

**AN HISTORICAL SKETCH OF  
THE PROVINCIAL DIALECTS  
OF ENGLAND: ILLUSTRATED  
BY NUMEROUS EXAMPLES**

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An historical sketch of the provincial dialects of England: Illustrated by Numerous Examples by  
James Orchard Halliwell

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ENGLAND,

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EXTRACTED FROM THE

“*Dictionary of Archaic and Provincial Words,*”

BY

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## THE ENGLISH PROVINCIAL DIALECTS.

ROBERT of Gloucester, after describing the Norman Conquest, thus alludes to the change of language introduced by that event.

And the Normans ne couthe speke tho bote her owe speche,  
And speke French as dude alon, and here chyldren dude also teche.  
So that hey men of this lond, that of her blod come,  
Holdeth alle thulke speche that hii of hem nome.  
Vor bote a man couthe French, me toth of hym wel lute,  
*Ac losse men holdeth to Englyes, and to her kunde speche gute.*  
Ich wene ther ne be man in world contreyes none,  
That ne holdeth to her kunde speche, bote Engeland one.  
Ac wel me wot vor to conne bothe wel yt ys,  
Vor the more that a man eon, the more worth he ys.

This extract describes very correctly the general history of the languages current in England for the first two centuries after the battle of Hastings. Anglo-Norman was almost exclusively the language of the court, of the Norman gentry, and of literature. "The works in English which were written before the Wars of the Barons belong," says Mr. Wright, "to the last expiring remains of an older and totally different Anglo-Saxon style, or to the first attempts of a new English one formed upon a Norman model. Of the two grand monuments of the poetry of this period, *Layamon* belongs to the former of these classes, and the singular poem entitled the *Ormulum* to the latter. After the middle of the thirteenth century, the attempts at poetical composition in English became more frequent and more successful, and previous to the age of Chaucer we have several poems of a very remarkable character, and some good imitations of the harmony and spirit of the French versification of the time." After the Barons' Wars, the Anglo-Norman was gradually intermingled with the Anglo-Saxon, and no long time elapsed before the mongrel language, English, was in general use, formed, however, from the latter. A writer of the following century thus alleges his reason for writing in English:

In Englis tonge y schal jow telle,  
Jyf ye so long with me wyt dwelle:  
Ne Latyn wil y speke ne waste,  
Bot Englisch that men uses maste,  
For that ys youre kynde langage,  
That ye hafe here most of usage:  
*That can ech man untherstonde  
That is born in Englonde;*  
For that langage ys most schewed,  
Als wel more lereþ as lewed,  
Latyn also y trows can name,  
Bot tho that hath hit of schole tane:  
Som can Frensch and no Latyne,  
That useth his court and duellit therinne,  
And som can of Latyn aparty,  
That can Frensch ful febylly;  
And som untherstondith Englisch,  
That nother can Latyn ne Frensch.  
*Bot lorde, and leude, old and yong,  
Alle untherstondith Englisch tonge.*  
Therefore y holde hit most eiker thanne  
To schewe the langage that ech man can;  
And for lewethe men namely,  
That can no more of clergy,  
Tho ken tham whare most nede,  
For clerkes can both se and rede  
In divers bokes of Holy Writt,  
How they schal lyve, yf thay loke hit:  
Therefore y wylle me holly halde  
To that langage that Englisch ys caide. *MS. Boll. 48, f. 48.*

#### ENGLISH PROVINCIAL DIALECTS.

The author of the *Cursor Mundi* thought each nation should be contented with one language, and that the English should discard the Anglo-Norman :

This ilk bok it es translate  
 Into Inglis tong to rede,  
 For the love of Inglis lede,  
 Inglis lede of Ingland,  
 For the comun at understand.  
 Frankis rimes here I redd  
 Comunlik in ilk sted.  
 Must es it wrought for Frankis man,  
 Quat is for him na Frankis can ?  
 Of Ingland the nacion  
 Es Inglisman thar in comun ;  
 The speche that man wit mast may spode,  
 Mast thar wit to speke war nede.  
 Seiden was for ani chance  
 Praised Inglis tong in France !  
 Gise us ilkan thare language,  
 Me think we do tham non outrage.

*MS. Cott. Vespas. A. III. f. 2.*

In the curious tale of King Edward and the Shepherd, the latter is described as being perfectly astonished with the French and Latin of the court :

The lordis anon to chawmber went,  
 The kyng aftur the scheperde sent,  
 He was brogt forth fulle sone ;  
 He clawed his hed, his hare he rent,  
 He wende wel to have be schent,  
 He ne wyst what was to done.  
 When he French and Latyn herde,  
 He hade mervelle how it ferde,  
 And drow hym ever alone :  
 Jhesu, he seid, for thi gret grace,  
 Bryng me fayre out of thi place !  
 Lady, now here my bone !

*MS. Cantab. FF. v. 48, f. 66.*

In the fifteenth century, English may be said to have been the general language of this country.\* At this period, too, what is now called old English, rapidly lost its grammatical forms, and the English of the time of Henry VIII., orthography excepted, differs very little from that of the present day. A few archaisms now obsolete, and old phrases, constitute the essential differences.

Our present subject is the provincial dialects, to which these very brief remarks on the general history of the English language are merely preliminary,—a subject of great difficulty, and one which requires far more reading than has yet been attempted to develop satisfactorily, especially in its early period. Believing that the principal use of the study of the English dialects consists in the explanation of archaisms, I have not attempted that research which would be necessary to understand their history, albeit this latter is by no means an unimportant inquiry. The Anglo-Saxon dialects were not numerous, as far as can be judged from the MSS. in that language which have been preserved, and it seems probable that most of our English dialects might be traced historically and etymologically to the original tribes of the Saxons, Angles, and Jutes, not forgetting the Danes, whose language, according to Wallingford, so long influenced the dialect of Yorkshire. In order to accomplish this we require many more early documents which bear upon the subject than have yet been discovered, and the uncertainty which occurs in most cases of fixing the exact locality in which they were written adds to our difficulties. When we come to a later period, the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, there being no standard literary form of our native language, every MS. sufficiently exhibits its dialect, and it is to be hoped that all English works of this period may one day be classed according to their dialects. In such an undertaking, great assistance will be derived from a knowledge of our local dialects as they now exist. Hence the value of specimens of modern provincial language, for in many instances, as in Robert of Gloucester's *Chronicle*, compared with the present dialect of Gloucestershire, the organic forms of the dialect have remained unchanged for centuries. The *Ayenbyte of Inwyt* is, perhaps, the most remarkable specimen of early English MSS. written in a broad dialect, and it proves very satisfactorily that in the fourteenth century the principal features of what is termed the Western dialect were those also of the Kentish dialect. There can be, in fact, little doubt that the former was

\* Anne, Countess of Stafford, thus writes in 1430, I "ordeyne and make my testament in English tonge for my most profit, redyng, and understandyng in this wise."

ENGLISH PROVINCIAL DIALECTS.

long current throughout the Southern counties, and even extended in some degree as far as Essex.\* If we judge from the specimens of early English of which the localities of composition are known, we might perhaps divide the dialects of the fourteenth century into three grand classes, the Northern, the Midland, and the Southern, the last being that now retained in the Western counties. But, with the few materials yet published, I set little reliance on any classification of the kind. If we may decide from Mr. Wright's Specimens of Lyric Poetry, which were written in Herefordshire, or from Audelay's Poems, written in Shropshire in the fifteenth century, those counties would belong to the Midland division, rather than to the West or South.

The few writers who have entered on the subject of the early English provincial dialects, have advocated their theories without a due consideration of the probability, in many cases the certainty, of an essential distinction between the language of literature and that of the natives of a county. Hence arises a fallacy which has led to curious anomalies. We are not to suppose, merely because we find an early MS. written in any county in standard English, that that MS. is a correct criterion of the dialect of the county. There are several MSS. written in Kent of about the same date as the Aeyenbyte of Inwyt, which have none of the dialectical marks of that curious work. Most of the quotations here given from early MSS. must be taken with a similar limitation as to their dialect. Hence the difficulty, from want of authentic specimens, of forming a classification, which has led to an alphabetical arrangement of the counties in the following brief notices:—

BEDFORDSHIRE.

The dialect of this county has been fully investigated in Hatcher's Orthoepical Analysis of the English Language, 8vo. 1809. *eo* takes the place of *ow*, *ea* of *a*, *ow* of the long *o*, *oi* of *i*, &c. When *r* precedes *s* and *e* final, or *s* and other consonants, it is frequently not pronounced. *ow* final is often changed into *er*; *ge* final, into *dge*; and *g* final is sometimes omitted.

BERKSHIRE.

The Berkshire dialect partly belongs to the Western, and partly to the Midland, more strongly marked with the features of the former in the South-West of the county. The *a* is changed into *o*, the diphthongs are pronounced broadly, and the vowels are lengthened. *Way* is pronounced *woye*; *this* and *thak* for this and that; *he* for him, and *she* for her.

BUCKINGHAMSHIRE.

The language of the peasantry is not very broad, although many dialectical words are in general use. A list of the latter was kindly forwarded to me by Dr. Hussey.

CAMBRIDGESHIRE.

There is little to distinguish the Cambridgeshire dialect from that of the adjoining counties. It is nearly allied to that of Norfolk and Suffolk. The perfect tense is formed strongly, as *hit*, hot, *sit*, sot, *spare*, spore, e. g. "if I am spore," i. e. spared, &c. I have to return my thanks to

the Rev. J. J. Smith and the Rev. Charles Warren for brief lists of provincialisms current in this county.

CHESHIRE.

The Cheshire dialect changes *i* into *eo*, *ui* into *wo* or *oo*, *i* into *oi* or *ee*, *o* into *u*, *a* into *o*, *o* into *a*, *u* into *i*, *ea* into *yo*, and *oa* into *wo*. Mr. Wilbraham has published a very useful and correct glossary of Cheshire words. Second ed. 12mo. 1836.

*Extract from a Speech of Judas Iscariot in the Play of Christ's Entry into Jerusalem.*

By deare God in magistie!  
I am so wroth as I may be,  
And some waye I will wrecken me,  
As some as ever I made.  
My mayster Jesus, as men maye see,  
Was rubbed heade, foote, and knyve,  
With oymtente of more dainlie  
Then I see manye a daie.  
To that I have greute envye,  
That he suffred to destroye  
More then all his good thyrre,  
And his James towe.  
Hade I of it hade maisterye,  
I woulde have soulede it some in his,  
And put it up in tresurye,  
As I was wonte to doe.  
Whatsoever was geven to Jesu,  
I have kepte, since I hym knewe;  
For he hopes I will brewe,  
His purse allwale I bare,  
Hym hade bene better, in good fayre,  
Hade spared oymtente that daie,

\* This is stated on sufficiently ample authority, but Verstegan appears to limit it in his time to the Western counties,—“ We see that in some several parts of England itselfe, both the names of things, and pronunciations of words, are somewhat different, and that among the country people that never borrow any words out of the Latin or French, and of this different pronuntiation one example in steed of many shal suffice, as this: for pronouncing according as one would say at London, *I would eat more chesse if I had it*, the Northern man saith, *dy end eat more chesse gin ay hadot*, and the Western man saith, *Chud eat more chesse an chad it*. Lo heere three different pronuntiations in our owne country in one thing, and herof many the like examples might be alleaged.”—*Verstegan's Rectification*, 1634, p. 150.



ENGLISH PROVINCIAL DIALECTS.

For wrocken I wilbe some wate  
Of waste that was done their;  
Three hundreth penny worthes it was  
That he let spill in that place;  
Therefore God gave me hard grace,  
But hymselfe shalbe soulede  
To the Jewes, or that I sitte,  
For the tenth peny of it:  
And this my malster shalbe quite  
My greiff a hundreth foulede.

*Chester Plays, li. 12.*

CORNWALL.

It is almost unnecessary to observe, that the ancient Cornish language has long been obsolete. It appears to have been gradually disused from the time of Henry VIII., but it was spoken in some parts of the country till the eighteenth century. Modern Cornish is now an English dialect, and a specimen of it is here given. Polwhele has recorded a valuable list of Cornish provincialisms, and a new glossary has recently been published, in 'Specimens of Cornish Provincial Dialect,' 8vo. 1846. In addition to these, I have to acknowledge several words, hitherto unnoticed, communicated by Miss Hicks, and R. T. Smith, Esq.

Harrison, Description of Britaine, p. 14, thus mentions the Cornish language: "The Cornish and Devonshire men, whose countrie the Britons call Cerniw, have a speach in like sort of their owne, and such as hath in deed more affinitie with the Armorican toong than I can well discuss of. Yet in mine opinion, they are both but a corrupted kind of British, albeit so far degenerating in these daies from the old, that if either of them doo meete with a Welshman, they are not able at the first to understand one another, except here and there in some od words, without the helpe of interpreters."

In Cornwall, Fembr, and Devon they for to milk say milky, for to squint, to squinny, this, thicky, &c., and after most verbs ending with consonants they clap a *y*, but more commonly the lower part of Pembrokeshire.

*Lloyd's MS. Additions to Ray, Astm. Mus.*

(1) *The Cornwall Schoolboy.*

An ould man found, one day, a yung gentleman's portmantle, as he were a going to es dennar; he took'd et en and gived et to es wife, and said, "Mally, here's a roul of lither, look, see, I suppose some poor ould shoemaker or other have loe'eo, tak'eo and put'en a top of the teaster of the bed, he'll be glad to hab'en agen sum day, I dear say." The ould man, Jan, that was es neame, went to es work as before. Mally then open'd the portmantle, and found en et three hunderd pounds. Soon after thes, the ould man not being very well, Mally said, "Jan, I've saaved away a little money, by the bye, and as thes can't read or write, thes shu't go to scool" (he were then nigh threescore and ten). He went but a very short time, and comed hoame one day, and said, "Mally, I wain't go to scool no more, 'cause the chidder do be laffen at me; they can tell their letters, and I can't tell my A, B, C, and I wud rather go to work agen." "Do as thes woeel," see Mally. Jan had not ben out many daies, afore the yung gentleman came by that lost the portmantle, and said, "Well, my ould man, did'ee see

or hear tell of sich a thing as a portmantle?" "Portmantle, sar, was't that un, sumthing like thicky" (pointing to one behind es saddle.) I found one the oulder day sackly like that. "Where es et?" "Come along, I carr'd en en and go'ven to my wife Mally; thes sha't ar'en. Mally, where es that roul of lither that I giv'd the the oulder day?" "What roul of lither?" said Mally. "The roul of lither I brofft en and tould tha to put'en a top of the teaster of the bed, afore I go'd to scool." "Drat the emperance," said the gentleman, "thee art betwattled, that was before I were born."

(2) *A Western Eclogue.*

Pengrouse, a lad in many a science blest,  
Outshone his toying brothers of the west:  
Of smuggling, hurling, wrestling much he know,  
And much of tin, and much of plichards too.  
Fam'd at each village, town, and country-house,  
Menacken, Helstone, Folkinhorne, and Grouse;  
Trespissen, Buddock, Cony-yerie, Trevery,  
Foitbasterd, Hallabaasack, Egleserry,  
Fencob, and Restijeg, Treviskey, Broague,  
Irewinick, Buskenwyn, Buswel, Roocregue:  
But what avail'd his fame and various art:  
Since he, by love, was smitten to the heart:  
The shaft a beam of Bet Polglaze's eyes;  
And now he dampin loaths, and plichard pies.  
Young was the las, a servant at St. Tizzy,  
Born at Polpis, and bred at Mowagry.  
Calm o'er the mountain blus'd the rising day,  
And ting'd the summit with a purple ray,  
When sleepless from his hutch the lover stole,  
And met, by chance, the mistress of his soul.  
And "Whither go'st?" he scratched his skull and cry'd:  
"Arrear, God bless us," well the nymph reply'd,  
"To Yealston sure, to buy a pound o' backy,  
That us and measter wonderfully lacky;  
God bless us ale, this fortnight, 'pon my word,  
We nothing smoaks but oak leaves and cue-terd."

*Pengrouse.*

Arrear then, Bessy, by alone the backy,  
Sly here a tiny bit and let us talky.  
Bessy, I loves thes, wot a ha me, say,  
Wot ha Pengrouse, why wot a, Bessy, ha?

*Bet Polglaze.*

Ah, hunkin, hunkin, mind at Moushole fair  
What did you at the Choughs, the alehouse there?  
When you stows eighteen pence in cakes and beer,  
To treat that dirty trollup, Mall Rosevear:  
You stuffs it in her gills, and makes such pucker,  
Arrear the people thoft you wd have chosok her.

*Pengrouse.*

Curse Mall Rosevear, I says, a great jack whore,  
I ne'er sees such a dirty drab before:  
I stuffs her gills with cakes and beer, the hunk,  
She stuffs herself, she meslin and got drunk.  
Best drink sure for her jaws wan't good enow,  
So leckery makes her drunk as David's now;  
Her feace is like a bull's, and 'tis a fool;  
Her legs are like the legs o' cobler's stool;  
Her eyes be grean's a lick, as yaffers big,  
Noase flat's my hond, and neck so black's a pig.

*Bet Polglaze.*

Ay, but I've more to say; this im't ale,  
You deann'd wy Mall Rosevear 't a sartin bale:  
She tould me so, and lefts me wy a smeare—  
Ay! you, Pengrouse, did deance wy Mall Rosevear.

\* Best drink implies strong beer. † Brandy.  
‡ Green as a leek.

ENGLISH PROVINCIAL DIALECTS.

*Pengrouse.*

Now, Bessy, hire me, Bessy, vath and soale,  
Hire me, I says, and thou that hire the whale;  
One night, a Wednesday night, I vows to Goade,  
Alone, a hoesback, to Tresouse I roade;  
Sure Bessy vath, dist hire me, 'tis no lie,  
A d—mndier bele was never seed w' eyes,  
I hires sum miszick at an oald bearne doore,  
And hires a wondrous rousing on the Boore;  
So in I pops my head; says I, arreare!  
Why, what a devil's neame is doing heave!  
Why dancing, cries the crowder by the wale,  
Why dancing, dancing, measter—'tis a bele,  
Dancing, says I, by Gam I hires sum prancers,  
But tell us where the devil be the dancers;  
For fy the dust and strawe so fled about,  
I could not, Bessy, spy the hoppers out.  
At laste I spies Rosevear, I wish her dead,  
Who meakes me deance all nite, the stinking jade.  
Says I, I have no chance to kick a foote:  
Why kick, says Mall Rosevear, then kick thy boote.  
And, Bet, dist hire me, for to leert us ale,  
A furthing candle wick'd agin the wale.

*Bet Polglaze.*

Ah, bunkin, hunkin, I am huge afraid  
That you is laughing at a simple maid.

*Pengrouse.*

Deare, dearest Bet, let's hug thee to my hearte,  
And may us never never never pearte!  
No, if I lies than, Bessy, than I wishes  
The Shackleheads may never close the fables;  
That picky dogs may eat the scenne when fule,  
Eat'n to rags, and let go ale the schule.

*Bet Polglaze.*

Then here's my hond, and wy it teake my hearte.

*Pengrouse.*

Goade bless us too, and here is mines, ods hearte!  
One buss, and then to Picharding I'll packy.

*Bet Polglaze.*

And I to Yealstone for my master's backy.

(3) *A Cornish Song.*

Come, all ye jolly Tinner boys, and listen to me;  
I'll tell ee of a storie shall make ye for to see,  
Consarnin Honey Peartie, the schaames which he had  
maade  
To stop our tin and copper mines, and all our plichard  
trade.  
He summonsed forty thousand men, to Polland they  
did goa,  
All for to rob and plunder there you very well do  
knowa;  
But ten-thou-sand were killed, and laade dead in blood  
and gore,  
And thirty thousand ranned away, and I cante tell  
where, I'm sure,  
And should that Honey Peartie have forty thousand still  
To maake into an army to work his wicked will,  
And try for to invade us, if he doent quickly fly—  
Why, forty thousand Cornish boys shall knowa the  
reason why.  
Hures for tin and copper, boys, and fisheries likewise!  
Hures for Cornish maadens—oh, bless their pretty  
eyes!  
Hures for our ould gentrie, and may they never faale!  
Hures, hures for Cornwall! hures, boys, "one and  
ale!"

CUMBERLAND.

The dialects of Cumberland, Westmoreland,  
Northumberland, and Durham may be consi-

dered to be identical in all essential peculiarities, the chief differences arising from the mode of pronunciation. According to Boucher, the dialect of Cumberland is much less uniform than that of Westmoreland. In Cumberland, *wo* is in frequent use instead of the long *o*, as will be noticed in the following example. A glossary of Cumberland words was kindly forwarded to me by Mr. Thomas Sanderson.

(1) *Love in Cumberland.*

Tune,—“Cuddle me, Cuddy.”  
Wa, Jwohn, what'n mannlahment's 'tis  
'At tou's gawn to dee for a hizzy!  
Aw hard o' this torrable fias,  
An' aw's cum't to advise tha',—'at is ee.  
Mun, thou'll nobbet lwose tee gud neame  
Wl' gowlin an' whinglin sea mickle;  
Cockswunturs I min beyde about heame,  
An' let her e'en ga to auld Niekle.  
Thy pliew-geer's aw liggin how-strow.  
An' somebody's atown thee thy couter;  
Oh faiks I thou's duin little 'at dow  
To fash theesel iver about her.  
Your Seymey has broken car stang,  
An' mendit it wid a clog-cooker;  
Pump-troc's greas aw whoyt wrang,  
An' they've sent for auld Tom Stawker.  
Young filly's dung oure the lang stee,  
An' leam'd peer Andrew the thecker;  
Thee mudder wad suffer' for tee,  
An' haw hadn't happ'n't to cleek her.  
Thou's spoilt for aw manner o' wark:  
Thou nobbet sits peghan an' pleenan.  
Odsuwicke, man! doff that dirty sark,  
An' pretha gi'e way git a clean an!  
An' then gaw to Carel w'l' me,—  
Let her gang to knock-croas wid her sewornin,  
Sec clanken at market we'll see,  
A'll up'od ta' forgit her 'or mwornin'!

(2) *Song, by Miss Blamire.*

What ails this heart o' mine?  
What means this wat'ry e'e?  
What gars me ay turn pale as death  
When I tak' leave o' thee?  
When thou art far awa',  
Thou'll dearer be to me;  
But change o' place, and change o' folk,  
May gar thy fancy jee.  
When I sit down at e'en,  
Or walk in morning air,  
lik rustling bough will seem to say,  
I us'd to meet thee there;  
Then I'll sit down and wail,  
And greet sneath a tree,  
And gin a leaf fa' i' my lap,  
It's ca't a word frae thee.  
I'll bie me to the bow'r  
Where yews w'l' roses tred,  
And where, w'l' moonie a blushing bud,  
I strove my face to hide;  
I'll doat on lika spot,  
Where I ha'e been w'l' thee,  
And ca' to mind some kindly look  
'Neath lika hollow tree.  
W'l' sec thoughts i' my mind,  
Time thro' the warl may gae,  
And find me still, in twenty years,  
The same as I was to-day.

ENGLISH PROVINCIAL DIALECTS.

'Tis friendship bears the sway,  
And keeps friends 'till the e'e;  
And g'n I think I see the still,  
Wha can part thee and me?

DERBYSHIRE.

"This dialect," observes Dr. Bosworth, "is remarkable for its broad pronunciation. In *me* the *e* is pronounced long and broad, as *mee*. The *i* is often omitted after *a* or *o*, as *aw* for *all*, *ow*, *owd*, *owld*, *owld*, *owld*. Words in *ing* generally omit the *g*, but sometimes it is changed into *k*: as *think* for *thing*, *lovin* for *loving*. They use *con* for *can*; *conner* for *cannot*; *shanner* for *shall not*; *wool*, *wooner* for *will*, and *will not*; *yo* for *you*, &c." Lists of provincial words peculiar to this county have been kindly forwarded by Dr. Bosworth, Thomas Bateman, Esq., the Rev. Samuel Fox, the Rev. William Shilleto, Mrs. A. Butler, and L. Jewitt, Esq.

*A Dialogue between Farmer Bennet and Tummus Lide.*

*Farmer Bennet.* Tummus, why dunner yo mend meh shoorn?

*Tummus Lide.* Becox, mester, 'tis so cood, I conner work wee the tachin at aw. I've brockn it ten times I'm shur to de—it freezes so hard. Why, Hester hung out a smock-frook to dry, an in three minits it wor frozen as stiff as a proker, an I conner afford to keep a good fire; I wish I cud. I'd soon mend yore shoorn, an others tow. I'd soon yarn sum munney, I warrant ye. Conner yo find sum work for m', mester, these hard times? I'll doo onythink to addle a penny. I con thresh—I con spilt wood—I con mak spars—I con thack. I con skower a dike, an I con trench tow, but it freezes so hard. I con winner—I con fother, or milk, if there beed on't. I woodner mind drivin plow or onythink.

*Farmer B.* I hanner got nothin for ye to doo, Tummus; but Mester Boord tow'd me jist now that they wor gooin to winner, an that they shud want sumbody to help 'em.

*Tummus L.* O, I'm glad on't. I'll run oor an see whether I con help 'em; but I hanner bin weeln the threshold or Mester Boord's doer for a nation time, becos I thoot missa dinner use Hester well; but I dunner bear malice, an so I'll goo.

*Farmer B.* What did Misses Boord sa or doo to Hester then?

*Tummus L.* Why, Hester may be wor summ't to blame too; for her wor one on 'em, de ye see, that jaw'd Skimmerton,—the mak-gam that frunted sum o'the gentefook. They said 'twor time to dun wee slich litter, or slich stuff, or I dunner know what they owd it; but they wor frunted wee Hester bout it; an I said, if they wor frunted wee Hester, they mid be frunted wee mee. This set missa's back up, an Hester hanner bin a charrin there sin. But 'tis no use to bear malice; an so I'll goo oor, and see which wee the wide blows.

*Bosworth's Anglo-Saxon Dictionary, Introd. p. 31.*

DEVONSHIRE.

The MS. Ashmole 33 contains an early romance, written about the year 1377, which appears to have been composed by a clergyman living in the diocese of Exeter. Several extracts from it will be found in the following pages. *The MS. possesses great interest, having part*

of the author's original draught of the romance. See farther in Mr. Black's Catalogue, col. 15.

"A Devonshire song" is printed in Wits Interpreter, ed. 1671, p. 171; the "Devonshire ditty" occurs in the same work, p. 247. The Exmoor Scolding and the Exmoor Courtship, specimens of the broad Devonshire dialect at the commencement of the last century, have been lately republished. The third edition was published at Exeter in 1746, 4to. Mr. Marshall has given a list of West Devonshire words in his Rural Economy of the West of England, 1796, vol. i. pp. 323-32, but the best yet printed is that by Mr. Palmer, appended to a Dialogue in the Devonshire Dialect, 8vo. 1837. A brief glossary is also added to the Devonshire Dialogue, 8vo. 1839. My principal guide, however, for the dialectical words of this county is a large MS. collection stated in Mr. Thomas Rodd's Catalogue of MSS. for 1845 (No. 276) to have been written by Dr. Milles, Dean of Exeter, and quoted in this work as Dean Milles' MS. I have been since informed that it was compiled by the late Rev. Richard Hole, but in either case its integrity and value are undoubted. Notes of Devonshire words have been kindly transmitted by the Rev. John Wilkinson, J. H. James, Esq., William Chappell, Esq., Mrs. Lovell, and Mr. J. Metcalfe. The West Country dialect is now spoken in greater purity in Devonshire than in any other county.

The following remarks on the English dialects are taken from Aubrey's Natural History of Wiltshire, a MS. preserved in the library of the Royal Society:

The Northern parts of England speake gutturally; and in Yorkshire and the bishoprick of Durham they have more of the *coedene*, or Scottish tone than they have at Edinburgh: in like manner, in Herefordshire they have more of the Welch *coedene* than they have in Wales. The Westerne people cannot open their mouths to speak *ore rotundo*. Wee pronounce *psal*, *pale*, &c., and especially in Devonshire, The Exeter Coll. men in disputations, when they allege *Causa Causae est Causa Causati*, they pronounce it, *Causa, Causae est Causa Causati* very un-gracefully. Now *contra* the French and Italians doe naturally pronounce a fully *ore rotundo*, and s, a and even children of French born in England; and the farther you goe South the more fully, qd. NB. This must proceed from the earth or aire, or both. One may observe, that the speech (*twang* or accent—*adlantis*) of ye vulgar begins to alter some thing towards the Herefordshire manner even at Cyreneester. Mr. Thom. Hobbs told me, that Sir Charles Cavendish did say, that the Greekes doe sing their words (as the Hereff. doe in some degree). From hence arose the accents, not used by the ancients. I have a conceit, that the Britons of the South part of this Isle, e. g. the *Trimbantes*, &c., did speak no more gutturally, or *twangings*, than the Inhabitants doe now. The tone, accent, &c., depends on the temper of the earth (and so to plants) and aire.

(1) *A Lovers' Dialogue.*

*Rab.* I love dearty, Bet, to hear the tell; but, good loving now, let's tell o'zummel else. Time slips away.

*Bet.* I, fegs, that it dith. I warnis our vokes wonder what the godger's a come o'me, I'll drive home. I wish thee good neat.