

DICTIONARY
OF
PHRASE AND FABLE.

GIVING THE

*Derivation, Source, or Origin of Common Phrases, Allusions,
and Words that have a place to tell*

BY THE REV. —

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FIFTEENTH EDITION, REVISED AND CORRECTED.

TO WHICH IS ADDED

A CONCISE BIBLIOGRAPHY OF ENGLISH LITERATURE,

BASED UPON THE LARGER WORK OF REFERENCE ON THE SAME

SUBJECT BY W. DAVENPORT ADAMS, WITH ADDITIONS.

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DICTIONARY
OF
PHRASE AND FABLE.

PREFACE.

"WHAT has this babbler to say?" is substantially the question of every one to whom a new book is offered. For ourselves, it will be difficult to furnish an answer in a sentence equally terse and explicit; yet our book has a definite scope and distinct speciality, which we will proceed to unfold. We call it a "Dictionary of Phrase and Fable," a title wide enough, no doubt, to satisfy a very lofty ambition, yet not sufficiently wide to describe the miscellaneous contents of this "alms-basket of words." As the Gargantuan course of studies included everything known to man and something more, so this sweep-net of a book encloses anything that comes within its reach. It draws in curious or novel etymologies, pseudonyms and popular titles, local traditions and literary blunders, biographical and historical trifles too insignificant to find a place in books of higher pretension, but not too worthless to be worth knowing. Sometimes a criticism is adventured, sometimes an exposition. Vulgar errors, of course, form an item; for the prescience of the ant in laying up a store for winter, the wisdom of the bee in the peculiar shape of its honey-comb, the disinterestedness of the jackal, the poisonous nature of the upas tree, and the striding of the Rhodian Colossos, if not of the nature of fable, are certainly "more strange than true."

In regard to etymology, it forms a staple of the book, which professes to give "the derivation, source, or origin of words that have a tale to tell." Thus, *abandon* is to "desert your colours;" *church* means "a circle," and not "God's house," as is usually given; *prevaricate* is "to go zig-zag," or "plough a crooked furrow;" *scrupulous* is to get a "stone in one's shoe;" *sir* is cousin german to the Greek "anax," a

king; *head*, to the Greek "kephalé;" *wig*, to the Latin "pilucca;" *tear* and the French *larme* are mere varieties of the Greek "dakru." A large number of such word-studies have been admitted as walnuts for after dinner. Many others will serve to show how strangely even wise men will sometimes err when they wander in Dreamland: witness the etymology given by Dr. Ash of the word *curmudgeon*; Crabbe's etymology of the word *doze*, noticed under the article SLEEP in this Dictionary; Isidor's derivation of the word *stipulate*; Blackstone's deduction of *parson* from "persona;" Pliny's *druid* from "drus," an oak; Scaliger's etymology of *satire*; Bescherelle's *bigot*; Ducange's *Saracen*; Bailey's *Dunstable*; the derivation given in the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle of the *Isle of Wight*; that of *barbarous* from "barba," a beard; of *Shoreditch* from "Jane Shore;" of *Stony Arabia*; Ptolemy's blunder about Arabia Felix (see YEMEN); Lloyd's etymology of *Ireland*, "the land of ire;" and Lord Coke's *Parliament* (*q.v.*). Pleasant fables these, which have a right to stand in this museum of odds and ends.

Fugitive matter of this sort makes up no small portion of our bulky volume; but, after all, the main substance of the book is "Phrase and Fable" proper. We have all met with a number of familiar phrases, some of them "as old as the hills," the meaning of which, though perfectly plain, it is difficult to connect with the words themselves. Why, for example, is *common sense* so called? and how can we be said to have *seven senses*? Why is kindliness of heart called *good-humour*? and one "gâté" said to be *killed with kindness*? What was the *cat* of the famous Whittington that made him a merchant prince? Why is it said *there is luck in odd numbers*? Why does Hamlet call the ghost old *True-penny*? Why is a parasite called a *Toad-eater*? or a hare *Wat*? What is the origin of such household phrases as *standing Sam*, *mare's-nest*, *shell out*, *kick the bucket*, *dishing the spurs*, *little urchin*, *layers-over for meddlers*, *eau de vie*, *fagot votes*, *salted accounts*, *walls have ears*, the polite refusal expressed by the words *I'll think about it*, and why is a mismanaged concern called a *kettle of fish*? We talk of getting our *hand* or *foot in*, of the *crisis* of a disease, of a *pretext* (which, of course, is a sort of dress), with a thousand similar words and phrases; but where they come from, how they became naturalised, and what they refer to, is, for the most part, a mystery. One object of this

"Dictionary of Phrase and Fable" is to make them tell their respective tales.

Again, there are a host of words which have an attached meaning, apart "from" their original bearing, such as *Adullamites*; *shibboleth*; *tariff*; *delirium*, which has something to do with ploughing; *canvassing* a town, which has something to do with hemp; *suffrages* and *suffragans*, which are somehow connected with the pasterns of a horse; *bankrupt*, a man whose bench is broken; *grotesque*, which must belong to the word grotto; a tradesman's *bill*, which must be connected with a billet of wood; and all such strange misnomers as *widow-bird*, *Judas-tree*, *wolf's-bane*, *Jerusalem artichoke*, and *fox-glove*. Who gave them their present twist? who effaced their old image, and stamped on them their present superscription? In what crucible have they been melted, that their nature has been so completely changed? To give a brief and trustworthy answer is another of the objects of our book.

Once more. There are allusions in every newspaper and periodical, which would puzzle many a wrangler more than the "*Principia*" of Newton. Crabbe, for example, says, *I do not use the word fight in the sense of Mendoza, the Jew*; but no extant book that I know of throws any light upon this Hebrew. Napoleon said of the young Queen of Prussia, *She was Armida, in her distraction, setting fire to her own palace*. Sir Walter Scott says, *I submitted, like Doræ, with a swelling heart*. The song says, *Sham Abram you may, but must not sham Abraham Newland*. Longfellow says, *Thought, like Acastes' arrow, kindles as it flies*. The *Times* says, *Let Gryll be Gryll, and keep his hoggish mind*. Some hundreds of such allusions are explained in the present book.

Then we have references to Scandinavian and other mythology, bogie-land and fairy-land, ghouls and gnomes, and a legion of character-words, such as *Bumbledom* and *Podsnappery*, *Lilliputian* and *Utopian*, *Jeremy Diddler* and *Jerry Sneak*, *Tony Lumpkin*, *Tom Tiddler*, *Bob Acres*, and *Squeers*, the *Malaprops* and *Partingtons* of society, whom we meet with in our daily walks, but know neither their family nor address. The "Dictionary of Phrase and Fable" is their Directory, not so perfect as that of the Post Office, yet sufficiently so, we hope, to give the local habitation of the most characteristic. In a word, from a mass of

material in manuscript, fully thrice the size of the present volume, we have selected some 20,000 examples of what we have thought to be the best suited for popular purposes. Much has been culled, of necessity, from the thousand and one sources of such lore, in English, German, or French, and more is entirely new. We cannot even hope that all our explanations will pass the ordeal of critics unscathed. It is the bread and cheese of some to "pick holes in a' our coats;" and the lighting on weak places carries with it something of the ferret's or huntsman's "passion." What is fair game will, of course, be run hard; and some of our statements must of necessity be mere matters of opinion, in more than one instance modified even while these pages have been passing through the press; but we doubt not that most of them are correct, and are bold to believe that we have in many cases succeeded, where others have wholly or partially failed. The labour has been the willing labour of an enthusiast, who has been for twenty years a "snapper-up of unconsidered trifles." If other eyes less fond see defects in any of these little ones, and will communicate with the author, or his publishers, he will promise to be more grateful than the Archbishop of Granada to his secretary Gil Blas.

**.* As a rule, the names of Greek and Latin fable have been excluded from this Dictionary; where an exception has been made it is either because the word has been so incorporated into our literature as to render its omission a serious defect, or because some characteristic has been added which finds no place in a "Classical Dictionary."*

TWELFTH EDITION.

It would be to the general reader a wearisome list, if the names were set down of all the correspondents who have by their suggestions shown an interest in this Dictionary. Some of them have written from America, others from Germany, Belgium, France, and Norway, two from Ireland, many from Scotland, and the rest from England. George Martin, Esq., of Birkenhead, F. Tolhausen, Esq., whose name is already before the public, and the Rev Arthur M. Rendell, M.A., of Coston Rectory, Melton Mowbray, have gone through the book *seriatim*. Their corrections have been duly inserted, and are gratefully acknowledged.

To all our correspondents we return our thanks; and if they or others still observe faults which have escaped detection, we shall be glad to have them pointed out to us.

Lavant, Chichester.

THE AUTHOR.

[Appended to this edition of the Dictionary of Phrase and Fable will be found a concise Bibliography of English Literature. A Handy Bibliography such as this has long been a desideratum among readers; and the Publishers believe this to be the best opportunity for supplying what was wanted.]

BREWER'S DICTIONARY

OF

PHRASE AND FABLE.

A. This letter is the outline of an ox's head, the two legs being the two horns. It is called in Hebrew *aleph* (an ox).

A among the Egyptians is the hieroglyphic which represents the ibis. Among the Greeks it was the symbol of a bad augury in the sacrifices.

A in logic is the symbol of a universal affirmative. *A* asserts, *E* denies. Thus, syllogisms in *barbara* contain three universal affirmative propositions.

A 1 means first-rate—the very best. In Lloyd's Register of British and Foreign Shipping, the character of the ship's hull is designated by *letters*, and that of the anchors, cables, and stores by figures. **A 1** means hull first-rate, and also anchors, cables, and stores; **A 2**, hull first-rate, but furniture second-rate.

She is a prime girl, she is; she is **A 1**.—*Sam Slick*.

A.B. (See **ABLE**.)

A B C Book. A primer, a book in which articles are set in alphabetical order, as the "A B C Railway Guide."

A. E. I. O. U. The device adopted by Frederick, emperor of Germany.

Austriæ Est Imperatura Orbi	Universo.
Alles Erdreich Ist	Oesterreich Unterthan
Austria's Empire Is	Overall Universal.
Austria's Empire Is	Obviously Upset.

Frederick III., in the fifteenth century, translated the motto thus:—

Austria Erit In Orbe Ultima (Austria will one day be lowest in the scale of empires).

A.U.C. *Anno urbis conditæ* (Latin), "from the foundation of the city"—i.e., Rome.

Aaron. *An Aaron's serpent.* Something so powerful as to swallow up minor powers. Thus, Prussia was the Aaron's

serpent that swallowed up the small German States; England was the Aaron's serpent that swallowed up the States of India. A gigantic monopoly is the Aaron's serpent that swallows up small private traders. (Exod. vii. 10—12).

Ab o'vo. From the very beginning. *Stas'imos*, in the epic poem called the "Little Iliad," does not rush *in medias res*, but begins with the eggs of Leda, from one of which Helen was born. If Leda had not laid this egg, Helen would never have been born. If Helen had not been born, Paris could not have eloped with her. If Paris had not eloped with Helen, there would have been no Trojan War, &c.

Ab ovo usque ad mala. From the first dish to the last. A Roman *cæna* (chief meal) consisted of three parts. The first course was the appetiser, and consisted chiefly of eggs, with stimulants; the second was the "dinner proper;" and the third the dessert, at which *mala* (i.e., all sorts of apples, pears, quinces, pomegranates, and so on) formed the most conspicuous part.

Aback'. *I was taken aback*—I was greatly astonished—taken by surprise—startled. It is a sea term. A ship is "taken aback" when the sails are suddenly carried back by the wind.

Abacus. Each wire contains ten balls.

The Abacus is an instrument for calculation. The word is derived from the Hebrew *abak* (dust), because the Orientals used tables covered with dust for cipher-

—00—0000000—
—0000—000000—
—0—000000000—
—0000000—000—
—00000—00000—
—000000000—0—

ing and diagrams. The multiplication table invented by Pythagoras is called *Abacus Pythagoricus*.

Abaddon. The angel of the bottomless pit. (Rev. ix. 11.) The Hebrew *abad* means "to be lost."

Abam'bou. The evil spirit of the Camma tribes in Africa. A fire is kept always burning in his house. He is supposed to have the power of causing sickness and death.

Abandan'nad. A boy who picks pockets of bandannas (pocket-handkerchiefs). The word is a contraction of *A bandanna-lad*.

Abandon means properly to go away from your general's ensign; to fly from your colours. (Latin—*a*, "away from;" *bandum*, "the general's banner.")

Ab'aris. The dart of *Abaris*. *Abaris*, the Scythian, was a priest of Apollo; and the god gave him a golden arrow on which to ride through the air. This dart rendered him invisible; it also cured diseases, and gave oracles. *Abaris* gave it to Pythagoras.

The dart of *Abaris* carried the philosopher wheresoever he desired it.—*Wilmott*.

Abased. In heraldry the wings of eagles are called *abased*, when the tops are turned downward towards the point of the shield, or when they are shut.

Abas'ter. One of the horses of Pluto. (See *ABATOS*.)

Abate means properly to knock down. (French, *abattre*, whence a *battue*, i.e., wholesale destruction of game; Saxon, *a-bettan*.)

Abate, in horsemanship, is to perform well the downward motion. A horse is said to abate when, working upon curvets, he puts or *beats down* both his hind legs to the ground at once, and keeps exact time.

Abatement, in heraldry, is a mark of dishonour annexed to coat armour, whereby the honour of it is abated.

Ab'atos. One of the horses of Pluto. (See *AETON*.)

Abb'asside (3 syl.). A family of Arab caliphs, who reigned from 749-1257. The name is derived from Abbas ben Abd-al-Motaleb, paternal uncle of the prophet Mahomet. The most celebrated of these

caliphs was Haroun-al-Raschid, born 765, reigned 786-808.

Abbey Lands. At the dissolution of the monasteries, the abbey lands were mainly divided among five noble families, if the following rhyme may be relied on:

Hopton, Horner, Smyth, Knocknaile, and Thynne
When abbots went out, they all came in.

Abbot of Misrule, or Lord of Misrule. A person who used to superintend the diversions of Christmas. In France the "Abbot of Misrule" was called *L'abbé de Liesse*. In Scotland the master of revels was called the "Master of Unreason."

Abbotsford. A name given by Sir Walter Scott to Cartley Hole, on the south bank of the Tweed, after it became his residence. Sir Walter devised the name from a fancy he loved to indulge in, that the *abbots* of Melrose Abbey, in ancient times, passed over the *fords* of the Tweed.

Abb-wool. Wool or yarn used in the woof or *abb* of woollen fabrics. (*Saxon*.)

Abdall'ah, the father of Mahomet, was so beautiful, that when he married *Ami'na*, 200 virgins broke their hearts from disappointed love.—"*Life of Mahomet*," by Washington Irving.

Abdall'ah. Brother and predecessor of *Giafir*, pacha of *Aby'dos*. He was murdered by *Giafir* (2 syl.).—*Byron*, "*Bride of Abydos*."

Ab'dals. Persian fanatics, who think it a merit to kill any one of a different religion, and if slain in the attempt, are accounted martyrs.

Ab'derite (3 syl.). A scoffer. Democritus, the laughing or rather scoffing philosopher, was a native of *Abd'era*, in Thrace. Hence *Abderitan* [scoffing] laughter.

Abderi'tan. A native of *Abd'era*—a fool. The stupidity of the *Abderitans* was proverbial. They were ultimately compelled to abandon their native land and migrate to Macedonia, in consequence of the swarms of rats and frogs.

Ab'diel. The faithful seraph who withstood Satan when he urged the angels to revolt.

(He) adheres with the faith of *Abdiel* to the ancient form of adoration.—*Sir Walter Scott*.

Abeceda'rian. One who teaches or is learning his A B C.

Abecedarian hymns. Hymns which began with the letter A, and each verse or clause following took up the letters of the alphabet in regular succession. (See ACROSTIC POETRY.)

Abeile, a white poplar.

Six abeiles i' the kirkyard grow.

Mrs B. Browning, *Duchess May*.

Abel Keene. A village school-master, afterwards a merchant's clerk. He was led astray, lost his place, and hanged himself.—*Crabbe's "Borough" Letter*, xxi.

Abel Shufflebottom. (See p. 818.)

A'belites (3 syl.), *Abel'ians*, or *Abe-lo'nians*. A christian sect of the fourth century, chiefly found in Hippo (N. Africa). They married, but lived in continence, as they affirm Abel did. The sect was maintained by adopting the children of others. No children of Abel being mentioned in Scripture, the Abelites assume that he had none.

Abes'sa. The impersonation of Abbeys and Convents, represented by Spenser as a damsel. When Una asked if she had seen the Red Cross Knight, Abessa, frightened at the lion, ran to the cottage of blind Superstition, and shut the door. Una arrived, and the lion burst the door open. The meaning is, that at the Reformation, when Truth came, the abbeys and convents got alarmed, and would not let Truth enter, but England (the lion) broke down the door.—*Fairy Queen*, i. 3.

Abes'ta. The Commentary of the Zend.

Abey or *Alawy*. The Nile, so called by the Abyssinians. The word means "the giant."

Abey'ance really means something gaped after (French, *bager*, to gape). The allusion is to men standing with their mouths open, in expectation of some sight about to appear.

Abhor' (Latin, *ab*, "intensive," and *horreo*, "to set up the bristles," as a cat from antipathy to a dog). To abhor is to have a natural antipathy, and to show it by "bristling" in anger.

Abia'la. Wife of Makambi; African deities. She holds a pistol in her hand, and is greatly feared. Her aid is implored in sickness.

Abidhar'ma. The book of metaphysics in the Tripit'aka (q.v.).

Ab'igail. A lady's maid, or lady-maid, Abigail, who introduced herself to David, calls herself over and over again his handmaid (1 Sam. xxv. 3); hence the word became a synonym for a lady-maid, as *Goliath* for a giant, *Samson* a strong man, and *Job* a model of patience. Beaumont and Fletcher, in "The Scornful Lady," call the "waiting gentlewoman" Abigail, a name employed by Swift, Fielding, and others, in their novels. Probably "Abigail Hill," the birth-name of Mrs. Masham, waiting-woman to Queen Anne, popularised the name.

Abim'elech is no proper name, but a regal title of the Philistines, meaning *Father-king*.

Able. An able seaman is a skilled seaman. Such a man is termed an A.B. (Able-Bodied). Boys are *unskilled* seamen, without regard to age.

Aboard. *He fell aboard of me*—met me, abused me. A ship is said to fall aboard another when, both being in motion, one runs against the other and obstructs its progress.

To go aboard is to embark, to go on the board or deck.

Aboard main tack is to draw one of the lower corners of the main-sail down to the chess-tree. Figuratively, it means "to keep to the point."

Aboll'a. An ancient military garment worn by the Greeks and Romans, opposed to the *toga* or robe of peace. The abolla being worn by the lower orders, was affected by the philosophers in the vanity of humility.

Abom'inate (*ab o'mina*, ill-omened). As ill-omened things are disliked, so, by a simple figure of speech, what we dislike we consider ill-omened.

Abomina'tion. *The abomination of desolation.* The Roman standard is so called. (Matt. xxiv. 15.) As it was set up in the holy temple, it was an abomination; and, as it brought destruction, it was the "abomination of desolation."

Abon Hassan. A rich merchant, transferred during sleep to the bed and palace of the caliph Haroun-al-Raschid. Next morning he was treated as the caliph, and every effort was made to make him forget his identity. The same trick was played on *Christopher Sly*, in the Induction of Shakespeare's comedy of "Taming the Shrew;" and, according to Burton ("Anatomy of Melancholy," ii. 2, 4), by Philippe the Good, duke of Burgundy, on his marriage with Eleono'ra.—*Arabian Nights*, "*The Sleeper Awakened*."

Were I caliph for a day, as honest Abon Hassan, I would scourge me these jugglers out of the Commonwealth.—*Sir Walter Scott*.

Abortion. A work badly finished, especially a literary production. An abortion is a human fœtus born before the sixth month of pregnancy.

Abortive Flowers are those which have stamens but no pistils.

Abou ebn Sina, born at Shiraz. The great Persian physician, whose canons of medicine were those adopted by Hippoc'ratës and Aristotle. Died 1037.

Abou-Bekr, called *Father of the Virgin*, Mahomet's favourite wife. He was the first caliph, and was founder of the sect called the Sunnites. (571-634.)

Abou-Jahî'a. The angel of death. (*Mahom. Myth.*)

Above. In a previous part of the book, as *See above*, p. *. An expression derived from the ancient method of making books in the form of scrolls, when the writer began at the top and continued to the bottom, which was the end.

Above board. In a straightforward manner. Dr. Johnson says the expression is derived from gamesters, who place their hands above the table when they change cards, that their adversaries may see they play fairly.

Above your hook—i.e., beyond your comprehension; beyond your mark. The allusion is to hat-pegs placed in rows; the higher rows are above the reach of small statures.

Abracada'bra. A charm. Abracadabra was the supreme deity of the Assyrians. Sere'nus Samon'icus recommended the use of the word as a powerful antidote against ague, flux, and tooth-

ache. The word was to be written on parchment, and suspended round the neck by a linen thread, in the form given below:—

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A B R A C A D A B R A
A B R A C A D A B R
A B R A C A D A B
A B R A C A D A
A B R A C A D
A B R A C A
A B R A C
A B R A
A B R
A B
A

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Abrac'alam. A Syrian deity. A cabalistic word, serving as a charm among the Jews.

Abrac'ax, also written *Abras'as* or *Abras'ax*, in Persian mythology denotes the Supreme Being. In Greek notation it stands for 365. In Persian mythology Abracax presides over 365 impersonated virtues, one of which is supposed to prevail on each day of the year. In the second century the word was employed by the Basilid'ians for the deity; it was also the principle of the Gnostic hierarchy, and that from which sprang their numerous Æons.

A'braham. The Ghebers say that Abraham was thrown into the fire by Nimrod's order, but the flame turned into a bed of roses, on which the child Abraham went to sleep.—*Tavernier*.

Sweet and welcome as the bed
For their own infant prophet spread,
When pitying Heaven to roses turned
The death-flames that beneath him burned.
T. Moore, "*Fire Worshipers*."

To Sham Abraham. To pretend illness or distress, in order to get off work. (*See* ABRAM-MAN.)

I have heard people say *Sham Abram* you may,
But must not sham Abraham Newland.
Upton.

Abraham Newland was cashier of the Bank of England, and signed the notes.

Abraham's Bosom. The repose of the happy in death. (Luke xvi. 22.) The figure is taken from the ancient custom of allowing a dear friend to recline at dinner on your bosom. Thus the beloved John reclined on the bosom of Jesus.

There is no leaping from Delil'ah's lap into Abraham's bosom—i.e., those who live and die in notorious sin, must not expect to go to heaven at death.—*Boston*, "*Crook in the Lot*."

Abraham Newland, An. A bank-note; so called because, in the early part of the present century, none were genuine but those signed by this name.

Abraham'ic Covenant. The covenant made by God with Abraham, that Messiah should spring from his seed. This promise was given to Abraham, because he left his country and father's house to live in a strange land, as God told him.

Abrahamites (A-braham-ites). Certain Bohemian deists, so called because they professed to believe what Abraham believed before he was circumcised. The sect was forbidden by the emperor Joseph II. in 1783.

Abram-Man, or Abraham Cove. A Tom o' Bedlam; a naked vagabond; a begging impostor.

The Abraham Ward, in Bedlam, had for its inmates begging lunatics, who used to array themselves "with party-coloured ribbons, tape in their hats, a fox-tail hanging down, a long stick with streamers," and beg alms; but "for all their seeming madness, they had wit enough to steal as they went along."
—*Canting Academy.*

See "King Lear," ii. 3.

In Beaumont and Fletcher we have several synonyms:—

And these, what name or title e'er they bear,
Jackman or Pat'rico, Cranks or Clapper-dudgeon,
Frater or Abram-man, I speak to all.
Beggars' Bush, ii. 1.

Abrax. One of the horses of Auro'ra.

Abrax'as Stones. Stones with the word *Abraxas* engraved on them, and used as a talisman. The word symbolises the mystic number 365, and the number of intelligences between earth and deity. (See *ABRACAX.*)

Abreast. Side by side, the breasts being all in a line.

The ships were all abreast—i.e., their heads were all equally advanced, as soldiers marching abreast.

Abridge has no connection with the word *bridge*; but "bridge" in this word is a corruption of the Greek *brachus*, or Latin *brevis* (short), through the French *abrégé* (to shorten).

Abroach. Afloat. *To set mischief abroach* is to set it on foot. The figure

is from a tub of liquor, which is broached that the liquor may be drawn from it.

Abroad. *You are all abroad.* Wide of the mark; not at home with the subject. *Abroad*—in all directions.

An elm displays her dusky arms abroad.

Dryden.

Abroc'omas. The lover of Anthi'a, in Xenophon's romance called "Ephesi'aca." (See *ANTHI'A.*)

Ab'rogate. When the Roman senate wanted a law to be passed, they asked the people to give their votes in its favour. The Latin for this is *rogare legem* (to solicit or propose a law). If they wanted a law repealed, they asked the people to vote against it; this was *abrogare legem* (to solicit against the law).

Ab'salom. James, duke of Monmouth, the handsome but rebellious son of Charles II. in Dryden's "Absalom and Achitophel." (1649-1685.)

Abscond' means properly to *be in hiding*; but we generally use the word in the sense of stealing off secretly from an employer. (Latin, *abscondo.*)

Ab'sent, The. "Out of mind as soon as out of sight." Generally misquoted "Out of sight, out of mind."—*Lord Brooke.*

Ab'solute. A *Captain Absolute*, a bold, despotic man, determined to have his own way. The character is in Sheridan's play called "The Rivals."

Sir Anthony Absolute, a warm-hearted, testy, overbearing country squire, in the same play.

Absquat'ulate. To run away or abscond. An American word, compounded of *ab squat* (to go away from your squatting). A squatting is a tenement taken in some unclaimed part, without purchase or permission. The persons who take up their squatting are termed *squatters*.

Abste'mious, according to Fabius and Aulus Gellius, is compounded of *abs* and *temetum*. "Temetum" was a strong, intoxicating drink, allied to the Greek *methē* (strong drink).

Abstract Numbers are numbers considered abstractedly—1, 2, 3; but if we say 1 year, 2 feet, 3 men, &c., the numbers are no longer abstract, but *concrete*.

Taken in the abstract. Things are said

to be taken in the abstract when they are considered absolutely, that is, without reference to other matters or persons. Thus, in the abstract, one man is as good as another, but not so socially and politically.

Abstraction. *An empty Abstraction*, a mere ideality, of no practical use. Every noun is an abstraction, but the narrower genuses may be raised to higher ones, till the common thread is so fine that hardly anything is left. These high abstractions, from which everything but one common cord is taken, are called *empty abstractions*:

For example, *man* is a genus, but may be raised to the genus *animal*, thence to *organised being*, thence to *created being*, thence to *matter* in the abstract, and so on, till everything but one is emptied out.

Absurd means deaf and dumb. (Latin, *ab*, "intensive," and *surdus*, "deaf and dumb.")

Reductio ad absurdum. "Reducing to absurdity" whatever contradicts your statement; or proving a proposition to be right, by showing that every supposable deviation from it would involve an absurdity.

Abu'dah. A merchant of Bagdad, haunted every night by an old hag; he finds at last that the way to rid himself of this torment is to "fear God, and keep his commandments."—*Tales of the Genii*.

Like Abudah, he is always looking out for the Fury, and knows that the night will come with the inevitable hag with it.—*Thackeray*.

Ab'yla. A mountain in Gibraltar. This, with Calpè in Spain, sixteen miles distant, forms the *two pillars of Hercules*.

Abyssin'ians. A sect of Christians in Abyssinia, who admit only one nature in Jesus Christ, and reject the Council of Chalcedon.

Aca'cians. Followers of Aca'cius, bishop of Cesare'a, and Aca'cius, patriarch of Constantinople.

Academ'ics. The followers of Plato were so called, because they attended his lectures in the Acad'emy, a garden planted by Acade'mos.

Acad'emy. Divided into—*Old*, the philosophic teaching of Plato and his immediate followers; *Middle*, a modification of the Platonic system, taught by Arcesila'os; *New*, the half-sceptical school of Car'neadès.

Plato taught that matter is eternal and infinite, but without form or order; and that there is an intelligent cause, the author of everything. He maintained that we could grasp truth only so far as we had elevated our mind by thought to its divine essence.

Arcesila'os was the great antagonist of the Stoics, and wholly denied man's capacity for grasping truth.

Car'neadès maintained that neither our senses nor our understanding could supply us with a sure criterion of truth.

The talent of the Academy, so Plato called Aristotle. (B.G. 384-322.)

Academy Figures. Drawings in black and white chalk, on tinted paper, from living models, used by artists. So called from the Royal Academy of Artists.

Aca'dia—i.e., Nova Scotia, so called by the French from the river *Shuben-acadie*. The name was changed in 1621. In 1755 the old French inhabitants were driven into exile by order of George II.

Thus dwelt together in love those simple Acadian farmers.—*Longfellow*, "Evangeline."

Acaire, St. Patron saint of madmen, by a play on the Greek word *acerias'tos*, meaning a "frantic bedlamite."

Acan'thus. The leafy ornament of Corinthian and composite columns. It is said that Callim'achos lost his daughter, and set a basket of flowers on her grave, with a tile to keep the wind from blowing it away. The next time he went to visit the grave an acanthus had sprung up around the basket, which so struck the fancy of the architect that he introduced the design in his buildings.

Accep'tance. A bill or note accepted. This is done by the drawee writing on it "accepted," and signing his name. The person who accepts it is called the "acceptor."

Ac'cessory. *Accessory before the fact* is one who prompts another to commit an offence, but is himself absent when the offence is perpetrated.

Accessory after the fact is one who screens a felon, aids him in eluding justice, or helps him in any way to profit by his crime. Thus, the receiver of stolen goods, knowing or even suspecting them to be stolen, is an accessory *ex post facto*.

Ac'cident. *A logical accident* is some property or quality which a thing pos-

resses, but which does not essentially belong to it, as the tint of our skin, the height of our body, the redness of a brick, or the whiteness of paper. If any of these were changed, the substance would remain intact.

Accidental Colours. Those which depend on the state of our eye, and not those which the object really possesses. Thus, after looking at the bright sun, all objects appear dark; that dark colour is the accidental colour of the bright sun. When, again, we come from a dark room, all objects at first have a yellow tinge. This is especially the case if we wear blue glasses, for a minute or two after we have taken them off.

The accidental colour of *red* is bluish green, of *orange* dark blue, of *violet* yellow, of *black* white; and the converse.

Accidentals in music are those sharps and flats, &c., which do not properly belong to the key in which the music is set, but which the composer arbitrarily introduces.

Ac'cius Na'vius was the augur who cut the whetstone with a razor in the presence of Tarquin the Elder.

In short, 'twas his fate unemployed, or in place,

sir,
To eat mutton cold, or cut blocks with a razor.

Goldsmith. Retaliation.

Accolade (3 syl.). The embrace given by the grand master when he receives a neophyte or new convert. (Latin, *ad collum*, round the neck.)

Accommoda'tion. A loan of money, which accommodates us, or fits a want.

Accommodation Note or Bill. An acceptance given on a Bill of Exchange for which value has not been received by the acceptor from the drawer, and which, not representing a commercial transaction, is so far fictitious.

Accommodation Ladder. The light ladder hung over the side of a ship at the gangway.

Accord' means "heart to heart." (Lat., *ad corda*.) If two persons like and dislike the same things, they are at "ac-cord," or heart to heart with each other.

Accost' means to "come to the side" of a person for the purpose of speaking to him. (Latin, *ad costam*, to the side.)

Account. To open an account, to enter a customer's name on your ledger for the first time.

To keep open account is when merchants agree to honour each other's bills of exchange.

We will give a good account of them—i.e., we will give them a thorough good drubbing. An account is an entry made in a book of some transaction; and when an antagonist is "paid out in full" with blood and iron, the transaction may be posted as a good account.

If they come, see if we do not give a good account of them.—*The Times*.

Ac'curate means well and carefully done. (Latin, *ad-curo*.)

Accu'sative, The. Calvin was so called by his college companions.

Ace (1 syl.). The unit of cards or dice. The Romans called it *unus* (one); the Greeks, who borrowed the game of dice from the Romans, called *unus onos*, but *onos* in Greek means "an ass." The Teutons learnt the game from the Greeks, and translated the word into *ass*, Italian *asso*, French and Spanish *as*, English *ace*. (See BATE.)

Within an ace. Within a shave. An ace is the lowest numeral, and he who wins within an ace, wins within a single mark.

Acel'dama. A battle-field, a place where much blood has been shed. To the south of Jerusalem there was a field so called; it was purchased by the priests with the blood-money thrown down by Judas, and appropriated as a cemetery for strangers.

Aceph'alites (4 syl.) properly means men without a head. (1.) A faction among the Eutych'ians in the fifth century after the submission of Mongus their chief, by which they were "deprived of their head." (2.) Certain bishops exempt from the jurisdiction and discipline of their patriarch. (3.) A sect of levellers in the reign of Henry I., who acknowledged no leader. (4.) The fabulous Blemmyës of Africa, who are described as having no head, their eyes and mouth being placed in the breast. (Greek, *a-keph'alē*, without a head.)

Aces'tes (3 syl.). *The Arrow of Acestes.* In a trial of skill Acestēs, the Sicilian, discharged his arrow with such force that it took fire. (Roman fable.)

Like Acestes' shaft of old,
The swift thought kindles as it flies.
Longfellow

Achæ'an League. A confederacy of the twelve towns of Achæa. It was broken up by Alexander the Great, but was again re-organised B.C. 280, and dissolved by the Romans in 147 B.C.

Acha'tes (3 syl.). A *fidus Achatës*. A faithful companion, a bosom friend. The term *fidus Achates* repeatedly occurs in Virgil's "Æneid."

He has chosen this fellow for his *fidus Achates*.
Sir Walter Scott.

Ac'heron. The "River of Sorrows" (Greek, *achea roos*); one of the five rivers of the infernal regions.

Sad Acheron of sorrow, black and deep.
Milton, "Paradise Lost," ii.

Acheron'tian books. The most celebrated books of augury in the world. They are the books which the Etruscans received from Tagès, grandson of Jupiter.

Acheru'sia. A cavern on the borders of Pontus, said to lead down to the infernal regions. It was through this cavern that Hercules dragged Cer'berus to earth.

Achilles (3 syl.). King of the Myr'midons (in Thessaly), the hero of Homer's epic poem called the "Iliad." He is represented as brave and relentless. The poem begins with a quarrel between him and Agamemnon, the commander-in-chief of the allied Greeks, in consequence of which Achilles refuses to go to battle. The Trojans prevail, and he sends forth his friend Patroc'los to oppose them. Patroc'los falls; and Achilles, in anger, rushes into the battle, and kills Hector, the commander of the Trojans. He himself falls in battle a few days afterwards, before Troy is taken.

Achilles of Rome: Sicin'ius Denta'tus. (B.C. 405.)

Of England: the Duke of Wellington. (1769-1852.)

Of Germany: Albert, Elector of Brandenburg. (1414-1486.)

Achilles' Tendon. A strong sinew running along the heel to the calf of the leg. The tale says that Thetis took her son Achilles by the heel, and dipped him in the river Styx to make him invulnerable. The water washed every part, except the heel covered with his mother's hand. It was on this vulnerable point the hero was slain; and the sinew of the heel is called, in consequence, *tendo Achillis*. A post-Homeric story.

The Heel of Achilles, the vulnerable or weak point in a man's character. (See above.)

Ireland is sometimes called the *Achilles' heel of England*.

Achit'ophel, in Dryden's satire of "Absalom and Achitophel," is designed for the earl of Shaftesbury. Achitophel was David's traitorous counsellor, who deserted to Absalom, but his advice being disregarded he hanged himself (2 Sam. xv.).

Of these (*the rebels*) the false Achitophel was first;
A name to all succeeding ages curst;
For close designs and crooked counsels fit;
Sagacious, bold, and turbulent of wit;
Restless, unlied in principles and place;
In power unpleasant, impatient in disgrace.—Pt. I.

Ac'chor. God of flies, worshipped by the Cyre'neans, that they might not be annoyed with these tiny tormentors. (See BEELZEBUB.)

Achte-que'djams (4 syl.). The eight elephants, in Indian mythology, which sustain the world. (See AIRA-PADAM.)

Ac'cis. The son of Faunus, in love with Galat'e'a. Polyph'e'mos, his rival, crushed him under a huge rock.

Ac'më. The crisis of a disease. Old medical writers used to divide the progress of a disease into four periods: the *ar'-chë*, or beginning; the *anab'asis*, or increase; the *ac'më*, or term of its utmost violence; and the *pa-rac'-më*, or decline.

Ac'olyte (3 syl.). A subordinate officer in the Catholic Church, whose duty is to light the lamps, prepare the sacred elements, attend the officiating priests, &c. (Greek, *a follower*.)

Acoime'tæ. An order of monks in the fifth century who watched day and night. (Greek, *watchers*.)

Acra'sia (*Feebleness*). An enchantress who lived in the "Bower of Bliss," situate in "Wandering Island." She transformed her lovers into monstrous shapes, and kept them captives. Sir Guyon having crept up softly, threw a net over her, and bound her in chains of adamant; then broke down her bower and burnt it to ashes.—*Spenser*, "Faëry Queen," ii. 12.

Acra'tes (3 syl.), i.e., *incontinence*; called by Spenser the father of Cymoch'lës and Pyroch'lës.—*Faëry Queen*, ii. 4.

A'cre-fight. A duel in the open field. The combats of the Scotch and English Borderers were so called. The word "acre" is the Latin *ager* (a field).

Acre-shot, a land tax. "Acre" is *ager* (land), and "shot" is *scot* or *sceat* (a tax).

A'cres. A *Bob Acres*—i.e., a coward. From Sheridan's comedy called "The Rivals." His "courage always oozed out at his fingers' ends."

Acroamat'ics. Esoter'ical lectures; the lectures of Aristotle, which none but his chosen disciples were allowed to attend. Those given to the public generally were called *exoter'ic*. (Acroamatic is a Greek word, meaning *heard*.)

Acroat'ic. Same as *esoter'ic*. (See ACROAMATICS.)

Ac'robat means one who goes on his extremities, or uses only the tips of his fingers and toes in moving about. (It is from the two Greek words *akros* *baino*, to go on the extremities of one's limbs.)

Acros'tic means "first letter verse." (Greek, *akros-stichos*). The term was first applied to the verses of the Erythræan sibyl, written on leaves. These prophecies were excessively obscure, but were so contrived that when the leaves were sorted and laid in order, their initial letters always made a word.—*Dionys.*, iv. 62.

Acrostic poetry among the Hebrews consisted of twenty-two lines or stanzas beginning with the letters of the alphabet in succession, as Psalm cxix., &c.

Act of Faith (*auto da fé*), in Roman Catholic countries, is a day set apart by the Inquisition for the punishment of heretics, and the absolution of those who renounce their heretical doctrines. The sentence of the Inquisition is also so called; and so is the ceremony of burning, or otherwise torturing the condemned.

Actæ'on. A hunter, a cuckold. In Grecian mythology Actæon was a huntsman, who surprised Diana bathing, was changed by her into a stag, and torn to pieces by his own hounds.

Go thou, like Sir Actæon, with Ringwood at thy heel.

Shakespeare, "Merry Wives," &c., ii. 1.
Divulge Page himself for a secure and wilful Actæon. *Ditto, iii. 2.*

Ac'tian Years. Years in which the Actian games were celebrated. Augustus instituted games at Actium to celebrate

his naval victory over Antony. They were held every five years.

Ac'tive. *Active verbs*, verbs which act on the noun governed.

Active capital. Property in actual employment in a given concern.

Active commerce. Exports and imports carried to and fro in our own ships. *Passive commerce* is when they are carried in foreign vessels. The commerce of England is *active*, of China *passive*.

Activity. *The sphere of activity*, the whole field through which the influence of an object or person extends.

Acutia'tor. A person in the Middle Ages who attended armies and knights to sharpen their instruments of war. (Latin, *acuo*, to sharpen.)

Ad. *Argumentum ad hominem.* A personal or home-thrust argument.

Ad inquirendum. A judicial writ commanding an inquiry to be made into some complaint.

Ad lib'itum. Without restraint.

Ad valorem. According to the price charged. Some custom-duties vary according to the different values of the goods imported. Thus at one time teas paid duty *ad valorem*, the high-priced tea paying more duty than that of a lower price.

Adam. *The old Adam; Beat the offending Adam out of thee; The first Adam.* Adam, as the federal head of unredeemed man, stands for "original sin," or "man without regenerating grace."

The second Adam; the new Adam, &c.; I will give you the new Adam. Jesus Christ, as the covenant head, is so called; also the "new birth unto righteousness."

A faithful Adam. A faithful old servant. The character is taken from Shakespeare's comedy of "As You Like It," where a retainer of that name, who had served the family sixty-three years, offers to accompany Orlando in his flight, and to share with him his thrifty savings of 500 crowns.

Adam Bell. A northern outlaw, whose name has become a synonym for a good archer. (See CLYM OF THE CLOUGH.)

Adam Cupid—i.e., Archer Cupid, so called from Adam Bell, the celebrated archer. (See "Percy's Reliques," vol. i., p. 7.)

Adam's Ale. Water as a beverage; from the supposition that Adam had nothing but water to drink. In Scotland water for a beverage is called *Adam's Wine*.

Adam's Apple. The protuberance in the fore-part of a man's throat; so called from the superstition that a piece of the forbidden fruit which Adam ate stuck in his throat, and occasioned the swelling.

Adam's Needle. The yucca, so called because it is sharp-pointed like a needle. If Adam ever sewed, the yucca would have served him for a needle.

Adam's Peak, in Ceylon, is where the Arabs say Adam bewailed his expulsion from Paradise, and stood on one foot till God forgave him. It was the Portuguese who first called it "Pico de Adam." (See KAABA.)

Adam's Profession. Gardening, agriculture. Adam was appointed by God to dress the garden of Eden, and to keep it (Gen. ii. 15); and after the fall he was sent out of the garden "to till the ground." (Gen. iii. 23.)

There is no ancient gentlemen, but gardeners, ditchers, and grave-makers; they hold up Adam's profession.—*The Clown in "Hamlet,"* v. 1.

Adams. *Parson Adams*, the ideal of a benevolent, simple-minded, eccentric country clergyman; ignorant of the world, bold as a lion for the truth, and modest as a girl. The character is in Fielding's novel of "Joseph Andrews."

Adamas'tor. The spirit of the stormy Cape (Good Hope), described by Camoëns in the "Lusiad" as a hideous phantom. According to Barre'to, he was one of the giants who invaded heaven.

Ad'amic. *Adamic Covenant*, the covenant made with God to Adam, that "the seed of the woman should bruise the serpent's head." (Gen. iii. 15.)

Adamic Earth. Common red clay, so called from the popular but erroneous notion that *adam* means "red earth." Adam really means "likeness" (Hebrew, *damah*), and refers to the words "Let us make man after our likeness," and "in the likeness of God made he him; male and female created he them, and called their name Adam." (Gen. v. 1, 2.)

Ad'amites (3 syl.). A sect of fanatics who spread themselves over Bohemia and Moravia in the fifteenth and sixteenth

centuries. One Picard was the founder in 1400, and styled himself "Adam, son of God." He professed to recall his followers to the state of primitive innocence. No clothes were worn, wives were in common, and there was no such thing as good and evil, but all actions were indifferent.

Ad'aran', according to the Parsee superstition, is a sacred fire less holy than that called Behram (*q.v.*).

Ad'dison of the North—*i.e.*, Henry Mackenzie, the "Man of Feeling." (1745-1831.)

Addixit, or Addix'e runt (Latin). All right. The word uttered by the augurs when the "birds" were favourable.

Ad'dle. *Addle-headed, or Addle-pated*—*i.e.*, empty-headed. (Saxon, *a-dilrian*, to be empty.)

Addled egg, a rotten one; or, rather one that has lost the principle of vitality. (Welsh, *hadl*, rotten.) See PARLIAMENT.

Ad'elite, or Almog'enen. A Spanish fortune-teller, who predicts the fortune of a person by the flight and note of birds.

Ad'emar, or Adema'ro (in "Jerusalem Delivered"). Archbishop of Pogg'io, an ecclesiastical warrior, who with William archbishop of Orange, besought pope Urban on his knees that he might be sent on the crusade. He took 400 armed men from Poggio, but they sneaked off during a drought, and left the crusade. (Book xiii.) Ademar was not alive at the time, he had been slain at the attack on Antioch, by Clorinda (Book xi.); but in the final attack on Jerusalem, his spirit came with three squadrons of angels to aid the besiegers. (Book xviii.)

Adephag'ia (5 syl.). Goddess of gluttony, who had a temple in Sicily.

Adept' properly means one who has found it out (from the Latin *adeptus*). The alchemists applied the term *verë adeptus* to those persons who professed to have "found out" the elixir of life or philosopher's stone.

Ades'senari'ians. A sect who hold the real presence of Christ's body in the eucharist, but do not maintain that the bread and wine lose any of their original properties. (The word is from the Latin *adesse*, to be present.)

Ades'te Fide'lés. Composed by John Reading, who wrote "Dulcè Domum." It is called the "Portuguese Hymn," from being heard at the Portuguese Chapel by the duke of Leeds, who supposed it to be a part of the usual Portuguese service.

Adfil'iate, Adfilia'tion. The ancient Goths adopted the children of a former marriage, and put them on the same footing as those of the new family. (Latin, *ad-filius*, equal to a real son.)

Adha, al (*the slit-eared*). The swiftest of Mahomet's camels.

Ad'hab-al-Cabr. The first purgatory of the Mahometans.

Adiaph'orists. Followers of Melancthon; moderate Lutherans, who hold that some of the dogmas of Luther are matters of indifference. (Greek, *adiaph'oros*, indifferent.)

Adieu, good-b'ye. *A dieu*, an elliptical form for *I commend you to God*. Good-b'ye is *God be with ye*.

Adis'sehen. The serpent with a thousand heads which sustains the universe. (*Ind. myth.*)

Adjective. *Adjective colours* are those which require a mordant before they can be used as dyes.

Adjourn'. A corruption of *Ajourn*—i.e., *a-journée* (from to-day's work), to put off from to-day to another time.

Ad'mirable, The. James Crichton (*kry-ton*). (1551-1573.)

Admirable Doctor. Roger Bacon. (1214-1292.)

Admiral, corruption of Amir-al. Milton, speaking of Satan, says:—

His spear (to equal which the tallest pine
Hewn on Norwegian hills, to be the mast
Of some tall amiral, were but a wand)
He walked with.—*Paradise Lost*, i. 292.

The word was introduced by the Turks or Genoese in the twelfth century, and is the Arabic *Amir* with the article *al* (the lord or commander); as, *Amir-al-ma* (commander of the water), *Amir-al-Omra* (commander of the forces), *Amir-al-Mumenim* (commander of the faithful).

English admirals were of three classes, according to the colour of their flag—

Admiral of the Red, held the centre in an engagement.

Admiral of the White, held the van.

Admiral of the Blue, held the rear.

Admirals are called *Flag Officers*.

Admiral of the Red. A cant, punning term applied to a wine-bibber, whose face and nose are very red.

Admittance. Licence. Shakespeare says, "Sir John, you are a gentleman of excellent breeding, of great admittance" —i.e., to whom great freedom is allowed. ("Merry Wives," ii. 2). The allusion is to an obsolete custom called *admission*, by which a prince avowed another prince to be under his protection. Maximilian, emperor of Mexico, was the "admittant" of the emperor Napoleon III.

Admonitionists. Certain Puritans who in 1571 sent an *admonition* to the Parliament condemning everything in the Church of England which was not in accordance with the doctrines and practices of Geneva.

Ado'nai. Son of the star-beam, and god of light among the Rosicrucians.

Adona'is (4 syl.). The song about Adonis; Shelley's elegy on Keats is so called. See Bion's *Lament for Adonis*.

Ado'nis. A beautiful boy. The allusion is to Adonis, who was beloved by Venus, and was killed by a boar while hunting. See Shakespeare's *Venus and Adonis*.

The flower called Adonis is blood-red, and, according to fable, sprang from the blood of the gored hunter (Pheasant's-eye).

A garden of Adonis (Greek). A worthless toy; a very perishable good. The allusion is to the fennel and lettuce jars of the ancient Greeks, called "Adonis gardens," because these herbs were planted in them for the annual festival of the young huntsman, and thrown away the next morning.

Ado'nists. Those Jews who maintain that the proper vowels of the word Jehovah are unknown, and that the word is never to be pronounced. Every time they meet with the word Jehovah they call it *Ado'nai* instead. (Hebrew, *adon*, lord.)

Adoption. *Adoption by arms.* An ancient custom of giving arms to a person of merit, which laid him under the obligation of being your champion and defender.

Adoption by baptism. Being godfather or godmother to a child. The child by baptism is your god-child.