A Supplementary English Glossary

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A SUPPLEMENTARY ENGLISH GLOSSARY.

BY

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I have been for some time in the habit of marking in an interleaved copy of Halliwell’s Dictionary references to any of the words noted therein that I may have come across in my reading. I found, however, that even a Dictionary so copious as that had left many terms unrecorded, and about four years ago the idea occurred to me of compiling a Supplementary Glossary.

I determined then not to confine myself to archaic and provincial words, which were what Mr. Halliwell undertook to register, but to insert any expressions, whether old or modern, which were not in the best existing Dictionaries. I chose four as those which I would desire to supplement; that is to say, I decided to exclude from my book (subject to certain exceptions which I shall name immediately) words that were in Richardson’s, or Halliwell’s, or Latham’s Dictionaries, or in Nares’s Glossary as edited by Halliwell and Wright. I further resolved not to go back earlier than the 16th century for my materials.

The exceptional circumstances under which I have thought it expedient to insert words that were already in one or more of the four works that I have mentioned are principally these:—

1. When the word is given, but with no example.
2. When I could adduce a much earlier or later illustration than any supplied in those other Dictionaries. See, e.g., cut = to ‘run,’ ‘crope,’ ‘fisc,’ ‘lope,’ ‘officious,’ ‘partlet,’ ‘scry,’ ‘volve,’ ‘weeds,’ &c., &c.
3. When I have been able to furnish an extract, unnoticed by previous lexicographers, which bears on the history of a word, showing at about what time or under what circumstances it found its way into the language. Thus Latham has the verb to ‘storm’ (a town) with quotations from Dryden and Pope; Richardson only cites the latter; it seemed therefore well worth while to adduce a
passage from Howell in which he says that this expression, together with 'plunder' and the familiar use of "that once abominable word, excise," came in at the time of the Great Rebellion. Similar instances will be found under 'geography,' 'granadier,' 'huzza,' 'loyalty,' 'ministry,' 'prudery,' 'yacht,' &c.

4. When I met with a quotation which marked some sense of a word, differing from that now current, or from the meaning given in the Dictionaries. Thus 'pelf' is explained by both Richardson and Latham as "money, riches," and the former adds, "perhaps applied originally to wealth or riches acquired by pilfering, by petty scrapings, or hoardings." But Puttenham (Arts of Eng. Poesie, 1589) tells us the particular kind of scraps that the word in the first place meant: "Pelfe is properly the scrappes or shreds of taylors and skinners." We may observe a similar connection between tailors' odds and ends and pilfering in the word 'cabbage.'

Again, 'smart,' as applied to dress, is, among educated people at all events, a modern usage. Richardson has no example of it, and the earliest in Latham is from Dickens. But this would be only negative evidence; it is confirmed, however, by the following direct testimony from The Gentleman Instructed, which was published very early in the 18th century:

"Sirrah!" says the youngster, 'make me a smart wig, a smart one, ye dog.' The fellow blest himself; he had heard of a smart nag, a smart man, &c., but a smart wig was Chinese to the tradesman. However, nothing would please his worship but smart shoes, smart hats, and smart cravats: within two days he had a smart wig with a smart price in the box. The truth is, he had been bred up with the groom, and transplanted the stable-dialect into the dressing-room.

I have, of course, been glad also to put down anything that threw light, however little, on any passage in our best authors. Thus under the words 'capon-justice,' 'crants,' and 'equipage' may be found something bearing on certain expressions in Shakespeare. I may take this opportunity of adding another illustration of the last of these terms, which I met with after that sheet had been printed off: "Master Watson . . . whose Amintas and translated Antigone may march in equipage of honour with any of our ancient Poets." (Nashe, Introduction to Greene's Menaphon, p. 14).

I have not meddled with etymology on my own account. My
Glossary does not pretend to be more than a bare catalogue of words with their meanings (where I knew or could ascertain them) and with illustrative examples. I desire to lay stress on this, because while I shall try to receive with proper equanimity strictures on the way in which I have performed even the modest task that I have undertaken, I do not wish to be blamed for not having accomplished objects which it was never in my mind to attempt.

But while, in the matter of etymology, I have refrained from any original effort, I have always been forward to cite extracts which treat of or refer to the derivation of the word for which the passage is quoted. In several cases the etymology may be wrong, or even ridiculous; as when Ascham tells us that "there is nothing worse [waur?] than war, whereof it taketh his name," or when S. Richardson, in the person of Lovelace, says that familiar letter-writing is "writing from the heart (without the fetters prescribed by method or study) as the very word cor-respondence implied." These etymologies, if not useful, are at least entertaining and noteworthy; and indeed in a few instances (e.g. Job, Redshanks, Salic) I have cited derivations that were intended to be jocular.

As regards the quotations generally, I have endeavoured to make the references as exact as possible. In some cases I was only able to give the volume and page of the edition used, but I hope that the plan which I have adopted in the appended List of Authorities will render the verification of the extract possible, while the year of birth and death which I have added to the name of each author will give to the general reader information as to (about) the date of the quotation.

When I first contemplated this Glossary, I did not know that there was any immediate prospect of the Dictionary of the Philological Society being issued. Happily, since then, that scheme has started into new life, and we are led to expect its completion in about eight or ten years time. If there is anything in my book that may be found useful to that important undertaking, I willingly offer it; while there will still remain a large number of words and phrases which, suitable enough in a miscellaneous Glossary like this, would find no place in a regular Dictionary.

I am fully conscious that what I now present to the Public is as a drop in the ocean, but I am not afraid of criticism on the score of my omissions, because all must know that any one man's contri-
bution towards a catalogue of English words must be very imperfect. I am, however, more apprehensive of adverse remark on some of the terms that I have admitted. No one would accuse a man of moroseness or exclusiveness because a very large number of respectable persons might be pointed out of whom he had never taken any notice. It would be well understood that he could not be expected to know everybody, and that probably he would have been well pleased if circumstances had allowed him to make such valuable additions to his acquaintance. If, however, he admitted to his intimacy people of bad or doubtful character, he would justly incur blame. Opinions may differ as to whether I am in this last position.

Several slang expressions will be found in my Glossary. I have not gone out of my way to seek these, but I have not rejected them when they have presented themselves in the pages of books that have an assured place in English literature, as, for example, the novels of Fielding, Dickens, or Thackeray. A great deal of slang is ephemeral, neither preserved nor worth preserving, but when an eminent writer employs it, he bestows on it a species of immortality: indeed it often happens that a slang word in course of years loses its slanginess and becomes a recognised part of the language. It is not the aim of a work like this to form a collection of pure and standard English, but to register and explain any words good or bad, legitimate or illegitimate, which are used in our literature. The compiler is like a census enumerator; his business is to note the names of every one in his district, and to state certain particulars in each case, and this he is bound to do quite irrespective of his private opinion as to the personal qualities of the various individuals with whom he is in this way concerned. The above remarks will also apply, in great measure, to a more respectable class than the preceding—the provincialisms, as to which my practice has been the same.

Several foreign words will be found in the following pages, and exception may be taken to their presence in an English Glossary. My rule has been to include these when they appear to have become naturalised or semi-naturalised, e. g. ‘chiffonière,’ ‘esclandre,’ ‘nonchalance,’ ‘penchant’; or when the writer has seemed to me to use the term with a wish to naturalise it, though his introduction may not have availed to give the stranger any permanent footing among us; e. g. ‘calino’ (Nashe; Dekker); ‘intrado’ (Fuller; Heylin); ‘orange’ (R. North), &c., &c.
Another class of words I may notice;—those which have apparently been coined for the occasion. I have not excluded such expressions; they are often amusing or interesting, and it would be rash in any one case to say that the word is peculiar to the author in whom we first find it. 'Betweenity,' for instance, might be taken for one of Southey's numerous inventions, but Walpole, another great manufacturer of verbal eccentricities, had used it before him. Even when a writer expressly announces a word as coined by himself, we cannot be certain of more than that he was unaware of its having been in circulation. (See 'agreeability,' 'naturalness,' 'regimented,' 'triality,' &c.) Thus then, though many of these issues of the word-mint may be ugly, debased, or intrinsically worthless, they ought yet, I think, to have a place as objects of curiosity in the cabinet of the collector.

I have also had to consider what should be done with words which in their simple form are in the Dictionaries, but which I have found compounded with some prefix as be-, fore-, un-, or some suffix as -able, -less, -ship. I could not discover that the works which I propose to supplement went on any fixed principle in this matter; some of these compounds were inserted; others, equally common, were left out. My general rule has been to admit them.

In addition to isolated words I have, following the example of Nares, Halliwell, and Latham, taken cognizance also of phrases, and even, in some instances, of proverbial sentences. It is of course difficult to draw the line as to what should be included under this head; each case has had to be decided on its own merits and to the best of my judgment.

It only remains to express my cordial thanks to those who have assisted me in my task. My acknowledgments are especially due to Edward Peacock, Esq., author of the Manley and Corringham Glossary, &c., for large contributions of words; to the Rev. W. C. Plenderleath, Rector of Cherhill, Wilts, who carefully read and marked for me three somewhat voluminous works; to Edgar MacCulloch, Esq., of Guernsey, who has often taken much trouble in clearing up points on which I needed information; to the Hon. J. Leicester Warren, who sent me several words, principally from books that are rather out of the ordinary course of reading; and to F. François De Chaumont, Esq., M.D., F.R.S., Professor of Hygiene at Netley Hospital, who added to the kindesses shown me during a
friendship of many years standing, by being always ready to assist me with his large and varied knowledge in ascertaining the meaning of obscure or technical terms.

I have also derived great help from the vast store of information de omni re scibili contained in the five Series of Notes and Queries; from the publications of the English Dialect Society; and from the Chertsey Worthies' Library, edited by Mr. Grosart, and rendered more valuable by the careful Glossarial lists which he has appended to such of the works as are yet completed. This Library is printed for private circulation, only 100 copies of each part being issued. I owe the use of the copy that I have had to the kindness of one of the subscribers, J. E. Bailey, Esq., author of the Life of Fuller.

It will be seen that a few words or phrases are left unexplained. I shall be glad to receive any elucidation of these, or any corrections of errors that may be detected by those who use the book.

T. LEWIS O. DAVIES.
LIST OF AUTHORS QUOTED.

I have only inserted in this list the names of the Authors who are quoted more or less frequently. In other cases the date is generally appended to the extract. Except as regards living writers I have added the date of birth and death, and in some instances the year in which their more important works, or the works most often cited in my Dictionary, appeared. Where a knowledge of the edition used by me would be necessary to enable a reader to verify the reference, the information is given within square brackets.

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