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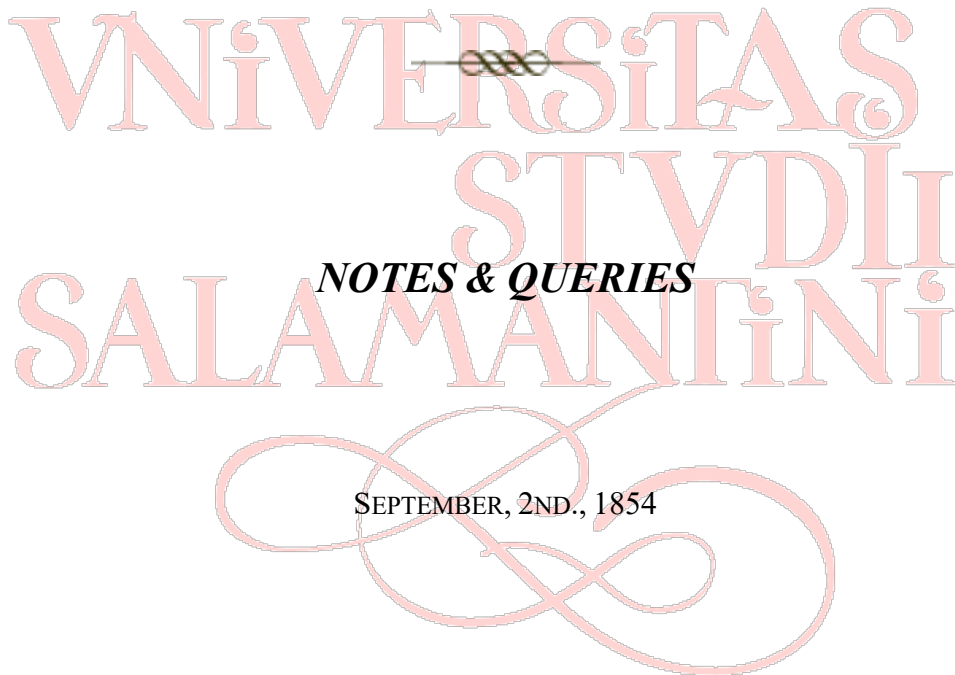
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"WORDS AND PHRASES COMMON AT POLPERRO IN CORNWALL, BUT
NOT USUAL ELSEWHERE."

BY

VIDEO [I.E. JONATHAN COUCH].

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WORDS AND PHRASES COMMON AT POLPERRO
IN CORNWALL, BUT NOT USUAL ELSEWHERE.

My late friend Thomas Bond, Esq., in his *History of Looe*, says;

"I have been informed that, about a century ago, the people of Polperro had such a dialect among them, that even the inhabitants of Looe could scarce understand what they said. Of late years, however, from associating more with strangers they have nothing particularly striking in their mode of speech, except a few of the old people."

To collect and fix, before it was too late, those dying modes of expression, several years since I adopted the practice of making a note of words and phrases which appeared to be unusual, or to bear a different meaning from that which would be understood by them in other places; in doing which I was impressed with the light which was thus thrown on many passages in ancient writers, and also with the fact that many words in local common use were expressive of a meaning which could only be conveyed in modern discourse by a considerable circumlocution. I am sorry, that among these antiquated words, I am not able to distinguish such of them as have their origin in the ancient Cornu-British language, from those which are of Saxon derivation; but I feel certain that some of them belong to the former, although they are not to be found in the vocabularies of Borlase or Pryce. I have arranged the words I have collected into alphabetical order; and if the sample of them I now send is thought worthy a place in "N. & Q.," the remainder shall be forwarded in due order.

Abide; cannot *abide* a thing, is, not able to suffer, or put up with it.

Addle. Attle is a term used in mining and signifies the rejected and useless rubbish. Hence an addled egg is an egg unfit for use.

Aft, now only used as a sea-term; but anciently with degrees of comparison, as "after, aftest."

Agáte, open-mouthed attention; hearkening with eagerness. "He was all *ogate*," eager to hear what was said.

Alàre, a short time ago: in common use.

Anán. I remember to have often heard this Shakspearian expression from some old persons, when they wished to have a repetition of what had been said: but no one now uses it.

Anist, nigh, at all nigh; as, "I did not go *anist* him;" that is, I kept a good distance: a phrase in common use.

Arymouse, the common name for a bat, *verspertilio*: signifying a mouse that flies in the air.

Ascrode, astride; to ride a horse with legs across it as a man does.

Ax, for ask.

Balch, stout cord, used for the head lines of fishing nets; well twisted, but not so stout as rope.

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Ball, to beat a person with a stout stick or the hand.

Banging, great, very large. Hence the word *bang*, a verb, "to strike a great blow," to make a great sensation.

Beastly, simply used for dirty or soiled.

Bettermost, much for the best.

Béver, a sudden shivering; trembling from chill.

Blinch, used as a verb; to catch a sight of a thing or person.

Bobble, a pebble.

Bord, vulgar pronunciation of *bird*.

Borm and *Borham*, the common word for yeast.

Botter, butter.

Boustis, stout and unwieldy; applied to a person or thing so stoutly wrapped up, or so fat and unwieldy, as not to be able easily to move.

Braggaty, mottled, like an adder, with a tendency to brown. It is usually applied to such a mottled colour in the skin.

Brath, the ancient Cornish name of the mastiff dog. Hence, perhaps, the common expression "a broth of a boy;" meaning "a stout dog of a boy," robust.

Breck, a small hole broken, usually confined to cloth or like material; no doubt, the origin of the word *break*; but Fuller uses it in its old state, and meaning: "*Holy State*," p. 41.

Brew Burns uses this word for broth, liquid water. Perhaps *broth*, as being boiled is the root. *Snaw broo*, in Scottish, is melted snow.

Brimstone. Burns uses the word *brunstone*, which is equivalent to *branstone* or "burnt stone;" for *brand*, is to burn. *Bran* means, newly come from the fire; and *brantnew*, is a common expression. But *brim* signifies, "to flash up, to blaze;" hence, "to *brime* a boat," a common expression, is to melt the pitch on it by applying a flame of fire to it. *Briming* also means a flash of light in the sea, when the waves give light from luminous animals in them. This has been supposed by some to proceed from phosphoric combustion; but in that case it would occur very deep below the surface as is often the case.

Browthy, light and spongy bread; the opposite of *clusty*, or clayey.

Brunt, the burnt part of a thing; consequently, in a metaphorical sense, the hottest part of a fray.

Buck, a book.

Buck, that peculiar infection which in summer gets into a dairy, and spoils the cream and buter; a sign of gross negligence and want of skill, and not easily to be eradicated.

Bumpkin, a common term for a clumsy, uncouth man, But whence the word? for it is also applied to a part of ship, where the foretack is fastened down. The word *bump* means a protuberance, a prominence: to *bump* against a thing, is a local term for striking one's self clumsily against it. A *bumpkin*, therefore, is a low, unshapely, clumsy, blunt, not moveable or active, piece of wood.

Caff, refuse fish; but for the most part applied to refuse pilchards only, when they are so bruised as to be only fit for manure.

Cannis, to toss about from place to place, without care.

Castes, an instrument for punishing schoolboys with a blow on the palm of the hand.

Cawdle, entanglement, confusion. A line or thread so entangled as not to be separated, is said to be "all in a *cawdle*." *Cawdle* is also a mining term for a thick and muddy fluid.

Chemibly, for chimney.

Chield, for child.

Chitter, thin, folded up. It is applied to a thin and furrowed face, by way of ridicule. Such a one is said to be *chitter-faced*. The long and folded milts or testes of some fishes are called *chitterlins*; as were the frills at the bosom of shirts, when they were so worn.

Chuff, sullen. Burns uses the word *chuffle* for a fat-faced, as equivalent to chubby; but with us, it is expressive of the look of a sullen and discontented face. Spenser, in his *Fairy Queen*, Cant. II. b. 6, says, "After long search and *chauf*," that is discontent; and it seems to be the root of what is now pronounced *chafed*, or made angry. And equivalent to this, when the skin of the body is rubbed, it is said to be *chafed*, or made to feel sore. With us, a place that has some beginning of local inflammation, and looks red, is said to be, to look, angry.

Churer, an occasional work woman.

Click-handed, left-handed.

Cloam, common earthenware.

Clush, to lie down close to the ground, to stoop low down.

Clusty, close and heavy; particularly applied to bread not well fermented, and, therefore, closely set. Also applied to a potatoe that is not mealy.

Coccabels, icicles.

Condididdle, to filch away, to convey anything away by trickery.

Cowle, for Cole, a proper name.

Creem, to shrink into a small compass. When used in an active sense, it means, so to press a person's hand or arm as to cause it to suffer from it; also, when potatoes have been pressed into pulp, they are said to be *creemed*. But the word is used passively, to

be shrunk and contracted; and the phrase is common, "to be *creemed* with cold;" that is, shrunk with it.

Cribbage-faced, a face that is thin and emaciated.

Crickle, to break down. It is applied to a prop or support when it breaks down through feebleness, and simple perpendicular pressure of a weight above.

Crim, a small bit; and thus it answers to the

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word *crumb*; but it is often applied to time, as "after a *crim*," or in a very short time.

Crowd, a fiddle; *crowder*, a fiddler (a genuine British word). We have a proverb: "If I can't *crowdy*, they won't dance;" meaning, they will take no notice of me, when I have no power to feast or entertain them.

Crowst, for crust, as of bread.

Cuttit, sharp in reply, impudently sharp. It implies pertness, but is not equivalent to cutting, as descriptive of speech.

VIDEO.

