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Folk-phrases
OF
FOUR COUNTIES
(GLOUC., STAFF., WARW., WORC.).
*GATHERED FROM UNPUBLISHED MSS. AND
ORAL TRADITION*

BY
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AUTHOR OF 'ENGLISH FOLK-RHYMES'.

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[NP]

Oxford

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PREFACE

MANY of the phrases herein are purely local, some of the proverbs and similes are, doubtless, to be met with in other counties, but these, with very few exceptions, are not included in Ray, Bohn, Brewer, Hazlitt, &c. Such exceptions are given when some new or fuller form is displayed, or annotation was thought necessary.

I hope to see some day a bulky volume of Folk-phrases proper—I mean sentences exhibiting pithy, traditional matter, but with nothing of the precept or adage in their composition. Various examples are gathered together here, *e.g.* Sneeze-a- bob, blow the chair bottom out—That's the last the cobbler threw at his wife, &c. &c., and there must be a rich harvest awaiting the industrious gleaner, north, south, east, and west of the counties which yielded this sheaf.

[5]

FOLK-PHRASES OF FOUR COUNTIES

A Bewdley salute. To tap on the ground with a walking-stick when passing an acquaintance.

A blind man on a galloping horse would be glad to see it. Said to one who cavils at the smallness of a thing, or makes a fuss over some trifling defect.

A Bobby Dazzler. A resplendent fop. *Warw.*

A brownpaper clerk. A petty warehouseman.

A Brummagem button. A young man of Birmingham. The name of this town is usually corrupted into Brummagem, and button-making was the staple trade.

A face like a wet Saturday night.

A face like the comer of a street, i. e. angular.

A face that would stop a clock, i. e. repellent.

A gardener has a big thumb nail. Manages to carry off a great deal of his master's property.

A good deal to chew but little to swallow. This was once said of shop-bread by old country people: it is now used indiscriminately.

A good man round a barrel but no cooper. Said of a noted drinker. This phrase is included in Lawson's *Upton-on-Severn Words and Phrases*, 1884. *Dial. Soc. Publs.* It is common in Worcestershire. Another and more usual phrase is, 'A public-house would want but two customers, him, and a man to fetch away the grains'.

A good old farmer's clock = a correct timepiece.

[6]

A good one to send for sorrow. Spoken of an idler.

A good wife and a good cat are best at home.

A head like a bladder of lard, i. e. bald and shiny.

A horse with its head where its tail ought to be. Tail towards the manger. *Worc.*

A Johnny Raw. A bumpkin, rustic. 'Johnny Whipstraw' is another term.

A juniper lecture = a reprimand.

A lick and a promise and better next time. Alluding to a hasty wash given to a child, dish, &c.

A long thing and a thank you. Said of anything lengthy not having particular value.

A lowing cow soon forgets her calf. *West Worc. Words*, by Mrs. Chamberlain, 1882. *Dial. Soc. Publs.* Compare—

'Hit nis noht al for the calf that cow louweth, Ac hit is for the grene gras that in the medewe grouweth'.—Wright's *Political Songs*, 1839, p. 332.

A mere dog in a doublet = A mean pitiful creature.

A mess for a mad dog. Said of a meal or course compounded of various ingredients.

A miller is never dry. Never waits to be thirsty before drinking.

A month of Sundays. A figure for a very long time, or oven eternity.

A mouth like a parish oven.

A nod' a as good as a wink to a blind horse.

A poor hap'orth of cheese. *Worc.* Said of a sickly child.

A roadman's sweat is good for sore eyes.

A silver new nothing to hang on your {sleeve / arm}. Youngsters sometimes worry their elders with the question—'What shall you bring me from the fair, market, or town?' This phrase is the stock answer. A *tantadlin-tart* was once a common reply.

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A slice from a out cake is never missed. This is usually said to gloss over a breach of some moral law—particularly the seventh commandment.

A still bee gathers no honey. *Glouc.*

A tongue banging = A scolding: some say 'tongue-walking', others 'skull-dragging'.

A tongue like a whip-saw.

A tongue that goes nineteen to the dozen.

A wheelstring sort of job, i. e. endless. *Worc.*

A word and a blow and the blow first. Hasty temper.

A young shaver=A sharp youth. *Common,*

About a tie. *Warw.* Said of two people whose qualities, actions, &c. are similar, or of one value.

All one can reap and run for. *Glouc* In *Warw.* they say 'rap and ring for'. It is a phrase much used to express the total sum of money that can be accumulated in an emergency.

All on one side like a bird with one wing.

All over aches and pains like Trotting Bessie. *Harborne, Staff.*

All tittery to tottery = From laughing to staggering.

All together like Brown's cows. *Glouc.*

All together like the men of Maisemore, and they went one at a time. M. is about 2 miles W. of Gloucester.

An afternoon farmer = A dawdling husbandman. Lawson, *Upton-on-Severn Words*, &c., 1884, p. 34.

As big as a bee's knee.

As black as a sloe—or a sweep, or my hat.

As black as thunder.

As bright as a new penny. Mr. Hazlitt, *Proverbs*, 1882, has 'As clean as a new penny'.

In Warwickshire they say 'As clean as a new pin'.

As busy as a oat in a tripe shop. *Common.*

As dean as a pink.

As clear as mud. Ironical.

[8]

As clever as mad.

As cold as a frog.

As crooked as a dog's bind leg.

As {sly / cunning} as a fox.

As dead as a nit. *Warw.* A nit is a young louse.

As deaf as a post.

As deep as a draw-well. *Glouc.*

As drunk as a fly.

As drunk as a fiddler's bitch, *Glouc.* Forby, *Vocab. East Anglia*, 1830, pp. 26, 27, has 'tinker's bitch.'

As drunk as a fool.

As drunk as a mop. Said of a sot that cannot stand without support.

As drunk as a parson. *Warw.*

As drunk as a pig.

As easy as an old shoe. Spoken of the fit of anything.

As fat as a match with the brimstone off.

As fond of a raw place as a bluebottle. Said of one always ready for a quarrel, or anxious to touch on grievances.

As full as a tick, i. e. a bed tick.

As full of megrims as a dancing bear.

As good as a puppet show. Said of anything amusing.

As good as gold. Said of one's moral worth, or a child's behaviour, &c.; never of intrinsic value.

As grey as a badger. This refers to *colour*, and truly: but some people say of one in the dumps that he or she is 'As blue as a badger.'

As handy [with some article] as a pig with a musket.

'Dost look as handy wi' that as a pig do wi' a musket.'—Robertson.

Gloss. co. Glouc., 1890. Dial. Soc. Publs, p. 186.

As hard as a bullet.

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As hard as a flint. Said of a close-fisted or hard hearted-person.

As hard as a tabber (? tabour). *Glouc.*

As hard as iron.

As hard as old nails.

As hard as the devil's nagnails.

As hardy as a forest pig. *Glouc.*

As heavy as lead.

As hungry as a hunter.

As ill-conditioned as old Nick.

As jolly as a sandboy.

As joyful as the back of a gravestone.

As large as life and quite as natural.

As lazy as [one] can hang together. *Worc.*

As lean as a lath.

As light as a feather.

As lousy as a coot.

As lousy as a pig.

As merry as a two year old.

As merry as Momus.

As merry as Pope Joan.

As {rusty / mouldy} [*sic*] as an old horseshoe. *Glouc.*

As much use of *it* as a toad has of a side pocket. *It* may mean anything unnecessary.

As mute as a mouse.

As natural as hooping to owls.

‘It do come as nat’ral as hooping do to owls.’—Robertson, *Gloss. co. Glouc.*

As near as damn it.

As near as fourpence to a groat.

As near as two ha’pennies for a penny.

As neat as ninepence.

[10]

As old as Adam or Methuselah. The former refers to time or period: the latter to longevity.

As old as the hills.

‘The everlasting hills’.—*Genesis* xlix. 26.

As pale as a parson.

As playful as a kitten.

As pleased as a jay with a bean. *Glouc.* In the vernacular, ‘As plazed as a joy with a beun.’ *Joy* or *joypie* = jay.—Robertson, *Gloss, co. Glouc.*, 1890.

As pretty as paint. Some say ‘As fresh as paint’.

As proud as a dog with two tails.

As proud as a horse with bells. *Glouc.*

As quick as thought.

As ragged as a colt.

As red as a turkeycock’s jowls [wattles]. Some say a...

As red as Roger’s nose who was christened in pump water.

As red as the rising sun at Bromford. As this phrase is well known in *Warw.*, I judge that it alludes to Bromford, 1 mile S. E. from Erdington, par. Aston juxta-Birmingham, where there was a mill on the Tame prior to the Conquest. A forge

mill still exists on the old site. It might be thought to refer to some old public-house sign, but of this there is no present proof, I am informed.

As right as ninepence. Some think this should read ‘ninepins;’ but *ninepence* is a sum frequently mentioned in proverbs.

As right as pie.

As right as the mail [train], i.e. as true to time.

As rough as a bear’s backside.

As round shoulder’d as a grindstone.

As safe as houses. Usually spoken of an investment.

As sandy as a Tamworth pig. Spoken of a red-haired woman; and hinting that she was likely to prove concupiscent and prolific.

[11]

As savage as a tup.

As short as a Marchington wake-cake. *Staff.* Said of a woman’s temper. Poole, *Gloss. Archaic and Provincial Words of Staff.*, 1880, p. 25.

As silly as a {gull / goose}. A gull is a young goose.

As smart as a carrot. Said of one gaily dressed.

As smart as a master sweep.

As solid as old times.

As sound as an acorn.

As sure as fate, or death. Some say ‘As sure as I’m alive;’ or ‘As sure as you’re born;’ or ‘As sure as you’re there.’

As sure as God made little apples.

As thick as gutter mud.

As thin as a farthing rushlight.

As thin as ha’penny ale, i.e. small beer at 2*d.* per quart.

As tight as a drum.

As ugly as sin. Said of an ill-favoured individual.

Be as quick as you can, and, if you fell down, don't stop to get up. Sometimes, 'Make haste,' &c. A jocular incentive to one going an errand, &c.

Better a quick penny than a dallying shilling.

Better long little than soon nothing.

Black your behind and go naked. This is the advice given to one who complains of no change of clothing.

Bread and pull it (*pullet*). Sometimes, when a man is asked what he had for dinner—when he has fasted—he replies 'Gravel Hash,' which really means a walk on the roads. Another reply is 'Chums and chair knobs'. See '*To box Harry*.'

By degrees, as lawyers go to Heaven.

[92]

Cat, you bitch, your tail's afire. The idea of a cat bearing fire in its tail is found in many folk-tales and verses. See *English Folk Rhymes*, pp. 290-291. I can find no satisfactory explanation.

Catchings, havings; slips go again. A street phrase spoken by one threatened with capture.

Chance the Ducks. *Warw.* To do a thing and 'chance the ducks' is to do it, come what may.

Choke up, chicken, more a-hatching. *Glouc.* Mr. Hazlitt, *Proverbs*, 1882, has—'Choke up, child, the churchyard's nigh.'

Clean gone like the boy's eye, i. e. into his 'head:' he squinted.

Come, love! or Husband's Tea. It is a standard joke that women drink the first brew, and then fill the teapot with water—adding no fresh leaves. Weak tea has received the above names, therefore.

Compliments pass when beggars meet. Ironical.

Cry! you'll p... the less. Addressed usually to children that cry unreasonably.

Curses, like chickens, come home to roost.

Cut off his head but mind you don't kill him. A mock injunction to one about to beat a youngster.

Dab, says Dan'l, as he sh.. in the well.

Deeds are Johns, and words Nans. *Worc.* A local version of the proverb—'Deeds are males, but words females.'

Deritend Wake Sunday, the first day of Winter. Deritend, in the parish of Aston juxta-Birmingham, is divided from the south-east side of the town by the river Rea. The chapel is dedicated to St. John the Baptist, the calendared date of whose beheading is Aug. 29.

Dillydally brings night as soon as hurryscurry. Mrs. Chamberlain, *West Worc. Words*, 1882, p. 39.

[13]

Don't be always don'ting.

Don't Care was hanged. Said to be a reckless person who exclaims, 'I don't care!' Some say, 'Don't care came to a bad end.'

Don't drown the miller's eye, i. e. don't put too much water to flour when mixing the dough. 'Millers' eyes' are, in Glouc., the little kernels often met with in indifferent bread. Miss Baker, *Northamps. Gloss.*, 1854, ii. 21, thinks that 'miller's eye' refers 'probably to that part of the machinery which is the aperture in the upper revolving stone, beneath the hopper, through which the com passes to be ground'. But Ray bears out the former meaning, giving, *To put out the miller's eye*, adding, 'spoken by good housewives when they have wet their meal for paste or bread too much'.

Don't sigh, but send, I'd run a mile for a penny. Said to one that sighs without apparent cause.

Doomsday in the afternoon. A phrase similar in meaning to 'At Latter Lammas' or 'Nevermass;' 'Tib's Eve;' 'Ad Græcas Kalendas;' 'A le venue des coquecigrues,' &c.; i. e. Never. See *When the sun shines, &c.*

Drunk as a boiled owl.

Dudley moonrakers. *Worc.* It is almost unnecessary to state that the term 'moonrakers' is applied to many districts whose inhabitants are considered illiterate: e. g. Wiltshire.

Enough to sicken a snipe. *Glouc.*

Every dog has his day, and a cat has two afternoons. *Warw.*

Every little helps, as the old woman said when she made water in the sea.

Execution Day = Washing day.

Forehanded pay is the worst pay as is.

Fun and fancy; gee up, Nancy. A phrase intimating that a thing is said or done in jest.

Some say 'John kiss'd Nancy.'

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Gently, John, my daughter's young.

Gloucestershire kindness, giving away what you don't want yourself.

Go to Smerrick. *Staff.* Local version of 'Go to Jericho!' Smethwick between Birmingham and Dudley is the place meant.

Gold makes a woman penny white.

Gornal. *Staff.* A place renowned for the rudeness and oddness of its inhabitants. 'He comes from Gornal,' i. e. is a boor, or strange-looking man.

Half-past kissing time, time to kiss again. A jocular reply to one who asks the time.

Happy as pigs in muck.

He always had a crooked elbow. *Glouc.* 'Said of a man who has been a drunkard from his Youth.' - Robertson, *Gloss, co. Glouc.*, 1890. It is often used in Warwickshire, too. 'Crooked elbow' refers to the bent position of the arm in lifting a mug or glass to the mouth. Sometimes the folks say, 'He holds his head hack too much'.

He doesn't know where his behind hangs. Said of an insufferably proud man.

He is fit for nothing but to pick up straws, i. e. is a natural, a simpleton.

He lies on his face too much. Said of a man who looks used up owing to frequent observances of Paphian rites.

He makes the bullets and leaves we to shoot them. *Glouc.* Robertson, *Gloss. Glouc.*—'Said of a person who leaves dirty work to others.' I have never heard it

quite in that sense. 'He makes the bullets and you shoot them' is usually spoken of persons acting in concert.

He must have been fed with a shovel. Alluding to one with a wide mouth.

He was born tired = He is thoroughly lazy.

[125]

He was born under a threepenny planet, i. e. is avaricious, a curmudgeon. Mrs. Chamberlain, *West Worc. Words*, 1882, p. 39, quotes Swift's *Polite Convers.* for a different sense, 'If you are born under a threepenny planet you'll never be worth fourpence.'

He would give him the top brick of the chimney. Said of a fond father and spoiled child.

He would not give any one the parings of his nails.

He wouldn't give away the droppings of his nose on a frosty morning.

He would skin a flint for a ha'penny, and spoil a sixpenny knife doing it. These three phrases refer to stingy folk. 'He would flay a flint' is a proverb of remote times. Abdalmalek, one of the Khalifs of the race of Ommiades, was surnamed, by way of sarcasm, Raschal Hegiarah, that is 'the skinner of a flint'....—*Universal Magazine*, 1796. *He'd take snuff through a rag* is said of a mean, miserly fellow in Worcestershire and the adjoining counties.

He'll never make old bones. Spoken of a sickly child, youth, or young man.

He's a builder's clerk, and carries the books up the ladder, i. e. is a hodman.

He's very clever but he can't pay. *Worc.*

Heads a penny! Said to a child that bumps its head. It is probably an abbreviated form; but the origin is doubtful.

Here goes ding-dong for a dumpling, i. e. neck or nothing. Possibly derived from the old sport of bobbing with the mouth for balm dumplings immersed in hot water.

Her's the cat's mother. *Warw.* Said to one who uses the possessive *her* of the third person instead of the nominative *she*.

His dirt will not stick, i. e. his abuse will harm no one.

His father will never be dead as long as *he* is alive. Said of a son who closely resembles his father in appearance or ways.

His hair is as straight as a pound of candles.

[16]

How are you froggin'? How are you in health? Common in the neighbourhood of Sutton Coldfield, but not unfamiliar in other parts of *Warw.*

How many beans make five? *Warw; Worc.* (?) Said to test one's sharpness. The 'retort courteous' is not always given. The 'quip modest' is, 'A bean and a half, a bean and a half, half a bean, and a bean and a half'. To say of a man that 'He knows how many beans make five' is to speak highly of his shrewdness.

How you like, and the rest in ha'pence. An answer to some such question as, 'How will you have it?' *it* answering for anything from an unpaid account to a glass of grog.

Hungry Harborne, poor and proud. *Staff.* A suburb of Birmingham. Ancient documents preserve several parish place-names which suggest poverty. Kenward, *Harborne and its Surroundings*, 1885, pp. 44-45, mentions Wilderness Farm, Bareland's Coppice, Mock Beggar Farm, &c. He quotes Leland—whose authority was Warkworth—

'The water of Hungrevale is 7 miles on this side of Dudeley Castle', and says, 'Is Stonehouse Brook the water? is Hungrevale the valley it flows through?' On another portion of the page he remarks, 'I presume that it refers not to the poverty which cannot satisfy hunger but to the bracing winds from the S.W. which provoke it.'—p. 46.

I am eating my white bread now instead of at the end of my days. *Worc.* See Lawson's *Upton-on-Severn Words*, &c., 1884.

I could tell by the whites of his eyes and the bends of his elbows.

I'd as soon hear a rake and basket. Said of discordant singing.

'I'd as zoon' ear a raëk and basket.'—Robertson, *Gloss. co. Glouc.*, 1890, p. 186.

I shan't undress myself before I go to bed, i. e. shall not give all my property away whilst alive.

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Idle as [H] Ines that was too lazy to get his wagon and horses out of the ditch.

Glouc. This has, perhaps, some local tale to back it; but no one seems to know the telling. At first sight it strikes one as an idea borrowed from the fable of Hercules and the Wagoner, which should run, 'As idle as the hind, &c.' But this is a chance resemblance, maybe; as *hind*, in country places at least, is still restricted in meaning.

I'll see your nose above your chin. A mock threat addressed to very young children.

I'm like Tommy Daddle 'em I twet (sweat). *Warw.*

In a jilt of rags. Spoken of a tatterdemalion.

In quick sticks = rapidly.

In the fashion = *Enceinte*. See 'She is so.'

It cost a mint of money. This is the common superlative phrase expressive of the value of a thing. 'He' or 'she is worth a mint of money' is another form.

It shines like Worcester against Gloucester. Common in the former county. See Mrs. Chamberlain, *West Worc. Words*, 1882, p. 39.

It tastes of what never was in it. Spoken of a service of food that has a burnt or smoky flavour.

It's a poor hen that can't scrat for one chick. Mrs. Chamberlain, *West Worc. Words*, 1882.

It's all about. Said by one youngster to frighten another, the speaker thereby pretending that some secret or reprehensible act of his fellow is commonly talked of. Should *B* be green enough to ask, 'What's all about?' *A* replies—'Horse dung!'

It's all for the back and belly, i. e. food and clothing are the main objects of all endeavour.

It's all moonshine. Said of shallow talk, or an argument not sound, &c.

It's blowing great guns.

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It's cold enough to frizzle a yan [hern, heron,] which will stand still in a pond in the coldest weather.

It's fun alive.

It's hats that go to jail, not caps. *Glouc.* Husbands are imprisoned for debt, not wives.

It's like giving a donkey strawberries. To give one something too fine or particularly unfit for his condition.

It's neither here nor there. Spoken of an argument unstable and worthless.

I've got a head and so has a pin. i. e. a knob, nothing more. Spoken by one whose wits are cloudy from sleep, &c., when occasion demands a clear brain.

Jack's alive at our house. Said on an occasion of noisy merriment. There is a well-known game at forfeits, in which a lighted spill is passed from hand to hand, the players saying meanwhile—

'Jack's alive, and likely to live,
If he dies in your hand you've a forfeit to give'

—that may have originated this phrase: for, as the spill burns lower and lower, there is much haste to place it in the hands of the next player, and this is carried on amidst much cheering and laughter.

Jests / Jokes} go free till Christmas, and then they begin again.

Johnnies and Mollies. *Worc.* Country lads and lasses. In *Glouc.* applied to place-hunters at the hiring-fair or mops.

Kiss'd, cursed, vexed, or shake hands with a fool. Said by one whose nose itches—hoping for the first lot, but prepared for either.

Lay o's for meddlers. Things that children are forbidden to touch. Possibly corrupted from layholds. Another name for a thing forbidden is *Trinamanoose*.

Like a bag of muck tied up ugly. Said of anybody or anything shapeless in form.

[159]

Like a chick in wool, i. e. comfortable.

Like a cow's tail [he or she] **grows down hill**.

Like a duck in a stocking, happy anywhere.

Like a frog in a fit. Said of one tipsy.

Like a humble bee in a churn. Spoken of one whose voice is indistinct. *Worc.* 'Like a dumble-dore in a pitcher' is the *Glouc.* version. Lawson, *Upton-on-Severn Words and Phrases*, 1884; Robertson, *Gloss. co. Glouc.*, 1890.

Like a tomtit on a round of beef. A little person is said to look so when situated on some coign of vantage.

Like an Irishman's obligation, all on one side.

Like an old hen scratchin' afore day. *Glouc.* i. e. working at useless time.

Like dogs in dough, i. e. unable to make headway.

Like the old woman's pig, if he's little he's old, i. e. crafty.

Like the old woman's tripe, always ready. *Warw.* In *Worc.* they say, 'Like Dudley tripe', &c.

Like the tailor, done over. There is an old song entitled 'The tailor done over'.

Long and narrow, like the boy's granny.

Lucky, John Hodges. Spoken to one who has a find, or experiences a stroke of good fortune.

Making feet for baby's stockings. Spoken of a childing woman.

Malvern measure, full and running over.

Many / Several} men, many minds.

Matrimony. Cake and bread and butter eaten together.

Michaelmas chickens and parsons' daughters never come to good.

More fools in Henley. This ambiguous phrase is used by natives of Henley-in-Arden, co. *Warw.*, when strangers of remarkable appearance tarry in the main street. It might be made to cut both ways certainly.

More than ever the parson preached about.

My fingers are all thumbs, i. e. have lost their dexterity for a time.

My granny's come back = *Catamenia*.

Neither my eye nor my elbow, i. e. neither one thing nor the other.

Neither sick nor sorry. Said of one who has caused annoyance or trouble and takes the matter lightly. Some understand 'sorry' in the old sense of *sore*.

No carrion will kill a crow. *Glouc*, Robertson, *Gloss.*, 1890, p. 186.

No / None of your} tricks upon travellers.

Not worth a tinker's curse.

Old Sarbut told me so. *Warw*. A local version of 'A little bird told me so.' The mythical Sarbut is another *Brookes of Sheffield*, who is credited with the revealing of secrets, and as the originator of malicious statements.

Once bitten, twice shy.

Open your shoulders and let it go down. This is a jesting speech to one about to drink: a jest because to do both is impossible. The antithesis is—'Drink as if you meant it.'

Out of all ho, i. e. immoderately. This *ho* is an ancient phrase-word. In John Smyth's remarks on 'Proverbs and Phrases of Speach' contained in his last volume of the Berkeley MS., entitled, *A description of the hundred of Berkeley, and of the Inhabitants thereof in the County of Glouc* (completed in 1639), we get—'He makes noe hoe of it, i. e. hee cares not for it.' A portion of the above interesting MS., says Mr. Robertson, *Gloss.*, 1890, p. 200, was published by the Bristol and Gloucester Archaeological Society, in three large quarto vol., in 1883-5. Mr. Robertson gives some interesting phrases from the work, in local vernacular.

Out of one's five wits and seven senses.

[21]

Out of the road of the coaches, i. e. safe, secure. A housewife might use this phrase when placing a glass in a cupboard, or shutting a child in a room, &c. Another

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form of the phrase seems to have a more definite meaning. Ray has, 'The coaches won't run over him,' stating that it means 'he is in jail.'

Over the left shoulder, i. e. adverse, contrary to custom. The French seem to claim this phrase, explaining it *du côté que les Suisses portent la hallebarde—du côté gauche*. It has a figurative position in English: e. g. to do a man a kindness over the left shoulder is to do him an injury.

Paws off, Pompey = Touch me not.

Perhaps it will be like the old woman's dishcloth, look better when it's dry.

Pershore {where do you think? / God help us} Pershore, *Worc.*, is noted for its fruit.

When there is a particularly fine crop, any native vendor, if asked where his fruit was grown, says boastingly, 'Parshur, where do you think but Parshur?' If asked the same question in a bad season, he replies, 'Parshur, God help us!'

Pride must be pinched. A reproof to one who complains of tight boots, garments, &c.

Put a pitch plaster on your mouth = Be silent.

Put in with the bread and pull'd out with the cakes. Spoken of a stupid person: one 'half-Baked,' as folk sometimes say.

Rub your sore eye with your elbow, i. e. not at all.

Sam who? *Warw.* A street phrase: a sort of contemptuous 'put off' *Exs.* 'I'll punch your head;' 'I'll tell your gaffer!' *Ans.* 'Sam who?'

Shake your {shirt shift} and give the crows a feed. Said by way of insult. It implies lousiness.

[22]

Shameful leaving is worse than shameful eating.

Sharp work for the eyes, as the boy said when the wheel went over his nose.

She is so. 'Means a female expects to become a mother; probably this delicate phrase was originally accompanied with a position of the hands and arms in front of the person speaking, indicative of a promising amplitude.'—Huntley, *Gloss. of the Cotswold*, 1868, p. 19.

The Salamanca Corpus: Folk-Phrases of Four Counties (1892)

The phrase is, however, common in the Midlands, as is 'She is like that,' to which the above remarks may again apply.

She'll make the lads sigh at their suppers. Said of a pretty or attractive girl.

Sh.... n luck is good luck. Said by one who treads accidentally into excrement, or is befouled by mischance. This superstition, if superstition it be, probably owes its existence to an ancient term for ordure—*gold* or *gold dust*: and these in turn probably originated from the agricultural value of dung, or perhaps from its natural colour. Mr. Thomas Wright, F.S.A., says—

'The Anglo-Saxon vocabularies have preserved another name *gold hordhus*, a gold treasure house, or gold treasury, which is still more curious from its connexion with the name *gold finder* or *gold farmer*, given as late as the seventeenth century to the cleaners of privies. It is at this time still in use in Shrewsbury to designate such men'— *Uricornium (Wroxeter)*, 1872, footnote, p. 146.

Short and sweet, like a donkey's gallop. Some say, 'like a roast maggot'.

Silence in the pigmarket, and let the old sow have a grunt.

Sit on your thumb till more room do come. A reply to a child that continually says, 'Where shall I sit?'

Six of one, and half a dozen of the other. Said of opposite parties in a quarrel, misdemeanour, scheme, &c., when the right or wrong of the matter in question cannot be fixed on either side with certainty.

Slow and steady wins the race.

[23]

Sneeze-a-bob, blow the chair bottom out! *Warw.* Said when a person sneezes.

Some day, or never at the farthest. An answer to some such question as, 'When will you bring me a present?'

Sound love is not soon forgotten.

Spare'em. The limbo of queer or uncouth folk: e. g. 'He comes from Spare'em.'

Spotted and spangled like Joe Danks's Devil. *Warw.* According to report this Joe

Danks was an itinerant showman, who exhibited a wretched creature whose attractions comprised a skin eruption and a spangled suit.

Sticks and stones will break my bones, but names will never hurt me! Said by one youngster to another calling names.

Straight off the reel = Without hindrance.

That cock won't fight. Said of an unsatisfactory plan, argument, &c.

That won't hold water. A phrase of similar meaning.

That won't pay the old woman her ninepence. Said of aught not equivalent to given value, in money or kind.

That'll tickle your gig. *Warw.* There seems to be some play on *gig*, a wanton, and *gig*, slang = pudendum. The phrase is now used of anything likely to cause mirth, or even brisk movement of body.

That's a cock. Said after spitting, should the spittle contain a clot of mucus.

That's a rhyme if you'll take it in time. Said by one who 'drops into poetry' by accident.

That's about my barror. This, in the North Midlands, signifies that some job, action, or feat is within the speaker's capacity. By 'barror' is intended, possibly, *barrow-load*.

That's it if you can dance it. *Glouc.* Equivalent to 'If the cap fits, wear it.'

[24]

That's the chap that gnaw'd the { cheese / bacon } Points out a person guilty of some offence.

That's the last the cobbler threw at his wife. Said to end an argument. The play is on 'last.' Actually, the *last word* is meant.

That's the stuff for trousers. This phrase, which once had a definite meaning, no doubt, is now freely used of any good thing.

That's what you are! i. e. a snot. A street phrase, and deadly insult. The insulter blows his nose, and then says the say. The insulted one sometimes says 'There's two friends parted.'

The best of the { boiling/bunch } Spoken the worthy member of some family or company.

The bigger the man, the better the mark, i. e. to aim, or strike at in combat.

The colour of the devil's nutting bag. Said of anything dingy or bad-coloured.

The devil hung in chains. *Warw.* A cooking turkey dressed with sausages.

The devil knows many things because he is old.

The {dustman / sandman's} come into your eyes. i.e. you are sleepy; usually addressed to children.

The ghost of Old Flam. *Warw.* Any mysterious noise is said to be caused by this spectre.

The more hazelnuts the more bastard children. *Glouc.*

The people of Clent are all Hills, Waldrons, or devils. *Worc.* Some of the old people remember this proverb. Amphlett, *Short Hist. Clent*, 1890, states that before 1600, 30 entries of Hill, 18 of Waldron, 67 of Sparrey, 37 of Coxe are registered in the parish books. Afterwards the Hills and Waldrons multiplied exceedingly.

[25]

The smock is nearer than the petticoat.

The tops of the potatoes [&c.] have the soot bag over them, i. e. have been blackened by the frost.

The very devil chock! i.e. chokefull of the devil.

The way Gandy hops. Expressive of the tendency of one's wishes or deeds.

The Welsh ambassador = The cuckoo.

The Wooden Hill. The stair. 'To go up the wooden hill' = to go to bed.

There are more { houses / parsons } than parish churches.

There were only two that came over in the same boat with him, and one is dead.

There's more old [ale] in you than fourpenny. Said to a sharp-witted person. Fourpenny is beer at 4*d.* per quart.

There's no cock's eyes out. *Black Country*. Said when a matter goes off tamely, or if expectations are not realized. It recalls the days of cockfighting.

There's no profit got from feeding pigs but their muck and their company.

There's nothing done without trouble, except letting the fire out.

Thirteen pence out of a shilling.

Through the wood, and through the wood, and pick up a crooked stick at last.

Throw your { orts / rubbish } where you throw your love. This is admonitory, not a piece of advice: some add 'and in bigger pieces!'

'Tis a blessed heat, tho', as the old woman said when her house was on fire.

To be a cup too low.

To be born with no gizzard, i. e. with a poor digestion.

To be brother and Bob, i. e. hand and glove.

[26]

To be down in the mouth.

To be down on one's duff. *Warw.* i. e. clown on one's luck; or in the dumps.

To be full of good keep.

To be measured for a new suit of clothes = To have a thrashing.

To be off the hinges = To be out of temper, or in bad spirits.

To be on the wrong side of the hedge = To be badly situated in any circumstance.

To be put to one's trumps = To be embarrassed.

To be sick of the simples, i. e. silly. In *Warw.* they say to the performer of a foolish action, 'I'll have you cut for the simples.'

To be struck all of a heap = To be surprised.

To be the very spawn of a person. *Worc.; Glouc.* i. e. exactly like. Some say 'the very spit:' e. g. 'He looks as like his father as if he was spit out of his mouth.'

To be up in the boughs = To be out of temper. *Worc.; Glouc.* Lawson, *Upton-on-Severn Words, &c.*, 1884.

To be whitewashed = To pass through the bankruptcy court.

To blow one up skyhigh = To rate soundly.

To box Harry and chew rag, i. e. to go on short commons. In North Britain should one say, 'What's for dinner?'— when there is some uncertainty from want or other cause— the answer would be *Cat's teeth and clinkins*. In *Glouc.* the reply is, 'Barley-chaff dumplings sugared with wool.'

To break a man's back = To ruin him.

To catch the chat = To receive a reprimand.

To clear one's feathers = To get out of debt, rub off old scores, &c.

To { come back / turn up } like a bad half-penny.

To come off with a whole skin.

To come off with flying colours.

[27]

To crock up = To store.

To cry roast meat. (1) to make known one's good luck. (2) to boast of women's favours.

To dispute with Bellarmin = To quarrel with the bottle. The Bellarmin—a dutch mug or jug—is a varied form of our Toby Tossopot, Greybeard, &c.: but the face upon it was popularly likened to the visage of Cardinal Bellarmin, the bitter opponent of the reform party in the Netherlands, in the latter part of the sixteenth and early part of the seventeenth centuries.

To draw in one's horns = To lose ground in argument.

To draw the long bow = To exaggerate, to lie.

To draw the yoke together = To work in concert.

To drink like a fish.

To drink like an ass, i. e. when thirsty only.

To eat enough for three bears.

To fall into the huckster's hands = To be cheated, duped.

To feel all overish.

To fetch copper = To strike fire from stone with iron. Youngsters of *Warw.* and *Staff.* run swiftly along the paved side-walks striking sparks therefrom with their nailed shoes, and use the phrase.

To fix the bottom on one = To become a parasite.

To fly one's kite. Brewer, *Dict. Phrase and Fable*, says, *To fly the kite* is 'to raise the wind, or obtain money on bills, whether good or bad. It is a Stock Exchange phrase, &c.' In *Warw.* a very different meaning is understood, i. e. 'to shake a loose leg,' or enjoy one's-self.

To follow one's ear = To go out of one's way to discover the source of a distant noise.

To fret the guts to fiddle-strings.

To get behind the wicket.

To get more kicks than ha'pence.

[28]

To get on the blind side of any one.

To get the forehorse by the head = To get out of debt: to see one's way clear, &c.

To get used to a thing like an eel to skinning.

To give one Bell Tinker! = To beat, as tinkers clout a pot.

To give one the bag to hold = To cozen, cheat, &c.

To go away with the breech in the hand = To retire chapfallen. 'Breech' is substituted for the more vulgar word. Sometimes it is said of a man who 'gets the wrong end of the stick' in a matter that 'He goes off hopper-a... d.'

To go home with the parish lantern. *Worc.* i. e. the moon.

To go off like one o'clock, i. e. 'with as little delay as a workman gets off to dinner when the clock strikes one.' —*Lectures on the Science of Language*, by Prof. Max Müller, M.A., 1885, i. 69.

To go out of one's own country and all others, into Walsall. *Staff.* Walsall was formerly regarded as a rough, 'ill-conditioned' place, inhabited by boors. There is a tale that a pedestrian had need to ask passers-by the way to this place. He said to the first man he met, 'Is this the way to Walsall?' The reply was 'Ah!' The second man he questioned replied 'I suppose so.' The third answered 'Go to H—!' 'Thank you,' said the pedestrian, 'I am evidently nearing your town.'

To go scratching on.

To have a dog in one's belly = To be ill-tempered.

To have a fling at a man = To make him a mark for abuse. The phrase 'To have one's fling,' i.e. to indulge in one's liberty, has no bearing on it.

To have a grumbling in the gizzard = To be ill-content.

To have a screw loose = To be out of sorts, &c. It is also used of a demented person.

To have been priming up, i. e. drinking.

To have but one eye, and squint of that.

[29]

To have dropped a watch in the bottom of a rick. *Worc.* 'A jocular hypothesis,' says Lawton, *Upton-on-Severn Words*, &c., 'to account for the cutting or turning of a rick which has become overheated.'

To kick up Bob's a-dying = To make noisy merriment.

To leather one's pig = To drub, actually, or in argument.

To look as if one had been drawn through a hedge backwards.

To look like a boil'd turnip, i. e. sickly. In *Worc.* one may hear, 'He looks as if he'd been eaten and spew'd up again.' In *Warw.* they say, 'You look as if you had murdered a turnip and washed your face in its blood.'

To look like a dog that has burn'd his tail, i. e. ashamed, discomposed. Ray has, '*lost his tail.*'

To look two ways for Sunday. Said of the improvident.

To make a maygame of one = To mock, rail, &c.

To make brick walls = To swallow without chewing: to eat greedily.

To make one dance without a fiddle = To give a drubbing.

To make the neddy, i. e. a fortune, or large profit.

To-morrow goes by of itself.

To part with dry lips, i. e. without drinking.

To pick up a knife = To have a bad fall in riding.

To play Hell and Tommy with one. *Midlands*

To play sure play, i. e. with all the points in one's keeping.

To play the bear with one = To harass, to vex. In *Glouc.* 'To play the very Buggan with one.' Huntley, *Gloss, of the Cotswold*, 1868, p. 19, has the latter phrase. Buggan = Old Bogey, Satan, or any evil spirit.

To pop about like a parched pea on a shovel. 'Like a pea on a drumhead' is another version.

To pour water on a drowned mouse = To cast out spite on one past vengeance.

[30]

To preach over one's liquor = To crack up its excellence as an excuse for drinking.

To put down one's dripping pan = To pout the under lip.

To put one's spoon into the wall = To die. *Worc. & Glouc.*

To put two and two together = To establish truth by reasoning.

To quarrel like fighting cocks.

To ride a free horse to death = To abuse one's patience or kindness.

To ride rusty.

To set the dice upon one = To cheat, to gull. *Vulg.*

To sing like a Bromwich throstle. *Staff.* A 'Bromwich throstle' is a donkey. West Bromwich is the place meant.

To sleep like a pig.

To spite one's belly for the sake of one's back, i. e. to stint one's self of food to provide fine clothes.

To spite one's nose for the sake of one's face, i. e. for the *offence* of one's face. Another form is 'Don't cut off your nose to spite your face.'

To stand to one's pan-pudding = To be firm: to hold to a position.

To stare like a throttled Isaac.

To stick up one's stick = To die. *Worc.*

To stink like a herring.

To swear like a trooper.

To take tea in the kitchen = To pour tea from the cup into the saucer, and drink it from this.

To take to one's heels = To retreat

To take up the cudgels for any one = To fight another's battles.

To talk the leg off an iron pot = To chatter incessantly. It is sometimes said of a talkative person that he or she would talk a horse's [or donkey's] hind leg off.'

To tan the hide = To chastise.

[31]

To throw a thing in one's { teeth / dish } = To reproach.

To throw cold water on a thing = To decry.

To trim one's jacket = To thrash.

To tumble to pieces = To give birth to a child. This repulsive, and, one might add, irrelevant phrase is common.

To turn up the eyes like a duck at thunder. An inferior, or corrupted version is, 'like a dying duck in a thunderstorm.'

To walk an Alderman's pace, i. e. sedately, with gravity.

To walk like a cat in pattens, i. e. in a pottering way.

To walk like a cat on hot bricks, i. e. in a jerky fashion.

To warm the cockles of one's heart = To enjoy to the very core.

To watch one's waters = To keep an eye on a person; to follow his movements.

To wear the yellow = To be jealous. 'To wear the yellow' meant, among old authors, to be free, one's own master, or a bachelor, e. g. 'Give me my yellow hose again.'— Old song.

To wipe a person's eye, i. e. see what he does not see.

To work like a thresher.

To work upon the raw.

To-morrow's the day that never came yet, but the name of the day comes every week.

Too big for his boots. Said of one overbearing or supercilious in manner.

Too much for one, and not enough for two, like the Walsall man's goose. 'The hungry man from Walsall' is the title of a comic song. Poole, *Archaic and Provincial Words of Staff.*, 1880, p. 25, says—'The presumed foundation for this proverb is, that a Walsall man, when asked if he and his wife were going to have a

goose for their Christmas dinner, replied “No;” for said he, “the goose was a silly bird—too much for one to eat, and not enough for two.” ‘

[32]

Too thick to thrive. Said of live stock too abundant in a place.

Top bird of the bosket.

Touch and go.

Trying to look as modest as an old w... e at a christening. *Glouc.* Said of a woman who affects a chaste manner on occasion.

Two heads are better than one, even if the one’s a sheep’s. An extended version of the well-known and ancient proverb. ‘A sheep’s’ head, in folk figure, means a daft or unreasoning head. There seems to be a country joke on *two heads*, which has several forms. Mr. Hazlitt, *Proverbs*, 1882, has, ‘Two heads are better than one, quoth the woman, when she took her dog with her to the market.’

Two swedes to a ton of mutton. *Warw.* A formula used by one who does not wish to gamble for high stakes. ‘I’ll bet you a button’ belongs to the same class of saying.

Two-year breeders never ha’ done. *Warw.* Said of married people whose first children are born one child two years after the other.

Up a daisy! Addressed to a child when taking it up into the arms; or in lifting it from the ground after a fall.

Walsall Whofflers, i. e. bandy legs. Possibly from *whiffle whoffle*, to shake. The inhabitants jocularly assert that their shaky knees are caused by ascending so many steps to church. Standing and working at the bench, with bent legs, for ease, is the true cause of the peculiarity others say.

Wash together, wipe together, fall out and fight together

We shall live till we die, like Tantarabobas.

Weeds don’t spoil.

What’s a cat but its skin?

[33]

What's a penny made of? This is a street jibe uttered in the hearing of a policeman.

The answer is 'Copper!' *Copper*, from the slang verb *to cop*, i. e. catch, signifies constable.

What's the good of a well without a bucket? 'Well' is an exclamation of surprise, greeting, inquiry, &c. It is often, too, a palliative, or the introduction to an excuse, or poor argument. The phrase given is said in reply to these last usages. To the former, the jesting answer is, 'That's what David said to Nell.'

When the monkey jumps = When inclination prompts.

When the sun shines on both sides of the hedge, i. e. never. Frequently said to children that inquire when their parents will take them for an outing, or bring presents. Mr. Denham has, 'The sun shines on both sides of the hedge,' and states that it signifies the position of that body at meridian. I venture to assert, however, that the former is the better reading.

Who stole the donkey? Shouted after the wearer of a white felt hat. The idea seems to be that the hide of the animal was used to make the hat.

Who stole the donkey's dinner? *Answer.* 'Him with the straw brimmer.' Even in Canada a straw hat is called 'the donkey's breakfast.'

Winking and blinking like a rat in a sinkhole.

With a whiz, i. e. Giddily.

With half an eye. Usually spoken of 'the mind's eye:' as, 'A man may see it [the point of the matter in question] with half an eye.'

Worcester, poor, proud, and pretty. Mrs. Chamberlain, *West Worc. Words*, 1882, p. 39, says of this well-known phrase, 'It is proverbial that the Worcester ladies are poor, proud, and pretty. That the accusation of pride may be brought against the Worcester people generally is proved by their saying that 'Ours is the only county that can produce everything necessary for its own consumption.'

[34]

Worse and worse, like Povey's foot. Robertson, *Gloss. Glouc.* 1890. Povey = an owl.

The phrase is used in other counties. Hartshorne, *Salopia Antiqua*, 1841, thought that some man named Povey had a swollen foot which became proverbial. He preserves the Shropshire variant, 'as large as Povey's foot.'

You are come like snow in harvest, i. e. unexpectedly. A person wearing a sour expression is said to look 'as pleasant as snow in harvest.' Ray includes a version amongst 'Scotch proverbs.' It is, however, common in the Midlands.

You be like Jimmy Broadstock's turkeycock, stand and sit. 'Sit 'e down, Gearge!' 'No, I be a gwain while I be a standin'!' 'O you be like,' &c. This Broadstock, folks say, was a farmer near Cheltenham, and he owned a ridiculous he-bird that used to stand astride over the eggs—thinking, no doubt, to help to hatch—when the hen left her nest for food.

You have done it in a dish, i. e. cleverly.

You mean pudding and I mean pork, i. e. we talk of different matters. It seems to be a form of the old proverb—

'I talk of chalk and you of cheese.'—Dyke's *English Proverbs*, 1709. p. 54.

Ray gives an Italian phrase of the same kind, 'Io ti domando danari e tu mi rispondi coppe.' In the Midlands, when one wanders in argument, another replies, 'What's that to do with pork?'

You might as well rub your backside with a brickbat. Said of an action that would cause unnecessary hardship or infliction.

You might {put / feel} it in your eye and see none the worse.

Spoken of a small portion of anything.

You must not expect perfumes in a pigsty. In Herbert's *Outlandish Proverbs*, 1640, we get, 'Look not for musk in a dog's kennel.'

You should not think till the crows build in your bum and then you should wonder

how they got the sticks there. Said to one who apologises for an error by the remark, 'I thought "so and so."'

You sit like Mumchaucer who was hanged for saying nothing. *Midlands.* In Cheshire 'like Mumphazard,' &c.

You were not behind the door when {eyes / noses} given out. Said to one specially favoured in some feature.

You'll be well before you're twice married. Said to one who complains of a trifling ailment. 'You'll be worse before you're any better' is said by one woman to another in labour pains.

You'll pass in a crowd with a good push. An answer to one who says, 'How do I look?'—in the way of dress, &c.

You're a nice young man for a small tea party. Ironical.

[37]

VOCABULARY.

These words are not in the printed glossaries of the four counties, nor in Halliwell's *Diet. Archaic and Provincial Words*, 2, 8vo. 1878; Wright's *Dict. Obsolete and Provincial English*, &c.

Applefoot=Apple turnover. *Glouc.*

Attwood=A silly fellow. *Warw.*

Ayzam-jayzam=Equitable; fair and square. 'Upright and down straight' is an old term of the same meaning.

Backfriend=A small piece of loose skin near the base of a finger nail. *Warw.*

Bancel, *v. a.* =To beat out, to drive. *Glouc.*

Batters=Railway or canal banks. *Tamworth.*

Bob-a-lantern=A turnip lantern. *Warw.*

Bob 'owler or **Bob bowler** = The tiger moth. *Warw.*

Bodge, v. a. = To prod or pierce with an instrument. Near Tamworth, Bodger=tailor.

Bread and cheese=The leaves and young shoots of hawthorn hedges. *Warw.*

Bug = A clot of mucus from the nose. *Warw.*

Bullyhead=A tadpole. *Warw.*

Butter-my-eye=A butterfly, *Warw.*

Caggy or Keggy=Lefthanded.

Chabble or Chobble, v. a. =To chew. *Glouc.*

[38]

Chatterwater=Tea. *Modern.*

Chelp, v. a. =To talk overmuch. *Chelping* is replying or chattering to one's elders, without respect.

Chucky pig=A young pig.

Chuff= Bread; sometimes, but not often, used broadly for food. *Warw.*

Clozam, v. a. =To appropriate. *Warw.*

Codge, v. a. =To cobble, or mend clumsily. *Warw.* See 'Modge.'

Corkle=The core of fruit.

Cowge, v. a. =To pilfer, to steal forcibly. *Warw.* See 'Rant.'

Cows and calves. Children sometimes rub their moist hands, after play, and work up little rolls of dirt-charged moisture. These they term 'cows and calves.' *Glouc.*

Crap, v. n. — To discharge excrement.

Cunnythumb. To shoot with a *cunnythumb* is to discharge a marble with the thumb released from far beneath the forefinger. *Warw; Worc.*

Daddies and **Mammies**=The dust-charged collections of moisture that gather between the toes after a walk, &c. *Glouc.*

Devil's oatmeal = Cowparsnip (?). *Warw.*

Dirty Dan'l [Daniel] = Treacle.

Docker me! *excl.*, e. g. 'Docker me if I do!'

Dogger=A mallet or bat, comprising a handle fitted to a heavy cylindrical end, used in a game differing from *knur and spell* in that a one-nosed tipcat is used instead of a ball. *Warw.*

Donkey=A four-square block on which marbles are placed to be shot at. The term is also applied to a board pierced at intervals, each hole having a number above it, at which marbles are discharged in the hope of their passing through some hole of high value. The numbers represent the marbles that the holder of the donkey must pay if the shooter be successful. The shooter loses his marbles that strike the donkey without passing through a hole. *Warw.*

Dummox = Clay marbles of inferior quality, 'pots.' *Warw.*

[39]

Dummy=A candle. *Warw.*

Dunnekin or Donnykin } = A privy, jakes. *Warw.*

Durgey=A dwarf. Also an adjective, e. g. 'A *durgey* little man. In other counties, according to Halliwell, *durgan*. (*Ang. Sax.* Dveorg, a dwarf: *Goth.* Duergar, dwarfs.)

'E-stich-'em-stich=Hasty pudding. *Glouc.*

Faggot=A small savoury pudding of liver, lights, &c., chopped small. *Warw.*

Footstich=A footstep.

Frum= Concupiscent, big with desire. This is the exact *Warw.* meaning. It has other meanings in other counties.

Fudge, *v. n.*=To advance the hand unfairly when discharging a marble. *Hodge* is the word near Tamworth.

Gaubshite=A filthy boor. 'A jolter-yeded (headed) gaubshite' is an insulting phrase in *Warw.* But see Northall's *English Folk-Rhymes*, p. 304 'Gobbinshire, Gobbinshire,' &c.

Glosser= A perfect cast or throw of a spinning top.

Hatredans=Ill tempers, 'tantrums.' *Glouc.*

Haunty=Uneasy with desire. It is equal to the Scotch 'fidgin-fain.'

Hill, *v. a.*=To tuck or round a child up in bed. (*Hill*, *v. a.* to cover, is a good old English word. Mr. Halliwell quotes *MS. Lincoln. A. i. 17 f. 134* as an example.) But a child may be covered and yet not *hilled* up. It is generally the last thing a woman does before she leaves the bedroom of a child. *Hilling* or *heeling*, the round back of a book, seems to be formed from this verb. *Warw.*

Hodge=The belly, e. g. 'To stuff one's hodge.' *Warw.*

Holy-falls=Trousers buttoned breeches fashion, having the flap, not the fly front.

Howk or **yowk**, *v. n.* =To howl.

[40]

Inchy-pinchy=Progressive leap-frog. *Warw.*

Itching-berries=The berries of the dogrose. They contain woolly, prickly seeds, and these, the children put down their playmates' backs.

Jackbannel or **Bannock**=The minnow. *Warw.* Halliwell has 'Jack Barrel,' but this is never heard. In his edition of Sharp's *Warw. Gloss*, he has 'Jackbannel,' however. But bannock is more usual.

Jank=Excrement. *Jankhole*=privy, jakes, midden, miskin. *Warw.*

Jibber and jumbles=Sweetmeats. *Stratford-on-Avon.*

Joey=The green linnet. *Warw.*

Jole, *v. a.* = To knock or bump another's head against an obstacle.

Kit=A flock of pigeons. *Warw.*

Knurley or **knuz** = (1) The ball of hard wood used in the game of shindy or bandy. (2) *adj.* e.g. 'A knurley little man' = one hard, compact, sturdy of make.

Maid=A wooden beetle used to pound clothes in the washing, or maiding-tub, a dolly. *Warw.*

Mecklekeckle = Poor in quality, or fibre: e.g. 'A meckle-keckle sort of fellow.' Mr. Halliwell states that keckle-meckle, *sub.* is the Derbyshire miner's term for poor ore. *Glouc.*

Miller's dogs = Caterpillars. *Glouc.* See 'Woolly-bear.'

Modge, *v.a.* = To work badly. Frequently used with *codge*, e. g. 'Don't codge and modge at that patch any longer.' *Warw.*

Morris! *imper.* = Be off. *Warw;* *Worc.*

Munch, *v. a.* = To maltreat. The substantive is the same, e. g. 'She is a cruel munch to her children.' *Warw.*

Nammus! *imper.* = Be off. *Warw., &c.*

Nick-and-brick = A variation of chuck-farthing, the dividing line between two bricks in a pavement affording the mark.

[41]

Nineter = An artful youngster. *Warw.* Halliwell has *nineted*, wicked, perverse, *South.*

Nogman = A numskull. *Glouc.*

Ockerdocker = A greasy-looking black pebble, striped with some other colour, regarded as a lucky stone. I do not think the word is of old standing in *Warw.* It probably belongs much further north.

Padgell, *v. n.* To trifle; *adj.* padgelling, e.g. 'a padgelling way of paying a debt;' i.e. little by little. *Warw.*

Peff = Punishment. 'To give a man peff' is to thrash him. *Warw.*

Pell, *v. a.* = To bare, e. g. 'Don't pell your hair back so.' *Glouc.*

Pewey = The pea-linnet. *Warw.*

Pithering, *a.* = Trifling. *Warw.* Halliwell has *pither*, to dig lightly, to throw up earth very gently. *Kent.*

Podge, *v. a.* = To give a blow with the fist, to punch. *Warw.*

Poke or powk = A sty. *Warw.* This is the Shropshire meaning, too, according to Hartshorne. In other counties it seems to be used for any pimple.

Pollydoddle = A man who potters about at woman's work; a mollycoddle.

Polt, *v. a.* = To beat or knock. *Glouc.*

Pup, *v. a.* = To crepitate from the anus. *Warw.*

Rant, *v. a.* = To steal by force. Boys use this term to signify forcible appropriation of marbles or other toys. It is also used of forcible and undue familiarities with females. *Warw.*

Rodney = A helper on canal paths; the one that opens the locks.

Roozles = Wretchedness of mind; the miserables.

[42]

Say, *v. n.* = To micturite. Wright, *Dict. Obsolete and Provincial English*, has 'say,' to strain thro' a sieve. *Leic.*

Scouse, *v. a.* = harry, to drive. *Glouc.*

Scruff = A worthless fellow, a wastrel. *Warw.*

Scrumps = Apples. *Warw.*

Seven-coloured linnet = Goldfinch.

Shining = Stealing—particularly apple stealing. *Warw.*

Sigh, *v. n.* To waste, to fade, as 'the sighing away of a boil,' &c.

Skrinsh = The smallest possible portion of anything.

Soga = Gooseberries. 'Goozgogs' is another common term. *Warw.*

Soysed, I'll be. *Exclam.*

Sprightle up, *imper.* = Be brisk, lively (sprightly). *Warw.*

Squilch = A 'blind' boil. *Glouc.*

Squit = Nonsense. *Warw.*

Stitchwhile = A moment. Generally used in conjunction with *every*, as, 'every stitchwhile.' *Glouc.*

Strommock, *v. n.* = To walk ungainly.

Syke = Bacon. *Stratford-on-Avon.*

Taw = The mark from which players start for a race, jump, cast stones, &c. ‘Take off taw,’ i.e. leap or start from the line.

Thunderball = The poppy. *Warw.* Many glossaries have ‘thunderbolt.’ It is believed by children that to pluck it will draw down the ‘bolts of heaven’ on them. Venus and Jove—or possibly Venus and Vulcan—seem to be in conjunction here.

Tittymog = A child frequently at the breast. ‘Mog,’ or ‘Moggy,’ is, in several counties, a term applied to a calf. Another term for a suckling is ‘lugtit.’

Trollymog, *v. n.* = To walk about heavily and aimlessly. ‘Don’t let’s go trollymogging about any more.’ *Lichfield.* In Worcestershire they say ‘loblolling.’

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Wingell, *v. n.* = To murmur or whimper incessantly. Hartshorne has it in his *Salopia*.

Woolly-bear = A caterpillar. *Warw.* In other parts of the country, caterpillars are called ‘Cats and kittens.’

Wrire or rile, *v. n.* = To fidget on another’s lap, or to get up and down on another’s knees. It may be a corruption of wriggle.

[NP]

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