

**GEOGRAPHICAL  
ETYMOLOGY: A DICTIONARY  
OF PLACE-NAMES  
GIVING THEIR DERIVATIONS**

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Geographical Etymology: A Dictionary of Place-Names Giving Their Derivations by C. Blackie  
& John Stuart Blackie

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**C. BLACKIE & JOHN STUART BLACKIE**

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DICTIONARY OF PLACE-NAMES

GEOGRAPHICAL ETYMOLOGY

44385

A DICTIONARY  
OF  
PLACE - NAMES

GIVING THEIR DERIVATIONS

By C. BLACKIE

WITH AN INTRODUCTION

By JOHN STUART BLACKIE

PROFESSOR OF GREEK IN THE UNIVERSITY OF EDINBURGH

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## PREFACE

THE Introduction, by which the present work is ushered into public notice, renders any lengthened Preface on my part quite unnecessary. Yet I wish to say a few words with regard to the design and plan of this little volume.

The subject, though no doubt possessing a peculiar interest to the general reader, and especially to tourists in these travelling days, falls naturally under the head of historical and geographical instruction in schools; and for such use the book is, in the first place, specially intended.

When I was myself one of a class in this city where Geography and History were taught, no information connected with etymology was imparted to us. We learned, with more or less trouble and edification, the names of countries, towns, etc., by rote; but our teacher did not ask us who gave the names to these places, nor were we expected to inquire or to know if there was any connection between their names and their

histories. Things are changed now ; and I believe the first stimulus to an awakening interest in Geographical Etymology was given by the publication of the Rev. Isaac Taylor's popular work, *Words and Places*. About ten years ago, I found that the best teachers in the English schools of Edinburgh did ask questions on this subject, and I discovered, at the same time, that a book specially bearing upon it was a desideratum in school literature. As no one better qualified came forward, I was induced to make the attempt ; and I hope the following pages, the result of much research and in the face of no small discouragement, may prove useful to teachers, as well as to their pupils.

The Index at the end of the volume, although it contains many names not included in the body of the work, does by no means include all that I have given there. This did not seem necessary, because, the root words being alphabetically arranged, an intelligent teacher or pupil will easily find the key to the explanation of any special name by referring to the head under which it is naturally classed. I must, however, premise that, with regard to names derived from the Celtic languages, the root word is generally placed at the beginning of the name—that is, if it contain more than one syllable. This is the case with such vocables as *pen, ben, dun, lis, rath, strath*, etc.; e.g. Lismore, Benmore, Dungarvan, Strath-Allan. On the other hand,



in names derived from the Teutonic or Scandinavian languages, the root word comes last, as will be found with regard to *ton, dale, burg, berg, stadt, dorf, ford*, etc.

The index, therefore, may be expected to include principally such names as, either through corruption or abbreviation, have materially changed their form, such as are formed from the simple root, like Fürth, Ennis, Delft, or such as contain more than one, as in Portrush, it being uncertain under which head I may have placed such names. Along with the root words, called by the Germans *Grundwörter*, I have given a number of defining words (*Bestimmungswörter*)—such adjectives as express variety in colour, form, size, etc.

It is to be regretted that many names have necessarily been omitted from ignorance or uncertainty with regard to their derivation. This is the case, unfortunately, with several well-known and important towns—Glasgow, Berlin, Berne, Madrid, Paisley, etc. With regard to these and many others, I shall be glad to receive reliable information.

And now it only remains for me to express my obligations to the gentlemen who have kindly assisted me in this work, premising that, in the departments which they have revised, the credit of success is due mainly to them; while I reserve to myself any blame which may be deservedly attached to failures or omissions. The Celtic portion of my proof-sheets has been

revised by Dr. Skene, the well-known Celtic scholar of this city, and by Dr. Joyce, author of *Irish Names of Places*. I have also to thank the Rev. Isaac Taylor, author of *Words and Places*, for the help and encouragement which he has given me from time to time ; and Mr. Paterson, author of the *Magyars*, for valuable information which I received from him regarding the topography of Hungary. I appreciate the assistance given me by these gentlemen the more, that it did not proceed from personal friendship, as I was an entire stranger to all of them. It was the kindness and courtesy of the stronger and more learned to one weaker and less gifted than themselves ; and I beg they may receive my grateful thanks, along with the little volume which has been so much their debtor.

C. B.

EDINBURGH, *July 1887.*

## INTRODUCTION

AMONG the branches of human speculation that, in recent times, have walked out of the misty realm of conjecture into the firm land of science, and from the silent chamber of the student into the breezy fields of public life, there are few more interesting than Etymology. For as words are the common counters, or coins rather, with which we mark our points in all the business and all the sport of life, any man whose curiosity has not been blunted by familiarity, will naturally find a pleasure in understanding what the image and superscription on these markers mean; and amongst words there are none that so powerfully stimulate this curiosity as the names of persons and places. About these the intelligent interest of young persons is often prominently manifested; and it is a sad thing when parents or teachers, who should be in a position to gratify this interest, are obliged to waive an eager intelligence aside, and by repeated negations to repel the curiosity which they ought to have encouraged. Geography indeed, a subject full of interest