

**A SUPPLEMENT TO THE
GLOSSARY
OF THE DIALECT
OF CUMBERLAND**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649077250

A supplement to the glossary of the dialect of Cumberland by E. W. Prevost & S. Dickson
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Edited by Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd.
Cover @ 2017

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Dialect of Cumberland

BY
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WITH A GRAMMAR OF THE DIALECT
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LONDON
HENRY FROWDE
OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS WAREHOUSE
AMEN CORNER
BEMROSE & SONS, LTD.
4 SNOW HILL, E.C.
CARLISLE: C. THURNAM & SONS

1905

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PART I

PREFATORY NOTE

THE necessity for a Supplement to the Glossary embodying that of Mr. Wm. Dickinson, which was issued in 1899, became evident soon after its publication, for much new material was offered to me by those who had become acquainted with my work. Several of these became regular correspondents, and the additional List of Correspondents shows that I have thus been able to increase largely my sources of information; districts hitherto altogether neglected, or but slightly explored, having now been well worked.

Meanwhile I have continued to collect quotations from the newspapers, books published after 1899, and many other sources, wherewith to illustrate the use of words recorded. From the *English Dialect Dictionary* I have recovered material which I had collected and handed over to the Editor before I commenced my own independent labours, and it is a pleasing duty to thank Professor Wright for many quotations and references to several obsolete words.

It has come as a surprise to many that, apart from dialect form and pronunciation, there are several words and phrases in daily use which are either unknown or bear a different signification in the South of England; e.g. a 'small family' a southerner considers to refer to the number of children, whereas the northerner means that the children in the family are young; a 'table-maid' is not to be found in the advertising columns of a London daily newspaper, whilst a 'parlourmaid' is. While therefore it might appear that much matter of this nature has now been added unnecessarily, the contrary is the fact; for apart from having given to the instances illustrated full consideration before adopting them, I find there are still others which might have been similarly treated. Exception may be taken to the introduction of technical terms, &c., in and out of use, and though some of them cannot be said to be strictly dialectal, yet by being more or less restricted to the northern counties they possess a sufficient interest to warrant their insertion here. Where the original glosses seem to be in any way misleading or uncertain, I have made additions which will, I hope, remove any element of uncertainty that may exist. A few peculiar shades of meanings attributed to words in general use are here given for the first time; notable examples will be found in Teem and Tew.

Several words which were 'peculiar only on account of the dialectic pronunciation' had been erroneously placed in the list pp. xxxiv-lxxxii; these are now transferred to the glossarial part of the present volume, together with a few others from the same list which possess a special interest apart from the pronunciation; e. g. Toes, s. v. Teaa.

As this Supplement is intended to be used in conjunction with, and not wholly independent of, the previous volume, and to avoid unnecessary repetition, a number often follows the Headword. In such a case reference must be made to the page in the earlier Glossary whereon will be found the same Headword; then the connexion of the old material with new, whether consisting of variants, new localities, or illustrations not previously obtainable, will be made clear; otherwise the additions will at first sight appear to be irrelevant. The corrections and additions to the Preface are also paged (roman numerals), in order that the reader may the more easily make comparison if he should so desire.

For more than one reason it was thought that a list of Similes current in the county would be of interest; it will be seen that whilst many are truly dialectal, others are but translations into the vernacular of those in general use. The Proverbial Sayings are quaint, and indicative of the character of the people.

I am indebted to Mr. R. W. Moore, mining engineer, for a valuable list of Mining Terms formerly in use in Cumberland, which he has collected whilst preparing the chapter on Coal-mining for the Victoria History of the county. My hearty thanks are likewise due to all who have verbally and by letter replied to my many inquiries, and who have not spared themselves any trouble to give me of their best.

Mr. T. H. Coward of Silcroft, and Mr. James Walter Brown of Carlisle, in addition to help already rendered, undertook the onerous task of reading the proof-sheets, and the first-named likewise generously handed over to me a collection of south-western words which he had made some few years ago.

The value of this Supplement has been greatly enhanced by the insertion of the results of a more extended investigation into the grammar, idioms, &c., which Mr. S. Dickson Brown has made.

E. W. PREVOST.

ROSS, HEREFORDSHIRE, 1905.

GRAMMAR

By S. DICKSON BROWN, M.A. (Lond.), F.R.G.S.,
Member of the Philological Society.

In the Introduction to the Glossary (p. xvi) I gave an analysis of the vowel sounds, together with a tolerably complete accidence. Now, on the issue of this new work, I am taking the opportunity afforded to me to complete the phonology by adding some notes on the consonants, and at the same time make a few remarks on certain syntactical points which are peculiar to the dialect.

Noteworthy examples of irregular word-building are also quoted, and in one or two cases a short statement has been inserted where the historical aspect seems to be of special interest.

I have also briefly discussed the elements of the dialect, calling attention to the French derivatives, as this detail seems to have escaped observation hitherto, or perhaps was not deemed worthy of comment.

Some friendly criticisms have been passed on my choice of the word *maul* (xvi) as a type of the Cumbrian sound of *o* in (Glossic) *uo*. But the choice of such a word as *pole* would have been open to the same objection—that it is not a true equivalent. I have already stated (L.c.) that 'it is impossible to express the true sound of Cumbrian vowels by any examples taken from received English pronunciation,' and my selection of the word *maul* was governed by the desire to prevent any one not acquainted with the dialect from forming the erroneous idea that Cumbrian *o* is equal to English *o*. The essential difference is that the Cumbrian does not round the orifice of the mouth and lips, and therefore the sound approximates as closely to English *au* as to English *o*. This difficulty applies only to the long vowel; in the case of the short, the sounds are identical, that is Cumbrian short *o* is English *au*.

There are several consonantal peculiarities exhibited by Cumbrian which merit a more extended comment than was accorded to them on pp. xxiv-xxvi. The substitution of one consonant for another is of frequent occurrence, and is almost entirely irregular. Examples are: *gimlek* (gimblet), *rebbat* (rivet), *ebbm* (even), *twilt* (quilt), *busk* (bush), *flay* (fright), *sidders* (scissors), *wid* (with), *med* (might), and *buddiek* (buttock). There is a marked tendency to substitute *b* for *v* when the latter is followed by a nasal, and the older dialect speakers use *w* or *wh* for *qu* in all cases. The retention of the form *busk* is no doubt due to Icelandic influence. One change, however, is carried out regularly, viz. final

d to *t*: eerant (errand), shippert (shepherd), forrat (forward), and lovt (loved).

Some of these forms result from analogy, and one striking instance is to be found in the word *strinkle*. The Old-English verb was *stregdan* (to strew), and under the influence of *sprinkle*—which shows an epenthetic *k*, the O.E. verb being *sprengan*—has developed an *n*, and converted the *g* into *k*. It is interesting to note that the German verb *sprinkeln* exhibits much the same process.

Assimilation accounts for a great number of consonantal variations, and it has acted not only in individual words, but from one to another. Flaunnin (flannel), mull (muddle), boddm (bottom), are instances of the first group; whilst wim meh (with me), im meh (in me), forgim meh (forgive me) belong to the second.

The transference of a final consonant to the following word commencing with a vowel is very usual, thus: a noor (an hour), a nesp leaf (an aspen leaf), this norashin (from an oration). In the last instance the *n* has become permanent. Smatter (matter), swarn (warrant) obtain their foreign *s* from the verb 'to be'; the former from the frequent question, 'What smatter?' and the latter from the use of *is* to form the future tense. 'I's tell him' means I shall tell him, and so 'I's warnt him' meant I shall guarantee him, but the phrase came to be used as a mere expletive phrase to add emphasis, and the *s* passed over to *warnt* or *warn*, with the total loss of the future meaning.

Epenthesis or insertion of foreign letters is not common; varst (vast), narder (nearer), spreckle (speckle)—this evidently an analogical form—may serve as examples. Another analogical form is *div* (do). This word originated in the negative answer to a question, 'Ah divn't,' and the *v* was introduced from the corresponding phrase 'Ah hev'n't.' That this explanation is the correct one is proved by the fact that the present tenses of the two verbs coincide exactly in form, thus: ah hev'n't, thoo hesn't, he hesn't, we hev'n't, &c. Ah divn't, thoo disn't, he disn't, we divn't, &c. The addition of final sounds is, however, more often found, e.g. suddent, varmint, mysert (miser), and ninetpence.

Saunter is also deserving of separate mention. It is the Old French *aventure*, which appears in Middle English as *aunter* or *auntour*. Employed in a depreciatory sense, it is nowadays usually found in the phrase 'an old wife saunter,' which would be originally 'an oald wife's aunter.' As I shall point out later, the dialect never uses the possessive 's, consequently every Cumbrian hearing the phrase would naturally assume that the *s* heard here must belong, not to *wife*, but to *aunter*, and thus the word *saunter* would come into existence.

Metathesis is rare, and the examples—brust, gurse—quoted on p. xxvi would have been better described as instances of the original O.E. forms (*brestan*, *gacrs*) retained by the dialect, in

striking contrast to the changes which the same words have undergone in English. True dialectal specimens are *wardle* (world), *pertense* (pretence), *girt* (great), *hundert* (hundred), and *towarst* (towards).

Mutilated words which have lost, some a single letter, others a whole syllable, are thickly strewn throughout the Cumbrian dialect, and in addition to what has been said above, constitute a living body of evidence to support the truth of that fundamental law of change in all languages, economy of effort. I will quote here but a few of these sufferers: *rageous* (outrageous), *cashin* (occasion), *tice* (entice), *bateable* (debateable), *frunts* (affronts), *pleenish* (replenish), *pore* (poker), *mell* (meddle), *est* (nest), and *wussel* (wrestle).

The group of conjunctions and prepositions beginning with the prefix *be-*, e. g. *before*, *because*, &c., are found as—*afwore*, *accoase*, &c. The origin of these is as follows. The preposition 'above' is derived from O.E. *on* and *būfan*, *on* being contracted to *a*, and thus we have the modern 'above.' In Cumbrian, this word has been taken as the type on which all others have been modelled; *a-* taking the place of *be-* in all cases, and even of *with* in *without*. By a wrong division of the word the last-named has become the anomalous form, *adoot*.

The tendency to level all final unaccented syllables under the indefinite and indistinct vowel sound represented by the glossic *u'* has resulted in the production of some peculiar forms. The following words will serve as illustrations of this—*edgwes* (edgeways), *milkas* (milk-house), *summat* (somewhat), *bakstun* (bakestone). One other common instance is the agglutination of the indefinite pronoun to a preceding adjective or demonstrative, e. g. *good'un*, *this'n*. I repeat this point, for some philologists have seen in this dialectal form a remnant of the O.E. accusative ending in *-ne*. With this view I cannot agree, seeing that these terminations are used in all cases, and neither are nor have been confined to the one case in Cumbrian. In *seckan* we have a remarkable agglutinating process, for the phrase 'seckan a yan' contains three successive forms of the word *one* (O.E. *ān*).

If the initial is a vowel it is not infrequently preceded by a *w* or *y*, as—*wouth* (oath), *worder* (order), *worniment* (ornament), *wostler* (ostler), *yerth* (earth); in the last example the initial semi-consonant represents O.E. *e* in the diphthong *ea*, as in modern English *yard*.

There is an absence of abstract nouns ending in *-tion*, this termination not having secured a footing in the dialect; on the other hand we find a large number of nouns with the suffix *-ment* which serves to form a species of collective noun, as well as a series implying 'state' or 'condition.' To the former group belong such words as *needments*, *oddments*, and to the latter such as *worniment*, *bodderment*, &c. There are, however, one or

two nouns terminating with *-tion*, which are probably of recent formation, e. g. *flusteration*, *fairation*.

A single example of a dialect word in *-ance* is *providance*, in which the accent falls on the second syllable. On the whole the dialect employs few suffixes in forming parts of speech; such formations as do exist will be found under their respective heads.

The word *marras*, although a plural, is used as a singular in such phrases as, 'This shoe isn't a marras te that.' A peculiar combination of plural and singular is found in the phrase *men-folk* and *woman-folk*.

I append some more examples of the uninflected genitive: 'Isbel Simon drink,' 'Heidless woman greans,' 'Joe stwory' (xxvii).

The dialect forms an adjective expressing a slight degree of quality, by means of the termination *-ish*, and by compounding the adjective with *like*, thus: sharpish, cleverish, roon-like, and also by a combination of the two methods—sharpish-like. 'Rather' is even added, so that the curious combination 'rayder sharpish-like' results. This use of *-ish* and *like* is extended to the past participle in the passive voice, 'He was droon't-like.' If this word *like* has developed from the O.E. adjectival termination *-lic*, and not from the O.E. adjective *gelic*, as in modern English *like*, then in such groups as wakely-like, wankly-like we have a doubling of the suffix *-lic*, thus: O.E. *wactlic + lic*.

There is a peculiar use of the word *like* in the west of the county. It is added to a sentence to convey the idea of a threat, a reproach, or a challenge, according to the nature of the conversation; e. g. 'What's te deun theer, like?' 'Thoo's nobbut a gurt feull, like'; 'Ah'll tell thee fadder, like.' When these sentences are uttered a decided pause is made before the word *like*. Occasionally we find it employed as an introductory word, with the elliptical meaning of 'it was like this,' 'it happened thus.' To the question 'Hoo did te leamm theesel?' the answer would be 'Like, Ah was gaan whietly doon t' lwonnin,' &c.

An absolute comparative is made by suffixing *more* to a comparative adjective, thus: bettermer, uppermer, topmer. This form is the result of analogy with such words as *uppermost*, being the corresponding comparative to the already existing superlative.

Another notable dialectal group is that ending in *-some*, where the suffix means 'causing' when added to a verb, as in dootsome, flaysome; 'full of' when suffixed to a noun or adjective, as in fondsome; and 'consisting of' when affixed to a numeral, as in threesome.

In *knowledgeable* and *naterable*, there is a creation of two new adjectives by adding the suffix to nouns, instead of following the English method of adding it to verbs.

In connexion with the numeral adjective, it is worth while noting that the 'long hundred' (one hundred and twenty) of