

ment against smugglers of figs from Attica, at a time when their export was prohibited. The purpose of these informers was often to secure the favor of the great, and thus the word changes its meaning.

Parasite gives us another scrap of interesting information, regarding the internal affairs of the Athenians. Men were appointed to collect corn (*sitos*) from the adjacent country for the public sacrifices, but the number of these became so great that their support was a serious burden to the state, and it was at last proposed by some one, who was desirous of increasing his popularity, to quarter them upon the richest land-holders. This was agreed to. These parasites became the hangers on of the rich, and in order to make themselves tolerated were not backward in magnifying the virtues of their hosts. At last the word took its present signification, and is thus employed by Byron in *Child Harold*.

He gathered revellers from far and near,
He knew them flatterers of the festal hour;
The heartless *parasite* of present cheer.

The word is appositely applied to those plants and animals that subsist upon others, and they are fit congeners for their human namesake.

I have already referred to one word as showing the way in which our forefathers kept their accounts. The word *calculate* tells us that the Romans used pebbles to reckon their accounts with. The Arabs used the same means, for Chaucer informs us that Augrim (*Algorithm*) stones, were part of the means of study of hendi Nicholas. The Romans also used their fanigiers, as children of various ages do now for the same purpose, and gave us the word *digit* in consequence. Previous to the discovery of the circulation of the blood, there were numerous theories accounting for the sustenance of the body, and because certain vessels were found empty after death, which we know convey the life-blood, they were called *arteries* or air vessels.

The Greeks supposed that depression of spirits was caused by the effusion of black bile in the intestines, hence the term melancholy; this *chole* or bile, had to answer for another and much more serious misdemeanor, that of causing anger, hence cholera.

From the custom of burning incense in worship, we have the word *perfume*. St. Paul has this in his mind when addressing the Philippians, he speaks of their contributions as an "odour of sweet smell, a sacrifice acceptable and well pleasing to God."

It is curious to observe the different fate that awaits words as they are handed down from one generation to another. It was the custom in both Greece and Rome, for actors to wear masks on the stage; from this we have the word *hypocrite* from the Greeks, and *person* from the Romans, but while few would object to the word person applied to themselves, it would be considered anything but complimentary to be called a hypocrite.

An *hostler*, called in some of our old works hosteler, was one who kept an inn, now he is but the attendant on the horses at an inn. *Cunning* meant at first skill, and is used in this sense by the Psalmist, "If I forget thee O Jerusalem, may my right hand forget her *cunning*;" and a king or konig, was one who became leader by reason of his skill in arms. A *rascal* was at first nothing worse than a lean fellow. A *knave* with our Saxon forefathers was simply an attendant, and the knave in cards, was so called from his being supposed to be in the position of attendant to the king and queen.

While some words have degenerated in meaning, others have improved; take for instance the word *mercy*; who at first sight would suppose that mercy, mercenary, and merchant, are all from the same root? Yet the word *mercator* is the source of them all. We have no difficulty in tracing the connection of the last two, but *mercy* needs some explanation. It is a well established fact