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*To the Editor of the Monthly Magazine.*

SIR,

YOUR Taunton correspondent has furnished you with a list of words usually spoken in this county (Somerset); upon looking over which I find he has omitted a great number; and I really think, could we catch all the provincial words and expressions here in use amongst the lower classes of society and the yeomanry, that, so far from the number being scanty, we should find it amount to many hundreds. I speak, of course, of the whole county: your correspondent perhaps only of the western part of it, or perhaps of the neighbourhood of Taunton, as such words as *ort* and *hend* (should it not be *hen*?) indicate an origin west of the river Parret. It strikes me that he might have considerably increased his number even of that part of the county: —*nort*, nothing, immediately occurs to me; and I am much mistaken if several of the words in the annexed vocabulary are not in use equally west as well as north of the Parret. But, however, there is so different a pronunciation north of this river, that one is almost tempted to believe, at first hearing, it is absolutely a different language; and, although the pronunciation is inharmonious enough, yet, unless my ear has long deceived me, it possesses less

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novelty in sound, relatively to the language of other parts of England, than the dialect which prevails in this county *west* of the river Parret: one great peculiarity in which is, that in the *present* tense of the third person singular of all verbs, the *eth*, or a contraction of it, is constantly used; thus instead of *has, does, gives, hears, sees, &c.* we find *hath, doth, giv'th, hear'th, see'th &c.* I recollect no verb which does not bend to this rule, except the verb *to be*. But I am trenching upon your Taunton correspondent's more immediate province,

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which I beg leave to quit, in observing that the sound of *S* and *F* are more commonly converted into the sound of *Z* and *V* in the *western*, than in the northern or eastern parts of the county: I would add, that I think him much mistaken in supposing, that the difference of the language consists rather in *pronunciation*, than in the use of provincial words; and the following list bears me out in my idea. Johnson was of the same opinion as your correspondent, but he knew nothing of the matter.

What constitutes a peculiarity of idiom on this side the Parret, is the sound which is commonly given to the letter *a*, in such words as *fall, tall, call, ball &c.* the *a* being sounded exactly like the *a* in father: another peculiarity is, that of attaching to many verbs in the *infinitive* mood, as well as to some other parts of different conjugations, the letter *y*. Thus, it is very common to say, *I can't sewy, I can't nursy, he can't reapy, he can't sawy*; as well as *to sewy, to nursy, to reapy, to sawy, &c.* but never, I think, without an *auxiliary* verb, or the sign of the infinitive *to*. I am very much disposed to believe that this arises from an inclination to give the infinitives of verbs an uniform termination, as in the French and many other languages; I am not aware that this observation has ever been before made. Other peculiarities might be mentioned; but I cannot see the importance of extending these remarks, as it is not very probable that a second *Burns* should ever arise in this county to give celebrity to, and immortalize, in song, its different dialect; none of them having, it must be admitted, any thing strikingly melodious to recommend them. However, although the *sounds* might not be worth preserving, yet *words* assuredly are, if different from those in use in other parts of the island. With this view, and with the attempt to see how far it might be practicable to

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introduce the Somersetshire idiom into the lighter species of poetry, the following Vocabulary was collected many years ago, and now, with recision and revision, is much at the service of the readers of the Monthly Magazine. I beg leave, at the same time, to inform them, that I have never felt myself sufficiently inspired to write even one solitary stanza in this my native dialect.

Some of the words which your Taunton correspondent has mentioned, are common here; I have not, therefore repeated them.

It will be borne in mind, that in the following vocabulary I have given the words, as nearly as I could, as they are pronounced: that many of them are corrupted Saxon, I entertain no doubt, and this the learned in that tongue must readily discover.

*Hunstpill*, Sept. 10, 1814.

J. JENNINGS.

*Ax*, verb, to ask; this corruption is, I believe, common in other parts of England.

*Banehond*, v. To signify intention, to intimate.

*Bee-but*, s. A bee-hive.

*Bee-lippen*,

*Begummers!* interject. A term of asseveration; No, begummers! Yes, begummers!

Perhaps a corrupted oath—*By god mothers?*

*Betwit*, v. To upbraid, to repeat a past circumstance aggravatingly.

*Bibble*, v. To drink often, to tope.

*Bibbler*, s. A toper, a drunkard.

*Billid*, adj. Distracted, mad.

*Bin*, conj. Because.

*Bote*, part. and past tense of To buy.

*Bunt*, v. To separate bran from flour.

*Bunt*,

*Bunting*, s. Bolting-cloth.

*Bunting-cloth*

*Cleves*, s. pl. Cliffs.

*Chamer*, s. Chamber, floor up stairs.

*Colley*, s. A blackbird.

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*Crips*, *adj.* Crisp. This is a very common corruption; we have *claps* for clasp, *haps* for hasp, &c. which were they all noted would swell this vocabulary to an enormous size.

*Clear and shear*, *adv.* Completely, totally.

*Couth*, *v.* To bane; applied to sheep.

*Comical*, *adj.* Odd, singular.

*Crowst*, *s.* Crust.

*Crowsty*, *adj.* Crusty, snappish, surly.

*Daver*, *v.* To fall down, to fade, to droop.

*Desperd*, *adv.* Very, extremely.

*Diddlecome*, *adj.* Half mad, sorely vexed.

*Dirsh*, *s.* A thrush.

*Don*, *v.* To put on.

*Drang*, *s.* A narrow path.

*Dring*, *v.* To throng, to press as in a crowd.

*Drow*, *v.* To dry. *The hay don't drowy at all.*

*Drowth*, *s.* Dryness, thirst.

*Drowthy*, *adj.* Dry, thirsty.

*Dudder*, *v.* To deafen with noise, to render the head confused.

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*Dunch*, *adj.* Deaf.

*Eth*. *s.* Earth.

*Evet*. *s.* A lizard.

*Fags!* *interject.* Truly, indeed.

*Forweend*, *adj.* Humoursome, difficult to please; applied to children.

*Gally*, *v.* To frighten.

*Gammer*. *s.* Mistress, an old woman.

*Gafter*. *s.* An old man.

*Gaffer*, *s.* An old man.

*Grammer*, *s.* Grandmother.

*Gramfer*, s. Grandfather.

*Guddle*, v. To drink greedily.

*Guddler*, s. A greedy drinker; one who is fond of liquor.

*In haydigees*, In high spirits, frolicsome.

*Heft*, s. Weight.

*Hearam-skearam*, adj. Wild, romantic.

*Hitch*, v. To hang up as upon a hook, to affix temporarily; in a neuter sense, to be attached temporarily. Much has been written upon this word, and many correspondents of the Monthly Magazine have tried their hands at it. I wrote a paper expressly to explain it, but I suppose that it was mislaid. Its use and meaning are well understood here. We frequently say to a friend, "HITCH UP *your horse while you stay*;" to a lady, "*Take care, or the brambles will hitch in your cloaths*." If any person will give himself the trouble to add the word *up* to *hitch* in the famous couplet of Pope, the sense will become obvious enough.

*Hoke*, v. To wound with horns, to gore.

*Hoop*, s. A bullfinch.

*Hulder*, v. To hide, to conceal.

*Hulve*, v. To turn over.

*Kex*, s. The dry stalks of some plants are called *Kexies*, such as Hemlock,

*Kexy*, &c.; as dry as a *Kexy* is a common simile.

*Kit*, s. A tribe, a collection, a gang.

*Lamiger*, adj. Lame, crippled.

*Lew*, adj. sheltered, defended from storms.

*Limmers*, s. pl. Shafts.

*Limbers*,

*Lidden*, s. A tale, theme, subject.

*Longful*, adj. Long in regard to time.

*Mang*, v. To mix.

*Mallard*, s. A male duck.

*May-be*, adv. Is constantly used instead of *perhaps*; similar to the French *peut-être*; in both cases *it* and *il* being understood.

*Manche*, v. To chew, to eat. Quere if from *manger*, French?

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*Meech*, *v.* To play truant, to run away from school improperly.

*Meecher*, *s.* A truant, one who absents himself improperly.

*Mixen*, *s.* A dunghill. Johnson has this word, but give no authority for its use. Its use is common here.

*Moor-coot*, *s.* A moor-hen.

*Moot*, *v.* To root out.

*Moxe*, *s.* A root.

*Northering*, *adj.* Wild, foolish, incoherent.

*Pilch*, *s.* A baby's woolen clout.

*Pilcher*,

*Pig's looze*, *s.* A pig-sty.

*Pilm*, *s.* Dust.

*Pink*, *s.* A chaffinch.

*Pip*, *s.* A seed: applied to those seeds which have the shape of apple-seed, cucumber-seed, &c. but never to globular or minute seeds.

*Pulk*, *s.* A small shallow place containing water.

*Pulker*,

*Quarrel*, *s.* A square of window glass; *quarré*, French.

*Ray*, *v.* To dress.

*Readship*, *s.* Confidence, trust.

*Revel*, *s.* What is called a *Wake* in many parts of England is called here a *Revel*. In a *Fair* horses, cattle, sheep, &c. are sold; in a *Revel* never, but liquor, fruit, toys, &c.

*Rudderish*, *adj.* Hasty, without care, rude.

*Sar*, *v.* To earn, to get.

*Shord*, *s.* A gap in a hedge; a *stop-shord*, a stop-gap.

*Single-stick*, *s.* A game, to the disgrace of this county, too well known;—sometimes called Back-sword.

*Scrunch*, *v.* I know not any synonym in our language for this word. The idea of crushing and bringing closer together is evidently implied, accompanied also with some kind of noise; a person may be said to *scrunch* an apple or a biscuit if in eating it

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he made a noise; so a pig in eating acorns; agreeably to this idea Mr. Southey has used the word in Thalaba: —

“No sound but the wild, wild wind,  
An the snow crunching under his feet.”

but he spells it omitting the *s*.

*Skir-devil*, *s*. A black martin, a swift.

*Skrent*, *v*. To burn, to singe: *an irregular verb*.

*Skrent*, *part*. Burnt, singed.

*Skeer*, *v*. To mow lightly over: applied to pastures which have been summer eaten, never to meadow land.

*Skeerings*, *s. pl*. Hay which has been made in pasture land.

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*Skram*, *v*. to benumb with cold.

*Skram*, *adj*. Awkward, stiff as if benumbed.

*Skummer*, *s*. A foulness made with a dirty liquid.

*Skummer*, *v*. To foul with a dirty liquid, to besummer.

*Smeech*, *s*. Fine dust raised in the air.

*Soce!* *s. pl*. vocative case, Friends! Companions! Quere if not from *Socius*, Latin.

*Spry*, *v*. To become chapped by cold.

*Stud*, *v*. To study.

*Stote*, *s*. A weasel; a *Fare* or *Vare* is also a species of *ueasel*, but I am not naturalist sufficient to distinguish them.

*Suent*, *adj*. Even, smooth, plain.

*Swankum*, *v*. To walk to and fro in an idle and careless manner.

*Swop*, *v*. To exchange one thing for another, to barter.

*Tallet*, *s*. The garret, the floor next the roof.

*Tack*, *s*. A shelf.

*Taffety*, *adj*. Dainty, nice, delicate; applied to the taste for food.

*Tang*, *v*. To tie.

*Than*, *adv*. Then.

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*Tilty, adj.* Testy, soon offended.

*To-do, s.* Bustle, confusion.

*Tine, v.* To shut, or close.

*Turf, s. pl.* Turves. Peat cut out in pieces, and dried fit for burning.

*Tut, s.* A hassoc.

*Tutty, s.* A flower, a nosegay.

*Tut-work, s.* Piece-work.

*Twily, adj.* Troublesome, irksome.

*Unray, v.* To undress.

*Unket, adj.* Dreary, dismal, lonesome.

*Up, v.* To get up, to arise.

*Untung, v.* To untie.

*Vang, v.* To receive, to earn.

*Vaught, part.* Fetched.

*Vinned, adj.* Mouldy, humoursome; applied to children.

*Vitious, adj.* Spiteful, revengeful.

*Vlother, s.* Incoherent talk, nonsense.

*Ward, v.* To wade.

*Wash-dish, s.* A wagtail.

*Well-at-ease, adj.* Healthy, hearty.

*Whop, v.* To strike with heavy blows.

*Want, s.* A mole.

*Wood-quist, s.* A wood-pigeon.

*Wrumple, v.* To discompose, to rumple.

*Wrumple, s.* A rumple.

*Zát, adj.* Soft.

*Zoundy, v.* To swoon.

The names of *plants, herbs, trees and flowers*, would furnish another list of no trifling length; thus the common species of *convolvulus*, called *bind-weed*, is called here *withy-wine*; and sometimes *ladies'-smock*, no doubt from the delicate whiteness of its flowers. The single and double *daffodil* are both called *bell-flower*, for their shape. The *hedera terrestris*, or *ground ivy*, is called *hay-maidens*; but your readers are surely



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weary by this time of *Zomerzeshire*. But, should their appetite for Somersetshire words still continue unabated, I can assure them that even now a great many have occurred to my memory since the above list was written, which if they desire to *manche* must be conveyed to them in a future communication.