

**A GENERAL
DICTIONARY OF
PROVINCIALISMS**

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A General Dictionary of Provincialisms by William Holloway

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WILLIAM HOLLOWAY

**A GENERAL
DICTIONARY OF
PROVINCIALISMS**

A

GENERAL DICTIONARY

OF

PROVINCIALISMS,

WRITTEN WITH A VIEW TO RESCUE FROM OBLIVION THE FAST FADING
RELICS OF BY-GONE DAYS.

Tenet insanabile multos
Scribendi Cacotheta.

Juv.

LABOR IPSE VOLUNTAS.

BY
Wm. in Cassel.
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P R E F A C E.

After a labour of some years, I have at length succeeded, as far as my slender means, and still slenderer abilities will permit, in the compilation of a Dictionary of Provincial Words. But, though I have accomplished my task, I feel some diffidence, and some misgivings as to its success with the public. I fear the task is very inefficiently executed; and even were it a more correct performance, I am doubtful whether it is one that is likely to suit the public taste. Many friends have laughed at the pains I have bestowed upon it, while one has even told me that the only object to be obtained by it, was that of teaching well-educated persons to speak patois. After this, I was almost tempted to abandon the work in despair, and I verily believe I should have done so, had it not been for the following observation which I met with in the Quarterly Review for February, 1836, No. 110, on the subject of Provincial Words, viz:—"If he (Mr. Stevenson,*) and his fellow-labourers will collect all the words which deserve a place in an archaic and provincial glossary, accompanied with data for ascertaining their meaning, they will be entitled to the thanks of the public, whether their etymologies are right or wrong."

Encouraged by these and other observations, I persevered, and now I humbly present the fruits of my labour to the judgment of a scrutinizing, but just public.

* One of the conductors of the publication of a Glossary of Archaic and Provincial Words, by the late Rev. Jonathan Boucher.

To a great deal of originality I do not lay claim, mine has been perhaps rather more the task of a compiler than of an author. I have collected upwards of nine thousand words; some of these I have borrowed from former collectors, some have been supplied by the kindness of friends in different counties, and others have been picked up by myself. Not to claim more merit than I ought, to myself, I shall proceed at once to acknowledge the debt I owe to the different authors from whom I have borrowed.

The oldest work, I believe, on Provincialisms, is one by Ray, in 1674, entitled, "A Collection of English Words not generally used." His work I have not seen, but he is often referred to by some of those from whom I have quoted. The oldest work which I have met with, is Tim Bobbin's View of the Lancashire Dialect, printed at Manchester, in 1775. He gives some good examples of the dialect by the introduction of some entertaining dialogues; but the vocabulary is not quite so clear and explicit as one could wish.

In 1790, Dr. Pryce, of Redruth, Cornwall, published a work on the Cornish Language: this book I have not been able to obtain, and, therefore, should not have mentioned it here; but for the purpose of showing that by the observations I have seen on it, in the *Encyclopædia Londinensis*, he confirms the opinion, which I have given in my introduction, as to the Cornish being a relic of the ancient British language.

Grose's Provincial Dictionary was published in 1790, and to him I am greatly indebted, as every collector must be. His is a general collection, not confined to one particular county or district, but ranging over the whole kingdom. He has got together a numerous vocabulary, but has not entered much into the Etymology of words.

The Craven dialect, by a native of Craven, was published in 1824, and is a valuable work, containing many words and entering largely into their etymons. Craven is that part of Yorkshire in the Western Riding, which adjoins to Lancashire, and abounding in wild and extensive fells and moors,

the inhabitants have retained their ancient dialect in more purity than in more populous districts, though the author regrets that commerce is making great inroads even on the seclusion of Craven.

Observations on some of the dialects of the west of England, particularly Somersetshire, by James Jennings, Honorary Secretary of the Metropolitan Literary Institution, London, were published in 1825. This is a useful little book and I have made use of it.

The vocabulary of East Anglia, (that is of the counties of Norfolk and Suffolk) by the late Rev. Robert Forby, Rector of Fincham, Norfolk, was published by his friends after his decease in the year 1830, and is by far the most valuable work I have met with. It is only to be regretted it did not extend beyond the two counties already mentioned. The author goes more fully into an explanation of the words, and more minutely into their origin than any I have been fortunate enough to meet with.

Specimens of the Yorkshire Dialect is a very small book published at Knaresborough in 1833.

Having spoken of the doubts I entertain as to the reception this little work may meet with from the public, the question may very fairly and very naturally be asked, "Why then do I persevere in printing it?" My answer is this, that as education is now become so general among all classes of the people, Provincial Words, in another generation or two, will cease in a great measure to be used, when antiquaries may feel the same delight in poring over these remains of a by-gone age, as Cuvier did in putting together the bones of the antediluvian animals which he discovered, or as modern geologists do in attempting to prove that the earth, instead of being some six thousand years old, has existed as many millions.

With these remarks I launch my bark into the sea of public opinion.

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INTRODUCTION.

IN a country, which, like Great Britain, has been conquered and held by Foreigners of several different nations, it must follow, as a matter of course, that a great variety of Dialects will be found to prevail in different parts of the kingdom. It is not my intention to enter into a very critical history of the subject, as I am not equal to such a task, nor do I deem it absolutely necessary. The Languages, evident remains of which are still found in Great Britain, are, the Ancient British, the Roman, the Danish, the Saxon, and the Norman.

When the Romans established themselves in England, such of the Ancient Britons as preferred rude liberty to polished slavery fled from the conquerors into the fastnesses of Cornwall and Wales; consequently it is in those places that we must look for the remains of the British Language; in short the Welch is the Ancient British, and the Cornish is strongly tingured with the British, though probably it is not spoken in the same purity there as in Wales. We find many British words interspersed through different counties in England, particularly in the names of places; as Pen, for instance, 'a head.' Penhurst and Peshurst, are from Pen, Brit. and Hurst, Sax. a wood—a place at the head of a wood. Ceaster, Brit. a city or fortified place; as Chester, the city or camp; Chichester—Cissa, a King of the South Saxons, and Ceaster, Brit.—the city of Cissa, by whom it was founded; and so with many others.

The Romans kept possession of the country about 500 years; but as they held it rather as a conquered province—that is by means of various fortified places, and not by an amalgamation of the two races—their language was never very widely diffused.

In the Welch language there seem to be several traces of the Roman, as may be seen in the following words, viz:—

Window	Ffenestr, W.	Fenestra. Lat.
Bridge,	Pont, W.	Pons, Lat.
And,	Ac, W.	Ac, Lat.
Was,	Fu, W.	Fuit, Lat.
Angel,	Angel, W.	Angelus, Lat.
His,	Ei, W.	Is, ea, id. Ei, Dat. Lat.
Gold.	Awr, W.	Aurum, Lat.

In Cornwall we find Tumuls, heaps; Tumulus, Lat.

Numer, s.	Number.	Numerous, Lat.	Norf.
Bever, s.	A lunch.	Bevere.	Suff.

LATIN ETYMONS, NORTH.

North.	English.	Lat.
Ark, s.	A chest.	Arca,
Arran, s.	A spider.	Araaea.
To Colloque, v. n.	To converse.	Colloquor.
Doubler, s.	A large plate.	Duplaris.
Haspert, s.	A rough fellow.	Asper.
To Oumer, v. a.	To shadow.	Umbræ.
Ramile, s.	Twigs.	Ramus, Ramulus.
Stoop, s.	A post.	Stupa.

EAST SUSSEX AND KENT.

Ripe, s.	A bank.	Ripa.
Aqua-Bob, s.	An icicle.	Aqua, and Bob, an ear-ring.
To Coddle, v. a.	To parboil.	Coctulo.
Gut, s.	An under drain.	Gutter.
Hames, s.	Part of a cart-horse's harness.	Hama.
Mall, s.	A two-handed hammer.	Malleus.
Pell, s.	A small pool.	Falus.
To Pose, v. a.	To set a person down in an argument.	Positua.
Sally, s.	A willow.	Salix.
Toft, s.	A piece of ground on which a message has stood. Toftum.	

The words of Danish origin are not very numerous, but such as do exist, are, as might be reasonably expected, found in the Eastern and Northern parts of the kingdom, those counties having been more contiguous to that part of the continent, whence the