



## **The Devil's Dictionary**

Original by Ambrose Bierce. Compiled by V. Subhash  
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# AUTHOR'S PREFACE

*The Devil's Dictionary* was begun in a weekly paper in 1881, and was continued in a desultory way at long intervals until 1906. In that year a large part of it was published in covers with the title *The Cynic's Word Book*, a name which the author had not the power to reject or happiness to approve. To quote the publishers of the present work:

"This more reverent title had previously been forced upon him by the religious scruples of the last newspaper in which a part of the work had appeared, with the natural consequence that when it came out in covers the country already had been flooded by its imitators with a score of 'cynic' books – *The Cynic's This*, *The Cynic's That*, and *The Cynic's t'Other*. Most of these books were merely stupid, though some of them added the distinction of silliness. Among them, they brought the word 'cynic' into disfavor so deep that any book bearing it was discredited in advance of publication."

Meantime, too, some of the enterprising humorists of the country had helped themselves to such parts of the work as served their needs, and many of its definitions, anecdotes, phrases and so forth, had become more or less current in popular speech. This explanation is made, not with any pride of priority in trifles, but in simple denial of possible charges of plagiarism, which is no trifle. In merely resuming his own the author hopes to be held guiltless by those to whom the work is addressed – enlightened souls who prefer dry wines to sweet, sense to sentiment, wit to humor and clean English to slang.

A conspicuous, and it is hope not unpleasant, feature of the book is its abundant illustrative quotations from eminent poets, chief of whom is that learned and ingenious cleric, Father Gassalasca Jape, S.J., whose lines bear his initials. To Father Jape's kindly encouragement and assistance the author of the prose text is greatly indebted.

A.B.

## A

**ABASEMENT**, n. A decent and customary mental attitude in the presence of wealth of power. Peculiarly appropriate in an employee when addressing an employer.

**ABATIS**, n. Rubbish in front of a fort, to prevent the rubbish outside from molesting the rubbish inside.

**ABDICATION**, n. An act whereby a sovereign attests his sense of the high temperature of the throne.

Poor Isabella's Dead, whose  
abdication  
Set all tongues wagging in the  
Spanish nation. For that performance  
'twere unfair to scold her: She wisely  
left a throne too hot to hold her. To  
History she'll be no royal riddle –  
Merely a plain parched pea that  
jumped the griddle.  
G.J.

**ABDOMEN**, n. The temple of the god Stomach, in whose worship, with sacrificial rights, all true men engage. From women this ancient faith commands but a stammering assent. They sometimes minister at the altar in a half-hearted and ineffective way, but true reverence for the one deity that men really adore they know not. If woman had a free hand in the world's marketing the race would become graminivorous.

**ABILITY**, n. The natural equipment to accomplish some small part of the meaner ambitions distinguishing able men from dead ones. In the last analysis ability is commonly found to consist mainly in a high degree of solemnity. Perhaps, however, this impressive quality is rightly appraised; it is no easy task to be solemn.

**ABNORMAL**, adj. Not conforming to standard. In matters of thought and conduct, to be independent is to be abnormal, to be abnormal is to be detested.

Wherefore the lexicographer adviseth a striving toward the straiter [sic] resemblance of the Average Man than he hath to himself. Whoso attaineth thereto shall have peace, the prospect of death and the hope of Hell.

**ABORIGINIES**, n. Persons of little worth found cumbering the soil of a newly discovered country. They soon cease to cumber; they fertilize.

**ABRACADABRA**.

By *Abracadabra* we signify  
An infinite number of things.  
'Tis the answer to What? and How?  
and Why? And Whence? and  
Whither? – a word whereby The  
Truth (with the comfort it brings) Is  
open to all who grope in night,  
Crying for Wisdom's holy light.  
Whether the word is a verb or a noun  
Is knowledge beyond my reach.  
I only know that 'tis handed down.  
From sage to sage,  
From age to age –  
An immortal part of speech!  
Of an ancient man the tale is told  
That he lived to be ten centuries old,  
In a cave on a mountain side.  
(True, he finally died.)  
The fame of his wisdom filled the  
land,  
For his head was bald, and you'll  
understand His beard was long and  
white  
And his eyes uncommonly bright.  
Philosophers gathered from far and  
near  
To sit at his feat and hear and hear,  
Though he never was heard  
To utter a word  
But "*Abracadabra, abracadab,*  
*Abracada, abracad,*  
*Abraca, abrac, abra, ab!*"  
'Twas all he had,  
'Twas all they wanted to hear, and  
each

Made copious notes of the mystical  
speech, Which they published next –  
A trickle of text  
In the meadow of commentary.  
Mighty big books were these,  
In a number, as leaves of trees;  
In learning, remarkably – very!  
He's dead,  
As I said,  
And the books of the sages have  
perished,  
But his wisdom is sacredly cherished.  
In *Abracadabra* it solemnly rings,  
Like an ancient bell that forever  
swings.  
O, I love to hear  
That word make clear  
Humanity's General Sense of Things.  
Jamrach Holobom

**ABRIDGE**, v.t. To shorten.

When in the course of human events  
it becomes necessary for people to  
abridge their king, a decent respect  
for the opinions of mankind requires  
that they should declare the causes  
which impel them to the separation.  
Oliver Cromwell

**ABRUPT**, adj. Sudden, without ceremony, like the  
arrival of a cannon – shot and the departure of the  
soldier whose interests are most affected by it. Dr.  
Samuel Johnson beautifully said of another author's  
ideas that they were "concatenated without  
abruption."

**ABSCOND**, v.i. To "move in a mysterious way,"  
commonly with the property of another.

Spring beckons! All things to the call  
respond; The trees are leaving and  
cashiers abscond.  
Phela Orm

**ABSENT**, adj. Peculiarly exposed to the tooth of  
detraction; vilified; hopelessly in the wrong;  
superseded in the consideration and affection of  
another.

To men a man is but a mind. Who  
cares  
What face he carries or what form he  
wears? But woman's body is the  
woman. O,  
Stay thou, my sweetheart, and do  
never go, But heed the warning  
words the sage hath said: A woman  
absent is a woman dead.  
Jogo Tyree

**ABSENTEE**, n. A person with an income who has  
had the forethought to remove himself from the  
sphere of exaction.

**ABSOLUTE**, adj. Independent, irresponsible. An  
absolute monarchy is one in which the sovereign does  
as he pleases so long as he pleases the assassins. Not  
many absolute monarchies are left, most of them  
having been replaced by limited monarchies, where  
the sovereign's power for evil (and for good) is  
greatly curtailed, and by republics, which are  
governed by chance.

**ABSTAINER**, n. A weak person who yields to the  
temptation of denying himself a pleasure. A total  
abstainer is one who abstains from everything but  
abstention, and especially from inactivity in the  
affairs of others.

Said a man to a crapulent youth: "I  
thought You a total abstainer, my  
son."  
"So I am, so I am," said the  
scrapgrace caught – "But not, sir, a  
bigoted one."  
G.J.

**ABSURDITY**, n. A statement or belief manifestly  
inconsistent with one's own opinion.

**ACADEME**, n. An ancient school where morality  
and philosophy were taught.

**ACADEMY**, n. [from ACADEME] A modern school  
where football is taught.

**ACCIDENT**, n. An inevitable occurrence due to the  
action of immutable natural laws.

**ACCOMPLICE**, n. One associated with another in a crime, having guilty knowledge and complicity, as an attorney who defends a criminal, knowing him guilty. This view of the attorney's position in the matter has not hitherto commanded the assent of attorneys, no one having offered them a fee for assenting.

**ACCORD**, n. Harmony.

**ACCORDION**, n. An instrument in harmony with the sentiments of an assassin.

**ACCOUNTABILITY**, n. The mother of caution.

"My accountability, bear in mind,"  
Said the Grand Vizier: "Yes, yes,"  
Said the Shah: "I do – 'tis the only  
kind Of ability you possess." Joram  
Tate

**ACCUSE**, v.t. To affirm another's guilt or unworth; most commonly as a justification of ourselves for having wronged him.

**ACEPHALOUS**, adj. In the surprising condition of the Crusader who absently pulled at his forelock some hours after a Saracen scimitar had, unconsciously to him, passed through his neck, as related by de Joinville.

**ACHIEVEMENT**, n. The death of endeavor and the birth of disgust.

**ACKNOWLEDGE**, v.t. To confess.  
Acknowledgement of one another's faults is the highest duty imposed by our love of truth.

**ACQUAINTANCE**, n. A person whom we know well enough to borrow from, but not well enough to lend to. A degree of friendship called slight when its object is poor or obscure, and intimate when he is rich or famous.

**ACTUALLY**, adv. Perhaps; possibly.

**ADAGE**, n. Boned wisdom for weak teeth.

**ADAMANT**, n. A mineral frequently found beneath a corset. Soluble in sollicitate of gold.

**ADDER**, n. A species of snake. So called from its habit of adding funeral outlays to the other expenses of living.

**ADHERENT**, n. A follower who has not yet obtained all that he expects to get.

**ADMINISTRATION**, n. An ingenious abstraction in politics, designed to receive the kicks and cuffs due to the premier or president. A man of straw, proof against bad-egging and dead-catting.

**ADMIRAL**, n. That part of a war-ship which does the talking while the figure-head does the thinking.

**ADMIRATION**, n. Our polite recognition of another's resemblance to ourselves.

**ADMONITION**, n. Gentle reproof, as with a meat-axe. Friendly warning.

Consigned by way of admonition,  
His soul forever to perdition.  
Judibras

**ADORE**, v.t. To venerate expectantly.

**ADVICE**, n. The smallest current coin.

"The man was in such deep distress,"  
Said Tom, "that I could do no less  
Than give him good advice." Said  
Jim:  
"If less could have been done for him  
I know you well enough, my son,  
To know that's what you would have  
done."  
Jebel Jocordy

**AFFIANCED**, pp. Fitted with an ankle-ring for the ball-and-chain.

**AFFLICTION**, n. An acclimatizing process preparing the soul for another and bitter world.

**AFRICAN**, n. A nigger that votes our way.

**AGE**, n. That period of life in which we compound for the vices that we still cherish by reviling those



that we have no longer the enterprise to commit.

**AGITATOR**, n. A statesman who shakes the fruit trees of his neighbors – to dislodge the worms.

**AIM**, n. The task we set our wishes to.

"Cheer up! Have you no aim in life?"  
She tenderly inquired.  
"An aim? Well, no, I haven't, wife;  
The fact is – I have fired."  
G.J.

**AIR**, n. A nutritious substance supplied by a bountiful Providence for the fattening of the poor.

**ALDERMAN**, n. An ingenious criminal who covers his secret thieving with a pretence of open marauding.

**ALIEN**, n. An American sovereign in his probationary state.

**ALLAH**, n. The Mahometan Supreme Being, as distinguished from the Christian, Jewish, and so forth.

Allah's good laws I faithfully have kept,  
And ever for the sins of man have wept;  
And sometimes kneeling in the temple I Have reverently crossed my hands and slept.  
Junker Barlow

**ALLEGIANCE**, n.

This thing Allegiance, as I suppose,  
Is a ring fitted in the subject's nose,  
Whereby that organ is kept rightly pointed To smell the sweetness of the Lord's anointed.  
G.J.

**ALLIANCE**, n. In international politics, the union of two thieves who have their hands so deeply inserted in each other's pockets that they cannot separately plunder a third.

**ALLIGATOR**, n. The crocodile of America, superior in every detail to the crocodile of the effete monarchies of the Old World. Herodotus says the Indus is, with one exception, the only river that produces crocodiles, but they appear to have gone West and grown up with the other rivers. From the notches on his back the alligator is called a sawrian.

**ALONE**, adj. In bad company.

In contact, lo! the flint and steel,  
By spark and flame, the thought reveal  
That he the metal, she the stone,  
Had cherished secretly alone.  
Booley Fito

**ALTAR**, n. The place whereupon the priest formerly raveled out the small intestine of the sacrificial victim for purposes of divination and cooked its flesh for the gods. The word is now seldom used, except with reference to the sacrifice of their liberty and peace by a male and a female tool.

They stood before the altar and supplied  
The fire themselves in which their fat was fried. In vain the sacrifice! – no god will claim An offering burnt with an unholy flame.  
M.P. Nopput

**AMBIDEXTROUS**, adj. Able to pick with equal skill a right-hand pocket or a left.

**AMBITION**, n. An overmastering desire to be vilified by enemies while living and made ridiculous by friends when dead.

**AMNESTY**, n. The state's magnanimity to those offenders whom it would be too expensive to punish.

**ANOINT**, v.t. To grease a king or other great functionary already sufficiently slippery.

As sovereigns are anointed by the priesthood, So pigs to lead the populace are greased good.  
Judibras

**ANTIPATHY**, n. The sentiment inspired by one's friend's friend.

**APHORISM**, n. Predigested wisdom.

The flabby wine-skin of his brain  
Yields to some pathologic strain,  
And voids from its unstored abyss  
The driblet of an aphorism.  
"The Mad Philosopher," 1697

**APOLOGIZE**, v.i. To lay the foundation for a future offence.

**APOSTATE**, n. A leech who, having penetrated the shell of a turtle only to find that the creature has long been dead, deems it expedient to form a new attachment to a fresh turtle.

**APOTHECARY**, n. The physician's accomplice, undertaker's benefactor and grave worm's provider.

When Jove sent blessings to all men  
that are, And Mercury conveyed  
them in a jar,  
That friend of tricksters introduced  
by stealth Disease for the  
apothecary's health,  
Whose gratitude impelled him to  
proclaim:  
"My deadliest drug shall bear my  
patron's name!"  
G.J.

**APPEAL**, v.t. In law, to put the dice into the box for another throw.

**APPETITE**, n. An instinct thoughtfully implanted by Providence as a solution to the labor question.

**APPLAUSE**, n. The echo of a platitude.

**APRIL FOOL**, n. The March fool with another month added to his folly.

**ARCHBISHOP**, n. An ecclesiastical dignitary one point holier than a bishop.

If I were a jolly archbishop,  
On Fridays I'd eat all the fish up –  
Salmon and flounders and smelts;  
On other days everything else.  
Jodo Rem

**ARCHITECT**, n. One who drafts a plan of your house, and plans a draft of your money.

**ARDOR**, n. The quality that distinguishes love without knowledge.

**ARENA**, n. In politics, an imaginary rat-pit in which the statesman wrestles with his record.

**ARISTOCRACY**, n. Government by the best men. (In this sense the word is obsolete; so is that kind of government.) Fellows that wear downy hats and clean shirts – guilty of education and suspected of bank accounts.

**ARMOR**, n. The kind of clothing worn by a man whose tailor is a blacksmith.

**ARRAYED**, pp. Drawn up and given an orderly disposition, as a rioter hanged to a lamppost.

**ARREST**, v.t. Formally to detain one accused of unusualness.

God made the world in six days and  
was arrested on the seventh.  
*The Unauthorized Version*

**ARSENIC**, n. A kind of cosmetic greatly affected by the ladies, whom it greatly affects in turn.

"Eat arsenic? Yes, all you get,"  
Consenting, he did speak up;  
"Tis better you should eat it, pet,  
Than put it in my teacup."  
Joel Huck

**ART**, n. This word has no definition. Its origin is related as follows by the ingenious Father Gassalasca Jape, S.J.

One day a wag – what would the  
wretch be at? – Shifted a letter of the  
cipher RAT,  
And said it was a god's name!  
Straight arose Fantastic priests and  
postulants (with shows, And  
mysteries, and mummeries, and  
hymns,  
And disputations dire that lamed their  
limbs) To serve his temple and  
maintain the fires, Expound the law,  
manipulate the wires.  
Amazed, the populace that rites  
attend,  
Believe whate'er they cannot  
comprehend,  
And, inly edified to learn that two  
Half-hairs joined so and so (as Art  
can do) Have sweeter values and a  
grace more fit  
Than Nature's hairs that never have  
been split, Bring cates and wines for  
sacrificial feasts, And sell their  
garments to support the priests.

**ARTLESSNESS**, n. A certain engaging quality to  
which women attain by long study and severe  
practice upon the admiring male, who is pleased to  
fancy it resembles the candid simplicity of his young.

**ASPERSE**, v.t. Maliciously to ascribe to another  
vicious actions which one has not had the temptation  
and opportunity to commit.

**ASS**, n. A public singer with a good voice but no ear.  
In Virginia City, Nevada, he is called the Washoe  
Canary, in Dakota, the Senator, and everywhere the  
Donkey. The animal is widely and variously  
celebrated in the literature, art and religion of every  
age and country; no other so engages and fires the  
human imagination as this noble vertebrate. Indeed, it  
is doubted by some (Ramasilus, *lib. II., De Clem.*, and  
C. Stantatus, *De Temperamente*) if it is not a god; and  
as such we know it was worshiped by the Etruscans,  
and, if we may believe Macrobius, by the Cupasians  
also. Of the only two animals admitted into the  
Mahometan Paradise along with the souls of men, the  
ass that carried Balaam is one, the dog of the Seven  
Sleepers the other. This is no small distinction. From  
what has been written about this beast might be

compiled a library of great splendor and magnitude,  
rivaling that of the Shakespearean cult, and that  
which clusters about the Bible. It may be said,  
generally, that all literature is more or less Asinine.

"Hail, holy Ass!" the quiring angels  
sing; "Priest of Unreason, and of  
Discords King!" Great co-Creator,  
let Thy glory shine:  
God made all else, the Mule, the  
Mule is thine!"  
G.J.

**AUCTIONEER**, n. The man who proclaims with a  
hammer that he has picked a pocket with his tongue.

**AUSTRALIA**, n. A country lying in the South Sea,  
whose industrial and commercial development has  
been unspeakably retarded by an unfortunate dispute  
among geographers as to whether it is a continent or  
an island.

**AVERNUS**, n. The lake by which the ancients  
entered the infernal regions. The fact that access to  
the infernal regions was obtained by a lake is believed  
by the learned Marcus Ansello Scrutator to have  
suggested the Christian rite of baptism by immersion.  
This, however, has been shown by Lactantius to be an  
error.

*Facilis descensus Averni,*  
The poet remarks; and the sense  
Of it is that when down-hill I turn I  
Will get more of punches than pence.  
Jehal Dai Lupe

## B

**BAAL**, n. An old deity formerly much worshiped  
under various names. As Baal he was popular with  
the Phoenicians; as Belus or Bel he had the honor to  
be served by the priest Berosus, who wrote the  
famous account of the Deluge; as Babel he had a  
tower partly erected to his glory on the Plain of  
Shinar. From Babel comes our English word  
"babble." Under whatever name worshiped, Baal is  
the Sun-god. As Beelzebub he is the god of flies,  
which are begotten of the sun's rays on the stagnant  
water. In Physicia Baal is still worshiped as Bolus,  
and as Belly he is adored and served with abundant  
sacrifice by the priests of Guttledom.

**BABE** or **BABY**, n. A misshapen creature of no particular age, sex, or condition, chiefly remarkable for the violence of the sympathies and antipathies it excites in others, itself without sentiment or emotion. There have been famous babes; for example, little Moses, from whose adventure in the bulrushes the Egyptian hierophants of seven centuries before doubtless derived their idle tale of the child Osiris being preserved on a floating lotus leaf.

Ere babes were invented  
The girls were contended.  
Now man is tormented  
Until to buy babes he has squandered  
His money. And so I have pondered  
This thing, and thought may be  
'T were better that Baby  
The First had been eagled or  
condored.  
Ro Amil

**BACCHUS**, n. A convenient deity invented by the ancients as an excuse for getting drunk.

Is public worship, then, a sin,  
That for devotions paid to Bacchus  
The lictors dare to run us in,  
And resolutely thump and whack us?  
Jorace

**BACK**, n. That part of your friend which it is your privilege to contemplate in your adversity.

**BACKBITE**, v.t. To speak of a man as you find him when he can't find you.

**BAIT**, n. A preparation that renders the hook more palatable. The best kind is beauty.

**BAPTISM**, n. A sacred rite of such efficacy that he who finds himself in heaven without having undergone it will be unhappy forever. It is performed with water in two ways – by immersion, or plunging, and by aspersion, or sprinkling.

But whether the plan of immersion  
Is better than simple aspersion  
Let those immersed  
And those aspersed

Decide by the Authorized Version,  
And by matching their agues tertian.  
G.J.

**BAROMETER**, n. An ingenious instrument which indicates what kind of weather we are having.

**BARRACK**, n. A house in which soldiers enjoy a portion of that of which it is their business to deprive others.

**BASILISK**, n. The cockatrice. A sort of serpent hatched from the egg of a cock. The basilisk had a bad eye, and its glance was fatal. Many infidels deny this creature's existence, but Semprello Aurator saw and handled one that had been blinded by lightning as a punishment for having fatally gazed on a lady of rank whom Jupiter loved. Juno afterward restored the reptile's sight and hid it in a cave. Nothing is so well attested by the ancients as the existence of the basilisk, but the cocks have stopped laying.

**BASTINADO**, n. The act of walking on wood without exertion.

**BATH**, n. A kind of mystic ceremony substituted for religious worship, with what spiritual efficacy has not been determined.

The man who taketh a steam bath  
He loseth all the skin he hath,  
And, for he's boiled a brilliant red,  
Thinketh to cleanliness he's wed,  
Forgetting that his lungs he's soiling  
With dirty vapors of the boiling.  
Richard Gwong

**BATTLE**, n. A method of untying with the teeth of a political knot that would not yield to the tongue.

**BEARD**, n. The hair that is commonly cut off by those who justly execrate the absurd Chinese custom of shaving the head.

**BEAUTY**, n. The power by which a woman charms a lover and terrifies a husband.

**BEFRIEND**, v.t. To make an ingrate.

**BEG**, v. To ask for something with an earnestness proportioned to the belief that it will not be given.

Who is that, father?  
A mendicant, child,  
Haggard, morose, and unaffable –  
wild!  
See how he glares through the bars of  
his cell! With Citizen Mendicant all  
is not well.  
Why did they put him there, father?  
Because Obeying his belly he struck  
at the laws.  
His belly?  
Oh, well, he was starving, my boy –  
A state in which, doubtless, there's  
little of joy. No bite had he eaten for  
days, and his cry Was "Bread!" ever  
"Bread!"  
What's the matter with pie?  
With little to wear, he had nothing to  
sell; To beg was unlawful – improper  
as well.  
Why didn't he work?  
He would even have done that, But  
men said: "Get out!" and the State  
remarked: "Scat!" I mention these  
incidents merely to show  
That the vengeance he took was  
uncommonly low. Revenge, at the  
best, is the act of a Siou, But for  
trifles –  
Pray what did bad Mendicant do?  
Stole two loaves of bread to replenish  
his lack And tuck out the belly that  
clung to his back.  
Is that *all* father dear?  
There's little to tell: They sent him to  
jail, and they'll send him to – well,  
The company's better than here we  
can boast, And there's –  
Bread for the needy, dear father?  
Um – toast.  
Atka Mip

**BEGGAR**, n. One who has relied on the assistance of his friends.

**BEHAVIOR**, n. Conduct, as determined, not by principle, but by breeding. The word seems to be somewhat loosely used in Dr. Jamrach Holobom's translation of the following lines from the *Dies Irae*:

Recordare, Jesu pie,  
Quod sum causa tuae viae.  
Ne me perdas illa die.  
Pray remember, sacred Savior,  
Whose the thoughtless hand that gave  
your  
Death-blow. Pardon such behavior.

**BELLADONNA**, n. In Italian a beautiful lady; in English a deadly poison. A striking example of the essential identity of the two tongues.

**BENEDICTINES**, n. An order of monks otherwise known as black friars.

She thought it a crow, but it turn out  
to be A monk of St. Benedict  
croaking a text. "Here's one of an  
order of cooks," said she – "Black  
friars in this world, fried black in the  
next."  
"The Devil on Earth" (London, 1712)

**BENEFACTOR**, n. One who makes heavy purchases of ingratitude, without, however, materially affecting the price, which is still within the means of all.

**BERENICE'S HAIR**, n. A constellation (*Coma Berenices*) named in honor of one who sacrificed her hair to save her husband.

Her locks an ancient lady gave  
Her loving husband's life to save;  
And men – they honored so the dame  
–  
Upon some stars bestowed her name.  
But to our modern married fair,  
Who'd give their lords to save their  
hair, No stellar recognition's given.  
There are not stars enough in heaven.  
G.J.

**BIGAMY**, n. A mistake in taste for which the wisdom of the future will adjudge a punishment called trigamy.

**BIGOT**, n. One who is obstinately and zealously attached to an opinion that you do not entertain.

**BILLINGSGATE**, n. The invective of an opponent.

**BIRTH**, n. The first and direst of all disasters. As to the nature of it there appears to be no uniformity. Castor and Pollux were born from the egg. Pallas came out of a skull. Galatea was once a block of stone. Peresilis, who wrote in the tenth century, avers that he grew up out of the ground where a priest had spilled holy water. It is known that Arimaxus was derived from a hole in the earth, made by a stroke of lightning. Leucomedon was the son of a cavern in Mount Aetna, and I have myself seen a man come out of a wine cellar.

**BLACKGUARD**, n. A man whose qualities, prepared for display like a box of berries in a market – the fine ones on top – have been opened on the wrong side. An inverted gentleman.

**BLANK-VERSE**, n. Unrhymed iambic pentameters – the most difficult kind of English verse to write acceptably; a kind, therefore, much affected by those who cannot acceptably write any kind.

**BODY-SNATCHER**, n. A robber of grave-worms. One who supplies the young physicians with that with which the old physicians have supplied the undertaker. The hyena.

"One night," a doctor said, "last fall,  
I and my comrades, four in all,  
When visiting a graveyard stood  
Within the shadow of a wall.  
"While waiting for the moon to sink  
We saw a wild hyena slink  
About a new-made grave, and then  
Begin to excavate its brink!  
"Shocked by the horrid act, we made  
A sally from our ambushade,  
And, falling on the unholy beast,  
Dispatched him with a pick and

spade."  
Bettel K. Jhones

**BONDSMAN**, n. A fool who, having property of his own, undertakes to become responsible for that entrusted to another to a third.

Philippe of Orleans wishing to appoint one of his favorites, a dissolute nobleman, to a high office, asked him what security he would be able to give. "I need no bondsmen," he replied, "for I can give you my word of honor." "And pray what may be the value of that?" inquired the amused Regent. "Monsieur, it is worth its weight in gold."

**BORE**, n. A person who talks when you wish him to listen.

**BOTANY**, n. The science of vegetables – those that are not good to eat, as well as those that are. It deals largely with their flowers, which are commonly badly designed, inartistic in color, and ill-smelling.

**BOTTLE-NOSED**, adj. Having a nose created in the image of its maker.

**BOUNDARY**, n. In political geography, an imaginary line between two nations, separating the imaginary rights of one from the imaginary rights of the other.

**BOUNTY**, n. The liberality of one who has much, in permitting one who has nothing to get all that he can.

A single swallow, it is said, devours  
ten millions of insects every year.  
The supplying of these insects I take  
to be a signal instance of the  
Creator's bounty in providing for the  
lives of His creatures.  
Henry Ward Beecher

**BRAHMA**, n. He who created the Hindoos, who are preserved by Vishnu and destroyed by Siva – a rather neater division of labor than is found among the deities of some other nations. The Abracadabranese,

for example, are created by Sin, maintained by Theft and destroyed by Folly. The priests of Brahma, like those of Abracadabranese, are holy and learned men who are never naughty.

O Brahma, thou rare old Divinity,  
First Person of the Hindoo Trinity,  
You sit there so calm and securely,  
With feet folded up so demurely –  
You're the First Person Singular,  
surely.

Polydore Smith

**BRAIN**, n. An apparatus with which we think what we think. That which distinguishes the man who is content to *be* something from the man who wishes to *do* something. A man of great wealth, or one who has been pitchforked into high station, has commonly such a headful of brain that his neighbors cannot keep their hats on. In our civilization, and under our republican form of government, brain is so highly honored that it is rewarded by exemption from the cares of office.

**BRANDY**, n. A cordial composed of one part thunder–and–lightning, one part remorse, two parts bloody murder, one part death–hell–and–the–grave and four parts clarified Satan. Dose, a headful all the time. Brandy is said by Dr. Johnson to be the drink of heroes. Only a hero will venture to drink it.

**BRIDE**, n. A woman with a fine prospect of happiness behind her.

**BRUTE**, n. See [HUSBAND](#).

## C

**CAABA**, n. A large stone presented by the archangel Gabriel to the patriarch Abraham, and preserved at Mecca. The patriarch had perhaps asked the archangel for bread.

**CABBAGE**, n. A familiar kitchen–garden vegetable about as large and wise as a man's head.

The cabbage is so called from Cabagius, a prince who on ascending the throne issued a decree appointing a High Council of Empire consisting of the members of his predecessor's

Ministry and the cabbages in the royal garden. When any of his Majesty's measures of state policy miscarried conspicuously it was gravely announced that several members of the High Council had been beheaded, and his murmuring subjects were appeased.

**CALAMITY**, n. A more than commonly plain and unmistakable reminder that the affairs of this life are not of our own ordering. Calamities are of two kinds: misfortune to ourselves, and good fortune to others.

**CALLOUS**, adj. Gifted with great fortitude to bear the evils afflicting another.

When Zeno was told that one of his enemies was no more he was observed to be deeply moved. "What!" said one of his disciples, "you weep at the death of an enemy?" "Ah, 'tis true," replied the great Stoic; "but you should see me smile at the death of a friend."

**CALUMNUS**, n. A graduate of the School for Scandal.

**CAMEL**, n. A quadruped (the *Splaypes humpidorsus*) of great value to the show business. There are two kinds of camels – the camel proper and the camel improper. It is the latter that is always exhibited.

**CANNIBAL**, n. A gastronome of the old school who preserves the simple tastes and adheres to the natural diet of the pre–pork period.

**CANNON**, n. An instrument employed in the rectification of national boundaries.

**CANONICALS**, n. The motley worn by Jesters of the Court of Heaven.

**CAPITAL**, n. The seat of misgovernment. That which provides the fire, the pot, the dinner, the table and the knife and fork for the anarchist; the part of the repast that himself supplies is the disgrace before meat. *Capital Punishment*, a penalty regarding the

justice and expediency of which many worthy persons – including all the assassins – entertain grave misgivings.

**CARMELITE**, n. A mendicant friar of the order of Mount Carmel.

As Death was a–rising out one day,  
Across Mount Camel he took his way,  
Where he met a mendicant monk,  
Some three or four quarters drunk,  
With a holy leer and a pious grin,  
Ragged and fat and as saucy as sin,  
Who held out his hands and cried:  
"Give, give in Charity's name, I pray.  
Give in the name of the Church. O  
give,  
Give that her holy sons may live!"  
And Death replied,  
Smiling long and wide:  
"I'll give, holy father, I'll give thee –  
a ride."  
With a rattle and bang  
Of his bones, he sprang  
From his famous Pale Horse, with his  
spear; By the neck and the foot  
Seized the fellow, and put  
Him astride with his face to the rear.  
The Monarch laughed loud with a  
sound that fell Like clods on the  
coffin's sounding shell: "Ho, ho! A  
beggar on horseback, they say, Will  
ride to the devil!" – and *thump* Fell  
the flat of his dart on the rump  
Of the charger, which galloped away.  
Faster and faster and faster it flew,  
Till the rocks and the flocks and the  
trees that grew By the road were dim  
and blended and blue  
To the wild, wild eyes  
Of the rider – in size  
Resembling a couple of blackberry  
pies. Death laughed again, as a tomb  
might laugh At a burial service  
spoiled,  
And the mourners' intentions foiled  
By the body erecting  
Its head and objecting

To further proceedings in its behalf.  
Many a year and many a day  
Have passed since these events away.  
The monk has long been a dusty  
corse,  
And Death has never recovered his  
horse.  
For the friar got hold of its tail,  
And steered it within the pale  
Of the monastery gray,  
Where the beast was stabled and fed  
With barley and oil and bread  
Till fatter it grew than the fattest  
friar, And so in due course was  
appointed Prior.  
G.J.

**CARNIVOROUS**, adj. Addicted to the cruelty of devouring the timorous vegetarian, his heirs and assigns.

**CARTESIAN**, adj. Relating to Descartes, a famous philosopher, author of the celebrated dictum, *Cogito ergo sum* – whereby he was pleased to suppose he demonstrated the reality of human existence. The dictum might be improved, however, thus: *Cogito cogito ergo cogito sum* – "I think that I think, therefore I think that I am;" as close an approach to certainty as any philosopher has yet made.

**CAT**, n. A soft, indestructible automaton provided by nature to be kicked when things go wrong in the domestic circle.

This is a dog,  
This is a cat.  
This is a frog,  
This is a rat.  
Run, dog, mew, cat.  
Jump, frog, gnaw, rat.  
Elevenson

**CAVILER**, n. A critic of our own work.

**CEMETERY**, n. An isolated suburban spot where mourners match lies, poets write at a target and stone–cutters spell for a wager. The inscriptions following will serve to illustrate the success attained in these Olympian games:



His virtues were so conspicuous that  
his enemies, unable to overlook  
them, denied them, and his friends, to  
whose loose lives they were a rebuke,  
represented them as vices. They are  
here commemorated by his family,  
who shared them. In the earth we  
here prepare a  
Place to lay our little Clara.  
Thomas M. and Mary Frazer  
P.S. – Gabriel will raise her.

**CENTAUR**, n. One of a race of persons who lived before the division of labor had been carried to such a pitch of differentiation, and who followed the primitive economic maxim, "Every man his own horse." The best of the lot was Chiron, who to the wisdom and virtues of the horse added the fleetness of man. The scripture story of the head of John the Baptist on a charger shows that pagan myths have somewhat sophisticated sacred history.

**CERBERUS**, n. The watch-dog of Hades, whose duty it was to guard the entrance – against whom or what does not clearly appear; everybody, sooner or later, had to go there, and nobody wanted to carry off the entrance. Cerberus is known to have had three heads, and some of the poets have credited him with as many as a hundred. Professor Graybill, whose clerky erudition and profound knowledge of Greek give his opinion great weight, has averaged all the estimates, and makes the number twenty-seven – a judgment that would be entirely conclusive is Professor Graybill had known (a) something about dogs, and (b) something about arithmetic.

**CHILDHOOD**, n. The period of human life intermediate between the idiocy of infancy and the folly of youth – two removes from the sin of manhood and three from the remorse of age.

**CHRISTIAN**, n. One who believes that the New Testament is a divinely inspired book admirably suited to the spiritual needs of his neighbor. One who follows the teachings of Christ in so far as they are not inconsistent with a life of sin.

I dreamed I stood upon a hill, and, lo!  
The godly multitudes walked to and fro

Beneath, in Sabbath garments fitly  
clad,  
With pious mien, appropriately sad,  
While all the church bells made a  
solemn din – A fire-alarm to those  
who lived in sin.  
Then saw I gazing thoughtfully  
below,  
With tranquil face, upon that holy  
show  
A tall, spare figure in a robe of white,  
Whose eyes diffused a melancholy  
light.  
"God keep you, strange," I  
exclaimed. "You are No doubt (your  
habit shows it) from afar;  
And yet I entertain the hope that you,  
Like these good people, are a  
Christian too."  
He raised his eyes and with a look so  
stern It made me with a thousand  
blushes burn  
Replied – his manner with disdain  
was spiced: "What! I a Christian? No,  
indeed! I'm Christ."  
G.J.

**CIRCUS**, n. A place where horses, ponies and elephants are permitted to see men, women and children acting the fool.

**CLAIRVOYANT**, n. A person, commonly a woman, who has the power of seeing that which is invisible to her patron, namely, that he is a blockhead.

**CLARIONET**, n. An instrument of torture operated by a person with cotton in his ears. There are two instruments that are worse than a clarionet – two clarionets.

**CLERGYMAN**, n. A man who undertakes the management of our spiritual affairs as a method of better his temporal ones.

**CLIO**, n. One of the nine Muses. Clio's function was to preside over history – which she did with great dignity, many of the prominent citizens of Athens occupying seats on the platform, the meetings being addressed by Messrs. Xenophon, Herodotus and other popular speakers.

**CLOCK**, n. A machine of great moral value to man, allaying his concern for the future by reminding him what a lot of time remains to him.

A busy man complained one day:  
"I get no time!" "What's that you say?"  
Cried out his friend, a lazy quiz;  
"You have, sir, all the time there is.  
There's plenty, too, and don't you doubt it – We're never for an hour without it."  
Purzil Crofe

**CLOSE–FISTED**, adj. Unduly desirous of keeping that which many meritorious persons wish to obtain.

"Close–fisted Scotchman!" Johnson cried  
To thrifty J. Macpherson;  
"See me – I'm ready to divide  
With any worthy person."  
Sad Jamie: "That is very true –  
The boast requires no backing;  
And all are worthy, sir, to you,  
Who have what you are lacking."  
Anita M. Bobe

**COENOBITE**, n. A man who piously shuts himself up to meditate upon the sin of wickedness; and to keep it fresh in his mind joins a brotherhood of awful examples.

O Coenobite, O coenobite,  
Monastical gregarian,  
You differ from the anchorite,  
That solitudinarian:  
With vollied prayers you wound Old Nick;  
With dropping shots he makes him sick.  
Quincy Giles

**COMFORT**, n. A state of mind produced by contemplation of a neighbor's uneasiness.

**COMMENDATION**, n. The tribute that we pay to achievements that resembles, but do not equal, our own.

**COMMERCE**, n. A kind of transaction in which A plunders from B the goods of C, and for compensation B picks the pocket of D of money belonging to E.

**COMMONWEALTH**, n. An administrative entity operated by an incalculable multitude of political parasites, logically active but fortuitously efficient.

This commonwealth's capitol's  
corridors view, So thronged with a  
hungry and indolent crew Of clerks,  
pages, porters and all attaches Whom  
rascals appoint and the populace pays  
That a cat cannot slip through the  
thicket of shins Nor hear its own  
shriek for the noise of their chins. On  
clerks and on pages, and porters, and  
all, Misfortune attend and disaster  
befall!

May life be to them a succession of  
hurts; May fleas by the bushel inhabit  
their shirts; May aches and diseases  
encamp in their bones, Their lungs  
full of tubercles, bladders of stones;  
May microbes, bacilli, their tissues  
infest, And tapeworms securely their  
bowels digest; May corn–cobs be  
snared without hope in their hair,  
And frequent impalement their  
pleasure impair. Disturbed be their  
dreams by the awful discourse Of  
audible sofas sepulchrally hoarse,  
By chairs acrobatic and wavering  
floors – The mattress that kicks and  
the pillow that snores! Sons of  
cupidity, cradled in sin!  
Your criminal ranks may the death  
angel thin, Avenging the friend  
whom I couldn't work in.  
K.Q.

**COMPROMISE**, n. Such an adjustment of conflicting interests as gives each adversary the satisfaction of thinking he has got what he ought not to have, and is deprived of nothing except what was justly his due.

**COMPULSION**, n. The eloquence of power.

**CONDOLE**, v.i. To show that bereavement is a smaller evil than sympathy.

**CONFIDANT, CONFIDANTE**, n. One entrusted by A with the secrets of B, confided by *him* to C.

**CONGRATULATION**, n. The civility of envy.

**CONGRESS**, n. A body of men who meet to repeal laws.

**CONNOISSEUR**, n. A specialist who knows everything about something and nothing about anything else.

An old wine-bibber having been  
smashed in a railway collision, some  
wine was pouted on his lips to revive  
him. "Pauillac, 1873," he murmured  
and died.

**CONSERVATIVE**, n. A statesman who is enamored of existing evils, as distinguished from the Liberal, who wishes to replace them with others.

**CONSOLATION**, n. The knowledge that a better man is more unfortunate than yourself.

**CONSUL**, n. In American politics, a person who having failed to secure an office from the people is given one by the Administration on condition that he leave the country.

**CONSULT**, v.i. To seek another's disapproval of a course already decided on.

**CONTEMPT**, n. The feeling of a prudent man for an enemy who is too formidable safely to be opposed.

**CONTROVERSY**, n. A battle in which spittle or ink replaces the injurious cannon-ball and the inconsiderate bayonet.

In controversy with the facile tongue  
—  
That bloodless warfare of the old and  
young — So seek your adversary

to engage  
That on himself he shall exhaust his  
rage, And, like a snake that's fastened  
to the ground, With his own fangs  
inflict the fatal wound. You ask me  
how this miracle is done?  
Adopt his own opinions, one by one,  
And taunt him to refute them; in his  
wrath He'll sweep them pitilessly  
from his path. Advance then gently  
all you wish to prove, Each  
proposition prefaced with, "As  
you've So well remarked," or, "As  
you wisely say, And I cannot  
dispute," or, "By the way,  
This view of it which, better far  
expressed, Runs through your  
argument." Then leave the rest To  
him, secure that he'll perform his  
trust And prove your views  
intelligent and just.  
Conmore Apel Brune

**CONVENT**, n. A place of retirement for woman who wish for leisure to meditate upon the vice of idleness.

**CONVERSATION**, n. A fair to the display of the minor mental commodities, each exhibitor being too intent upon the arrangement of his own wares to observe those of his neighbor.

**CORONATION**, n. The ceremony of investing a sovereign with the outward and visible signs of his divine right to be blown skyhigh with a dynamite bomb.

**CORPORAL**, n. A man who occupies the lowest rung of the military ladder.

Fiercely the battle raged and, sad to  
tell, Our corporal heroically fell!  
Fame from her height looked down  
upon the brawl And said: "He hadn't  
very far to fall."  
Giacomo Smith

**CORPORATION**, n. An ingenious device for obtaining individual profit without individual responsibility.

**CORSAIR**, n. A politician of the seas.

**COURT FOOL**, n. The plaintiff.

**COWARD**, n. One who in a perilous emergency thinks with his legs.

**CRAYFISH**, n. A small crustacean very much resembling the lobster, but less indigestible.

In this small fish I take it that human wisdom is admirably figured and symbolized; for whereas the crayfish doth move only backward, and can have only retrospection, seeing naught but the perils already passed, so the wisdom of man doth not enable him to avoid the follies that beset his course, but only to apprehend their nature afterward.  
Sir James Merivale

**CREDITOR**, n. One of a tribe of savages dwelling beyond the Financial Straits and dreaded for their desolating incursions.

**CREMONA**, n. A high-priced violin made in Connecticut.

**CRITIC**, n. A person who boasts himself hard to please because nobody tries to please him.

There is a land of pure delight,  
Beyond the Jordan's flood,  
Where saints, apparelled all in white,  
Fling back the critic's mud.  
And as he legs it through the skies,  
His pelt a sable hue,  
He sorrows sore to recognize  
The missiles that he threw.  
Orrin Goof

**CROSS**, n. An ancient religious symbol erroneously supposed to owe its significance to the most solemn event in the history of Christianity, but really antedating it by thousands of years. By many it has been believed to be identical with the *crux ansata* of the ancient phallic worship, but it has been traced even beyond all that we know of that, to the rites of

primitive peoples. We have to-day the White Cross as a symbol of chastity, and the Red Cross as a badge of benevolent neutrality in war. Having in mind the former, the reverend Father Gassalasca Jape smites the lyre to the effect following:

"Be good, be good!" the sisterhood  
Cry out in holy chorus,  
And, to dissuade from sin, parade  
Their various charms before us.  
But why, O why, has ne'er an eye  
Seen her of winsome manner  
And youthful grace and pretty face  
Flaunting the White Cross banner?  
Now where's the need of speech and  
screed  
To better our behaving?  
A simpler plan for saving man  
(But, first, is he worth saving?)  
Is, dears, when he declines to flee  
From bad thoughts that beset him,  
Ignores the Law as 't were a straw,  
And wants to sin – don't let him.

**CUI BONO?** [Latin] What good would that do *me*?

**CUNNING**, n. The faculty that distinguishes a weak animal or person from a strong one. It brings its possessor much mental satisfaction and great material adversity. An Italian proverb says: "The furrier gets the skins of more foxes than asses."

**CUPID**, n. The so-called god of love. This bastard creation of a barbarous fancy was no doubt inflicted upon mythology for the sins of its deities. Of all unbeautiful and inappropriate conceptions this is the most reasonless and offensive. The notion of symbolizing sexual love by a semisexless babe, and comparing the pains of passion to the wounds of an arrow – of introducing this pudgy homunculus into art grossly to materialize the subtle spirit and suggestion of the work – this is eminently worthy of the age that, giving it birth, laid it on the doorstep of prosperity.

**CURIOSITY**, n. An objectionable quality of the female mind. The desire to know whether or not a woman is cursed with curiosity is one of the most active and insatiable passions of the masculine soul.

**CURSE**, v.t. Energetically to belabor with a verbal slap—stick. This is an operation which in literature, particularly in the drama, is commonly fatal to the victim. Nevertheless, the liability to a cursing is a risk that cuts but a small figure in fixing the rates of life insurance.

**CYNIC**, n. A blackguard whose faulty vision sees things as they are, not as they ought to be. Hence the custom among the Scythians of plucking out a cynic's eyes to improve his vision.

## D

**DAMN**, v. A word formerly much used by the Paphlagonians, the meaning of which is lost. By the learned Dr. Dolabelly Gak it is believed to have been a term of satisfaction, implying the highest possible degree of mental tranquillity. Professor Groke, on the contrary, thinks it expressed an emotion of tumultuous delight, because it so frequently occurs in combination with the word *jod* or *god*, meaning "joy." It would be with great diffidence that I should advance an opinion conflicting with that of either of these formidable authorities.

**DANCE**, v.i. To leap about to the sound of tittering music, preferably with arms about your neighbor's wife or daughter. There are many kinds of dances, but all those requiring the participation of the two sexes have two characteristics in common: they are conspicuously innocent, and warmly loved by the vicious.

**DANGER**, n.

A savage beast which, when it sleeps,  
Man girds at and despises,  
But takes himself away by leaps  
And bounds when it arises.  
Ambat Delaso

**DARING**, n. One of the most conspicuous qualities of a man in security.

**DATARY**, n. A high ecclesiastic official of the Roman Catholic Church, whose important function is to brand the Pope's bulls with the words *Datum Romae*. He enjoys a princely revenue and the

friendship of God.

**DAWN**, n. The time when men of reason go to bed. Certain old men prefer to rise at about that time, taking a cold bath and a long walk with an empty stomach, and otherwise mortifying the flesh. They then point with pride to these practices as the cause of their sturdy health and ripe years; the truth being that they are hearty and old, not because of their habits, but in spite of them. The reason we find only robust persons doing this thing is that it has killed all the others who have tried it.

**DAY**, n. A period of twenty-four hours, mostly misspent. This period is divided into two parts, the day proper and the night, or day improper – the former devoted to sins of business, the latter consecrated to the other sort. These two kinds of social activity overlap.

**DEAD**, adj.

Done with the work of breathing;  
done  
With all the world; the mad race run  
Though to the end; the golden goal  
Attained and found to be a hole!  
Squatol Johnes

**DEBAUCHEE**, n. One who has so earnestly pursued pleasure that he has had the misfortune to overtake it.

**DEBT**, n. An ingenious substitute for the chain and whip of the slave— driver.

As, pent in an aquarium, the troutlet  
Swims round and round his tank to  
find an outlet, Pressing his nose  
against the glass that holds him, Nor  
ever sees the prison that enfolds him;  
So the poor debtor, seeing naught  
around him, Yet feels the narrow  
limits that impound him, Grieves at  
his debt and studies to evade it, And  
finds at last he might as well have  
paid it.  
Barlow S. Vode

**DECALOGUE**, n. A series of commandments, ten in number – just enough to permit an intelligent selection for observance, but not enough to embarrass the choice. Following is the revised edition of the Decalogue, calculated for this meridian.

Thou shalt no God but me adore:  
'Twere too expensive to have more.  
No images nor idols make  
For Robert Ingersoll to break.  
Take not God's name in vain; select  
A time when it will have effect.  
Work not on Sabbath days at all,  
But go to see the teams play ball.  
Honor thy parents. That creates  
For life insurance lower rates.  
Kill not, abet not those who kill;  
Thou shalt not pay thy butcher's bill.  
Kiss not thy neighbor's wife, unless  
Thine own thy neighbor doth caress  
Don't steal; thou'lt never thus compete  
Successfully in business. Cheat.  
Bear not false witness – that is low –  
But "hear 'tis rumored so and so."  
Cover thou naught that thou hast not  
By hook or crook, or somehow, got.  
G.J.

**DECIDE**, v.i. To succumb to the preponderance of one set of influences over another set.

A leaf was riven from a tree,  
"I mean to fall to earth," said he.  
The west wind, rising, made him veer.  
"Eastward," said he, "I now shall  
steer."  
The east wind rose with greater force.  
Said he: "'Twere wise to change my  
course." With equal power they  
contend.  
He said: "My judgment I suspend."  
Down died the winds; the leaf, elate,  
Cried: "I've decided to fall straight."  
"First thoughts are best?" That's not  
the moral; Just choose your own and  
we'll not quarrel.  
Howe'er your choice may chance to  
fall,

You'll have no hand in it at all.  
G.J.

**DEFAME**, v.t. To lie about another. To tell the truth about another.

**DEFENCELESS**, adj. Unable to attack.

**DEGENERATE**, adj. Less conspicuously admirable than one's ancestors. The contemporaries of Homer were striking examples of degeneracy; it required ten of them to raise a rock or a riot that one of the heroes of the Trojan war could have raised with ease. Homer never tires of sneering at "men who live in these degenerate days," which is perhaps why they suffered him to beg his bread – a marked instance of returning good for evil, by the way, for if they had forbidden him he would certainly have starved.

**DEGRADATION**, n. One of the stages of moral and social progress from private station to political preferment.

**DEINOTHERIUM**, n. An extinct pachyderm that flourished when the Pterodactyl was in fashion. The latter was a native of Ireland, its name being pronounced Terry Dactyl or Peter O'Dactyl, as the man pronouncing it may chance to have heard it spoken or seen it printed.

**DEJEUNER**, n. The breakfast of an American who has been in Paris. Various pronounced.

**DELEGATION**, n. In American politics, an article of merchandise that comes in sets.

**DELIBERATION**, n. The act of examining one's bread to determine which side it is buttered on.

**DELUGE**, n. A notable first experiment in baptism which washed away the sins (and sinners) of the world.

**DELUSION**, n. The father of a most respectable family, comprising Enthusiasm, Affection, Self-denial, Faith, Hope, Charity and many other goodly sons and daughters.

All hail, Delusion! Were it not for thee  
The world turned topsy-turvy we  
should see; For Vice, respectable  
with cleanly fancies, Would fly  
abandoned Virtue's gross advances.  
Mumfrey Mappel

**DENTIST**, n. A prestidigitator who, putting metal into your mouth, pulls coins out of your pocket.

**DEPENDENT**, adj. Reliant upon another's generosity for the support which you are not in a position to exact from his fears.

**DEPUTY**, n. A male relative of an office-holder, or of his bondsman. The deputy is commonly a beautiful young man, with a red necktie and an intricate system of cobwebs extending from his nose to his desk. When accidentally struck by the janitor's broom, he gives off a cloud of dust.

"Chief Deputy," the Master cried,  
"To-day the books are to be tried  
By experts and accountants who  
Have been commissioned to go  
through  
Our office here, to see if we  
Have stolen injudiciously.  
Please have the proper entries made,  
The proper balances displayed,  
Conforming to the whole amount  
Of cash on hand – which they will  
count.  
I've long admired your punctual way  
–  
Here at the break and close of day,  
Confronting in your chair the crowd  
Of business men, whose voices loud  
And gestures violent you quell  
By some mysterious, calm spell –  
Some magic lurking in your look  
That brings the noisiest to book  
And spreads a holy and profound  
Tranquillity o'er all around.  
So orderly all's done that they  
Who came to draw remain to pay.  
But now the time demands, at last,  
That you employ your genius vast

In energies more active. Rise  
And shake the lightnings from your  
eyes;  
Inspire your underlings, and fling  
Your spirit into everything!"  
The Master's hand here dealt a whack  
Upon the Deputy's bent back,  
When straightway to the floor there  
fell  
A shrunken globe, a rattling shell  
A blackened, withered, eyeless head!  
The man had been a twelvemonth  
dead.  
Jamrach Holobom

**DESTINY**, n. A tyrant's authority for crime and fool's excuse for failure.

**DIAGNOSIS**, n. A physician's forecast of the disease by the patient's pulse and purse.

**DIAPHRAGM**, n. A muscular partition separating disorders of the chest from disorders of the bowels.

**DIARY**, n. A daily record of that part of one's life, which he can relate to himself without blushing.

Hearst kept a diary wherein were writ  
All that he had of wisdom and of wit.  
So the Recording Angel, when  
Hearst died,  
Erased all entries of his own and  
cried:  
"I'll judge you by your diary." Said  
Hearst: "Thank you; 'twill show you I  
am Saint the First" – Straightway  
producing, jubilant and proud, That  
record from a pocket in his shroud.  
The Angel slowly turned the pages  
o'er,  
Each stupid line of which he knew  
before,  
Glooming and gleaming as by turns  
he hit  
On Shallow sentiment and stolen wit;  
Then gravely closed the book and  
gave it back. "My friend, you've  
wandered from your proper track:  
You'd never be content this side the

tomb – For big ideas Heaven has  
little room,  
And Hell's no latitude for making  
mirth,"  
He said, and kicked the fellow back  
to earth.  
"The Mad Philosopher"

**DICTATOR**, n. The chief of a nation that prefers the  
pestilence of despotism to the plague of anarchy.

**DICTIONARY**, n. A malevolent literary device for  
cramping the growth of a language and making it  
hard and inelastic. This dictionary, however, is a most  
useful work.

**DIE**, n. The singular of "dice." We seldom hear the  
word, because there is a prohibitory proverb, "Never  
say die." At long intervals, however, some one says:  
"The die is cast," which is not true, for it is cut. The  
word is found in an immortal couplet by that eminent  
poet and domestic economist, Senator Depew:

A cube of cheese no larger than a die  
May bait the trap to catch a nibbling  
mie.

**DIGESTION**, n. The conversion of victuals into  
virtues. When the process is imperfect, vices are  
evolved instead – a circumstance from which that  
wicked writer, Dr. Jeremiah Blenn, infers that the  
ladies are the greater sufferers from dyspepsia.

**DIPLOMACY**, n. The patriotic art of lying for one's  
country.

**DISABUSE**, v.t. The present your neighbor with  
another and better error than the one which he has  
deemed it advantageous to embrace.

**DISCRIMINATE**, v.i. To note the particulars in  
which one person or thing is, if possible, more  
objectionable than another.

**DISCUSSION**, n. A method of confirming others in  
their errors.

**DISOBEDIENCE**, n. The silver lining to the cloud  
of servitude.

**DISOBEY**, v.t. To celebrate with an appropriate  
ceremony the maturity of a command.  
His right to govern me is clear as day,  
My duty manifest to disobey;  
And if that fit observance e'er I shut  
May I and duty be alike undone.  
Israfel Brown

**DISSEMBLE**, v.i. To put a clean shirt upon the  
character.

Let us dissemble.  
Adam

**DISTANCE**, n. The only thing that the rich are  
willing for the poor to call theirs, and keep.

**DISTRESS**, n. A disease incurred by exposure to the  
prosperity of a friend.

**DIVINATION**, n. The art of nosing out the occult.  
Divination is of as many kinds as there are  
fruit-bearing varieties of the flowering dunce and the  
early fool.

**DOG**, n. A kind of additional or subsidiary Deity  
designed to catch the overflow and surplus of the  
world's worship. This Divine Being in some of his  
smaller and silkier incarnations takes, in the affection  
of Woman, the place to which there is no human male  
aspirant. The Dog is a survival – an anachronism. He  
toils not, neither does he spin, yet Solomon in all his  
glory never lay upon a door-mat all day long,  
sun-soaked and fly-fed and fat, while his master  
worked for the means wherewith to purchase the idle  
wag of the Solomonic tail, seasoned with a look of  
tolerant recognition.

**DRAGOON**, n. A soldier who combines dash and  
steadiness in so equal measure that he makes his  
advances on foot and his retreats on horseback.

**DRAMATIST**, n. One who adapts plays from the  
French.

**DRUIDS**, n. Priests and ministers of an ancient Celtic  
religion which did not disdain to employ the humble  
allurement of human sacrifice. Very little is now  
known about the Druids and their faith. Pliny says



their religion, originating in Britain, spread eastward as far as Persia. Caesar says those who desired to study its mysteries went to Britain. Caesar himself went to Britain, but does not appear to have obtained any high preferment in the Druidical Church, although his talent for human sacrifice was considerable. Druids performed their religious rites in groves, and knew nothing of church mortgages and the season-ticket system of pew rents. They were, in short, heathens and – as they were once complacently catalogued by a distinguished prelate of the Church of England – Dissenters.

**DUCK-BILL**, n. Your account at your restaurant during the canvas-back season.

**DUEL**, n. A formal ceremony preliminary to the reconciliation of two enemies. Great skill is necessary to its satisfactory observance; if awkwardly performed the most unexpected and deplorable consequences sometimes ensue. A long time ago a man lost his life in a duel.

That dueling's a gentlemanly vice  
I hold; and wish that it had been my  
lot To live my life out in some  
favored spot – Some country where it  
is considered nice  
To split a rival like a fish, or slice  
A husband like a spud, or with a shot  
Bring down a debtor doubled in a  
knot  
And ready to be put upon the ice.  
Some miscreants there are, whom I  
do long  
To shoot, to stab, or some such way  
reclaim The scurvy rogues to better  
lives and manners, I seem to see  
them now – a mighty throng. It looks  
as if to challenge *me* they came,  
Jauntily marching with brass bands  
and banners!  
Xamba Q. Dar

**DULLARD**, n. A member of the reigning dynasty in letters and life. The Dullards came in with Adam, and being both numerous and sturdy have overrun the habitable world. The secret of their power is their insensibility to blows; tickle them with a bludgeon and they laugh with a platitude. The Dullards came

originally from Boeotia, whence they were driven by stress of starvation, their dullness having blighted the crops. For some centuries they infested Philistia, and many of them are called Philistines to this day. In the turbulent times of the Crusades they withdrew thence and gradually overspread all Europe, occupying most of the high places in politics, art, literature, science and theology. Since a detachment of Dullards came over with the Pilgrims in the *Mayflower* and made a favorable report of the country, their increase by birth, immigration, and conversion has been rapid and steady. According to the most trustworthy statistics the number of adult Dullards in the United States is but little short of thirty millions, including the statisticians. The intellectual centre of the race is somewhere about Peoria, Illinois, but the New England Dullard is the most shockingly moral.

**DUTY**, n. That which sternly impels us in the direction of profit, along the line of desire.

Sir Lavender Portwine, in favor at  
court,  
Was wroth at his master, who'd  
kissed Lady Port. His anger provoked  
him to take the king's head, But duty  
prevailed, and he took the king's  
bread, Instead.  
G.J.

## E

**EAT**, v.i. To perform successively (and successfully) the functions of mastication, humectation, and deglutition.

"I was in the drawing-room,  
enjoying my dinner," said Brillat-  
Savarin, beginning an anecdote.  
"What!" interrupted Rochebriant;  
"eating dinner in a drawing-room?"  
"I must beg you to observe,  
monsieur," explained the great  
gastronome, "that I did not say I was  
eating my dinner, but enjoying it. I  
had dined an hour before."

**EAVESDROP**, v.i. Secretly to overhear a catalogue of the crimes and vices of another or yourself.

A lady with one of her ears applied  
To an open keyhole heard, inside,  
Two female gossips in converse free  
—  
The subject engaging them was she.  
"I think," said one, "and my husband  
thinks That she's a prying, inquisitive  
minx!"  
As soon as no more of it she could  
hear  
The lady, indignant, removed her ear.  
"I will not stay," she said, with a pout,  
"To hear my character lied about!"  
Gopete Sherany

**ECCENTRICITY**, n. A method of distinction so cheap that fools employ it to accentuate their incapacity.

**ECONOMY**, n. Purchasing the barrel of whiskey that you do not need for the price of the cow that you cannot afford.

**EDIBLE**, adj. Good to eat, and wholesome to digest, as a worm to a toad, a toad to a snake, a snake to a pig, a pig to a man, and a man to a worm.

**EDITOR**, n. A person who combines the judicial functions of Minos, Rhadamanthus and Aeacus, but is placable with an obolus; a severely virtuous censor, but so charitable withal that he tolerates the virtues of others and the vices of himself; who flings about him the splintering lightning and sturdy thunders of admonition till he resembles a bunch of firecrackers petulantly uttering his mind at the tail of a dog; then straightway murmurs a mild, melodious lay, soft as the cooing of a donkey intoning its prayer to the evening star. Master of mysteries and lord of law, high-pinnacled upon the throne of thought, his face suffused with the dim splendors of the Transfiguration, his legs intertwined and his tongue a-cheek, the editor spills his will along the paper and cuts it off in lengths to suit. And at intervals from behind the veil of the temple is heard the voice of the foreman demanding three inches of wit and six lines of religious meditation, or bidding him turn off the wisdom and whack up some pathos.

O, the Lord of Law on the Throne of Thought, A gilded impostor is he.

Of shreds and patches his robes are wrought, His crown is brass,  
Himself an ass,  
And his power is fiddle-dee-dee.  
Prankily, crankily prating of naught,  
Silly old quilly old Monarch of Thought.  
Public opinion's camp-follower he,  
Thundering, blundering, plundering free. Affected,  
Ungracious,  
Suspected,  
Mendacious,  
Respected contemporaree!  
J.H. Bumblehook

**EDUCATION**, n. That which discloses to the wise and disguises from the foolish their lack of understanding.

**EFFECT**, n. The second of two phenomena which always occur together in the same order. The first, called a Cause, is said to generate the other — which is no more sensible than it would be for one who has never seen a dog except in the pursuit of a rabbit to declare the rabbit the cause of a dog.

**EGOTIST**, n. A person of low taste, more interested in himself than in me.

Megaceph, chosen to serve the State  
In the halls of legislative debate,  
One day with all his credentials came  
To the capitol's door and announced  
his name. The doorkeeper looked,  
with a comical twist Of the face, at  
the eminent egotist,  
And said: "Go away, for we settle  
here  
All manner of questions, knotty and  
queer, And we cannot have, when the  
speaker demands To be told how  
every member stands,  
A man who to all things under the sky  
Assents by eternally voting 'I.'"

**EJECTION**, n. An approved remedy for the disease of garrulity. It is also much used in cases of extreme poverty.

**ELECTOR**, n. One who enjoys the sacred privilege of voting for the man of another man's choice.

**ELECTRICITY**, n. The power that causes all natural phenomena not known to be caused by something else. It is the same thing as lightning, and its famous attempt to strike Dr. Franklin is one of the most picturesque incidents in that great and good man's career. The memory of Dr. Franklin is justly held in great reverence, particularly in France, where a waxen effigy of him was recently on exhibition, bearing the following touching account of his life and services to science:

"Monsieur Franquelin, inventor of electricity. This illustrious savant, after having made several voyages around the world, died on the Sandwich Islands and was devoured by savages, of whom not a single fragment was ever recovered." Electricity seems destined to play a most important part in the arts and industries. The question of its economical application to some purposes is still unsettled, but experiment has already proved that it will propel a street car better than a gas jet and give more light than a horse.

**ELEGY**, n. A composition in verse, in which, without employing any of the methods of humor, the writer aims to produce in the reader's mind the dampest kind of dejection. The most famous English example begins somewhat like this:

The cur foretells the knell of parting  
day; The loafing herd winds slowly  
o'er the lea; The wise man homeward  
plods; I only stay  
To fiddle-faddle in a minor key.

**ELOQUENCE**, n. The art of orally persuading fools that white is the color that it appears to be. It includes the gift of making any color appear white.

**ELYSIUM**, n. An imaginary delightful country which the ancients foolishly believed to be inhabited

by the spirits of the good. This ridiculous and mischievous fable was swept off the face of the earth by the early Christians – may their souls be happy in Heaven!

**EMANCIPATION**, n. A bondman's change from the tyranny of another to the despotism of himself.

He was a slave: at word he went and  
came; His iron collar cut him to the  
bone.  
Then Liberty erased his owner's  
name,  
Tightened the rivets and inscribed his  
own.  
G.J.

**EMBALM**, v.i. To cheat vegetation by locking up the gases upon which it feeds. By embalming their dead and thereby deranging the natural balance between animal and vegetable life, the Egyptians made their once fertile and populous country barren and incapable of supporting more than a meagre crew. The modern metallic burial casket is a step in the same direction, and many a dead man who ought now to be ornamenting his neighbor's lawn as a tree, or enriching his table as a bunch of radishes, is doomed to a long inutility. We shall get him after awhile if we are spared, but in the meantime the violet and rose are languishing for a nibble at his *glutoeus maximus*.

**EMOTION**, n. A prostrating disease caused by a determination of the heart to the head. It is sometimes accompanied by a copious discharge of hydrated chloride of sodium from the eyes.

**ENCOMIAST**, n. A special (but not particular) kind of liar.

**END**, n. The position farthest removed on either hand from the Interlocutor.

The man was perishing apace  
Who played the tambourine;  
The seal of death was on his face –  
'Twas pallid, for 'twas clean.  
"This is the end," the sick man said  
In faint and failing tones.

A moment later he was dead,  
And Tambourine was Bones.  
Tinley Roquot

**ENOUGH**, pro. All there is in the world if you like it.

Enough is as good as a feast – for  
that matter Enough's as good as a  
feast for the platter. Arbely C. Strunk

**ENTERTAINMENT**, n. Any kind of amusement whose inroads stop short of death by injection.

**ENTHUSIASM**, n. A distemper of youth, curable by small doses of repentance in connection with outward applications of experience. Byron, who recovered long enough to call it "entuzy-muzy," had a relapse, which carried him off – to Missolonghi.

**ENVELOPE**, n. The coffin of a document; the scabbard of a bill; the husk of a remittance; the bed-gown of a love-letter.

**ENVY**, n. Emulation adapted to the meanest capacity.

**EPAULET**, n. An ornamented badge, serving to distinguish a military officer from the enemy – that is to say, from the officer of lower rank to whom his death would give promotion.

**EPICURE**, n. An opponent of Epicurus, an abstemious philosopher who, holding that pleasure should be the chief aim of man, wasted no time in gratification from the senses.

**EPIGRAM**, n. A short, sharp saying in prose or verse, frequently characterize by acidity or acerbity and sometimes by wisdom. Following are some of the more notable epigrams of the learned and ingenious Dr. Jamrach Holobom:

We know better the needs of  
ourselves than of others. To serve  
oneself is economy of administration.  
In each human heart are a tiger, a pig,  
an ass and a nightingale. Diversity of  
character is due to their unequal  
activity.

There are three sexes; males, females  
and girls.

Beauty in women and distinction in  
men are alike in this: they seem to be  
the unthinking a kind of credibility.  
Women in love are less ashamed than  
men. They have less to be ashamed  
of.

While your friend holds you  
affectionately by both your hands  
you are safe, for you can watch both  
his.

**EPITAPH**, n. An inscription on a tomb, showing that virtues acquired by death have a retroactive effect. Following is a touching example:

Here lie the bones of Parson Platt,  
Wise, pious, humble and all that,  
Who showed us life as all should live  
it;  
Let that be said – and God forgive it!

**ERUDITION**, n. Dust shaken out of a book into an empty skull.

So wide his erudition's mighty span,  
He knew Creation's origin and plan  
And only came by accident to grief –  
He thought, poor man, 'twas right to  
be a thief.  
Romach Pute

**ESOTERIC**, adj. Very particularly abstruse and consummately occult. The ancient philosophies were of two kinds, – *exoteric*, those that the philosophers themselves could partly understand, and *esoteric*, those that nobody could understand. It is the latter that have most profoundly affected modern thought and found greatest acceptance in our time.

**ETHNOLOGY**, n. The science that treats of the various tribes of Man, as robbers, thieves, swindlers, dunces, lunatics, idiots and ethnologists.

**EUCHARIST**, n. A sacred feast of the religious sect of Theophagi. A dispute once unhappily arose among the members of this sect as to what it was that they ate. In this controversy some five hundred thousand

have already been slain, and the question is still unsettled.

**EULOGY**, n. Praise of a person who has either the advantages of wealth and power, or the consideration to be dead.

**EVANGELIST**, n. A bearer of good tidings, particularly (in a religious sense) such as assure us of our own salvation and the damnation of our neighbors.

**EVERLASTING**, adj. Lasting forever. It is with no small diffidence that I venture to offer this brief and elementary definition, for I am not unaware of the existence of a bulky volume by a sometime Bishop of Worcester, entitled, *A Partial Definition of the Word "Everlasting," as Used in the Authorized Version of the Holy Scriptures*. His book was once esteemed of great authority in the Anglican Church, and is still, I understand, studied with pleasure to the mind and profit of the soul.

**EXCEPTION**, n. A thing which takes the liberty to differ from other things of its class, as an honest man, a truthful woman, etc. "The exception proves the rule" is an expression constantly upon the lips of the ignorant, who parrot it from one another with never a thought of its absurdity. In the Latin, "*Exceptio probat regulam*" means that the exception *tests* the rule, puts it to the proof, not *confirms* it. The malefactor who drew the meaning from this excellent dictum and substituted a contrary one of his own exerted an evil power which appears to be immortal.

**EXCESS**, n. In morals, an indulgence that enforces by appropriate penalties the law of moderation.

Hail, high Excess – especially in  
wine,  
To thee in worship do I bend the knee  
Who preach abstemiousness unto me  
—  
My skull thy pulpit, as my paunch  
thy shrine. Precept on precept, aye,  
and line on line, Could ne'er persuade  
so sweetly to agree With reason as  
thy touch, exact and free, Upon my  
forehead and along my spine.

At thy command eschewing  
pleasure's cup,  
With the hot grape I warm no more  
my wit; When on thy stool of  
penitence I sit  
I'm quite converted, for I can't get up.  
Ungrateful he who afterward would  
falter  
To make new sacrifices at thine altar!

**EXCOMMUNICATION**, n.

This "excommunication" is a word  
In speech ecclesiastical oft heard,  
And means the damning, with bell,  
book and candle, Some sinner whose  
opinions are a scandal – A rite  
permitting Satan to enslave him  
Forever, and forbidding Christ to  
save him.  
Gat Huckle

**EXECUTIVE**, n. An officer of the Government, whose duty it is to enforce the wishes of the legislative power until such time as the judicial department shall be pleased to pronounce them invalid and of no effect. Following is an extract from an old book entitled, *The Lunarian Astonished* – Pfeiffer Co., Boston, 1803:

LUNARIAN: Then when your  
Congress has passed a law it goes  
directly to the Supreme Court in  
order that it may at once be known  
whether it is constitutional?  
TERRESTRIAN: O no; it does not  
require the approval of the Supreme  
Court until having perhaps been  
enforced for many years somebody  
objects to its operation against  
himself – I mean his client. The  
President, if he approves it, begins to  
execute it at once.  
LUNARIAN: Ah, the executive  
power is a part of the legislative. Do  
your policemen also have to approve  
the local ordinances that they  
enforce?

**TERRESTRIAN:** Not yet – at least not in their character of constables. Generally speaking, though, all laws require the approval of those whom they are intended to restrain.

**LUNARIAN:** I see. The death warrant is not valid until signed by the murderer.

**TERRESTRIAN:** My friend, you put it too strongly; we are not so consistent.

**LUNARIAN:** But this system of maintaining an expensive judicial machinery to pass upon the validity of laws only after they have long been executed, and then only when brought before the court by some private person – does it not cause great confusion?

**TERRESTRIAN:** It does.

**LUNARIAN:** Why then should not your laws, previously to being executed, be validated, not by the signature of your President, but by that of the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court?

**TERRESTRIAN:** There is no precedent for any such course.

**LUNARIAN:** Precedent. What is that?

**TERRESTRIAN:** It has been defined by five hundred lawyers in three volumes each. So how can any one know?

**EXHORT**, v.t. In religious affairs, to put the conscience of another upon the spit and roast it to a nut-brown discomfort.

**EXILE**, n. One who serves his country by residing abroad, yet is not an ambassador.

An English sea-captain being asked if he had read "The Exile of Erin," replied: "No, sir, but I should like to anchor on it." Years afterwards, when he had been hanged as a pirate after a career of unparalleled atrocities,

the following memorandum was found in the ship's log that he had kept at the time of his reply: Aug. 3d, 1842. Made a joke on the ex-Isle of Erin. Coldly received. War with the whole world!

**EXISTENCE**, n.

A transient, horrible, fantastic dream, Wherein is nothing yet all things do seem: From which we're wakened by a friendly nudge Of our bedfellow Death, and cry: "O fudge!"

**EXPERIENCE**, n. The wisdom that enables us to recognize as an undesirable old acquaintance the folly that we have already embraced.

To one who, journeying through  
night and fog, Is mired neck-deep in  
an unwholesome bog,  
Experience, like the rising of the  
dawn,  
Reveals the path that he should not  
have gone.  
Joel Frad Bink

**EXPOSTULATION**, n. One of the many methods by which fools prefer to lose their friends.

**EXTINCTION**, n. The raw material out of which theology created the future state.

## F

**FAIRY**, n. A creature, variously fashioned and endowed, that formerly inhabited the meadows and forests. It was nocturnal in its habits, and somewhat addicted to dancing and the theft of children. The fairies are now believed by naturalist to be extinct, though a clergyman of the Church of England saw three near Colchester as lately as 1855, while passing through a park after dining with the lord of the manor. The sight greatly staggered him, and he was so affected that his account of it was incoherent. In the year 1807 a troop of fairies visited a wood near Aix

and carried off the daughter of a peasant, who had been seen to enter it with a bundle of clothing. The son of a wealthy *bourgeois* disappeared about the same time, but afterward returned. He had seen the abduction been in pursuit of the fairies. Justinian Gaux, a writer of the fourteenth century, avers that so great is the fairies' power of transformation that he saw one change itself into two opposing armies and fight a battle with great slaughter, and that the next day, after it had resumed its original shape and gone away, there were seven hundred bodies of the slain which the villagers had to bury. He does not say if any of the wounded recovered. In the time of Henry III, of England, a law was made which prescribed the death penalty for "Kyllynge, wowndynge, or mamynge" a fairy, and it was universally respected.

**FAITH**, n. Belief without evidence in what is told by one who speaks without knowledge, of things without parallel.

**FAMOUS**, adj. Conspicuously miserable.

Done to a turn on the iron, behold  
Him who to be famous aspired.  
Content? Well, his grill has a plating  
of gold, And his twistings are greatly  
admired.  
Hassan Brubuddy

**FASHION**, n. A despot whom the wise ridicule and obey.

A king there was who lost an eye  
In some excess of passion;  
And straight his courtiers all did try  
To follow the new fashion.  
Each dropped one eyelid when before  
The throne he ventured, thinking  
'Twould please the king. That  
monarch swore He'd slay them all for  
winking.  
What should they do? They were not  
hot  
To hazard such disaster;  
They dared not close an eye – dared  
not  
See better than their master.  
Seeing them lacrymose and glum,  
A leech consoled the weepers:

He spread small rags with liquid gum  
And covered half their peepers.  
The court all wore the stuff, the flame  
Of royal anger dying.  
That's how court-plaster got its name  
Unless I'm greatly lying.  
Naramy Oof

**FEAST**, n. A festival. A religious celebration usually signalized by gluttony and drunkenness, frequently in honor of some holy person distinguished for abstemiousness. In the Roman Catholic Church feasts are "movable" and "immovable," but the celebrants are uniformly immovable until they are full. In their earliest development these entertainments took the form of feasts for the dead; such were held by the Greeks, under the name *Nemeseia*, by the Aztecs and Peruvians, as in modern times they are popular with the Chinese; though it is believed that the ancient dead, like the modern, were light eaters. Among the many feasts of the Romans was the *Novemdiale*, which was held, according to Livy, whenever stones fell from heaven.

**FELON**, n. A person of greater enterprise than discretion, who in embracing an opportunity has formed an unfortunate attachment.

**FEMALE**, n. One of the opposing, or unfair, sex.

The Maker, at Creation's birth,  
With living things had stocked the  
earth.  
From elephants to bats and snails,  
They all were good, for all were  
males.  
But when the Devil came and saw  
He said: "By Thine eternal law  
Of growth, maturity, decay,  
These all must quickly pass away  
And leave untenanted the earth  
Unless Thou dost establish birth" –  
Then tucked his head beneath his  
wing  
To laugh – he had no sleeve – the  
thing  
With deviltry did so accord,  
That he'd suggested to the Lord.  
The Master pondered this advice,  
Then shook and threw the fateful

dice

Wherewith all matters here below  
Are ordered, and observed the throw;  
Then bent His head in awful state,  
Confirming the decree of Fate.  
From every part of earth anew  
The conscious dust consenting flew,  
While rivers from their courses rolled  
To make it plastic for the mould.  
Enough collected (but no more,  
For niggard Nature hoards her store)  
He kneaded it to flexible clay,  
While Nick unseen threw some away.  
And then the various forms He cast,  
Gross organs first and finer last;  
No one at once evolved, but all  
By even touches grew and small  
Degrees advanced, till, shade by  
shade,  
To match all living things He'd made  
Females, complete in all their parts  
Except (His clay gave out) the hearts.  
"No matter," Satan cried; "with speed  
I'll fetch the very hearts they need" –  
So flew away and soon brought back  
The number needed, in a sack.  
That night earth range with sounds of  
strife – Ten million males each had a  
wife;  
That night sweet Peace her pinions  
spread  
O'er Hell – ten million devils dead!  
G.J.

**FIB**, n. A lie that has not cut its teeth. An habitual liar's nearest approach to truth: the perigee of his eccentric orbit.

When David said: "All men are  
liars," Dave, Himself a liar, fibbed  
like any thief. Perhaps he thought to  
weaken disbelief By proof that even  
himself was not a slave To Truth;  
though I suspect the aged knave  
Had been of all her servitors the chief  
Had he but known a fig's reluctant  
leaf Is more than e'er she wore on  
land or wave. No, David served not  
Naked Truth when he  
Struck that sledge-hammer blow

at all his race; Nor did he hit the nail  
upon the head: For reason shows that  
it could never be,  
And the facts contradict him to his  
face. Men are not liars all, for some  
are dead.

Bartle Quinker

**FICKLENESS**, n. The iterated satiety of an enterprising affection.

**FIDDLE**, n. An instrument to tickle human ears by friction of a horse's tail on the entrails of a cat.

To Rome said Nero: "If to smoke you  
turn

I shall not cease to fiddle while you  
burn."

To Nero Rome replied: "Pray do your  
worst, 'Tis my excuse that you were  
fiddling first." Orm Pludge

**FIDELITY**, n. A virtue peculiar to those who are about to be betrayed.

**FINANCE**, n. The art or science of managing revenues and resources for the best advantage of the manager. The pronunciation of this word with the i long and the accent on the first syllable is one of America's most precious discoveries and possessions.

**FLAG**, n. A colored rag borne above troops and hoisted on forts and ships. It appears to serve the same purpose as certain signs that one sees and vacant lots in London – "Rubbish may be shot here."

**FLESH**, n. The Second Person of the secular Trinity.

**FLOP**, v. Suddenly to change one's opinions and go over to another party. The most notable flop on record was that of Saul of Tarsus, who has been severely criticised as a turn-coat by some of our partisan journals.

**FLY-SPECK**, n. The prototype of punctuation. It is observed by Garvinus that the systems of punctuation in use by the various literary nations depended originally upon the social habits and general diet of the flies infesting the several countries. These



creatures, which have always been distinguished for a neighborly and companionable familiarity with authors, liberally or niggardly embellish the manuscripts in process of growth under the pen, according to their bodily habit, bringing out the sense of the work by a species of interpretation superior to, and independent of, the writer's powers. The "old masters" of literature – that is to say, the early writers whose work is so esteemed by later scribes and critics in the same language – never punctuated at all, but worked right along free-handed, without that abruptness of the thought which comes from the use of points. (We observe the same thing in children to-day, whose usage in this particular is a striking and beautiful instance of the law that the infancy of individuals reproduces the methods and stages of development characterizing the infancy of races.) In the work of these primitive scribes all the punctuation is found, by the modern investigator with his optical instruments and chemical tests, to have been inserted by the writers' ingenious and serviceable collaborator, the common house-fly – *Musca maledicta*. In transcribing these ancient MSS, for the purpose of either making the work their own or preserving what they naturally regard as divine revelations, later writers reverently and accurately copy whatever marks they find upon the papyrus or parchment, to the unspeakable enhancement of the lucidity of the thought and value of the work. Writers contemporary with the copyists naturally avail themselves of the obvious advantages of these marks in their own work, and with such assistance as the flies of their own household may be willing to grant, frequently rival and sometimes surpass the older compositions, in respect at least of punctuation, which is no small glory. Fully to understand the important services that flies perform to literature it is only necessary to lay a page of some popular novelist alongside a saucer of cream-and-molasses in a sunny room and observe "how the wit brightens and the style refines" in accurate proportion to the duration of exposure

**FOLLY**, n. That "gift and faculty divine" whose creative and controlling energy inspires Man's mind, guides his actions and adorns his life.

Folly! although Erasmus praised thee  
once  
In a thick volume, and all authors  
known, If not thy glory yet thy power

have shown, Deign to take homage  
from thy son who hunts Through all  
thy maze his brothers, fool and  
dunce, To mend their lives and to  
sustain his own, However feebly be  
his arrows thrown,  
Howe'er each hide the flying  
weapons blunts. All–Father Folly! be  
it mine to raise,  
With lusty lung, here on his western  
strand With all thine offspring  
thronged from every land, Thyself  
inspiring me, the song of praise.  
And if too weak, I'll hire, to help me  
bawl, Dick Watson Gilder, gravest of  
us all.  
Aramis Loto Frope

**FOOL**, n. A person who pervades the domain of intellectual speculation and diffuses himself through the channels of moral activity. He is omnific, omniform, omnipercipient, omniscience, omnipotent. He it was who invented letters, printing, the railroad, the steamboat, the telegraph, the platitude and the circle of the sciences. He created patriotism and taught the nations war – founded theology, philosophy, law, medicine and Chicago. He established monarchical and republican government. He is from everlasting to everlasting – such as creation's dawn beheld he fooleth now. In the morning of time he sang upon primitive hills, and in the noonday of existence headed the procession of being. His grandmotherly hand was warmly tucked-in the set sun of civilization, and in the twilight he prepares Man's evening meal of milk-and-morality and turns down the covers of the universal grave. And after the rest of us shall have retired for the night of eternal oblivion he will sit up to write a history of human civilization.

**FORCE**, n.

"Force is but might," the teacher said  
–  
"That definition's just."  
The boy said naught but through  
instead,  
Remembering his pounded head:  
"Force is not might but must!"

**FOREFINGER**, n. The finger commonly used in pointing out two malefactors.

**FOREORDINATION**, n. This looks like an easy word to define, but when I consider that pious and learned theologians have spent long lives in explaining it, and written libraries to explain their explanations; when I remember the nations have been divided and bloody battles caused by the difference between foreordination and predestination, and that millions of treasure have been expended in the effort to prove and disprove its compatibility with freedom of the will and the efficacy of prayer, praise, and a religious life, – recalling these awful facts in the history of the word, I stand appalled before the mighty problem of its signification, abase my spiritual eyes, fearing to contemplate its portentous magnitude, reverently uncover and humbly refer it to His Eminence Cardinal Gibbons and His Grace Bishop Potter.

**FORGETFULNESS**, n. A gift of God bestowed upon doctors in compensation for their destitution of conscience.

**FORK**, n. An instrument used chiefly for the purpose of putting dead animals into the mouth. Formerly the knife was employed for this purpose, and by many worthy persons is still thought to have many advantages over the other tool, which, however, they do not altogether reject, but use to assist in charging the knife. The immunity of these persons from swift and awful death is one of the most striking proofs of God's mercy to those that hate Him.

**FORMA PAUPERIS**. [Latin] In the character of a poor person – a method by which a litigant without money for lawyers is considerably permitted to lose his case.

When Adam long ago in Cupid's  
awful court  
(For Cupid ruled ere Adam was  
invented) Sued for Eve's favor, says  
an ancient law report, He stood and  
pleaded unhabilitmented.  
"You sue *in forma pauperis*, I see,"  
Eve cried; "Actions can't here be that  
way prosecuted."

So all poor Adam's motions coldly  
were denied: He went away – as he  
had come – nonsuited.  
G.J.

**FRANKALMOIGNE**, n. The tenure by which a religious corporation holds lands on condition of praying for the soul of the donor. In mediaeval times many of the wealthiest fraternities obtained their estates in this simple and cheap manner, and once when Henry VIII of England sent an officer to confiscate certain vast possessions which a fraternity of monks held by frankalmoigne, "What!" said the Prior, "would you master stay our benefactor's soul in Purgatory?" "Ay," said the officer, coldly, "an ye will not pray him thence for naught he must e'en roast." "But look you, my son," persisted the good man, "this act hath rank as robbery of God!" "Nay, nay, good father, my master the king doth but deliver him from the manifold temptations of too great wealth."

**FREEBOOTER**, n. A conqueror in a small way of business, whose annexations lack of the sanctifying merit of magnitude.

**FREEDOM**, n. Exemption from the stress of authority in a beggarly half dozen of restraint's infinite multitude of methods. A political condition that every nation supposes itself to enjoy in virtual monopoly. Liberty. The distinction between freedom and liberty is not accurately known; naturalists have never been able to find a living specimen of either.

Freedom, as every schoolboy knows,  
Once shrieked as Kosciusko fell;  
On every wind, indeed, that blows  
I hear her yell.  
She screams whenever monarchs  
meet,  
And parliaments as well,  
To bind the chains about her feet  
And toll her knell.  
And when the sovereign people cast  
The votes they cannot spell,  
Upon the pestilential blast  
Her clamors swell.  
For all to whom the power's given  
To sway or to compel,  
Among themselves apportion Heaven

And give her Hell.  
Blary O'Gary

**FREEMASONS**, n. An order with secret rites, grotesque ceremonies and fantastic costumes, which, originating in the reign of Charles II, among working artisans of London, has been joined successively by the dead of past centuries in unbroken retrogression until now it embraces all the generations of man on the hither side of Adam and is drumming up distinguished recruits among the pre-Creational inhabitants of Chaos and Formless Void. The order was founded at different times by Charlemagne, Julius Caesar, Cyrus, Solomon, Zoroaster, Confucious, Thothmes, and Buddha. Its emblems and symbols have been found in the Catacombs of Paris and Rome, on the stones of the Parthenon and the Chinese Great Wall, among the temples of Karnak and Palmyra and in the Egyptian Pyramids – always by a Freemason.

**FRIENDLESS**, adj. Having no favors to bestow. Destitute of fortune. Addicted to utterance of truth and common sense.

**FRIENDSHIP**, n. A ship big enough to carry two in fair weather, but only one in foul.

The sea was calm and the sky was  
blue;  
Merrily, merrily sailed we two.  
(High barometer maketh glad.)  
On the tipsy ship, with a dreadful  
shout,  
The tempest descended and we fell  
out.  
(O the walking is nasty bad!)  
Armit Huff Bettle

**FROG**, n. A reptile with edible legs. The first mention of frogs in profane literature is in Homer's narrative of the war between them and the mice. Skeptical persons have doubted Homer's authorship of the work, but the learned, ingenious and industrious Dr. Schliemann has set the question forever at rest by uncovering the bones of the slain frogs. One of the forms of moral suasion by which Pharaoh was besought to favor the Israelities was a plague of frogs, but Pharaoh, who liked them *fricasees*, remarked, with truly oriental stoicism,

that he could stand it as long as the frogs and the Jews could; so the programme was changed. The frog is a diligent songster, having a good voice but no ear. The libretto of his favorite opera, as written by Aristophanes, is brief, simple and effective – "brekekex-koax"; the music is apparently by that eminent composer, Richard Wagner. Horses have a frog in each hoof – a thoughtful provision of nature, enabling them to shine in a hurdle race.

**FRYING-PAN**, n. One part of the penal apparatus employed in that punitive institution, a woman's kitchen. The frying-pan was invented by Calvin, and by him used in cooking span-long infants that had died without baptism; and observing one day the horrible torment of a tramp who had incautiously pulled a fried babe from the waste-dump and devoured it, it occurred to the great divine to rob death of its terrors by introducing the frying-pan into every household in Geneva. Thence it spread to all corners of the world, and has been of invaluable assistance in the propagation of his sombre faith. The following lines (said to be from the pen of his Grace Bishop Potter) seem to imply that the usefulness of this utensil is not limited to this world; but as the consequences of its employment in this life reach over into the life to come, so also itself may be found on the other side, rewarding its devotees:

Old Nick was summoned to the skies.  
Said Peter: "Your intentions  
Are good, but you lack enterprise  
Concerning new inventions.  
"Now, broiling in an ancient plan  
Of torment, but I hear it  
Reported that the frying-pan  
Sears best the wicked spirit.  
"Go get one – fill it up with fat –  
Fry sinners brown and good in't."  
"I know a trick worth two o' that,"  
Said Nick – "I'll cook their food in't."

**FUNERAL**, n. A pageant whereby we attest our respect for the dead by enriching the undertaker, and strengthen our grief by an expenditure that deepens our groans and doubles our tears.

The savage dies – they sacrifice a  
horse  
To bear to happy hunting-grounds

the corse. Our friends expire – we  
make the money fly In hope their  
souls will chase it to the sky.  
Jex Wopley

**FUTURE**, n. That period of time in which our affairs prosper, our friends are true and our happiness is assured.

## G

**GALLOWS**, n. A stage for the performance of miracle plays, in which the leading actor is translated to heaven. In this country the gallows is chiefly remarkable for the number of persons who escape it.

Whether on the gallows high  
Or where blood flows the reddest,  
The noblest place for man to die –  
Is where he died the deadest.  
(Old play)

**GARGOYLE**, n. A rain-spout projecting from the eaves of mediaeval buildings, commonly fashioned into a grotesque caricature of some personal enemy of the architect or owner of the building. This was especially the case in churches and ecclesiastical structures generally, in which the gargoyles presented a perfect rogues' gallery of local heretics and controversialists. Sometimes when a new dean and chapter were installed the old gargoyles were removed and others substituted having a closer relation to the private animosities of the new incumbents.

**GARTHER**, n. An elastic band intended to keep a woman from coming out of her stockings and desolating the country.

**GENEROUS**, adj. Originally this word meant noble by birth and was rightly applied to a great multitude of persons. It now means noble by nature and is taking a bit of a rest.

**GENEALOGY**, n. An account of one's descent from an ancestor who did not particularly care to trace his own.

**GENTEEL**, adj. Refined, after the fashion of a gent.

Observe with care, my son, the  
distinction I reveal: A gentleman is  
gentle and a gent genteel.  
Heed not the definitions your  
"Unabridged" presents, For  
dictionary makers are generally gents.  
G.J.

**GEOGRAPHER**, n. A chap who can tell you offhand the difference between the outside of the world and the inside.

Habeam, geographer of wide  
reknown,  
Native of Abu-Keber's ancient town,  
In passing thence along the river Zam  
To the adjacent village of Xelam,  
Bewildered by the multitude of roads,  
Got lost, lived long on migratory  
toads,  
Then from exposure miserably died,  
And grateful travelers bewailed their  
guide.  
Henry Haukhorn

**GEOLOGY**, n. The science of the earth's crust – to which, doubtless, will be added that of its interior whenever a man shall come up garrulous out of a well. The geological formations of the globe already noted are catalogued thus: The Primary, or lower one, consists of rocks, bones or mired mules, gas-pipes, miners' tools, antique statues minus the nose, Spanish doubloons and ancestors. The Secondary is largely made up of red worms and moles. The Tertiary comprises railway tracks, patent pavements, grass, snakes, mouldy boots, beer bottles, tomato cans, intoxicated citizens, garbage, anarchists, snap-dogs and fools.

**GHOST**, n. The outward and visible sign of an inward fear.

He saw a ghost.  
It occupied – that dismal thing! –  
The path that he was following.  
Before he'd time to stop and fly,  
An earthquake trifled with the eye  
That saw a ghost.  
He fell as fall the early good;  
Unmoved that awful vision stood.

The stars that danced before his ken  
He wildly brushed away, and then  
He saw a post.

Jared Macphester

Accounting for the uncommon  
behavior of ghosts, Heine mentions  
somebody's ingenious theory to the  
effect that they are as much afraid of  
us as we of them. Not quite, if I may  
judge from such tables of  
comparative speed as I am able to  
compile from memories of my own  
experience.

There is one insuperable obstacle to a  
belief in ghosts. A ghost never comes  
naked: he appears either in a  
winding-sheet or "in his habit as he  
lived." To believe in him, then, is to  
believe that not only have the dead  
the power to make themselves visible  
after there is nothing left of them, but  
that the same power inheres in textile  
fabrics. Supposing the products of  
the loom to have this ability, what  
object would they have in exercising  
it? And why does not the apparition  
of a suit of clothes sometimes walk  
abroad without a ghost in it? These  
be riddles of significance. They reach  
away down and get a convulsive grip  
on the very tap-root of this  
flourishing faith.

**GHOUL**, n. A demon addicted to the reprehensible  
habit of devouring the dead. The existence of ghouls  
has been disputed by that class of controversialists  
who are more concerned to deprive the world of  
comforting beliefs than to give it anything good in  
their place. In 1640 Father Secchi saw one in a  
cemetery near Florence and frightened it away with  
the sign of the cross. He describes it as gifted with  
many heads and an uncommon allowance of limbs, and  
he saw it in more than one place at a time. The good  
man was coming away from dinner at the time and  
explains that if he had not been "heavy with eating"  
he would have seized the demon at all hazards.  
Atholston relates that a ghoulish was caught by some  
sturdy peasants in a churchyard at Sudbury and  
ducked in a

horsepond. (He appears to think that  
so distinguished a criminal should  
have been ducked in a tank of  
rosewater.) The water turned at once  
to blood "and so continues unto ys  
daye." The pond has since been bled  
with a ditch. As late as the beginning  
of the fourteenth century a ghoul was  
cornered in the crypt of the cathedral  
at Amiens and the whole population  
surrounded the place. Twenty armed  
men with a priest at their head,  
bearing a crucifix, entered and  
captured the ghoul, which, thinking  
to escape by the stratagem, had  
transformed itself to the semblance of  
a well known citizen, but was  
nevertheless hanged, drawn and  
quartered in the midst of hideous  
popular orgies. The citizen whose  
shape the demon had assumed was so  
affected by the sinister occurrence  
that he never again showed himself  
in Amiens and his fate remains a  
mystery.

**GLUTTON**, n. A person who escapes the evils of  
moderation by committing dyspepsia.

**GNOME**, n. In North-European mythology, a  
dwarfish imp inhabiting the interior parts of the earth  
and having special custody of mineral treasures.  
Bjorsen, who died in 1765, says gnomes were  
common enough in the southern parts of Sweden in  
his boyhood, and he frequently saw them scampering  
on the hills in the evening twilight. Ludwig  
Binkerhoof saw three as recently as 1792, in the  
Black Forest, and Sneddeker avers that in 1803 they  
drove a party of miners out of a Silesian mine. Basing  
our computations upon data supplied by these  
statements, we find that the gnomes were probably  
extinct as early as 1764.

**GNOSTICS**, n. A sect of philosophers who tried to  
engineer a fusion between the early Christians and the  
Platonists. The former would not go into the caucis  
and the combination failed, greatly to the chagrin of  
the fusion managers.

**GNU**, n. An animal of South Africa, which in its domesticated state resembles a horse, a buffalo and a stag. In its wild condition it is something like a thunderbolt, an earthquake and a cyclone.

A hunter from Kew caught a distant  
view  
Of a peacefully meditative gnu,  
And he said: "I'll pursue, and my  
hands imbrue In its blood at a closer  
interview."

But that beast did ensue and the  
hunter it threw O'er the top of a palm  
that adjacent grew; And he said as he  
flew: "It is well I withdrew Ere,  
losing my temper, I wickedly slew  
That really meritorious gnu."  
Jarn Leffer

**GOOD**, adj. Sensible, madam, to the worth of this present writer. Alive, sir, to the advantages of letting him alone.

**GOOSE**, n. A bird that supplies quills for writing. These, by some occult process of nature, are penetrated and suffused with various degrees of the bird's intellectual energies and emotional character, so that when inked and drawn mechanically across paper by a person called an "author," there results a very fair and accurate transcript of the fowl's thought and feeling. The difference in geese, as discovered by this ingenious method, is considerable: many are found to have only trivial and insignificant powers, but some are seen to be very great geese indeed.

**GORGON**, n.

The Gorgon was a maiden bold Who  
turned to stone the Greeks of old  
That looked upon her awful brow.  
We dig them out of ruins now,  
And swear that workmanship so bad  
Proves all the ancient sculptors mad.

**GOUT**, n. A physician's name for the rheumatism of a rich patient.

**GRACES**, n. Three beautiful goddesses, Aglaia, Thalia and Euphrosyne, who attended upon Venus,

serving without salary. They were at no expense for board and clothing, for they ate nothing to speak of and dressed according to the weather, wearing whatever breeze happened to be blowing.

**GRAMMAR**, n. A system of pitfalls thoughtfully prepared for the feet for the self-made man, along the path by which he advances to distinction.

**GRAPE**, n.

Hail noble fruit! – by Homer sung,  
Anacreon and Khayyam;  
Thy praise is ever on the tongue  
Of better men than I am.  
The lyre in my hand has never swept,  
The song I cannot offer:  
My humbler service pray accept –  
I'll help to kill the scoffer.  
The water-drinkers and the cranks  
Who load their skins with liquor –  
I'll gladly bear their belly-tanks  
And tap them with my sticker.  
Fill up, fill up, for wisdom cools  
When e'er we let the wine rest.  
Here's death to Prohibition's fools,  
And every kind of vine-pest!  
Jamrach Holobom

**GRAPESHOT**, n. An argument which the future is preparing in answer to the demands of American Socialism.

**GRAVE**, n. A place in which the dead are laid to await the coming of the medical student.

Beside a lonely grave I stood –  
With brambles 'twas encumbered;  
The winds were moaning in the wood,  
Unheard by him who slumbered,  
A rustic standing near, I said:  
"He cannot hear it blowing!"  
"Course not," said he: "the feller's  
dead – He can't hear nowt [sic] that's  
going."  
"Too true," I said; "alas, too true –  
No sound his sense can quicken!"  
"Well, mister, wot is that to you? –  
The deadster ain't a-kickin'."

I knelt and prayed: "O Father, smile  
On him, and mercy show him!"  
That countryman looked on the while,  
And said: "Ye didn't know him."  
Pobeter Dunko

**GRAVITATION**, n. The tendency of all bodies to approach one another with a strength proportion to the quantity of matter they contain – the quantity of matter they contain being ascertained by the strength of their tendency to approach one another. This is a lovely and edifying illustration of how science, having made A the proof of B, makes B the proof of A.

**GREAT**, adj.

"I'm great," the Lion said – "I reign  
The monarch of the wood and plain!"  
The Elephant replied: "I'm great –  
No quadruped can match my weight!"  
"I'm great – no animal has half  
So long a neck!" said the Giraffe.  
"I'm great," the Kangaroo said – "see  
My femoral muscularity!"  
The 'Possum said: "I'm great –  
behold,  
My tail is lithe and bald and cold!"  
An Oyster fried was understood  
To say: "I'm great because I'm good!"  
Each reckons greatness to consist  
In that in which he heads the list,  
And Vierick thinks he tops his class  
Because he is the greatest ass.  
Arion Spurl Duke

**GUILLOTINE**, n. A machine which makes a Frenchman shrug his shoulders with good reason.

In his great work on *Divergent Lines of Racial Evolution*, the learned Professor Brayfugle argues from the prevalence of this gesture – the shrug – among Frenchmen, that they are descended from turtles and it is simply a survival of the habit of retracing the head inside the shell. It is with reluctance that I differ with so eminent an authority, but in my judgment (as more elaborately set

forth and enforced in my work entitled *Hereditary Emotions* – lib. II, c. XI) the shrug is a poor foundation upon which to build so important a theory, for previously to the Revolution the gesture was unknown. I have not a doubt that it is directly referable to the terror inspired by the guillotine during the period of that instrument's activity.

**GUNPOWDER**, n. An agency employed by civilized nations for the settlement of disputes which might become troublesome if left unadjusted. By most writers the invention of gunpowder is ascribed to the Chinese, but not upon very convincing evidence. Milton says it was invented by the devil to dispel angels with, and this opinion seems to derive some support from the scarcity of angels. Moreover, it has the hearty concurrence of the Hon. James Wilson, Secretary of Agriculture.

Secretary Wilson became interested in gunpowder through an event that occurred on the Government experimental farm in the District of Columbia. One day, several years ago, a rogue imperfectly reverent of the Secretary's profound attainments and personal character presented him with a sack of gunpowder, representing it as the seed of the *Flashawful flabbergastor*, a Patagonian cereal of great commercial value, admirably adapted to this climate. The good Secretary was instructed to spill it along in a furrow and afterward inhume it with soil. This he at once proceeded to do, and had made a continuous line of it all the way across a ten-acre field, when he was made to look backward by a shout from the generous donor, who at once dropped a lighted match into the furrow at the starting-point. Contact with the earth had somewhat dampened the powder, but the startled functionary saw himself pursued by a tall moving pillar of fire and smoke and fierce evolution. He

stood for a moment paralyzed and speechless, then he recollected an engagement and, dropping all, absented himself thence with such surprising celerity that to the eyes of spectators along the route selected he appeared like a long, dim streak prolonging itself with inconceivable rapidity through seven villages, and audibly refusing to be comforted. "Great Scott! what is that?" cried a surveyor's chainman, shading his eyes and gazing at the fading line of agriculturist which bisected his visible horizon. "That," said the surveyor, carelessly glancing at the phenomenon and again centering his attention upon his instrument, "is the Meridian of Washington."

## H

**HABEAS CORPUS.** A writ by which a man may be taken out of jail when confined for the wrong crime.

**HABIT,** n. A shackle for the free.

**HADES,** n. The lower world; the residence of departed spirits; the place where the dead live.

Among the ancients the idea of Hades was not synonymous with our Hell, many of the most respectable men of antiquity residing there in a very comfortable kind of way. Indeed, the Elysian Fields themselves were a part of Hades, though they have since been removed to Paris. When the Jacobean version of the New Testament was in process of evolution the pious and learned men engaged in the work insisted by a majority vote on translating the Greek word "Aides" as "Hell"; but a conscientious minority member secretly possessed himself of the record and struck out the objectional word wherever he could find it. At the next meeting, the Bishop of Salisbury, looking over the work,

suddenly sprang to his feet and said with considerable excitement: "Gentlemen, somebody has been razing 'Hell' here!" Years afterward the good prelate's death was made sweet by the reflection that he had been the means (under Providence) of making an important, serviceable and immortal addition to the phraseology of the English tongue.

**HAG,** n. An elderly lady whom you do not happen to like; sometimes called, also, a hen, or cat. Old witches, sorceresses, etc., were called hags from the belief that their heads were surrounded by a kind of baleful lumination or nimbus – hag being the popular name of that peculiar electrical light sometimes observed in the hair. At one time hag was not a word of reproach: Drayton speaks of a "beautiful hag, all smiles," much as Shakespeare said, "sweet wench." It would not now be proper to call your sweetheart a hag – that compliment is reserved for the use of her grandchildren.

**HALF,** n. One of two equal parts into which a thing may be divided, or considered as divided. In the fourteenth century a heated discussion arose among theologians and philosophers as to whether Omniscience could part an object into three halves; and the pious Father Aldrovinus publicly prayed in the cathedral at Rouen that God would demonstrate the affirmative of the proposition in some signal and unmistakable way, and particularly (if it should please Him) upon the body of that hardy blasphemer, Manutius Procinus, who maintained the negative. Procinus, however, was spared to die of the bite of a viper.

**HALO,** n. Properly, a luminous ring encircling an astronomical body, but not infrequently confounded with "aureola," or "nimbus," a somewhat similar phenomenon worn as a head-dress by divinities and saints. The halo is a purely optical illusion, produced by moisture in the air, in the manner of a rainbow; but the aureola is conferred as a sign of superior sanctity, in the same way as a bishop's mitre, or the Pope's tiara. In the painting of the Nativity, by Szedgkin, a pious artist of Pesth, not only do the Virgin and the Child wear the nimbus, but an ass nibbling hay from the sacred manger is similarly decorated and, to his



lasting honor be it said, appears to bear his unaccustomed dignity with a truly saintly grace.

**HAND**, n. A singular instrument worn at the end of the human arm and commonly thrust into somebody's pocket.

**HANDKERCHIEF**, n. A small square of silk or linen, used in various ignoble offices about the face and especially serviceable at funerals to conceal the lack of tears. The handkerchief is of recent invention; our ancestors knew nothing of it and intrusted its duties to the sleeve. Shakespeare's introducing it into the play of "Othello" is an anachronism: Desdemona dried her nose with her skirt, as Dr. Mary Walker and other reformers have done with their coattails in our own day – an evidence that revolutions sometimes go backward.

**HANGMAN**, n. An officer of the law charged with duties of the highest dignity and utmost gravity, and held in hereditary disesteem by a populace having a criminal ancestry. In some of the American States his functions are now performed by an electrician, as in New Jersey, where executions by electricity have recently been ordered – the first instance known to this lexicographer of anybody questioning the expediency of hanging Jerseymen.

**HAPPINESS**, n. An agreeable sensation arising from contemplating the misery of another.

**HARANGUE**, n. A speech by an opponent, who is known as an harrangue– outang.

**HARBOR**, n. A place where ships taking shelter from stores are exposed to the fury of the customs.

**HARMONISTS**, n. A sect of Protestants, now extinct, who came from Europe in the beginning of the last century and were distinguished for the bitterness of their internal controversies and dissensions.

**HASH**, x. There is no definition for this word – nobody knows what hash is.

**HATCHET**, n. A young axe, known among Indians as a Thomashawk.

"O bury the hatchet, irascible Red,  
For peace is a blessing," the White  
Man said. The Savage concurred, and  
that weapon interred, With imposing  
rites, in the White Man's head.  
John Lukkus

**HATRED**, n. A sentiment appropriate to the occasion of another's superiority.

**HEAD–MONEY**, n. A capitation tax, or poll–tax.

In ancient times there lived a king  
Whose tax–collectors could not wring  
From all his subjects gold enough  
To make the royal way less rough.  
For pleasure's highway, like the  
dames  
Whose premises adjoin it, claims  
Perpetual repairing. So  
The tax–collectors in a row  
Appeared before the throne to pray  
Their master to devise some way  
To swell the revenue. "So great,"  
Said they, "are the demands of state  
A tithe of all that we collect  
Will scarcely meet them. Pray reflect:  
How, if one–tenth we must resign,  
Can we exist on t'other nine?"  
The monarch asked them in reply:  
"Has it occurred to you to try  
The advantage of economy?"  
"It has," the spokesman said: "we sold  
All of our gray garrotes of gold;  
With plated–ware we now compress  
The necks of those whom we assess.  
Plain iron forceps we employ  
To mitigate the miser's joy  
Who hoards, with greed that never  
tires,  
That which your Majesty requires."  
Deep lines of thought were seen to  
plow  
Their way across the royal brow.  
"Your state is desperate, no question;  
Pray favor me with a suggestion."  
"O King of Men," the spokesman  
said,  
"If you'll impose upon each head  
A tax, the augmented revenue

We'll cheerfully divide with you."  
As flashes of the sun illumine  
The parted storm-cloud's sullen  
gloom,  
The king smiled grimly. "I decree  
That it be so – and, not to be  
In generosity outdone,  
Declare you, each and every one,  
Exempted from the operation  
Of this new law of capitulation.  
But lest the people censure me  
Because they're bound and you are  
free,  
'Twere well some clever scheme  
were laid  
By you this poll-tax to evade.  
I'll leave you now while you confer  
With my most trusted minister."  
The monarch from the throne-room  
walked  
And straightway in among them  
stalked  
A silent man, with brow concealed,  
Bare-armed – his gleaming axe  
revealed!  
G.J.

**HEARSE**, n. Death's baby-carriage.

**HEART**, n. An automatic, muscular blood-pump. Figuratively, this useful organ is said to be the esat of emotions and sentiments – a very pretty fancy which, however, is nothing but a survival of a once universal belief. It is now known that the sentiments and emotions reside in the stomach, being evolved from food by chemical action of the gastric fluid. The exact process by which a beefsteak becomes a feeling – tender or not, according to the age of the animal from which it was cut; the successive stages of elaboration through which a caviar sandwich is transmuted to a quaint fancy and reappears as a pungent epigram; the marvelous functional methods of converting a hard-boiled egg into religious contrition, or a cream-puff into a sigh of sensibility – these things have been patiently ascertained by M. Pasteur, and by him expounded with convincing lucidity. (See, also, my monograph, *The Essential Identity of the Spiritual Affections and Certain Intestinal Gases Freed in Digestion* – 4to, 687 pp.) In a scientific work entitled, I believe, *Delectatio*

Demonorum (John Camden Hotton, London, 1873) this view of the sentiments receives a striking illustration; and for further light consult Professor Dam's famous treatise on *Love as a Product of Alimentary Maceration*.

**HEAT**, n.

Heat, says Professor Tyndall, is a mode  
Of motion, but I know now how he's  
proving His point; but this I know –  
hot words bestowed With skill will  
set the human fist a-moving, And  
where it stops the stars burn free and  
wild. *Crede expertum* – I have seen  
them, child.  
Gorton Swope

**HEATHEN**, n. A benighted creature who has the folly to worship something that he can see and feel. According to Professor Howison, of the California State University, Hebrews are heathens.

"The Hebrews are heathens!" says  
Howison. He's A Christian  
philosopher. I'm  
A scurril agnostical chap, if you  
please,  
Addicted too much to the crime  
Of religious discussion in my rhyme.  
Though Hebrew and Howison cannot  
agree  
On a *modus vivendi* – not they! –  
Yet Heaven has had the designing of  
me,  
And I haven't been reared in a way  
To joy in the thick of the fray.  
For this of my creed is the soul and  
the gist, And the truth of it I aver:  
Who differs from me in his faith is an  
'ist, And 'ite, an 'ie, or an 'er –  
And I'm down upon him or her!  
Let Howison urge with perfunctory  
chin  
Toleration – that's all very well, But  
a roast is "nuts" to his nostril thin,  
And he's running – I know by the  
smell – A secret and personal Hell!

Bissell Gip

**HEAVEN**, n. A place where the wicked cease from troubling you with talk of their personal affairs, and the good listen with attention while you expound your own.

**HEBREW**, n. A male Jew, as distinguished from the Shebrew, an altogether superior creation.

**HELPMATE**, n. A wife, or bitter half.

"Now, why is yer wife called a helpmate, Pat?" Says the priest.  
"Since the time 'o yer wooin' She's niver [sic] assisted in what ye were at – For it's naught ye are ever doin'."  
"That's true of yer Riverence [sic]," Patrick replies, And no sign of contrition envinces;  
"But, bedad, it's a fact which the word implies, For she helps to mate the expinses [sic]!"  
Marley Wottel

**HEMP**, n. A plant from whose fibrous bark is made an article of neckwear which is frequently put on after public speaking in the open air and prevents the wearer from taking cold.

**HERMIT**, n. A person whose vices and follies are not sociable.

**HERS**, pron. His.

**HIBERNATE**, v.i. To pass the winter season in domestic seclusion. There have been many singular popular notions about the hibernation of various animals. Many believe that the bear hibernates during the whole winter and subsists by mechanically sucking its paws. It is admitted that it comes out of its retirement in the spring so lean that it had to try twice before it can cast a shadow. Three or four centuries ago, in England, no fact was better attested than that swallows passed the winter months in the mud at the bottom of their brooks, clinging together in globular masses. They have apparently been compelled to give up the custom and account of the foulness of the brooks. Sotus Ecobius discovered in Central Asia a whole nation of people who hibernate. By some

investigators, the fasting of Lent is supposed to have been originally a modified form of hibernation, to which the Church gave a religious significance; but this view was strenuously opposed by that eminent authority, Bishop Kip, who did not wish any honors denied to the memory of the Founder of his family.

**HIPPOGRIFF**, n. An animal (now extinct) which was half horse and half griffin. The griffin was itself a compound creature, half lion and half eagle. The hippogriff was actually, therefore, a one-quarter eagle, which is two dollars and fifty cents in gold. The study of zoology is full of surprises.

**HISTORIAN**, n. A broad-gauge gossip.

**HISTORY**, n. An account mostly false, of events mostly unimportant, which are brought about by rulers mostly knaves, and soldiers mostly fools.

Of Roman history, great Niebuhr's shown  
'Tis nine-tenths lying. Faith, I wish  
'twere known, Ere we accept great  
Niebuhr as a guide,  
Wherein he blundered and how much  
he lied.  
Salder Bupp

**HOG**, n. A bird remarkable for the catholicity of its appetite and serving to illustrate that of ours. Among the Mahometans and Jews, the hog is not in favor as an article of diet, but is respected for the delicacy and the melody of its voice. It is chiefly as a songster that the fowl is esteemed; the cage of him in full chorus has been known to draw tears from two persons at once. The scientific name of this dicky-bird is *Porcus Rockefelleri*. Mr. Rockefeller did not discover the hog, but it is considered his by right of resemblance.

**HOMOEOPATHIST**, n. The humorist of the medical profession.

**HOMOEOPATHY**, n. A school of medicine midway between Allopathy and Christian Science. To the last both the others are distinctly inferior, for Christian Science will cure imaginary diseases, and they can not.

**HOMICIDE**, n. The slaying of one human being by

another. There are four kinds of homicide: felonious, excusable, justifiable, and praiseworthy, but it makes no great difference to the person slain whether he fell by one kind or another – the classification is for advantage of the lawyers.

**HOMILETICS**, n. The science of adapting sermons to the spiritual needs, capacities and conditions of the congregation.

So skilled the parson was in  
homiletics  
That all his normal purges and  
emetics  
To medicine the spirit were  
compounded  
With a most just discrimination  
founded  
Upon a rigorous examination  
Of tongue and pulse and heart and  
respiration. Then, having diagnosed  
each one's condition, His scriptural  
specifics this physician  
Administered – his pills so  
efficacious  
And pukes of disposition so vivacious  
That souls afflicted with ten kinds of  
Adam Were convalescent ere they  
knew they had 'em. But Slander's  
tongue – itself all coated – uttered  
Her bilious mind and scandalously  
muttered That in the case of patients  
having money  
The pills were sugar and the pukes  
were honey.  
*Biography of Bishop Potter*

**HONORABLE**, adj. Afflicted with an impediment in one's reach. In legislative bodies it is customary to mention all members as honorable; as, "the honorable gentleman is a scurvy cur."

**HOPE**, n. Desire and expectation rolled into one.

Delicious Hope! when naught to man  
it left – Of fortune destitute, of  
friends bereft;  
When even his dog deserts him, and  
his goat With tranquil disaffection  
chews his coat

While yet it hangs upon his back;  
then thou, The star far-flaming on  
thine angel brow,  
Descendest, radiant, from the skies to  
hint The promise of a clerkship in the  
Mint.  
Fogarty Weffing

**HOSPITALITY**, n. The virtue which induces us to feed and lodge certain persons who are not in need of food and lodging.

**HOSTILITY**, n. A peculiarly sharp and specially applied sense of the earth's overpopulation. Hostility is classified as active and passive; as (respectively) the feeling of a woman for her female friends, and that which she entertains for all the rest of her sex.

**HOURI**, n. A comely female inhabiting the Mohammedan Paradise to make things cheery for the good Mussulman, whose belief in her existence marks a noble discontent with his earthly spouse, whom he denies a soul. By that good lady the Houris are said to be held in deficient esteem.

**HOUSE**, n. A hollow edifice erected for the habitation of man, rat, mouse, beetle, cockroach, fly, mosquito, flea, bacillus and microbe. *House of Correction*, a place of reward for political and personal service, and for the detention of offenders and appropriations. *House of God*, a building with a steeple and a mortgage on it. *House-dog*, a pestilent beast kept on domestic premises to insult persons passing by and appal the hardy visitor. *House-maid*, a younger person of the opposing sex employed to be variously disagreeable and ingeniously unclean in the station in which it has pleased God to place her.

**HOUSELESS**, adj. Having paid all taxes on household goods.

**HOVEL**, n. The fruit of a flower called the Palace.

Twaddle had a hovel,  
Twiddle had a palace;  
Twaddle said: "I'll grovel  
Or he'll think I bear him malice" – A  
sentiment as novel  
As a castor on a chalice.

Down upon the middle  
Of his legs fell Twaddle  
And astonished Mr. Twiddle,  
Who began to lift his noddle.  
Feed upon the fiddle—  
Faddle flummery, unswaddle  
A new-born self-sufficiency and  
think himself a [mockery.]  
G.J.

**HUMANITY**, n. The human race, collectively, exclusive of the anthropoid poets.

**HUMORIST**, n. A plague that would have softened down the hoar austerity of Pharaoh's heart and persuaded him to dismiss Israel with his best wishes, cat-quick.

Lo! the poor humorist, whose  
tortured mind See jokes in crowds,  
though still to gloom inclined —  
Whose simple appetite, untaught to  
stray,  
His brains, renewed by night,  
consumes by day. He thinks,  
admitted to an equal sty,  
A graceful hog would bear his  
company.  
Alexander Poke

**HURRICANE**, n. An atmospheric demonstration once very common but now generally abandoned for the tornado and cyclone. The hurricane is still in popular use in the West Indies and is preferred by certain old-fashioned sea-captains. It is also used in the construction of the upper decks of steamboats, but generally speaking, the hurricane's usefulness has outlasted it.

**HURRY**, n. The dispatch of bunglers.

**HUSBAND**, n. One who, having dined, is charged with the care of the plate.

**HYBRID**, n. A pooled issue.

**HYDRA**, n. A kind of animal that the ancients catalogued under many heads.

**HYENA**, n. A beast held in reverence by some

oriental nations from its habit of frequenting at night the burial-places of the dead. But the medical student does that.

**HYPOCHONDRIASIS**, n. Depression of one's own spirits.

Some heaps of trash upon a vacant lot  
Where long the village rubbish had  
been shot Displayed a sign among  
the stuff and stumps —  
"Hypochondriasis." It meant The  
Dumps.  
Bogul S. Purvy

**HYPOCRITE**, n. One who, profession virtues that he does not respect secures the advantage of seeming to be what he depises.

## I

**I** is the first letter of the alphabet, the first word of the language, the first thought of the mind, the first object of affection. In grammar it is a pronoun of the first person and singular number. Its plural is said to be *We*, but how there can be more than one myself is doubtless clearer the grammarians than it is to the author of this incomparable dictionary. Conception of two myselfs is difficult, but fine. The frank yet graceful use of "I" distinguishes a good writer from a bad; the latter carries it with the manner of a thief trying to cloak his loot.

**ICHOR**, n. A fluid that serves the gods and goddesses in place of blood.

Fair Venus, speared by Diomed,  
Restrained the raging chief and said:  
"Behold, rash mortal, whom you've  
bled —  
Your soul's stained white with  
ichorshed!"  
Mary Doke

**ICONOCLAST**, n. A breaker of idols, the worshipers whereof are imperfectly gratified by the performance, and most strenuously protest that he unbuildeth but doth not reedify, that he pulleth down but pileth not up. For the poor things would have other idols in place of those he thwacketh upon the

mazzard and dispelleth. But the iconoclast saith: "Ye shall have none at all, for ye need them not; and if the rebuilder fooleth round hereabout, behold I will depress the head of him and sit thereon till he squawk it."

**IDIOT**, n. A member of a large and powerful tribe whose influence in human affairs has always been dominant and controlling. The Idiot's activity is not confined to any special field of thought or action, but "pervades and regulates the whole." He has the last word in everything; his decision is unappealable. He sets the fashions and opinion of taste, dictates the limitations of speech and circumscribes conduct with a dead-line.

**IDLENESS**, n. A model farm where the devil experiments with seeds of new sins and promotes the growth of staple vices.

**IGNORAMUS**, n. A person unacquainted with certain kinds of knowledge familiar to yourself, and having certain other kinds that you know nothing about.

Dumble was an ignoramus,  
Mumble was for learning famous.  
Mumble said one day to Dumble:  
"Ignorance should be more humble.  
Not a spark have you of knowledge  
That was got in any college."  
Dumble said to Mumble: "Truly  
You're self-satisfied unduly.  
Of things in college I'm denied  
A knowledge – you of all beside."  
Borelli

**ILLUMINATI**, n. A sect of Spanish heretics of the latter part of the sixteenth century; so called because they were light weights – *cunctationes illuminati*.

**ILLUSTRIOUS**, adj. Suitably placed for the shafts of malice, envy and detraction.

**IMAGINATION**, n. A warehouse of facts, with poet and liar in joint ownership.

**IMBECILITY**, n. A kind of divine inspiration, or sacred fire affecting censorious critics of this dictionary.

**IMMIGRANT**, n. An unenlightened person who thinks one country better than another.

**IMMODEST**, adj. Having a strong sense of one's own merit, coupled with a feeble conception of worth in others.

There was once a man in Ispahan  
Ever and ever so long ago,  
And he had a head, the phrenologists  
said, That fitted him for a show.  
For his modesty's bump was so large  
a lump (Nature, they said, had taken  
a freak) That its summit stood far  
above the wood  
Of his hair, like a mountain peak.  
So modest a man in all Ispahan,  
Over and over again they swore –  
So humble and meek, you would  
vainly seek; None ever was found  
before.  
Meantime the hump of that awful  
bump  
Into the heavens contrived to get  
To so great a height that they called  
the wight The man with the minaret.  
There wasn't a man in all Ispahan  
Prouder, or louder in praise of his  
chump: With a tireless tongue and a  
brazen lung  
He bragged of that beautiful bump  
Till the Shah in a rage sent a trusty  
page Bearing a sack and a  
bow-string too,  
And that gentle child explained as he  
smiled: "A little present for you."  
The saddest man in all Ispahan,  
Sniffed at the gift, yet accepted the  
same. "If I'd lived," said he, "my  
humility  
Had given me deathless fame!"  
Sukker Uffro

**IMMORAL**, adj. Inexpedient. Whatever in the long run and with regard to the greater number of instances men find to be generally inexpedient comes to be considered wrong, wicked, immoral. If man's notions of right and wrong have any other basis than this of expediency; if they originated, or could have

originated, in any other way; if actions have in themselves a moral character apart from, and nowise dependent on, their consequences – then all philosophy is a lie and reason a disorder of the mind.

**IMMORTALITY**, n.

A toy which people cry for,  
And on their knees apply for,  
Dispute, contend and lie for,  
And if allowed  
Would be right proud  
Eternally to die for.  
G.J.

**IMPALE**, v.t. In popular usage to pierce with any weapon which remains fixed in the wound. This, however, is inaccurate; to imape is, properly, to put to death by thrusting an upright sharp stake into the body, the victim being left in a sitting position. This was a common mode of punishment among many of the nations of antiquity, and is still in high favor in China and other parts of Asia. Down to the beginning of the fifteenth century it was widely employed in "churching" heretics and schismatics. Wolecraft calls it the "stoole of repentyng," and among the common people it was jocularly known as "riding the one legged horse." Ludwig Salzmänn informs us that in Thibet impalement is considered the most appropriate punishment for crimes against religion; and although in China it is sometimes awarded for secular offences, it is most frequently adjudged in cases of sacrilege. To the person in actual experience of impalement it must be a matter of minor importance by what kind of civil or religious dissent he was made acquainted with its discomforts; but doubtless he would feel a certain satisfaction if able to contemplate himself in the character of a weather-cock on the spire of the True Church.

**IMPARTIAL**, adj. Unable to perceive any promise of personal advantage from espousing either side of a controversy or adopting either of two conflicting opinions.

**IMPENITENCE**, n. A state of mind intermediate in point of time between sin and punishment.

**IMPIETY**, n. Your irreverence toward my deity.

**IMPOSITION**, n. The act of blessing or consecrating by the laying on of hands – a ceremony common to many ecclesiastical systems, but performed with the frankest sincerity by the sect known as Thieves.

"Lo! by the laying on of hands,"  
Say parson, priest and dervise,  
"We consecrate your cash and lands  
To ecclesiastical service.  
No doubt you'll swear till all is blue  
At such an imposition. Do."  
Pollo Doncas

**IMPOSTOR** n. A rival aspirant to public honors.

**IMPROBABILITY**, n.

His tale he told with a solemn face  
And a tender, melancholy grace.  
Improbable 'twas, no doubt,  
When you came to think it out,  
But the fascinated crowd  
Their deep surprise avowed  
And all with a single voice averred  
'Twas the most amazing thing they'd  
heard – All save one who spake  
never a word,  
But sat as mum  
As if deaf and dumb,  
Serene, indifferent and unstirred.  
Then all the others turned to him  
And scrutinized him limb from limb –  
Scanned him alive;  
But he seemed to thrive  
And tranquil grow each minute,  
As if there were nothing in it.  
"What! what!" cried one, "are you  
not amazed At what our friend has  
told?" He raised  
Soberly then his eyes and gazed  
In a natural way  
And proceeded to say,  
As he crossed his feet on the  
mantel-shelf: "O no – not at all; I'm  
a liar myself."

**IMPROVIDENCE**, n. Provision for the needs of to-day from the revenues of to-morrow.

**IMPUNITY**, n. Wealth.

**INADMISSIBLE**, adj. Not competent to be considered. Said of certain kinds of testimony which juries are supposed to be unfit to be entrusted with, and which judges, therefore, rule out, even of proceedings before themselves alone. Hearsay evidence is inadmissible because the person quoted was unsworn and is not before the court for examination; yet most momentous actions, military, political, commercial and of every other kind, are daily undertaken on hearsay evidence. There is no religion in the world that has any other basis than hearsay evidence. Revelation is hearsay evidence; that the Scriptures are the word of God we have only the testimony of men long dead whose identity is not clearly established and who are not known to have been sworn in any sense. Under the rules of evidence as they now exist in this country, no single assertion in the Bible has in its support any evidence admissible in a court of law. It cannot be proved that the battle of Blenheim ever was fought, that there was such a person as Julius Caesar, such an empire as Assyria.

But as records of courts of justice are admissible, it can easily be proved that powerful and malevolent magicians once existed and were a scourge to mankind. The evidence (including confession) upon which certain women were convicted of witchcraft and executed was without a flaw; it is still unimpeachable. The judges' decisions based on it were sound in logic and in law. Nothing in any existing court was ever more thoroughly proved than the charges of witchcraft and sorcery for which so many suffered death. If there were no witches, human testimony and human reason are alike destitute of value.

**INAUSPICIOUSLY**, adv. In an unpromising manner, the auspices being unfavorable. Among the Romans it was customary before undertaking any important action or enterprise to obtain from the augurs, or state prophets, some hint of its probable

outcome; and one of their favorite and most trustworthy modes of divination consisted in observing the flight of birds – the omens thence derived being called *auspices*. Newspaper reporters and certain miscreant lexicographers have decided that the word – always in the plural – shall mean "patronage" or "management"; as, "The festivities were under the auspices of the Ancient and Honorable Order of Body-Snatchers"; or, "The hilarities were auspicated by the Knights of Hunger."

A Roman slave appeared one day  
Before the Augur. "Tell me, pray,  
If —" here the Augur, smiling, made  
A checking gesture and displayed  
His open palm, which plainly itched,  
For visibly its surface twitched.  
A *denarius* (the Latin nickel)  
Successfully allayed the tickle,  
And then the slave proceeded: "Please  
Inform me whether Fate decrees  
Success or failure in what I  
To-night (if it be dark) shall try.  
Its nature? Never mind – I think  
'Tis writ on this" – and with a wink  
Which darkened half the earth, he  
drew  
Another denarius to view,  
Its shining face attentive scanned,  
Then slipped it into the good man's  
hand,  
Who with great gravity said: "Wait  
While I retire to question Fate."  
That holy person then withdrew  
His scared clay and, passing through  
The temple's rearward gate, cried  
"Shoo!"  
Waving his robe of office. Straight  
Each sacred peacock and its mate  
(Maintained for Juno's favor) fled  
With clamor from the trees o'erhead,  
Where they were perching for the  
night.  
The temple's roof received their flight,  
For thither they would always go,  
When danger threatened them below.  
Back to the slave the Augur went:  
"My son, forecasting the event  
By flight of birds, I must confess  
The auspices deny success."  
That slave retired, a sadder man,



Abandoning his secret plan –  
Which was (as well the craft seer  
Had from the first divined) to clear  
The wall and fraudulently seize  
On Juno's poultry in the trees.  
G.J.

**INCOME**, n. The natural and rational gauge and measure of respectability, the commonly accepted standards being artificial, arbitrary and fallacious; for, as "Sir Sycophas Chrysolater" in the play has justly remarked, "the true use and function of property (in whatsoever it consisteth – coins, or land, or houses, or merchant– stuff, or anything which may be named as holden of right to one's own subservience) as also of honors, titles, preferments and place, and all favor and acquaintance of persons of quality or ableness, are but to get money. Hence it followeth that all things are truly to be rated as of worth in measure of their serviceableness to that end; and their possessors should take rank in agreement thereto, neither the lord of an unproducing manor, howsoever broad and ancient, nor he who bears an unremunerate dignity, nor yet the pauper favorite of a king, being esteemed of level excellency with him whose riches are of daily accretion; and hardly should they whose wealth is barren claim and rightly take more honor than the poor and unworthy."

**INCOMPATIBILITY**, n. In matrimony a similarity of tastes, particularly the taste for domination. Incompatibility may, however, consist of a meek-eyed matron living just around the corner. It has even been known to wear a moustache.

**IMPOSSIBLE**, adj. Unable to exist if something else exists. Two things are impossible when the world of being has scope enough for one of them, but not enough for both – as Walt Whitman's poetry and God's mercy to man. Impossibility, it will be seen, is only incompatibility let loose. Instead of such low language as "Go heel yourself – I mean to kill you on sight," the words, "Sir, we are impossible," would convey and equally significant intimation and in stately courtesy are altogether superior.

**INCUBUS**, n. One of a race of highly improper demons who, though probably not wholly extinct, may be said to have seen their best nights. For a

complete account of *incubi* and *succubi*, including *incubae* and *succubae*, see the *Liber Demonorum* of Protassus (Paris, 1328), which contains much curious information that would be out of place in a dictionary intended as a text–book for the public schools.

Victor Hugo relates that in the Channel Islands Satan himself – tempted more than elsewhere by the beauty of the women, doubtless – sometimes plays at *incubus*, greatly to the inconvenience and alarm of the good dames who wish to be loyal to their marriage vows, generally speaking. A certain lady applied to the parish priest to learn how they might, in the dark, distinguish the hardy intruder from their husbands. The holy man said they must feel his brown for horns; but Hugo is ungallant enough to hint a doubt of the efficacy of the test.

**INCUMBENT**, n. A person of the liveliest interest to the outcumbents.

**INDECISION**, n. The chief element of success; "for whereas," saith Sir Thomas Brewbold, "there is but one way to do nothing and divers way to do something, whereof, to a surety, only one is the right way, it followeth that he who from indecision standeth still hath not so many chances of going astray as he who pusheth forwards" – a most clear and satisfactory exposition on the matter.

"Your prompt decision to attack," said Genera Grant on a certain occasion to General Gordon Granger, "was admirable; you had but five minutes to make up your mind in."  
"Yes, sir," answered the victorious subordinate, "it is a great thing to be know exactly what to do in an emergency. When in doubt whether to attack or retreat I never hesitate a moment – I toss us a copper."  
"Do you mean to say that's what you did this time?" "Yes, General; but for Heaven's sake don't reprimand me: I disobeyed the coin."

**INDIFFERENT**, adj. Imperfectly sensible to distinctions among things.

"You tiresome man!" cried  
Indolentio's wife, "You've grown  
indifferent to all in life."  
"Indifferent?" he drawled with a slow  
smile; "I would be, dear, but it is not  
worth while."  
Apuleius M. Gokul

**INDIGESTION**, n. A disease which the patient and his friends frequently mistake for deep religious conviction and concern for the salvation of mankind. As the simple Red Man of the western wild put it, with, it must be confessed, a certain force: "Plenty well, no pray; big bellyache, heap God."

**INDISCRETION**, n. The guilt of woman.

**INEXPEDIENT**, adj. Not calculated to advance one's interests.

**INFANCY**, n. The period of our lives when, according to Wordsworth, "Heaven lies about us." The world begins lying about us pretty soon afterward.

**INFERIAE**, n. [Latin] Among the Greeks and Romans, sacrifices for propitiation of the *Dii Manes*, or souls of the dead heroes; for the pious ancients could not invent enough gods to satisfy their spiritual needs, and had to have a number of makeshift deities, or, as a sailor might say, jury-gods, which they made out of the most unpromising materials. It was while sacrificing a bullock to the spirit of Agamemnon that Laiades, a priest of Aulis, was favored with an audience of that illustrious warrior's shade, who prophetically recounted to him the birth of Christ and the triumph of Christianity, giving him also a rapid but tolerably complete review of events down to the reign of Saint Louis. The narrative ended abruptly at the point, owing to the inconsiderate crowing of a cock, which compelled the ghosted King of Men to scamper back to Hades. There is a fine mediaeval flavor to this story, and as it has not been traced back further than Pere Brateille, a pious but obscure writer at the court of Saint Louis, we shall probably not err on the side of presumption

in considering it apocryphal, though Monsignor Capel's judgment of the matter might be different; and to that I bow – wow.

**INFIDEL**, n. In New York, one who does not believe in the Christian religion; in Constantinople, one who does. (See GIAOUR) A kind of scoundrel imperfectly reverent of, and niggardly contributory to, divines, ecclesiastics, popes, parsons, canons, monks, mollahs, voodoos, presbyters, hierophants, prelates, obeah-men, abbes, nuns, missionaries, exhorters, deacons, friars, hadjis, high-priests, muezzins, brahmins, medicine-men, confessors, eminences, elders, primates, prebendaries, pilgrims, prophets, imaums, beneficiaries, clerks, vicars-choral, archbishops, bishops, abbots, priors, preachers, padres, abbesses, caloyers, palmers, curates, patriarchs, bonezs, santons, beadsmen, canonesses, residentiaries, diocesans, deans, subdeans, rural deans, abdals, charm-sellers, archdeacons, hierarchs, class-leaders, incumbents, capitulars, sheiks, talapoins, postulants, scribes, gooroos, precentors, beadles, fakeers, sextons, reverences, revivalists, cenobites, perpetual curates, chaplains, mudjoes, readers, novices, vicars, pastors, rabbis, ulemas, lamas, sacristans, vergers, dervises, lectors, church wardens, cardinals, prioresses, suffragans, acolytes, rectors, cures, sophis, mutifs and pumpums.

**INFLUENCE**, n. In politics, a visionary *quo* given in exchange for a substantial *quid*.

**INFALAPSARIAN**, n. One who ventures to believe that Adam need not have sinned unless he had a mind to – in opposition to the Supralapsarians, who hold that that luckless person's fall was decreed from the beginning. Infralapsarians are sometimes called Sublapsarians without material effect upon the importance and lucidity of their views about Adam.

Two theologues once, as they  
wended their way To chapel,  
engaged in colloquial fray – An  
earnest logomachy, bitter as gall,  
Concerning poor Adam and what  
made him fall. "'Twas  
Predestination," cried one – "for the  
Lord Decreed he should fall of his  
own accord."

"Not so – 'twas Free will," the other maintained, "Which led him to choose what the Lord had ordained." So fierce and so fiery grew the debate That nothing but bloodshed their dudgeon could sate; So off flew their cassocks and caps to the ground And, moved by the spirit, their hands went round. Ere either had proved his theology right By winning, or even beginning, the fight, A gray old professor of Latin came by, A staff in his hand and a scowl in his eye, And learning the cause of their quarrel (for still As they clumsily sparred they disputed with skill Of foreordination freedom of will) Cried: "Sirrahs! this reasonless warfare compose: Atwixt ye's no difference worthy of blows. The sects ye belong to – I'm ready to swear Ye wrongly interpret the names that they bear. *You* – Infralapsarian son of a clown! – Should only contend that Adam slipped down; While *you* – you Supralapsarian pup! – Should nothing aver but that Adam slipped up. It's all the same whether up or down You slip on a peel of banana brown. Even Adam analyzed not his blunder, But thought he had slipped on a peal of thunder!" G.J.

**INGRATE**, n. One who receives a benefit from another, or is otherwise an object of charity.

"All men are ingrates," sneered the cynic. "Nay," The good philanthropist replied; "I did great service to a man one day Who never since has cursed me to repay, Nor vilified."  
"Ho!" cried the cynic, "lead me to him straight – With veneration I am

overcome,  
And fain would have his blessing."  
"Sad your fate – He cannot bless you, for Al grieve to state This man is dumb."  
Ariel Selp

**INJURY**, n. An offense next in degree of enormity to a slight.

**INJUSTICE**, n. A burden which of all those that we load upon others and carry ourselves is lightest in the hands and heaviest upon the back.

**INK**, n. A villainous compound of tannogallate of iron, gum–arabic and water, chiefly used to facilitate the infection of idiocy and promote intellectual crime. The properties of ink are peculiar and contradictory: it may be used to make reputations and unmake them; to blacken them and to make them white; but it is most generally and acceptably employed as a mortar to bind together the stones of an edifice of fame, and as a whitewash to conceal afterward the rascal quality of the material. There are men called journalists who have established ink baths which some persons pay money to get into, others to get out of. Not infrequently it occurs that a person who has paid to get in pays twice as much to get out.

**INNATE**, adj. Natural, inherent – as innate ideas, that is to say, ideas that we are born with, having had them previously imparted to us. The doctrine of innate ideas is one of the most admirable faiths of philosophy, being itself an innate idea and therefore inaccessible to disproof, though Locke foolishly supposed himself to have given it "a black eye." Among innate ideas may be mentioned the belief in one's ability to conduct a newspaper, in the greatness of one's country, in the superiority of one's civilization, in the importance of one's personal affairs and in the interesting nature of one's diseases.

**IN'ARDS**, n. The stomach, heart, soul and other bowels. Many eminent investigators do not class the soul as an in'ard, but that acute observer and renowned authority, Dr. Gunsaulus, is persuaded that the mysterious organ known as the spleen is nothing less than our important part. To the contrary, Professor Garrett P. Servis holds that man's soul is that prolongation of his spinal marrow which forms

the pith of his no tail; and for demonstration of his faith points confidently to the fact that no tailed animals have no souls. Concerning these two theories, it is best to suspend judgment by believing both.

**INSCRIPTION**, n. Something written on another thing. Inscriptions are of many kinds, but mostly memorial, intended to commemorate the fame of some illustrious person and hand down to distant ages the record of his services and virtues. To this class of inscriptions belongs the name of John Smith, penciled on the Washington monument. Following are examples of memorial inscriptions on tombstones: (See [EPITAPH](#).)

"In the sky my soul is found,  
And my body in the ground.  
By and by my body'll rise  
To my spirit in the skies,  
Soaring up to Heaven's gate.  
1878."

"Sacred to the memory of Jeremiah  
Tree. Cut down May 9th, 1862, aged  
27 yrs. 4 mos. and 12 ds. Indigenous."  
"Affliction sore long time she bore,  
Physicians was in vain,  
Till Death released the dear deceased  
And left her a remain.  
Gone to join Ananias in the regions  
of bliss."

"The clay that rests beneath this stone  
As Silas Wood was widely known.  
Now, lying here, I ask what good  
It was to let me be S. Wood.  
O Man, let not ambition trouble you,  
Is the advice of Silas W."

"Richard Haymon, of Heaven. Fell to  
Earth Jan. 20, 1807, and had the dust  
brushed off him Oct. 3, 1874."

**INSECTIVORA**, n.

"See," cries the chorus of admiring  
preachers, "How Providence provides  
for all His creatures!" "His care," the  
gnat said, "even the insects follows:  
For us He has provided wrens and  
swallows."  
Sempen Railey

**INSURANCE**, n. An ingenious modern game of chance in which the player is permitted to enjoy the comfortable conviction that he is beating the man who keeps the table.

**INSURANCE AGENT**: My dear sir,  
that is a fine house – pray let me  
insure it.

**HOUSE OWNER**: With pleasure.  
Please make the annual premium so  
low that by the time when, according  
to the tables of your actuary, it will  
probably be destroyed by fire I will  
have paid you considerably less than  
the face of the policy.

**INSURANCE AGENT**: O dear, no –  
we could not afford to do that. We  
must fix the premium so that you will  
have paid more.

**HOUSE OWNER**: How, then, can  
*I afford that?*

**INSURANCE AGENT**: Why, your  
house may burn down at any time.  
There was Smith's house, for  
example, which –

**HOUSE OWNER**: Spare me – there  
were Brown's house, on the contrary,  
and Jones's house, and Robinson's  
house, which –

**INSURANCE AGENT**: Spare *me!*

**HOUSE OWNER**: Let us understand  
each other. You want me to pay you  
money on the supposition that  
something will occur previously to  
the time set by yourself for its  
occurrence. In other words, you  
expect me to bet that my house will  
not last so long as you say that it will  
probably last.

**INSURANCE AGENT**: But if your  
house burns without insurance it will  
be a total loss.

**HOUSE OWNER**: Beg your pardon  
– by your own actuary's tables I shall  
probably have saved, when it burns,  
all the premiums I would otherwise  
have paid to you – amounting to  
more than the face of the policy they  
would have bought. But suppose it to

burn, uninsured, before the time upon which your figures are based. If I could not afford that, how could you if it were insured?

INSURANCE AGENT: O, we should make ourselves whole from our luckier ventures with other clients. Virtually, they pay your loss. HOUSE OWNER: And virtually, then, don't I help to pay their losses? Are not their houses as likely as mine to burn before they have paid you as much as you must pay them? The case stands this way: you expect to take more money from your clients than you pay to them, do you not? INSURANCE AGENT: Certainly; if we did not –

HOUSE OWNER: I would not trust you with my money. Very well then. If it is *certain*, with reference to the whole body of your clients, that they lose money on you it is *probable*, with reference to any one of them, that *he* will. It is these individual probabilities that make the aggregate certainty.

INSURANCE AGENT: I will not deny it – but look at the figures in this pamph –

HOUSE OWNER: Heaven forbid!

INSURANCE AGENT: You spoke of saving the premiums which you would otherwise pay to me. Will you not be more likely to squander them? We offer you an incentive to thrift.

HOUSE OWNER: The willingness of A to take care of B's money is not peculiar to insurance, but as a charitable institution you command esteem. Deign to accept its expression from a Deserving Object.

**INSURRECTION**, n. An unsuccessful revolution. Disaffection's failure to substitute misrule for bad government.

**INTENTION**, n. The mind's sense of the prevalence of one set of influences over another set; an effect whose cause is the imminence, immediate or remote,

of the performance of an involuntary act.

**INTERPRETER**, n. One who enables two persons of different languages to understand each other by repeating to each what it would have been to the interpreter's advantage for the other to have said.

**INTERREGNUM**, n. The period during which a monarchical country is governed by a warm spot on the cushion of the throne. The experiment of letting the spot grow cold has commonly been attended by most unhappy results from the zeal of many worthy persons to make it warm again.

**INTIMACY**, n. A relation into which fools are providentially drawn for their mutual destruction.

Two Seidlitz powders, one in blue  
And one in white, together drew  
And having each a pleasant sense  
Of t'other powder's excellence,  
Forsook their jackets for the snug  
Enjoyment of a common mug.  
So close their intimacy grew  
One paper would have held the two.  
To confidences straight they fell,  
Less anxious each to hear than tell;  
Then each remorsefully confessed  
To all the virtues he possessed,  
Acknowledging he had them in  
So high degree it was a sin.  
The more they said, the more they felt  
Their spirits with emotion melt,  
Till tears of sentiment expressed  
Their feelings. Then they effervesced!  
So Nature executes her feats  
Of wrath on friends and sympathetes  
The good old rule who don't apply,  
That you are you and I am I.

**INTRODUCTION**, n. A social ceremony invented by the devil for the gratification of his servants and the plaguing of his enemies. The introduction attains its most malevolent development in this century, being, indeed, closely related to our political system. Every American being the equal of every other American, it follows that everybody has the right to know everybody else, which implies the right to introduce without request or permission. The Declaration of Independence should have read thus:

"We hold these truths to be self-evident: that all men are created equal; that they are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights; that among these are life, and the right to make that of another miserable by thrusting upon him an incalculable quantity of acquaintances; liberty, particularly the liberty to introduce persons to one another without first ascertaining if they are not already acquainted as enemies; and the pursuit of another's happiness with a running pack of strangers."

**INVENTOR**, n. A person who makes an ingenious arrangement of wheels, levers and springs, and believes it civilization.

**IRRELIGION**, n. The principal one of the great faiths of the world.

**ITCH**, n. The patriotism of a Scotchman.

## J

**J** is a consonant in English, but some nations use it as a vowel – than which nothing could be more absurd. Its original form, which has been but slightly modified, was that of the tail of a subdued dog, and it was not a letter but a character, standing for a Latin verb, *jacere*, "to throw," because when a stone is thrown at a dog the dog's tail assumes that shape. This is the origin of the letter, as expounded by the renowned Dr. Jocolpus Bumer, of the University of Belgrade, who established his conclusions on the subject in a work of three quarto volumes and committed suicide on being reminded that the j in the Roman alphabet had originally no curl.

**JEALOUS**, adj. Unduly concerned about the preservation of that which can be lost only if not worth keeping.

**JESTER**, n. An officer formerly attached to a king's household, whose business it was to amuse the court by ludicrous actions and utterances, the absurdity being attested by his motley costume. The king himself being attired with dignity, it took the world

some centuries to discover that his own conduct and decrees were sufficiently ridiculous for the amusement not only of his court but of all mankind. The jester was commonly called a fool, but the poets and romancers have ever delighted to represent him as a singularly wise and witty person. In the circus of to-day the melancholy ghost of the court fool effects the dejection of humbler audiences with the same jests wherewith in life he gloomed the marble hall, panged the patrician sense of humor and tapped the tank of royal tears.

The widow-queen of Portugal  
Had an audacious jester  
Who entered the confessional  
Disguised, and there confessed her.  
"Father," she said, "thine ear bend  
down – My sins are more than scarlet:  
I love my fool – blaspheming clown,  
And common, base-born varlet."  
"Daughter," the mimic priest replied,  
"That sin, indeed, is awful:  
The church's pardon is denied  
To love that is unlawful.  
"But since thy stubborn heart will be  
For him forever pleading,  
Thou'dst better make him, by decree,  
A man of birth and breeding."  
She made the fool a duke, in hope  
With Heaven's taboo to palter;  
Then told a priest, who told the Pope,  
Who damned her from the altar!  
Barel Dort

**JEWS-HARP**, n. An unmusical instrument, played by holding it fast with the teeth and trying to brush it away with the finger.

**JOSS-STICKS**, n. Small sticks burned by the Chinese in their pagan tomfoolery, in imitation of certain sacred rites of our holy religion.

**JUSTICE**, n. A commodity which is a more or less adulterated condition the State sells to the citizen as a reward for his allegiance, taxes and personal service.

## K

**K** is a consonant that we get from the Greeks, but it can be traced away back beyond them to the

Cerathians, a small commercial nation inhabiting the peninsula of Smero. In their tongue it was called *Klatch*, which means "destroyed." The form of the letter was originally precisely that of our H, but the erudite Dr. Snedeker explains that it was altered to its present shape to commemorate the destruction of the great temple of Jarute by an earthquake, *circa* 730 B.C. This building was famous for the two lofty columns of its portico, one of which was broken in half by the catastrophe, the other remaining intact. As the earlier form of the letter is supposed to have been suggested by these pillars, so, it is thought by the great antiquary, its later was adopted as a simple and natural – not to say touching – means of keeping the calamity ever in the national memory. It is not known if the name of the letter was altered as an additional mnemonic, or if the name was always *Klatch* and the destruction one of nature's pums. As each theory seems probable enough, I see no objection to believing both – and Dr. Snedeker arrayed himself on that side of the question.

**KEEP**, v.t.

He willed away his whole estate,  
And then in death he fell asleep,  
Murmuring: "Well, at any rate,  
My name unblemished I shall keep."  
But when upon the tomb 'twas  
wrought  
Whose was it? – for the dead keep  
naught.  
Durang Gophel Arn

**KILL**, v.t. To create a vacancy without nominating a successor.

**KILT**, n. A costume sometimes worn by Scotchmen in America and Americans in Scotland.

**KINDNESS**, n. A brief preface to ten volumes of exaction.

**KING**, n. A male person commonly known in America as a "crowned head," although he never wears a crown and has usually no head to speak of.

A king, in times long, long gone by,  
Said to his lazy jester:

"If I were you and you were I  
My moments merrily would fly –  
Nor care nor grief to pester."  
"The reason, Sire, that you would  
thrive," The fool said – "if you'll hear  
it – Is that of all the fools alive  
Who own you for their sovereign, I've  
The most forgiving spirit."  
Oogum Bem

**KING'S EVIL**, n. A malady that was formerly cured by the touch of the sovereign, but has now to be treated by the physicians. Thus 'the most pious Edward' of England used to lay his royal hand upon the ailing subjects and make them whole –

a crowd of wretched souls  
That stay his cure: their malady  
convinces The great essay of art; but  
at his touch,  
Such sanctity hath Heaven given his  
hand,  
They presently amend,  
as the "Doctor" in *Macbeth* hath it.  
This useful property of the royal  
hand could, it appears, be transmitted  
along with other crown properties;  
for according to "Malcolm,"  
'tis spoken  
To the succeeding royalty he leaves  
The healing benediction.  
But the gift somewhere dropped out  
of the line of succession: the later  
sovereigns of England have not been  
tactual healers, and the disease once  
honored with the name "king's evil"  
now bears the humbler one of  
"scrofula," from *scrofa*, a sow. The  
date and author of the following  
epigram are known only to the author  
of this dictionary, but it is old enough  
to show that the jest about Scotland's  
national disorder is not a thing of  
yesterday.  
Ye Kynge his evill in me laye,  
Wh. he of Scottlande charmed awaye.  
He layde his hand on mine and sayd:  
"Be gone!" Ye ill no longer stayd.  
But O ye wofull plyght in wh.  
I'm now y–pight: I have ye itche!

The superstition that maladies can be cured by royal taction is dead, but like many a departed conviction it has left a monument of custom to keep its memory green. The practice of forming a line and shaking the President's hand had no other origin, and when that great dignitary bestows his healing salutation on strangely visited people, All swoln and ulcerous, pitiful to the eye, The mere despair of surgery, he and his patients are handing along an extinguished torch which once was kindled at the altar-fire of a faith long held by all classes of men. It is a beautiful and edifying "survival" – one which brings the sainted past close home in our "business and bosoms."

**KISS**, n. A word invented by the poets as a rhyme for "bliss." It is supposed to signify, in a general way, some kind of rite or ceremony appertaining to a good understanding; but the manner of its performance is unknown to this lexicographer.

**KLEPTOMANIAC**, n. A rich thief.

**KNIGHT**, n.

Once a warrior gentle of birth,  
Then a person of civic worth,  
Now a fellow to move our mirth.  
Warrior, person, and fellow – no more:  
We must knight our dogs to get any lower.  
Brave Knights Kennelers then shall be,  
Noble Knights of the Golden Flea,  
Knights of the Order of St. Steboy,  
Knights of St. Gorge and Sir Knights Jawy. God speed the day when this knightning fad  
Shall go to the dogs and the dogs go mad.

**KORAN**, n. A book which the Mohammedans foolishly believe to have been written by divine

inspiration, but which Christians know to be a wicked imposture, contradictory to the Holy Scriptures.

## L

**LABOR**, n. One of the processes by which A acquires property for B.

**LAND**, n. A part of the earth's surface, considered as property. The theory that land is property subject to private ownership and control is the foundation of modern society, and is eminently worthy of the superstructure. Carried to its logical conclusion, it means that some have the right to prevent others from living; for the right to own implies the right exclusively to occupy; and in fact laws of trespass are enacted wherever property in land is recognized. It follows that if the whole area of *terra firma* is owned by A, B and C, there will be no place for D, E, F and G to be born, or, born as trespassers, to exist.

A life on the ocean wave,  
A home on the rolling deep,  
For the spark the nature gave  
I have there the right to keep.  
They give me the cat-o'-nine  
Whenever I go ashore.  
Then ho! for the flashing brine –  
I'm a natural commodore!  
Dodle

**LANGUAGE**, n. The music with which we charm the serpents guarding another's treasure.

**LAOCOON**, n. A famous piece of antique scripture representing a priest of that name and his two sons in the folds of two enormous serpents. The skill and diligence with which the old man and lads support the serpents and keep them up to their work have been justly regarded as one of the noblest artistic illustrations of the mastery of human intelligence over brute inertia.

**LAP**, n. One of the most important organs of the female system – an admirable provision of nature for the repose of infancy, but chiefly useful in rural festivities to support plates of cold chicken and heads of adult males. The male of our species has a rudimentary lap, imperfectly developed and in no way contributing to the animal's substantial welfare.



**LAST**, n. A shoemaker's implement, named by a frowning Providence as opportunity to the maker of puns.

Ah, punster, would my lot were cast,  
Where the cobbler is unknown,  
So that I might forget his last  
And hear your own.  
Gargo Repsky

**LAUGHTER**, n. An interior convulsion, producing a distortion of the features and accompanied by inarticulate noises. It is infectious and, though intermittent, incurable. Liability to attacks of laughter is one of the characteristics distinguishing man from the animals – these being not only inaccessible to the provocation of his example, but impregnable to the microbes having original jurisdiction in bestowal of the disease. Whether laughter could be imparted to animals by inoculation from the human patient is a question that has not been answered by experimentation. Dr. Meir Witchell holds that the infection character of laughter is due to the instantaneous fermentation of *sputa* diffused in a spray. From this peculiarity he names the disorder *Convulsio spargens*.

**LAUREATE**, adj. Crowned with leaves of the laurel. In England the Poet Laureate is an officer of the sovereign's court, acting as dancing skeleton at every royal feast and singing–mute at every royal funeral. Of all incumbents of that high office, Robert Southey had the most notable knack at drugging the Samson of public joy and cutting his hair to the quick; and he had an artistic color–sense which enabled him so to blacken a public grief as to give it the aspect of a national crime.

**LAUREL**, n. The *laurus*, a vegetable dedicated to Apollo, and formerly defoliated to wreath the brows of victors and such poets as had influence at court. (*Vide supra*.)

**LAW**, n.

Once Law was sitting on the bench,  
And Mercy knelt a–weeping.  
"Clear out!" he cried, "disordered  
wench!"

Nor come before me creeping.  
Upon your knees if you appear,  
'Tis plain your have no standing  
here."  
Then Justice came. His Honor cried:  
"Your status? – devil seize you!"  
"Amica curiae," she replied –  
"Friend of the court, so please you."  
"Begone!" he shouted – "there's the  
door – I never saw your face before!"  
G.J.

**LAWFUL**, adj. Compatible with the will of a judge having jurisdiction.

**LAWYER**, n. One skilled in circumvention of the law.

**LAZINESS**, n. Unwarranted repose of manner in a person of low degree.

**LEAD**, n. A heavy blue–gray metal much used in giving stability to light lovers – particularly to those who love not wisely but other men's wives. Lead is also of great service as a counterpoise to an argument of such weight that it turns the scale of debate the wrong way. An interesting fact in the chemistry of international controversy is that at the point of contact of two patriotisms lead is precipitated in great quantities.

Hail, holy Lead! – of human feuds  
the great And universal arbiter;  
endowed  
With penetration to pierce any cloud  
Fogging the field of controversial  
hate,  
And with a sift, inevitable, straight,  
Searching precision find the  
unavowed  
But vital point. Thy judgment, when  
allowed By the surgeon, settles the  
debate.  
O useful metal! – were it not for thee  
We'd grapple one another's ears  
always: But when we hear thee  
buzzing like a bee  
We, like old Muhlenberg, "care not  
to stay."

And when the quick have run away  
like pellets Jack Satan smelts the  
dead to make new bullets.

**LEARNING**, n. The kind of ignorance distinguishing the studious.

**LECTURER**, n. One with his hand in your pocket, his tongue in your ear and his faith in your patience.

**LEGACY**, n. A gift from one who is legging it out of this vale of tears.

**LEONINE**, adj. Unlike a menagerie lion. Leonine verses are those in which a word in the middle of a line rhymes with a word at the end, as in this famous passage from Bella Peeler Silcox:

The electric light invades the dunnest  
deep of Hades. Cries Pluto, 'twixt his  
snores: "O tempora! O mores!"  
It should be explained that Mrs.  
Silcox does not undertake to teach  
pronunciation of the Greek and Latin  
tongues. Leonine verses are so called  
in honor of a poet named Leo, whom  
prosodists appear to find a pleasure  
in believing to have been the first to  
discover that a rhyming couplet could  
be run into a single line.

**LETTUCE**, n. An herb of the genus *Lactuca*, "Wherewith," says that pious gastronome, Hengist Pelly, "God has been pleased to reward the good and punish the wicked. For by his inner light the righteous man has discerned a manner of compounding for it a dressing to the appetency whereof a multitude of gustible condiments conspire, being reconciled and ameliorated with profusion of oil, the entire comestible making glad the heart of the godly and causing his face to shine. But the person of spiritual unworth is successfully tempted to the Adversary to eat of lettuce with destitution of oil, mustard, egg, salt and garlic, and with a rascal bath of vinegar polluted with sugar. Wherefore the person of spiritual unworth suffers an intestinal pang of strange complexity and raises the song."

**LEVIATHAN**, n. An enormous aquatic animal mentioned by Job. Some suppose it to have been the

whale, but that distinguished ichthyologist, Dr. Jordan, of Stanford University, maintains with considerable heat that it was a species of gigantic Tadpole (*Thaddeus Polandensis*) or Polliwig – *Maria pseudo-hirsuta*. For an exhaustive description and history of the Tadpole consult the famous monograph of Jane Potter, *Thaddeus of Warsaw*.

**LEXICOGRAPHER**, n. A pestilent fellow who, under the pretense of recording some particular stage in the development of a language, does what he can to arrest its growth, stiffen its flexibility and mechanize its methods. For your lexicographer, having written his dictionary, comes to be considered "as one having authority," whereas his function is only to make a record, not to give a law. The natural servility of the human understanding having invested him with judicial power, surrenders its right of reason and submits itself to a chronicle as if it were a statue. Let the dictionary (for example) mark a good word as "obsolete" or "obsolescent" and few men thereafter venture to use it, whatever their need of it and however desirable its restoration to favor – whereby the process of improverishment is accelerated and speech decays. On the contrary, recognizing the truth that language must grow by innovation if it grow at all, makes new words and uses the old in an unfamiliar sense, has no following and is tartly reminded that "it isn't in the dictionary" – although down to the time of the first lexicographer (Heaven forgive him!) no author ever had used a word that *was* in the dictionary. In the golden prime and high noon of English speech; when from the lips of the great Elizabethans fell words that made their own meaning and carried it in their very sound; when a Shakespeare and a Bacon were possible, and the language now rapidly perishing at one end and slowly renewed at the other was in vigorous growth and hardy preservation – sweeter than honey and stronger than a lion – the lexicographer was a person unknown, the dictionary a creation which his Creator had not created him to create.

God said: "Let Spirit perish into  
Form,"  
And lexicographers arose, a swarm!  
Thought fled and left her clothing,  
which they took, And catalogued  
each garment in a book.  
Now, from her leafy covert when she

cries: "Give me my clothes and I'll return," they rise And scan the list, and say without compassion: "Excuse us – they are mostly out of fashion." Sigismund Smith

**LIAR**, n. A lawyer with a roving commission.

**LIBERTY**, n. One of Imagination's most precious possessions.

The rising People, hot and out of breath,  
Roared around the palace: "Liberty or death!" "If death will do," the King said, "let me reign; You'll have, I'm sure, no reason to complain." Martha Braymance

**LICKSPITTLE**, n. A useful functionary, not infrequently found editing a newspaper. In his character of editor he is closely allied to the blackmailer by the tie of occasional identity; for in truth the lickspittle is only the blackmailer under another aspect, although the latter is frequently found as an independent species. Lickspittling is more detestable than blackmailing, precisely as the business of a confidence man is more detestable than that of a highway robber; and the parallel maintains itself throughout, for whereas few robbers will cheat, every sneak will plunder if he dare.

**LIFE**, n. A spiritual pickle preserving the body from decay. We live in daily apprehension of its loss; yet when lost it is not missed. The question, "Is life worth living?" has been much discussed; particularly by those who think it is not, many of whom have written at great length in support of their view and by careful observance of the laws of health enjoyed for long terms of years the honors of successful controversy.

"Life's not worth living, and that's the truth," Carelessly caroled the golden youth.  
In manhood still he maintained that view  
And held it more strongly the older he grew. When kicked by a jackass at eighty-three,  
"Go fetch me a surgeon at once!"

cried he.  
Han Soper

**LIGHTHOUSE**, n. A tall building on the seashore in which the government maintains a lamp and the friend of a politician.

**LIMB**, n. The branch of a tree or the leg of an American woman.

'Twas a pair of boots that the lady bought, And the salesman laced them tight  
To a very remarkable height –  
Higher, indeed, than I think he ought –

Higher than *can* be right.  
For the Bible declares – but never mind:

It is hardly fit  
To censure freely and fault to find  
With others for sins that I'm not inclined Myself to commit.  
Each has his weakness, and though my own  
Is freedom from every sin,  
It still were unfair to pitch in,  
Discharging the first censorious stone.  
Besides, the truth compels me to say,  
The boots in question were *made* that way. As he drew the lace she made a grimace,  
And blushing said to him:  
"This boot, I'm sure, is too high to endure, It hurts my – hurts my – limb."

The salesman smiled in a manner mild,  
Like an artless, undesigning child;  
Then, checking himself, to his face he gave A look as sorrowful as the grave,  
Though he didn't care two figs  
For her paints and throes,  
As he stroked her toes,  
Remarking with speech and manner just  
Befitting his calling: "Madam, I trust  
That it doesn't hurt your twigs."  
B. Percival Dike

**LINEN**, n. "A kind of cloth the making of which, when made of hemp, entails a great waste of hemp."  
– Calcraft the Hangman.

**LITIGANT**, n. A person about to give up his skin for the hope of retaining his bones.

**LITIGATION**, n. A machine which you go into as a pig and come out of as a sausage.

**LIVER**, n. A large red organ thoughtfully provided by nature to be bilious with. The sentiments and emotions which every literary anatomist now knows to haunt the heart were anciently believed to infest the liver; and even Gascoygne, speaking of the emotional side of human nature, calls it "our hepaticall parte." It was at one time considered the seat of life; hence its name – liver, the thing we live with. The liver is heaven's best gift to the goose; without it that bird would be unable to supply us with the Strasbourg *pate*.

**LL.D.** Letters indicating the degree *Legumptionorum Doctor*, one learned in laws, gifted with legal gumption. Some suspicion is cast upon this derivation by the fact that the title was formerly *LL.d.*, and conferred only upon gentlemen distinguished for their wealth. At the date of this writing Columbia University is considering the expediency of making another degree for clergymen, in place of the old D.D. – *Damnator Diaboli*. The new honor will be known as *Sanctorum Custus*, and written \$\$. The name of the Rev. John Satan has been suggested as a suitable recipient by a lover of consistency, who points out that Professor Harry Thurston Peck has long enjoyed the advantage of a degree.

**LOCK-AND-KEY**, n. The distinguishing device of civilization and enlightenment.

**LODGER**, n. A less popular name for the Second Person of that delectable newspaper Trinity, the Roomer, the Bedder, and the Mealer.

**LOGIC**, n. The art of thinking and reasoning in strict accordance with the limitations and incapacities of the human misunderstanding. The basic of logic is the syllogism, consisting of a major and a minor premise and a conclusion – thus:

*Major Premise:* Sixty men can do a piece of work sixty times as quickly as one man.

*Minor Premise:* One man can dig a posthole in sixty seconds; therefore –

*Conclusion:* Sixty men can dig a posthole in one second. This may be called the syllogism arithmetical, in which, by combining logic and mathematics, we obtain a double certainty and are twice blessed.

**LOGOMACHY**, n. A war in which the weapons are words and the wounds punctures in the swim-bladder of self-esteem – a kind of contest in which, the vanquished being unconscious of defeat, the victor is denied the reward of success.

'Tis said by divers of the scholar-men  
That poor Salmasius died of Milton's  
pen.

Alas! we cannot know if this is true,  
For reading Milton's wit we perish  
too.

**LOGANIMITY**, n. The disposition to endure injury with meek forbearance while maturing a plan of revenge.

**LONGEVITY**, n. Uncommon extension of the fear of death.

**LOOKING-GLASS**, n. A vitreous plane upon which to display a fleeting show for man's disillusion given.

The King of Manchuria had a magic  
looking-glass, whereon whoso  
looked saw, not his own image, but  
only that of the king. A certain  
courtier who had long enjoyed the  
king's favor and was thereby enriched  
beyond any other subject of the  
realm, said to the king: "Give me, I  
pray, thy wonderful mirror, so that  
when absent out of thine august  
presence I may yet do homage before  
thy visible shadow, prostrating  
myself night and morning in the  
glory of thy benign countenance, as

which nothing has so divine  
splendor, O Noonday Sun of the  
Universe!"  
Please with the speech, the king  
commanded that the mirror be  
conveyed to the courtier's palace; but  
after, having gone thither without  
appraisal, he found it in an apartment  
where was naught but idle lumber.  
And the mirror was dimmed with  
dust and overlaced with cobwebs.  
This so angered him that he fisted it  
hard, shattering the glass, and was  
sorely hurt. Enraged all the more by  
this mischance, he commanded that  
the ungrateful courtier be thrown into  
prison, and that the glass be repaired  
and taken back to his own palace;  
and this was done. But when the king  
looked again on the mirror he saw  
not his image as before, but only the  
figure of a crowned ass, having a  
bloody bandage on one of its hinder  
hooves – as the artificers and all who  
had looked upon it had before  
discerned but feared to report. Taught  
wisdom and charity, the king restored  
his courtier to liberty, had the mirror  
set into the back of the throne and  
reigned many years with justice and  
humility; and one day when he fell  
asleep in death while on the throne,  
the whole court saw in the mirror the  
luminous figure of an angel, which  
remains to this day.

**LOQUACITY**, n. A disorder which renders the sufferer unable to curb his tongue when you wish to talk.

**LORD**, n. In American society, an English tourist above the state of a costermonger, as, lord 'Aberdasher, Lord Hartisan and so forth. The traveling Briton of lesser degree is addressed as "Sir," as, Sir 'Arry Donkiboi, or 'Amstead 'Eath. The word "Lord" is sometimes used, also, as a title of the Supreme Being; but this is thought to be rather flattery than true reverence.

Miss Sallie Ann Splurge, of her own

accord, Wedded a wandering English lord – Wedded and took him to dwell with her "paw," A parent who throve by the practice of Draw. Lord Cadde I don't hesitate to declare Unworthy the father-in-legal care Of that elderly sport, notwithstanding the truth That Cadde had renounced all the follies of youth; For, sad to relate, he'd arrived at the stage Of existence that's marked by the vices of age. Among them, cupidity caused him to urge Repeated demands on the pocket of Splurge, Till, wrecked in his fortune, that gentleman saw Inadequate aid in the practice of Draw, And took, as a means of augmenting his pelf, To the business of being a lord himself. His neat-fitting garments he wilfully shed And sacked himself strangely in checks instead; Denuded his chin, but retained at each ear A whisker that looked like a blasted career. He painted his neck an incarnadine hue Each morning and varnished it all that he knew. The moony monocular set in his eye Appeared to be scanning the Sweet Bye-and-Bye. His head was enroofed with a billycock hat, And his low-necked shoes were aduncous and flat. In speech he eschewed his American ways, Denying his nose to the use of his A's And dulling their edge till the delicate sense Of a babe at their temper could take no offence. His H's – 'twas most inexpressibly sweet, The patter they made as they fell at his feet! Re-outfitted thus, Mr. Splurge without fear Began as Lord Splurge his recouping career. Alas, the Divinity shaping his end Entertained other views and decided to send His lordship in horror, despair and dismay From the land of the nobleman's natural prey. For, smit with his Old World ways, Lady

Cadde Fell – suffering Caesar! – in  
love with her dad!  
G.J.

**LORE**, n. Learning – particularly that sort which is not derived from a regular course of instruction but comes of the reading of occult books, or by nature. This latter is commonly designated as folk-lore and embraces popularly myths and superstitions. In Baring-Gould's *Curious Myths of the Middle Ages* the reader will find many of these traced backward, through various people soon converging lines, toward a common origin in remote antiquity. Among these are the fables of "Teddy the Giant Killer," "The Sleeping John Sharp Williams," "Little Red Riding Hood and the Sugar Trust," "Beauty and the Brisbane," "The Seven Aldermen of Ephesus," "Rip Van Fairbanks," and so forth. The fable with Goethe so affectingly relates under the title of "The Erl-King" was known two thousand years ago in Greece as "The Demos and the Infant Industry." One of the most general and ancient of these myths is that Arabian tale of "Ali Baba and the Forty Rockefellers."

**LOSS**, n. Privation of that which we had, or had not. Thus, in the latter sense, it is said of a defeated candidate that he "lost his election"; and of that eminent man, the poet Gilder, that he has "lost his mind." It is in the former and more legitimate sense, that the word is used in the famous epitaph:

Here Huntington's ashes long have  
lain  
Whose loss is our eternal gain,  
For while he exercised all his powers  
Whatever he gained, the loss was  
ours.

**LOVE**, n. A temporary insanity curable by marriage or by removal of the patient from the influences under which he incurred the disorder. This disease, like *caries* and many other ailments, is prevalent only among civilized races living under artificial conditions; barbarous nations breathing pure air and eating simple food enjoy immunity from its ravages. It is sometimes fatal, but more frequently to the physician than to the patient.

**LOW-BRED**, adj. "Raised" instead of brought up.

**LUMINARY**, n. One who throws light upon a subject; as an editor by not writing about it.

**LUNARIAN**, n. An inhabitant of the moon, as distinguished from Lunatic, one whom the moon inhabits. The Lunarians have been described by Lucian, Locke and other observers, but without much agreement. For example, Bragellos avers their anatomical identity with Man, but Professor Newcomb says they are more like the hill tribes of Vermont.

**LYRE**, n. An ancient instrument of torture. The word is now used in a figurative sense to denote the poetic faculty, as in the following fiery lines of our great poet, Ella Wheeler Wilcox:

I sit astride Parnassus with my lyre,  
And pick with care the disobedient  
wire.  
That stupid shepherd lolling on his  
crook  
With deaf attention scarcely deigns to  
look. I bide my time, and it shall  
come at length, When, with a Titan's  
energy and strength,  
I'll grab a fistful of the strings, and O,  
The word shall suffer when I let them  
go!  
Farquharson Harris

## M

**MACE**, n. A staff of office signifying authority. Its form, that of a heavy club, indicates its original purpose and use in dissuading from dissent.

**MACHINATION**, n. The method employed by one's opponents in baffling one's open and honorable efforts to do the right thing.

So plain the advantages of  
machination  
It constitutes a moral obligation,  
And honest wolves who think upon't  
with loathing Feel bound to don the  
sheep's deceptive clothing. So  
prosper still the diplomatic art,  
And Satan bows, with hand upon his

heart.  
R.S.K.

**MACROBIAN**, n. One forgotten of the gods and living to a great age. History is abundantly supplied with examples, from Methuselah to Old Parr, but some notable instances of longevity are less well known. A Calabrian peasant named Coloni, born in 1753, lived so long that he had what he considered a glimpse of the dawn of universal peace. Scanavius relates that he knew an archbishop who was so old that he could remember a time when he did not deserve hanging. In 1566 a linen draper of Bristol, England, declared that he had lived five hundred years, and that in all that time he had never told a lie. There are instances of longevity (*macrobiosis*) in our own country. Senator Chauncey Depew is old enough to know better. The editor of *The American*, a newspaper in New York City, has a memory that goes back to the time when he was a rascal, but not to the fact. The President of the United States was born so long ago that many of the friends of his youth have risen to high political and military preferment without the assistance of personal merit. The verses following were written by a macrobian:

When I was young the world was fair  
And amiable and sunny.  
A brightness was in all the air,  
In all the waters, honey.  
The jokes were fine and funny,  
The statesmen honest in their views,  
And in their lives, as well,  
And when you heard a bit of news  
'Twas true enough to tell.  
Men were not ranting, shouting,  
reeking,  
Nor women "generally speaking."  
The Summer then was long indeed:  
It lasted one whole season!  
The sparkling Winter gave no heed  
When ordered by Unreason  
To bring the early peas on.  
Now, where the dickens is the sense  
In calling that a year  
Which does no more than just  
commence  
Before the end is near?  
When I was young the year extended  
From month to month until it ended.

I know not why the world has  
changed  
To something dark and dreary,  
And everything is now arranged  
To make a fellow weary.  
The Weather Man – I fear he  
Has much to do with it, for, sure,  
The air is not the same:  
It chokes you when it is impure,  
When pure it makes you lame.  
With windows closed you are  
asthmatic;  
Open, neuralgic or sciatic.  
Well, I suppose this new regime  
Of dun degeneration  
Seems eviler than it would seem  
To a better observation,  
And has for compensation  
Some blessings in a deep disguise  
Which mortal sight has failed  
To pierce, although to angels' eyes  
They're visible unveiled.  
If Age is such a boon, good land!  
He's costumed by a master hand!  
Venerable Strigg

**MAD**, adj. Affected with a high degree of intellectual independence; not conforming to standards of thought, speech and action derived by the conformants from study of themselves; at odds with the majority; in short, unusual. It is noteworthy that persons are pronounced mad by officials destitute of evidence that themselves are sane. For illustration, this present (and illustrious) lexicographer is no firmer in the faith of his own sanity than is any inmate of any madhouse in the land; yet for aught he knows to the contrary, instead of the lofty occupation that seems to him to be engaging his powers he may really be beating his hands against the window bars of an asylum and declaring himself Noah Webster, to the innocent delight of many thoughtless spectators.

**MAGDALENE**, n. An inhabitant of Magdala. Popularly, a woman found out. This definition of the word has the authority of ignorance, Mary of Magdala being another person than the penitent woman mentioned by St. Luke. It has also the official sanction of the governments of Great Britain and the United States. In England the word is pronounced Maudlin, whence maudlin, adjective, unpleasantly

sentimental. With their Maudlin for Magdalene, and their Bedlam for Bethlehem, the English may justly boast themselves the greatest of revisers.

**MAGIC**, n. An art of converting superstition into coin. There are other arts serving the same high purpose, but the discreet lexicographer does not name them.

**MAGNET**, n. Something acted upon by magnetism.

**MAGNETISM**, n. Something acting upon a magnet. The two definitions immediately foregoing are condensed from the works of one thousand eminent scientists, who have illuminated the subject with a great white light, to the inexpressible advancement of human knowledge.

**MAGNIFICENT**, adj. Having a grandeur or splendor superior to that to which the spectator is accustomed, as the ears of an ass, to a rabbit, or the glory of a glowworm, to a maggot.

**MAGNITUDE**, n. Size. Magnitude being purely relative, nothing is large and nothing small. If everything in the universe were increased in bulk one thousand diameters nothing would be any larger than it was before, but if one thing remain unchanged all the others would be larger than they had been. To an understanding familiar with the relativity of magnitude and distance the spaces and masses of the astronomer would be no more impressive than those of the microscopist. For anything we know to the contrary, the visible universe may be a small part of an atom, with its component ions, floating in the life-fluid (luminiferous ether) of some animal. Possibly the wee creatures peopling the corpuscles of our own blood are overcome with the proper emotion when contemplating the unthinkable distance from one of these to another.

**MAGPIE**, n. A bird whose thievish disposition suggested to someone that it might be taught to talk.

**MAIDEN**, n. A young person of the unfair sex addicted to clewless conduct and views that madden to crime. The genus has a wide geographical distribution, being found wherever sought and deplored wherever found. The maiden is not altogether unpleasing to the eye, nor (without her

piano and her views) insupportable to the ear, though in respect to comeliness distinctly inferior to the rainbow, and, with regard to the part of her that is audible, bleating out of the field by the canary – which, also, is more portable.

A lovelorn maiden she sat and sang  
— This quaint, sweet song sang she;  
"It's O for a youth with a football  
bang  
And a muscle fair to see!  
The Captain he  
Of a team to be!  
On the gridiron he shall shine,  
A monarch by right divine,  
And never to roast on it – me!"  
Opoline Jones

**MAJESTY**, n. The state and title of a king. Regarded with a just contempt by the Most Eminent Grand Masters, Grand Chancellors, Great Incohonees and Imperial Potentates of the ancient and honorable orders of republican America.

**MALE**, n. A member of the unconsidered, or negligible sex. The male of the human race is commonly known (to the female) as Mere Man. The genus has two varieties: good providers and bad providers.

**MALEFACTOR**, n. The chief factor in the progress of the human race.

**MALTHUSIAN**, adj. Pertaining to Malthus and his doctrines. Malthus believed in artificially limiting population, but found that it could not be done by talking. One of the most practical exponents of the Malthusian idea was Herod of Judea, though all the famous soldiers have been of the same way of thinking.

**MAMMALIA**, n.pl. A family of vertebrate animals whose females in a state of nature suckle their young, but when civilized and enlightened put them out to nurse, or use the bottle.

**MAMMON**, n. The god of the world's leading religion. The chief temple is in the holy city of New York.

He swore that all other religions were



gammon, And wore out his knees in  
the worship of Mammon.  
Jared Oopf

**MAN**, n. An animal so lost in rapturous  
contemplation of what he thinks he is as to overlook  
what he indubitably ought to be. His chief occupation  
is extermination of other animals and his own species,  
which, however, multiplies with such insistent  
rapidity as to infest the whole habitable earth and  
Canada.

When the world was young and Man  
was new, And everything was  
pleasant,  
Distinctions Nature never drew  
'Mongst kings and priest and peasant.  
We're not that way at present,  
Save here in this Republic, where  
We have that old regime,  
For all are kings, however bare  
Their backs, howe'er extreme  
Their hunger. And, indeed, each has  
a voice To accept the tyrant of his  
party's choice.  
A citizen who would not vote,  
And, therefore, was detested,  
Was one day with a tarry coat  
(With feathers backed and breasted)  
By patriots invested.  
"It is your duty," cried the crowd,  
"Your ballot true to cast  
For the man o' your choice." He  
humbly bowed, And explained his  
wicked past:  
"That's what I very gladly would  
have done, Dear patriots, but he has  
never run."  
Apperton Duke

**MANES**, n. The immortal parts of dead Greeks and  
Romans. They were in a state of dull discomfort until  
the bodies from which they had exhaled were buried  
and burned; and they seem not to have been  
particularly happy afterward.

**MANICHEISM**, n. The ancient Persian doctrine of  
an incessant warfare between Good and Evil. When  
Good gave up the fight the Persians joined the  
victorious Opposition.

**MANNA**, n. A food miraculously given to the  
Israelites in the wilderness. When it was no longer  
supplied to them they settled down and tilled the soil,  
fertilizing it, as a rule, with the bodies of the original  
occupants.

**MARRIAGE**, n. The state or condition of a  
community consisting of a master, a mistress and two  
slaves, making in all, two.

**MARTYR**, n. One who moves along the line of least  
reluctance to a desired death.

**MATERIAL**, adj. Having an actual existence, as  
distinguished from an imaginary one. Important.

Material things I know, or fell, or  
see; All else is immaterial to me.  
Jamrach Holobom

**MAUSOLEUM**, n. The final and funniest folly of  
the rich.

**MAYONNAISE**, n. One of the sauces which serve  
the French in place of a state religion.

**ME**, pro. The objectionable case of I. The personal  
pronoun in English has three cases, the dominative,  
the objectionable and the oppressive. Each is all  
three.

**MEANDER**, n. To proceed sinuously and aimlessly.  
The word is the ancient name of a river about one  
hundred and fifty miles south of Troy, which turned  
and twisted in the effort to get out of hearing when  
the Greeks and Trojans boasted of their prowess.

**MEDAL**, n. A small metal disk given as a reward for  
virtues, attainments or services more or less authentic.  
It is related of Bismark, who had been awarded a  
medal for gallantly rescuing a drowning person, that,  
being asked the meaning of the medal, he replied: "I  
save lives sometimes." And sometimes he didn't.

**MEDICINE**, n. A stone flung down the Bowery to  
kill a dog in Broadway.

**MEEKNESS**, n. Uncommon patience in planning a  
revenge that is worth while.

**M** is for Moses,

Who slew the Egyptian. As sweet as  
a rose is  
The meekness of Moses.  
No monument shows his  
Post-mortem inscription,  
But M is for Moses  
Who slew the Egyptian.  
*The Biographical Alphabet*

**MEERSCHAUM**, n. (Literally, seafoam, and by many erroneously supposed to be made of it.) A fine white clay, which for convenience in coloring it brown is made into tobacco pipes and smoked by the workmen engaged in that industry. The purpose of coloring it has not been disclosed by the manufacturers.

There was a youth (you've heard  
before, This woeful tale, may be),  
Who bought a meerschaum pipe and  
swore  
That color it would be!  
He shut himself from the world away,  
Nor any soul he saw.  
He smoke by night, he smoked by  
day,  
As hard as he could draw.  
His dog died moaning in the wrath  
Of winds that blew aloof;  
The weeds were in the gravel path,  
The owl was on the roof.  
"He's gone afar, he'll come no more,"  
The neighbors sadly say.  
And so they batter in the door  
To take his goods away.  
Dead, pipe in mouth, the youngster  
lay,  
Nut-brown in face and limb.  
"That pipe's a lovely white," they say,  
"But it has colored him!"  
The moral there's small need to sing –  
'Tis plain as day to you:  
Don't play your game on any thing  
That is a gamester too.  
Martin Bulstrode

**MENDACIOUS**, adj. Addicted to rhetoric.

**MERCHANT**, n. One engaged in a commercial pursuit. A commercial pursuit is one in which the thing pursued is a dollar.

**MERCY**, n. An attribute beloved of detected offenders.

**MESMERISM**, n. Hypnotism before it wore good clothes, kept a carriage and asked Incredulity to dinner.

**METROPOLIS**, n. A stronghold of provincialism.

**MILLENNIUM**, n. The period of a thousand years when the lid is to be screwed down, with all reformers on the under side.

**MIND**, n. A mysterious form of matter secreted by the brain. Its chief activity consists in the endeavor to ascertain its own nature, the futility of the attempt being due to the fact that it has nothing but itself to know itself with. From the Latin *mens*, a fact unknown to that honest shoe-seller, who, observing that his learned competitor over the way had displayed the motto "*Mens conscia recti*," emblazoned his own front with the words "Men's, women's and children's conscia recti."

**MINE**, adj. Belonging to me if I can hold or seize it.

**MINISTER**, n. An agent of a higher power with a lower responsibility. In diplomacy and officer sent into a foreign country as the visible embodiment of his sovereign's hostility. His principal qualification is a degree of plausible inveracity next below that of an ambassador.

**MINOR**, adj. Less objectionable.

**MINSTREL**, adj. Formerly a poet, singer or musician; now a nigger with a color less than skin deep and a humor more than flesh and blood can bear.

**MIRACLE**, n. An act or event out of the order of nature and unaccountable, as beating a normal hand of four kings and an ace with four aces and a king.

**MISCREANT**, n. A person of the highest degree of

unworth. Etymologically, the word means unbeliever, and its present signification may be regarded as theology's noblest contribution to the development of our language.

**MISDEMEANOR**, n. An infraction of the law having less dignity than a felony and constituting no claim to admittance into the best criminal society.

By misdemeanors he essays to climb  
Into the aristocracy of crime.  
O, woe was him! – with manner chill  
and grand "Captains of industry"  
refused his hand,  
"Kings of finance" denied him  
recognition  
And "railway magnates" jeered his  
low condition. He robbed a bank to  
make himself respected. They still  
rebuffed him, for he was detected.  
S.V. Hanipur

**MISERICORDE**, n. A dagger which in mediaeval warfare was used by the foot soldier to remind an unhorsed knight that he was mortal.

**MISFORTUNE**, n. The kind of fortune that never misses.

**MISS**, n. The title with which we brand unmarried women to indicate that they are in the market. Miss, Missis (Mrs.) and Mister (Mr.) are the three most distinctly disagreeable words in the language, in sound and sense. Two are corruptions of Mistress, the other of Master. In the general abolition of social titles in this our country they miraculously escaped to plague us. If we must have them let us be consistent and give one to the unmarried man. I venture to suggest Mush, abbreviated to Mh.

**MOLECULE**, n. The ultimate, indivisible unit of matter. It is distinguished from the corpuscle, also the ultimate, indivisible unit of matter, by a closer resemblance to the atom, also the ultimate, indivisible unit of matter. Three great scientific theories of the structure of the universe are the molecular, the corpuscular and the atomic. A fourth affirms, with Haeckel, the condensation of precipitation of matter from ether – whose existence is proved by the condensation of precipitation. The present trend of

scientific thought is toward the theory of ions. The ion differs from the molecule, the corpuscle and the atom in that it is an ion. A fifth theory is held by idiots, but it is doubtful if they know any more about the matter than the others.

**MONAD**, n. The ultimate, indivisible unit of matter. (See *Molecule*.) According to Leibnitz, as nearly as he seems willing to be understood, the monad has body without bulk, and mind without manifestation – Leibnitz knows him by the innate power of considering. He has founded upon him a theory of the universe, which the creature bears without resentment, for the monad is a gentlmean. Small as he is, the monad contains all the powers and possibilities needful to his evolution into a German philosopher of the first class – altogether a very capable little fellow. He is not to be confounded with the microbe, or bacillus; by its inability to discern him, a good microscope shows him to be of an entirely distinct species.

**MONARCH**, n. A person engaged in reigning. Formerly the monarch ruled, as the derivation of the word attests, and as many subjects have had occasion to learn. In Russia and the Orient the monarch has still a considerable influence in public affairs and in the disposition of the human head, but in western Europe political administration is mostly entrusted to his ministers, he being somewhat preoccupied with reflections relating to the status of his own head.

**MONARCHICAL GOVERNMENT**, n. Government.

**MONDAY**, n. In Christian countries, the day after the baseball game.

**MONEY**, n. A blessing that is of no advantage to us excepting when we part with it. An evidence of culture and a passport to polite society. Supportable property.

**MONKEY**, n. An arboreal animal which makes itself at home in genealogical trees.

**MONOSYLLABIC**, adj. Composed of words of one syllable, for literary babes who never tire of testifying their delight in the vapid compound by appropriate googogling. The words are commonly Saxon – that

is to say, words of a barbarous people destitute of ideas and incapable of any but the most elementary sentiments and emotions.

The man who writes in Saxon  
Is the man to use an ax on  
Judibras

**MONSIGNOR**, n. A high ecclesiastical title, of which the Founder of our religion overlooked the advantages.

**MONUMENT**, n. A structure intended to commemorate something which either needs no commemoration or cannot be commemorated.

The bones of Agammemnon are a show,  
And ruined is his royal monument,  
but Agammemnon's fame suffers no diminution in consequence. The monument custom has its *reductiones ad absurdum* in monuments "to the unknown dead" – that is to say, monuments to perpetuate the memory of those who have left no memory.

**MORAL**, adj. Conforming to a local and mutable standard of right. Having the quality of general expediency.

It is sayd there be a raunge of mountaynes in the Easte, on one syde of the which certayn conducts are immorall, yet on the other syde they are holden in good esteeme; wherebye the mountayneer is much conveyenced, for it is given to him to goe downe eyther way and act as it shall suite his moode, withouten offence. *Gooke's Meditations*

**MORE**, adj. The comparative degree of too much.

**MOUSE**, n. An animal which strews its path with fainting women. As in Rome Christians were thrown to the lions, so centuries earlier in Otumwee, the most ancient and famous city of the world, female heretics were thrown to the mice. Jakak-Zotp, the historian, the only Otumwump whose writings have descended

to us, says that these martyrs met their death with little dignity and much exertion. He even attempts to exculpate the mice (such is the malice of bigotry) by declaring that the unfortunate women perished, some from exhaustion, some of broken necks from falling over their own feet, and some from lack of restoratives. The mice, he avers, enjoyed the pleasures of the chase with composure. But if "Roman history is nine-tenths lying," we can hardly expect a smaller proportion of that rhetorical figure in the annals of a people capable of so incredible cruelty to a lovely women; for a hard heart has a false tongue.

**MOUSQUETAIRE**, n. A long glove covering a part of the arm. Worn in New Jersey. But "mousquetaire" is a might poor way to spell muskeeter.

**MOUTH**, n. In man, the gateway to the soul; in woman, the outlet of the heart.

**MUGWUMP**, n. In politics one afflicted with self-respect and addicted to the vice of independence. A term of contempt.

**MULATTO**, n. A child of two races, ashamed of both.

**MULTITUDE**, n. A crowd; the source of political wisdom and virtue. In a republic, the object of the statesman's adoration. "In a multitude of consellers there is wisdom," saith the proverb. If many men of equal individual wisdom are wiser than any one of them, it must be that they acquire the excess of wisdom by the mere act of getting together. Whence comes it? Obviously from nowhere – as well say that a range of mountains is higher than the single mountains composing it. A multitude is as wise as its wisest member if it obey him; if not, it is no wiser than its most foolish.

**MUMMY**, n. An ancient Egyptian, formerly in universal use among modern civilized nations as medicine, and now engaged in supplying art with an excellent pigment. He is handy, too, in museums in gratifying the vulgar curiosity that serves to distinguish man from the lower animals.

By means of the Mummy, mankind,  
it is said, Attests to the gods its

respect for the dead. We plunder his  
tomb, be he sinner or saint, Distil him  
for physic and grind him for paint,  
Exhibit for money his poor, shrunken  
frame, And with levity flock to the  
scene of the shame. O, tell me, ye  
gods, for the use of my rhyme: For  
respecting the dead what's the limit  
of time?  
Scopas Brune

**MUSTANG**, n. An indocile horse of the western  
plains. In English society, the American wife of an  
English nobleman.

**MYRMIDON**, n. A follower of Achilles –  
particularly when he didn't lead.

**MYTHOLOGY**, n. The body of a primitive people's  
beliefs concerning its origin, early history, heroes,  
deities and so forth, as distinguished from the true  
accounts which it invents later.

## N

**NECTAR**, n. A drink served at banquets of the  
Olympian deities. The secret of its preparation is lost,  
but the modern Kentuckians believe that they come  
pretty near to a knowledge of its chief ingredient.

Juno drank a cup of nectar,  
But the draught did not affect her.  
Juno drank a cup of rye –  
Then she bad herself good-bye.  
J.G.

**NEGRO**, n. The *piece de resistance* in the American  
political problem. Representing him by the letter n,  
the Republicans begin to build their equation thus:  
"Let n = the white man." This, however, appears to  
give an unsatisfactory solution.

**NEIGHBOR**, n. One whom we are commanded to  
love as ourselves, and who does all he knows how to  
make us disobedient.

**NEPOTISM**, n. Appointing your grandmother to  
office for the good of the party.

**NEWTONIAN**, adj. Pertaining to a philosophy of the  
universe invented by Newton, who discovered that an  
apple will fall to the ground, but was unable to say  
why. His successors and disciples have advanced so  
far as to be able to say when.

**NIHILIST**, n. A Russian who denies the existence of  
anything but Tolstoi. The leader of the school is  
Tolstoi.

**NIRVANA**, n. In the Buddhist religion, a state of  
pleasurable annihilation awarded to the wise,  
particularly to those wise enough to understand it.

**NOBLEMAN**, n. Nature's provision for wealthy  
American minds ambitious to incur social distinction  
and suffer high life.

**NOISE**, n. A stench in the ear. Undomesticated  
music. The chief product and authenticating sign of  
civilization.

**NOMINATE**, v. To designate for the heaviest  
political assessment. To put forward a suitable person  
to incur the mudgobbling and deadcatting of the  
opposition.

**NOMINEE**, n. A modest gentleman shrinking from  
the distinction of private life and diligently seeking  
the honorable obscurity of public office.

**NON-COMBATANT**, n. A dead Quaker.

**NONSENSE**, n. The objections that are urged against  
this excellent dictionary.

**NOSE**, n. The extreme outpost of the face. From the  
circumstance that great conquerors have great noses,  
Getius, whose writings antedate the age of humor,  
calls the nose the organ of quell. It has been observed  
that one's nose is never so happy as when thrust into  
the affairs of others, from which some physiologists  
have drawn the inference that the nose is devoid of  
the sense of smell.

There's a man with a Nose,  
And wherever he goes  
The people run from him and shout:  
"No cotton have we  
For our ears if so be

He blow that interminous snout!"

So the lawyers applied  
For injunction. "Denied,"  
Said the Judge: "the defendant  
prefixion, Whate'er it portend,  
Appears to transcend  
The bounds of this court's  
jurisdiction."  
Arpad Singiny

**NOTORIETY**, n. The fame of one's competitor for public honors. The kind of renown most accessible and acceptable to mediocrity. A Jacob's-ladder leading to the vaudeville stage, with angels ascending and descending.

**NOUMENON**, n. That which exists, as distinguished from that which merely seems to exist, the latter being a phenomenon. The noumenon is a bit difficult to locate; it can be apprehended only by a process of reasoning – which is a phenomenon. Nevertheless, the discovery and exposition of noumena offer a rich field for what Lewes calls "the endless variety and excitement of philosophic thought." Hurrah (therefore) for the noumenon!

**NOVEL**, n. A short story padded. A species of composition bearing the same relation to literature that the panorama bears to art. As it is too long to be read at a sitting the impressions made by its successive parts are successively effaced, as in the panorama. Unity, totality of effect, is impossible; for besides the few pages last read all that is carried in mind is the mere plot of what has gone before. To the romance the novel is what photography is to painting. Its distinguishing principle, probability, corresponds to the literal actuality of the photograph and puts it distinctly into the category of reporting; whereas the free wing of the romancer enables him to mount to such altitudes of imagination as he may be fitted to attain; and the first three essentials of the literary art are imagination, imagination and imagination. The art of writing novels, such as it was, is long dead everywhere except in Russia, where it is new. Peace to its ashes – some of which have a large sale.

**NOVEMBER**, n. The eleventh twelfth of a weariness.

## O

**OATH**, n. In law, a solemn appeal to the Deity, made binding upon the conscience by a penalty for perjury.

**OBLIVION**, n. The state or condition in which the wicked cease from struggling and the dreary are at rest. Fame's eternal dumping ground. Cold storage for high hopes. A place where ambitious authors meet their works without pride and their betters without envy. A dormitory without an alarm clock.

**OBSERVATORY**, n. A place where astronomers conjecture away the guesses of their predecessors.

**OBSESSED**, p.p. Vexed by an evil spirit, like the Gadarene swine and other critics. Obsession was once more common than it is now. Arasthus tells of a peasant who was occupied by a different devil for every day in the week, and on Sundays by two. They were frequently seen, always walking in his shadow, when he had one, but were finally driven away by the village notary, a holy man; but they took the peasant with them, for he vanished utterly. A devil thrown out of a woman by the Archbishop of Rheims ran through the trees, pursued by a hundred persons, until the open country was reached, where by a leap higher than a church spire he escaped into a bird. A chaplain in Cromwell's army exorcised a soldier's obsessing devil by throwing the soldier into the water, when the devil came to the surface. The soldier, unfortunately, did not.

**OBsolete**, adj. No longer used by the timid. Said chiefly of words. A word which some lexicographer has marked obsolete is ever thereafter an object of dread and loathing to the fool writer, but if it is a good word and has no exact modern equivalent equally good, it is good enough for the good writer. Indeed, a writer's attitude toward "obsolete" words is as true a measure of his literary ability as anything except the character of his work. A dictionary of obsolete and obsolescent words would not only be singularly rich in strong and sweet parts of speech; it would add large possessions to the vocabulary of every competent writer who might not happen to be a competent reader.

**OBSTINATE**, adj. Inaccessible to the truth as it is manifest in the splendor and stress of our advocacy. The popular type and exponent of obstinacy is the mule, a most intelligent animal.

**OCCASIONAL**, adj. Afflicting us with greater or less frequency. That, however, is not the sense in which the word is used in the phrase "occasional verses," which are verses written for an "occasion," such as an anniversary, a celebration or other event. True, they afflict us a little worse than other sorts of verse, but their name has no reference to irregular recurrence.

**OCCIDENT**, n. The part of the world lying west (or east) of the Orient. It is largely inhabited by Christians, a powerful subtribe of the Hypocrites, whose principal industries are murder and cheating, which they are pleased to call "war" and "commerce." These, also, are the principal industries of the Orient.

**OCEAN**, n. A body of water occupying about two-thirds of a world made for man – who has no gills.

**OFFENSIVE**, adj. Generating disagreeable emotions or sensations, as the advance of an army against its enemy.

"Were the enemy's tactics offensive?"  
the king asked. "I should say so!"  
replied the unsuccessful general.  
"The blackguard wouldn't come out  
of his works!"

**OLD**, adj. In that stage of usefulness which is not inconsistent with general inefficiency, as an *old man*. Discredited by lapse of time and offensive to the popular taste, as an *old book*.

"Old books? The devil take them!"  
Goby said. "Fresh every day must be  
my books and bread."  
Nature herself approves the Goby rule  
And gives us every moment a fresh  
fool.  
Harley Shum

**OLEAGINOUS**, adj. Oily, smooth, sleek.

Disraeli once described the manner of Bishop Wilberforce as "unctuous, oleaginous, saponaceous." And the good prelate was ever afterward known as Soapy Sam. For every man there is something in the vocabulary that would stick to him like a second skin. His enemies have only to find it.

**OLYMPIAN**, adj. Relating to a mountain in Thessaly, once inhabited by gods, now a repository of yellowing newspapers, beer bottles and mutilated sardine cans, attesting the presence of the tourist and his appetite.

His name the smirking tourist scrawls  
Upon Minerva's temple walls,  
Where thundered once Olympian  
Zeus,  
And marks his appetite's abuse.  
Averil Joop

**OMEN**, n. A sign that something will happen if nothing happens.

**ONCE**, adv. Enough.

**OPERA**, n. A play representing life in another world, whose inhabitants have no speech but song, no motions but gestures and no postures but attitudes. All acting is simulation, and the word *simulation* is from *simia*, an ape; but in opera the actor takes for his model *Simia audibilis* (or *Pithecanthropos stentor*) – the ape that howls.

The actor apes a man – at least in  
shape; The opera performer apes and  
ape.

**OPIATE**, n. An unlocked door in the prison of Identity. It leads into the jail yard.

**OPPORTUNITY**, n. A favorable occasion for grasping a disappointment.

**OPPOSE**, v. To assist with obstructions and objections.

How lonely he who thinks to vex

With bandinage the Solemn Sex!  
Of levity, Mere Man, beware;  
None but the Grave deserve the  
Unfair.

Percy P. Orminder

**OPPOSITION**, n. In politics the party that prevents the Government from running amuck by hamstringing it.

The King of Ghargaroo, who had been abroad to study the science of government, appointed one hundred of his fattest subjects as members of a parliament to make laws for the collection of revenue. Forty of these he named the Party of Opposition and had his Prime Minister carefully instruct them in their duty of opposing every royal measure. Nevertheless, the first one that was submitted passed unanimously. Greatly displeased, the King vetoed it, informing the Opposition that if they did that again they would pay for their obstinacy with their heads. The entire forty promptly disemboweled themselves. "What shall we do now?" the King asked. "Liberal institutions cannot be maintained without a party of Opposition." "Splendor of the universe," replied the Prime Minister, "it is true these dogs of darkness have no longer their credentials, but all is not lost. Leave the matter to this worm of the dust."

So the Minister had the bodies of his Majesty's Opposition embalmed and stuffed with straw, put back into the seats of power and nailed there. Forty votes were recorded against every bill and the nation prospered. But one day a bill imposing a tax on warts was defeated – the members of the Government party had not been nailed to their seats! This so enraged the King that the Prime Minister was put to death, the parliament was dissolved with a battery of artillery,

and government of the people, by the people, for the people perished from Ghargaroo.

**OPTIMISM**, n. The doctrine, or belief, that everything is beautiful, including what is ugly, everything good, especially the bad, and everything right that is wrong. It is held with greatest tenacity by those most accustomed to the mischance of falling into adversity, and is most acceptably expounded with the grin that apes a smile. Being a blind faith, it is inaccessible to the light of disproof – an intellectual disorder, yielding to no treatment but death. It is hereditary, but fortunately not contagious.

**OPTIMIST**, n. A proponent of the doctrine that black is white. A pessimist applied to God for relief.

"Ah, you wish me to restore your hope and cheerfulness," said God.

"No," replied the petitioner, "I wish you to create something that would justify them."

"The world is all created," said God, "but you have overlooked something – the mortality of the optimist."

**ORATORY**, n. A conspiracy between speech and action to cheat the understanding. A tyranny tempered by stenography.

**ORPHAN**, n. A living person whom death has deprived of the power of filial ingratitude – a privation appealing with a particular eloquence to all that is sympathetic in human nature. When young the orphan is commonly sent to an asylum, where by careful cultivation of its rudimentary sense of locality it is taught to know its place. It is then instructed in the arts of dependence and servitude and eventually turned loose to prey upon the world as a bootblack or scullery maid.

**ORTHODOX**, n. An ox wearing the popular religious joke.

**ORTHOGRAPHY**, n. The science of spelling by the eye instead of the ear. Advocated with more heat than light by the outmates of every asylum for the insane. They have had to concede a few things since the time of Chaucer, but are none the less hot in defence of



those to be conceded hereafter.

A spelling reformer indicted  
For fudge was before the court cicted.  
The judge said: "Enough –  
His candle we'll snough,  
And his sepulchre shall not be  
whicted."

**OSTRICH**, n. A large bird to which (for its sins, doubtless) nature has denied that hinder toe in which so many pious naturalists have seen a conspicuous evidence of design. The absence of a good working pair of wings is no defect, for, as has been ingeniously pointed out, the ostrich does not fly.

**OTHERWISE**, adv. No better.

**OUTCOME**, n. A particular type of disappointment. By the kind of intelligence that sees in an exception a proof of the rule the wisdom of an act is judged by the outcome, the result. This is immortal nonsense; the wisdom of an act is to be judged by the light that the doer had when he performed it.

**OUTDO**, v.t. To make an enemy.

**OUT-OF-DOORS**, n. That part of one's environment upon which no government has been able to collect taxes. Chiefly useful to inspire poets.

I climbed to the top of a mountain  
one day To see the sun setting in  
glory,  
And I thought, as I looked at his  
vanishing ray, Of a perfectly splendid  
story.  
'Twas about an old man and the ass  
he bestrode Till the strength of the  
beast was o'ertested; Then the man  
would carry him miles on the road  
Till Neddy was pretty well rested.  
The moon rising solemnly over the  
crest  
Of the hills to the east of my station  
Displayed her broad disk to the  
darkening west Like a visible new  
creation.  
And I thought of a joke (and I  
laughed till I cried) Of an idle young  
woman who tarried

About a church—door for a look at the  
bride, Although 'twas herself that was  
married.

To poets all Nature is pregnant with  
grand Ideas – with thought and  
emotion.

I pity the dunces who don't  
understand  
The speech of earth, heaven and  
ocean.

Stromboli Smith

**OVATION**, n. n ancient Rome, a definite, formal pageant in honor of one who had been disserviceable to the enemies of the nation. A lesser "triumph." In modern English the word is improperly used to signify any loose and spontaneous expression of popular homage to the hero of the hour and place.

"I had an ovation!" the actor man  
said,  
But I thought it uncommonly queer,  
That people and critics by him had  
been led By the ear.  
The Latin lexicon makes his absurd  
Assertion as plain as a peg;  
In "ovum" we find the true root of the  
word. It means egg.  
Dudley Spink

**OVEREAT**, v. To dine.

Hail, Gastronome, Apostle of Excess,  
Well skilled to overeat without  
distress!  
Thy great invention, the unfatal feast,  
Shows Man's superiority to Beast.  
John Boop

**OVERWORK**, n. A dangerous disorder affecting high public functionaries who want to go fishing.

**OWE**, v. To have (and to hold) a debt. The word formerly signified not indebtedness, but possession; it meant "own," and in the minds of debtors there is still a good deal of confusion between assets and liabilities.

**OYSTER**, n. A slimy, gobby shellfish which civilization gives men the hardihood to eat without

removing its entrails! The shells are sometimes given to the poor.

## P

**PAIN**, n. An uncomfortable frame of mind that may have a physical basis in something that is being done to the body, or may be purely mental, caused by the good fortune of another.

**PAINTING**, n. The art of protecting flat surfaces from the weather and exposing them to the critic.

Formerly, painting and sculpture were combined in the same work: the ancients painted their statues. The only present alliance between the two arts is that the modern painter chisels his patrons.

**PALACE**, n. A fine and costly residence, particularly that of a great official. The residence of a high dignitary of the Christian Church is called a palace; that of the Founder of his religion was known as a field, or wayside. There is progress.

**PALM**, n. A species of tree having several varieties, of which the familiar "itching palm" (*Palma hominis*) is most widely distributed and sedulously cultivated. This noble vegetable exudes a kind of invisible gum, which may be detected by applying to the bark a piece of gold or silver. The metal will adhere with remarkable tenacity. The fruit of the itching palm is so bitter and unsatisfying that a considerable percentage of it is sometimes given away in what are known as "benefactions."

**PALMISTRY**, n. The 947th method (according to Mimbleshaw's classification) of obtaining money by false pretences. It consists in "reading character" in the wrinkles made by closing the hand. The pretence is not altogether false; character can really be read very accurately in this way, for the wrinkles in every hand submitted plainly spell the word "dupe." The imposture consists in not reading it aloud.

**PANDEMONIUM**, n. Literally, the Place of All the Demons. Most of them have escaped into politics and finance, and the place is now used as a lecture hall by the Audible Reformer. When disturbed by his voice

the ancient echoes clamor appropriate responses most gratifying to his pride of distinction.

**PANTALOONS**, n. A nether habiliment of the adult civilized male. The garment is tubular and unprovided with hinges at the points of flexion. Supposed to have been invented by a humorist. Called "trousers" by the enlightened and "pants" by the unworthy.

**PANTHEISM**, n. The doctrine that everything is God, in contradistinction to the doctrine that God is everything.

**PANTOMIME**, n. A play in which the story is told without violence to the language. The least disagreeable form of dramatic action.

**PARDON**, v. To remit a penalty and restore to the life of crime. To add to the lure of crime the temptation of ingratitude.

**PASSPORT**, n. A document treacherously inflicted upon a citizen going abroad, exposing him as an alien and pointing him out for special reprobation and outrage.

**PAST**, n. That part of Eternity with some small fraction of which we have a slight and regrettable acquaintance. A moving line called the Present parts it from an imaginary period known as the Future. These two grand divisions of Eternity, of which the one is continually effacing the other, are entirely unlike. The one is dark with sorrow and disappointment, the other bright with prosperity and joy. The Past is the region of sobs, the Future is the realm of song. In the one crouches Memory, clad in sackcloth and ashes, mumbling penitential prayer; in the sunshine of the other Hope flies with a free wing, beckoning to temples of success and bowers of ease. Yet the Past is the Future of yesterday, the Future is the Past of to-morrow. They are one – the knowledge and the dream.

**PASTIME**, n. A device for promoting dejection. Gentle exercise for intellectual debility.

**PATIENCE**, n. A minor form of despair, disguised as a virtue.

**PATRIOT**, n. One to whom the interests of a part seem superior to those of the whole. The dupe of statesmen and the tool of conquerors.

**PATRIOTISM**, n. Combustible rubbish read to the torch of any one ambitious to illuminate his name.

In Dr. Johnson's famous dictionary patriotism is defined as the last resort of a scoundrel. With all due respect to an enlightened but inferior lexicographer I beg to submit that it is the first.

**PEACE**, n. In international affairs, a period of cheating between two periods of fighting.

O, what's the loud uproar assailing  
Mine ears without cease?  
'Tis the voice of the hopeful,  
all-hailing The horrors of peace.  
Ah, Peace Universal; they woo it –  
Would marry it, too.  
If only they knew how to do it  
'Twere easy to do.  
They're working by night and by day  
On their problem, like moles.  
Have mercy, O Heaven, I pray,  
On their meddlesome souls!  
Ro Amil

**PEDESTRIAN**, n. The variable (an audible) part of the roadway for an automobile.

**PEDIGREE**, n. The known part of the route from an arboreal ancestor with a swim bladder to an urban descendant with a cigarette.

**PENITENT**, adj. Undergoing or awaiting punishment.

**PERFECTION**, n. An imaginary state of quality distinguished from the actual by an element known as excellence; an attribute of the critic. The editor of an English magazine having received a letter pointing out the erroneous nature of his views and style, and signed "Perfection," promptly wrote at the foot of the letter: "I don't agree with you," and mailed it to Matthew Arnold.

**PERIPATETIC**, adj. Walking about. Relating to the philosophy of Aristotle, who, while expounding it, moved from place to place in order to avoid his pupil's objections. A needless precaution – they knew no more of the matter than he.

**PERORATION**, n. The explosion of an oratorical rocket. It dazzles, but to an observer having the wrong kind of nose its most conspicuous peculiarity is the smell of the several kinds of powder used in preparing it.

**PERSEVERANCE**, n. A lowly virtue whereby mediocrity achieves an inglorious success.

"Persevere, persevere!" cry the  
homilists all, Themselves, day and  
night, persevering to bawl.  
"Remember the fable of tortoise and  
hare – The one at the goal while the  
other is – where?" Why, back there  
in Dreamland, renewing his lease Of  
life, all his muscles preserving the  
peace, The goal and the rival  
forgotten alike,  
And the long fatigue of the needless  
hike. His spirit a-squat in the grass  
and the dew Of the dogless Land  
beyond the Stew,  
He sleeps, like a saint in a holy place,  
A winner of all that is good in a race.  
Sukker Uffro

**PESSIMISM**, n. A philosophy forced upon the convictions of the observer by the disheartening prevalence of the optimist with his scarecrow hope and his unsightly smile.

**PHILANTHROPIST**, n. A rich (and usually bald) old gentleman who has trained himself to grin while his conscience is picking his pocket.

**PHILISTINE**, n. One whose mind is the creature of its environment, following the fashion in thought, feeling and sentiment. He is sometimes learned, frequently prosperous, commonly clean and always solemn.

**PHILOSOPHY**, n. A route of many roads leading

from nowhere to nothing.

Jali Hane

**PHOENIX**, n. The classical prototype of the modern "small hot bird."

**PIE**, n. An advance agent of the reaper whose name is Indigestion.

**PHONOGRAPH**, n. An irritating toy that restores life to dead noises.

Cold pie was highly esteemed by the remains. Rev. Dr. Mucker  
(in a funeral sermon over a British nobleman)

**PHOTOGRAPH**, n. A picture painted by the sun without instruction in art. It is a little better than the work of an Apache, but not quite so good as that of a Cheyenne.

Cold pie is a detestable American comestible.  
That's why I'm done – or undone –  
So far from that dear London.  
(from the headstone of a British nobleman in Kalamazoo)

**PHRENOLOGY**, n. The science of picking the pocket through the scalp. It consists in locating and exploiting the organ that one is a dupe with.

**PIETY**, n. Reverence for the Supreme Being, based upon His supposed resemblance to man.

**PHYSICIAN**, n. One upon whom we set our hopes when ill and our dogs when well.

The pig is taught by sermons and epistles  
To think the God of Swine has snout and bristles.  
Judibras

**PHYSIOGNOMY**, n. The art of determining the character of another by the resemblances and differences between his face and our own, which is the standard of excellence.

"There is no art," says Shakespeare,  
foolish man, "To read the mind's  
construction in the face."  
The physiognomists his portrait scan,  
And say: "How little wisdom here we  
trace! He knew his face disclosed his  
mind and heart, So, in his own  
defence, denied our art."  
Lavatar Shunk

**PIG**, n. An animal (*Porcus omnivorus*) closely allied to the human race by the splendor and vivacity of its appetite, which, however, is inferior in scope, for it sticks at pig.

**PIANO**, n. A parlor utensil for subduing the impenitent visitor. It is operated by pressing the keys of the machine and the spirits of the audience.

**PIGMY**, n. One of a tribe of very small men found by ancient travelers in many parts of the world, but by modern in Central Africa only. The Pigmies are so called to distinguish them from the bulkier Caucasians – who are Hogmies.

**PICKANINNY**, n. The young of the *Procyanthropos*, or *Americanus dominans*. It is small, black and charged with political fatalities.

**PILGRIM**, n. A traveler that is taken seriously. A Pilgrim Father was one who, leaving Europe in 1620 because not permitted to sing psalms through his nose, followed it to Massachusetts, where he could personate God according to the dictates of his conscience.

**PICTURE**, n. A representation in two dimensions of something wearisome in three.

**PILLORY**, n. A mechanical device for inflicting personal distinction – prototype of the modern newspaper conducted by persons of austere virtues and blameless lives.

"Behold great Daubert's picture here  
on view – Taken from Life." If that  
description's true, Grant, heavenly  
Powers, that I be taken, too.

**PIRACY**, n. Commerce without its folly–swaddles, just as God made it.

**PITIFUL**, adj. The state of an enemy of opponent after an imaginary encounter with oneself.

**PITY**, n. A failing sense of exemption, inspired by contrast.

**PLAGIARISM**, n. A literary coincidence compounded of a discreditable priority and an honorable subsequence.

**PLAGIARIZE**, v. To take the thought or style of another writer whom one has never, never read.

**PLAGUE**, n. In ancient times a general punishment of the innocent for admonition of their ruler, as in the familiar instance of Pharaoh the Immune. The plague as we of to-day have the happiness to know it is merely Nature's fortuitous manifestation of her purposeless objectionableness.

**PLAN**, v.t. To bother about the best method of accomplishing an accidental result.

**PLATITUDE**, n. The fundamental element and special glory of popular literature. A thought that snores in words that smoke. The wisdom of a million fools in the diction of a dullard. A fossil sentiment in artificial rock. A moral without the fable. All that is mortal of a departed truth. A demi-tasse of milk-and-mortality. The Pope's-nose of a featherless peacock. A jelly-fish withering on the shore of the sea of thought. The cackle surviving the egg. A desiccated epigram.

**PLATONIC**, adj. Pertaining to the philosophy of Socrates. Platonic Love is a fool's name for the affection between a disability and a frost.

**PLAUDITS**, n. Coins with which the populace pays those who tickle and devour it.

**PLEASE**, v. To lay the foundation for a superstructure of imposition.

**PLEASURE**, n. The least hateful form of dejection.

**PLEBEIAN**, n. An ancient Roman who in the blood of his country stained nothing but his hands. Distinguished from the Patrician, who was a saturated

solution.

**PLEBISCITE**, n. A popular vote to ascertain the will of the sovereign.

**PLENIPOTENTIARY**, adj. Having full power. A Minister Plenipotentiary is a diplomatist possessing absolute authority on condition that he never exert it.

**PLEONASM**, n. An army of words escorting a corporal of thought.

**PLOW**, n. An implement that cries aloud for hands accustomed to the pen.

**PLUNDER**, v. To take the property of another without observing the decent and customary reticences of theft. To effect a change of ownership with the candid concomitance of a brass band. To wrest the wealth of A from B and leave C lamenting a vanishing opportunity.

**POCKET**, n. The cradle of motive and the grave of conscience. In woman this organ is lacking; so she acts without motive, and her conscience, denied burial, remains ever alive, confessing the sins of others.

**POETRY**, n. A form of expression peculiar to the Land beyond the Magazines.

**POKER**, n. A game said to be played with cards for some purpose to this lexicographer unknown.

**POLICE**, n. An armed force for protection and participation.

**POLITENESS**, n. The most acceptable hypocrisy.

**POLITICS**, n. A strife of interests masquerading as a contest of principles. The conduct of public affairs for private advantage.

**POLITICIAN**, n. An eel in the fundamental mud upon which the superstructure of organized society is reared. When he wriggles he mistakes the agitation of his tail for the trembling of the edifice. As compared with the statesman, he suffers the disadvantage of being alive.

**POLYGAMY**, n. A house of atonement, or expiatory chapel, fitted with several stools of repentance, as distinguished from monogamy, which has but one.

**POPULIST**, n. A fossil patriot of the early agricultural period, found in the old red soapstone underlying Kansas; characterized by an uncommon spread of ear, which some naturalists contend gave him the power of flight, though Professors Morse and Whitney, pursuing independent lines of thought, have ingeniously pointed out that had he possessed it he would have gone elsewhere. In the picturesque speech of his period, some fragments of which have come down to us, he was known as "The Matter with Kansas."

**PORTABLE**, adj. Exposed to a mutable ownership through vicissitudes of possession.

His light estate, if neither he did  
make it Nor yet its former guardian  
forsake it,  
Is portable improperly, I take it.  
Worgum Slupsky

**PORTUGUESE**, n.pl. A species of geese indigenous to Portugal. They are mostly without feathers and imperfectly edible, even when stuffed with garlic.

**POSITIVE**, adj. Mistaken at the top of one's voice.

**POSITIVISM**, n. A philosophy that denies our knowledge of the Real and affirms our ignorance of the Apparent. Its longest exponent is Comte, its broadest Mill and its thickest Spencer.

**POSTERITY**, n. An appellate court which reverses the judgment of a popular author's contemporaries, the appellant being his obscure competitor.

**POTABLE**, n. Suitable for drinking. Water is said to be potable; indeed, some declare it our natural beverage, although even they find it palatable only when suffering from the recurrent disorder known as thirst, for which it is a medicine. Upon nothing has so great and diligent ingenuity been brought to bear in all ages and in all countries, except the most uncivilized, as upon the invention of substitutes for water. To hold that this general aversion to that liquid

has no basis in the preservative instinct of the race is to be unscientific – and without science we are as the snakes and toads.

**POVERTY**, n. A file provided for the teeth of the rats of reform. The number of plans for its abolition equals that of the reformers who suffer from it, plus that of the philosophers who know nothing about it. Its victims are distinguished by possession of all the virtues and by their faith in leaders seeking to conduct them into a prosperity where they believe these to be unknown.

**PRAY**, v. To ask that the laws of the universe be annulled in behalf of a single petitioner confessedly unworthy.

**PRE-ADAMITE**, n. One of an experimental and apparently unsatisfactory race of antedated Creation and lived under conditions not easily conceived. Melsius believed them to have inhabited "the Void" and to have been something intermediate between fishes and birds. Little its known of them beyond the fact that they supplied Cain with a wife and theologians with a controversy.

**PRECEDENT**, n. In Law, a previous decision, rule or practice which, in the absence of a definite statute, has whatever force and authority a Judge may choose to give it, thereby greatly simplifying his task of doing as he pleases. As there are precedents for everything, he has only to ignore those that make against his interest and accentuate those in the line of his desire. Invention of the precedent elevates the trial-at-law from the low estate of a fortuitous ordeal to the noble attitude of a dirigible arbitrament.

**PRECIPITATE**, adj. Anteprandial.

Precipitate in all, this sinner  
Took action first, and then his dinner.  
Judibras

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**PREDESTINATION**, n. The doctrine that all things occur according to programme. This doctrine should not be confused with that of foreordination, which means that all things are programmed, but does not affirm their occurrence, that being only an implication from other doctrines by which this is entailed. The difference is great enough to have deluged Christendom with ink, to say nothing of the gore. With the distinction of the two doctrines kept well in mind, and a reverent belief in both, one may hope to escape perdition if spared.

**PREDICAMENT**, n. The wage of consistency.

**PREDILECTION**, n. The preparatory stage of disillusion.

**PRE-EXISTENCE**, n. An unnoted factor in creation.

**PREFERENCE**, n. A sentiment, or frame of mind, induced by the erroneous belief that one thing is better than another. An ancient philosopher, expounding his conviction that life is no better than death, was asked by a disciple why, then, he did not die. "Because," he replied, "death is no better than life." It is longer.

**PREHISTORIC**, adj. Belonging to an early period and a museum. Antedating the art and practice of perpetuating falsehood.

He lived in a period prehistoric,  
When all was absurd and  
phantasmagoric.  
Born later, when Clio, celestial  
recorded, Set down great events in  
succession and order, He surely had  
seen nothing droll or fortuitous In  
anything here but the lies that she

threw at us.  
Orpheus Bowen

**PREJUDICE**, n. A vagrant opinion without visible means of support.

**PRELATE**, n. A church officer having a superior degree of holiness and a fat preferment. One of Heaven's aristocracy. A gentleman of God.

**PREROGATIVE**, n. A sovereign's right to do wrong.

**PRESBYTERIAN**, n. One who holds the conviction that the government authorities of the Church should be called presbyters.

**PRESCRIPTION**, n. A physician's guess at what will best prolong the situation with least harm to the patient.

**PRESENT**, n. That part of eternity dividing the domain of disappointment from the realm of hope.

**PRESENTABLE**, adj. Hideously appareled after the manner of the time and place.

In Boorioboola-Gha a man is  
presentable on occasions of  
ceremony if he have his abdomen  
painted a bright blue and wear a  
cow's tail; in New York he may, if it  
please him, omit the paint, but after  
sunset he must wear two tails made  
of the wool of a sheep and dyed  
black.

**PRESIDE**, v. To guide the action of a deliberative body to a desirable result. In Journalese, to perform upon a musical instrument; as, "He presided at the piccolo."

The Headliner, holding the copy in  
hand,  
Read with a solemn face:  
"The music was very uncommonly  
grand –  
The best that was every provided,  
For our townsman Brown presided  
At the organ with skill and grace."

The Headliner discontinued to read,  
And, spread the paper down  
On the desk, he dashed in at the top  
of the screed: "Great playing by  
President Brown."  
Orpheus Bowen

**PRESIDENCY**, n. The greased pig in the field game of American politics.

**PRESIDENT**, n. The leading figure in a small group of men of whom – and of whom only – it is positively known that immense numbers of their countrymen did not want any of them for President.

If that's an honor surely 'tis a greater  
To have been a simple and undamned  
spectator. Behold in me a man of  
mark and note  
Whom no elector e'er denied a vote! –  
An undiscredited, unhooted gent  
Who might, for all we know, be  
President  
By acclimation. Cheer, ye varlets,  
cheer – I'm passing with a wide and  
open ear!  
Jonathan Fomry

**PREVARICATOR**, n. A liar in the caterpillar estate.

**PRICE**, n. Value, plus a reasonable sum for the wear and tear of conscience in demanding it.

**PRIMATE**, n. The head of a church, especially a State church supported by involuntary contributions. The Primate of England is the Archbishop of Canterbury, an amiable old gentleman, who occupies Lambeth Palace when living and Westminster Abbey when dead. He is commonly dead.

**PRISON**, n. A place of punishments and rewards. The poet assures us that –

"Stone walls do not a prison make,"  
but a combination of the stone wall,  
the political parasite and the moral  
instructor is no garden of sweets.

**PRIVATE**, n. A military gentleman with a field-marshal's baton in his knapsack and an

impediment in his hope.

**PROBOSCIS**, n. The rudimentary organ of an elephant which serves him in place of the knife-and-fork that Evolution has as yet denied him. For purposes of humor it is popularly called a trunk. Asked how he knew that an elephant was going on a journey, the illustrious Jo. Miller cast a reproachful look upon his tormentor, and answered, absently: "When it is ajar," and threw himself from a high promontory into the sea. Thus perished in his pride the most famous humorist of antiquity, leaving to mankind a heritage of woe! No successor worthy of the title has appeared, though Mr. Edward bok, of *The Ladies' Home Journal*, is much respected for the purity and sweetness of his personal character.

**PROJECTILE**, n. The final arbiter in international disputes. Formerly these disputes were settled by physical contact of the disputants, with such simple arguments as the rudimentary logic of the times could supply – the sword, the spear, and so forth. With the growth of prudence in military affairs the projectile came more and more into favor, and is now held in high esteem by the most courageous. Its capital defect is that it requires personal attendance at the point of propulsion.

**PROOF**, n. Evidence having a shade more of plausibility than of unlikelihood. The testimony of two credible witnesses as opposed to that of only one.

**PROOF-READER**, n. A malefactor who atones for making your writing nonsense by permitting the compositor to make it unintelligible.

**PROPERTY**, n. Any material thing, having no particular value, that may be held by A against the cupidity of B. Whatever gratifies the passion for possession in one and disappoints it in all others. The object of man's brief rapacity and long indifference.

**PROPHECY**, n. The art and practice of selling one's credibility for future delivery.

**PROSPECT**, n. An outlook, usually forbidding. An expectation, usually forbidden.

Blow, blow, ye spicy breezes –  
O'er Ceylon blow your breath,



Where every prospect pleases,  
Save only that of death.  
Bishop Sheber

**PROVIDENTIAL**, adj. Unexpectedly and conspicuously beneficial to the person so describing it.

**PRUDE**, n. A bawd hiding behind the back of her demeanor.

**PUBLISH**, n. In literary affairs, to become the fundamental element in a cone of critics.

**PUSH**, n. One of the two things mainly conducive to success, especially in politics. The other is Pull.

**PYRRHONISM**, n. An ancient philosophy, named for its inventor. It consisted of an absolute disbelief in everything but Pyrrhonism. Its modern professors have added that.

## Q

**QUEEN**, n. A woman by whom the realm is ruled when there is a king, and through whom it is ruled when there is not.

**QUILL**, n. An implement of torture yielded by a goose and commonly wielded by an ass. This use of the quill is now obsolete, but its modern equivalent, the steel pen, is wielded by the same everlasting Presence.

**QUIVER**, n. A portable sheath in which the ancient statesman and the aboriginal lawyer carried their lighter arguments.

He extracted from his quiver,  
Did the controversial Roman,  
An argument well fitted  
To the question as submitted,  
Then addressed it to the liver,  
Of the unpersuaded foeman.  
Oglum P. Boomp

**QUIXOTIC**, adj. Absurdly chivalric, like Don Quixote. An insight into the beauty and excellence of this incomparable adjective is unhappily denied to him who has the misfortune to know that the

gentleman's name is pronounced Ke-ho-tay.  
When ignorance from out of our lives  
can banish Philology, 'tis folly to  
know Spanish.  
Juan Smith

**QUORUM**, n. A sufficient number of members of a deliberative body to have their own way and their own way of having it. In the United States Senate a quorum consists of the chairman of the Committee on Finance and a messenger from the White House; in the House of Representatives, of the Speaker and the devil.

**QUOTATION**, n. The act of repeating erroneously the words of another. The words erroneously repeated.

Intent on making his quotation truer,  
He sought the page infallible of  
Brewer,  
Then made a solemn vow that we  
would be  
Condemned eternally. Ah, me, ah,  
me!  
Stumpo Gaker

**QUOTIENT**, n. A number showing how many times a sum of money belonging to one person is contained in the pocket of another – usually about as many times as it can be got there.

## R

**RABBLE**, n. In a republic, those who exercise a supreme authority tempered by fraudulent elections. The rabble is like the sacred Simurgh, of Arabian fable – omnipotent on condition that it do nothing. (The word is Aristocrateese, and has no exact equivalent in our tongue, but means, as nearly as may be, "soaring swine.")

**RACK**, n. An argumentative implement formerly much used in persuading devotees of a false faith to embrace the living truth. As a call to the unconverted the rack never had any particular efficacy, and is now held in light popular esteem.

**RANK**, n. Relative elevation in the scale of human worth.

He held at court a rank so high  
That other noblemen asked why.  
"Because," 'twas answered, "others  
lack  
His skill to scratch the royal back."  
Aramis Jukes

**RANSOM**, n. The purchase of that which neither belongs to the seller, nor can belong to the buyer. The most unprofitable of investments.

**RAPACITY**, n. Providence without industry. The thrift of power.

**RAREBIT**, n. A Welsh rabbit, in the speech of the humorless, who point out that it is not a rabbit. To whom it may be solemnly explained that the comestible known as toad-in-a-hole is really not a toad, and that *riz-de-veau a la financiere* is not the smile of a calf prepared after the recipe of a she banker.

**RASCAL**, n. A fool considered under another aspect.

**RASCALITY**, n. Stupidity militant. The activity of a clouded intellect.

**RASH**, adj. Insensible to the value of our advice.

"Now lay your bet with mine, nor let  
These gamblers take your cash."  
"Nay, this child makes no bet."  
"Great snakes! How can you be so  
rash?"  
Bootle P. Gish

**RATIONAL**, adj. Devoid of all delusions save those of observation, experience and reflection.

**RATTLESNAKE**, n. Our prostrate brother, *Homo ventrambulans*.

**RAZOR**, n. An instrument used by the Caucasian to enhance his beauty, by the Mongolian to make a guy of himself, and by the Afro-American to affirm his worth.

**REACH**, n. The radius of action of the human hand. The area within which it is possible (and customary) to gratify directly the propensity to provide.

This is a truth, as old as the hills,  
That life and experience teach:  
The poor man suffers that keenest of  
ills, An impediment of his reach.  
G.J.

**READING**, n. The general body of what one reads. In our country it consists, as a rule, of Indiana novels, short stories in "dialect" and humor in slang.

We know by one's reading  
His learning and breeding;  
By what draws his laughter  
We know his Hereafter.  
Read nothing, laugh never –  
The Sphinx was less clever!  
Jupiter Muke

**RADICALISM**, n. The conservatism of to-morrow injected into the affairs of to-day.

**RADIUM**, n. A mineral that gives off heat and stimulates the organ that a scientist is a fool with.

**RAILROAD**, n. The chief of many mechanical devices enabling us to get away from where we are to wher we are no better off. For this purpose the railroad is held in highest favor by the optimist, for it permits him to make the transit with great expedition.

**RAMSHACKLE**, adj. Pertaining to a certain order of architecture, otherwise known as the Normal American. Most of the public buildings of the United States are of the Ramshackle order, though some of our earlier architects preferred the Ironical. Recent additions to the White House in Washington are Theo-Doric, the ecclesiastical order of the Dorians. They are exceedingly fine and cost one hundred dollars a brick.

**REALISM**, n. The art of depicting nature as it is seem by toads. The charm suffusing a landscape painted by a mole, or a story written by a measuring-worm.

**REALITY**, n. The dream of a mad philosopher. That which would remain in the cupel if one should assay a phantom. The nucleus of a vacuum.

**REALLY**, adv. Apparently.

**REAR**, n. In American military matters, that exposed part of the army that is nearest to Congress.

**REASON**, v.i. To weight probabilities in the scales of desire.

**REASON**, n. Propensitate of prejudice.

**REASONABLE**, adj. Accessible to the infection of our own opinions. Hospitable to persuasion, dissuasion and evasion.

**REBEL**, n. A proponent of a new misrule who has failed to establish it.

**RECOLLECT**, v. To recall with additions something not previously known.

**RECONCILIATION**, n. A suspension of hostilities. An armed truce for the purpose of digging up the dead.

**RECONSIDER**, v. To seek a justification for a decision already made.

**RECOUNT**, n. In American politics, another throw of the dice, accorded to the player against whom they are loaded.

**RECREATION**, n. A particular kind of dejection to relieve a general fatigue.

**RECRUIT**, n. A person distinguishable from a civilian by his uniform and from a soldier by his gait.

Fresh from the farm or factory or  
street,  
His marching, in pursuit or in retreat,  
Were an impressive martial spectacle  
Except for two impediments – his  
feet.  
Thompson Johnson

**RECTOR**, n. In the Church of England, the Third Person of the parochial Trinity, the Cruate and the Vicar being the other two.

**REDEMPTION**, n. Deliverance of sinners from the penalty of their sin, through their murder of the deity

against whom they sinned. The doctrine of Redemption is the fundamental mystery of our holy religion, and whoso believeth in it shall not perish, but have everlasting life in which to try to understand it.

We must awake Man's spirit from his  
sin,  
And take some special measure for  
redeeming it; Though hard indeed the  
task to get it in  
Among the angels any way but  
teaming it, Or purify it otherwise  
than steaming it. I'm awkward at  
Redemption – a beginner:  
My method is to crucify the sinner.  
Golgo Brone

**REDRESS**, n. Reparation without satisfaction. Among the Anglo-Saxon a subject conceiving himself wronged by the king was permitted, on proving his injury, to beat a brazen image of the royal offender with a switch that was afterward applied to his own naked back. The latter rite was performed by the public hangman, and it assured moderation in the plaintiff's choice of a switch.

**RED-SKIN**, n. A North American Indian, whose skin is not red – at least not on the outside.

**REDUNDANT**, adj. Superfluous; needless; **de trop**.

The Sultan said: "There's evidence  
abundant To prove this unbelieving  
dog redundant."  
To whom the Grand Vizier, with  
mien impressive, Replied: "His head,  
at least, appears excessive."  
Habeeb Suleiman  
Mr. Debs is a redundant citizen.  
Theodore Roosevelt

**REFERENDUM**, n. A law for submission of proposed legislation to a popular vote to learn the nonsensus of public opinion.

**REFLECTION**, n. An action of the mind whereby we obtain a clearer view of our relation to the things of yesterday and are able to avoid the perils that we shall not again encounter.

**REFORM**, v. A thing that mostly satisfies reformers opposed to reformation.

**REFUGE**, n. Anything assuring protection to one in peril. Moses and Joshua provided six cities of refuge – Bezer, Golan, Ramoth, Kadesh, Shekem and Hebron – to which one who had taken life inadvertently could flee when hunted by relatives of the deceased. This admirable expedient supplied him with wholesome exercise and enabled them to enjoy the pleasures of the chase; whereby the soul of the dead man was appropriately honored by observations akin to the funeral games of early Greece.

**REFUSAL**, n. Denial of something desired; as an elderly maiden's hand in marriage, to a rich and handsome suitor; a valuable franchise to a rich corporation, by an alderman; absolution to an impenitent king, by a priest, and so forth. Refusals are graded in a descending scale of finality thus: the refusal absolute, the refusal condition, the refusal tentative and the refusal feminine. The last is called by some casuists the refusal assentive.

**REGALIA**, n. Distinguishing insignia, jewels and costume of such ancient and honorable orders as Knights of Adam; Visionaries of Detectable Bosh; the Ancient Order of Modern Troglodytes; the League of Holy Humbug; the Golden Phalanx of Phalangiers; the Genteel Society of Expurgated Hoodlums; the Mystic Alliances of Gorgeous Regalians; Knights and Ladies of the Yellow Dog; the Oriental Order of Sons of the West; the Blatherhood of Insufferable Stuff; Warriors of the Long Bow; Guardians of the Great Horn Spoon; the Band of Brutes; the Impenitent Order of Wife-Beaters; the Sublime Legion of Flamboyant Conspicuous; Worshipers at the Electroplated Shrine; Shining Inaccessibles; Fee-Faw-Fummers of the inimitable Grip; Jannissaries of the Broad-Blown Peacock; Plumed Increscencies of the Magic Temple; the Grand Cabal of Able-Bodied Sedentarians; Associated Deities of the Butter Trade; the Garden of Galoots; the Affectionate Fraternity of Men Similarly Warded; the Flashing Astonishers; Ladies of Horror; Cooperative Association for Breaking into the Spotlight; Dukes of Eden; Disciples Militant of the Hidden Faith; Knights-Champions of the Domestic Dog; the Holy Gregarians; the Resolute Optimists; the Ancient Sodality of Inhospitable Hogs;

Associated Sovereigns of Mendacity; Dukes-Guardian of the Mystic Cess-Pool; the Society for Prevention of Prevalence; Kings of Drink; Polite Federation of Gents-Consequential; the Mysterious Order of the Undecipherable Scroll; Uniformed Rank of Lousy Cats; Monarchs of Worth and Hunger; Sons of the South Star; Prelates of the Tub-and-Sword.

**RELIGION**, n. A daughter of Hope and Fear, explaining to Ignorance the nature of the Unknowable.

"What is your religion my son?"  
inquired the Archbishop of Rheims.  
"Pardon, monseigneur," replied  
Rochebriant; "I am ashamed of it."  
"Then why do you not become an  
atheist?"  
"Impossible! I should be ashamed of  
atheism."  
"In that case, monsieur, you should  
join the Protestants."

**RELIQUARY**, n. A receptacle for such sacred objects as pieces of the true cross, short-ribs of the saints, the ears of Balaam's ass, the lung of the cock that called Peter to repentance and so forth. Reliquaries are commonly of metal, and provided with a lock to prevent the contents from coming out and performing miracles at unseasonable times. A feather from the wing of the Angel of the Annunciation once escaped during a sermon in Saint Peter's and so tickled the noses of the congregation that they woke and sneezed with great vehemence three times each. It is related in the "Gesta Sanctorum" that a sacristan in the Canterbury cathedral surprised the head of Saint Dennis in the library. Reprimanded by its stern custodian, it explained that it was seeking a body of doctrine. This unseemly levity so raged the diocesan that the offender was publicly anathematized, thrown into the Stour and replaced by another head of Saint Dennis, brought from Rome.

**RENOWN**, n. A degree of distinction between notoriety and fame – a little more supportable than the one and a little more intolerable than the other. Sometimes it is conferred by an unfriendly and inconsiderate hand.

I touched the harp in every key,  
But found no heeding ear;  
And then Ithuriel touched me  
With a revealing spear.  
Not all my genius, great as 'tis,  
Could urge me out of night.  
I felt the faint appulse of his,  
And leapt into the light!  
W.J. Candleton

**REPARATION**, n. Satisfaction that is made for a wrong and deducted from the satisfaction felt in committing it.

**REPARTEE**, n. Prudent insult in retort. Practiced by gentlemen with a constitutional aversion to violence, but a strong disposition to offend. In a war of words, the tactics of the North American Indian.

**REPENTANCE**, n. The faithful attendant and follower of Punishment. It is usually manifest in a degree of reformation that is not inconsistent with continuity of sin.

Desirous to avoid the pains of Hell,  
You will repent and join the Church,  
Parnell? How needless! – Nick will  
keep you off the coals And add you  
to the woes of other souls.  
Jomater Abemy

**REPLICA**, n. A reproduction of a work of art, by the artist that made the original. It is so called to distinguish it from a "copy," which is made by another artist. When the two are made with equal skill the replica is the more valuable, for it is supposed to be more beautiful than it looks.

**REPORTER**, n. A writer who guesses his way to the truth and dispels it with a tempest of words.

"More dear than all my bosom  
knows, O thou Whose 'lips are  
sealed' and will not disavow!" So  
sang the blithe reporter—man as grew  
Beneath his hand the leg—long  
"interview."  
Barson Maith

**REPOSE**, v.i. To cease from troubling.

**REPRESENTATIVE**, n. In national politics, a member of the Lower House in this world, and without discernible hope of promotion in the next.

**REPROBATION**, n. In theology, the state of a luckless mortal prenatally damned. The doctrine of reprobation was taught by Calvin, whose joy in it was somewhat marred by the sad sincerity of his conviction that although some are foredoomed to perdition, others are predestined to salvation.

**REPUBLIC**, n. A nation in which, the thing governing and the thing governed being the same, there is only a permitted authority to enforce an optional obedience. In a republic, the foundation of public order is the ever lessening habit of submission inherited from ancestors who, being truly governed, submitted because they had to. There are as many kinds of republics as there are graduations between the despotism whence they came and the anarchy whither they lead.

**REQUIEM**, n. A mass for the dead which the minor poets assure us the winds sing o'er the graves of their favorites. Sometimes, by way of providing a varied entertainment, they sing a dirge.

**RESIDENT**, adj. Unable to leave.

**RESIGN**, v.t. To renounce an honor for an advantage. To renounce an advantage for a greater advantage.

'Twas rumored Leonard Wood had  
signed  
A true renunciation  
Of title, rank and every kind  
Of military station –  
Each honorable station.  
By his example fired – inclined  
To noble emulation,  
The country humbly was resigned  
To Leonard's resignation –  
His Christian resignation.  
Politian Greame

**RESOLUTE**, adj. Obstinate in a course that we approve.

**RESPECTABILITY**, n. The offspring of a *liaison* between a bald head and a bank account.

**RESPIRATOR**, n. An apparatus fitted over the nose and mouth of an inhabitant of London, whereby to filter the visible universe in its passage to the lungs.

**RESPITE**, n. A suspension of hostilities against a sentenced assassin, to enable the Executive to determine whether the murder may not have been done by the prosecuting attorney. Any break in the continuity of a disagreeable expectation.

Altgeld upon his incandescend bed  
Lay, an attendant demon at his head.  
"O cruel cook, pray grant me some  
relief – Some respite from the roast,  
however brief."

"Remember how on earth I pardoned  
all  
Your friends in Illinois when held in  
thrall."

"Unhappy soul! for that alone you  
squirm  
O'er fire unquenched, a never-dying  
worm.

"Yet, for I pity your uneasy state,  
Your doom I'll mollify and pains  
abate.

"Naught, for a season, shall your  
comfort mar, Not even the memory  
of who you are."

Throughout eternal space dread  
silence fell; Heaven trembled as  
Compassion entered Hell.

"As long, sweet demon, let my  
respite be

As, governing down here, I'd respite  
thee."

"As long, poor soul, as any of the  
pack

You thrust from jail consumed in  
getting back."

A genial chill affected Altgeld's hide  
While they were turning him on  
t'other side.

Joel Spate Woop

**RESPLENDENT**, adj. Like a simple American  
citizen beduiking himself in his lodge, or affirming his

consequence in the Scheme of Things as an elemental  
unit of a parade.

The Knights of Dominion were so  
resplendent in their velvet– and–gold  
that their masters would hardly have  
known them.

"Chronicles of the Classes"

**RESPOND**, v.i. To make answer, or disclose  
otherwise a consciousness of having inspired an  
interest in what Herbert Spencer calls "external  
coexistences," as Satan "squat like a toad" at the ear  
of Eve, responded to the touch of the angel's spear.  
To respond in damages is to contribute to the  
maintenance of the plaintiff's attorney and,  
incidentally, to the gratification of the plaintiff.

**RESPONSIBILITY**, n. A detachable burden easily  
shifted to the shoulders of God, Fate, Fortune, Luck  
or one's neighbor. In the days of astrology it was  
customary to unload it upon a star.

Alas, things ain't what we should see  
If Eve had let that apple be;  
And many a feller which had ought  
To set with monarchses of thought,  
Or play some rosy little game  
With battle–chaps on fields of fame,  
Is downed by his unlucky star  
And hollers: "Peanuts! – here you  
are!"

"The Sturdy Beggar"

**RESTITUTIONS**, n. The founding or endowing of  
universities and public libraries by gift or bequest.

**RESTITUTOR**, n. Benefactor; philanthropist.

**RETALIATION**, n. The natural rock upon which is  
reared the Temple of Law.

**RETRIBUTION**, n. A rain of fire–and–brimstone  
that falls alike upon the just and such of the unjust as  
have not procured shelter by evicting them.

In the lines following, addressed to  
an Emperor in exile by Father  
Gassalasca Jape, the reverend poet  
appears to hint his sense of the  
improvidence of turning about to face

Retribution when it is talking  
exercise:

What, what! Dom Pedro, you desire  
to go  
Back to Brazil to end your days in  
quiet? Why, what assurance have you  
'twould be so? 'Tis not so long since  
you were in a riot, And your dear  
subjects showed a will to fly at Your  
throat and shake you like a rat. You  
know That empires are ungrateful;  
are you certain Republics are less  
handy to get hurt in?

**REVEILLE**, n. A signal to sleeping soldiers to  
dream of battlefields no more, but get up and have  
their blue noses counted. In the American army it is  
ingeniously called "rev-e-lee," and to that  
pronunciation our countrymen have pledged their  
lives, their misfortunes and their sacred dishonor.

**REVELATION**, n. A famous book in which St. John  
the Divine concealed all that he knew. The revealing  
is done by the commentators, who know nothing.

**REVERENCE**, n. The spiritual attitude of a man to a  
god and a dog to a man.

**REVIEW**, v.t.

To set your wisdom (holding not a  
doubt of it, Although in truth there's  
neither bone nor skin to it) At work  
upon a book, and so read out of it  
The qualities that you have first read  
into it.

**REVOLUTION**, n. In politics, an abrupt change in  
the form of misgovernment. Specifically, in  
American history, the substitution of the rule of an  
Administration for that of a Ministry, whereby the  
welfare and happiness of the people were advanced a  
full half-inch. Revolutions are usually accompanied  
by a considerable effusion of blood, but are accounted  
worth it – this appraisal being made by  
beneficiaries whose blood had not the mischance to  
be shed. The French revolution is of incalculable  
value to the Socialist of to-day; when he pulls the  
string actuating its bones its gestures are  
inexpressibly terrifying to gory tyrants suspected of

fomenting law and order.

**RHADOMANCER**, n. One who uses a divining-rod  
in prospecting for precious metals in the pocket of a  
fool.

**RIBALDRY**, n. Censorious language by another  
concerning oneself.

**RIBROASTER**, n. Censorious language by oneself  
concerning another. The word is of classical  
refinement, and is even said to have been used in a  
fable by Georgius Coadjutor, one of the most  
fastidious writers of the fifteenth century –  
commonly, indeed, regarded as the founder of the  
Fastidiotic School.

**RICE-WATER**, n. A mystic beverage secretly used  
by our most popular novelists and poets to regulate  
the imagination and narcotize the conscience. It is  
said to be rich in both obtundite and lethargine, and is  
brewed in a midnight fog by a fat which of the  
Dismal Swamp.

**RICH**, adj. Holding in trust and subject to an  
accounting the property of the indolent, the  
incompetent, the unthrifty, the envious and the  
luckless. That is the view that prevails in the  
underworld, where the Brotherhood of Man finds its  
most logical development and candid advocacy. To  
denizens of the midworld the word means good and  
wise.

**RICHERS**, n.

A gift from Heaven signifying, "This  
is my beloved son, in whom I am  
well pleased."

John D. Rockefeller

The reward of toil and virtue.

J.P. Morgan

The sayings of many in the hands of  
one.

Eugene Debs

To these excellent definitions the  
inspired lexicographer feels that he  
can add nothing of value.

**RIDICULE**, n. Words designed to show that the  
person of whom they are uttered is devoid of the

dignity of character distinguishing him who utters them. It may be graphic, mimetic or merely rident. Shaftesbury is quoted as having pronounced it the test of truth – a ridiculous assertion, for many a solemn fallacy has undergone centuries of ridicule with no abatement of its popular acceptance. What, for example, has been more valorously derided than the doctrine of Infant Respectability?

**RIGHT**, n. Legitimate authority to be, to do or to have; as the right to be a king, the right to do one's neighbor, the right to have measles, and the like. The first of these rights was once universally believed to be derived directly from the will of God; and this is still sometimes affirmed **in partibus infidelium** outside the enlightened realms of Democracy; as the well known lines of Sir Abednego Bink, following:

By what right, then, do royal rulers  
rule? Whose is the sanction of their  
state and pow'r? He surely were as  
stubborn as a mule  
Who, God unwilling, could maintain  
an hour His uninvited session on the  
throne, or air His pride securely in  
the Presidential chair.  
Whatever is so by Right Divine;  
Whate'er occurs, God wills it so.  
Good land! It were a wondrous thing  
if His design A fool could baffle or a  
rogue withstand! If so, then God, I  
say (intending no offence) Is guilty  
of contributory negligence.

**RIGHTEOUSNESS**, n. A sturdy virtue that was once found among the Pantidoodles inhabiting the lower part of the peninsula of Oque. Some feeble attempts were made by returned missionaries to introduce it into several European countries, but it appears to have been imperfectly expounded. An example of this faulty exposition is found in the only extant sermon of the pious Bishop Rowley, a characteristic passage from which is here given:

"Now righteousness consisteth not  
merely in a holy state of mind, nor  
yet in performance of religious rites  
and obedience to the letter of the law.  
It is not enough that one be pious and

just: one must see to it that others also are in the same state; and to this end compulsion is a proper means. Forasmuch as my injustice may work ill to another, so by his injustice may evil be wrought upon still another, the which it is as manifestly my duty to estop as to forestall mine own tort. Wherefore if I would be righteous I am bound to restrain my neighbor, by force if needful, in all those injurious enterprises from which, through a better disposition and by the help of Heaven, I do myself restrain."

**RIME**, n. Agreeing sounds in the terminals of verse, mostly bad. The verses themselves, as distinguished from prose, mostly dull. Usually (and wickedly) spelled "rhyme."

**RIMER**, n. A poet regarded with indifference or disesteem.

The rimer quenches his unheeded  
fires,  
The sound surceases and the sense  
expires. Then the domestic dog, to  
east and west,  
Expounds the passions burning in his  
breast. The rising moon o'er that  
enchanted land  
Pauses to hear and yearns to  
understand.  
Mowbray Myles

**RIOT**, n. A popular entertainment given to the military by innocent bystanders.

**R.I.P.** A careless abbreviation of **requiescat in pace**, attesting to indolent goodwill to the dead. According to the learned Dr. Drigge, however, the letters originally meant nothing more than **reductus in pulvis**.

**RITE**, n. A religious or semi-religious ceremony fixed by law, precept or custom, with the essential oil of sincerity carefully squeezed out of it.

**RITUALISM**, n. A Dutch Garden of God where He may walk in rectilinear freedom, keeping off the grass.

**ROAD**, n. A strip of land along which one may pass from where it is too tiresome to be to where it is futile



to go.

All roads, howsoe'er they diverge,  
lead to Rome, Whence, thank the  
good Lord, at least one leads back  
home.

Borey the Bald

**ROBBER**, n. A candid man of affairs.

It is related of Voltaire that one night  
he and some traveling companion  
lodged at a wayside inn. The  
surroundings were suggestive, and  
after supper they agreed to tell robber  
stories in turn. "Once there was a  
Farmer-General of the Revenues."  
Saying nothing more, he was  
encouraged to continue. "That," he  
said, "is the story."

**ROMANCE**, n. Fiction that owes no allegiance to  
the God of Things as They Are. In the novel the  
writer's thought is tethered to probability, as a  
domestic horse to the hitching-post, but in romance it  
ranges at will over the entire region of the  
imagination – free, lawless, immune to bit and rein.  
Your novelist is a poor creature, as Carlyle might say  
– a mere reporter. He may invent his characters and  
plot, but he must not imagine anything taking place  
that might not occur, albeit his entire narrative is  
candidly a lie. Why he imposes this hard condition on  
himself, and "drags at each remove a lengthening  
chain" of his own forging he can explain in ten thick  
volumes without illuminating by so much as a  
candle's ray the black profound of his own ignorance  
of the matter. There are great novels, for great writers  
have "laid waste their powers" to write them, but it  
remains true that far and away the most fascinating  
fiction that we have is "The Thousand and One  
Nights."

**ROPE**, n. An obsolescent appliance for reminding  
assassins that they too are mortal. It is put about the  
neck and remains in place one's whole life long. It has  
been largely superseded by a more complex electrical  
device worn upon another part of the person; and this  
is rapidly giving place to an apparatus known as the  
preachment.

**ROSTRUM**, n. In Latin, the beak of a bird or the  
prow of a ship. In America, a place from which a  
candidate for office energetically expounds the  
wisdom, virtue and power of the rabble.

**ROUNDHEAD**, n. A member of the Parliamentary  
party in the English civil war – so called from his  
habit of wearing his hair short, whereas his enemy,  
the Cavalier, wore his long. There were other points  
of difference between them, but the fashion in hair  
was the fundamental cause of quarrel. The Cavaliers  
were royalists because the king, an indolent fellow,  
found it more convenient to let his hair grow than to  
wash his neck. This the Roundheads, who were  
mostly barbers and soap-boilers, deemed an injury to  
trade, and the royal neck was therefore the object of  
their particular indignation. Descendants of the  
belligerents now wear their hair all alike, but the fires  
of animosity enkindled in that ancient strife smoulder  
to this day beneath the snows of British civility.

**RUBBISH**, n. Worthless matter, such as the  
religions, philosophies, literatures, arts and sciences  
of the tribes infesting the regions lying due south  
from Boreaplas.

**RUIN**, v. To destroy. Specifically, to destroy a maid's  
belief in the virtue of maids.

**RUM**, n. Generically, fiery liquors that produce  
madness in total abstainers.

**RUMOR**, n. A favorite weapon of the assassins of  
character.

Sharp, irresistible by mail or shield,  
By guard unparried as by flight  
unstayed, O serviceable Rumor, let  
me wield  
Against my enemy no other blade.  
His be the terror of a foe unseen,  
His the inutile hand upon the hilt,  
And mine the deadly tongue, long,  
slender, keen, Hinting a rumor of  
some ancient guilt. So shall I slay the  
wretch without a blow, Spare me to  
celebrate his overthrow,  
And nurse my valor for another foe.  
Joel Buxter

**RUSSIAN**, n. A person with a Caucasian body and a Mongolian soul. A Tartar Emetic.

## S

**SABBATH**, n. A weekly festival having its origin in the fact that God made the world in six days and was arrested on the seventh. Among the Jews observance of the day was enforced by a Commandment of which this is the Christian version: "Remember the seventh day to make thy neighbor keep it wholly." To the Creator it seemed fit and expedient that the Sabbath should be the last day of the week, but the Early Fathers of the Church held other views. So great is the sanctity of the day that even where the Lord holds a doubtful and precarious jurisdiction over those who go down to (and down into) the sea it is reverently recognized, as is manifest in the following deep-water version of the Fourth Commandment:

Six days shalt thou labor and do all  
thou art able, And on the seventh  
holystone the deck and scrape the  
cable.

Decks are no longer holystoned, but  
the cable still supplies the captain  
with opportunity to attest a pious  
respect for the divine ordinance.

**SACERDOTALIST**, n. One who holds the belief that a clergyman is a priest. Denial of this momentous doctrine is the hardest challenge that is now flung into the teeth of the Episcopalian church by the Neo-Dictionarians.

**SACRAMENT**, n. A solemn religious ceremony to which several degrees of authority and significance are attached. Rome has seven sacraments, but the Protestant churches, being less prosperous, feel that they can afford only two, and these of inferior sanctity. Some of the smaller sects have no sacraments at all – for which mean economy they will indubitably be damned.

**SACRED**, adj. Dedicated to some religious purpose; having a divine character; inspiring solemn thoughts or emotions; as, the Dalai Lama of Thibet; the Moogum of M'bwango; the temple of Apes in Ceylon; the Cow in India; the Crocodile, the Cat and the Onion of ancient Egypt; the Mufti of Moosh; the

hair of the dog that bit Noah, etc.

All things are either sacred or  
profane.

The former to ecclesiasts bring gain;  
The latter to the devil appertain.

Dumbo Omohundro

**SANDLOTTER**, n. A vertebrate mammal holding the political views of Denis Kearney, a notorious demagogue of San Francisco, whose audiences gathered in the open spaces (sandlots) of the town. True to the traditions of his species, this leader of the proletariat was finally bought off by his law-and-order enemies, living prosperously silent and dying impenitently rich. But before his treason he imposed upon California a constitution that was a confection of sin in a diction of solecisms. The similarity between the words "sandlotter" and "sansculotte" is problematically significant, but indubitably suggestive.

**SAFETY-CLUTCH**, n. A mechanical device acting automatically to prevent the fall of an elevator, or cage, in case of an accident to the hoisting apparatus.

Once I seen a human ruin  
In an elevator-well,  
And his members was bestrewin'  
All the place where he had fell.  
And I says, apostrophisin'  
That uncommon woful wreck:  
"Your position's so surprisin'  
That I tremble for your neck!"  
Then that ruin, smilin' sadly  
And impressive, up and spoke:  
"Well, I wouldn't tremble badly,  
For it's been a fortnight broke."  
Then, for further comprehension  
Of his attitude, he begs  
I will focus my attention  
On his various arms and legs –  
How they all are contumacious;  
Where they each, respective, lie;  
How one trotter proves ungracious,  
T'other one an *alibi*.  
These particulars is mentioned  
For to show his dismal state,  
Which I wasn't first intentioned  
To specifical relate.  
None is worsen to be dreaded

That I ever have heard tell  
Than the gent's who there was  
spreaded  
In that elevator—well.  
Now this tale is allegoric —  
It is figurative all,  
For the well is metaphoric  
And the feller didn't fall.  
I opine it isn't moral  
For a writer—man to cheat,  
And despise to wear a laurel  
As was gotten by deceit.  
For 'tis Politics intended  
By the elevator, mind,  
It will boost a person splendid  
If his talent is the kind.  
Col. Bryan had the talent  
(For the busted man is him)  
And it shot him up right gallant  
Till his head begun to swim.  
Then the rope it broke above him  
And he painful come to earth  
Where there's nobody to love him  
For his detrimented worth.  
Though he's livin' none would know  
him,  
Or at leastwise not as such.  
Moral of this woful poem:  
Frequent oil your safety—clutch.  
Porfer Poog

**SAINT**, n. A dead sinner revised and edited. The Duchess of Orleans relates that the irreverent old calumniator, Marshal Villeroi, who in his youth had known St. Francis de Sales, said, on hearing him called saint: "I am delighted to hear that Monsieur de Sales is a saint. He was fond of saying indelicate things, and used to cheat at cards. In other respects he was a perfect gentleman, though a fool."

**SALACITY**, n. A certain literary quality frequently observed in popular novels, especially in those written by women and young girls, who give it another name and think that in introducing it they are occupying a neglected field of letters and reaping an overlooked harvest. If they have the misfortune to live long enough they are tormented with a desire to burn their sheaves.

**SALAMANDER**, n. Originally a reptile inhabiting

fire; later, an anthropomorphous immortal, but still a pyrophile. Salamanders are now believed to be extinct, the last one of which we have an account having been seen in Carcassonne by the Abbe Belloc, who exorcised it with a bucket of holy water.

**SARCOPHAGUS**, n. Among the Greeks a coffin which being made of a certain kind of carnivorous stone, had the peculiar property of devouring the body placed in it. The sarcophagus known to modern obsequiographers is commonly a product of the carpenter's art.

**SATAN**, n. One of the Creator's lamentable mistakes, repented in sashcloth and axes. Being instated as an archangel, Satan made himself multifariously objectionable and was finally expelled from Heaven. Halfway in his descent he paused, bent his head in thought a moment and at last went back. "There is one favor that I should like to ask," said he.

"Name it."

"Man, I understand, is about to be created. He will need laws." "What, wretch! you his appointed adversary, charged from the dawn of eternity with hatred of his soul — you ask for the right to make his laws?"

"Pardon; what I have to ask is that he be permitted to make them himself."

It was so ordered.

**SATIETY**, n. The feeling that one has for the plate after he has eaten its contents, madam.

**SATIRE**, n. An obsolete kind of literary composition in which the vices and follies of the author's enemies were expounded with imperfect tenderness. In this country satire never had more than a sickly and uncertain existence, for the soul of it is wit, wherein we are dolefully deficient, the humor that we mistake for it, like all humor, being tolerant and sympathetic. Moreover, although Americans are "endowed by their Creator" with abundant vice and folly, it is not generally known that these are reprehensible qualities, wherefore the satirist is popularly regarded as a soul-spirited knave, and his ever victim's outcry for codefendants evokes a national assent.

Hail Satire! be thy praises ever sung

In the dead language of a mummy's  
tongue,  
For thou thyself art dead, and  
damned as well – Thy spirit (usefully  
employed) in Hell.  
Had it been such as consecrates the  
Bible  
Thou hadst not perished by the law of  
libel.  
Barney Stims

**SATYR**, n. One of the few characters of the Grecian  
mythology accorded recognition in the Hebrew.  
(Leviticus, xvii, 7.) The satyr was at first a member of  
the dissolute community acknowledging a loose  
allegiance with Dionysius, but underwent many  
transformations and improvements. Not infrequently  
he is confounded with the faun, a later and decenter  
creation of the Romans, who was less like a man and  
more like a goat.

**SAUCE**, n. The one infallible sign of civilization and  
enlightenment. A people with no sauces has one  
thousand vices; a people with one sauce has only nine  
hundred and ninety-nine. For every sauce invented  
and accepted a vice is renounced and forgiven.

**SAW**, n. A trite popular saying, or proverb.  
(Figurative and colloquial.) So called because it  
makes its way into a wooden head. Following are  
examples of old saws fitted with new teeth.

A penny saved is a penny to squander.  
A man is known by the company that  
he organizes. A bad workman  
quarrels with the man who calls him  
that.  
A bird in the hand is worth what it  
will bring.  
Better late than before anybody has  
invited you.  
Example is better than following it.  
Half a loaf is better than a whole one  
if there is much else.  
Think twice before you speak to a  
friend in need.  
What is worth doing is worth the  
trouble of asking somebody to do it.  
Least said is soonest disavowed.  
He laughs best who laughs least.

Speak of the Devil and he will hear  
about it.  
Of two evils choose to be the least.  
Strike while your employer has a big  
contract.  
Where there's a will there's a won't.

**SCARABAEUS**, n. The sacred beetle of the ancient  
Egyptians, allied to our familiar "tumble-bug." It was  
supposed to symbolize immortality, the fact that God  
knew why giving it its peculiar sanctity. Its habit of  
incubating its eggs in a ball of ordure may also have  
commended it to the favor of the priesthood, and may  
some day assure it an equal reverence among  
ourselves. True, the American beetle is an inferior  
beetle, but the American priest is an inferior priest.

**SCARABEE**, n. The same as scarabaeus.

He fell by his own hand  
Beneath the great oak tree. He'd  
traveled in a foreign land. He tried to  
make her understand The dance that's  
called the Saraband, But he called it  
Scarabee. He had called it so through  
an afternoon,  
And she, the light of his harem if so  
might be, Had smiled and said  
naught. O the body was fair to see,  
All frosted there in the shine o' the  
moon – Dead for a Scarabee  
And a recollection that came too late.  
O Fate!  
They buried him where he lay, He  
sleeps awaiting the Day, In state,  
And two Possible Puns, moon-eyed  
and wan,  
Gloom over the grave and then move  
on.  
Dead for a Scarabee!  
Fernando Tapple

**SCARIFICATION**, n. A form of penance practised  
by the mediaeval pious. The rite was performed,  
sometimes with a knife, sometimes with a hot iron,  
but always, says Arsenius Asceticus, acceptably if the  
penitent spared himself no pain nor harmless  
disfigurement. Scarification, with other crude  
penances, has now been superseded by benefaction.  
The founding of a library or endowment of a

university is said to yield to the penitent a sharper and more lasting pain than is conferred by the knife or iron, and is therefore a surer means of grace. There are, however, two grave objections to it as a penitential method: the good that it does and the taint of justice.

**SCEPTER**, n. A king's staff of office, the sign and symbol of his authority. It was originally a mace with which the sovereign admonished his jester and vetoed ministerial measures by breaking the bones of their proponents.

**SCIMETAR**, n. A curved sword of exceeding keenness, in the conduct of which certain Orientals attain a surprising proficiency, as the incident here related will serve to show. The account is translated from the Japanese by Shusi Itama, a famous writer of the thirteenth century.

When the great Gichi-Kuktai was Mikado he condemned to decapitation Jijiji Ri, a high officer of the Court. Soon after the hour appointed for performance of the rite what was his Majesty's surprise to see calmly approaching the throne the man who should have been at that time ten minutes dead! "Seventeen hundred impossible dragons!" shouted the enraged monarch. "Did I not sentence you to stand in the market-place and have your head struck off by the public executioner at three o'clock? And is it not now 3:10?"

"Son of a thousand illustrious deities," answered the condemned minister, "all that you say is so true that the truth is a lie in comparison. But your heavenly Majesty's sunny and vitalizing wishes have been pestilently disregarded. With joy I ran and placed my unworthy body in the market-place. The executioner appeared with his bare scimeter, ostentatiously whirled it in air, and then, tapping me lightly upon the neck, strode away, pelted by the populace, with whom I was ever a

favorite. I am come to pray for justice upon his own dishonorable and treasonous head."

"To what regiment of executioners does the black-boweled caitiff belong?" asked the Mikado.

"To the gallant Ninety-eight Hundred and Thirty-seventh – I know the man. His name is Sakko-Samshi."

"Let him be brought before me," said the Mikado to an attendant, and a half-hour later the culprit stood in the Presence.

"Thou bastard son of a three-legged hunchback without thumbs!" roared the sovereign – "why didst thou but lightly tap the neck that it should have been thy pleasure to sever?"

"Lord of Cranes of Cherry Blooms," replied the executioner, unmoved, "command him to blow his nose with his fingers." Being commanded, Jijiji Ri laid hold of his nose and trumpeted like an elephant, all expecting to see the severed head flung violently from him. Nothing occurred: the performance prospered peacefully to the close, without incident. All eyes were now turned on the executioner, who had grown as white as the snows on the summit of Fujiama. His legs trembled and his breath came in gasps of terror.

"Several kinds of spike-tailed brass lions!" he cried; "I am a ruined and disgraced swordsman! I struck the villain feebly because in flourishing the scimeter I had accidentally passed it through my own neck! Father of the Moon, I resign my office." So saying, he gasped his top-knot, lifted off his head, and advancing to the throne laid it humbly at the Mikado's feet.

**SCRAP-BOOK**, n. A book that is commonly edited by a fool. Many persons of some small distinction compile scrap-books containing whatever they happen to read about themselves or employ others to

collect. One of these egotists was addressed in the lines following, by Agamemnon Melancthon Peters:

Dear Frank, that scrap-book where  
you boast You keep a record true  
Of every kind of peppered roast  
That's made of you;  
Wherein you paste the printed gibes  
That revel round your name,  
Thinking the laughter of the scribes  
Attests your fame;  
Where all the pictures you arrange  
That comic pencils trace –  
Your funny figure and your strange  
Semitic face –  
Pray lend it me. Wit I have not,  
Nor art, but there I'll list  
The daily drubbings you'd have got  
Had God a fist.

**SCRIBBLER**, n. A professional writer whose views are antagonistic to one's own.

**SCRIPTURES**, n. The sacred books of our holy religion, as distinguished from the false and profane writings on which all other faiths are based.

**SEAL**, n. A mark impressed upon certain kinds of documents to attest their authenticity and authority. Sometimes it is stamped upon wax, and attached to the paper, sometimes into the paper itself. Sealing, in this sense, is a survival of an ancient custom of inscribing important papers with cabalistic words or signs to give them a magical efficacy independent of the authority that they represent. In the British museum are preserved many ancient papers, mostly of a sacerdotal character, validated by necromantic pentagrams and other devices, frequently initial letters of words to conjure with; and in many instances these are attached in the same way that seals are appended now. As nearly every reasonless and apparently meaningless custom, rite or observance of modern times had origin in some remote utility, it is pleasing to note an example of ancient nonsense evolving in the process of ages into something really useful. Our word "sincere" is derived from *sine cero*, without wax, but the learned are not in agreement as to whether this refers to the absence of the cabalistic signs, or to that of the wax with which letters were formerly closed from public scrutiny. Either view of the matter will serve one in immediate need of an

hypothesis. The initials L.S., commonly appended to signatures of legal documents, mean *locum sigillis*, the place of the seal, although the seal is no longer used – an admirable example of conservatism distinguishing Man from the beasts that perish. The words *locum sigillis* are humbly suggested as a suitable motto for the Pribyloff Islands whenever they shall take their place as a sovereign State of the American Union.

**SEINE**, n. A kind of net for effecting an involuntary change of environment. For fish it is made strong and coarse, but women are more easily taken with a singularly delicate fabric weighted with small, cut stones.

The devil casting a seine of lace,  
(With precious stones 'twas weighted)  
Drew it into the landing place  
And its contents calculated.  
All souls of women were in that sack  
—  
A draft miraculous, precious!  
But ere he could throw it across his  
back  
They'd all escaped through the  
meshes.  
Baruch de Loppis

**SELF-ESTEEM**, n. An erroneous appraisalment.

**SELF-EVIDENT**, adj. Evident to one's self and to nobody else.

**SELFISH**, adj. Devoid of consideration for the selfishness of others.

**SENATE**, n. A body of elderly gentlemen charged with high duties and misdemeanors.

**SERIAL**, n. A literary work, usually a story that is not true, creeping through several issues of a newspaper or magazine. Frequently appended to each installment is a "synopsis of preceding chapters" for those who have not read them, but a direr need is a synopsis of succeeding chapters for those who do not intend to read *them*. A synopsis of the entire work would be still better. The late James F. Bowman was writing a serial tale for a weekly paper in collaboration with a genius whose name has not come

down to us. They wrote, not jointly but alternately, Bowman supplying the installment for one week, his friend for the next, and so on, world without end, they hoped. Unfortunately they quarreled, and one Monday morning when Bowman read the paper to prepare himself for his task, he found his work cut out for him in a way to surprise and pain him. His collaborator had embarked every character of the narrative on a ship and sunk them all in the deepest part of the Atlantic.

**SEVERALTY**, n. Separateness, as, lands in severalty, i.e., lands held individually, not in joint ownership. Certain tribes of Indians are believed now to be sufficiently civilized to have in severalty the lands that they have hitherto held as tribal organizations, and could not sell to the Whites for waxen beads and potato whiskey.

Lo! the poor Indian whose unsuited  
mind  
Saw death before, hell and the grave  
behind; Whom thrifty settler ne'er  
besought to stay – His small  
belongings their appointed prey;  
Whom Dispossession, with alluring  
wile,  
Persuaded elsewhere every little  
while!  
His fire unquenched and his undying  
worm  
By "land in severalty" (charming  
term!)  
Are cooled and killed, respectively,  
at last, And he to his new holding  
anchored fast!

**SHERIFF**, n. In America the chief executive office of a country, whose most characteristic duties, in some of the Western and Southern States, are the catching and hanging of rogues.

John Elmer Pettibone Cajee  
(I write of him with little glee)  
Was just as bad as he could be.  
'Twas frequently remarked: "I swon!  
The sun has never looked upon  
So bad a man as Neighbor John."  
A sinner through and through, he had  
This added fault: it made him mad

To know another man was bad.  
In such a case he thought it right  
To rise at any hour of night  
And quench that wicked person's  
light.  
Despite the town's entreaties, he  
Would hale him to the nearest tree  
And leave him swinging wide and  
free.  
Or sometimes, if the humor came,  
A luckless wight's reluctant frame  
Was given to the cheerful flame.  
While it was turning nice and brown,  
All unconcerned John met the frown  
Of that austere and righteous town.  
"How sad," his neighbors said, "that  
he  
So scornful of the law should be –  
An anar c, h, i, s, t."  
(That is the way that they preferred  
To utter the abhorrent word,  
So strong the aversion that it stirred.)  
"Resolved," they said, continuing,  
"That Badman John must cease this  
thing  
Of having his unlawful fling.  
"Now, by these sacred relics" – here  
Each man had out a souvenir  
Got at a lynching yesteryear –  
"By these we swear he shall forsake  
His ways, nor cause our hearts to ache  
By sins of rope and torch and stake.  
"We'll tie his red right hand until  
He'll have small freedom to fulfil  
The mandates of his lawless will."  
So, in convention then and there,  
They named him Sheriff. The affair  
Was opened, it is said, with prayer.  
J. Milton Sloluck

**SIREN**, n. One of several musical prodigies famous for a vain attempt to dissuade Odysseus from a life on the ocean wave. Figuratively, any lady of splendid promise, dissembled purpose and disappointing performance.

**SLANG**, n. The grunt of the human hog (*Pignoramus intolerabilis*) with an audible memory. The speech of one who utters with his tongue what he thinks with his ear, and feels the pride of a creator in

accomplishing the feat of a parrot. A means (under Providence) of setting up as a wit without a capital of sense.

**SMITHAREEN**, n. A fragment, a decomponent part, a remain. The word is used variously, but in the following verse on a noted female reformer who opposed bicycle-riding by women because it "led them to the devil" it is seen at its best:

The wheels go round without a sound  
—  
The maidens hold high revel;  
In sinful mood, insanely gay,  
True spinsters spin adown the way  
From duty to the devil!  
They laugh, they sing, and —  
ting-a-ling! Their bells go all the  
morning;  
Their lanterns bright bestar the night  
Pedestrians a-warning.  
With lifted hands Miss Charlotte  
stands,  
Good-Lording and O-mying,  
Her rheumatism forgotten quite,  
Her fat with anger frying.  
She blocks the path that leads to  
wrath,  
Jack Satan's power defying.  
The wheels go round without a sound  
The lights burn red and blue and  
green. What's this that's found upon  
the ground?  
Poor Charlotte Smith's a smithareen!  
John William Yope

**SOPHISTRY**, n. The controversial method of an opponent, distinguished from one's own by superior insincerity and fooling. This method is that of the later Sophists, a Grecian sect of philosophers who began by teaching wisdom, prudence, science, art and, in brief, whatever men ought to know, but lost themselves in a maze of quibbles and a fog of words.

His bad opponent's "facts" he sweeps  
away, And drags his sophistry to  
light of day;  
Then swears they're pushed to  
madness who resort To falsehood of  
so desperate a sort.

Not so; like sods upon a dead man's  
breast, He lies most lightly who the  
least is pressed.  
Polydore Smith

**SORCERY**, n. The ancient prototype and forerunner of political influence. It was, however, deemed less respectable and sometimes was punished by torture and death. Augustine Nicholas relates that a poor peasant who had been accused of sorcery was put to the torture to compel a confession. After enduring a few gentle agonies the suffering simpleton admitted his guilt, but naively asked his tormentors if it were not possible to be a sorcerer without knowing it.

**SOUL**, n. A spiritual entity concerning which there hath been brave disputation. Plato held that those souls which in a previous state of existence (antedating Athens) had obtained the clearest glimpses of eternal truth entered into the bodies of persons who became philosophers. Plato himself was a philosopher. The souls that had least contemplated divine truth animated the bodies of usurpers and despots. Dionysius I, who had threatened to decapitate the broad-browed philosopher, was a usurper and a despot. Plato, doubtless, was not the first to construct a system of philosophy that could be quoted against his enemies; certainly he was not the last. "Concerning the nature of the soul," saith the renowned author of *Diversiones Sanctorum*, "there hath been hardly more argument than that of its place in the body. Mine own belief is that the soul hath her seat in the abdomen — in which faith we may discern and interpret a truth hitherto unintelligible, namely that the glutton is of all men most devout. He is said in the Scripture to 'make a god of his belly' — why, then, should he not be pious, having ever his Deity with him to freshen his faith? Who so well as he can know the might and majesty that he shrines? Truly and soberly, the soul and the stomach are one Divine Entity; and such was the belief of Promasius, who nevertheless erred in denying it immortality. He had observed that its visible and material substance failed and decayed with the rest of the body after death, but of its immaterial essence he knew nothing. This is what we call the Appetite, and it survives the wreck and reek of mortality, to be rewarded or punished in another world, according to what it hath demanded in the flesh. The Appetite whose coarse clamoring was for the unwholesome viands of the general market



and the public refectory shall be cast into eternal famine, whilst that which firmly through civilly insisted on ortolans, caviare, terrapin, anchovies, *pates de foie gras* and all such Christian comestibles shall flesh its spiritual tooth in the souls of them forever and ever, and wreak its divine thirst upon the immortal parts of the rarest and richest wines ever quaffed here below. Such is my religious faith, though I grieve to confess that neither His Holiness the Pope nor His Grace the Archbishop of Canterbury (whom I equally and profoundly revere) will assent to its dissemination."

**SPOOKER**, n. A writer whose imagination concerns itself with supernatural phenomena, especially in the doings of spooks. One of the most illustrious spookers of our time is Mr. William D. Howells, who introduces a well-credentialed reader to as respectable and mannerly a company of spooks as one could wish to meet. To the terror that invests the chairman of a district school board, the Howells ghost adds something of the mystery enveloping a farmer from another township.

**STORY**, n. A narrative, commonly untrue. The truth of the stories here following has, however, not been successfully impeached.

One evening Mr. Rudolph Block, of New York, found himself seated at dinner alongside Mr. Percival Pollard, the distinguished critic. "Mr. Pollard," said he, "my book, *The Biography of a Dead Cow*, is published anonymously, but you can hardly be ignorant of its authorship. Yet in reviewing it you speak of it as the work of the Idiot of the Century. Do you think that fair criticism?" "I am very sorry, sir," replied the critic, amiably, "but it did not occur to me that you really might not wish the public to know who wrote it." Mr. W.C. Morrow, who used to live in San Jose, California, was addicted to writing ghost stories which made the reader feel as if a stream of lizards, fresh from the ice, were streaking it up his back and hiding in his hair. San Jose was at that time

believed to be haunted by the visible spirit of a noted bandit named Vasquez, who had been hanged there. The town was not very well lighted, and it is putting it mildly to say that San Jose was reluctant to be out o' nights. One particularly dark night two gentlemen were abroad in the loneliest spot within the city limits, talking loudly to keep up their courage, when they came upon Mr. J.J. Owen, a well-known journalist. "Why, Owen," said one, "what brings you here on such a night as this? You told me that this is one of Vasquez' favorite haunts! And you are a believer. Aren't you afraid to be out?" "My dear fellow," the journalist replied with a drear autumnal cadence in his speech, like the moan of a leaf-laden wind, "I am afraid to be in. I have one of Will Morrow's stories in my pocket and I don't dare to go where there is light enough to read it." Rear-Admiral Schley and Representative Charles F. Joy were standing near the Peace Monument, in Washington, discussing the question, Is success a failure? Mr. Joy suddenly broke off in the middle of an eloquent sentence, exclaiming: "Hello! I've heard that band before. Santlemann's, I think." "I don't hear any band," said Schley. "Come to think, I don't either," said Joy; "but I see General Miles coming down the avenue, and that pageant always affects me in the same way as a brass band. One has to scrutinize one's impressions pretty closely, or one will mistake their origin." While the Admiral was digesting this hasty meal of philosophy General Miles passed in review, a spectacle of impressive dignity. When the tail of the seeming procession had passed and the two observers had recovered from the transient blindness caused by its effulgence – "He seems to be enjoying himself,"

said the Admiral. "There is nothing," assented Joy, thoughtfully, "that he enjoys one-half so well."

The illustrious statesman, Champ Clark, once lived about a mile from the village of Jebigue, in Missouri.

One day he rode into town on a favorite mule, and, hitching the beast on the sunny side of a street, in front of a saloon, he went inside in his character of teetotaler, to apprise the barkeeper that wine is a mocker. It was a dreadfully hot day. Pretty soon a neighbor came in and seeing Clark, said:

"Champ, it is not right to leave that mule out there in the sun. He'll roast, sure! – he was smoking as I passed him."

"O, he's all right," said Clark, lightly; "he's an inveterate smoker."

The neighbor took a lemonade, but shook his head and repeated that it was not right.

He was a conspirator. There had been a fire the night before: a stable just around the corner had burned and a number of horses had put on their immortality, among them a young colt, which was roasted to a rich nut-brown. Some of the boys had turned Mr. Clark's mule loose and substituted the mortal part of the colt. Presently another man entered the saloon.

"For mercy's sake!" he said, taking it with sugar, "do remove that mule, barkeeper: it smells."

"Yes," interposed Clark, "that animal has the best nose in Missouri. But if he doesn't mind, you shouldn't."

In the course of human events Mr. Clark went out, and there, apparently, lay the incinerated and shrunken remains of his charger. The boys did not have any fun out of Mr. Clarke, who looked at the body and, with the non-committal expression to which he owes so much of his political preferment, went away. But walking

home late that night he saw his mule standing silent and solemn by the wayside in the misty moonlight.

Mentioning the name of Helen Blazes with uncommon emphasis, Mr. Clark took the back track as hard as ever he could hook it, and passed the night in town.

General H.H. Wotherspoon, president of the Army War College, has a pet rib-nosed baboon, an animal of uncommon intelligence but imperfectly beautiful. Returning to his apartment one evening, the General was surprised and pained to find Adam (for so the creature is named, the general being a Darwinian) sitting up for him and wearing his master's best uniform coat, epaulettes and all. "You confounded remote ancestor!"

thundered the great strategist, "what do you mean by being out of bed after naps? – and with my coat on!"

Adam rose and with a reproachful look got down on all fours in the manner of his kind and, scuffling across the room to a table, returned with a visiting-card: General Barry had called and, judging by an empty champagne bottle and several cigar-stumps, had been hospitably entertained while waiting. The general apologized to his faithful progenitor and retired. The next day he met General Barry, who said:

"Spoon, old man, when leaving you last evening I forgot to ask you about those excellent cigars. Where did you get them?" General Wotherspoon did not deign to reply, but walked away.

"Pardon me, please," said Barry, moving after him; "I was joking of course. Why, I knew it was not you before I had been in the room fifteen minutes."

**SUCCESS**, n. The one unpardonable sin against one's fellows. In literature, and particularly in poetry, the elements of success are exceedingly simple, and

are admirably set forth in the following lines by the reverend Father Gassalasca Jape, entitled, for some mysterious reason, "John A. Joyce."

The bard who would prosper must  
carry a book, Do his thinking in  
prose and wear  
A crimson cravat, a far-away look  
And a head of hexameter hair.  
Be thin in your thought and your  
body'll be fat; If you wear your hair  
long you needn't your hat.

**SUFFRAGE**, n. Expression of opinion by means of a ballot. The right of suffrage (which is held to be both a privilege and a duty) means, as commonly interpreted, the right to vote for the man of another man's choice, and is highly prized. Refusal to do so has the bad name of "incivism." The incivilian, however, cannot be properly arraigned for his crime, for there is no legitimate accuser. If the accuser is himself guilty he has no standing in the court of opinion; if not, he profits by the crime, for A's abstention from voting gives greater weight to the vote of B. By female suffrage is meant the right of a woman to vote as some man tells her to. It is based on female responsibility, which is somewhat limited. The woman most eager to jump out of her petticoat to assert her rights is first to jump back into it when threatened with a switching for misusing them.

**SYCOPHANT**, n. One who approaches Greatness on his belly so that he may not be commanded to turn and be kicked. He is sometimes an editor.

As the lean leech, its victim found, is  
pleased To fix itself upon a part  
diseased  
Till, its black hide distended with bad  
blood, It drops to die of surfeit in the  
mud,  
So the base sycophant with joy  
descries  
His neighbor's weak spot and his  
mouth applies, Gorges and prospers  
like the leech, although, Unlike that  
reptile, he will not let go.  
Gelasma, if it paid you to devote  
Your talent to the service of a goat,  
Showing by forceful logic that its  
beard

Is more than Aaron's fit to be revered;  
If to the task of honoring its smell  
Profit had prompted you, and love as  
well, The world would benefit at last  
by you

And wealthy malefactors weep anew

—

Your favor for a moment's space  
denied

And to the nobler object turned aside.

Is't not enough that thrifty

millionaires

Who loot in freight and spoliage in  
fares, Or, cursed with consciences  
that bid them fly To safer villainies  
of darker dye,

Forswearing robbery and fain,  
instead,

To steal (they call it "cornering") our  
bread May see you groveling their  
boots to lick

And begging for the favor of a kick?  
Still must you follow to the bitter end  
Your sycophantic disposition's trend,  
And in your eagerness to please the  
rich

Hunt hungry sinners to their final  
ditch?

In Morgan's praise you smite the  
sounding wire, And sing hosannas to  
great Havemeyher!

What's Satan done that him you  
should eschew? He too is reeking  
rich — deducting *you*.

**SYLLOGISM**, n. A logical formula consisting of a major and a minor assumption and an inconsequent. (See [LOGIC](#).)

**SYLPH**, n. An immaterial but visible being that inhabited the air when the air was an element and before it was fatally polluted with factory smoke, sewer gas and similar products of civilization. Sylphs were allied to gnomes, nymphs and salamanders, which dwelt, respectively, in earth, water and fire, all now insalubrious. Sylphs, like fowls of the air, were male and female, to no purpose, apparently, for if they had progeny they must have nested in accessible places, none of the chicks having ever been seen.

**SYMBOL**, n. Something that is supposed to typify or stand for something else. Many symbols are mere "survivals" – things which having no longer any utility continue to exist because we have inherited the tendency to make them; as funereal urns carved on memorial monuments. They were once real urns holding the ashes of the dead. We cannot stop making them, but we can give them a name that conceals our helplessness.

**SYMBOLIC**, adj. Pertaining to symbols and the use and interpretation of symbols.

They say 'tis conscience feels  
compunction; I hold that that's the  
stomach's function, For of the sinner  
I have noted  
That when he's sinned he's somewhat  
bloated, Or ill some other ghastly  
fashion  
Within that bowel of compassion.  
True, I believe the only sinner  
Is he that eats a shabby dinner.  
You know how Adam with good  
reason,  
For eating apples out of season,  
Was "cursed." But that is all  
symbolic:  
The truth is, Adam had the colic.  
G.J.

## T

**T**, the twentieth letter of the English alphabet, was by the Greeks absurdly called *tau*. In the alphabet whence ours comes it had the form of the rude corkscrew of the period, and when it stood alone (which was more than the Phoenicians could always do) signified *Tallegal*, translated by the learned Dr. Brownrigg, "tanglefoot."

**TABLE D'HOTE**, n. A caterer's thrifty concession to the universal passion for irresponsibility.

Old Paunchinello, freshly wed,  
Took Madam P. to table,  
And there deliriously fed  
As fast as he was able.  
"I dote upon good grub," he cried,

Intent upon its throatage.  
"Ah, yes," said the neglected bride,  
"You're in your *table d'hotage*."  
Associated Poets

**TAIL**, n. The part of an animal's spine that has transcended its natural limitations to set up an independent existence in a world of its own. Excepting in its foetal state, Man is without a tail, a privation of which he attests an hereditary and uneasy consciousness by the coat-skirt of the male and the train of the female, and by a marked tendency to ornament that part of his attire where the tail should be, and indubitably once was. This tendency is most observable in the female of the species, in whom the ancestral sense is strong and persistent. The tailed men described by Lord Monboddoo are now generally regarded as a product of an imagination unusually susceptible to influences generated in the golden age of our pithecan past.

**TAKE**, v.t. To acquire, frequently by force but preferably by stealth.

**TALK**, v.t. To commit an indiscretion without temptation, from an impulse without purpose.

**TARIFF**, n. A scale of taxes on imports, designed to protect the domestic producer against the greed of his consumer.

The Enemy of Human Souls  
Sat grieving at the cost of coals;  
For Hell had been annexed of late,  
And was a sovereign Southern State.  
"It were no more than right," said he,  
"That I should get my fuel free.  
The duty, neither just nor wise,  
Compels me to economize –  
Whereby my broilers, every one,  
Are execrably underdone.  
What would they have? – although I  
yearn  
To do them nicely to a turn,  
I can't afford an honest heat.  
This tariff makes even devils cheat!  
I'm ruined, and my humble trade  
All rascals may at will invade:  
Beneath my nose the public press  
Outdoes me in sulphureousness;

The bar ingeniously applies  
To my undoing my own lies;  
My medicines the doctors use  
(Albeit vainly) to refuse  
To me my fair and rightful prey  
And keep their own in shape to pay;  
The preachers by example teach  
What, scorning to perform, I teach;  
And statesmen, aping me, all make  
More promises than they can break.  
Against such competition I  
Lift up a disregarded cry.  
Since all ignore my just complaint,  
By Hokey–Pokey! I'll turn saint!"  
Now, the Republicans, who all  
Are saints, began at once to bawl  
Against *his* competition; so  
There was a devil of a go!  
They locked horns with him,  
tete–a–tete  
In acrimonious debate,  
Till Democrats, forlorn and lone,  
Had hopes of coming by their own.  
That evil to avert, in haste  
The two belligerents embraced;  
But since 'twere wicked to relax  
A tittle of the Sacred Tax,  
'Twas finally agreed to grant  
The bold Insurgent–protestant  
A bounty on each soul that fell  
Into his ineffectual Hell.  
Edam Smith

**TECHNICALITY**, n. In an English court a man named Home was tried for slander in having accused his neighbor of murder. His exact words were: "Sir Thomas Holt hath taken a cleaver and stricken his cook upon the head, so that one side of the head fell upon one shoulder and the other side upon the other shoulder." The defendant was acquitted by instruction of the court, the learned judges holding that the words did not charge murder, for they did not affirm the death of the cook, that being only an inference.

**TEDIUM**, n. Ennui, the state or condition of one that is bored. Many fanciful derivations of the word have been affirmed, but so high an authority as Father Jape says that it comes from a very obvious source – the first words of the ancient Latin hymn *Te Deum Laudamus*. In this apparently natural derivation there

is something that saddens.

**TEETOTALER**, n. One who abstains from strong drink, sometimes totally, sometimes tolerably totally.

**TELEPHONE**, n. An invention of the devil which abrogates some of the advantages of making a disagreeable person keep his distance.

**TELESCOPE**, n. A device having a relation to the eye similar to that of the telephone to the ear, enabling distant objects to plague us with a multitude of needless details. Luckily it is unprovided with a bell summoning us to the sacrifice.

**TENACITY**, n. A certain quality of the human hand in its relation to the coin of the realm. It attains its highest development in the hand of authority and is considered a serviceable equipment for a career in politics. The following illustrative lines were written of a Californian gentleman in high political preferment, who has passed to his accounting:

Of such tenacity his grip  
That nothing from his hand can slip.  
Well–battered eels you may  
o'erwhelm  
In tubs of liquid slippery–elm  
In vain – from his detaining pinch  
They cannot struggle half an inch!  
'Tis lucky that he so is planned  
That breath he draws not with his  
hand,  
For if he did, so great his greed  
He'd draw his last with eager speed.  
Nay, that were well, you say. Not so  
He'd draw but never let it go!

**THEOSOPHY**, n. An ancient faith having all the certitude of religion and all the mystery of science. The modern Theosophist holds, with the Buddhists, that we live an incalculable number of times on this earth, in as many several bodies, because one life is not long enough for our complete spiritual development; that is, a single lifetime does not suffice for us to become as wise and good as we choose to wish to become. To be absolutely wise and good – that is perfection; and the Theosophist is so keen–sighted as to have observed that everything desirous of improvement eventually attains

perfection. Less competent observers are disposed to except cats, which seem neither wiser nor better than they were last year. The greatest and fattest of recent Theosophists was the late Madame Blavatsky, who had no cat.

**TIGHTS**, n. An habiliment of the stage designed to reinforce the general acclamation of the press agent with a particular publicity. Public attention was once somewhat diverted from this garment to Miss Lillian Russell's refusal to wear it, and many were the conjectures as to her motive, the guess of Miss Pauline Hall showing a high order of ingenuity and sustained reflection. It was Miss Hall's belief that nature had not endowed Miss Russell with beautiful legs. This theory was impossible of acceptance by the male understanding, but the conception of a faulty female leg was of so prodigious originality as to rank among the most brilliant feats of philosophical speculation! It is strange that in all the controversy regarding Miss Russell's aversion to tights no one seems to have thought to ascribe it to what was known among the ancients as "modesty." The nature of that sentiment is now imperfectly understood, and possibly incapable of exposition with the vocabulary that remains to us. The study of lost arts has, however, been recently revived and some of the arts themselves recovered. This is an epoch of *renaissances*, and there is ground for hope that the primitive "blush" may be dragged from its hiding-place amongst the tombs of antiquity and hissed on to the stage.

**TOMB**, n. The House of Indifference. Tombs are now by common consent invested with a certain sanctity, but when they have been long tenanted it is considered no sin to break them open and rifle them, the famous Egyptologist, Dr. Huggyns, explaining that a tomb may be innocently "glened" as soon as its occupant is done "smellynge," the soul being then all exhaled. This reasonable view is now generally accepted by archaeologists, whereby the noble science of Curiosity has been greatly dignified.

**TOPE**, v. To tippie, booze, swill, soak, guzzle, lush, bib, or swig. In the individual, toping is regarded with disesteem, but toping nations are in the forefront of civilization and power. When pitted against the hard-drinking Christians the absemious Mahometans go down like grass before the scythe. In India

one hundred thousand beef-eating and brandy-and-soda guzzling Britons hold in subjection two hundred and fifty million vegetarian abstainers of the same Aryan race. With what an easy grace the whisky-loving American pushed the temperate Spaniard out of his possessions! From the time when the Berserkers ravaged all the coasts of western Europe and lay drunk in every conquered port it has been the same way: everywhere the nations that drink too much are observed to fight rather well and not too righteously. Wherefore the estimable old ladies who abolished the canteen from the American army may justly boast of having materially augmented the nation's military power.

**TORTOISE**, n. A creature thoughtfully created to supply occasion for the following lines by the illustrious Ambat Delaso:

TO MY PET TORTOISE

My friend, you are not graceful – not at all; Your gait's between a stagger and a sprawl.

Nor are you beautiful: your head's a snake's To look at, and I do not doubt it aches.

As to your feet, they'd make an angel weep. 'Tis true you take them in whene'er you sleep.

No, you're not pretty, but you have, I own, A certain firmness – mostly you're [sic] backbone.

Firmness and strength (you have a giant's thews) Are virtues that the great know how to use –

I wish that they did not; yet, on the whole, You lack – excuse my mentioning it – Soul.

So, to be candid, unreserved and true, I'd rather you were I than I were you.

Perhaps, however, in a time to be, When Man's extinct, a better world may see

Your progeny in power and control, Due to the genesis and growth of Soul.

So I salute you as a reptile grand Predestined to regenerate the land. Father of Possibilities, O deign To accept the homage of a dying

reign!

In the far region of the unforeknown  
I dream a tortoise upon every throne.  
I see an Emperor his head withdraw  
Into his carapace for fear of Law;  
A King who carries something else  
than fat, Howe'er acceptably he  
carries that;  
A President not strenuously bent  
On punishment of audible dissent –  
Who never shot (it were a vain attack)  
An armed or unarmed tortoise in the  
back;  
Subject and citizens that feel no need  
To make the March of Mind a wild  
stampede;  
All progress slow, contemplative,  
sedate,  
And "Take your time" the word, in  
Church and State.  
O Tortoise, 'tis a happy, happy dream,  
My glorious testudinous regime!  
I wish in Eden you'd brought this  
about  
By slouching in and chasing Adam  
out.

**TREE**, n. A tall vegetable intended by nature to serve as a penal apparatus, though through a miscarriage of justice most trees bear only a negligible fruit, or none at all. When naturally fruited, the tree is a beneficent agency of civilization and an important factor in public morals. In the stern West and the sensitive South its fruit (white and black respectively) though not eaten, is agreeable to the public taste and, though not exported, profitable to the general welfare. That the legitimate relation of the tree to justice was no discovery of Judge Lynch (who, indeed, conceded it no primacy over the lamp-post and the bridge-girder) is made plain by the following passage from Morryster, who antedated him by two centuries:

**TRIAL**, n. A formal inquiry designed to prove and put upon record the blameless characters of judges, advocates and jurors. In order to effect this purpose it is necessary to supply a contrast in the person of one who is called the defendant, the prisoner, or the accused. If the contrast is made sufficiently clear this person is made to undergo such an affliction as will give the virtuous gentlemen a comfortable sense of

their immunity, added to that of their worth. In our day the accused is usually a human being, or a socialist, but in mediaeval times, animals, fishes, reptiles and insects were brought to trial. A beast that had taken human life, or practiced sorcery, was duly arrested, tried and, if condemned, put to death by the public executioner. Insects ravaging grain fields, orchards or vineyards were cited to appeal by counsel before a civil tribunal, and after testimony, argument and condemnation, if they continued *in contumaciam* the matter was taken to a high ecclesiastical court, where they were solemnly excommunicated and anathematized. In a street of Toledo, some pigs that had wickedly run between the viceroy's legs, upsetting him, were arrested on a warrant, tried and punished. In Naples and ass was condemned to be burned at the stake, but the sentence appears not to have been executed. D'Addosio relates from the court records many trials of pigs, bulls, horses, cocks, dogs, goats, etc., greatly, it is believed, to the betterment of their conduct and morals. In 1451 a suit was brought against the leeches infesting some ponds about Berne, and the Bishop of Lausanne, instructed by the faculty of Heidelberg University, directed that some of "the aquatic worms" be brought before the local magistracy. This was done and the leeches, both present and absent, were ordered to leave the places that they had infested within three days on pain of incurring "the malediction of God." In the voluminous records of this *cause celebre* nothing is found to show whether the offenders braved the punishment, or departed forthwith out of that inhospitable jurisdiction.

**TRICHINOSIS**, n. The pig's reply to proponents of porcophagy. Moses Mendlessohn having fallen ill sent for a Christian physician, who at once diagnosed the philosopher's disorder as trichinosis, but tactfully gave it another name. "You need an immediate change of diet," he said; "you must eat six ounces of pork every other day."

"Pork?" shrieked the patient – "pork?  
Nothing shall induce me to touch it!"  
"Do you mean that?" the doctor  
gravely asked. "I swear it!"  
"Good! – then I will undertake to  
cure you."

**TRINITY**, n. In the multiplex theism of certain

Christian churches, three entirely distinct deities consistent with only one. Subordinate deities of the polytheistic faith, such as devils and angels, are not dowered with the power of combination, and must urge individually their claims to adoration and propitiation. The Trinity is one of the most sublime mysteries of our holy religion. In rejecting it because it is incomprehensible, Unitarians betray their inadequate sense of theological fundamentals. In religion we believe only what we do not understand, except in the instance of an intelligible doctrine that contradicts an incomprehensible one. In that case we believe the former as a part of the latter.

**TROGLODYTE**, n. Specifically, a cave-dweller of the paleolithic period, after the Tree and before the Flat. A famous community of troglodytes dwelt with David in the Cave of Adullam. The colony consisted of "every one that was in distress, and every one that was in debt, and every one that was discontented" – in brief, all the Socialists of Judah.

**TRUCE**, n. Friendship.

**TRUTH**, n. An ingenious compound of desirability and appearance. Discovery of truth is the sole purpose of philosophy, which is the most ancient occupation of the human mind and has a fair prospect of existing with increasing activity to the end of time.

**TRUTHFUL**, adj. Dumb and illiterate.

**TRUST**, n. In American politics, a large corporation composed in greater part of thrifty working men, widows of small means, orphans in the care of guardians and the courts, with many similar malefactors and public enemies.

**TURKEY**, n. A large bird whose flesh when eaten on certain religious anniversaries has the peculiar property of attesting piety and gratitude. Incidentally, it is pretty good eating.

**TWICE**, adv. Once too often.

**TYPE**, n. Pestilent bits of metal suspected of destroying civilization and enlightenment, despite their obvious agency in this incomparable dictionary.

**TZETZE (or TSETSE) FLY**, n. An African insect

(*Glossina morsitans*) whose bite is commonly regarded as nature's most efficacious remedy for insomnia, though some patients prefer that of the American novelist (*Mendax interminabilis*).

## U

**UBIQUITY**, n. The gift or power of being in all places at one time, but not in all places at all times, which is omnipresence, an attribute of God and the luminiferous ether only. This important distinction between ubiquity and omnipresence was not clear to the mediaeval Church and there was much bloodshed about it. Certain Lutherans, who affirmed the presence everywhere of Christ's body were known as Ubiquitarians. For this error they were doubtless damned, for Christ's body is present only in the eucharist, though that sacrament may be performed in more than one place simultaneously. In recent times ubiquity has not always been understood – not even by Sir Boyle Roche, for example, who held that a man cannot be in two places at once unless he is a bird.

**UGLINESS**, n. A gift of the gods to certain women, entailing virtue without humility.

**ULTIMATUM**, n. In diplomacy, a last demand before resorting to concessions.

Having received an ultimatum from Austria, the Turkish Ministry met to consider it.

"O servant of the Prophet," said the Sheik of the Imperial Chibouk to the Mamoosh of the Invincible Army, "how many unconquerable soldiers have we in arms?"

"Upholder of the Faith," that dignitary replied after examining his memoranda, "they are in numbers as the leaves of the forest!" "And how many impenetrable battleships strike terror to the hearts of all Christian swine?" he asked the Imaum of the Ever Victorious Navy.

"Uncle of the Full Moon," was the reply, "deign to know that they are as the waves of the ocean, the sands of the desert and the stars of Heaven!"



For eight hours the broad brow of the  
Sheik of the Imperial Chibouk was  
corrugated with evidences of deep  
thought: he was calculating the  
chances of war. Then, "Sons of  
angels," he said, "the die is cast! I  
shall suggest to the Ulema of the  
Imperial Ear that he advise inaction.  
In the name of Allah, the council is  
adjourned."

**UN-AMERICAN**, adj. Wicked, intolerable,  
heathenish.

**UNCTION**, n. An oiling, or greasing. The rite of  
extreme unction consists in touching with oil  
consecrated by a bishop several parts of the body of  
one engaged in dying. Marbury relates that after the  
rite had been administered to a certain wicked  
English nobleman it was discovered that the oil had  
not been properly consecrated and no other could be  
obtained. When informed of this the sick man said in  
anger: "Then I'll be damned if I die!"

"My son," said the priest, "this is  
what we fear."

**UNDERSTANDING**, n. A cerebral secretion that  
enables one having it to know a house from a horse  
by the roof on the house. Its nature and laws have  
been exhaustively expounded by Locke, who rode a  
house, and Kant, who lived in a horse.

His understanding was so keen  
That all things which he'd felt, heard,  
seen, He could interpret without fail  
If he was in or out of jail.  
He wrote at Inspiration's call  
Deep disquisitions on them all,  
Then, pent at last in an asylum,  
Performed the service to compile 'em.  
So great a writer, all men swore,  
They never had not read before.  
Jorrock Wormley

**UNITARIAN**, n. One who denies the divinity of a  
Trinitarian.

**UNIVERSALIST**, n. One who forgoes the advantage  
of a Hell for persons of another faith.

**URBANITY**, n. The kind of civility that urban  
observers ascribe to dwellers in all cities but New  
York. Its commonest expression is heard in the  
words, "I beg your pardon," and it is not consistent  
with disregard of the rights of others.

The owner of a powder mill  
Was musing on a distant hill –  
Something his mind foreboded –  
When from the cloudless sky there  
fell  
A deviled human kidney! Well,  
The man's mill had exploded.  
His hat he lifted from his head;  
"I beg your pardon, sir," he said;  
"I didn't know 'twas loaded."  
Swatkin

**USAGE**, n. The First Person of the literary Trinity,  
the Second and Third being Custom and  
Conventionality. Imbued with a decent reverence for  
this Holy Triad an industrious writer may hope to  
produce books that will live as long as the fashion.

**UXORIOUSNESS**, n. A perverted affection that has  
strayed to one's own wife.

## V

**VALOR**, n. A soldierly compound of vanity, duty  
and the gambler's hope.

"Why have you halted?" roared the  
commander of a division and  
Chickamauga, who had ordered a  
charge; "move forward, sir, at once."  
"General," said the commander of the  
delinquent brigade, "I am persuaded  
that any further display of valor by  
my troops will bring them into  
collision with the enemy."

**VANITY**, n. The tribute of a fool to the worth of the  
nearest ass.

They say that hens do cackle loudest  
when  
There's nothing vital in the eggs  
they've laid; And there are hens,

professing to have made A study of  
mankind, who say that men  
Whose business 'tis to drive the  
tongue or pen Make the most  
clamorous fanfaronade  
O'er their most worthless work; and  
I'm afraid They're not entirely  
different from the hen. Lo! the  
drum-major in his coat of gold,  
His blazing breeches and  
high-towering cap – Imperiously  
pompous, grandly bold,  
Grim, resolute, an awe-inspiring  
chap! Who'd think this gorgeous  
creature's only virtue Is that in battle  
he will never hurt you?  
Hannibal Hunsiker

**VIRTUES**, n.pl. Certain abstentions.

**VITUPERATION**, n. Saite, as understood by dunces  
and all such as suffer from an impediment in their  
wit.

**VOTE**, n. The instrument and symbol of a freeman's  
power to make a fool of himself and a wreck of his  
country.

## W

**W** (double U) has, of all the letters in our alphabet,  
the only cumbrous name, the names of the others  
being monosyllabic. This advantage of the Roman  
alphabet over the Grecian is the more valued after  
audibly spelling out some simple Greek word, like  
**epixoriambikos**. Still, it is now thought by the  
learned that other agencies than the difference of the  
two alphabets may have been concerned in the  
decline of "the glory that was Greece" and the rise of  
"the grandeur that was Rome." There can be no  
doubt, however, that by simplifying the name of W  
(calling it "wow," for example) our civilization could  
be, if not promoted, at least better endured.

**WALL STREET**, n. A symbol for sin for every devil  
to rebuke. That Wall Street is a den of thieves is a  
belief that serves every unsuccessful thief in place of  
a hope in Heaven. Even the great and good Andrew  
Carnegie has made his profession of faith in the  
matter.

Carnegie the dauntless has uttered his  
call To battle: "The brokers are  
parasites all!" Carnegie, Carnegie,  
you'll never prevail;  
Keep the wind of your slogan to belly  
your sail, Go back to your isle of  
perpetual brume,  
Silence your pibroch, doff tartan and  
plume: Ben Lomond is calling his  
son from the fray – Fly, fly from the  
region of Wall Street away! While  
still you're possessed of a single  
baubee (I wish it were pledged to  
endowment of me) 'Twere wise to  
retreat from the wars of finance Lest  
its value decline ere your credit  
advance. For a man 'twixt a king of  
finance and the sea, Carnegie,  
Carnegie, your tongue is too free!  
Anonymus Bink

**WAR**, n. A by-product of the arts of peace. The most  
menacing political condition is a period of  
international amity. The student of history who has  
not been taught to expect the unexpected may justly  
boast himself inaccessible to the light. "In time of  
peace prepare for war" has a deeper meaning than is  
commonly discerned; it means, not merely that all  
things earthly have an end – that change is the one  
immutable and eternal law – but that the soil of peace  
is thickly sown with the seeds of war and singularly  
suited to their germination and growth. It was when  
Kubla Khan had decreed his "stately pleasure dome"  
– when, that is to say, there were peace and fat  
feasting in Xanadu – that he heard from afar  
Ancestral voices prophesying war. One of the greatest  
of poets, Coleridge was one of the wisest of men, and  
it was not for nothing that he read us this parable. Let  
us have a little less of "hands across the sea," and a  
little more of that elemental distrust that is the  
security of nations. War loves to come like a thief in  
the night; professions of eternal amity provide the  
night.

**WASHINGTONIAN**, n. A Potomac tribesman who  
exchanged the privilege of governing himself for the  
advantage of good government. In justice to him it  
should be said that he did not want to.

They took away his vote and gave

instead

The right, when he had earned, to  
*eat* his bread. In vain – he clamors  
for his "boss," pour soul, To come  
again and part him from his roll.  
Offenbach Stutz

**WEAKNESSES**, n.pl. Certain primal powers of  
Tyrant Woman wherewith she holds dominion over  
the male of her species, binding him to the service of  
her will and paralyzing his rebellious energies.

**WEATHER**, n. The climate of the hour. A  
permanent topic of conversation among persons  
whom it does not interest, but who have inherited the  
tendency to chatter about it from naked arboreal  
ancestors whom it keenly concerned. The setting up  
official weather bureaus and their maintenance in  
mendacity prove that even governments are  
accessible to suasion by the rude forefathers of the  
jungle.

Once I dipt into the future far as  
human eye could see, And I saw the  
Chief Forecaster, dead as any one can  
be – Dead and damned and shut in  
Hades as a liar from his birth, With a  
record of unreason seldom paralleled  
on earth. While I looked he reared  
him solemnly, that incadescent  
youth, From the coals that he'd  
preferred to the advantages of truth.  
He cast his eyes about him and above  
him; then he wrote On a slab of thin  
asbestos what I venture here to quote  
– For I read it in the rose–light of the  
everlasting glow: "Cloudy; variable  
winds, with local showers; cooler;  
snow."  
Halcyon Jones

**WEDDING**, n. A ceremony at which two persons  
undertake to become one, one undertakes to become  
nothing, and nothing undertakes to become  
supportable.

**WEREWOLF**, n. A wolf that was once, or is  
sometimes, a man. All werewolves are of evil  
disposition, having assumed a bestial form to gratify a  
bestial appetite, but some, transformed by sorcery,

are as humane and is consistent with an acquired taste  
for human flesh. Some Bavarian peasants having  
caught a wolf one evening, tied it to a post by the tail  
and went to bed. The next morning nothing was  
there! Greatly perplexed, they consulted the local  
priest, who told them that their captive was  
undoubtedly a werewolf and had resumed its human  
form during the night. "The next time that you take a  
wolf," the good man said, "see that you chain it by the  
leg, and in the morning you will find a Lutheran."

**WHANGDEPOOTENAWAH**, n. In the Ojibwa  
tongue, disaster; an unexpected affliction that strikes  
hard.

Should you ask me whence this  
laughter,  
Whence this audible big–smiling,  
With its labial extension,  
With its maxillar distortion  
And its diaphragmic rhythmus  
Like the billowing of an ocean,  
Like the shaking of a carpet,  
I should answer, I should tell you:  
From the great deeps of the spirit,  
From the unplummeted abysmus  
Of the soul this laughter welletth  
As the fountain, the gug–guggle,  
Like the river from the canon [sic],  
To entoken and give warning  
That my present mood is sunny.  
Should you ask me further question –  
Why the great deeps of the spirit,  
Why the unplummeted abysmus  
Of the soule extrudes this laughter,  
This all audible big–smiling,  
I should answer, I should tell you  
With a white heart, tumpitumpy,  
With a true tongue, honest Injun:  
William Bryan, he has Caught It,  
Caught the Whangdepootenawah!  
Is't the sandhill crane, the shankank,  
Standing in the marsh, the kneedeep,  
Standing silent in the kneedeep  
With his wing–tips crossed behind  
him  
And his neck close–reefed before  
him,  
With his bill, his william, buried  
In the down upon his bosom,

With his head retracted inly,  
While his shoulders overlook it?  
Does the sandhill crane, the shankank,  
Shiver grayly in the north wind,  
Wishing he had died when little,  
As the sparrow, the chipchip, does?  
No 'tis not the Shankank standing,  
Standing in the gray and dismal  
Marsh, the gray and dismal kneedeep.  
No, 'tis peerless William Bryan  
Realizing that he's Caught It,  
Caught the Whangdepootenawah!

**WHEAT**, n. A cereal from which a tolerably good whisky can with some difficulty be made, and which is used also for bread. The French are said to eat more bread *per capita* of population than any other people, which is natural, for only they know how to make the stuff palatable.

**WHITE**, adj. and n. Black.

**WIDOW**, n. A pathetic figure that the Christian world has agreed to take humorously, although Christ's tenderness towards widows was one of the most marked features of his character.

**WINE**, n. Fermented grape-juice known to the Women's Christian Union as "liquor," sometimes as "rum." Wine, madam, is God's next best gift to man.

**WIT**, n. The salt with which the American humorist spoils his intellectual cookery by leaving it out.

**WITCH**, n. (1) Any ugly and repulsive old woman, in a wicked league with the devil. (2) A beautiful and attractive young woman, in wickedness a league beyond the devil.

**WITTICISM**, n. A sharp and clever remark, usually quoted, and seldom noted; what the Philistine is pleased to call a "joke."

**WOMAN**, n.

An animal usually living in the vicinity of Man, and having a rudimentary susceptibility to domestication. It is credited by many of the elder zoologists with a certain

vestigial docility acquired in a former state of seclusion, but naturalists of the postsusananthony period, having no knowledge of the seclusion, deny the virtue and declare that such as creation's dawn beheld, it roareth now. The species is the most widely distributed of all beasts of prey, infesting all habitable parts of the globe, from Greeland's spicy mountains to India's moral strand. The popular name (wolfman) is incorrect, for the creature is of the cat kind. The woman is lithe and graceful in its movement, especially the American variety (*felis pugnans*), is omnivorous and can be taught not to talk.

Balthasar Pober

**WORMS'—MEAT**, n. The finished product of which we are the raw material. The contents of the Taj Mahal, the Tombeau Napoleon and the Granitarium. Worms'—meat is usually outlasted by the structure that houses it, but "this too must pass away." Probably the silliest work in which a human being can engage is construction of a tomb for himself. The solemn purpose cannot dignify, but only accentuates by contrast the foreknown futility.

Ambitious fool! so mad to be a show!  
How profitless the labor you bestow  
Upon a dwelling whose magnificence  
The tenant neither can admire nor  
know.  
Build deep, build high, build massive  
as you can, The wanton grass—roots  
will defeat the plan By shouldering  
asunder all the stones  
In what to you would be a moment's  
span.  
Time to the dead so all unreckoned  
flies  
That when your marble is all dust,  
arise,  
If wakened, stretch your limbs and  
yawn — You'll think you scarcely can  
have closed your eyes.  
What though of all man's works your  
tomb alone Should stand till Time.

himself be overthrown? Would it  
advantage you to dwell therein  
Forever as a stain upon a stone?  
Joel Huck

**WORSHIP**, n. Homo Creator's testimony to the sound construction and fine finish of Deus Creatus. A popular form of abjection, having an element of pride.

**WRATH**, n. Anger of a superior quality and degree, appropriate to exalted characters and momentous occasions; as, "the wrath of God," "the day of wrath," etc. Amongst the ancients the wrath of kings was deemed sacred, for it could usually command the agency of some god for its fit manifestation, as could also that of a priest. The Greeks before Troy were so harried by Apollo that they jumped out of the frying-pan of the wrath of Cryses into the fire of the wrath of Achilles, though Agamemnon, the sole offender, was neither fried nor roasted. A similar noted immunity was that of David when he incurred the wrath of Yahveh by numbering his people, seventy thousand of whom paid the penalty with their lives. God is now Love, and a director of the census performs his work without apprehension of disaster

## X

**X** in our alphabet being a needless letter has an added invincibility to the attacks of the spelling reformers, and like them, will doubtless last as long as the language. X is the sacred symbol of ten dollars, and in such words as Xmas, Xn, etc., stands for Christ, not, as is popular supposed, because it represents a cross, but because the corresponding letter in the Greek alphabet is the initial of his name – *Xristos*. If it represented a cross it would stand for St. Andrew, who "testified" upon one of that shape. In the algebra of psychology x stands for Woman's mind. Words beginning with X are Grecian and will not be defined in this standard English dictionary.

## Y

**YANKEE**, n. In Europe, an American. In the Northern States of our Union, a New Englander. In the Southern States the word is unknown. (See DAMNYANK.)

**YEAR**, n. A period of three hundred and sixty-five disappointments.

**YESTERDAY**, n. The infancy of youth, the youth of manhood, the entire past of age.

But yesterday I should have thought  
me blest To stand high–pinnacled  
upon the peak  
Of middle life and look adown the  
bleak And unfamiliar foreslope to the  
West,  
Where solemn shadows all the land  
invest  
And stilly voices, half–remembered,  
speak Unfinished prophecy, and  
witch–fires freak The haunted  
twilight of the Dark of Rest.  
Yea, yesterday my soul was all  
aflake  
To stay the shadow on the dial's face  
At manhood's noonmark! Now, in  
God His name I chide aloud the little  
interspace  
Disparting me from Certitude, and  
fain  
Would know the dream and vision  
ne'er again.  
Baruch Arnegriff  
It is said that in his last illness the  
poet Arnegriff was attended at  
different times by seven doctors.

**YOKE**, n. An implement, madam, to whose Latin name, *jugum*, we owe one of the most illuminating words in our language – a word that defines the matrimonial situation with precision, point and poignancy. A thousand apologies for withholding it.

**YOUTH**, n. The Period of Possibility, when Archimedes finds a fulcrum, Cassandra has a following and seven cities compete for the honor of endowing a living Homer.

Youth is the true Saturnian Reign, the Golden Age on earth again, when figs are grown on thistles, and pigs betailed with whistles and, wearing silken bristles, live ever in clover,

and clows fly over, delivering milk at every door, and Justice never is heard to snore, and every assassin is made a ghost and, howling, is cast into Baltimost!  
Polydore Smith

## Z

**ZANY**, n. A popular character in old Italian plays, who imitated with ludicrous incompetence the *buffone*, or clown, and was therefore the ape of an ape; for the clown himself imitated the serious characters of the play. The zany was progenitor to the specialist in humor, as we to-day have the unhappiness to know him. In the zany we see an example of creation; in the humorist, of transmission. Another excellent specimen of the modern zany is the curate, who apes the rector, who apes the bishop, who apes the archbishop, who apes the devil.

**ZANZIBARI**, n. An inhabitant of the Sultanate of Zanzibar, off the eastern coast of Africa. The Zanzibaris, a warlike people, are best known in this country through a threatening diplomatic incident that occurred a few years ago. The American consul at the capital occupied a dwelling that faced the sea, with a sandy beach between. Greatly to the scandal of this official's family, and against repeated remonstrances of the official himself, the people of the city persisted in using the beach for bathing. One day a woman came down to the edge of the water and was stooping to remove her attire (a pair of sandals) when the consul, incensed beyond restraint, fired a charge of bird-shot into the most conspicuous part of her person. Unfortunately for the existing *entente cordiale* between two great nations, she was the Sultana.

**ZEAL**, n. A certain nervous disorder afflicting the young and inexperienced. A passion that goeth before a sprawl.

When Zeal sought Gratitude for his reward  
He went away exclaiming: "O my Lord!"  
"What do you want?" the Lord asked,  
bending down. "An ointment for my cracked and bleeding crown."

Jum Coople

**ZENITH**, n. The point in the heavens directly overhead to a man standing or a growing cabbage. A man in bed or a cabbage in the pot is not considered as having a zenith, though from this view of the matter there was once a considerably dissent among the learned, some holding that the posture of the body was immaterial. These were called Horizontalists, their opponents, Verticalists. The Horizontalist heresy was finally extinguished by Xanobus, the philosopher-king of Abara, a zealous Verticalist. Entering an assembly of philosophers who were debating the matter, he cast a severed human head at the feet of his opponents and asked them to determine its zenith, explaining that its body was hanging by the heels outside. Observing that it was the head of their leader, the Horizontalists hastened to profess themselves converted to whatever opinion the Crown might be pleased to hold, and Horizontalism took its place among *fides defuncti*.

**ZEUS**, n. The chief of Grecian gods, adored by the Romans as Jupiter and by the modern Americans as God, Gold, Mob and Dog. Some explorers who have touched upon the shores of America, and one who professes to have penetrated a considerable distance to the interior, have thought that these four names stand for as many distinct deities, but in his monumental work on Surviving Faiths, Frumpp insists that the natives are monotheists, each having no other god than himself, whom he worships under many sacred names.

**ZIGZAG**, v.t. To move forward uncertainly, from side to side, as one carrying the white man's burden. (From *zed*, *z*, and *jag*, an Icelandic word of unknown meaning.)

He zedjagged so uncomen wyde  
Thet non coude pas on eyder syde;  
So, to com saufly thruh, I been  
Constreynet for to doodge betwene.  
Munwele

**ZOOLOGY**, n. The science and history of the animal kingdom, including its king, the House Fly (*Musca maledicta*). The father of Zoology was Aristotle, as is universally conceded, but the name of its mother has not come down to us. Two of the science's most

illustrious expounders were Buffon and Oliver Goldsmith, from both of whom we learn (*L'Histoire generale des animaux* and *A History of Animated Nature*) that the domestic cow sheds its horn every two years.

## Biography of Ambrose Bierce (1842–1914?)

Ambrose Bierce was the author of supernatural stories that have secured his place in both the weird tradition and in American letters at large. The stories in his two primary volumes, *Tales of Soldiers and Civilians* (a.k.a., *In the Midst of Life*, 1892) and *Can Such Things Be?* (1893) often added a Western setting to Gothic fiction — and, more importantly, developed the psychological aspects of horror first recognized by Poe.

He is also noted for his tales of the Civil War, which drew on his own experience as a Union cartographer and officer. His first job in journalism was as editor for the *San Francisco News-Letter* and *California Advertiser* (1868–72), writing the entries of the "Town Crier" which constituted the first real newspaper column. Perhaps we can his true love was satire in any form — whether ghost story or fable, newspaper column or lyrical lambaste, fantasy or pseudo-lexicography.

In time, Bierce established himself a kind of literary dictator of the West Coast and was so respected and feared as a critic that his judgement could "make or break" an aspiring author's reputation. Well-known by his mere initials, A.G.B., his enemies and detractors called him "Almighty God Bierce." He was also nicknamed "Bitter Bierce," and his nihilistic motto was "Nothing matters." Apart from a few well-anthologized ghost stories (notably, "An Occurrence at Owl Creek Bridge"), Bierce is best remembered for his cynical but humorous *Devil's Dictionary*.

In 1913, at the age of seventy-one, Bierce disappeared into revolution-torn Mexico to fight alongside the bandit Pancho Villa. Although a popular theory is that Bierce argued with Villa over military strategy and was subsequently shot, he probably perished in the battle of Ojinaga on January 11, 1914.

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