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APRIL 1870

"SOME INQUIRY INTO THE ASSOCIATION OF THE DIALECTS OF DEVON AND CORNWALL"

BY

RICHARD NICHOLLS WORTH

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V.—*Some Inquiry into the Association of the Dialects of Devon and Cornwall.*—By R. N. WORTH.

Read at the Spring Meeting, May 18, 1869.

IN the earlier Numbers of the *Journal* of this Institution there appeared a series of Papers on the peculiarities of the Cornish dialect; Mr. T. Q. Couch, of Bodmin, contributing a Glossary of Words in local use in East Cornwall, and the late Mr. Garland discharging a similar office for the common speech of the Western portion of the county. It struck me at the time that there was nothing distinctively Cornish in a number of the words adduced; but it was not until recently that I made a more careful examination of them, with the view of selecting therefrom such as I knew to be in current use in the county of Devon. Of course it does not always follow that the employment of a peculiar word, the use of an ordinary word in a peculiar sense, or the existence of a well-defined peculiarity of pronunciation, in both of the sister counties, is a proof that either did not originate to the west of the Tamar. The interchange of population and the course of traffic must in the progress of centuries have established many Devonshire words in Cornwall, and have introduced many Cornish words into Devon. And of late years the process has been, on one side at least, greatly accelerated by the inducements held out to large bodies of the Cornish industrial classes to settle in the Three Towns of Plymouth, Devonport, and Stonehouse, and their neighbourhood. I offer no opinion as to the origin of the words contained in the list which I have the pleasure of laying before the Institution. Many of them are undoubtedly national, and not in any true sense provincial; others are the common property of the West of England; but when these are eliminated, and those about whose Devonian origin there can be no dispute also set on one side, there will still remain a large number of a more or less unsettled character.

My object has been to direct attention to the fact that large proportions of the words in the lists of Mr. Couch and Mr. Garland are current speech in the two counties, in order to assist if possible in the work of forming a full and exact glossary of the dialect of Cornwall, as it is now spoken. Such a glossary would be imperfect did it not distinguish between words which are legitimately and those which are accidentally in use in the county. It has been my endeavour to supply some materials for the prosecution of this task, leaving it to other hands to carry out the work of discrimination.

The lists published in the *Journal* contained, allowing for repetitions and variations in pronunciation only, about 700 words. Of these I have identified nearly a third as in common use in Devon, the larger quota coming naturally from East Cornwall. Wherever the Devonshire form differs from the Cornish I have enclosed it in brackets, with the letter D appended. The letters E and W are in like manner used to distinguish between forms employed in East and West Cornwall respectively, where such a distinction is necessary to be drawn. Where there are two or more words of similar sound but differing in sense, the meaning of the one referred to is also given within a parenthesis. In all other cases the glossaries of Mr. Couch and Mr. Garland, to which what I have done is merely supplementary, will supply the information that may be required. No doubtful words have been dealt with, excepting in a few instances where suggestions, which are given, appeared to arise. It will be observed that in some cases the Devonshire pronunciation of a word is somewhat sharper than the Cornish.

*Words contained in the Glossaries of Messrs. Couch and Garland,
common to Devon and Cornwall.*

Afeard; agg; angletwitch (used in East Cornwall for the earth-worm, in Devonshire for the blind-worm or slow-worm); arrish W, errish E (arish D); athirt; anist; anker; appledrane; arg.

Bal (to bawl); ballywrag E, balarag W (ballyrag or bully-rag D; belk (to belch, bulk D); bucca (a scarecrow or goblin —

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query, is not this word related to the common term bogie?); beat (burnt turves—in Devonshire burnt garden refuse is called beat or peat); bever (biver D); belve; biddicks (bittacks D); bobble E (a pebble—popple D); bran-new; briming (briny D, as Carew has it); bullum; bultys or boulter (bolter D); buts (bots D); buckhorn; barm.

Cab; cabby; chibbals; chuck; chuff; clam (a foot bridge); clome E, clomen W (clomb D); clibby; clickpawed (clickypaw D); clout; cluck (to crouch—cruck D); cluck (of a hen); clusty (sometimes in Devon clisty, which in West Cornwall means soft or sticky); clunk; colewort; coign (commonly spelt quoin); coomb; creem (to creep, *i.e.* of the flesh); crib; cricket (a low stool, seldom used in Devon, but common in the North of England); crock; crumped; chet W (a kitten—not used in Devon; but for-ward children are sometimes called chits); chur; clack; clubbish (occasionally D); cob; crease.

Daps; davered; derns (sometimes in Devon dorns); dish-water; disle; drule; dig (a rap); doust (chaff; also to yield, give up—this word is included in both glossaries, but in each case only in one sense; it is used in Devon in both); dribs; drumbledory W (a cockchafer—compare drumble drone, a bumble bee D).

Evet.

Faggot (a feminine term of reproach); fang (to take—vang D); fitty (vitty D); fouse; flasket; flop; freath E (a wattled gap in a hedge—vreath D, a low hedge); flink.

Gawky; gladdy; grab; grainy (proud, haughty—in Devon it has also the meaning of cross-tempered); greet (earth, soil—*query* grit D, sand, small hard particles); grizzle; gumptious; girts or gerts; gulge; glow W (to look sullen—glower D); glump W (sulkiness—glum D); gammets.

Hack (to dig lightly); hallnut, also nuthall E (the hazel—nutall D); haveage (W habit, E lineage—Devon, lineage); head and henge; hekkymal (akkymal D); holm scritch (home screech D); home (near to, close); hurts; haps; heap ("knacked al ov a heap"); hood (wood, occasionally D).

Jakes.

Kern; killick; knap; keyls (keels D); kicklish (ticklish D); kink.

Leary; Lawrence (to idle—"Miky Lawrence's fever," to be

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lazy D); leat; lerrup E (to beat—the word is used in Devon in the same sense, and to signify trailing or dragging about,—lerrick also in Devon means to beat); lew (lewth not used); linhay; locus E (locust D); longcripple (used in East Cornwall sometimes of a lizard, in Devon generally of a viper); lug; likes; lattin (this word is not much used now in Devon, but lattin cup used to be the general name for a tin mug); louser.

Malkin E (mawkin D); mazzard; mazed; miche; muggets; moil (for mule); mange; mores.

Niff; nutall; nuddick E (niddick D); nesselbird E (the last bird in a nest—compare nesselcraft D, the last pig in a litter).

Oreweed (query oarweed); ozel; overlook.

Peendy E (pindy D); pillem; planchen; plum (soft); plumming (the rising of bread); proud flesh; pluff; purgy E (*query* pudgy D); pinnikin; prinked; piskey (pixie D); punkin or punion end E (puggin end D); puke E (pook D).

Quarry W, quarrel E (a pane of glass—quarril D); quilting (a thrashing).

Raffle (refuse—compare riff-raff D); ream; rig; runner (a jack towel).

Scat; school (of fish); scum; sconce; scovey; seud; scudder E (skitter D); scute; shammick; skit; skiver; slip (a young pig); slock; spell (of work); squat; stean; steer; seine; stogg E (stugg D); stound; strike (to anoint); sloan; stroil; strub; stub; stuggy; swop; suent; sharps (shafts); shrimmed W (shrammed D); slammikin; slewed; sour-sops W (sour-sass D) squab pie; scruff (of the neck); sight (a large quantity); stirridge; smeech W (smitch D); spall (a mining term); slewed; sker.

Tang; tap; tail E (teel D); thirl; tiddy; tine; town-place (some of the farms on Dartmoor are called towns); traapse; trig; tacle W (a windlass—teekle and fall D), a pulley and rope; tack (to clap hands); totalish; towse; train oil.

Upraising; uzzle W (ozel D).

Vady; vinnied.

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Wad; wadge E (to wager—wedge D); want; wettel E (wittle D); wisht; wornal (sometimes in Devon wormhole); wrinkle; walve E (to wallow—compare walving D, rolling); well-a-fine; wallop; withy; wizen; wop.

Yap; yock.