THE

SHORTER OXFORD ENGLISH DICTIONARY

ON HISTORICAL PRINCIPLES

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PREFACE

HIS Dictionary is an abridgement officially authorized by the Delegates of the Oxford University Press of A New English Dictionary on Historical Principles, later known as The Oxford English Dictionary. The need for such an abridged form of the great work was envisaged at the outset. The publication of this work is, in fact, a fulfilment of one of the provisions of the agreement entered into in the year 1879 between the Philological Society and the Oxford University Press. The relevant clause of the Indenture runs as follows:

The Delegates may (if and whenever they think fit) prepare and publish any Dictionaries compiled or abridged from the principal Dictionary, and in such form as they may think fit, and may deal with the same in all respects at their discretion.

It was not until 1902 that the project of an abridgement was initiated. It was clear that the editors and staff engaged on the principal work had their hands too full to undertake it. A scholar from outside was found for the task in the late Mr. William Little, Fellow of Corpus Christi College, Oxford, who was asked to submit specimens in 1902, and with him negotiations were officially entered into on 24 April 1903. The work was carried on steadily by him until his death in January 1922. By this time he had prepared entirely without assistance the manuscript for the letters A to T and V, and had passed for printing about one-third of the whole dictionary.

Upon his death the materials left by him were placed in my hands for revision and completion. The gaps in the manuscript 'copy' were filled by Mr. H. W. Fowler, who abridged U and X, Y, Z, and by Mrs. E. A. Coulson, who was responsible for W. In the earlier stages of my editorship I was assisted by two experienced members of the Oxford Dictionary staff, Mr. F. J. Sweatman, M.A. Oxon., and Mr. J. W. Birt. Since 1924, when these assistants could no longer be spared for the work, the following ladies have successively taken part: Mrs. J. W. Alden (Miss A. M. Savage), M.A. Oxon., and three graduates in English of the University of Leeds, Mrs. E. A. Coulson (Miss J. Senior), Miss M. Dawn, and Miss S. M. Mills. The services rendered by all these helpers and their share in bringing the work to a successful conclusion are here gratefully acknowledged.

The aim of this Dictionary is to present in miniature all the features of the principal work. It is designed to embrace not only the literary and colloquial English of the present day together with such technical and scientific terms as are most frequently met with or are likely to be the subject of inquiry, but also a considerable proportion of obsolete, archaic, and dialectal words and uses. The Oxford Dictionary was compiled and edited from materials amounting to over five million quotations, derived from English works of literature and records of all kinds, and resulted in 15,000 large quarto pages, in which nearly half

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a million words are recorded with more than one and a half million illustrative quotations. This abridgement, The Shorter Oxford English Dictionary, presents, therefore, a quintessence of those vast materials. The method reflects exactly that of the principal work. It is historical in its representation of the chronological sequence in the development of meaning, It gives the etymologies of words in such a form as to exhibit every significant stage of their history from their place of origin. The meanings are illustrated by quotations either exactly dated or assigned to their authors; the range of the texts used in these illustrations is shown in the list of Authors and Books Cited which is printed in Volume I, pp. xii-xviii. Idiomatic phrases are treated with a fullness that is unusual if not unparalleled in dictionaries of similar compass. Like the original work, this abridgement is not intended to provide a direct commentary on the peculiar vocabulary of any one author, but an attempt has been made to record the special words and meanings and even the oddities of important writers. Many provincialisms also that have some currency in standard literature or are of signal importance historically are treated here, though it may be with extreme brevity. It has been possible in many places to supplement the word-content of the original dictionary and its chronological evidence from the collections gathered by many hands during the last fifty years with a view to a grand supplement or an extensive revision of that work. It has been the aim of the compilers to keep a due proportion between the various interests, and not to exaggerate the etymological side at the expense of the semantic, and, though it has been impossible to preserve entirely the readability of the principal work, the definitions have much of their original fullness, so that the ample and leisurely character of the parent work is in a measure retained.

It is hoped that both the student and the general reader will find in this work what they may reasonably expect to find in a historical dictionary of English compressed within 2,500 quarto pages, which covers not only the history of the general English vocabulary from the days of King Alfred down to the present time, but includes also a large number of obsolete, archaic, provincial, and foreign words and phrases, and a multitude of terms of art and science. In short, it is hoped that it may be found acceptable as a lexical companion to English literature. For those who possess the great Oxford Dictionary the 'Shorter' will serve as a key to its treasures, for those who do not it will form the only possible substitute.

THE OLD ASHMOLEAN BUILDING, OXFORD. December, 1932.

C. T. ONIONS.

PREFATORY NOTE TO THE SECOND EDITION

The several calls for reprints of this work bear testimony to its acceptability and usefulness. In the present edition an opportunity has been afforded of revising many articles and of adding many others. In all some three thousand changes have been made of one kind or another. For the great bulk of these Mr. F. J. SWEATMAN has performed the arduous task of selection, adaptation, and preparation for the printer.

C. T. O.

August, 1936.

INTRODUCTION

HE following sections contain an exposition of the contents and method of this Dictionary, with directions for its use.

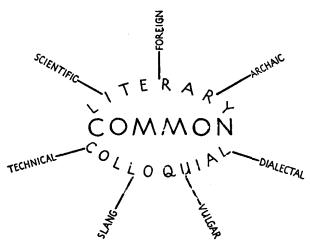
§ 1. The general order and arrangement of an article is as follows (all possible features, which are of necessity not present in all or even the majority of words, being taken into account). (i) The catchword in heavy type, preceded where necessary by a diacritic mark of the status of the word († obsolete, || alien), is followed by (ii) the pronunciation in phonetic transcript (§ 3), where this is not sufficiently indicated by stress-marks in the catchword itself, or unless the word is obsolete (the pronunciation being then omitted), and (iii) the notation of the part of speech (except where the word is a substantive and there is no word of another part of speech spelt in the same way). Next comes (iv) the indication of the modern currency of the word, unless already noted by a symbol, e.g. whether it is now literary, colloquial, slang, or surviving only in archaic, historical, dialectal, or other limited use. Then follows, where appropriate, (v) a statement of variant spellings or inflexional forms in heavy type with their pronunciations, if these have some special importance. The next item, which is a feature of all articles, is the indication of (vi) the earliest appearance of the word, which is shown either by the symbols OE., ME., late ME. (§ 4), or by a precise date. This is succeeded by (vii) the etymology enclosed within square brackets (§ 5); (viii) the specification of the word as belonging to some art or science (Mus., Bot., etc., for which see pp. xix-xxi) if it is entirely so restricted; (ix) the meanings, numbered or lettered, with specification of their status and with the date of their first appearance, or, if they are obsolete, an indication of their last known occurrence (§ 6). After each group of senses there is normally (x) a block of quotations with dates or indications of authorship, numbered according to the senses which they exemplify (§ 6). (xi) Groups of idiomatic phrases or attributive uses and combinations conclude the article, unless there are (xii) derivatives of minor importance, which are appended with an introductory 'Hence' or 'So' (§ 7).

§ 2. The VOCABULARY of this Dictionary is designed to include all words in regular literary and colloquial use, together with a selection of those which belong to the terminology of the arts and sciences and those which are current only in archaic or dialectal use, as well as of words now obsolete but of importance during some period of our literature.

The individual words of the vocabulary may be classified in various ways. In this work a broad distinction is made between *natives* and *denizens* (naturalized foreigners) on the one hand, and *aliens* (non-naturalized foreigners) on the other. *Natives* are words of Old English origin, *denizens* are borrowings from foreign languages which have acquired full English citizenship, *aliens* are words that retain their foreign appearance and to some extent their foreign sound. This last group is distinguished by the prefixing of || to the catchword.

Words are also classifiable according to the sphere of their currency and usage. Where they do not belong to the language common to literature and everyday speech the circumstances of their use call for some characterization. Hence the necessity for such labels as, on the one hand, obsolete (marked by †), literary, colloquial, slang, dialectal, local, archaic, vulgar, and on the other, Art, Natural History, Mathematics, and so on. The composition of a vocabulary under these aspects may be usefully pictured in such a diagram as that devised by Sir James Murray, which is here reproduced with some modifications from Vol. I, p. xvii, of the Oxford Dictionary:

a*



The centre is occupied by 'common' words, in which literary and colloquial usage meet. 'Scientific', 'foreign', and 'archaic' words are the specially learned outposts of the literary language; 'technical' and 'dialectal' words blend with the common language both in speech and in literature. 'Slang' touches the technical terminology of trades and occupations, as in 'nautical slang', 'University slang'; 'slang', 'vulgar' speech, and 'dialect' form a group of lower or less dignified status; 'dialectal' and 'archaic' words are allied in so far as they are outcrops of older strata of the language. In addition to and interpenetrating the common vocabulary with all its ramifications and outliers, there is a vast number of proper names, which either themselves acquire connotative value or give rise to derivatives which take their place among the ordinary words of the language.

Words created for one special occasion are here called nonce-words.

Where it has been found necessary to recognize variants of form having equal or nearly equal claims to be considered standard, a double, occasionally a triple, catchword indicates the diversity of usage, priority of place corresponding to priority of usage. Besides variants current in Britain, certain conventional spellings (as *honor*) of the United States have been recorded.

Exigencies of space have determined the arrangement of many compound words in groups under their first element, which usually appear in other dictionaries as 'main words'. Other linguistic elements that cannot be classed as words, viz. prefixes and suffixes, and the letters of the alphabet, are entered in their alphabetical places and receive the same historical treatment as words.

Entries of variant spellings referred to their standard form have been limited to those which are not easily recognizable, alternatives such as those between y and i, s and z, c and s, k and c being generally ignored. The word to which cross-reference is made is printed in SMALL CAPITALS.

§ 3. The PRONUNCIATION is noted within round brackets by means of a phonetic alphabet, the application of which is shown in the table printed on p. xxii of Vol. I and on p. viii of Vol. II. The chief vowel-signs of this system that diverge from or are additional to the alphabet of ordinary use are displayed at the foot of the opposite pages of every opening of the Dictionary. The additional consonant-signs are p, p, p, p, p, and p. Each simple sound is indicated regularly by the same single symbol. Short quantity in vowels is left unmarked, long quantity is denoted by the macron \bar{p} ; the mark generally employed to indicate short quantity \bar{p} is here used to denote obscuration of quality.

The main or primary stress is indicated by a turned period after the vowel of the stressed syllable. Subordinate or secondary stress, where it falls otherwise than in the normal place

(i.e. on the second syllable from the main stress), is marked as in crystallization, book-seller. In obsolete words and in some current words, especially compounds of obvious formation or derivatives or cognates of a word that is entered with full pronunciation, the stress only is marked without further notation. Varieties in the pronunciation of a word are recorded as fully as possible, priority of position in the record being given to the variety which according to the available evidence has the more extensive currency.

In the system as a whole variation is extensively recognized, and allowance is made for local or class divergence from the standard range, but not, as a rule, for dialectal, colonial, or American varieties. Thus, the divergent pronunciations of the vowels of such words as fast, bath, and cough, lost, soft are shown, special symbols, (a) and (ϕ) respectively, being used to indicate that such local or individual varieties exist. Again, discrimination has been made between the vowels of fir (f51) and fur (f $\bar{\nu}$ 1), where south-of-England speakers make no distinction. Similarly, a difference is noted between the (o) of scotch and the (o) of watch, the (\bar{p}) of for and the (\bar{p}) of war, and the northerly pronunciation (\bar{p}) of vowels of words like fort, port, mourn is recognized, where the southerly has (o), which is, on the other hand, the general sound in form, short, and morn. Use is made of small 'superior' letters, i and v. to express the final elements of those diphthongs which are fully developed only with certain classes of speakers, e.g. in fate (fēit), note (nout), as distinguished from the generally received diphthongs of eye (i), boy (boi), bow (bau), few (fix). Similar recognition is given to the variation between u, u, and u, u which is illustrated by the pronunciation of lieu, lure, illuminant. A 'superior' turned e (2) is used for the vowel-element developed between ī, ē, ō, ū, au, etc. and r, as in pier (pi-1), pare (pē-1), pour (pō-1), poor (pū-1), weary (wī-ri), scour (skau-1); the modern southern development of (ū°1) to (ō°1), e.g. (∫ū°1), (∫ō°1), is not admitted, nor the monophthongal pronunciation in words like door, i.e. (do1) as opposed to (do1).

In general, 'superior' letters indicate elements that are present or absent according to individual or other usage, and are therefore used in such cases as *promptitude* (promptitiad), standstill (stændstil).

An outstanding feature of the phonetic system is the recognition of the primary or ideal value of the many vowels that undergo obscuration or reduction in unstressed positions, but which may at any time revert to their full quality, as in rhetorical utterance, in singing, and in any cases of deliberate or affected precision. Examples are: accept (*ekse-pt), confer (konfo-1), judgement (dzv-dzměnt), dislocate (disloke-it)—contrast action (æ-kon), mental (mental), local (low-kal); here the unstressed obscured vowel is in normal speech the 'mid-mixed' vowel (a) of the second syllable of ever (e-val), towards which the majority of obscured vowels tend; mistress (mistress), billet (bi-lèt), useless (yū-slès), where (è) represents a 'raised' variant of (e) which approaches (i); beauteous (biū-ti-s), where (i) represents a reduced form of the short vowel of Hebe (hi-bi). In words like fracture, measure, the historical or ideal pronunciations are (fræ-ktiu), (me-3-1), from which may be deduced the common colloquial forms (fræ-kto-1), (me-3-1). The following equations show the general equivalents in ordinary speech, and in the majority of other phonetic systems, of the different types of obscured vowels:

$$\begin{cases}
\check{x} & \check{a} & \check{c} & \check{i} & \check{o} & \check{o} & \check{u} \\
\check{v} & \check{e} & \check{o} & \check{o} & \check{u}
\end{cases} = \mathbf{a}$$

$$\dot{c} & \check{t} = \mathbf{i}.$$

§ 4. CHRONOLOGY. Every independent word and meaning is attested by an indication of its earliest known occurrence. If the record begins before the middle of the twelfth century (c1150), it is regarded as falling within the Old English period and is marked OE.; if between that date and the middle of the fifteenth century (c1450), it belongs to Middle English and is marked ME., the later Middle English period (c1350-1450) being specified as late ME. After that period, and in exceptional instances even somewhat before 1450, dating by the

year is used. The earliest known meaning of a word has no date attached, since it has already been indicated at the beginning of the article; but for each succeeding sense a date is given. Where the etymology of a word begins with OE..., (late) ME..., the date of the earliest use is considered to be sufficiently indicated and is not expressed elsewhere in the article. The latest limit of an obsolete word or sense is shown by means of the year preceded by a dash, as -1759.

- § 5. The ETYMOLOGY is given within square brackets.
- (a) If the word is native, its form in Old English is given, and this is often referred back to a Primitive Germanic (Old Teutonic) form, which, being hypothetically reconstructed, is marked with an asterisk; cognate forms from other Germanic languages may be added, and, where the word is of Common Indo-European stock, this is shown—with a selection of related forms. The symbol:— means 'derived by organic process from', and especially 'the regular phonetic descendant of.
- 'Old Teutonic' is the hypothetical prehistoric language from which were developed the Germanic languages (of which the West Germanic group comprises English, Frisian, Dutch, Low and High German, and the East Germanic Gothic and the Scandinavian tongues). 'Pre-Teutonic' is an earlier stage of this, removed only by a step from the Indo-European (Indo-Germanic, Aryan), the hypothetical original of what were ultimately differentiated as Sanskrit, Greek, Italic (Latin, etc.), Celtic, Germanic, Slavonic, etc. The designation 'Common Teutonic' is given to a form which is represented in the main Germanic languages; similarly 'Common Romance' designates a form which is represented in all the main Romance languages (Italian, Spanish, Portuguese, French, Roumanian). Popular or Vulgar Latin is that form of Latin which was disseminated in the provinces of the Roman Empire, and from which arose the distinct vernaculars known as the Romance languages. For further information the articles on the various names of languages in this Dictionary should be consulted.
- (b) If the word is derived from a foreign language, the manner of its derivation may be indicated in any of three ways: (i) a. = adopted without change of form (or pronunciation) from the foreign word; (ii) ad. = derived by adaptation, i. e. with adjustment to English speech-habits; (iii) f_* = formed on, i. e., newly shaped on the basis of, the foreign form. When the immediate etymon is identical in form with its English derivative it is not given in the etymological statement. The notation of other kinds of derivation, e. g. compositions of two existing English words or combinations of a stem with a suffix, may be reduced to the formula $[f_* x + y]$. The etymology of the ulterior sources of an English word (as of French words derived from Latin, Latin from Greek, etc.) is noted by the same methods. Special observations on the later phonetic history, pronunciation, and spelling are often included in the etymological section of an article.
- § 6. MEANINGS, DEFINITIONS, QUOTATIONS, AUTHORITIES. The meanings are arranged with as strict a regard as possible for their appearance in order of time. They are liable to all the qualifications to which words themselves are liable; thus they may be marked † (obsolete), arch., dial., U.S., nonce-use, and so forth, or as pertaining to some branch of science or art. In a word of long and intricate history, the meanings are usually divided into groups having roman numeral headings, within which the meanings have an independent numeration in arabic figures. For the method of dating see § 4.

Two devices are used in order to specify the application of definitions. (i) The object of a transitive verb is placed in its grammatical position in a definition, within round brackets. Such parts of a definition as are not universally applicable, as well as qualifications of its extent, are similarly treated. (ii) Additions, as of prepositions or adverbs, or an infinitive,

in italic type indicate that the italicized words do or may enter into the construction accompanying or dependent upon the word when used in the sense defined. Examples are: Tend.. To watch over and wait upon (the sick or helpless); Beat.. To drive (a person) by blows away, off, from, into, etc.; Force.. To compel or constrain (a person, oneself, etc.) to do a thing; Layman.. an 'outsider' or non-expert (esp. in relation to law or medicine); Chit.. a (very young) child.

When the form of the catchword is used anywhere in the course of an article, it may be abbreviated for economy of space by means of the initial letter followed by a full stop.

The chief sources of the illustrative quotations, which are placed under number- or letter-headings according to the sections to which they apply, are catalogued in the list of Authors and Books Cited, printed below, pp. xii-xviii. Authors' names are printed in small capitals (e.g. Scott); for certain common abbreviations of these see pp. xix-xxi. Occasionally, an example of a current usage is supplied from a casual source; this is marked mod. (= a modern example). It has been found necessary in respect of some words or meanings whose history has been treated at considerable length in the original Dictionary, and with more detail than could be presented here, merely to refer by means of the abbreviation N.E.D. to the fuller statement there given. Modern dictionaries in general are referred to as Dicts.

§ 7. PHRASES, COMBINATIONS, and MINOR DERIVATIVES commonly form a block or blocks at the end of the article, phrases in italic or in thick type, obvious (undefined) combinations in italics. Specialized verbal phrases with adverbs or prepositions are displayed in thick type, as are also special combinations, i. e. those compound words of which the meaning cannot at once be inferred from their elements, as well as derivatives the status of which does not warrant their insertion as 'main words' of the vocabulary in their alphabetical sequence.

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ABBREVIATIONS AND SIGNS

In this list the abbreviations are printed in the type that is normally used for them, but there are variations for special cases.

	I.D. D. J.	
a = ante	Bp = Bishop	ed = edited by, edition (of)
a = adjective	Braz = Brazilian	E.D.D = The English Dialect Dic-
a. (in etymolo-	Brit. N. Amer = British North America	tionary, ed. J. Wright
gies) = adoption of	Bulg = Bulgarian	EE = Early English
abbrev = abbreviation, abbrevia-	Byz = Byzantine	e.g = exempli gratia, for ex-
ted	c = circa	ample"
abl = ablative	c = century	Egyptol = in Egyptology
Abp = Archbishop	Camb = Cambridge	E. Ind = in the East Indies
absol in absolute use, abso-	cap = capital (letter)	Electr = in Electricity
lutely	Cat(al) = Catalan	Electr. Engin = in Electrical Engineering
abstr = abstract	catachr = catachrestic(ally	ellipt = elliptical(ly
acc(us) = accusative	cc = centuries	Embryol = in Embryology
act = active	Cdl. — Cardinal	e. midl = east midland
ad. (in etymolo-	Celt. — Celtic	
gies) = adaptation of		Eng = English
	Cf., cf = confer, 'compare'	Eng. Hist = in English History
adj = adjective	Chem = in Chemistry	Engin in Engineering
adv = adverb	Ch. Hist = in Church History	Ent(om) = in Entomology
advb = adverbial(ly	Chor = Chorus	Epil = Epilogue
Æol = Æolic	Chron(ol) = in Chronology	equiv = equivalent
AF(r) = Anglo-French	cl = clause	erron = erroneous(ly
agent-n = agent-noun	cl. L = classical Latin	esp = especially
Agric = in Agriculture	cogn. w = cognate with	Ethnol = in Ethnology
Alb = Albanian	collect = collective(ly	etym = etymology
Alch = in Alchemy	colloq = in colloquial use, collo-	etymol = etymological
Alg = in Algebra	quial(ly, -ism	euphem = euphemistic(ally
allus = allusively	Com. (Rom., = Common (Romanic,	exc = except
Amer = American	Teut., WGer.) Teutonic, West Ger-	exclam = exclamation
Amer. Hist = in American History	manic)	f. (in cross-refer-
Amer. Ind = American Indian	comb = combining	
Anat = in Anatomy	Comb = in combination	ences, etc.) = form of
Anc. (Hist., etc.) = in Ancient (History, etc.)		f. (in etymologies) = formed on
Anglo-Fr = Anglo-French	Comm = in Commerce	F = French
	comp(ar) = comparative	fam = familiar
Anglo-Ind = Anglo-Indian	Comp. Anat = in Comparative Anatomy	fem = feminine
Anglo-Ir = Anglo-Irish	compd = compound	ff = forms (of)
Anglo-L = Anglo-Latin	compl = complement	fig = in figurative use
Anthrop = in Anthropology	Conch(ol) = in Conchology	fl = floruit
aphet = aphetic, aphetized	concr = concretely	Flem = Flemish
Apocr = Apocrypha	conj = conjunction, conjunctive	Fo = (First) Folio edition of
app = apparently	conjug = conjugation	Shakespeare's plays
appos = appositive(ly	conn. w = connected with	Fortif = in Fortification
Arab = Arabic	cons = consonant	F.Q = Spenser's Facric Queene
Aram = Aramaic	const. (w.) = construed with	(see List of Authors)
arch = archaic	constr = construction	Fr French
Arch(it) = in Architecture	contempt = in contemptuous use	Fr. Hist = in French History
Archmol = in Archmology	contr = contracted, contraction	freq = frequent(ly
Arith = in Arithmetic	correl = correlative	
assim = assimilated (to)	corresp = corresponding	frequent = frequentative Fris = Frisian
assoc. w = associated with		
Astr(on) = in Astronomy	Corrupt = corruption	fut = future
Astrol in Astrology	COTGR = Cotgrave (see List of	G = German
attrib in attributive use, at-	Authors)	Gael = Gaelic
	Cryst(all) = in Crystallography	Gen = General
tributively attrib. and Comb. = in attributive uses and	d = died	gen = generally
	Da = Danish	gen(it) = genitive
combinations	dat = dative	Geol = In Geology
augm = augmentative	def = definition	Geom = in Geometry
Austral Australian	def. art = definite article	Ger = German
A.V = Authorized Version of		GOLDSM = Goldsmith (see List of
the Bible	deriv = derivative, -ation	A: thors)
Bacteriol = in Bacteriology	dial = in dialect use dialectally	Goth = Gothic
BEAUM. & FL = Beaumont and Fletcher	Dict = Dictionary	Gr = Greek
(see List of Authors)	Dicts = (in other) Dictionaries	Gram = in Grammar
bef = before	dim = diminutive	Gr. Antiq. (Hist., = in Greek Antiquities
betw = between	dist = distinguished	etc.) (History, etc.)
bibl = biblical	distrib = distributive	Gr. Ch = in the Greek Church
Biol = in Biology	Dor = Doric	GrL = Greco-Latin
Biol. Chem = in Biological Chemistry	Du Dutch	Heb = Hebrew
B. Jons = Ben Jonson (see List of	dub = dubious	
Authors)	Eccl in ecclesiastical use	Her = in Heraldry
Boh = Bohemian	eccl. Gr., eccl. L. = ecclesiastical	Herb = with herbalists
Bot = in Botany	Red Hist - in Pasianiani Time	HG = High German
william at Louding	Eccl. Hist = in Ecclesiastical History	rimu = riindustani