

appearance." "Sycophant" was originally applied to one who *shewed up* some person who had done wrong in the matter of—figs! To be more explicit, there was at one time a law at Athens against the exportation of figs, and the person who gave information to the government of any breach of the law was called a "sycophantes" or "fig-informer." By and by the word was applied to any informer, and especially to one who was more influenced by base personal motives than by regard for the public good. In the course of time "sycophant" came to mean "a mean flatterer of the rich or powerful"—which meaning it retains to the present day.

It is not easy to discern any family likeness between the words "cousin" and "sanguinary," yet they are both derived from the Latin "sanguis," which signifies "blood." "Cousin" is, in its full form "consanguineus," "of the same blood"—which gives us the word "consanguinity," equivalent to cousinhood.

There is not much resemblance between "megrims" and "cranium,"—"the skull;" yet "megrim" comes from the French "migraine," which again is a corruption of "hemicrania," the medical term for "a pain confined to one side of the head."

"Proxy" and "cure" are near akin, although the former seems to have sold its birthright. It is simply a contraction for "procuracy"—"the taking charge of anything for another."

"Squirrel" and "cynosure" are at least half cousins, but the former has evidently fallen into bad company. In Greek the two words are "skiouros" (shady tail) and kynosoura (dog's tail—the same constellation as *Ursa Minor*, which contains the pole-star.)

It is not so surprising that "biscuit" and "cook" should be related. The latter comes to us directly from the Latin; the former through the French, meaning "twice cooked or baked."

"Shilling" and "shield" are of the same stock. The *penning* (penny), introduced under the Saxon Heptarchy, was so called from its resemblance to a pan—a little pan. Four of these pennies made a shilling, so called from its likeness to a diminutive shield—just as the French "écu" and the Italian

"scudo" are derived from the Latin "scutum" (a shield), which gives us our "escutcheon." This latter word again has for cousin-german "squire"—which is a degenerate "scutifer" (écuyer) or "shield-bearer."

It seems ridiculous that two such words as "clown" and "culture" should have any connection; yet they are both the offspring of the Latin "colo" (participle, cultus) to cultivate. The "colonus" of the Romans was a "tiller of the ground," "a ploughman," "a rustic"—then by a natural transition, "one who had the manners of such a person"—"a clown."

But we might pursue this part of the subject *ad nauseam*, so numerous are the odd relationships, generally unrecognized, between words which are in constant use. It only requires a little attention to discover them; and the habit of never passing a word in reading without ascertaining, if possible, its history, kinship and real meaning, though at first, perhaps, rather irksome, will, after a brief experience, prove its own reward. Next in importance to the treasures of literature which an ancient or foreign language reveals to us, is the use which may be made of it in adding to our knowledge of our own rich mother-tongue.

A pretty large and constantly increasing class of words is that which is derived from the names of persons. We speak of a "philippic" with hardly a thought of the wily father of Alexander the Great, or of the great orator whose burning words resisted his encroachments. We use the word "cicerone" (borrowed from the Italian) for the garrulous guide who shews us the gathered wonders of a museum or gallery with little, if any, indignation for the insult thus offered to the memory of the greatest of Roman orators. Even children "tantalize" each other without the least reference to the sufferings of the hapless Tantalus. We read our "Punch" and our "Judy" without once thinking of Pontius Pilate or the traitor Judas, the chief characters in the old mystery of which the modern street drama is the relic. "Simony," let us hope, will soon disappear for ever, and with it the memory of the disreputable impostor, Simon. But