

**A DICTIONARY OF THE SUSSEX
DIALECT AND COLLECTION
OF PROVINCIALISMS IN USE
IN THE COUNTY OF SUSSEX**

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A Dictionary of the Sussex Dialect and Collection of Provincialisms in Use in the County of Sussex by W. D. Parish

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AND
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COUNTY OF SUSSEX.

BY
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PREFACE.

THE march of education must sooner or later trample down and stamp out anything like distinctive provincial dialect in England; but when this result shall have been effected, much that is really valuable will be lost to our language, unless an effort is promptly made to collect and record words which, together with the ideas which first rendered them necessary, are rapidly falling into disuse.

Although in all such collections there will be a large proportion of words and phrases which are mere curiosities of expression, utterly useless to the science of language, yet there will remain a considerable number well worthy of being retained, and if possible revived.

Every year new words are being imported into the English language and gradually coming into general use amongst us. Too many of these are selected from the ghastly compounds of illiterate advertizers, and many more are of the most offensive type of slang—the sweepings of the music-hall, the leavings of the prize-ring and the worst specimens of Americanisms, selected to the exclusion of many good old English words which are to this day more frequently used in the United States of America than in our own country.

The English Dialect Society, which has lately been formed, will soon become the centre of a very valuable influence, by encouraging and uniting many word-collectors who have been quietly working for some time past in different parts of the country, and by giving a right direction to their labours.

To the Rev. W. W. Skeat, as the representative of that Society, I owe more than I am able to express for the guidance that he has given me, and the pains that he has taken to render this work as free as possible from imperfections. Without his assistance I could never have presented it to the reader in the form it now assumes.

Professor Bosworth also, although busily engaged (in his 87th year) in bringing out a new quarto Anglo-Saxon dictionary, found time to encourage me in my work, and set me in the right track by correcting the first pages of my proof. To him and many others my best thanks are due. Such a work could never have been done single-handed, and volunteers have come forward on all sides to help me.

The Rev. W. de St. Croix, late editor of the Sussex Archaeological Society's Collections, has for many years given me valuable assistance. Miss Bessie C. Curteis, of Leasam, near Rye, has contributed at least 200 words, with conversational illustrations and legends from the East Sussex district. The Rev. J. C. Egerton, of Burwash, has also placed at my disposal his collection of upwards of 100 words in use in his section of the county; and when I add that the Rev. C. Swainson has helped me in my folk-lore, and Mr. James Britten, of the British Museum, has corrected my botanical definitions, the reader will understand how much kindly effort has been made to render my work successful, and how little its success (if it shall be attained) is due to myself.

W. D. PARISH.





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ARUNDL (KINDLY LENT BY R. G. RAPER, ESQ.)
VARIOUS INVENTORIES OF FARM AND HOUSEHOLD GOODS OF THE LAST
THREE CENTURIES.







THE SUSSEX DIALECT.

IN almost every establishment in the country there is to be found some old groom, or gardener, bailiff, or factotum, whose odd expressions and quaint sayings and apparently outlandish words afford a never-failing source of amusement to the older as well as to the younger members of the household, who are not aware that many of the words and expressions which raise the laugh are purer specimens of the English language than the words which are used to tell the story in which they are introduced.

Every schoolboy home for the holidays at Christmas knows that the London cabman who drives him to the Theatre accentuates the word much more classically than the young gentleman who sits inside, who, if he had the audacity to pronounce Theatron with a short *a* in his next construe at school, would send a shudder through the Form amid which he would soon find himself in a lower place. So it is with our Sussex words; they sound strange to ears that are not accustomed to them; and by some persons they may be supposed to be mere slang expressions, not worthy of attention; but when they are examined, many of them will be found to be derived from the purest sources of our language, and to contain in themselves a clear reflection of the history of the county in which they are used.

Every page of this dictionary will show how distinctly the British, Roman, Saxon and Norman elements are to be traced in the words in every day use among our labouring people, who retain among them many of the oldest forms of old words which