CHAPTER VI

WORDS AND MEANINGS

We have all noticed the fantastic way in which ideas are linked together in our thoughts. One thing suggests another with which it is accidentally associated in memory, the second suggests a third, and, in the course even of a few seconds, we find that we have travelled from one subject to another so remote that it requires an effort to reconstruct the series of links which connects them. The same thing happens with words. A large number of words, despite great changes of sense, retain the fundamental meaning of the original, but in many cases this is quite lost. A truer image than that of the linked chain would be that of a sphere giving off in various directions a number of rays each of which may form the nucleus of a fresh sphere. Or we may say that at each link of the chain there is a possibility of another chain branching off in a direction of its own. In Cotgrave's time to garble (see p. 21) and to canvass, i.e. sift through canvas, meant the same thing. Yet how different is their later sense development.

There is a word ban, found in Old High German and Anglo-Saxon, and meaning, as far back as it can be traced, a proclamation containing a threat, hence a command or prohibition. We have it in banish, to put under the ban. The proclamation idea survives in the banus of marriage and in Fr. arrière-ban, "a prclama-
tion, whereby those that hold authority of the king in mesne tenure, are summoned to assemble, and serve him in his warres” (Cotgrave). This is folk-etymology for Old Fr. arban, Old High Ger. hari-ban, army summons. Slanting off from the primitive idea of proclamation is that of rule or authority. The French for outskirts is banlieue, properly the “circuit of a league, or thereabouts” (Cotgrave) over which the local authority extended. All public institutions within such a radius were associated with ban, e.g., un four, un moulin à ban, “a comon oven or mill whereat all men may, and every tenant and vassall must, bake, and grind” (Cotgrave). The French adjective banal, used in this connection, gradually developed from the meaning of “common” that of “common-place,” in which sense it is now familiar in English.1

Bureau, a desk, was borrowed from French in the 17th century. In modern French it means not only the desk, but also the office itself and the authority exercised by the office. Hence our familiar bureaucracy, likely to become increasingly familiar. The desk was so called because covered with bureau, Old Fr. burel, “a thicke course cloath, of a brown russet, or darke mingled, colour” (Cotgrave), whence Mid. Eng. borel, rustic, clownish, lit. roughly clad, which occurs as late as Spenser—

“How be I am but rude and borel,
Yet nearer ways I know.”
(Shepherd’s Calendar, July, i. 95)

With this we may compare the metaphorical use of home-spun—

“What hempen home-spuns have we swaggering here,
So near the cradle of the fairy queen?”
(Midsummer Night’s Dream, iii. i.)

1 Archaic Eng. banal already existed in the technical sense.
The source of Old Fr. burel is perhaps Lat. burreus, fiery; from Gk. θύρα, fire.

*Romance* was originally an adverb. To write in the vulgar tongue, instead of in classical Latin, was called *romanice scribere*, Old Fr. *romans escrire*. When *romans* became felt as a noun, it developed a "singular" *roman* or *romant*, the latter of which gave the archaic Eng. *romaunt*. The most famous of Old French romances are the epic poems called *Chansons de geste*, songs of exploits, *geste* coming from the Lat. *gesta*, deeds. Eng. *gest* or *jest* is common in the 16th and 17th centuries in the sense of act, deed, and *jest*-book meant a story-book. As the favourite story-books were merry tales, the word gradually acquired its present meaning.

A part of our Anglo-Saxon church vocabulary was supplanted by Latin or French words. Thus Anglo-Sax. *ge-bed*, prayer, was gradually expelled by Old Fr. *prierë* (prière), Lat. *precaria*. It has survived in *beadsman*—

"The beadsman, after thousand aves told,
For aye unsought-for slept among his ashes cold."

(Keats, *Eve of St Agnes*)

*beadroll*, and *bead*, now applied only to the humble device employed in counting prayers.

Not only the Romance languages, but also German and Dutch, adopted, with the Roman character, Lat. *scribere*, to write. English, on the contrary, preserved the native to *write*, *i.e.* to scratch (runes), giving to *scribere* only a limited sense, to *shrive*. The curious change of meaning was perhaps due to the fact that the priestly absolution was felt as having the validity of a "written" law or enactment.

The meaning which we generally give to *pudding*, is comparatively modern. The older sense appears in *black pudding*, a sausage made of pig's blood. This
is also the meaning of Fr. *boudin*, whence *pudding* comes. A still older meaning of both words is intestine, a sense still common in dialect. The derivation of the word is obscure, but it is probably related to Fr. *bouder*, to pout, whence *boudoir*, lit. a sulking-room.

A *hearse*, now the vehicle in which a coffin is carried, is used by Shakespeare for a coffin or tomb. Its earlier meaning is a framework to support candles, usually put round the coffin at a funeral. This framework was so named from some resemblance to a harrow, Fr. *herse*, Lat. *hirpex*, *hirpic*—a rake.

*Treacle* is a stock example of great change of meaning. It is used in Coverdale's Bible (1535) for the "*balm in Gilead*" of the Authorised Version—

"There is no more *treacle* at Galaad."*  (Jeremiah, vii. 22.)

Old Fr. *treacle* is from Greco-Lat. *thériaca*, a remedy against poison or snake-bite (*θῆρος*, a wild beast). In Mid. English and later it was used of a sovereign remedy. It has, like *sirup* (p. 146), acquired its present meaning via the apothecary's shop.

A *stickler* is now a man who is fussy about small points of etiquette or procedure. In Shakespeare he is one who parts combatants—

"The dragon wing of night o'erspreads the earth,
And, *stickler*-like, the armies separates."

(*Troilus and Cressida*, v. 8.)

An earlier sense is that of seeing fair-play. The word has been popularly associated with the *stick*, or staff used by the umpires in duels, and Torriano gives:

1 This is the usual explanation. But Fr. *hers* also acquired the meaning "portcullis," the pointed bars of which were naturally likened to the blades of a harrow; and it seems possible that it is to this later sense that we owe the older English meaning of *hearse* (see p. 154).

3 "Numquid *revisae* non est in Galaad?" (*Vulgate.*)
stickler as one of the meanings of bastoniere, a verger or mace-bearer. But it probably comes from Mid. Eng. stighlen, to arrange, keep order (see p. 172, n. 2).

Infantry comes, through French, from Italian. It means a collection of "infants" or juniors, so called by contrast with the proved veterans who composed the cavalry.

The pastern of a horse, defined by Dr Johnson as the knee, from "ignorance, madam, pure ignorance," still means in Cotgrave and Florio "shackle." Florio even recognises a verb to pastern, e.g., pastoiaire, "to fetter, to clog, to shake, to pastern, to give (gyve)." It comes from Old Fr. pasturon (paturon), a derivative of pasture, such shackles being used to prevent grazing horses from straying. Pester (p. 167) is connected with it. The modern Fr. paturon has changed its meaning in the same way.

To rummage means in the Elizabethan navigators to stow goods in a hold. A rummager was what we call a stevedore. Rummage is Old Fr. arrumage (arrimage), from arrumer, to stow, the middle syllable of which is probably cognate with English room; cf. arranger, to put in "rank."

The Christmas waits were originally watchmen, Anglo-Fr. waite, Old Fr. gait, from the Old High German form of modern Ger. Wacht, watch. Modern French still has the verb guetter, to lie in wait for, and guet, the watch. Minstrel comes from an Old French derivative of Lat. minister, servant. Modern Fr. minstrier is only used of a country fiddler who attends village weddings.

The lumber-room is supposed to be for Lombard room, i.e., the room in which pawnbrokers used to store

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1 A Spanish word, Lat. stevedore, "one that stoppeth chinkes" (Cooper). It came to England in connection with the wool trade.
pledged property. The Lombards introduced into this country the three balls, said to be taken from the arms of the Medici family.

*Livery* is correctly explained by the poet Spenser—

"What *livery* is, we by common use in England know well enough, namely, that it is allowance of horse-meat, as they commonly use the word in stabling; as, to keep horses at *livery*; the which word, I guess, is derived of *livering* or *delivering* forth their nightly food. So in great houses, the *livery* is said to be served up for all night, that is, their evening allowance for drink; and *livery* is also called the upper weed (see p. 2) which a serving-man wears; so called, as I suppose, for that it was *delivered* and *taken* from him at pleasure." (View of the State of Ireland.)

This passage explains also livery stable. Our word comes from Fr. *livrée*, the feminine past participle of *livrer*, from Lat. *liberare*, to *deliver*.

*Pedigree* was in Mid. English *pedegrew*, *petigrew*, etc. It represents Old Fr. *pie* (*pied*) *de grue*, crane's foot, from the shape of a sign used in showing lines of descent in genealogical charts. The older form survives in the family name *Pettigrew*. Here it is a nickname, like *Pettifer* (*pied de fer*), iron-foot; cf. *Sheepshanks*.

*Fairy* is a collective, Fr. *féerie*, its modern use being perhaps due to its occurrence in such phrases as *Faerie Queen*, i.e., Queen of Fairyland. Cf. *paynim*, used by some poets for *pagan*, but really a doublet of *paganism*, occurring in *paynim host*, *paynim knight*, etc. The correct name for the individual *fairy* is *fay*, Fr. *fée*, Vulgar Lat. *fata*, connected with *fatum*, *fate*. This appears in Ital. *fata*, "a fairie, a witch, an enchantress, an else" (Florio). The *fata morgana*, the mirage some-

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1 In "livery and bait" there is pleonasm. *Bait*, connected with *bite*, is the same word as in *bear-baiting* and fishermen's *bait*. We have it also, see Old French, in *abet*, whence the aphetic *bet*, originally to egg on.
times seen in the Strait of Messina, is attributed to the
fairy Morgana of Tasso, the Morgan le Fay of our own
Arthurian legends.

Many people must have wondered at some time
why the clubs and spades on cards are so called. The
latter figure, it is true, bears some resemblance to a
spade, but no giant of fiction is depicted with a club
with a triple head. The explanation is that we have
adopted the French pattern, carreau (see p. 161), diamond,
cœur, heart, pique, pike, spear-head, trèfle, trefoil, clover-
leaf, but have given to the two latter the names used
in the Italian and Spanish pattern, which, instead of the
pike and trefoil, has the sword (Ital. spada) and mace
(Ital. bastone). Etymologically both spades are identical,
the origin being Greco-Lat. spatha, the name of a number
of blade-shaped objects; cf. the diminutive spatula.

Wafer, in both its senses, is related to Ger. Wabe,
honeycomb. We find Anglo-Fr. wafre in the sense of
a thin cake, perhaps stamped with a honeycomb pattern.
The cognate Fr. gaufre is the name of a similar cake,
which not only has the honeycomb pattern, but is also
largely composed of honey. Hence our verb to goffer,
to give a cellular appearance to a frill.

The meanings of adjectives are especially subject
to change. Quaint now conveys the idea of what is
unusual, and, as early as the 17th century, we find
it explained as "strange, unknown." This is the
exact opposite of its original meaning, Old Fr. cointe,
Lat. cognitus; cf. acquaint, Old Fr. acointier, to make
known. It is possible to trace roughly the process by
which this remarkable volte-face has been brought
about. The intermediate sense of trim or pretty is
common in Shakespeare—

"For a fine, quaint, graceful, and excellent fashion, yours is
worth ten on't." (Mith. Ade, iii. 4.)
MEANINGS OF ADJECTIVES

We apply *restive* to a horse that will not stand still. It means properly a horse that will not do anything else. Fr. *rétif*, Old Fr. *restif*, from *rester*, to remain, Lat. *re-stare*, has kept more of the original sense of stubbornness. Scot. *reest*, *reist*, means to stand stock-still.

"Certain it was that Shagram *reisted*, and I ken Martin thinks he saw something." *(Monastick*, Ch. 4.)

Dryden even uses *restive* in the sense of sluggish—

"So James the drowsy genius wakes
Of Britain, long entranced in charms,
*Restive*, and slumbering on its arms."

*(Threnodia Augustalis.)*

*Reasty*, used of meat that has "stood" too long, is the same word, (cf. *testy*, Old Fr. *testif*, heady), and *rusty* bacon is probably folk-etymology for *reasty* bacon—

"And then came haltyng Jone,
And brought a gambone
Of bakon that was *reasty*."

*(Skelton, Elynour Run. nyng.)*

*Sterling* has an obscure history. It is from Old Fr. *esterlin*, a coin which etymologists have until lately connected with the *Easterlings*, or Hanse merchants, who formed one of the great mercantile communities of the Middle Ages; and perhaps some such association is responsible for the meaning that *sterling* has acquired; but chronology shows this traditional etymology to be impossible. We find *unus sterlingus* in a medieval Latin document of 1184, and the Old Fr. *esterlin* occurs in Wace's *Roman de Rou* (Romaunt of Rollo the Sea King), which was written before 1175. Hence it is conjectured that the original coin may have been stamped with a *star* or a *starling*. 
When Horatio says—

"It is a nipping and an eager air." (Hamlet, i. 4.)

we are reminded that eager is identical with the second part of vin-egan, Fr. aigré, sour, Lat. acer, keen. It seems hardly possible to explain the modern sense of nice, which in the course of its history has traversed nearly the whole diatonic scale between "rotten" and "ripping." In Mid. English and Old French it means foolish. Cotgrave explains it by "lither, lazie, sloathful, idle; faint, slack; dull, simple," and Shakespeare uses it in a great variety of meanings. It is supposed to come from Lat. nescius, ignorant. The transition from fond, foolish, which survives in "fond hopes," to fond, loving, is easy. French fou is used in exactly the same way. Cf. also to dote on, i.e., to be foolish about. Pumy is Fr. pulné, from puis né, later born, junior, whence the puisne justices. Milton uses it of a minor—

"He must appear in print like a pumy with his guardian."

(Areopagitica.)

Petty, Fr. petit, was similarly used for a small boy.

In some cases a complimentary adjective loses its true meaning and takes on a contemptuous or ironic sense. None of us care to be called bland, and to describe a man as worthy is to apologise for his existence. We may compare Fr. bonhomme, which now means generally an old fool, and bonne femme, good-wife, goody. Dapper, the Dutch for brave (cf. Ger. tapfer), and pert, Mid. Eng. apert, representing in meaning Lat. expertus, have changed much since Milton wrote of—

"The pert fairies and the dapper elves." (Comus, l. 118.)

Pert seems in fact to have acquired the meaning of its opposite malapert, though the older sense of brisk, sprightly, survives in dialect—
INFLUENCE OF ASSOCIATION

“He looks spry and peart for once.”
(Phillpotts, American Prisoner, Ch. 3.)

Smug, cognate with Ger. schmuck, trim, elegant, beautiful, has its original sense in Shakespeare—

“And here the smug and silver Trent shall run
In a new channel, fair and evenly.”

(1 Henry IV., iii. 1.)

The degeneration of an adjective is sometimes due to its employment for euphemistic purposes. The favourite substitute for fat is stout, properly strong, dauntless, etc., cognate with Ger. stolz, proud. Precisely the same euphemism appears in French, e.g., “une dame un peu forte.” Ugly is replaced in English by plain, and in American by homely—

“She is not so handsome as these, maybe, but her homeliness is not actually alarming.” (MAX ADELER, Mr Skinner’s Night in the Underworld.)

In the case of this word, as in many others, the American use preserves a meaning which was once common in English. Kersey’s Dictionary (1720) explains homely as “ugly, disagreeable, course (coarse), mean.”

Change of meaning may be brought about by association. A miniature is a small portrait, and we even use the word as an adjective meaning small, on a reduced scale. But the true sense of miniature is something painted in minium, red lead. Florio explains miniatura as “a limning (see p. 63), a painting with vermillion.” Such paintings were usually small, hence the later meaning. The word was first applied to the ornamental red initial capitals in manuscripts. Vignette still means technically in French an interlaced vine-

1 Hence the use of stout for a “strong” beer. Porter was once the favourite tap of porters, and a mixture of stout and ale, now known as cooper, was especially relished by the brewery cooper.
pattern on a frontispiece. Cotgrave has *vignettes; vignets; branches, or branch-like borders, or flourishes in painting, or ingravery."

The degeneration in the meaning of a noun may be partly due to frequent association with disparaging adjectives. Thus *hussy*, i.e. housewife, *quean, woman, wench, child, have absorbed such adjectives as impudent, idle, light, saucy, etc. Shakespeare uses *quean* only three times, and these three include "cozening quean" (*Merry Wives*, iv. 2) and "scolding quean" (*All's Well*, ii. 2). With *wench*, still used without any disparaging sense by country folk, we may compare Fr. *garce*, lass, and Ger. *Dirne*, maid-servant, both of which are now insulting epithets, but, in the older language, could be applied to Joan of Arc and the Virgin Mary respectively. *Garce* was replaced by *fille*, which has acquired in its turn a meaning so offensive that it has now given way to *jeune fille*. *Minx*, earlier *minkes*, is probably the Low Ger. *minsk*, Ger. *Mensch*, lit. human, but used also in the sense of "wench." For the consonantal change cf. *hunks*, Dan. *hundsk*, stingy, lit. doggish. These examples show that the indignant "Who are you calling a *woman*?" is, philologically, in all likelihood a case of intelligent anticipation.

Adjectives are affected in their turn by being regularly coupled with certain nouns. A *buxom* helpmate was once obedient, the word being cognate with Ger. *biqsam*, flexible, yielding—

"The place where thou and Death
Shall dwell at ease, and up and down unseen
Wing silently the *buxom* air."

(*Paradise Lost*, ii. 340.)

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1 Folk-etymology for *frontispice*, Lat. *frontispicium*, front view.
2 Related to, but not identical with, *quean."
BUXOM—PLUCK.  83

An obedient nature is "buxom, blithe and debonair," qualities which affect the physique and result in heartiness of aspect and a comely plumpness. An arch damsel is etymologically akin to an archbishop, both descending from the Greek prefix ἀρχάς, from ἀρχή, a beginning, first cause. Shakespeare uses arch as a noun—

"The noble duke my master,
My worthy arch and patron comes to-night."
(Lear, ii. 1.)

Occurring chiefly in such phrases as arch enemy, arch heretic, arch hypocrite, arch rogue, it acquired a depreciatory sense, which has now become so weakened that archness is not altogether an unpleasing attribute. We may compare the cognate German prefix Erz. Ludwig has, as successive entries, Erz-dieb, "an arch-thief, an arrant thief," and Erz-engel, "an arch-angel." The meaning of arrant is almost entirely due to association with "thief." It means lit. wandering, vagabond, so that the arrant thief is nearly related to the knight errant, and to the Justices in eyre, Old Fr. eire, Lat. iter, a way, journey. Fr. errer, to wander, stray, is compounded of Vulgar Lat. iterare, to journey, and Lat. errare, to stray, and it would be difficult to calculate how much of each enters into the composition of le Juif errant.

As I have suggested above, association accounts to some extent for changes of meaning, but the process is in reality more complex, and usually a number of factors are working together or in opposition to each other. A low word may gradually acquire right of citizenship. "That article blackguardly called pluck" (Scott) is now much respected. It is the same word as pluck, the heart, liver, and lungs of an animal—

"During the Crimean war, plucky, signifying courageous, seemed likely to become a favourite term in Mayfair, even among the ladies." (HOTTON'S Slang Dictionary, 1864.)
Having become respectable, it is now replaced in sporting circles by the more emphatic guts, which reproduces the original metaphor. A word may die out in its general sense, surviving only in some special meaning. Thus the poetic sward, scarcely used except with “green,” meant originally the skin or crust of anything. It is cognate with Ger. Schwarte, “the sward, or rind, of a thing” (Ludwig), which now means especially bacon-rind. Related words may meet with very different fates in kindred languages. Eng. knight is cognate with Ger. Knecht, servant, which had, in Mid. High German, a wide range of meanings, including “warrior, hero.” There is no more complimentary epithet than knightly, while Ger. knechtisch means servile. The degeneration of words like boor,\(^1\) churl, farmer, is a familiar phenomenon (cf. villain, p. 150). The same thing has happened to blackguard, the modern meaning of which bears hardly on a humble but useful class. The name black guard was given collectively to the kitchen detachment of a great man’s retinue. The scavenger has also come down in the world, rather an unusual phenomenon in the case of official titles. The medieval scavager\(^2\) was an important official who seems to have been originally a kind of inspector of customs. He was called in Anglo-French scavageour, from the noun scavage, showing. The Old French dialect verb escauwer is of Germanic origin and cognate with Eng. show and Ger. schauen, to look. The cheater, now usually cheat, probably deserved his fate. The escheators looked after escheats, i.e., estates or property that lapsed and were forfeited. The origin of

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\(^1\) The older meaning of boor survives in the compound neighbour, i.e., worth boor, the farmer near at hand. Du. boer is of course the same word.

\(^2\) English regularly inserts a in words thus formed; cf. harbinger, messenger, passenger, pottinger, etc.
the word is Old Fr. escheoir (échoir), to fall due, Vulgar Lat. ex cadère for cadère. Their reputation was unsavoury, and cheat has already its present meaning in Shakespeare. He also plays on the double meaning—

"I will be cheater to them both, and they shall be exchequers to me." (Merry Wives, i. 3.)

Beldam implies "hag" as early as Shakespeare, but he also uses it in its proper sense of "grandmother," e.g., Hotspur refers to "old beldam earth" and "our grandam earth" in the same speech (I Henry IV., iii. 1), and Milton speaks of "beldam nature"—

"Then sing of secret things that came to pass
When Beldam Nature in her cradle was."

(Vacation Exercise, l. 46.)

It is of course from belle-dame, used in Mid. English for grandmother, as belsire was for grandfather. Hence it is a doublet of belladonna. The masculine belsire survives as a family name, Belcher; and to Jim Belcher, most gentlemanly of prize-fighters, we owe the belcher handkerchief, which had large white spots with a dark blue dot in the centre of each on a medium blue ground. It was also known to the "fancy" as a "bird's-eye wipe."

1 Other forms of the same name are Bouwer and Bewsher. The form Belcher is Picard—

"On as somme la pauvre bête.
Un manant lui coupa le pied droit et la tête.
Le seigneur du village à sa porte les mit ;
Et ce dicton picard à l'entour fut écrit : 'Biaux chires leups, n'écoutez mie
Mère tanchent (grondant) chen feux (son fils) qui crie.'" (La Fontaine, Fables, iv. 16.)
CHAPTER VII

SEMANTICS

The convenient name semantics has been applied of late to the science of meanings, as distinguished from phonetics, the science of sound. The comparative study of languages enables us to observe and codify the general laws which govern sense development, and to understand why meanings become, extended or restricted. One phenomenon which seems to occur normally in language results from what we may call the simplicity of the olden times. Thus the whole vocabulary which is etymologically related to writing and books has developed from an old Germanic verb that means to scratch and the Germanic name for the beech. Our earliest books were wooden tablets on which inscriptions were scratched. The word book itself comes from Anglo-Sax. böc, beech; cf. Ger. Buchstabe, letter, lit. beech-stave. Lat. liber, book, whence a large family of words in the Romance languages, means the inner bark of a tree, and bible is ultimately from Greek βύβλος, the inner rind of the papyrus, the Egyptian rush from which paper was made.¹

The earliest measurements were calculated from the human body. All European languages use the foot, and

¹ Parchment (see p. 49) was invented as a substitute when the supply of papyrus failed.
we still measure horses by hands, while span survives in table-books. Cubit is Latin for elbow, the first part of which is the same as all, cognate with Lat. ulna, also used in both senses. Fr. brasse, fathom, is Lat. brachia, the two arms, and pounce, thumb, means inch. A further set of measures are represented by simple devices: a yard\(^1\) is a small "stick," and the rod, pole, or perch (cf. perch for birds, Fr. perch\(_f\) pole) which gives charm to our arithmetic is a larger one. A furlong is a furrow-long. For weights common objects were used, e.g., a grain, or a scruple, Lat. scrupulus, "a little sharpe stone falling sometime into a man's shooe" (Cooper), for very small things, a stone for heavier goods. Gk. δραχμα, whence our dram, means a handful. Our decimal system is due to our possession of ten digits, or fingers, and calculation comes from Lat. calculus, a pebble.

A modern Chancellor of the Exchequer, considering his budget, is not so near the reality of things as his medieval predecessor, who literally sat in his counting-house, counting up his money. For the exchequer named from the Old Fr. eschequier (échiquier), chess-board, was once the board marked out in squares on which the treasurer reckoned up with counters the king's taxes. This Old Fr. eschequier, which has also given chequer, is a derivative of Old Fr. eschec (échec), check. Thus "check trousers" and a "chequered career" are both directly related to an eastern potentate (see chess, p. 120.) The

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\(^1\) The "stick" meaning survives in the yards of a ship. Yard was once the general word for rod, wand. Thus the "cheating yardwound" of Tennyson's "smooth-faced subdued rogue" (Maud, l. i. 16) is a pleonasm of the same type as greyhound (p. 135). Yard, an enclosure, is a separate word, related to garden. The doublet garth, used in the Eastern counties, is of Scandinavian origin—

"I climb'd to the top of the garth, and stood by the road at the gate."
(TENNYSON, The Grandmother, l. 33.)
chancellor himself was originally a kind of door-keeper in charge of a chancel, a latticed barrier which we now know in church architecture only. Chancel is derived, through Fr. chancel or cancel, from Lat. cancellus, a cross-bar, occurring more usually in the plural in the sense of lattice, grating. We still cancel a document by drawing such a pattern on it. In German cancellus has given Kanzel, pulpit. The budget, now a document in which millions are mere items, was the chancellor’s little bag or purse—

“If tinkers may have leave to live,
   And bear the sow-skin budget,
Then my account I well may give,
   And in the stocks avouch it.”

(Winter's Tale, iv. 2.)

Fr. bougette, from which it is borrowed, is a diminutive of bouge, a leathern bag, which comes from Lat. bulga, “a male or bouget of leather; a purse; a bagge” (Cooper). Modern French has borrowed back our budget, together with several other words dealing with business and finance.

Among the most important servants of the exchequer were the controllers. We now call them officially comptroller, through a mistaken association with Fr. compte, account. The controller had charge of the counter-rolls (cf. counterfoil), from Old Fr. contre-rolle, “the copy of a role (of accounts, etc.), a parallell of the same quality and content, with the originall” (Cotgrave). In French contrôle has preserved the sense of supervision or verification which it has lost in ordinary English.

A very ancient functionary of the exchequer, the tally-cutter, was abolished in the reign of George III. Tallies (Fr. tailler, to cut) were sticks “scored” across in such a way that the notches could be compared for
purposes of verification. Jack Cade preferred those good old ways—

"Our fore-fathers had no other books but the score and the tally; thou hast caused books to be used."

(2 Henry VI., iv. 7.)

This rudimentary method of calculation was still in use in the Kentish hop-gardens within fairly recent times; and some of us can remember very old gentlemen asking us, after a cricket match, how many "notches" we had "scored"—

"The scorers were prepared to notch the runs."

(Pickwick, Ch. 7.)

This use of score, for a reckoning in general, or for twenty, occurs in Anglo-Saxon, but the word is Scandinavian. The words score and tally, originally of identical meaning, were soon differentiated, a common phenomenon in such cases. For the exchequer tally was substituted an "indented cheque receipt." An indenture, chiefly familiar to us in connection with apprenticeship, was a duplicate document of which the "indented" or toothed edges had to correspond like the notches of the score or tally. Cheque, earlier check, is identical with check, rebuff. The metaphor is from the game of chess (see p. 120), to check a man's accounts involving a sort of control, or pulling up short, if necessary. A cheque is a method of payment which makes "checking" easy. The modern spelling is due to popular association with exchequer, which is etymologically right, though the words have reached their modern functions by very different paths.

The development of the meaning of chancellor can be paralleled in the case of many other functionaries, once humble but now important. The titles of two great medieval officers, the constable and the marshal, mean
the same thing. Constable, Old Fr. conestable (conétâble), is Lat. comes stabuli, stable fellow. Marshal, the first element of which is cognate with mare, while the second corresponds to modern Ger. Schalk, rascal, expresses the same idea in German. Both constable and marshal are now used of very high positions, but Policeman X. and the farrier-marshal, or shoeing-smith, of a troop of cavalry, remind them of the base degrees by which they did ascend. The Marshalsea where Little Dorrit lived is for marshalsy, marshals' office, etc. The steward, or sty-ward, looked after his master's pigs. He rose in importance until, by the marriage of Marjorie Bruce to Walter the Stewart of Scotland, he founded the most picturesque of royal houses. The chamberlain, as his name suggests, attended to the royal comforts long before he became a judge of wholesome literature.

All these names now stand for a great number of functions of varying importance. Other titles which are equally vague are sergeant (see p. 148) and usher, Old Fr. nissier (huissier), lit. door-keeper, Lat. ostiarius, a porter. Another official was the harbinger, who survives only in poetry. He was a forerunner, or vauntcourier, who preceded the great man to secure him "harbourage" for the night, and his name comes from Old Fr. herberger (héberger), to shelter (see p. 164). As late as the reign of Charles II. we read that—

"On the removal of the court to pass the summer at Winchester, Bishop Ken's house, which he held in the right of his prebend, was marked by the harbinger for the use of Mrs Eleanor Gwyn; but he refused to grant her admittance, and she was forced to seek for lodgings in another place."

(HAWKINS, Life of Bishop Ken.)

1 As Old Fr. nissier has given usher, I would suggest that the family names Lush and Lusher, which Barlow (Dict. of English Surnames) gives up, are for Old Fr. Leu (cf. Leporte) and Pesier. In modern French Lhuissier is not an uncommon name.
PARALLEL METAPHORS

One of the most interesting branches of semantics, and the most useful to the etymologist, deals with the study of parallel metaphors in different languages. We have seen (p. 29) how, for instance, the names of flowers show that the same likeness has been observed by various races. The spice called clove and the clove-pink both belong to Lat. clavus, a nail. The German for pink is Nelke, a Low German diminutive, nögelin, of Nagel, nail. The spice, or Gewürznelke, is called in South Germany Nägel le, little nail. A clove of garlic is quite a separate word; but, as it has some interesting cognates, it may be mentioned here. It is so called because the bulb cleaves naturally into segments. The German name is Knoblauch, for Mid. High Ger. klobelouch, clove-leek, by dissimilation of one l. The Dutch doublet is kloof, a chasm, gully, familiar in South Africa.

Fr. poison, Lat. potio, potion-, a drink, and Ger. Giftpoison, lit. gift, seem to date from treacherous times. On the other hand, Ger. Geschenk, a present, means something poured out (see muncheon, p. 124), while a tip is in French pourboire and in German Trinkgeld, even when accepted by a lifelong abstainer. In English we "ride a hobby," i.e., a hobby-horse, or wooden horse. German has the same metaphor, "ein Steckenpferd reiten," and French says "ensfourcher un-dada," i.e., to bestride a gee-gee. Hobby, for Mid. Eng. hobin, a nag, was a proper name for a horse. Like Dobbin and Robin, it belongs to the numerous progeny of Robert.

In some cases the reason for a metaphor is not quite clear to the modern mind. The bloodthirsty weasel is called in French belette, little beauty, in Italian

1 The onion, Fr. oignon, Lat. cibium, union-, is so named because successive skins form an harmonious one-ness. It is a doublet of union.

2 Perhaps a diminutive of Cymric bea, marten, but felt as from Fr. belle.
donnola, in Portuguese doninha, little lady, in Spanish comadreja, gossip (Fr. commère, Scot. cummer, p. 94), in Bavarian Schönstierlein, beautiful little animal, in Danish kjonne, beautiful, and in older English fair. From Lat. medius we get mediastinus, "a drudge (drudge) or lubber to do all vile service in the house; a kitching slave" (Cooper). Why this drudge should have a name implying a middle position I cannot say; but to-day in the North of England a maid-of-all-work is called a tweeny (between maid).

A stock semantic parallel occurs in the relation between age and respectability. All of us, as soon as we get to reasonable maturity, lay great stress on the importance of deference to "elders." It follows naturally that many titles of more or less dignity should be evolved from this idea of seniority. The Eng. alderman is obvious. Priest, Qld Fr. prêtre (prêtre), from Gk. πρεσβύτερος, comparative of πρεσβύς, old, is not so obvious. In the Romance languages we have a whole group of words, e.g., Fr. sire, sieur, seigneur, Ital. signor, Span. señor, with their compounds monsieur, messer, etc. all representing either senior or seniorem. Ger. Eltern, parents, is the plural comparative of alt, old, and the first element of seneschal (see marshal, p. 90) is cognate with Lat. senex. From Fr. sire comes Eng. sir, and from this was formed the adjective sirly; now spelt surly, which in Shakespeare still means haughty, arrogant—

"See how the surly Warwick mans the wall."

(3 Henry VI., v. i.)

1 Dozens of similar names for the weasel could be collected from the European languages and dialects. It is probable that these complimentary names were propitiatory, the weasel being an animal regarded with superstitious dread.

2 Cf. Prester John, the fabulous priest monarch of Ethiopia.

3 Cf. lordly, princely, etc., and Ger. herrsach, imperative, from Herr, sir.
A list, in the sense of enumeration, is a "strip." The cognate German word is Leiste, border. We have the original meaning in "list slippers." Fr. bordereau, a list, which became very familiar in connection with the Dreyfus case, is a diminutive of bord, edge. Label is the same word as Old Fr. lambel (lambeau), rag. Scroll is an alteration, perhaps due to roll, of Mid. Eng. scrow or escrow, from Old Fr. escroue,¹ rag, shred. Docket, earlier dogget, is from an old Italian diminutive of doga, cask-stave, which meant a bendlet in heraldry. Schedule is a diminutive of Lat. scheda, "a sc Rowe" (Cooper), properly a strip of papyrus. Ger. Zettel, bill, ticket, is the same word. Thus all these words, more or less kindred in meaning, can be reduced to the primitive notion of strip or scrap.

Farce, from French, means stuffing. The verb to farce, which represents Lat. farcire, survives in the perverted force-meat. A parallel is satire, from Lat. satura (lanx), a full dish, hence a medley. Somewhat similar is the modern meaning of magazine, a "storehouse" of amusement or information.

The closest form of intimacy is represented by community of board and lodging, or, in older phraseology, "bed and board." Companion, with its related words, belongs to Vulgar Lat. companio, companion, bread-sharer. The same idea is represented by the pleonastic Eng. messmate, the second part of which, mate, is related to meat. Mess, food, Old Fr. mes (mets), Lat. missum, is in modern English only military or naval, but was once the usual name for a dish of food—

"Herbs and other country messes
Which the neat-handed Phillis dresses."

(Allegro, l. 85.)

Another related word is Fr. matelot, earlier matenot,

¹ Modern Fr. escrow is used only in the sense of prison register.
representing Du. *maat*, meat, and *genoot*, a companion. The latter word is cognate with Ger. *Genosse*, a companion, from *geniessen*, to enjoy or use together. In early Dutch we find also *mattegenoet*, through popular association with *mattes*, hammock, one hammock serving, by a Box and Cox arrangement, for two sailors.

*Comrade* is from Fr. *camarade*, and this from Span. *camarada*, originally a "room-full," called in the French army *une chambrelle*. This corresponds to Ger. *Geselle*, comrade, from *Saal*, room. The reduction of the collective to the individual is paralleled by Ger. *Bursche*, fellow, from Mid. High Ger. *burse*, college hostel; cf. *Frauensimmer*, wench, lit. women’s room. It can hardly be doubted that *chum* is a corrupted clip from *chamber-fellow*. It is thus explained in a *Dictionary of the Canting Crew* (1690), within a few years of its earliest recorded occurrence, and the reader will remember Mr Pickwick’s introduction to the *chummage* system in the Fleet (Ch. 42).

English *gossip*, earlier *god-sib*, related in God, a sponsor, soon developed the subsidiary meanings of boon companion, crony, tippler, babbler, etc., all of which are represented in Shakespeare. The case of Fr. *compère* and *commère*, godfather and godmother, is

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1 The vowel is not so great a difficulty as it might appear, and we actually have the same change in *comrade* itself, formerly pronounced *camrada*. In the London pronunciation the *u* of such words as *but*, *cup*, *hurry*, etc., represents roughly a continental short *o*. This fact, familiar to phoneticians but disbelieved by others, is one of the first peculiarities noted by foreigners beginning to learn English. It is quite possible that *chum* is an accidental spelling for *cham*, just as we write *bungalow* for *bongla* (Bengal), *pandit* for *pandhit*, and *Punjab* for *Pangab*, five rivers, whence also probably the liquid called *punch*, from its five ingredients. Cf. also American to *slug*, i.e. to *slag*, which appears to represent Du. *slag*, blow—"That was for slacking the guard" (Kipling, *An Error in the Fourth Dimension*)—and the adjective *bluff*, from obsolete Du. *blaf*, broad-faced.
similar. Cotgrave explains commère as "gossiping; the acquaintance, affinity, or league that growes betweene women by christning a child together, or one for another." Ger. Gevatter, godfather, has also acquired the sense of Fr. bonhomme (p. 80), Eng. daddy. From commère comes Scot. cummer or kimmer—

"A canty quean was Kate, and a special cummer of my ain."

(Monastery, Ch. 8.)

While christenings led to cheerful garrulity, the wilder fun of weddings has given the Fr. faire la noce, to go on the spree. In Ger. Hochzeit, wedding, lit. high time, we have a converse development of meaning.

Parallel sense development in different languages sometimes gives us a glimpse of the life of our ancestors. Our verb to curry (leather) comes from Old Fr. correr\(^1\) (courroyer), to make ready, put in order, which represents a theoretical con-red-are, the root syllable of which is Germanic and cognate with our ready. Ger. gerben, to tan, Old High Ger. garaven, to make ready, is a derivative of gar, ready complete, now used only as an adverb meaning "quite," but cognate with our yare—

"Our ship—
Which, but three glasses since, we gave out split—
Is tight, and yare, and bravely rigg'd."

(Tempest, v. i.)

Both curry and gerben must have acquired their restricted meaning at a time when there was literally nothing like leather.

Even in slang we find the same parallelism exemplified. We call an old-fashioned watch a turnip. In German it is called Zwiebel, onion, and in French oignon. Eng. greenhorn likens an inexperienced person to an

\(^1\) Array, Old Fr. errer, is related.
animal whose horns have just begun to sprout. In Ger. Gelbschnabel, yellow-bill, and Fr. bec-jaune, we have the metaphor of the fledgling. Ludwig explains Gelbschnabel by “chitty-face,” chit, cognate with kit-ten, being a general term in Mid. English for a young animal. From bec-jaune we have archaic Scot. beejam, university freshman. Cotgrave spells the French word bejaune, and gives, as he usually does for such words, a very full gloss, which happens, by exception, to be quotable—

“A novice; a late prentice to, or young beginner in, a trade, or art; also, a simple, ignorant, unexperienced, asse; a rude, unfashioned, home-bred hoydon; a sot, ninny, doubt, noddy; one that’s blankt, and hath nought to say, when he hath most need to speake.”

The Englishman intimates that a thing has ceased to please by saying that he is “fed up” with it. The Frenchman says, “J’en ai soupe.” Both these metaphors are quite modern, but they express in flippant form the same figure of physical satiety which is as old as language. Padding is a comparatively new word in connection with literary composition, but it reproduces, with a slightly different meaning, the figure expressed by bombast, lit. wadding, a derivative of Greco-Lat. bombyx, originally “silk-worm,” whence also bombasine. We may compare also “fustian eloquence”—

“And he, whose fustian’s so sublimely bad,
It is not poetry, but prose run mad.”

(Pope, Prologue to the Satires, l. 187.)

1 This is a characteristic of the old dictionary makers. The gem of my collection is Ludwig’s gloss for Lämmele, “a long lubber, a lazy lubber, a slouch, a lordant, a lordane, a looby, a booby, a tony, a sop, a dunce, a simpleton, a wise-axe, a sot, a logger-head, a block-head, a nickampoop, a lingerer, a drowsy or dreaming luak, a pill-garlick, a slowback, a lathback, a pitiful sneaking fellow, a lungis, a tall slim fellow, a slim longback, a great be-fellow, a lubberly fellow, a lousel, an awkward fellow.”
NAUTICAL METAPHOR

And a very similar image is found in the Latin poet Ausonius—

“At nos illepidum, rudem libellum,
Burras, quisquillas ineptiasque
Credemus gremio cui fovendum?"

(Drepanio Filio.)

Even to “take the cake” is paralleled by the Gk. λαβεῖν τὸν πυραμοῦντα, to be awarded the cake of roasted wheat and honey which was originally the prize of him who best kept awake during a night-watch.

In the proverbial expressions which contain the concentrated wisdom of the ages we sometimes find exact correspondences. Thus “to look a gift-horse in the mouth” is literally reproduced in French and German. Sometimes the symbols vary, e.g., the risk one is exposed to in acquiring goods without examination is called by us “buying a pig in a poke.”1 French and German substitute the cat. We say that “a cat may look at a king.” The French dramatis personae are a dog and a bishop. The “bird in hand” which we regard as the equivalent of two in the bush is in German compared advantageously with ten on the roof.

Every language has an immense number of metaphors to describe the various stages of intoxication. We, as a seafaring nation, have naturally a set of such metaphors taken from nautical English. In French and German the state of being “half-seas over” or “three sheets in the wind,” and the practice of “splicing the main-brace” are expressed by various land metaphors. But the more obvious nautical figures are common property. We speak of being stranded; French says “échouer (to run ashore) dans une entreprise,” and German uses scheitern, to strand, split on a rock, in the same way.

1 Ake, sack, is still common in dialect, e.g. in the Kentish hop-gardens. It is a doublet of peche, and its diminutive is pocket.
Finally, we observe the same principle in euphemism, or that form of speech which avoids calling things by their names. Euphemism is the result of various human instincts which range from religious reverence down to common decency. There is, however, a special type of euphemism which may be described as the delicacy of the partially educated. It is a matter of common observation that for educated people a spade is a spade, while the more outspoken class prefers to call it a decorated shovel. Between these two classes come those delicate beings whose work in life is—

"le retraitement de ces syllabes sales
Qui dans les plus beaux mots produisent des scandales;
Ces jouets éternels des sots de tous les temps;
Ces fadas lieux-communs de nos méchants plaisants;
Ces sources d'un amas d'équivoques infâmes,
Dont on vient faire insulte à la pudeur des femmes."

(MOLIÈRE, Les Femmes-savantes, iii. 2.)

In the United States refined society has succeeded in banning as improper the word leg, which must now be replaced by limb, even when the possessor is a boiled fowl, and this refinement is not unknown in England. The coloured ladies of Barbados appear to have been equally sensitive—

"Fate had placed me opposite to a fine turkey. I asked my partner if I should have the pleasure of helping her to a piece of the breast. She looked at me indignantly, and said, 'Curse your impudence, sar; I wonder where you learn manners. Sar, I take a lilly turkey bosom, if you please.'" (Peter Simple, Ch. 31.)

This tendency shows itself especially in connection with the more intimate garments and articles intended for personal use. We have the absurd name pocket handkerchief, i.e., pocket hand-cover-head, for a comparatively modern convenience, the earlier names of which have more of the directness of the Artful Dodger's
"wife." Ben Jonson calls it a muckinder. In 1829 the use of the word mouchoir in a French adaptation of Othello caused a riot at the Comédie Française. History repeats itself, for, in 1907, a play by J. M. Synge was produced in Dublin, but—

"The audience broke up in disorder at the word shift."

(Academy, 14th Oct. 1911.)

This is all the more ludicrous when we reflect that shift, i.e. change of raiment, is itself an early euphemism for smock; cf. Ital. mutande, "thinne under-breeches" (Florio), from a country and century not usually regarded as prudish. The fact is that, just as the low word, when once accepted, loses its primitive vigour (see pluck, p. 83), the euphemism is, by inevitable association, doomed from its very birth.

I will now give a few examples of the way in which the study of semantics helps the etymologist. The antlers of a deer are properly the lowest branches of the horns, what we now call brow-antlers. The word comes from Old Fr. antoilliers, which answers phonetically to a conjectured Lat. *ante-oculares, from oculus, eye. This conjecture is confirmed by the Ger. Augensprosse, brow-antler, lit. eye-sprout.

Eng. plover, from Fr. pluvier, could come from a Vulgar Lat. *pluviarium, belonging to rain. The German name Regenpfleifer, lit. rain-piper, shows this to be correct. It does not matter, etymologically, whether the bird really has any connection with rain, for rustic observation, interesting as it is, is essentially unscientific. The honeysuckle is useless to the bee. The slow-worm, which appears to be for slay-worm, strike-serpent, is

* The meaning of worm has degenerated since the days of the Lindwurm, the dragon slain by Siegfried. The Norse form survives in Great Orme's Head, the dragon's head.
perfectly harmless, and the toad, though ugly, is not venomous, nor does he bear a jewel in his head.

Kestrel, a kind of hawk, represents Old Fr. guercarelle (crécerelle), "a kastrell" (Cotgrave). Crécerelle is a diminutive of crécelle, a rattle, used in Old French especially of the leper's rattle or clapper, with which he warned people away from his neighbourhood. It is connected with Lat. crepere, to resound. The Latin name for the kestrel is tinnunculus, lit. a little ringer, derived from the verb tinnire, to clink, jingle, "tintinnabulate." Cooper tells us that "they use to set them (kestrels) in pigeon houses, to make doves to love the place, because they feare away other haukes with their ringing voyce." This information is obtained from the Latin agriculturist Columella. This parallel makes it clear that Fr. crécerelle, kestrel, is a metaphorical application of the same word, meaning a leper's "clicket."

The curious word akimbo occurs first in Mid. English in the form in kenebowe. In half a dozen languages we find this attitude expressed by the figure of a jug-handle, or, as it used to be called, a pot-ear. The oldest equivalent is Lat. ansatus, used by Plautus, from ansa, a jug-handle. Ansatus homo is explained by Cooper as "a man with his arms on kenebow." The French for to stand with arms akimbo is "faire le pot a deux anses," and the same striking image occurs in German, Dutch, and Spanish. Hence it seems a plausible conjecture that kenebowe means "jug-handle." This is confirmed by the fact that Dryden translates ansa, "the eare or handle of a cuppe or pot" (Cooper), by "kimbo handle" (Vergil, Ec. iii. 44). Eng. bow, meaning anything bent, is used in many connections for handle. The first element may be cæw, applied to every description of vessel in earlier English, as it still is in Scottish, or it may be some Scandinavian word. In fact the
whole compound may be Scandinavian. Thomas' Latin Dictionary (1644) explains ansatus homo as "one that in bragging manner strowteth up and down with his armes a-canne-bow."

Demure has been explained as from Mid. Eng. mere, ripe, mature, with prefixed de. But demure is the older word of the two, and while the loss of the atonic first syllable is normal in English (p. 61), it would be hard to find a case in which a meaningless prefix has been added. Nor does the meaning of demure approximate very closely to that of ripe. It now has a suggestion of slyness, but in Milton's time meant sedate—

"Come, pensive nun, devout and pure,
Sober, stedfast, and demure." (Penetroso, l. 31.)

and its oldest meaning is calm, settled, used of the sea. When we consider that it is nearly equivalent to staid, earlier stayed, and compare the equivalent terms in other languages, e.g., Lat. sedatus, Fr. rassis, Ger. gesetet, etc., it seems likely that it is formed from the Old Norman demurer (demeurer), to "stay," just as stale is formed from Old Fr. estaler (étaler), to display on a stall, or trove, in "treasure trove," from Qld Fr trover (trouver).

The origin of lugger is unknown, but the word is recorded a century later than lugsail, whence it is probably derived. The explanation of lugsail as a sail that is lugged seems to be a piece of folk-etymology. The French for lugsail is voile de fortune, and a still earlier name, which occurs also in Tudor English, is bonaventure, i.e., good luck. Hence it is not unreasonable to conjecture that lugsail stands for luck-sail, just as the name Higson stands for Hickson (see p. 172).
The *pips* on cards or dice have nothing to do with apple pips. The oldest spelling is *peeps.*¹ In the Germanic languages they are called "eyes," and in the Romance languages "points"; and the Romance derivatives of Lat. *punatus*, point, also mean "peep of day." Hence the *peeps* are connected with the verb to *peep.*

The game called *dominoes* is French, and the name is taken from the phrase *faire domino,* to win the game. *Domino,* a hooded cloak worn by priests in winter, is an Italian word, apparently connected with Lat. *dominus.* French also has, in various games, the phrase *faire capot,* with a meaning like that of *faire domino.* *Capot,* related to Eng. *cap* and Fr. *chapeau,* means properly a hooded cloak. The two metaphors are quite parallel, but it is impossible to say what was the original idea. Perhaps it was that of extinguishing the opponent by putting, as it were, his head in a bag.

The card game called *gloch* is often mentioned in Tudor literature. It is derived from Old Fr. *glic,* used by Rabelais, and the word is very common in the works of the more disreputable French poets of the 15th century. According to French archaeologists the game was also called *bonheur,* *chance,* *fortune,* and *hasard.* Hence *glic* represents in all probability Ger. *Glück,* luck. The Old French form *ghalicque* would correspond to Mid. High Ger. *gelücke.* The history of *tennis* (p. 10) and *trump* (p. 9) shows that it is not necessary to find the German word recorded in the same sense.

The word *sentry,* which occurs in English only, has no connection at all with *sentinel,* the earliest form of which is Ital. *sentinella,* of unknown origin. The older lexicographers obscured the etymology of *sentry,* which is really quite simple, by always attempting to treat it.

¹ *Taming of the Shrew,* 1. 2.
along with sentinel. It is a common phenomenon in military language that the abstract name of an action is applied to the building or station in which the action is performed, then to the group of men thus employed, and finally to the individual soldier. Thus Lat. custodia means (1) guardianship, (2) a ward-room, watch-tower, (3) the watch collectively, (4) a watchman. Fr. vigie, the look-out man on board ship, can be traced back in a similar series of meanings to Lat. vigilia, watching.1 A sentry, now a single soldier, was formerly a band of soldiers—

"What strength, what art can then
Suffice, or what evasion bear him safe
Through the strict sentries and stations thick
Of angels watching round?"

(Paradise Lost, ii. 410.)

and earlier still a watch-tower, e.g., Cotgrave explains Old Fr. eschaugette (eschaugette) as "a sentrie, watch-
tower, beacon." The purely abstract sense survives in the phrase "to keep sentry," i.e. guard—

"Here toils, and Death, and Death's half-brother, Sleep,
Forms terrible to view their centry 2 keep."

(Dryden, Æneid, vi. 277.)

It is a contracted form of sanctuary. In the 17th century it is a pretty familiar word in this sense.3 The earliest example I have come across is in Nashe—

"He hath no way now to slyppe out of my hands, but to take sentrie in the Hospital of Warwick."

(First Part of Pasquil's Apologia, 1590.)

Fr. guérite, a sentry box, can be traced back in the

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1 This is why so many French military terms are feminine, e.g., recrue, sentinelle, vedette, etc.

2 Skinner's Etymologicon (1671) has the two entries, centry pro sanctuary and centry v. sentinel. The spellings centry and centinel, which were common when the words still had a collective sense, are perhaps due to some fancied connection with centery, a hundred soldiers.
same way to Old Fr. *garir* (*guérir*), to save. Cotgrave explains it as “a place of refuge, and of safe retyrall,” also “a *sentrie*, or little lodge for a sentinell, built on high.” It is to this latter sense that we owe Eng. *garret*. In medieval French *guérite* means refuge, sanctuary—

> “Ceste roche est Ihesucristameismes qui est li refuges et la *garite* aus humbleles.”¹

If French had not borrowed *sentinelle* from Italian, *guérite* would probably now mean “sentry”; cf. the history of *vigie* (p. 103), or of *vedette*, a cavalry sentry, but originally “a prying or peeping hole” (Florio), from Ital. *vedere*, to see.

¹ “This rock is Jesus Christ himself, who is the refuge and sanctuary of the humble.”
CHAPTER VIII

METAPHOR

Every expression that we employ, apart from those that are connected with the most rudimentary objects and actions, is a metaphor, though the original meaning is dulled by constant use. Thus, in the above sentence, expression means what is "squeezed out," to employ is to "twine in" like a basket maker, to connect is to "weave together," rudimentary means "in the rough state," and an object is something "thrown in our way." A classification of the metaphors in use in the European languages would show that a large number of the most obvious kind, i.e. of those which "come to meet" one, are common property, while others would reflect the most striking habits and pursuits of the various races. It would probably be found that in the common stock of simple metaphor the most important contribution would come from agriculture, while in English the nautical element would occur to an extent quite unparalleled in other European languages. A curious agricultural

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1 It would be interesting to trace the rise and spread of nautical metaphor in English. We have a good example of the transition from the bucolic to the nautical in the expression "To lose the ship for a ha'porth of tar." Few people who use this metaphor know that ship is here the dialect pronunciation of sheep; cf. Ship Street, at Oxford (and elsewhere), for Sheep Street. Tar was, and is, used as a medicine for sheep, but in this particular case the allusion seems to be rather to the marking of sheep with tar; cf. "tarred with the same brush," i.e., members of the same flock.
metaphor which, though of Old French origin, now appears to be peculiar to English, is to *rehearse*, lit. to harrow over again (see *hearse*, p. 75).

Some metaphors are easy to track. It does not require much philological knowledge to see that *astonish*, *astound*, and *stun* all contain the idea of "thunder-striking," Vulgar Lat. *ex-tonare*. To *embarrass* is obviously connected with *bar*, and to *interfere* is to "strike between," Old Fr. *entrefuir*. This word was especially used in the 16th century of a horse knocking its legs together in trotting, "to *interfeere*, as a horse" (Cotgrave). When we speak of a *prentice-hand*, sound journeyman work, and a *masterpiece*, we revive the medieval classification of artisans into learners, qualified workmen, and those who, by the presentation to their guild of a finished piece of work, were recognised as past (passed) masters.

But many of our metaphors are drawn from pursuits with which we are no longer familiar, or from arts and sciences no longer practised. *Disaster*, *ill-starred*, and such adjectives as *jovial*, *mercurial*, are reminiscent of astrology. To bring a thing to the *test* is to put it in the alchemist's or metallurgist's *test* or trying-pot (cf. *test-tube*), Old Fr. *test* (ttt). This is related to Old Fr. *teste* (tte), head, from Lat. *testa*, tile, pot, etc., used in Roman slang for *caput*. Shakespeare has the complete metaphor—

"Let there be some more *test* made of my metal, ¹
Before so noble and so great a figure
Be stamp'd upon it." ²

(Measure for Measure, i. 1.)

The old butchers' shops which adjoin Nottingham Market Place are still called the *Shambles*. The word

¹ See note ², p. 144.
is similarly used at Carlisle, and probably elsewhere; but to most people it is familiar only in the metaphorical sense of place of slaughter, generally regarded as a singular. Thus Denys of Burgundy says—

"The beasts are in the shambles."
(Cloister and Hearth, Ch. 33.)

etymologically misusing the word, which does not mean slaughter-house, but the bench on which meat is exposed for sale. It is a very early loan from Lat. scamnum, a bench or form, also explained by Cooper as “a step or grice (see p. 118) to get up to bedde.” The same diminutive form occurs in Fr. escabeau, an office stool, and Ger. Schemel, a stool.

Fusty, earlier foisty, is no longer used in its proper sense. It comes from Old Fr. fussé, “fusty; tasting of the caske, smelling of the vessell wherein it hath been kept” (Cotgrave), a derivative of Old Fr. fust (fût), a cask.¹

The smith’s art has given us brand-new, often corrupted into bran-new. Shakespeare uses fire-new—

“You should then have accosted her; and with some excellent jests, fire-new from the mint, you should have banged the youth into dumbness.” (Twelfth Night, iii. 2.)

Modern German has funkeinagelneu, spark nail new; but in older German we find also spanneu, splinterneu, chip new, splinter new; which shows the origin of our spick and span (new), i.e., spike and chip new. French has tout battant neuf, beating new, i.e., fresh from the anvil.

Many old hunting terms survive as metaphors.

¹ Lat. fustis, a staff, cudgel, gave also Old Fr. fust, a kind of boat, whence obsolete Eng. futs in the same sense. Both meanings seem to go back to a time when casks and boats were “dug out” instead of being built up.
be at bay, Fr. aux abois, is to be facing the baying hounds. The fundamental meaning of Old Fr. abaier (aboyer), of obscure origin, is perhaps to gape. Thus a right or estate which is in abeyance is one regarded with open-mouthed expectancy. The toils are Fr. toiles, lit. cloths, Lat. tela, the nets put round a thicket to prevent the game from escaping. To “beat about the bush” seems to be a mixture of two metaphors which are quite unlike in meaning. To “beat the bush” was the office of the beaters, who started the game for others, hence an old proverb, “I will not beat the bush that another may have the birds.” To “go about the bush” would seem to have been used originally of a hesitating hound. The two expressions have coalesced to express the idea for which French says “y aller par quatre chemins.” Crestfallen and white feather belong to the old sport of cock-fighting. Jeopardy is Old Fr. jeu parti, a divided game, hence an equal encounter. To run full tilt is a jousting phrase. To pounce upon is to seize in the pounces, the old word for a hawk’s claws. The ultimate source is Lat. pungere, to prick, pierce. A goldsmith’s punch was also called a pounce, hence the verb to pounce, to make patterns on metal. The northern past participle pounted occurs in pountet-box, a metal perforated globe for scents—

“And ’twixt his finger and his thumb he held
A pountet-box, which ever and anon
He gave his nose, and took’t away again.”

(1 Henry IV., i. 3.)

To the language of hawking belongs also haggard. Cotgrave defines faulcon (faucon) hagard, as “a faulcon

1 Related are bouchs bientes or his, mouth agape; bèiller, to yawn; and bedawul, “a gaping huydon” (Cotgrave, Bedawi).

2 Cf. the Sticht Minister.
SPORTING METAPHORS

that preyed for her selfe long before she was taken." Hence the sense of wild, untameable. The original meaning is hedge-hawk, the first syllable representing Old High Ger. *hag*, hedge. *Hag*, a witch, is of cognate origin.

The antiquity of dicing appears in the history of Ger. gefallen, to please, originally used of the "fall" of the dice. In Mid. High German it is always used with wohl, well, or übel, ill; e.g., es gefällt mir wohl, it "falls out" well for me. There can be no reasonable doubt that the dence! is a dicer's exclamation at making the lowest throw, two, Fr. deux. We still use dence for the two in cards, and German has Daus in both senses. Tennis has given us bandy, Fr. bander, "to bandie, at tennis" (Cotgrave). We now only bandy words or reproaches, but Juliet understood the word in its literal sense—

"Had she affections and warm youthful blood,  
She'd be as swift in motion as a ball;  
My words would bandy her to my sweet love,  
And his to me." (Romeo and Juliet, ii. 5.)

Fowling has given us cajole, decoy, and trepan. Fr. cajoler, which formerly meant to chatter like a jay in a cage, has in modern French assumed the meaning of enjoler, earlier engeoler, "to incage, or ingaole" (Cotgrave), hence to entice. Fr. geôle, gaol, represents Vulgar Lat. *caœola*. Decoy, earlier also coy, is Du. kooi, cage. The later form is perhaps due to duck-coy. Du. kooi is also of Latin origin. It comes, like Fr. cage, from Vulgar Lat. *caeva*, and has a doublet kevie, whence Scot. cave, a hen-coop. Trepan was formerly trapan, and belongs to trap—

"Some by the nose with fumes, trapan 'em,  
As Dunstan did the devil's grannam." (Hudibras, ii. 3.)
It is now equivalent to kidnap, i.e. to nab kids (children), once a lucrative pursuit. The surgical trepan is a different word altogether, and belongs to Greco-Lat. trypanon, an auger, piercer. To allure is to bring to the lure, or bait. To the same group of metaphor's belongs inveigle, which corresponds, with altered prefix, to Fr. aveugler, to blind, Vulgar Lat. *ab-ocular.\(^1\) A distant relative of this word is ogle, probably Low German or Dutch; cf. Ger. liebaugehn, "to ogle, to smicker, to look amorously, to cast sheeps-eyes, to cast amorous looks" (Ludwig).

The synonymous cosen is a metaphor of quite another kind. Every young noble who did the grand tour in the 16th and 17th centuries spent some time at Naples, "where he may improve his knowledge in horsemanship" (Howell, Instructions for Forreine Travell, 1642). Now the Italian horse-dealers were so notorious that Dekker, writing about 1600, describes a swindling "horse-courser", as a "meere jadish Non-politane," a play on Neapolitan. The Italian name is cossonone, "a horse-courser, a horse-breaker, a craftie knave" (Florio), whence the verb cossonare, "to have perfect skill in all cosenages" (Torriano). The essential idea of to cosen in the Elizabethans is that of selling faulty goods in a bad light, a device said to be practised by some horse-dealers. At any rate the words for horse-dealer in all languages, from the Lat. mango to the Amer. horse-swapper, mean swindler and worse things. Cosen is a favourite word with the Elizabethan dramatists, because it enables them to bring off one of those stock puns that make one feel "The less Shakespeare he——"

\(^1\) Or perhaps *ab-ocular, as *albus ocubis, lit. white eye, is used of blindness in an early Vulgar Latin glossary.
"Cousins, indeed; and by their uncle cosen'd
Of comfort, kingdom, kindred, freedom, life."
(Richard III., iv. 4.)

In the Merry Wives of Windsor (iv. 5) there is a lot of word-play on "cousins-german" and "German cozeners." An exact parallel to the history of cozen is furnished by the verb to jockey, from jockey, in its older sense of horse-dealer.

Scion is a metaphor from the garden. It is Fr. scion, "a scion; a young and tender plant; a shoot, sprig, or twig" (Cotgrave). Ger. Sprossling, sprout-ling, is also used of an "offshoot" from a "stock." We have a similar metaphor in the word imp. We now graft trees, a misspelling of older graffe, Fr. greffe, Greco-Lat. graphium, a pencil, from the shape of the slip. But the older word was imp, which we find also used of inserting a new feather into the wing or tail of a hawk, or fitting a small bell-ropo to a larger one. The art of grafting was learnt from the Romans, who had a post-classical verb imputare,\(^1\) to graft, which has given Eng. imp, Ger. impfen, Fr. enter, and i represented in most other European languages. Imp was used like scion, but degenerated in meaning. In Shakespeare it has already the somewhat contemptuous shade of meaning which we find in Ger. Sprossling, and is only used by comic characters. Thus Pistol addresses Prince Hal—

"The heavens thee guard and keep, most royal imp of fame."
(2 Henry IV., v. 5.)

But Thomas Cromwell, in his last letter to Henry VIII., speaks of—

"That most noble imp, the prince's grace, your most dear son."

The special sense of "young devil" appears to be due

\(^1\) Of uncertain origin. Lat. putare, to cut (cf. amputate), or Grk. περικόλατος, implanted
to the frequent occurrence of such phrases as "imps (children) of Satan," "the devil and his imps," etc. Ger. *impfen* also means to vaccinate. Our earlier term *inoculate*\(^1\) originally meant to graft, and, in fact, *engraft* was also used in this sense.

*Zest* is quite obsolete in its original meaning of a piece of orange peel used to give piquancy to wine. It is a French word of unknown origin, properly applied to the inner skin of fruit and nuts. Cotgrave explains it as "the thick skinne, or filme whereby the kernell of a walnut is divided."

\(^1\) From *oculus*, eye, in the sense of bud.
CHAPTER IX

FOLK-ETYMOLOGY

The sound, spelling, and even the meaning of a word are often perverted by influences to which the collective name of folk-etymology has been given. I here use the term to include all phenomena which are due to any kind of misunderstanding of a word. A word beginning with \textit{n} sometimes loses this sound through its being confused with the \textit{n} of the indefinite article \textit{an}. Thus an \textit{adder} and an \textit{auger} are for a \textit{nadder} (cf. Ger. \textit{Natter}) and a \textit{nauger}, Mid. Eng. \textit{nager}, properly an instrument for piercing the 	extit{nave} of a wheel. \textit{Apron} was in Mid. English \textit{naperon}, from Old Fr. \textit{naperon}, a derivative of \textit{nappe}, cloth. The \textit{pitch-bone} was formerly the \textit{nach-bone}, from Old Fr. \textit{nache}, buttock, Vulgar Lat. *natica for nates. \textit{Nache} is still used by French butchers. \textit{Humble-pie} is a popular perversion of \textit{umble-pie}, i.e., a pie made from the \textit{umbles}, or inferior parts of the stag. But \textit{umble} is for earlier \textit{numble}, Old Fr. \textit{nemble}, formed, with dissimilation, from Lat. \textit{lumbulus}, diminutive of \textit{lumbus}, loin; cf. \textit{niveau} (p. 58). Thus \textit{humble-pie} has etymologically no connection with humility. \textit{Umpire} represents Old Fr. \textit{non per (pair)}, not equal, the \textit{umpire} being a third person called in when arbitrators could not agree. This appears clearly in the following extract from a medieval letter—

"And if so be that the said arbitrators may not accord before the said feast of Albalowes, then the said parties be
the advise abovesaid are agreed to abide the award and ordinar
ance of an number to be chosen be the said arbitrators."

(Plumpton Correspondence, 1431.)

For the sense we may compare Span. tercero, "the third, a broaker, a mediator" (Percyvall). An eyas falcon is for a neyas falcon, Fr. niais, foolish, lit. nestling, related to nid, nest. Rosenkrantz uses it in the literal sense—

"But there is, sir, an aiery of children, little eyases, that cry out on the top of question, and are most tyrannically clapped for't."

(Hamlet, ii. 2.)

Somewhat similar is the loss in French of initial a in la boutique for l'aboutique, Greco-Lat. apotheca, and la Pouille for l'Apouille, Apulia, or of the initial l in ounce, a kind of tiger-cat, from Fr. once, earlier lonce, "the ounce, a ravenous beast" (Cotgrave), taken as l'once. It is almost a doublet of lynx.

The opposite has happened in the case of a newt for an eel and a nick-name for an eke-name. Eke, also, occurs in the first stanza of John Gilpin. It is cognate with Ger. auch, also, and Lat. augere, to increase. Nuncle, the customary address of a court fool to his superiors—

"How now, nuncle! Would I had two coxcombs and two daughters."

(Lear; i. 4.)

is for mine uncle. We also find naunt. Nonce occurs properly only in the phrase for the nonce, which is for earlier for then ones, where then is the dative of the definite article. Family names like Nash, Nokes are aphetic for atten ash, at the ash, atten oakes, at the oaks. The creation of such forms was perhaps helped by our tendency to use initials in Christian names, e.g., Ned for Edward, Nell for Oliver, Nell for Ellen.
AGGLUTINATION OF THE ARTICLE

Agglutination of the definite article is common in French, e.g., lingot, ingot, pierre, ivy, for pierre, Lat. iedera, and the dialect levier, sink, for levier, Lat. aquarium, whence Eng. ever. The derivation of Fr. landier, andiron, is unknown, but the iron of the English word is due to folk-etymology. Such agglutination occurs often in family names such as Langlois, lit. the Englishman, Lhuissier, the usher (see p. 90), and some of these have passed into English, e.g., Levick for l'evêque, the bishop.

The two words alarm and alert include the Italian definite article. The first is Ital. all'arme, to arms, for a le arme, and the second is all'erta for alla (a la) erta, the last word representing Lat. ercta. With rolled r, alarm becomes alarum, whence the athetic larum—

"Then we shall hear their larum, and they ours."

(Coriolanus, i. 4.)

Ger. Larm, noise, is the same word. In Luther's time we also find Allerm.

We have the Arabic definite article in a great many words borrowed from Spanish. Alcalde, or alcade, and alguazil, common in Elizabethan literature, are two old friends from the Arabian Nights, the cadi and the wasir, or visier. The Arabic article also occurs in acton, Old Fr. auqueton, now hoquelon, for al qutn (cotton), because originally used of a wadded coat—

"But Cranstoun's lance, of more avail,
Pierced through, like silk, the Borderer's mail;
Through shield, and jack, and acton past,
Deep in his bosom broke at last."

(Scott, Lay, iii. 6.)

In alligator, Span. el lagarto, the lizard, from Lat. lacertus, we have the Spanish definite article. See also lariat, p. 24.
A foreign word ending in a sibilant is sometimes mistaken for a plural. Thus Old Fr. assets (assez), enough, Lat. ad satis, has given Eng. assets plural, with a barbarous, but useful, singular asset. Cherry is for cerise, from a dialect form of Fr. cerise, and sherry for sherris, from Xeres in Spain (see p. 51). Falstaff opines that—

"A good sherris-sack hath a twofold operation in it."

(2 Henry IV., iv. 3.)

Pea is a false singular from older pease, Lat. pisum. Perhaps the frequent occurrence of pease-soup, not to be distinguished from pea-soup, is partly responsible for this mistake. Marquise, a large tent, is from Fr. marquise. With this we may class the heathen Chinee and the Portuguee. Milton wrote correctly of—

"The barren plains
Of Sericana, where Chineses drive
With sails and wind their cany waggons light."

(Paradise Lost, iii. 438.)

It has been ingeniously suggested that Yankee has been derived in the same way from Du. Jan Kees, John Cornelius, supposed to have been a nickname for early Dutch colonists. It is more probably the Dutch dim. janke, i.e. Johnny. The vulgarism shay for chaise is of similar formation. Corp, for corpse, is also used provincially. Kickshaws is really a singular from Fr. quelque chose—

"Art thou good at these kickshawses, knight?"

(Twelfth Night, i. 3.)

Cotgrave spells it quelkchoises (s.v. fricandeau).

1 Such, earlier also seek, is Fr. sec, dry, which, with spurious e, has also given Ger. Sekt, now used for champagne.

2 Fr. chaise, chair, for older chaire, now used only of a pulpit or professorial chair, Lat. cathedra, is due to an affected pronunciation that prevailed in Paris in the 16th century.
Skates has a curious history. It is a false singular from Du. schaats. This is from escache, an Old French dialect form of échasse, stilt, which was used in the Middle Ages for a wooden leg. It is of German origin, and is related to shank. Cf., for the sense development, Eng. paten, from Fr. patin, a derivative of patte, foot, cognate with paw. Skates are still called pattens by the fenmen of Cambridgeshire. We also had formerly a doublet from Old Fr. escache directly, but in the older sense, for Cotgrave has eschasses (échasses), "stilts, or scatches to go on." Row, a disturbance, belongs to rouse, a jollification—

"The king doth wake to-night and takes his rouse."

(Hamlet, i. 4.)

of uncertain origin, but probably aphetic for carouse, drink carouse being wrongly separated as drink a rouse. The bird called a wheatear was formerly called wheatears, a corruption of a name best explained by its French equivalent cul blanc, "the bird called a whittaile" (Cotgrave). We may compare the bird-name redstart, where start means rump.

Conversely a word used in the plural is sometimes regarded as a singular, the result being a double plural. Many Latin neuter plurals were adopted into French as feminine singulars, e.g., cornua, corne, horn; labra, levre, lip; vela, voile, sail. It is obvious that this is most likely to occur in the case of plurals which are used for a pair, or set, of things, and thus have a kind of collective sense. Breeches or broeks is a double plural, Anglo-Sax. bric being already the plural of brie. In Mid. English we still find breche or breke used of this garment. Trousers was earlier trosses, plural of trowe, how trows, and was used especially of Irish native costume. The latest researches throw doubt on the
identity of these words with Fr. *trousse*, a page's short breeches. The etymology which now finds most favour is Irish and Gaelic *triubhas*, from Late Lat. *tubracci* or *tribracci*, which is supposed to be a corrupted compound from *tibia*, leg, shank, and *bracae*, breeches. *Bodice* is for *bodies*, as *pence* is for *pennies*. Cotgrave explains *corset* by "a paire of *bodies* for a woman," and the plural sense occurs as late as Harrison Ainsworth—

"A pair of bodice of the cumbrous form in vogue at the beginning of the last century." (Jack Sheppard, Ch. 1.)

*Trace*, of a horse, is the Old Fr. plural *trais*¹ (traits) of *trait*, "a teame-trace" (Cotgrave). *Apprentice* is the plural of Fr. *apprenti*, formerly *apprentis*, a derivative of *apprendre*, to learn, hence a disciple. *Invoice* is the plural of the obsolete *invoy*, from Fr. *envoi*, sending.

In the *Grecian steps*, at Lincoln, we have a popular corruption of the common Mid. Eng. and Tudor *grese*, *gresse*, plural of Qd Fr. *gré*, step, from Lat. *gradus*. Shakespeare spells it *grise*—

"Let me speak like yourself; and lay a sentence,
Which, as a *grise*, or step, may help these lovers
Into your favour."

(Othello, i. 3.)

Scot. *brose*, or *brewis*, was in Mid. Eng. *browes*, from Old Fr. *broues*, plural of *brouet*, a word cognate with our *broth*. From this association comes perhaps the use of *broth* as a plural in some of our dialects. *Porridge*, not originally limited to oatmeal, seems to be combined from *pottage* and Mid. Eng. *porrets*, plural of *porret*, leek.

¹ The fact that in Old French the final consonant of the singular disappeared in the plural form helped to bring about such misunderstandings.
a diminutive from Lat. *porrum*. *Porridge* is sometimes used as a plural in Scottish—

"They're fine, balesome food, they're grand food, *parritch.*"

*(Kidnapped, Ch. 3.)*

and in the northern counties of England people speak of taking “a few” porridge, or broth. *Baize*, now generally green, is for earlier *bayes*, the plural of the adjective *bay*, now used only of horses; cf. Du. *baai*, baize. The origin of the adjective *bay*, Fr. *ba*, forms of which occur in all the Romance languages, is Lat. *badius*, “of bay colour, bayarde” (Cooper). Hence the name *Bayard*, applied to FitzJames’ horse in *The Lady of the Lake* (v. 18), and earlier to the steed that carried the four sons of Aymon. *Quince* is the plural of *quin*, from the Norman form of Old Fr. *coin* (*coing*), ultimately from *Cydonia*, in Crete. *Truce* is the plural of Mid. Eng. *trewe* (lit. truth, faith) with the same meaning. Already in Anglo-Saxon it is found in the plural, probably as rendering Lat. *inducia*. *Lettuce*, Mid Eng. *letows*, seems also to be a plural, from Fr. *laitue*, Lat. *lactuce*.

*Earnest* in the sense of pledge—

"And, for an *earnest* of a greater honour,
He bade me, from him, call thee Thane of Cawdor."

*(Macbeth, i. 3.)*

has nothing to do with the adjective *earnest*. It is the Mid. Eng. *ernes*, earlier *erles*, which survives as *arles* in some of our dialects. The verb to *earl* is still used in Cumberland of “enlisting” a servant with a shilling in the open market. The Old French word was *arres* or *erres*, now written learnedly *arrhes*, a plural from Lat. *arrha*, “an earnest penny, earnest money” (Cooper). The existence of Mid Eng. *erles* shows that there must have been also an Old French diminutive form. For the apparently arbitrary change
of \( l \) to \( n \) we may compare *hamister* for *baluster* (see p. 60).

The *jess* of a hawk—

"If I do prove her haggard,"

Though that her *jess* were my dear heart-strings,

I'd whistle her off, and let her down the wind,

To prey at fortune."

*(Othello, iii. 3.)*

were the thongs by which it was held or "thrown" into the air. *Jess* is the Old Fr. *jes*, the plural of *jet*, from *jeter*, to throw. In Colman's *Elder Brother* we read of a gentleman who lounged and chatted, "not minding time a *souse*," where *souse* is the plural of Fr. *sou*, half-penny. From Fr. *muer*, to moult, Lat. *mutare*, we get Fr. *mue*, moulting, later applied to the coop or pen in which moulting falcons were confined, whence the phrase "to *mew* (up)"—

"More pity, that the eagles should be *mew'd*,

While kites and buzzards prey at liberty."

*(Richard III., i. 1.)*

When, in 1534, the royal *mews*, or hawk-houses, near Charing Cross were rebuilt as stables, the word acquired its present meaning.

*C reassuring, Old Fr. *esches* (*éches*), is the plural of *check*, Fr. *éche*, from Persian *shāh*, king. By analogy with the "game of kings," the name *jeu des dames* was given in French to draughts, still called *dams* in Scotland *Draught*, from *draw*, meant in Mid. English a "move" at chess. The etymology of *tweezers* can best be made clear by starting from French *étui*, a case, of doubtful origin. This became in English *etwice*, or *twee*, e.g., Cotgrave explains *estui* (*étui*) as "a sheath, case, or box to put things in, and (more particularly) a case of little instruments, as sizzars, bodkin, penknife,

\footnote{For *haggard* see p. 108.}
etc., now commonly termed an *ettwee.*" Such a case generally opens book-fashion, each half being fitted with instruments. Accordingly we find it called a surgeon's "pair of *twees," or simply *tweese,* and later a "pair of *tweeses." The implement was named from the case (cf. Fr. *boussole,* p. 127), and became *tweezers* by association with *pincers* (Fr. *pinces,* *scissors,* etc.

The form of a word is often affected by association with some other word with which it is instinctively coupled. Thus *larboard,* for Mid. Eng. *ladeboard,* i.e. loading side, is due to *starboard,* steering side. *Bridal,* for *bride-ale,* from the liquid consumed at marriage festivities, is due to analogy with *betrothal,* *espousal,* etc. A 16th-century Puritan records with satisfaction the disappearance of—

"Church-ales, helpe-ales, and soule-ales, called also dirig-ales, and heathenish rioting at *bride-ales.""

(HARRISON, Description of England, 1577.)

*Rampart* is from Old Fr. *rempar,* a verbal noun from *remparer,* to repair; cf. Ital. *riparo,* "a rampire, a fort, a banke" (Florio). By analogy with Old Fr. *boulevart* (boulevard), of German origin and identical with our *bulwark,¹* *rempar* became *rempart.* The older English form occurs in the obsolete *rampier* or *rampire,* which survive in the dialect *ramper,* embankment, causeway. For the spelling *rampire* we may compare *umpire* (p. 113). The apple called a *jenneting,* sometimes "explained" as for *June-eating,* was once spelt *genison,* no doubt for Fr. *jeanneton,* a diminutive of *Jean.* It is called in French *pomme de Saint-Jean,* and in German *johannisappel,* because ripe about St John's Day (June 21).

¹ In Old French confusion sometimes arose with regard to final consonants, because of their disappearance in the plural (see p. 118, n.). In *gourfaut,* *gourfalcon,* for Old Fr. *gourfau,* the less familiar final -walt, as in *boulevart,* replaced by the more usual -t.
The modern form is due to such apple names as *golding*, *sweeting*, *codlin*, *pippin*.

In the records of medieval London we frequently come across the distinction made between people who lived "in the city," Anglo-Fr. *deins* (*dans*) *la cité*, and "outside the city," Anglo-Fr. *fors* (*hors*) *la cité*. The former were called *deinsein*, whence our *denizen*, and the latter *forein*. The Anglo-French form of modern Fr. *citoyen* was *citein*, which became *citizen* by analogy with *denizen*. The following passage from a medieval London by-law shows how rigid was the division between "denizen" and "foreign" traders—

"Item, que nulle pulletere *deinseyn* n'estoise a Carfeux del Ledenhalle deins mesoun ne dehors, ove conilles, volatilie, n'autre pulletrie pur vendre . . . issint qe les *foreins* pulleters, ove lour pulletrie, estoissent par eux mesmes, et vendent lour pulletrie sur le cornere de Ledenhalle, sans ceo qe ascuns pulletere *deinsein* viegne ou medle en vent ou en achate ove eux, ne entre eux." *(Liber Alb.)*

Even words which have opposite meanings may affect each other by association. Thus Lat. *reddere*, to give back, became Vulgar Lat. *rendeere* by analogy with *prendere* (*prehendere*), to take away; hence Fr. *rendre*. Our word *grief*, from Fr. *grief*, is derived

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1 An unoriginal *g* occurs in many English words derived from French, e.g., *foreign*, *sovereign*, older *souvan*, sprightly for *spirity*, i.e., *spirite-like*, *delight*, from Old Fr. *delit*, to Lat. *delectare*.

2 "Also, that no *denizen* poulterer shall stand at the 'Carfax' of *Leadenhall* in a house or without, with rabbits, fowls, or other poultry to sell . . . and that the 'foreign' poulterers, with their poultry, shall stand by themselves, and sell their poultry at the corner of Leadenhall, without any *denizen* poulterer coming or meddling in sale or purchase with them, or among them."

The word *carfax*, once the usual name for a "cross-way," survives, at Oxford and Exeter. It is a plural, from Fr. *carrefour*, Vulgar Lat. *quadriforce* (*for force*), four-fork.
from a Vulgar Lat. *grēvis, heavy (for grēvis), which is due to levis, light.

The plural of titmouse is now usually titmice, by analogy with mouse, mice, with which it has no connection. The second part of the word is Anglo-Sax. māse, used of several small birds. It is cognate with Ger. Meise, titmouse, and Fr. mésange, "a titmouse, or tittling" (Cotgrave). Tit, of Norse origin, is applied to various small animals, and occurs also as a prefix in titbit or tidbit. Cf. tomtit (p. 37).

The Spanish word salva, "a taste, a salutation" (Percyvall), was used of the pregustation of a great man's food or drink. We have given the name to the tray or dish from which the "assay" was made, but, by analogy with platter, trencher, we spell it salver. In another sense, that of a "salutation" in the form of a volley of shot, we have corrupted it into salvo. With the use of Span. salva we may compare that of Ital. credenza, lit. faith, "the taste or assaie of a prince's meat and drink" (Florio), whence Fr. credence, sideboard, used in English only in the ecclesiastical compound credence table, and Ger. credensen, to pour out.

In spoken English the ending -ew, -ue, of French origin, has been often changed to -ee, -ey. Thus pedigree was formerly pedigrew (see p. 77). The fencing term veney—

"I bruised my shin the other day with playing at sword and dagger with a master of fence—three veneys for a dish of stewed prunes." (Merry Wives, i. 1.)

also spelt venew, is from Fr. venue, "a venny in fencing" (Cotgrave). Carew has become Carey, and Beaulieu, in Hampshire, is called Bewley. Under the influence of these double forms we sometimes get the opposite change, e.g., purlieu, now generally used of the outskirts
of a town, is for purley, a strip of disforested woodland. This is a contraction of Anglo-Fr. *pour-allée*, used to translate the legal Lat. *perambulatio*, a going through. A change of *venue*¹ is sometimes made when it seems likely that an accused person, or a football team, will not get justice from a local jury. This *venue* is in law Latin *vicinatum*, neighbourhood, which gave Anglo-Fr. *visne*, and this, perhaps by confusion with the *venire facias*, or jury summons, became *venew*, *venue*.

In the preceding examples the form has been chiefly affected. In the word *luncheon* both form and meaning have been influenced by the obsolete *nuncheon*, a meal at noon, Mid. Eng. *none-chench*, for *none-schenche*, noon draught, from Anglo-Sax. *scencan*, to pour. Drinking seems to have been regarded as more important than eating, for in some counties we find this *nuncheon* replaced by *bever*, the Anglo-French infinitive from Lat. *bidere*, to drink. *Lunch*, a piece or hunk, especially of bread, also used in the sense of a “snack” (cf. Scot. “piece”), was extended to *luncheon* by analogy with *nuncheon*, which it has now replaced—

“So munch on, crunch on, take your *nuncheon*,
Breakfast, supper, dinner, *luncheon*.”

(BROWNING, *Pied Piper of Hamelin*.)

The term folk-etymology is often applied in a narrower sense to the corruption of words through a mistaken idea of their etymology or origin. The tendency of the uneducated is to distort an unfamiliar or unintelligible word into some form which suggests a meaning. Some cases may have originated in a kind

¹ This word is getting overworked, e.g., “The Derbyshire Golf Club links were yesterday the venue of a 72-hole match” (Nottingham Guardian, 21st Nov. 1911).

² *Cf.* Ger. *schenken*, to pour, and the Tudor word *shindeur*, a drawer, waiter (1 Henry IV., ii. 4).
WRONG ASSOCIATION

of heavy jocularity, as in *sparrow-grass* for *asparagus* or *sparagus* (see p. 66), or Rogue Riderhood's *Alfred David* for *affidavit*.

"'Is that your name?' asked Lightwood. 'My name?' returned the man. 'No; I want to take a *Alfred David*.'"

*(Our Mutual Friend, Ch. 12.)*

In others there has been a wrong association of ideas, e.g., the *primrose*, *rosemary*, and *tuberose* have none of them originally any confection with the *rose*. *Primrose* was earlier *primerose*, an Old French derivative of Latin *primula*; *rosemary*, French *romarin*, is from Lat. *ros marinus*, sea-dew; *tuberose* is the Latin adjective *tuberosus*, bulbous, tuberous. Or attempts are made at translation, such as Sam Weller's *Have his carcass* for *Habeas Corpus*, or the curious names which country folk give to such complaints as *bronchitis*, *erysipelas*, etc. To this class belongs Private Mulvaney's perversion of *locomotor ataxia*—

"'They call ut *Locomotus* attacks us,' he sez, 'bekaze,' sez he, 'it attacks us like a locomotive.'" *(Love o' Women.)*

Our language is, owing to our borrowing habits, particularly rich in these gems. Examples familiar to everybody are *crayfish* from Fr. *écrevisse*, *gilly-flower* from Fr. *giroflé*, *shame-faced* for *shamefast*. Other words in which the second element has been altered are *causeway*, earlier *causey*, from the Picard form of Fr. *chaussée*, Lat. *(via) calciata*, i.e., made with lime, *calx*; *penthouse*, for *pentice*, Fr. *appentis*, "the penthouse of a house" (Cotgrave), a derivative of Old Fr. *appendre*, to. hang to. Fr. *hangar*, a shed, now introduced into English by aviators as unnecessarily as *garage* by motorists, may also contain the same idea of "hanging."

*In *hicough*, for earlier *hickup*, an onomatopoeic word, the spelling, suggested by *cough*, has not
affected the pronunciation. *Surcease* is Fr. *sursis*, past participle of *surseoir*, "to surcease, pawse, intermit, leave off, give over, delay or stay for a time" (Cotgrave), Lat. *supersedere*. *Taffrail* has been confused with *rail*, its older form being *tafferel*, from Du. *taferel*, diminutive of *tafel*, picture, from Lat. *tabula*. It meant originally the flat part of the stern of a ship ornamented with carvings or pictures. This is called *tableau* in nautical French. Fr. *couteurs*, an augmentative of Old Fr. *coute* (*couteau*), knife, gave Eng. *cutlass*, which has no more etymological connection with "cutting" than a *cutler*, Fr. *couteleur*, or a *cutlet*, Fr. *côtelette*, little rib, Lat. *costa*. *Cutlas* was popularly corrupted into *curtal-axe*, the form used by Rosalind—

"A gallant curtal-axe upon my thigh,
A boar-spear in my hand."

*(As You Like It, i. 3.)*

We have a similar corruption in *pick-axe*, Mid. Eng. *pikeys*, Old Fr. *piquois, picquois*, "a pickax" (Cotgrave), from the verb *piquer*. The word *posthumous* has changed its meaning through folk-etymology. It represents the Latin superlative *postumus*, latest born. By association with *humus*, ground, earth, it came to be used of a child born, or a work published, after its author's death, a meaning which the derivatives of *postumus* have in all the Romance languages.

The first part of the word has been distorted in *pursy*, short-winded—

"And pursy insolence shall break his wind
With fear and horrid flight."

*(Timon of Athens, v. 5.)*

Fr. *poussif*, from Lat. *pulsus*, throbbling. It was formerly used also in connection with horses—

"You must warrant this horse clear of the glands, and pursyness." *(The Gentleman's Dictionary, 1705.)*
Arquebus, Fr. arquebuse, is a doublet of hackbut, Old Fr. haquebute, "an haquebut, or arquebuse; a caliber" (Cotgrave). The corruption is due to arcus, bow. Both arquebus and hackbut are common in Scott—

"His arms were halbert, axe, or spear,
A cross-bow there, a hackbut here,
A dagger-knife, and brand."

(Marmion, v. 3.)

The origin is Du. haakbus, hook-gun, the second element of which appears in blunderbuss. The first part of this word has undergone so many popular transformations that it is difficult to say which was the original form. Ludwig has Donner-büchs, Blunderbüchs, oder Muskeketon, "a thunder-box; a blunder-buss; a musketoon; a wide-mouthed brass-gun, carrying about twenty pistol bullets at once." It was also called in German Plantier-büchs, from plantieren, to plant, set up, because fired from a rest. Du. bus, like Ger. Büchse, means both "box" and "gun." In the bushes, or axle-boxes, of a cart-wheel, we have the same word. The ultimate origin is Greek πυξ, the box-tree, whence also the learned word pyx. Fr. botte, box, is cognate, and Fr. bousole, mariners' compass, is from the Italian diminutive bossola, "a boxe that mariners keep their compasse in. Also taken for the compasse" (Florio).

Scissors were formerly cisars (cf. Fr. ciseaux), connected with Lat. cadere, to cut. The modern spelling is due to association with Lat. scissor, a cutter, tailor, from scindere, to cut. Runagate is well known to be a corrupt doublet of renegado, one who has "denied" his faith. Recreat, the present participle of Old Fr. recreere, Vulgar Lat. *recredere, to change one's faith, contains very much the same idea; cf. miscreant, lit. unbeliever. Jaunty, spelt janty by
Wycherley and gently by Burns, is Fr. gentil, wrongly brought into connection with jaunt.

In some cases of folk-etymology it is difficult to see to what idea the corruption is due. The mollusc called a periwinkle was in Anglo-Saxon pinewincla, which still survives in dialect as pennywinkle. It appears to have been influenced by the plant-name periwinkle, which is itself a corruption of Mid. Eng. pervenke, from Lat. pervinca; cf. Fr. pervenche. The material called lustrstring was formerly lustrine, Fr. lustrine, from its glossiness. A wiseacre is "one that knows or tells truth; we commonly use it in malam partem for a fool" (Blount, Glossographia, 1674). This comes, through Dutch, from Ger. Weisssager, commonly understood as wise-sayer, but really unconnected with sagen, to say. The Old High Ger. wisago, prophet, is cognate with Eng. witty. The military and naval word ensign is in Shakespeare corrupted, in both its meanings, into ancient. Thus Falstaff describes his tatterdemalion recruits as—

"Ten times more dishonourable ragged than an old-faced ancient."

(1 Henry IV., iv. 2.)

while Ancient Pistol is familiar to every reader. A cordwainer, from Old Fr. cordouanier, "a shoemaker, a cordwainer" (Cotgrave), worked with cordovan, "Cordovan leather; which is properly a goat's skin tanned." The modern French form cordonnier is due to association with cordon, a thong, bootlace, etc. Witch-elm has nothing to do with witches. It is for older weech-elm, wiche-elm, and belongs to Anglo-Sax. wrcgn.

1 Perhaps it is the mere instinct to make an unfamiliar word "look like something." Thus Fr. bonneâtre, from Eng. bonneâtre, cannot conceivably have been associated with a fair meadow; and accomplice, for complice, Law: * compleâtre, complice-, can hardly have been confused with accomplice.
to bend. *Service-tree* is a meaningless corruption of Mid. Eng. *serves*, an early loan word from Lat. *sorbus*.

In the case of a double-barrelled word, folk-etymology usually affects one half only, e.g., *verdigris* is for Fr. *vert-de-gris*, for Old Fr. *vert de Grece*, Greek green. The reason for the name is unknown. Cotgrave calls it “Spanish green.” Mid. English had the more correct *vertegresse*, and *verte Grece* (*Promptorium Parvulorum*, 1440). The cavalry trumpet-call *boot and saddle* is for Fr. *boute-selle*, lit. “put saddle.” *Court card* is for *coat card*, a name given to these cards from the dresses depicted on them. Florio has *carta di figura*, “a cote carde.” The card game called *Pope Joan* would appear to be in some way corrupted from *nain jaune*, lit. “yellow dwarf,” its French name.

But occasionally the results of folk-etymology are literally *preposterous.*¹ The Fr. *choucroute* is from *sürkrüt*, a dialect pronunciation of Ger. *Sauer-kraut*, sour cabbage, so that the first syllable, meaning “sour,” has actually been corrupted so as to mean “cabbage.” Another example, which I have never seen quoted, is the name of a beech-wood near the little town of Remilly in Lorraine. The trees of this wood are very old and curiously twisted, and they are called in French *les jolis fous*, where *fou* (Lat. *fagus*) is the Old French for “beech” (*fouet*, whip, is its diminutive). This is rendered in German as *tolle Buchen*, mad beeches, the *fou* having been misunderstood as referring to the fantastic appearance of the trees.

_Forlorn hope* is sometimes used metaphorically as though the *hope* were of the kind that springs eternal in

¹ Lat. *preposterus*, from *prae*, before, and *posterus*, behind.
the human breast. In military language it now means the leaders of a storming party.

"The forlorn hope of each attack consisted of a sergeant and twelve Europeans." (Wellington's Despatches, 1799.),
but was earlier used of soldiers in any way exposed to special danger. Cotgrave has *ensans perdus," per dus; or the forlorne hope of a campe (are commonly gentlemen of companies)." It is from obsolete Du. *verloren hoop, where hoop, cognate with Eng. heap, is used for a band or company. In 16th-century German we find *ein verlorenen Haufe. Both the Dutch and German expressions are obsolete in this sense.

The military phrase to run the gauntlet has no connection with gauntlet, glove. The older form is *gantlope—

"Some said he ought to be tied neck and heels; others that he deserved to run the gantlope." (Tom Jones, vii. i.)

It is a punishment of Swedish origin from the period of the Thirty Years' War. The Swedish form is gatlopp, in which gat is cognate with Eng. gate, in its proper sense of "street," and lopp with Eng. leap and Ger. laufen, to run.

The press-gang had originally nothing to do with "pressing." When soldiers or seaman were engaged, they received earnest money called prest-money, i.e., an advance on "loan," Old Fr. prest (pret), and the engagement was called presting or impresting. Florio explains soldato (see p. 154), lit. "paid," by "prest with paie as soldiers are." The popular corruption to press took place naturally as the method of enlistment became more "pressing."

The black art is a translation of Old Fr. nigromance, nigromancie, conjuring, the black art" (Cotgrave); but this is folk-etymology for *necromantia. Greco-Lat. necromantia, divination by means of the dead. The popular
form NEGROMANCIE still survives in French. To CURRY FAVOUR is a corruption of Mid. Eng. "to curry favel." The expression is translated from French. Palsgrave has CURRYFAVELL, a flatterer, "estrille faveau," estriller (etriller) meaning "to curry (a horse)." FAVEAU, earlier FAUVEL, is the name of a horse in the famous ROMAN DE FAUVEL, a satirical Old French poem of the early 14th century. He symbolises worldly vanity carefully tended by all classes of society. The name is a diminutive of Fr. fauve, tawny, cognate with Eng. fallow (deer). (See also p. 192, n.)

A very curious case of folk-etymology is seen in the old superstition of the HAND OF GLORY. This is understood to be a skeleton hand from the gallows which will point out hidden treasure—

"Now mount who list,
And close by the wrist
Sever me quickly the Dead Man's fist."

(INGOLDSBY, The Hand of Glory.)

It is simply a translation of Fr. MAIN DE GLOIRE. But the French expression is a popular corruption of MANDRAGORE, from Lat. mandragora, the mandragore, or mandrake, to the forked roots of which a similar virtue was attributed, especially if the plant were obtained from the foot of the gallows.

Akin to folk-etymology is contamination, i.e., the welding of two words into one. This can often be noticed in children, whose linguistic instincts are those of primitive races. I have heard a child, on her first visit to the Zoo, express great eagerness to see the CANIMALS (camels X animals), which, by the way, turned out to be the giraffes. A small boy who learnt English and German simultaneously evolved, at the age of two, the word SPAM (sponge X Ger. Schwamm). In a college in the English midlands, a student named Constantine, who sat next to a student named Turpin, once heard
himself startlingly addressed by a lecturer as *Turpentine*. People who inhabit the frontier of two languages, and in fact all who are in any degree bilingual, must inevitably form such composites occasionally. The *h* aspirate of Fr. *haut*, Lat. *altus*, high, can only be explained by the influence of Old High *Ger. *hh* (hoch). The poetic word *glaive* cannot be derived from Lat. *gladius*, sword, which has given Fr. *glai*, an archaic name for the gladiolus. We must invoke the help of a Gaulish word *cladebo*, sword, which is related to Gaelic *clay-more*, big sword. It has been said that in this word the swords of Cæsar and Vercingetorix still cross each other. In Old French we find *oreste*, a storm, combined from *orage* and *tempeste* (tempête). Fr. *orteil*, toe, represents the mixture of Lat. *articulus*, a little joint, with Gaulish *ordo*. A *battedore* was in Mid. English a washing beetle, which is in Provençal *batedor*, lit. beater. Hence it seems that this is one of the very few Provençal words which passed directly into English during the period of our occupation of Guérande. It has been contaminated by the cognate *beetle*.

*Cannibal* is from Span. *canibal*, earlier *caribal*, i.e. *Carib*, the *n* being perhaps due to contamination with Span. *canino*, canine, voracious. It can hardly be doubted that this word suggested Shakespeare's *Caliban*. *Seraglio* is due to confusion between the Turkish word *serai*, a palace, and Ital. *serraglio*, "an inclosure, a close, a padocke, a parke, a cloister or seclude" (Florio), which belongs to Lat. *sera*, a bolt or bar.

*Anecdote* is a deliberate coinage ascribed to John Wilkes—

"When a man fell into his *anecdote*, it was a sign for him to retire from the world." (Disraeli, *Lothair*, Ch. 28.)

In some cases it is impossible to estimate the
different elements in a word. Arbour certainly owes its modern spelling to Lat. arbor, a tree, but it represents also Mid. Eng. herbera, which comes, through French, from Lat. *herbarium. But this cannot only mean herb-garden, so that the sense development of the word must have been affected by *harbour, properly “army-shelter,” ultimately identical with Fr. auberge (p. 164). When Dryden wrote—

"Tardy of aid, *seal* thy heavy eyes,
Awake, and with the dawning day arise."

(The Cock and the Fox, 247.)

he was expressing a composite idea made up from the verb seal, Old Fr. seeler (sceller), Lat. sigillare, and seel, Old Fr. ciller, Vulgar Lat. *ciliare, from cillum, eyebrow. The latter verb, meaning to sew together the eyelids of a young falcon, was once a common word—

* "Come, *seeling* night,
Scarf up the tender eye of pitiful day."

(Macbeth, iii. 2.)

The verb fret is Anglo-Sax. fretan, to eat away (cf. Ger. fressen). Fret is also used of interlaced bars in heraldry, in which sense it corresponds to Fr. frette with the same meaning; for this word, which also means ferrule, a Vulgar Lat. *ferritta (ferrum, iron) has been suggested. When Hamlet speaks of—

* "This majestic roof fretted with golden fire,"

(Hamlet, ii. 3)

is he thinking of frets in heraldry, or of fretwork, or are these two of one origin? Why should fret, in this sense, not come from fret, to eat away, since fretwork may be described as the “eating away” of part of the material? Cf. etch, which comes, through Dutch, from Ger. ätsen, the factitive of essen, to eat. But the German for fretwork is durchbrochene Arbeit, “broken-
through" work, and Old Fr. fret or frait, Lat. fractus, means "broken." Who shall decide how much our fretwork owes to each of these possible etymons?

That form of taxation called excise, which dates from the time of Charles I., has always been unpopular. Andrew Marvell says that Excise—

"With hundred rows of teeth the shark exceeds,
And on all trades like cassawar she feeds."

Dr. Johnson defines it as "a hateful tax levied upon commodities, and adjudged not by the common judges of property, but wretches hired by those to whom excise is paid," an outburst which Lord Mansfield considered "actionable." The name, like the tax, came from the Netherlands, where it was called accijns—

"'Twere cheap living here, were it not for the monstrous excises which are impos'd upon all sorts of commodities, both for belly and back." (HOLLOW, Letter from Amsterdam, 1619.)

In modern Dutch it has become accijns, through confusion with cijns, tax (Lat. census; cf. Ger. Zins, interest). But the Dutch word is from Fr. accise, which appears in medieval Latin as accisia, as though connected with "cutting" (cf. tallage, from Fr. taillier, to cut), or with the "incidence" of the tax. It is perhaps a perversion of Ital. assisa, "an imposition, or taxe, or assessment" (Torriano); but there is also an Old Fr. aceis which must be related to Latin census.

When folk-etymology and contamination work together, the result is sometimes bewildering. Thus querry represents an older querry or quiry, still usual in the 18th century. Among my books is—

"The Compleat Horseman, or Perfect Farrier, written in French by the Sieur de Solleseuil, Querry to the Present King of France" (1702).

The modern spelling is due to popular association with
PLEONASM

Lat. equus. But this query is identical with French écuyer, stable, just as in Scottish the post often means the postman. And écuyer, older escurie, is from Old High Ger. scura\(^1\) (Scheuer, barn). The word used in modern French in the sense of our equerry is écuyer, older escurier. Lat. scutarius, shield-bearer, whence our word esquire. This écuyer is in French naturally confused with écuyer, so that Cotgrave defines escurie as "the stable of a prince, or nobleman; also, a query-ship; or the duties, or offices belonging thereto; also (in old authors) a squire's place; or, the dignity, title, estate of an esquire."

Ignorance of the true meaning of a word often leads to pleonasm. Thus greyhound means hound-hound, the first syllable representing Icel. grey, a dog. Peacock is explanatory of Du. pij, earlier pje, "py-gown, or rough gown, as soldiers and seamen wear" (Hexham). On Greenhow Hill means "on green hill hill," and Buckhurst Holt Wood means "beech wood wood wood," an explanatory word being added as its predecessor became obsolete. The second part of salt-cellar is not the same word as in wine-cellar. It comes from Fr. salière, "a salt-seller" (Cotgrave), so that the salt is unnecessary. We speak pleonastically of "dishevelled hair," while Old Fr. deschevell, lit. dis-haired, now replaced by échevel, can only be applied to a person, e.g., une femme toute deschevelée, "discheveled, with all her haire disorderly falling about her eares" (Cotgrave). The word chever meant in Mid. English "face." Its French original, chère, scarcely survives except in the phrase faire bonne chère, lit. "make a good face," a meaning preserved in "to be of good cheer." In both languages the meaning has been

\(^{1}\) This etymology is, however, now regarded as doubtful, and it seems likely that Old Fr. escurus is really derived from escuyer. If so, there is no question of contamination.
transferred to the more substantial blessings which the pleasant countenance seems to promise, and also to the felicity resulting from good treatment. The true meaning of the word is so lost that we can speak of a "cheerful face," i.e., a face full of face.

But there are many words whose changes of form cannot be altogether explained by any of the influences that have been discussed in this and the preceding chapters. Why should cerelga, "a large kind of sausage, well season'd, and eaten cold in slices" (Kersey's Eng. Dict., 1720), now be saveloy? We might invoke the initial letters of sausage to account for part of the change, but the oy remains a mystery. Cerelas, earlier cerelat, comes through French from Ital. cervellato, "a kinde of dry sausage" (Florio), said to have been originally made from pig's brains. For hatchment we find in the 16th century achement, and even achievement. It is archaic Fr. hachement, the ornamental crest of a helmet, etc., probably derived from Old Fr. achemer, variant of acesmer, to adorn. Hence both the French and English forms have an unexplained h-, the earlier achement being nearer the original. French omelette has a bewildering history, but we can trace it almost to its present form. To begin with, an omelet, in spite of proverbs, is not necessarily associated with eggs. The origin is to be found in Lat. lamella, a thin plate,¹ which gave Old Fr. lamelle. Then la lamelle was taken as l'alamelle, and the new alamelle or alemelle became, with change of suffix, alemette. By metathesis (see p. 59) this gave

¹ We have a parallel in Fr. flan, Eng. flumm, Ger. Fladen, etc., a kind of omelet, ultimately related to Eng. flat—

"The feast was over, the board was clear'd,

The flaneously and the custards had all disappear'd.

(INGOLDSBY, Jacobin of Rhine.)

Cotgrave has flanne, "flawpes, custards, eggepies; also, round plates, or plates of mettal."
UNEXPLAINED DISTORTIONS

omelette, still in dialect use, for which modern French has substituted omelette. The o then remains unexplained, unless we admit the influence of the old form auf-mollet, a product of folk-etymology.

Counterpane represents Old Fr. coute-pointe, now corruptly courte-pointe, from Lat. culcita puncta, lit. "stitched quilt"; cf. Ger. Stoffdecke, counterpane, from steppen, to stitch. In Old French we also find the corrupt form contrepinte which gave Eng. counterpoint—

“In ivory coffers I have stuff’d my crowns;
In cypress chests my arras, counterpoints,
Costly apparel, tents and canopies.”

(Taming of the Shrew, ii. 1).

in modern English replaced by counterpane. Mid. English has also the more correct form quilt-point, from the Old Norman cuite (pur)pointe, which occurs in a 12th-century poem on St Thomas of Canterbury. The hooped petticoat called a farthingale was spelt by Shakespeare fardingle and by Cotgrave vardingall. This is Old Fr. verdugalle, of Spanish origin and derived from Span. verdugo, a (green) wand, because the circumference was stiffened with flexible switches before the application of whalebone or steel to this purpose. The crinoline, as its name implies, was originally strengthened with horse-hair, Lat. crinis, hair. To return to the farthingale, the insertion of an n before g is common in English (see p. 84, n. 2), but the change of the initial consonant is baffling. The modern Fr. vertugadin is also a corrupt form. Isinglass seems to be an arbitrary perversion of obsolete Du. huyzenblass (huisblad), sturgeon bladder; cf. the cognate Ger. Hausenblase.

Few words have suffered so many distortions as liquorice. The original is Greco-Lat. glycyrrhiza,
lit. "sweet root," corrupted into late Lat. *liquiritia*, 
to have been influenced by *orris*, a plant which also 
has a sweet root, while the modern spelling is perhaps 
due to *liquor.*