise the British use of the Saxon synonyme of *sanguinary* as an intensive, the chief British rivals of *bloody* in this respect being *blooming* and *blasted*. All three are held to be shocking to polite ears, and it was with bated breath that the editor of a London newspaper wrote about the prospects of “a b—y war”; while, as another London editor declared recently, it is now impossible for a cockney to read with proper sympathy Jeffrey’s appeal to Carlyle after a visit to Craigenputtock, to bring his “blooming Eve out of her blasted paradise.” Of the other slang synonymes for *very*—*jolly*, “he was *jolly* ill” is British; *awfully* was British first, and is now American also; and *daisy* is American. But any discussion of intensives is a digression here, and I return as soon as may be to the main road.

“To *freeze* to” anything or any person is a Down East phrase, so Lowell records, but it has a far-Western strength; and so has “to *get solid with*,” as when the advice his given that if a man is courting a girl it is best “to get solid with her father.” What is this phrase, however, but the French *solidarité*, which we have recently taken over into English to indicate a communion of interests and responsibilities? The likeness of French terms to American is no new thing;

Lowell told us that Horace Mann, in one of his public addresses, commented at some length on the beauty and moral significance of the French phrase *s'orienter*, and called upon his young "friends to practice it," although "there was not a Yankee in his audience whose problem had not always been to find out what was *about east*, and to shape his course accordingly." A few weeks ago, in turning over *Karikari*, a volume of M. Ludovic Halévy's clever and charming sketches of Parisian character, I met with a delightful young lady who had *pas pour deux liards de coquetterie*; and I wondered whether M. Halévy, if he were an American, and one of the forty of the American Academy, would venture the assertion that his heroine was *not coquettish for a cent*.

Closely akin to *freeze to* and *solid with* is *jumped on*: when severe reproof is administered the culprit is said to be *jumped on*; and if the reproof shall be unduly severe, the sufferer is said then to be *jumped on with both feet*. All three of these phrases belong to a class from which the literary language has enlisted many worthy recruits in the past, and it would not surprise me to see them answer to their names whenever a new dictionary calls the roll of English words. Will they find themselves shoulder to shoulder with *spook*, a word of Dutch origin, now volunteering for English service both in New York and in South Africa? And by that time will *slump* have been admitted to the ranks, and *fad*, and *crank*, in the secondary meaning of a man of somewhat unsettled mind? *Slump* is an Americanism, *crank* is an Americanism of remote British descent, and *fad* is a Britishism; it is perhaps the most needed word of the three, and from it we get a name for the *faddist*, the bore who rides his hobby hard and without regard to the hounds.

Just as in New York the "Upper Ten Thousand" of N. P. Willis have shrunk to the "Four Hundred" of Mr. Ward McAllister, so in London the *swells* soon became the *smart* set, and after a while developed into *swagger* people, as they became more and more exclusive and felt the need of new terms to express their new quality. But in no department

of speech is the consumption of words more rapid than in that describing the degrees of intoxication; and the list of slang synonymes for the drunkard, and for his condition, and for the act which brings it about, is as long as Leporello's. Among these, *to get loaded* and *to carry a load* are expressions obvious enough; and when we recall that *jag* is a provincialism, meaning a light load, we see easily that the man who *has a jag on* is in the earlier stages of intoxication. This use of the word is, I think, wholly American, and it has not crossed the Atlantic as yet, or else the British author could never have blundered into a definition of *jag* as an umbrella, quoting in illustration a paragraph from a St. Louis paper, which said that "Mr. Brown was seen on the street last Sunday in the rain carrying a large fine jag." One may wonder what this British author would have made out of the remark of the Chicago humorist, that a certain man was not always drunk even if he did jump "from jag to jag like an alcoholic chamois."

Here, of course, we are fairly within the boundaries of slang—of the slang which is temporary only, and which withers away swiftly. But is *swell* slang now, and *fad*, and *crank*? Is *boom* slang, and is *blizzard*? And if it is difficult to draw any line of division between mere slang on the one side, and idiomatic words and phrases on the other, it is doubly difficult to draw this line between mere slang and the legitimate technicalities of a calling or a craft. Is it slang to say of a picture that the chief figure in it is *out of drawing*, or that the painter has got his *values* wrong? And how could any historian explain the ins and outs of New York politics who could not state frankly that the *machine* made a *slate*, and that the *mugwumps* broke it. Such a historian must needs master the meaning of *laying pipe* for a nomination, of *pulling wires* to secure it, of *taking the stump* before election, and of *log-rolling* after it; he must apprehend the exact relation of the *boss* to his *henchmen* and his *heelers*; and he must understand who the *half-breeds* were, and the *stalwirts*, and how the *Swallow-tails* were different from the *short-hairs*.

To call one man a *boss* and another a *henchman* may have been slang once, but the words are lawful now, because they are necessary. It is only by these words that the exact relation of a certain kind of political leader to a certain kind of political follower can be expressed succinctly. There are, of course, not a few political phrases still under the ban because they are needless. Some of these may some day come to convey an exact shade of meaning not expressed by any other word, and when this shall happen, they will take their places in the legitimate vocabulary. I doubt that this good fortune will ever befall a use of *influence*, now not uncommon in Washington. The statesman at whose suggestion and request an office-holder has received his appointment is known as that office-holder's *influence*. Thus a poor widow, suddenly turned out of a post she had held for years, because it was wanted by the henchman of some boss whose good will a Senator or a department chief wished to retain, explained to a friend that her dismissal was due to the fact that her *influence* had died during the summer. The inevitable extension of the merit system in the civil service of our country will probably prevent the permanent acceptance of this new meaning.

The political is only one of a vast number of technical vocabularies, all of which are proffering their words for popular consumption. Every art and every science, every trade and every calling, every sect and every sport, has its own special lexicon, the most of the words in which must always remain outside of the general speech of the whole people. They are reserves, to be drawn upon to fill up the regular army in time of need. Legitimate enough when confined to their proper use, these technicalities become slang when employed out of season, and when applied out of the special department of human endeavor in which they have been evolved. Of course, if the public interest in this department is increased for any reason, more and more words from that technical vocabulary are adopted into the wider dictionary of popular speech; and thus the general language is still enriching itself by the taking over of words and phrases from the terminology devised by experts for their own use.



So it is that many of the locutions of the Stock Exchange have won their way into general knowledge, and there are few of us who do not know what *bears* and *bulls* are, what a *corner* is, and what is a *margin*. The practical application of scientific knowledge makes the public at large familiar with many principles hitherto the exclusive possession of the experts, and the public at large gets to use freely to-day technicalities which even the learned of yesterday would not have understood. *Current*, for example, and *insulation*, made familiar by the startlingly rapid extension of electrical possibilities in the last few years, have been so fully assimilated that they are now used independently and without avowed reference to their original electrical meaning.

The prevalence of a sport or of a game brings into general use the terms of that special amusement. The Elizabethan dramatists, for example, use *vy* and *revy* and the other technicalities of the game of primero as freely as our Western humorists use *going it blind* and *calling* and the other technicalities of the game of poker, which has been evolved out of primero in the course of the centuries. Some of the technicalities of euchre also, and of whist, have passed into every-day speech; and so have a many of the terms of baseball and of football, of racing and of trotting, of rowing and of yachting. These made their way into the vocabulary of the average man one by one as the seasons went around, and as the sports followed one another in popularity. So during the war many military phrases were frequent in the mouths of the people, and have established themselves firmly, although there has been peace in the land now for nearly thirty years.

"In language, as in life," so Professor Dowden tells us, "there is, so to speak, an aristocracy and a commonalty words with a heritage of dignity, words which have been ennobled, and a rabble of words which are excluded from positions of honor and trust." Some writers and speakers there are with so delicate a sense of refinement that they are at ease only with the ennobled words, with the words that came over with the conqueror, with the lords, spiritual

and temporal, of the vocabulary. Others there are, parvenues themselves, and so tainted with snobbery that they are happy only in the society of their betters, and who express the utmost contempt for the mass of the vulgar. Yet again others there are who have Lincoln's liking for the plain words of the plain people, the democrats of the dictionary, homely, simple, direct. These last are tolerant of the words, once of high estate, which have lost their rank and are fallen upon evil days, preferring them over the other words, plebeian once, but having pushed their fortunes energetically in successive generations, until now there are none more highly placed.

Perhaps the aristocratic figure of speech is a little misleading, because in the English language, as in France after the Revolution, we find *la carrière ouverte aux talents*, and every word has a fair chance to attain the highest dignity in the gift of the dictionary. No doubt family connections are still potent, and it is much easier for some words to rise in life than it is for others. Most people would hold that war and law and medicine made a more honorable pedigree for a technical term than the stage, for example, or than some sport. George Eliot was reproved for her fondness for scientific slang, for speaking of the *dynamic* quality of Gwendolen Harleth's glance, for instance; but the reproof would have been far severer, I fancy, if she had drawn on theatrical slang instead of on scientific.

And yet the stage has its own enormous vocabulary, used with the utmost scientific precision. The theatre is a hot-bed of temporary slang, often, as lawless, as vigorous, and as picturesque as the phrases of the West; but it has also a terminology of its own, containing some hundreds of words, used always with absolute exactness. A *mascot*, meaning one who brings good luck, and a *hoodoo*, meaning one who brings ill fortune, are terms invented in the theatre, it is true; and many another odd word can be credited to the same source. But every one behind the scenes knows also what *skyborders* are, and *bunch-lights*, and *vampire-traps*, and *raking-pieces*—technical terms all of them, and all used with vigorous exactitude. Like the technicalities of any

other profession, those of the stage are often very puzzling to the uninitiated, and a greenhorn could hardly even make a guess at the meaning of terms which every visitor to a green-room might use at any moment. What layman could explain the office of a *cut-drop*, the utility of a *carpenter's scene*, or the precise privileges of a *bill-board ticket*?

There is one word which the larger vocabulary of the public has lately taken from the smaller vocabulary of the playhouse, and which some strolling player of the past apparently borrowed from some other vagabond familiar with thieves' slang. This word is *fake*. It has always conveyed the suggestion of an intent to deceive. "Are you going to get up new scenery for the new play?" might be asked; and the answer would be, "No; we shall *fake* it," meaning thereby that old scenery would be retouched and readjusted so as to have the appearance of new. From the stage the word passed to the newspapers, and a *fake* is a story invented, not founded on fact, made out of whole cloth," as the stump-speakers say. Mr. Howells, always bold in using new words, accepts *fake* as good enough for him, and prints it in *The Quality of Mercy* without the stigma of italics or quotation marks; just as in the same story he has adopted the colloquial *electrics* for *electric lights*—*i. e.*, "He turned off the electrics."

And hereafter the rest of us may use either *fake* or *electrics* with a clear conscience, either hiding ourselves behind Mr. Howells, who can always give a good account of himself when attacked, or else coming out into the open and asserting our own right to adopt either word because it is useful. "Is it called for? Is it accordant with the analysis of the language? Is it offered or backed by good authority? These are the considerations by which general consent is won or repelled," so Professor Whitney tells us, "and general consent decides every case without appeal." It happens that Don Quixote preceded Professor Whitney in this exposition of the law, for when he was instructing Sancho Panza, then about to be appointed governor of an island, he used a Latinized form of a certain word which had become vulgar, explaining that "if some do not under-

stand these terms it matters little, for custom will bring them into use in the course of time so that they will be readily understood. That is the way a language is enriched; custom and the public are all-powerful there." Sometimes the needful word which is thought to be too common for use is Latinized, as Don Quixote preferred, but more often it is ennobled without change, being simply lifted out from among its former low companions.

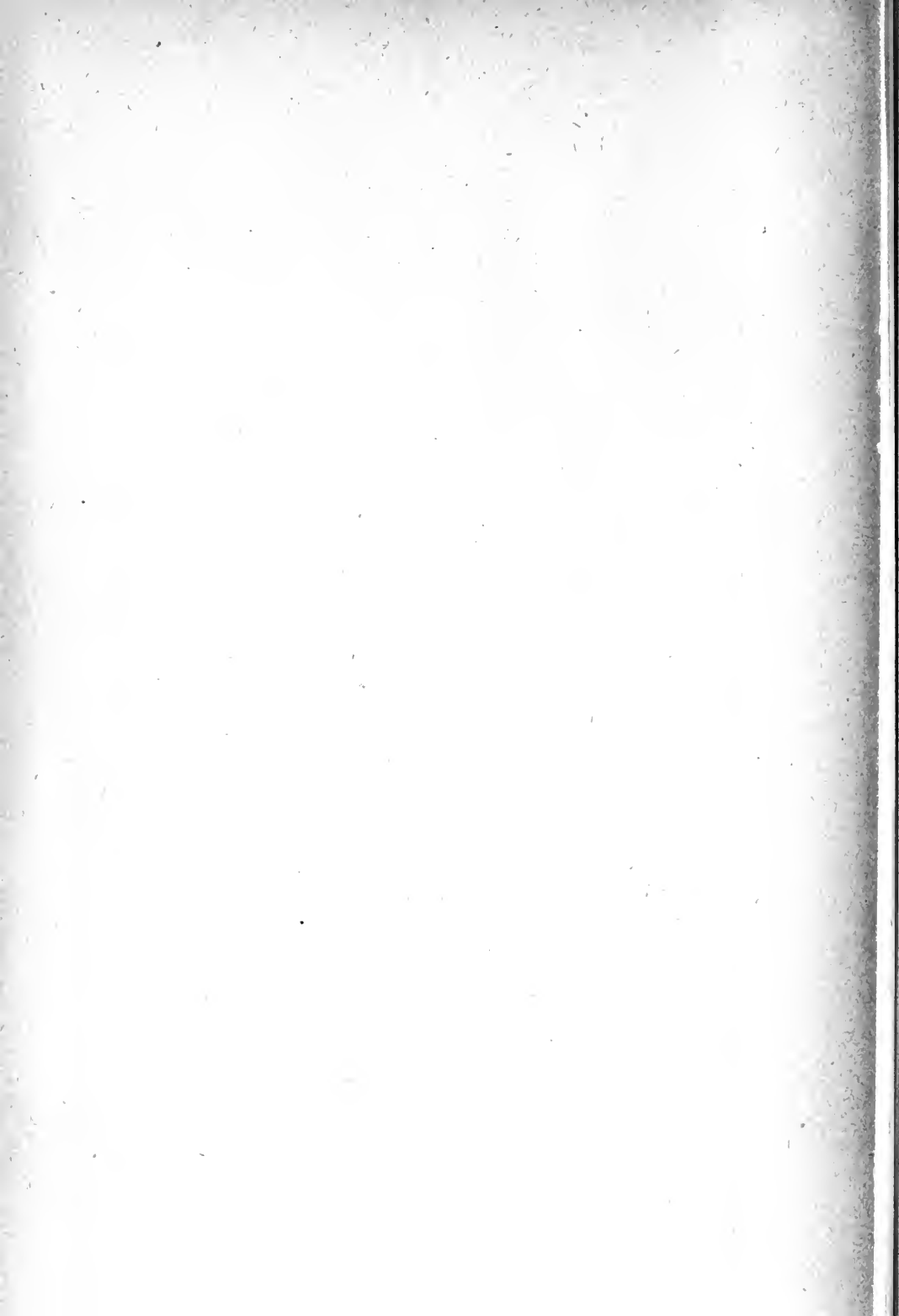
One of the hardest lessons for the amateurs in linguistics to learn—and most of them never attain to this wisdom—is that affectations are fleeting, that vulgarisms die of their own weakness, and that corruptions do little harm to the language. And the reason is not far to seek; either the apparent affectation, the alleged vulgarism, the so-called corruption, is accidental and useless, in which case its vogue will be brief and it will sink swiftly into oblivion; or else it represents a need and fills a want, in which case, no matter how careless it may be or how inaccurately formed, it will hold its own firmly, and there is really nothing more to be said about it. In other words, slang and all other variations from the high standard of the literary language are either temporary or permanent. If they are temporary only, the damage they can do is inconsiderable. If they are permanent, their survival is due solely to the fact that they were convenient or necessary. When a word or a phrase has come to stay (as *reliable* has, apparently), it is idle to denounce a decision rendered by the court of last resort. The most that we can do to advantage is to refrain from using the word ourselves, if we so prefer.

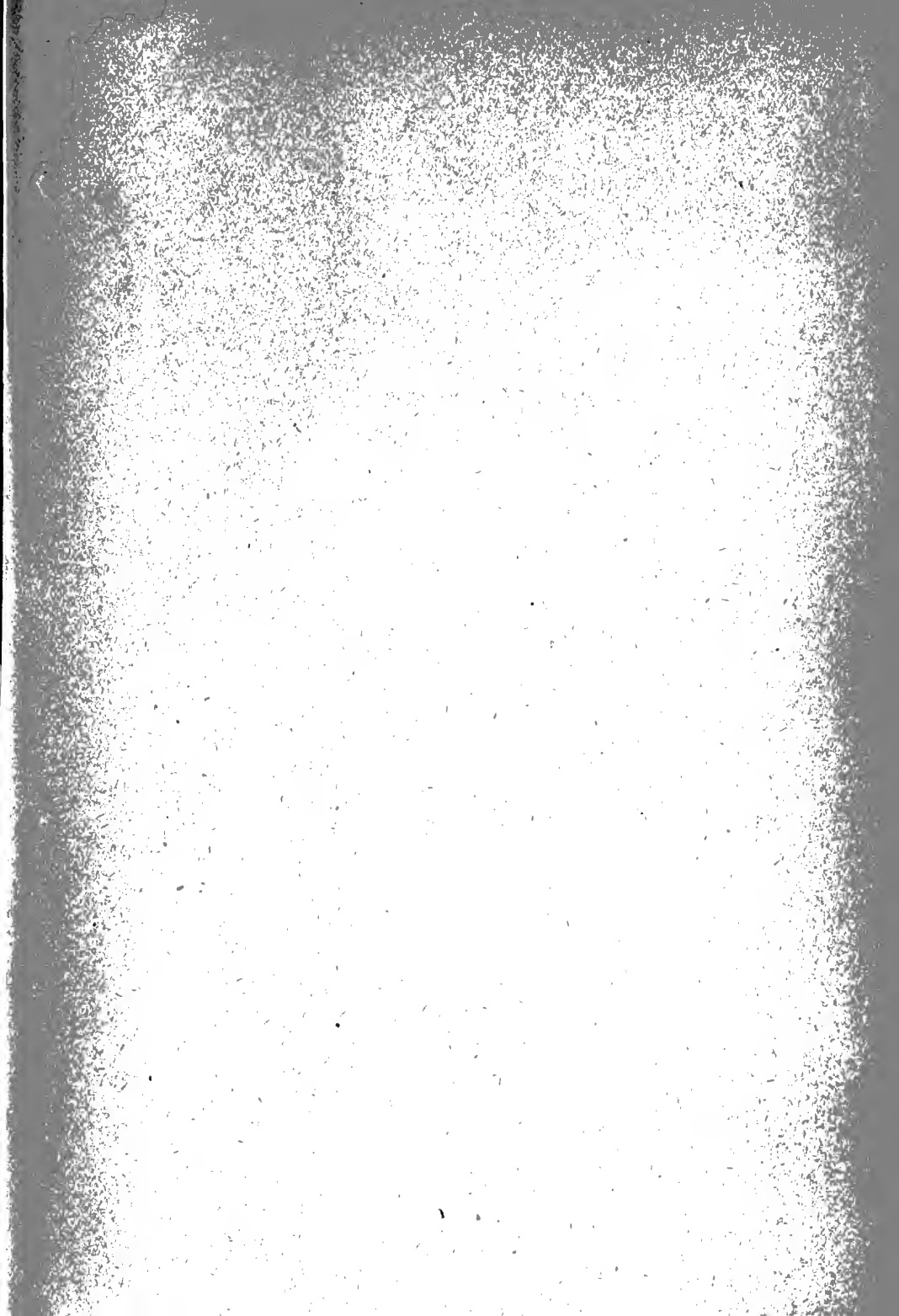
It is possible to go further, even, and to turn the tables on those who see in slang an ever-growing evil. Not only is there little danger to the language to be feared from those alleged corruptions, and from these doubtful locutions of evanescent popularity, but real harm is done by the purists themselves who do not understand every modification of our language, and who seek to check the development of idiom and to limit the liberty which enables our speech freely to provide for its own needs as these are revealed by time. It is these half-educated censors, prompt to protest

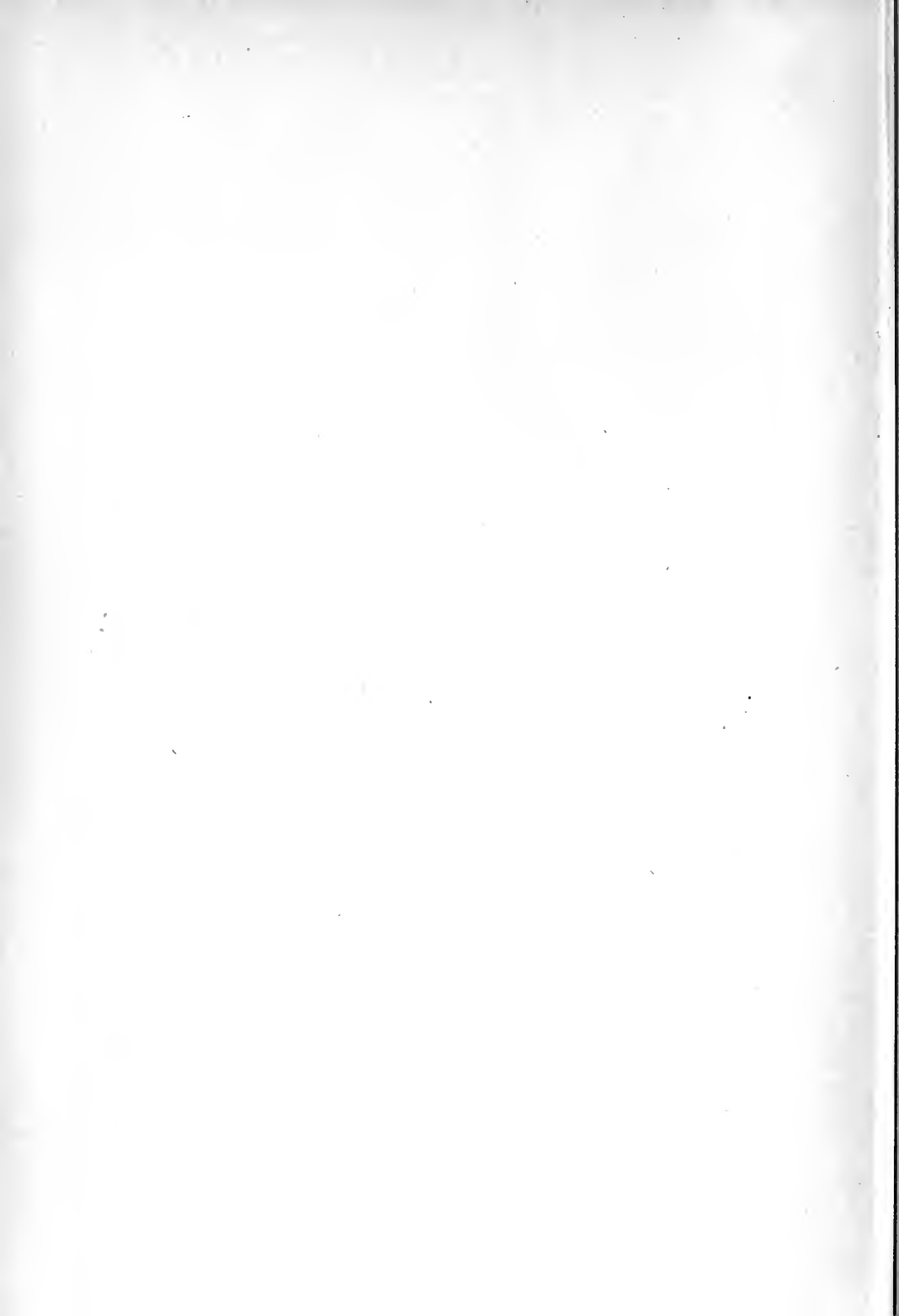
against whatever is novel to them, and swift to set up the standard of a narrow personal experience, who try to curb the development of a language. It cannot be declared too often and too emphatically how fortunate it is that the care of our language and the control of its development is not in the hands even of the most competent scholars. In language, as in politics, the people at large are in the long-run better judges of their own needs than any specialist can be. As Professor Whitney says, "the language would soon be shorn of no small part of its strength if placed exclusively in the hands of any individual or of any class." In the hands of no class would it be enfeebled sooner than if it were given to the guardianship of the pedants and the pedagogues.

I have no desire to be misunderstood myself, and I hope, therefore, that this little paper will not be taken as a plea for license and for lawlessness. I am not advocating the indiscriminate employment of the cheap phrases of the day, the meaningless catchwords which succeed one another in the popular vocabulary. On the contrary, I am glad of a chance to say that "a gentleman and a scholar" is never regardless and never reckless in his use of language.

A sloven in speech is as offensive as a sloven in manners or in dress; and neatness of phrase is as pleasant to the ear as neatness of attire to the eye. A man should choose his words at least as carefully as he chooses his clothes; a hint of the dandy even ~~his~~ unobjectionable, if it be but a hint. But when a man gives his whole mind to his dress, it is generally because he has but little mind to give; and so when a man spends his force wholly in rejecting words and phrases, it is generally because he lacks ideas to express with the words and phrases of which he does approve. In most cases a man can say best what he has to say without lapsing into slang; but the slangy expression which tells us something is better than the immaculate sentence empty of everything but the consciousness of its own propriety.

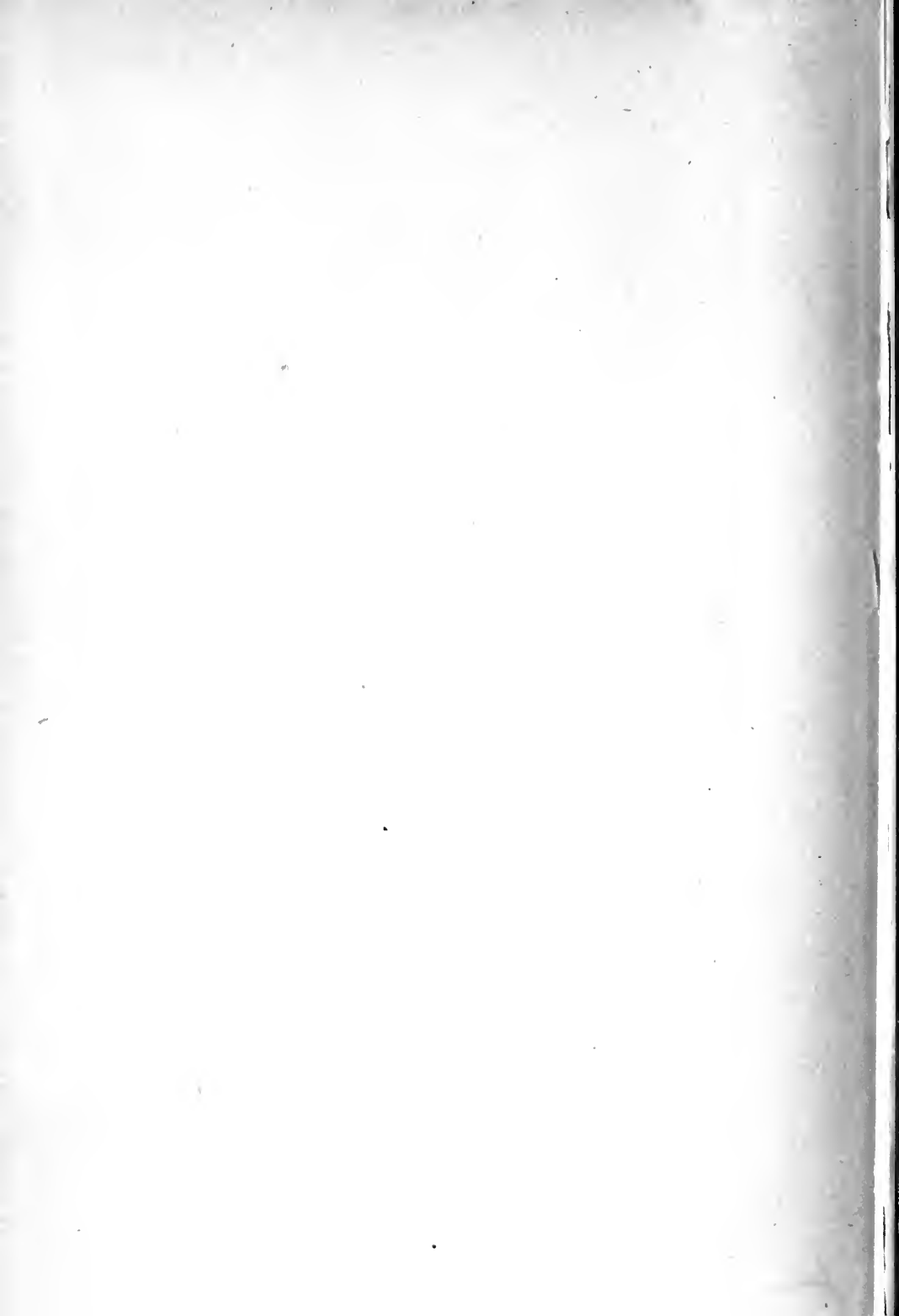












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