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"OBSCLETE WORDS STILL IN USE AMONG THE FOLK OF EAST CORNWALL"

BY

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[75]

*Obsolete Words still in use among the folk of East Cornwall.*

I HAVE read with much interest the long and valuable "List of Obsolete Words in common use among the folk of East Cornwall," contributed by Mr. T. Q. Couch to the First Number of this Journal. Most of the words are familiar to me; some I have never heard used by the people in this neighbourhood. Hoping that any information on this subject, however apparently trifling, may be of some use towards forming a complete and accurate Vocabulary of obsolete words still in common use among us, I venture to make the following remarks on Mr. Couch's list.

1.—In noticing the peculiarities of the East Cornwall dialect, Mr. Couch only mentions those which belong to consonants. Peculiarities in the pronunciation of vowels are quite as remarkable, and equally general and ascertainable. For instance :-

ā becomes ă, e.g., slāte becomes slăt.

ă " ā, e.g., tăckle becomes tăckle, and  
nătional " nătional.

e " ă or ā, e.g., egg " ăgg, and  
meat " mâte.

o, especially in names, becomes ă, e.g., John, Jăn.

2.—In a list of obsolete words, those words should not be inserted which are mere peculiarities of pronunciation. This would remove from the list—

agg for egg, a word in common use.

chak " cheek.

slat " slate.

datch " thatch, and drash for thrash.

And perhaps also such words as "harve" and "shouell," which Mr. Couch shows are merely corruptions of harrow and shovel.

Again, those words should not be inserted which are found in an ordinary English Dictionary, for instance, *Todd's Johnson's*, 1855; nor such words as are mere slang. This would exclude " Colewort; '\*

\* I find this in the Catalogue of Vegetable Seeds of Messrs. Carter & Co., and Butler & Mc. Culloch. "Kohl" also in that of Messrs. Sutton & Co., of Reading.

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Coigne; Gawky; Jam, to confine between, to wedge in; Rig;\* Steer; Swop or swap.

3.-In this neighbourhood,

Screw, is only applied to the shrew-mouse (*sorex araneus*).

Long-cripple, to the snake or viper.

Adder, to the newt (*lacertus aquaticus*),

4.-The following words are not mentioned in Mr. Couch's list.

Bal-girls,—a, pronounced as in *shall*,—girls who break the ore before it is put under the stamps.

Louster, v. to work hard. "The man that caan't skaimy must louster."

Zeer, adj. worn out; generally used with regard to clothing, &c., but applied also metaphorically to persons, *e.g.*, "She is very zeer."

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