FILE 321

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Armstrong College,
Newcastle-on-Tyne.
9.8.26.

Dear Sir Arthur Currie,

You may perhaps recollect exchanging some letters with me when I was at Queen's. I should hardly venture to trouble you on so slight a connexion; but my colleague Mr. James Dickinson, who presents this note, is travelling round the world as Albert Kahn Fellow, and this is a semi-public office which perhaps justifies me in introducing him. He comes to Canada after visiting the chief countries of the East and South America with his wife, and I think that he should not pass through Montreal without seeing you.

He is an electrical engineer by profession, and among his other accomplishments started the British Army boat on the Rhine.

The purpose of his tour is to gain some knowledge of the countries he visits in order to help to form an international opinion and to foster good will between nations.

I am,

Yours sincerely,

A. S. Ferguson.

June 10th, 1927.

James Dickinson, Esq.,
C/o. Headquarters, Bank of Montreal,
Vancouver, B. C.

Dear Mr. Dickinson:-

Let me acknowledge receipt of your letter of May 31st, in which you say that you may be in Montreal about the beginning of July.

I am sorry that I cannot reply definitely that I will be here. There is a possibility, though a remote one, that I may leave Montreal late in June for Honolulu to attend a meeting of the Institute of Pacific Relations. If I went I would be done out of my salmon fishing, and so if I stay in Quebec, I am likely to be down on the Bonaventure River about July 1st.

When you do come please ring up my office at McGill (Up. 5920) and ask for the Principal's Secretary, who will give you all information. If I am here I shall be very glad indeed to see you. If not, come to McGill and get in touch with Colonel Bovey.

Yours faithfully,

June 10th, 1927.

Professor A. S. Ferguson,
Armstrong College,
Newcastle-on-Tyne,
England.

Dear Professor Ferguson:-

The other day I received a letter from Mr. James Dickinson, enclosing one from you dated August 9th,1926, or September 8th, the same year, depending on what 9-8-26 stands for.

I remember very well my correspondence with you when you were at Queen's.

Mr. Dickinson writes that he is likely to be here about the 1st of July. I have written him saying that if I am in the city when he comes I shall be very glad to see him, but I am more than likely to be getting a little salmon fishing about that time.

With all good wishes, I am,

Yours faithfully,

Principal.

Admiral Oriental Line

31 May 1927.

Dear Sir Arthur,

Having been elected the British Albert Kahn Fellow for 1926-'27 I am, at present, travelling round the world with my wife.

Before leaving England, last August, my Colleague, Professor A.S. Ferguson, kindly gave me the enclosed letter of introduction.

I am afraid that our visit to North America is during the vacation, however, I expect to be in Eastern Canada about the beginning of July, and should be very glad if you would let me know whether I may call upon you. May I ask you to write to me at your earliest opportunity:-

c/o Mdgrs. The Bank of Montreal,
(To await arrival) Vancouver, (B.C.).

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whereupon I could give you a more exact date.

Yours Sincerely,
James Dickinson.

STAR Weekly
Sat Dec 17 1921

CANADIAN LANGUAGE PUZZLES THE ENGLISH

Englishwoman Asks for a Reel of Cotton and Is Shown Calico, But She Wants a Spool of Thread.

AND THE ASSISTANT WHO SERVES HER IS A "CLERK"

Many Ordinary Things are Known by Different Terms to the Old Countryman and the Canadian.

By PERCIVAL B. WALMSLEY.

"AT the present day, there is a perceptible difference, not only of pronunciation, but of diction, between the English of the educated classes in America and the English of the corresponding classes in England. Correct London English and correct American English have so far diverged as to run parallel courses."

So says Hart's Rhetoric. On the other hand, the language of the educated people in Canada and in the United States is so much alike that one might call it North American English.

It is this very perceptible difference, especially of diction, which causes much difficulty to English people coming to Canada whether as workers or visitors. An Englishman going to France expects to find there a different language, and may prepare himself with grammar and dictionary, but he will hardly think of the different vocabulary required for this part of the British Empire.

Baedeker indeed has recognized the need and has given the tourist a glimpse into the different phrases incidental to railway travel, but he did not go far. The Englishman is surprised to find no guards here, but conductors, and that luggage is luggage, and the smaller bags are termed grips. They are railroads rather than railways, and the rails are laid on ties, not sleepers. In fact, the terminology of railway management is almost entirely different. Trucks become freight cars, goods trains are freight trains. Nothing is sent "carriage-paid," but freight prepaid. Carriers are express companies, and so on.

The visitor may go shopping, but it will be in a store. He should not ask for a draper's, an ironmonger's, or a sweet shop. He will see these represented, but they are named drygoods, hardware and candy stores respectively. Those who assist the proprietors of these stores are not assistants but clerks, however slight may be their clerical duties. The bank clerk retains his name, but the bank cashier becomes the teller, as in Scotland.

The articles sold also go by different names. An Englishwoman's first experience in a drygoods store is generally comical. She asks for a reel of cotton, and the clerk has been known to offer to cut off a few yards of what she would call calico. She finds out she should have requested a spool of thread. Cotton-wool or wadding, she must call cotton-batting.

Here Lunch Isn't a Time of Day

THE blouse she fancies may be styled a blouse, and then again it may be a waist, which she formerly regarded as a part of her anatomy only, and not a species of garment. If she neglected to bring her galoshes with her, a pair of rubbers will serve the same purpose.

The lift is of course the elevator, the tramcar the street car, the pavement is the sidewalk. In the restaurants the visitor wanting biscuits must ask for crackers, while if he mentions biscuits he will get something a little richer than a bread roll, and certainly not twice-cooked. After the meat course he should inquire for the dessert not the sweets. If, during an evening with friends, his hostess asks him to stay for lunch, this does not mean till noon the next day, as a lunch may be served at any time.

How should one spell "cheque"? The newspapers print it "check"; the Royal Bank follows the English fashion, while the Dominion is impartial with "check" on counterfoils and "cheque" for its credit slips. "Gotten" for "got" will look wrong to the Englishman, but is authorized by English dictionaries, while "proven," an irregular form, will remind him of a Scottish verdict. "Dove" for "dived" he may think is boyish slang, but it is just colloquial and used by the newspapers. Here wills are probated; in England they are proved and probate is obtained. Real estate, a household phrase here, is not used in England, and is not even given in Roget's Theasaurus. There is property, the "proputty, proputty" of Tennyson's poem, and real property or realty, as a legal term.

Corn is restricted to maize, and is not the general term for various grains as it is in England. A rough character is not a rough but a tough, and if he uses a pistol or revolver unlawfully he is a gun-man, as the once local Western U. S. use of the word gun in this sense has spread over all North America. Petrol becomes gasoline. Coal oil seems to be the same thing as paraffin over the water. The chares of Shakespeare's time are the chores of North America, while England's legacy from the word is charwoman. The elementary or board schools of England are the public schools of Canada.

Changes are constantly going on in the language of the English-speaking peoples. A different set of the old words are retained in each country, and new ideas and contrivances are given different names. Subtle changes of meaning of the same word also take place. The great desideratum is that none should speak slightingly of the phraseology or the pronunciation of the others. Those most critical are often the least correct.

Let's Look it Up in the Dictionary

By SPENCER ARMSTRONG

ILLUSTRATED BY WYNCIE KING

HIGH above the bedlam of one of Manhattan's busiest thoroughfares, and just around the corner from the beautiful little plaza of Madison Square, is our word shop. It isn't very pretentious, our little shop; I know of many others whose artistic appointments and decorative graces are far more alluring. We have no velvet curtains as a back drop for our wares. They are merely words. No suave clerk will usher you across deep carpets to overstuffed divans. Your heels will click against nude concrete floors, and the rustle of paper is the nearest approach to the swish of silks and satins.

You might imagine from this that our word shop is a barren little abode. But it isn't. It is the rendezvous of the romances of time. It is the trysting place of almost all the hopes, hates, conquests and accomplishments of mankind. Into our little shop, at every sweep of the clock, pour the doings of the day from every point of the compass.

Instead of the walls of our shop being tinted in the latest fashion's decree, they are lost in tiers of books, stacks and stacks of books, worn and seasoned, some by hands that have been cold and rigid for centuries. But though their appearance may be ragged, within the oft tattered covers is almost the gamut of human knowledge. And here, when the shutters of the word shop are thrown back in the morning, convenes one of the high courts of the English Language.

As a tribunal of review, every word candidate desiring admittance into permanent speech must pass before the justices.

The court convenes.

"Here's a new word," announces a clerk.

"No, that's not a new word," interjects one of the justices. "It was well known about London in Queen Elizabeth's time."

"Been seen much since?" asks the chief justice.

A perusal of the files reveals slight usage.

"Once or twice," the clerk responds.

"Much too lazy. To the wastebasket with it! Next!"

"'Flapper' is the next candidate for entry into the dictionary," the clerk continues. "We have a record of her appearance in England about 1690, but she wasn't very popular. Her modern counterpart is a very pretty sprite, however, bubbling with pep and enthusiasm, and most popular. We have found her smiling at us from the covers of all the magazines, preening in the advertisements, using up miles of columns in the public prints, and the heroine of many of the best sellers."

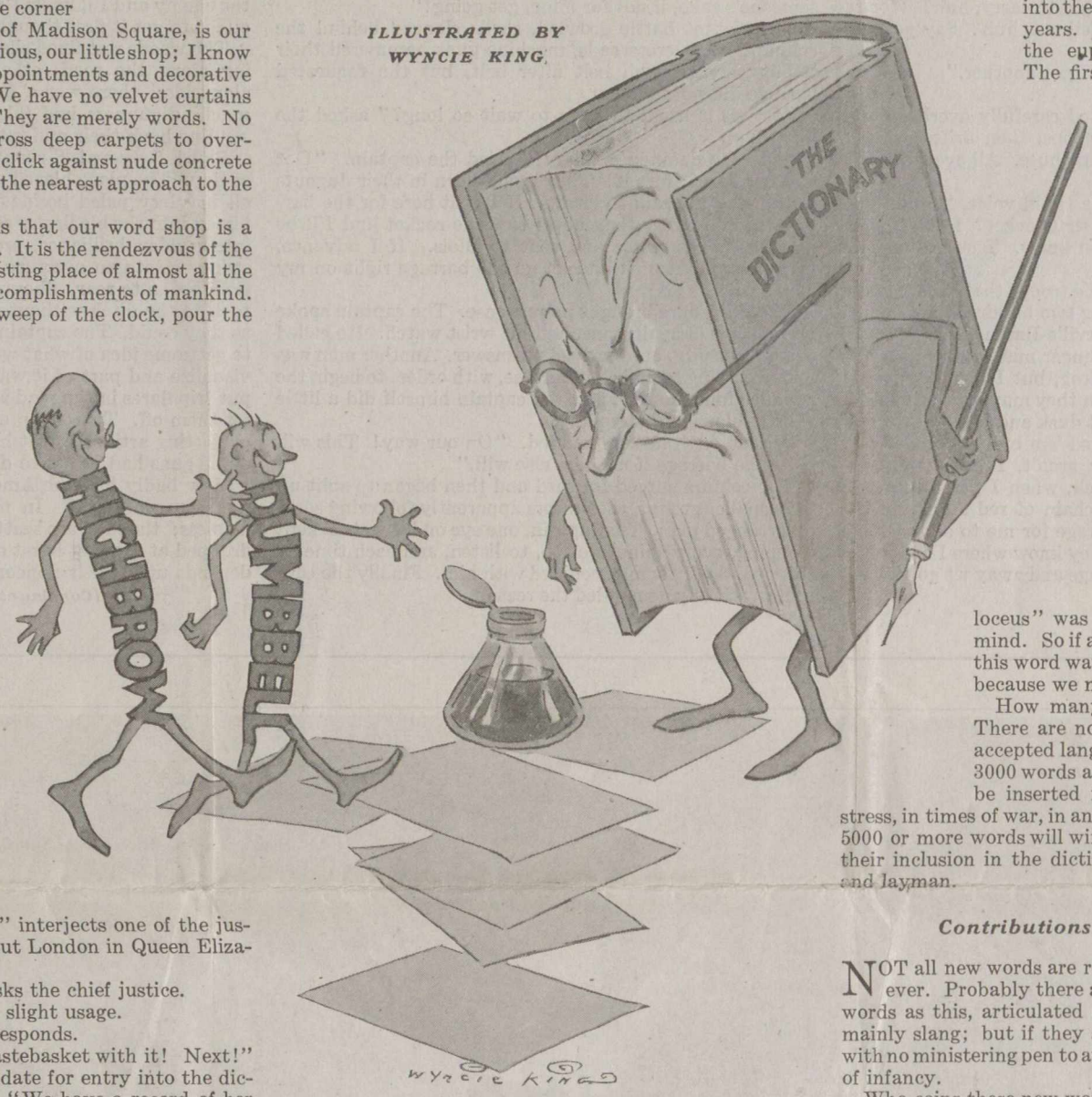
But before the chief justice has an opportunity to ask for a decision, a chorus of ayes rips the cloak of dignity that is purported to enmantle the bench.

Of course, it really isn't a court. It's just a word shop with judicial functions, filled with desks and files and telephones and typewriters like any other office, peopled by lexicographers, readers, stenographers and clerks; only, our business is to hunt for and pass upon new words, to keep the dictionary up to date.

Good Little Words That Never Arrive

A STAFF of readers and correspondents is continually searching the press of the English-speaking world, the newspapers, magazines, technical periodicals and books for virgin words. When an apparent new one is discovered the first task is to ascertain if it is actually new. We first seek its pedigree in Cockeram's Interpreter of Hard English Words, published in 1623; in Blount's Glossographia, of 1656; or perhaps in Samuel Johnson's famous dictionary of the vintage of 1755.

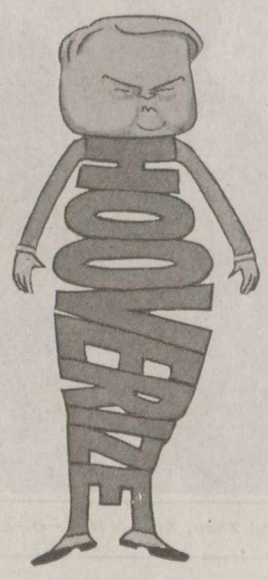
Unfound in any of the many English lexicons of the past, we deem it may be of foreign extraction. For this purpose we have dictionaries in Sanskrit, Maori, Hausa, Hebrew, Urdu, Afrikander, besides those of modern languages from French to Japanese. We have, too, complete dictionaries embracing lace making, draperies, politics, petroleum, ethics, botany and a myriad other specific subjects. Then also there are encyclopedias from almost every nation, English-speaking and alien. So it is a foxy word, parading as a new one in an attempt to elude its past, that can escape the net of this investigation.



Yet Some Slang Terms May Enter the Dictionary—in Time. "Dumb-Bell" and "Highbrow," for Instance, Seem Sure to be Recorded

But if the new word is bona-fide, freshly minted, we take it into our care for five years, place it on file. We watch its use by the people and tally this against its record during the probationary period. Also, in this interim, numerous letters will arrive at our office asking for the meaning of the intruder into the language. At the end of the interval the record of the neophyte is computed, and if its score shows a popular demand, the new word is awarded a place in the dictionary.

Incorporation in the dictionary, though, is no signal for a word to become indolent. It must work. We have a list of more than 50,000 words now in our word shop that have shown little or no activity in the language for a long time. We keep a tally on these words, too, that have been abandoned by the public, for possible ejection. It is a sort of waiting list—waiting for the ax. Infrequency of use means deletion from the dictionary.



Not all new words have to wait five years to get into the dictionary, however. Sometimes the acclaim of a new vocable is so universal and widespread that its inclusion is assured at once. "Flapper," for instance.

Then again some good words never become popular. We have a pet in our shop, orphaned by the world of letters, that has been hungering for admission into the dictionary for more than twenty years. It is a charming little word with the euphonious title of "meloceus." The first and last time we have been able to discover "meloceus" in literature is in Oscar Wilde's The Picture of Dorian Gray.

It seems to be a name for a precious gem capable of detecting criminals. If so, in this one word is a theme for a series of detective yarns that might shake the laurels of a Sherlock Holmes. But nowhere can we find it repeated—never used again.

We have searched the lapidary's lexicons of all ages, we have combed the encyclopedias of many countries, we have sought the assistance of gem lovers from Johannesburg to Maiden Lane; but to no avail. Always we receive the negative answer — unknown. The lips that might offer enlightenment are now still, and we can only suppose that "meloceus" was the coinage of an imaginative mind. So if any writer feels inclined to foster this word waif, we shall be more than happy, because we must soon abandon it.

How many words are coined annually? There are no figures. In normal times the accepted language grows at the rate of about 3000 words a year—of sufficient currency to be inserted in the dictionary. In days of stress, in times of war, in an era of discovery and invention, 5000 or more words will win the favor of the public so that their inclusion in the dictionary is demanded by scholar and layman.

Contributions to the Language

NOT all new words are recorded in the dictionary, however. Probably there are at least three times as many words as this, articulated or printed, minted every year, mainly slang; but if they are not stillborn, they soon die with no ministering pen to aid them through the vicissitudes of infancy.

Who coins these new words? Today most of the orthodox new words emanate from the research laboratories where men are toying in crucibles of thought to conceive a new idea. Once born, it needs a name and forthwith a new word arises. The medical, chemical and electrical fraternities sponsor the greatest galaxy of freshly minted speech. Nor are these words all technical.

Radio, for one branch of electricity alone, has fattened the dictionary with more than 5000 new words and compounds. The fan chats of neutrodyne and audiofrequency as glibly as a technician, and the dictionary must contain them.

Discovering something previously unknown to man, the scientists inadvertently enrich the language. If the find proves extraordinary the name of the inventor or discoverer is frequently used to commemorate the deed in our speech. Well-known examples of this cognizance in the realm of electricity are "ohm," "watt" and "ampere." In other fields are "hooverize," "galvanize," "bessemerize," "gerrymander" and "spoonerism," celebrating in lay speech the doings of Messrs. Hoover, Galvan, Bessemer, Gerry and Spooner.

There have been many exponents of this art of creating expressive terminology. They have come from almost every station in life, but naturally those who command the public spotlight have their mental offspring registered sooner.

Theodore Roosevelt, reflecting the explorer in his character, minted new words with an agility that kept lexicographers ever on the *qui vive*. His best-known contribution to the language perhaps was "chinafy," coined to express the complete helplessness to which pacifism would reduce America. He could have used the synonymous adjectival root, sinetic, already in the language; but he created the more forceful term that would catch on quicker. When the Government was building the Panama Canal he commanded much space in the press crusading to "sanitate" the Zone. This was heralded as a new word, but upon investigation we found that it had been introduced into speech as early as 1811, though used infrequently since.

A journalist, on a swing of the country with the late William Jennings Bryan, on a stumping trip in the popocrat days, coined the term "volublist" to describe the oratory that poured from the famous golden throat. The description fired the fancy of the retinue of reporters on the tour and in one blaze the word flashed from the front pages of the press from coast to coast, and thence was cast into the dictionary.

President Grover Cleveland, reputed an omnivorous reader, was forever digging up the archaic in some fastness of literature and grooming it for contemporary use. Who first phrased "innocuous desuetude," to express simply a harmless disuse of something, no one knows probably; but doubtless it will always be associated with Cleveland, who brought it to light in modern times.

Mayor William J. Gaynor, of New York City, whose clever and original personal letters brightened many drab columns in the news during the tenure of his popular favor, will long be allied with "spissitude," which was archaic previous to his resuscitation of it from the tombstones of the tongue. He unearthed this word to impress upon the public consciousness how sticky or gummy some of the politicians' fingers could become when funds for public improvements were being passed out.

Woodrow Wilson undoubtedly was about the greatest phraseologist, outside of an advertising agency, that the United States has heard in many generations. "Watchful waiting" and "too proud to fight" are memorable of his expressiveness in arranging new word groupings; but he failed to enrich our mother language with new words.

Warren Harding, desirous of unmeshing his country from its postwar plight, sounded an appealing slogan of Back to Normalcy, and the nation hailed the introduction as symbolizing the hopes of a debt-burdened land in one fresh new word. We turned to the files in our word shop for corroboration, but—unfortunately perhaps, for it was a happy phrase—we discovered that "normalcy" was in circulation at the latest by the year 1857.

A Cartoonist Who Struck Oil

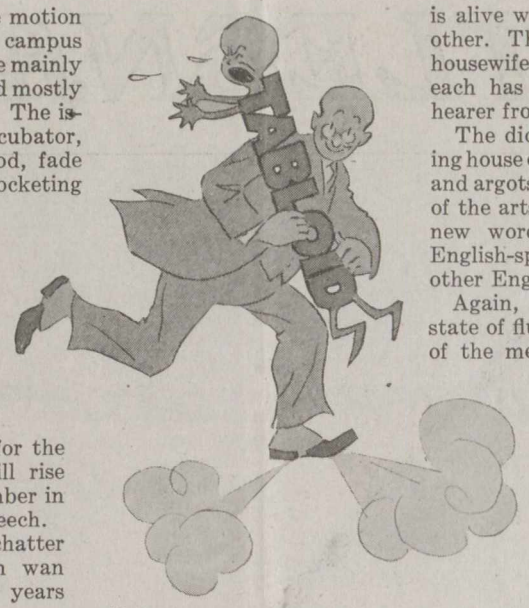
THERE was a young detective in the New York City Police Department some years ago who was acclaimed the handsomest man on the force. This gift of the gods he accepted as a license to strut and swagger a trifle more than his companions. Combined with a flowering of the physical, he was also clever in his appointed tasks. After culminating several successive scoops, his chest measurement seemed to increase perceptibly. In order to relieve the strain on his vest buttons the then Chief of Detectives Devery stated to reporters anxious for details of this thief catcher extraordinary that he was a splendid officer, but too chesty.

Chesty! Again the subheads of the newspapers featured a new word. Forsooth, it became overworked, so widespread was its appeal; but this constant repetition whipped it into the working vernacular of the average person and today it is a byword on the tongues of the multitude. Upon retrospection, it is almost difficult to imagine that it hasn't been with us always, and it hasn't celebrated its twentieth birthday yet.

Another fertile source of new expressions, idioms more than words, is the studio of the cartoonist, the columnist and the gag man of the motion pictures and the theater; also the campus of the carefree collegiate. These are mainly springheads of slanguage, mothered mostly by a desire to be smart or witty. The issues emanating from this speech incubator, though popular for a brief period, fade into oblivion in the same skyrocketing spirit that marked their ascent.

"So's your old man," "dimbox," "necking" and their ilk, though humorous and catchy, have no innate lasting qualities and are only mottoes of the moment. Each year brings a veritable horde of such linguistic corruptions that are scarcely worth housing room in our word shop; but we offer them shelter for the one gem in a thousand that will rise above its class and become a member in good standing in the society of speech.

Then who shouldn't coin such chatter when it irons the wrinkles from wan purses? A little more than two years ago I chanced to meet a struggling young cartoonist, and he was struggling. A most engaging personality, brimming over with a radiant line of bright banter, willing to illustrate his ideas on the back of an envelope or a scrap of paper, he cooled his heels in the waiting rooms of many of New York's publishing plants. He had the goods, but it seemed no one would let him deliver.



"Tabloid" Was Stolen, if So Harsh a Term May be Used, From its Progenitors

Eventually he obtained contact with a metropolitan journal, and within a short time coined a word that captured the fancy of the public. Forthwith he was famous and well started on a successful trail. I am informed that envoys from many of the publishers who once spurned his wares have since waited in his anteroom. He has gone now to Hollywood, where he has been promised some of the fabled wealth of that cinema community.

But don't think the dictionary wears a high hat. Far from it. In assembling new diction we are only hearkening to the edicts of the time-ripened formulas of accepting the best, the most useful. Slang isn't.

Though we do ferret slang from its habitat for investigation, there is a more fertile field, somewhat allied—dialect. A dialect is still considered by many people as degraded and a vulgar variety of speech. But it isn't. Beyond the rim of the city's stir and strife, along the shady lanes and in the nurtured acres of the countryside, there has gradually grown from time immemorial a distinct vernacular. It is rustic, we say, and the pedagogically inclined are apt to sniff at this poor relation of the literary language. Evolved by those who live closest to Nature, it is not only more varied but, within limits, much richer than its more precise counterpart.

The cant of every class is as much dialect as the jargon of the gypsy. Every profession and vocation is alive with terms that are Greek to another. The lawyer, the mechanic, the housewife, the journalist and the laborer, each has a vernacular that mystifies a hearer from another environment.

The dictionary must become the clearing house of these diversified provincialisms and argots. So we scout the meeting places of the arts, crafts and trades to report the new words for the purpose of aiding English-speaking people to understand other English-speaking people.

Again, the language is in a constant state of flux; there is a ceaseless mutation of the meanings of words. "Boy" once meant girl. "Agony" once meant a wrestling match, or exhibition of combat. "Run" years ago was a simple little word denoting the forceful dashing movement of a being. Now it has expanded until the dictionary lists ninety-four different meanings for it. Thus a writer or speaker may give a new interpretation to a common word which, gaining currency, takes unto itself another significance. These departures from the normal must be captured, for they modify the language.

Busy Workers at the Word Mint

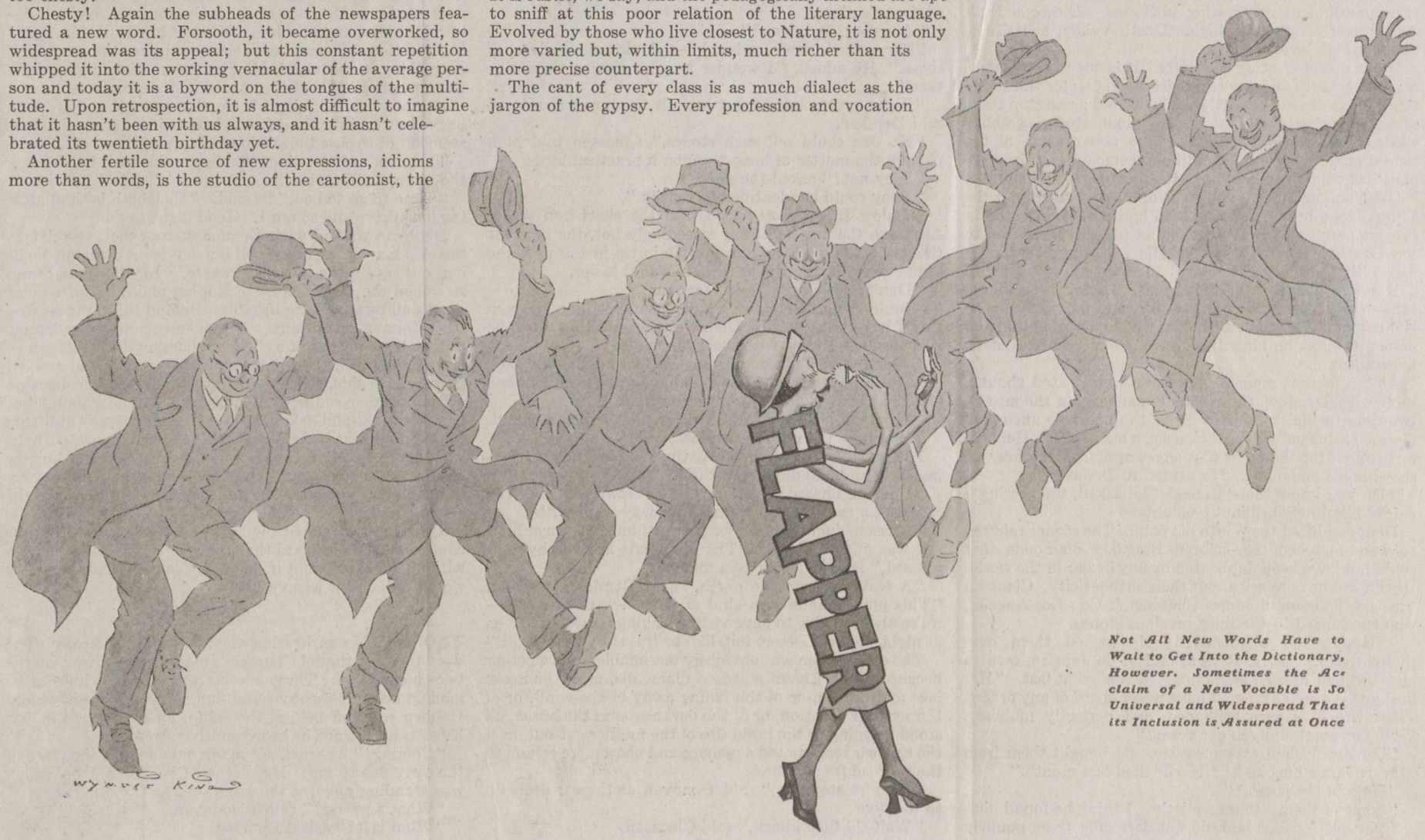
TO THE trained eye and ear, words are flowering everywhere; new meanings for old words. In one of Octavus Roy Cohen's merry stories of colored society in Birmingham appearing in THE SATURDAY EVENING POST we spotted "exodust," a new speech mintage.

Mr. Cohen wanted to express excessive speed in the departure of a dusky gentleman from troublesome quarters. I suppose that no word that was already in the dictionary could denote the swiftness of this runner as he sped in front of a razor flashing in the hands of an expert wielder behind him. He was exiting in a cloud of dust; thus, exodust.

In fact, a new profession—the word coiner—has capitalized the modern demand for personal and business distinction.

Though the numerical power of this group is small, perhaps not exceeding a dozen exponents in the whole country, its output is sometimes quite prolific.

(Continued on Page 55)



Not All New Words Have to Wait to Get Into the Dictionary, However. Sometimes the Acclaim of a New Vocable is So Universal and Widespread That its Inclusion is Assured at Once

LET'S LOOK IT UP IN THE DICTIONARY

(Continued from Page 17)

A nouveau riche desires an exclusive name for his country villa; a wealthy mother wants expert advice upon a name for her child that will stave off certain superstitious elements in the coming battle of life; numerology is accelerating the demand.

Chiefest, however, is the business man who seeks a distinguishing mark for a commodity he is about to market. Perhaps this potential manufacturer solicits the coöperation of an advertising man for this task, for such professionals make a specialty of just the right words, searching hours sometimes in quest of the proper term to express precisely their thoughts; and not without pleasing monetary compensation, it might be added. But however the prospective producer obtains the new term, he guards it with secrecy until it can be registered in the files of the United States Patent Office.

Here then is another fountainhead of many original words that are used glibly by the man on the street as though they had been extant forever. We have more than 50,000 trade terms in our word shop; but no great proportion are in the dictionary, because the discards have failed to gain the approval of the public. When such a coinage is ratified by popular use, however, occasionally it becomes worth hundreds of thousands of dollars to its owner.

For example, probably few people realize that the word "celluloid" once was owned by a person who controlled the destiny of that word just as legally as his building, his machinery and other chattels.

That "vaseline" and "petroleum jelly" are synonymous seems almost absurd at first blush, so common is the use of the former word. But let a corporation other than the sole and rightful owners of the term "vaseline" attempt to market petroleum jelly of exactly the same context under that patented name, and the brilliant legal talent of one of the greatest oil companies in the world would immediately coöperate with a sheriff's office to regain possession of the word. So great is the popularity of the word "vaseline" that the native appellation is seldom heard now outside of pharmaceutical circles.

Oddly, "groceteria" is patented, "cafeteria" isn't; "aerogram" has an owner, "radiogram" is a free lance. Extensive advertising of these terms, combined with an innate phonetic appeal, is chiefly responsible for their widespread use. There has never been a test case to prove the issue, but some legal authorities maintain that patented trade terms can be withheld from the dictionary by the owners of the words.

Trying to Recover a Stolen Word

Again, old and established words are sometimes supplanted by newer names that are calculated to add more distinction to the persons or products they describe. Undertakers, tenderly performing the last rites for the departed since no man knows exactly when, decided to change the name of their calling to one more élite, and now they are "morticians."

Practically every make of firearms is named after its inventor and his surname has been registered and universally used as the designation of the weapon, as Gatling, Colt, Winchester and Browning. Such developments are constantly pushing the covers of the dictionary farther apart.

And now we come to the sad case of "tabloid." "Tabloid" is the brain child of a British chemist. He conceived this word for a concentrated product which he had prepared. It was patented in several countries, including the United States, and entered the language under the careful guidance of its father. Almost from its birth, however, this mental mintage was the object of covetous fingers and it was kidnaped for other purposes. A lawsuit in Rome and another in London restored the wandering word to its legal guardians.

Then came an epidemic of half-size newspapers in America, and the publishers appropriated the term, without license, as a name for their bisected periodicals. Popularized by the press, "tabloid" captured the fancy of many writing craftsmen and since this flare we have been inundated with tabloid journalism, tabloid sermons, tabloid enthusiasm, and perhaps some delicatessen-fed husbands have used the term aptly to describe their meals. "Tabloid" was stolen, if so harsh a term may be used, from its progenitors.

Following this widespread piratical use, the chemist-owner of this word came to our shop one day, asking our assistance in the recovery of his word "tabloid" from its captors and inquiring what he could do to regain it. We informed him that he could institute legal proceedings against each user and—at that time, when it had just been abducted—possibly obtain damages from each user. We added, however, that the American public seemed to like the little word so much that such a course probably would prove disastrous to himself. We suggested that he should present it to the language with his compliments. So there it is now, evidently firmly intrenched.

Who's Who in the Dictionary

Not only places of public interest but names of people, together with an epitome of their deeds, are in the dictionary. Nor is it a tomb of ancient immortals only. When a living person pokes his head above the horizon of the average of us by exploit or position in life, which gives promise of continuance in the public mind, he or she becomes the object of attention by the lexicographer.

Every President of the United States is, of course, accorded a notation in the dictionary in the next edition after his inauguration, if he hasn't already been recorded there. Statesmen of prominence, leading scientists, doctors, authors, singers, inventors, everyone whose fame may carry his name into posterity, is carefully watched for the possibility of being included in the dictionary.

Now that the new word is captured, the next step is to register it in the master dictionary. This complex volume is an index of practically all human thought. It is really more of a loose-leaf file than a dictionary, for it is but a temporary abode for most words, a crucible of speech housing a host of transient vocables of doubtful vintage that will soon fade from view, unknown and unlamented by the public at large.

This master dictionary probably could be called more properly a lexicographer's notebook, as it harbors, in seasons, thousands of words which but few people will ever see, hear or use. However slight though its value may be to the general public, it is by far the most important document in the keeping of the dictionary maker, for it contains the gathered harvest of his labors, and it is carefully stored in a steel vault as a protection against fire or destruction. Were we stripped of this repository of the latest crop of virgin words, all our activities to the hour of that catastrophe would have been in vain and subsequent steps in enrolling the language rendered impossible. So, even though more than half waste, the master dictionary is guarded with jealous care.

A third step in aiding a word to enter the catalogue of speech is the dressing of it in a proper attire—correct spelling. It is somewhat unfortunate that the twenty-six letters of our alphabet are productive of sixty-eight different sounds. The very first letter of the alphabet even has seven different choices of sound values—as in art, ape, fat, fare, fast, what and all, not to mention the *e* in "obey" masquerading as an *a*.

Benjamin Franklin, besides his other manifold activities, viewed this situation with consternation a century and a half ago, and succeeded in rectifying the confusion in spelling in a measure by designing and sponsoring a new code of spelling, now known as the textbook form, which was a happy advance from the Chaucerian style. Think of padding words today in the fashion of the Father of English Poetry, as in these few lines from his The Knightes Tale:

Have mercy on oure woe and oure distresse,
Som drops of pitee, thurgh youre gentilnesse,
Uppon us wrecchede wommen lat thou falle.
For certus, lord, ther nys noon of us alle,
That sche nath ben a dutchesse or a queene.

Then the other extreme. The textbook form of spelling has become the standard for academic instruction in the United States, and it is therefore the first spelling form for the dictionary. But since the days of Poor Richard there have been many changes in word formations—an extra *e* dropped from one word, a spare *b* from another. They are slight changes always, just a slow gradual pruning of the silent letters which have cluttered and in many spots still do clutter our written and printed speech.

Following in the footsteps of Franklin, a group of serious-minded citizens gathered, in the year 1877, to reconstruct our spelling to a rigid phonetic basis; that is, to have words spelled the way they sound.

It soon became evident that a strictly phoneticized alphabet would mean practically the reëducation of the English-speaking world in two of the three R's, reading and 'riting. In view of this, scientific rigor was sacrificed in some degree to the hope of popular acceptance, but it was not forthcoming. Exact phonetic spelling would render Lincoln's Gettysburg Address into this effect:

"For scor and sevn yerz ago our fathers brot forth on this continent a nu nashon, consevd in liberti and dedikated to the propozishon that ol men ar created equal. Now we ar engajd in a grat sivil wor, testing whether that nashon . . . so consevd and so dedikated, can long endur. We ar met on a grat battilfild ov that wor. We hav com to dedikat a porshon ov that fild as a final resting plas of thoz hu her gav thar livz that that nashon mit liv. . . ."

Words That Pass in a Night

This scientific spelling was approved in 1910 by the National Educational Association. In another century, perhaps, this system of sound spelling will have become popularized and even superseded by more startling changes. Thus each new word now entering the language is given two spellings, unless by chance they coincide, one for the older generation and one for the budding generation.

Then when the stranger at the door of the dictionary has been properly spelled and pronounced, the next task is to discover what it means. As most of the new words slide almost noiselessly into usage, there is seldom any clew for their interpretation other than the few flanking words of context from which they are taken.

A first, second or third appearance of the new word in print or talk may perhaps disclose no precise sense, because other users slightly shade its significance each time it is used. Repetition, however, soon dispels this divergence of meaning among writers or speakers by some seemingly mysterious transference of thought to a probable single interpretation. If two or more meanings persist one is almost mathematically certain to gain the greater currency and eventually win at least first place in the dictionary from its rival.

Slang is the most untractable. It is too transient, in the mouths of the many today, superannuated by another wise crack tomorrow. These fancies we usually list with a lead pencil in a conviction born of experience that they will fail to pass final tests for inclusion in our word book.

Yet some slang terms may enter the dictionary—in time. "Dumb-bell" and "highbrow," for instance, seem sure to be recorded, and the verb "to crash" in the sense of breaking into a party or game without invitation or ticket is another that is taking firm root.

Indeed, some of the slang of today is sure to be used by fastidious writers of a following generation. The process is perennial. "Idiot," signifying an imbecile, was once slang for a private citizen. "Buncombe," meaning bombastic speech or any showy utterance for effect, is another. This latter comes from a remark made by a member of Congress from Buncombe County, North Carolina, who confided to a compeer that he was talking "only for Buncombe" when on the floor of the House. He was, apparently, for from this word "bunk" is derived.

Too, defining words today must be precise, for space in the dictionary is limited. A word must be so synonymized that it can be replaced in a sentence by its own definition. When the craft was young—I lift this from a seventeenth-century lexicon—a lobster was described as "a little red fish that walks backward." Such interpretation is more like a guessing contest, for a lobster is neither a fish nor red, unboiled, and it doesn't walk backward.

Einstein's Theory in 100 Words

What would you do if you were suddenly called upon to describe Einstein's theory comprehensibly? The little unobtrusive German-Swiss scholar turned from his telescope one night and sketched an idea born of his searchings in space that electrified the academic world. In one thesis he upset the orthodox tenets of master mathematicians and astronomers.

Awesome rumor related that only twelve very, very highbrows in all the world could comprehend the intricate reasoning involved in the revelations of Einstein. The more mysterious the new disclosure was heralded, the more people desired to know what it was, and the dictionary maker had to find out.

Our word shop sheltered many puzzled countenances at that time. The scholars of twenty centuries were consulted. The most modern methods of science were subpœnaed in the quest for popular enlightenment. Then, from the mass of evidence collected, it was discovered that the basis of the riddle of relativity had been solved more than fifteen years previous to Doctor Einstein's pronouncement by an American meteorologist in the service of Uncle Sam at Washington, D. C.

However, to the Swiss physicist who first broadcast his findings cleaves the recorded glory. If you want to know the gist of relativity, but have feared to broach the subject because it is too deep, look it up in the dictionary. You will find it tersely explained in less than 100 words.

Definitions must be exact, also, because Congress enacts many laws with the aid of a dictionary. A mistake may strip the Internal Revenue Department of thousands of dollars in income. For instance, the dictionary is used by the United States Board of Customs Appraisers to determine the nearest general grouping of a new incoming commodity so the appropriate toll may be levied against it. If the dictionary should be in error the Government would be the loser.

After a new word has been captured, registered, spelled and defined comes the last and most important step in its adventures of seeking entry into the sanctuary of our speech. It is brought before the committee of admissions, which group is composed of expert philologists and laymen steeped in language lore. This is the court of last appeal that passes upon the credentials of the vocables which have been

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approved by the word-shop staff. The committee decides the destiny of a word that will either elect it to a position in the living lexicon of the language or remand it to the executioner.

Such a committee, made up of residents of many lands, is somewhat difficult to assemble even once in a decade for a complete revision of the dictionary, when the words that have failed to do much work in the meanwhile are deleted or declared antiquated.

In the interim spanning each decennial reconstruction the sole power of this committee on admissions is vested in the ex-officio chairman of that body, our managing editor, Dr. Frank H. Vizetelly. As dean of American lexicographers, through thirty-five years of service he has made the acquaintance of more than 500,000 words, a record probably unequaled by any other living person. Offer this master of vocables a word for interpretation, and synonyms will pour from his mind like pearls from a severed necklace string. It is a smart word, indeed, that can pass his blue pencil without proper warrant. Yet his paramount concern always in passing upon new words is whether they will be acceptable in the homes of the nation, for which a dictionary is primarily designed.

To gain a place in the dictionary, a word must express a thought, or new variance of a thought, that is not in the compendium already. As the language grows, this test becomes more and more exacting, finally resolving itself into the necessity of a new word practically performing the work of two other words now in our speech.

Another certificate demanded of new words is the reputation of the person who vouches for them. Under whose authentication do they demand a place in our speech? One utterance of a new word by the President of the United States will speed it into the dictionary, where a thousand repetitions by a nonentity will fail. Next, orators and writers of seasoned popularity are the best indorsers for words that entertain hopes for longevity.

Furthermore, a word must be pure to enter the dictionary nowadays. Vulgarities and barbarisms are elbowed aside. In fact, many scientific terms in so orthodox a vocabulary as that of the psychical researcher tainted by a tendency toward the obscene are barred from the standard dictionaries. Such are relegated to the technical glossaries of the psychoanalyst.

Absolute Accuracy Always

But the lexicographer doesn't make the language in any sense; he merely records the best of it, that which is used or usable. Neither can speakers or authors force new vehicles of speech into the language; not even the President.

The language is made by that mythical person—the man in the street. It is to him that the committee of admissions turns when preparing its final balloting. Popularity is the ultimate test for the entrance into the dictionary of a reputable word.

A vocable lacking any semblance of style or pedigree can attain first rank among the immortal members of the language if it is acclaimed by the voice of the mass. The word may be but a passing fancy; but this position, if attained, is unalterable for the present, no matter how much the gownsman or speech purist may protest. The majority rules in lexicography, and popular acclaim is final. In essence, a dictionary is designed to enable who so desires, with its aid, to understand all classic and current literature of the English language.

During this entire registration of a word for our speech there is one slogan seared into the minds of the staff—Absolute Accuracy. This is inviolable, because the dictionary is the master proof chart; from it all other users of words take its edicts without question. The world's foremost specialists on every subject are consulted on each moot point. Human errors are reduced to a minimum.

But catching and pedigreeing words, once the dictionary is made, is insignificant almost compared tc creating such a compendium from blank paper. This later work is merely watching the parade go by, awarding palms to the new recruits; an endless task, but pleasant.

It is not many years since our word shop lacked the gentle manner that marks its stride today. The hum of intense activity sounded around the clock each week day for four long years in the original process of gathering together the heritage of knowledge that the many centuries have passed on to us.

Indeed, it is a far cry from poor old Samuel Johnson, stewing away in his wretched little house off Fleet Street, working almost single-handed at his labors of making a dictionary, then only 50,000 words, to a staff of 380 experts and more than 500 specialized scholars and readers dissecting 100,000 volumes in the building of a modern dictionary. Such was our shop then. Really, it wasn't a shop; it was a fact foundry.

A Census of English Words

The transition is that a dictionary is no longer a mere word book; it is a skeleton of human knowledge. No other earthly book contains so much enlightenment compressed for instant use, as ready to answer the little child's simple question as the perplexing problems of an adult. It contains every subject of human interest from sea, sky and land. With simplicity and condensation as a keystone, it is an oracle to which all classes of people may take thousands of questions that arise in their business, professional or social life. In brief, the modern dictionary is no less than a hundred lexicons of information.

To assemble this gigantic mass of data, the specialized readers were assigned to specific subjects, as medicine, law, biology, horticulture, more than 300 differentiæ, to extract all recorded facts on that particular topic. More than 2,000,000 quotations resulted from this survey which formed the basis for interpreting the delicate shadings of our language that have been passed on to us. Forty expert word definers were busy for forty-eight months rending and compressing these variations of meaning. Each definition in turn was passed upon by the most reputable expert to which it could be referred. Then an art department scoured the world for 7000 illustrations for some of the objects described, which words to date have been unable fully to portray, to produce a complete mental image of them.

It may be of passing interest to note that more than 275,000,000 typographical symbols were used in this Herculean task, and that these tons of metal are always kept set up that the dictionary may be quickly rendered up-to-date by the inclusion of the new words which have been accepted into fellowship in the language.

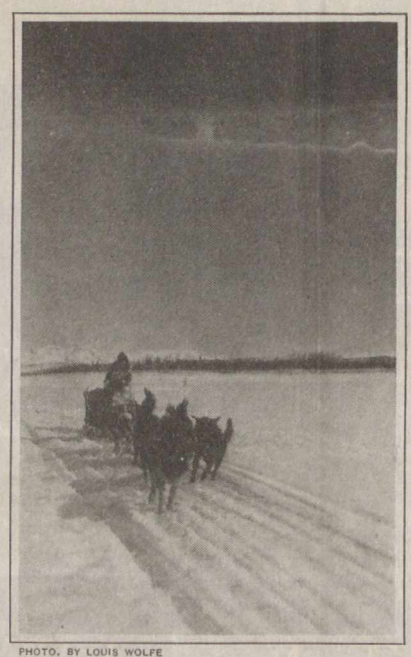

PHOTO. BY LOUIS WOLFE

A Dog Team Traveling Down the Kuskokwim River on 7-Feet-Thick Ice, 200 Miles From the Benngata, at Napimute, Alaska

How many words are there in the language? No one has yet been able to capture them all; that is, from the catacombs of speech and the current mintings too. Doctor Murray and his successors at Oxford University have been laboring upon this all-embracing plan since 1879, with its completion yet in the future.

However, it is no flight of fancy to state that there are between 1,000,000 and 1,250,000 words in our language today. At least two-fifths of these are ultrascientific terms used only in the recesses of a laboratory; they are not to be found in standard dictionaries. Many other words are obsolete or antiquated.

Dictionaries have guided thought since about 1100 B. C., when Pa-Out-She, a Chinese scholar, compiled the first lexicon of a language of which we have a record. Greek, Roman, Arabic, down through the ages, usually there have been dictionaries; but Yankee lexicographers have outstripped all forerunners for size and content.

The American dictionary of today contains very nearly half a million terms.

Of this mammoth list of words doing duty in our speech, how many do you use? The paucity may astound you. The Russell Sage Foundation decided to answer this question and analyzed 380,000 words written by 2500 different persons in seventy-five communities. Of this material diagnosed more than two-thirds consisted of personal and business correspondence.

Final results showed that the fifty commonest words used, together with their repetitions, constitute more than half of the words we use in writing. The ten commonest, as might be surmised, are "the," "and," "of," "to," "I," "a," "in," "that," "you" and "for," in the order named. Further tabulations revealed that the 300 commonest words constitute three-fourths of our communications, and nine-tenths of our writing is done with 1000 words.

How Many Words Do You Use?

If this is the average used, how many words do you understand when confronted with them? It has been facetiously stated that a woman has a vocabulary of only 800 words, but an enormous turnover. Perhaps tests such as this noted have a tendency to belittle our vocable powers.

In the opinion of our chief, Doctor Vizetelly, who is recognized as a past master of word lore, a child of six years has twice as many understandable terms in its mind as the 800 quota assigned to the fair sex by the humorists. An adult with a small range of information, he states, can understand not less than 3000. A business man, a skilled technician or mechanic, can muster not less than 8000 to 10,000 vocables, and a college graduate has a command of upward of 20,000 words.

With these limited vocabularies, which are such a small ratio of the great store of words available, we are beset at times by an incapacity to understand the thoughts expressed by others in speech or in print. Failure to appreciate a single word, though it happens to be in a native tongue, may dull the perception of an entire idea.

So day by day we gather the new words to post them in the dictionary that English-speaking people may understand other English-speaking people; that the planter from Georgia and the banker from Chicago may comprehend the boy from the Bowery or the antiquarian.

Of course we can't be expected to interpret the chatter of the cockney to a Scotsman or the negro drawl to an Australian plainsman; the dictionary would needs be a phonograph. But if there's a word, which is in reality a thought, of general or even infrequent currency that you don't understand, that you can spell correctly, you will find the most compact and enlightening interpretation obtainable by looking it up in the dictionary.

PERSONALITY AND COMMENT

NO one should run away with the idea that, through the production of "Skyscrapers" last month, jazz has been given an entering wedge at the Metropolitan Opera House. The addition of a few saxophones and banjos to the orchestra does not constitute jazz. True, these instruments are innovations; but there were orchestral innovations before them which had no particular bearing upon the trend of opera in general. In other words, the appearance of saxophones and banjos in the orchestra pit of the Metropolitan is important only so far as it affects the ensemble of "Skyscrapers." As a matter of fact, John Alden Carpenter's new work is not a jazz affair. If it were, it would not have been accepted for production at the Metropolitan. There is evidence enough that it owes something to a new and distinctive note in American music; but the composer has by no means left behind him the character of musicianship which he displayed so charmingly in his ballet setting of "The Birthday of the Infanta." He has merely strayed a little way down another musical bypath—perhaps as far as he dared, but more likely as far as he wished.

WHETHER jazz will ever break into opera at the Metropolitan, only time can tell. The chances are that it will not—that is to say, the somewhat indefinite musical form which, for want of a better name, is commonly called jazz. The probability is that out of this form, now simply running riot all over the land and setting feet a-tripping in Europe as well, will be evolved something infinitely better and infinitely more potent as an American expression. That will require a matter of years and, if it comes, can never be nearer a national opera than Charpentier's "Louise" is in France or Weber's "Der Freischuetz" is in Germany. It will be one of various national notes, that is all.

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SIGMUND ROMBERG

At work in his library, which contains over two thousand volumes of the first printed scores of famous works by dead composers, the collecting of which is his hobby, and said to be the most complete in the United States. The composer of "The Student Prince" and "Princess Flavia" is working on a new operetta based on the life of Barbara Frietchie

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MEANWHILE it is to be hoped that there will be native composers of opera turning to something more seriously American. There are subjects enough in our history and our legends. It is even conceivable that from the legends of our great Southwest there may be found the inspiration for a tetralogy as stupendous as Wagner's "Der Ring des Nibelungen"; the material and the scenic background are there. And, in another field, think of what might be done with some of the negro spirituals, such as "My Lord What a Morning!" and certain of the "work songs" by weaving them into a musical background. The soil is rich; it only needs to be tilled intelligently to yield good fruit.

IF any proof were needed that the United States is growing in its appreciation of art it would be found in this season's sales in New York. Both in the auction rooms and in the dealers' galleries there are signs of increasing intelligence in the matter of the purchase of paintings, sculpture and lesser art objects. Wise collectors, of course, continue to rely on the advice of experts; but they are learning more and more to rely on themselves and thus derive greater enjoyment in playing one of the most fascinating of games. They are at the same time acquiring the habit of specializing in collecting—of cultivating a really absorbing hobby as compared with the assembling of a little of this and a little of that. It is astonishing how widespread this specializing has become.

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ANGELO ANNINOS

Who has arrived in Washington to assume his new post as Counselor of the Greek Legation, where he takes over the former duties of Constantin D. Xanthopoulos

Dudley Hoyt

HENRY O. HAVEMEYER, JR.

A scion of an old New York family and one of the youngest railroad executives in the country, who recently perfected a device to prevent derailments on rail connections. See page 57

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VINCENT DI GIROLAMO

Who, as chancellor at the Italian Embassy in Washington, is the oldest staff employee in point of service, having served under many ambassadors to this country

FEWER AND FITTER WORDS

By Dr. Frank H. Vizetelly, managing editor of "Funk & Wagnalls New Standard Dictionary"

THE quality of the speech of to-day is not strained. If it had been, perhaps it might have proved purer; but, tested in the crucible of time, our simple words still remain what they have been since the days of the Saxon kings. The homely phrases we use are all of the Saxon type, and even when our emotions are under great stress the Anglo-Saxon word serves our purpose best. It bears the stamp of our early culture, to which we have given a literary tone by drawing from the other languages of the world, and appropriating therefrom such terms as best serve the purposes of the mind. This draft upon foreign sources has brought within the pale of our speech many terms with which we could dispense without loss to the language. The fact is that we have made an overdraft upon the treasury of words.

We live in an era of the most reckless abandon in so far as corruption of our native tongue is concerned. Such an era has followed every great war. A public overwrought by unusual strain seeks an outlet in expression as well as in action. Pent-up emotions throw off all restraint of customs in language as well as of morals in conduct. People feel entitled to coin any word, any expression that they want to, regardless of whether there is sanction for it in grammar, literature, or logic. So there you are, and that's how "So's your old man" sprang upon us.

Far be it for me to pose as a pestilential reformer because I make a plea for fewer and better words. The man who starts a reform invariably believes that he is the only man to enforce it except Volstead, and I do not aspire to even his distinction, although my name begins also with a "V."

It is true that those of us who confine our speech to the daily needs of home or business miss the fine adventures that we may have with words, and such of us as do this suffer from a restricted vocabulary, but that vocabulary is a vocabulary of strong words. The strength of the speech of the plain people is shown by the words that they use in daily life—words that every schoolboy knows and which every girl understands. John Addison Alexander, an almost forgotten American poet, of Philadelphia, a century or more ago, made a strong plea for plain speech:

"Think not that strength lies in the big, round word,
Or that the brief and plain must needs be weak,
To whom can this be true who once has heard
The cry for help, the tongue that all men speak
When want, or woe, or fear is in the throat,
Or that each word gasped out is like a shriek
Pressed from the sore heart, or a strange, wild note
Sung by some fay or fiend? There is a strength
Which dies if stretched too far or spun too fine,
Which has more height than breadth, more depth than length.
Let but this force of thought and speech be mine,
And he that will may take the sleek, fat phrase,
Which glows and burns not, though it gleam and shine,
Light but no heat—a flash but not a blaze."

Living in an age in which the spirit, "every one for himself and the devil take the hindmost," seems to rule our daily lives, we are suffering linguistically from a license universally assumed of creating new words with no other apparent object than to avoid the usual and appropriate term, and also from the habit that some of our great men have of playing the part of body-snatcher and digging out of their graves dead words which they try to reanimate by blowing the breath of their lives into them. With some of our writers the general affectation of foreign terms has become an infectious disease. My stand is for simplicity and purity of language as opposed to weak sophistry, covered by redundancy of words selected less for their import and application than their unusual and extraneous character. It is true that language purifies itself, but it is also true that one of the difficulties with which the modern lexicographer has to contend is to select from the superabundance of word-coinage only such terms as have a true ring.

Many years ago an eminent philologist told us that a dictionary ought to know its own limits, not merely as to what it should include, but also as to what it should exclude. The practise of indiscriminate inclusion was one for which Samuel Johnson was taken to task. He opened wide the leaves of his book to many terms that were not needed in his day, and there is scarcely a page of his *magnum opus* that does not contain words that have no business there. This work, which scanted the barest necessaries that such a work should possess, contained within a page and a half such choice additions to the English language as *zeolitiform, zinkiferous, zinky, zoophythologiscal, zumosimeter, zygodactulous, zygomatic,* and more than twenty others of the same kind. Some rare grammatical terms, still found in our dictionaries, also occur in this famous work, such as, *polysyndeton* and *zeugma.* Then there is the *auxesis* of rhetoric, and a number of medical terms, some of which may be found in the dictionaries of to-day, as, *aegilops, parotitis, ecphractic, meliceris, stratura,* supplemented by an extraordinary wealth of zoological and botanical terminology which runs up into thousands, to which Todd thought it needful to add largely, but both of them were completely outdone by Noah Webster.

There is not the least doubt that much harm is done by drafting into dictionaries vast cohorts of technical terms that have been invented deliberately as the nomenclature of some special art or science, beyond the pale of which they have never passed nor mingled with the general family of words. Additions of this kind are made cheaply. I recall one collection of several hundred terms submitted to me many years ago. This collection related to rocks. It was a treatise based upon an ideal mineralogical composition, and not a real one. As explained at the time, it was founded on a chemical analysis of the rock on the supposition that the only minerals which enter are those of a certain artificially selected list. In view of this fact, and of the fact that the classification had not been generally accepted, the nomenclature was omitted from the New Standard Dictionary, although it is to be found in another work. It is simplicity itself to draw from modern treatises of our later sciences vast vocabularies that did not exist fifty years ago.

Any one who knows the history of Sir James A. H. Murray's great work, the "New English Dictionary on Historic Principles," knows that the Philological Society planned the book in 1856, but not until twenty-three years later was work actually begun upon it. It has not yet reached completion. In the meantime, a vast collection of terms that are frequently looked for in dictionaries —terms in aeronautics, aviation, electricity, chemistry, eugenics, radiology, surgery and what-not—have been coined but do not appear in this work, for it was impossible for the lexicographers to keep pace with the growth of the language. This is not to say that every term in these sciences should be included, but that a select glossary of those in more common use should be included in a supplemental volume. The inclusion, however, must be done judiciously, for one has but to turn to any of our modern text-books, and treatises on the different sciences, to find terms by the hundred, or even by the thousand, with which one could inflate the vocabulary of any dictionary.

When it is not based on judicious selection, the boast of an increase of words over a competitor is an empty one. The recovery of twenty-five genuine English words, that have been either overlooked or crowded out, or lost in the maze through which every lexicographer must travel, is a far more important advance toward the completion of our vocabulary than the addition of a thousand terms of the other kind.

A supplement to the "Dictionary of the French Academy," which was published seventy years ago, contained a very large number of technical terms that properly belong, not to a dictionary of the language, but to glossaries of each of the technical branches of which they are part. The practise of lumbering up the pages of a book designed for the public in general with the dry bones and ashes of speech, for the benefit of the few students we have of philology, is a vicious practise.

As the years have passed we have lost some strikingly expressive terms, such as, *clutch-fist, pinchpenny, witwanton, need-not,* and *kindle-coal,* but there is ground for congratulation that certain other ill-sounding and malformed words have passed not only out of use, but also out of the dictionary. In a lexicographical

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FEWER WORDS

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experience extended over thirty-five years I have never once been asked for the meaning of any one of the following terms: *ataraxy, coaxation, colluctation, delinition, dyscolous, exenteration, formosity, humectation, illaqueation, immarcescible, lapidifical, ludibundness, medioxumous, mirificent, moliminously, mulierosity, pauciloquy, sanguinolency, septemfluous, subsannation, vertigonous.* Verily, a lover of his native speech may well tremble at what that speech may become if such terms as these, and all the latest coinages in words, are given free course.

Looking back, I find that we can in large measure trust the language to purify itself, but we are not now living in an age of such purification. It is true that some of the words that have made a home among us were at first foreigners and bore traces of their origin on their faces. For a while this was retained, but in due season the alien became naturalized, and with his naturalization his form changed. For instance, in "The Mystery of Iniquity," the Greek word, *chasma,* was used where to-day we use *chasm. Idioma,* another Greek term, has been supplanted by *idiom; prosody* has taken the place of *prosodia,* and *abyssus,* from the Greek *abyssos,* has been replaced by *abyss.* Some writers deliberately avoid the commoner word for the unusual one, and others born to the shovel insist on wielding the pen; so it comes about that we hear that "So and So has a *flair* for this or that," instead of "a *talent* or an *aptitude*" for it. But yesterday one of our intelligentsia told me that the dictionary definition of *effete,* which he pronounced *affate,* was out of date, and that in modern speech the *effete East* meant the bright and lively East. He spoke of a society woman who was quite as much at home in the saddle on a Western plain as she was in the effete surroundings of a New York home. Subseqently, I learned that in his mind he had confused the French phrase *au fait* with the English word *effete* which, as I have said above, he pronounced *affate.*

We speak the greatest polyglot tongue that the world has ever known, but there is no need for us to keep introducing from abroad terms for which we have good equivalents in English. The task of weeding strictly technical terms from the modern dictionary is by no means an easy one. There are few lexicographers who, having deliberately omitted certain terms from their books for these reasons, are not at some time chided because these terms have been sought and are not to be found in those books. Thirty years ago the word *bifurcate* seemed to be one of the elusive ones. The public did not know how to spell it and therefore was at a loss to find it in the dictionaries of the day. I recall other words of the same kind. *Autotoxic* and *psychic* brought to my desk many communications from persons who had heard the terms but did not know how to spell them, and therefore could not find them in their lexicons. *Psychoanalysis* is the latest in this class. All of which brings us to the point that it is necessary to have some idea of the formation of words before one can find them even in a dictionary. Cawdrey, in the preface to his little work, which dates from 1580 or thereabouts, warned the "gentle

(*Continued on page* 124)

FEWER AND FITTER WORDS

(*Continued from page* 122)

reader" that to understand and to profit by his book, a knowledge of the alphabet was necessary.

More than once suggestions have been made that a dictionary of the unusual words in the language should be compiled, but the persons recommending such a book invariably fail to define what they mean by an unusual word. That which is unusual to one is sometimes familiar to another; therefore, the production of a work of this kind would probably fail to please either.

It was Dr. Isaac K. Funk's idea that a dictionary should record all words about which a large body of persons is likely to seek information. It was upon this idea that he based the "New Standard Dictionary" and this is the policy followed by his successors. "Include every word that is likely to be inquired for by a large number of persons." Another sound principle impressed upon every definer was to "define by definitive statement in terms that could be understood by the high school student."

Words once dead and forgotten sometimes come back in an unexplainable way—often with a more respectable meaning than they originally had. The term "flapper" is one of these. In England under the Georges it belonged to the low speech of the day in which it was used to describe a courtesan. To-day it is used indiscriminately for a young girl—sophisticated or otherwise—but for more than a century before it had not been heard in speech or used in literature. "Hobson's choice" and "buncombe," once common, are now rarely met, still they have been given place in the literary language.

With the passing of the *church-bell* or "talkative woman," the flapper has introduced the *alarm-clock* or "chaperon," and although the term *cigaretticide* has passed out, the practise of smoking cigarettes to excess still remains. When the high bicycle was introduced, wheelmen were stigmatized by such silly phrases as "cads on casters," "monkeys on gridirons." *Bull*, which among us to-day is a term used to designate "bosh," was used in my boyhood as a nickname for a "teapot," and frequently also for "a second brew of tea." *Jumbo*, from the famous elephant who bore the name, worked its way into the language as a word used to designate "anything particularly large or striking," but these have all passed out.

There was a time when *G. T. T.* and *G. T. C.* passed as current among us to describe the sudden disappearance of any one. The first stood for "Gone to Texas," the second for "Gone to Chicago." So, at least, taught the *New York Mercury* of 1885.

In view of the agitation now being made in Great Britain over the suppression of betting, we may perhaps yet live to see the reintroduction of Joseph Chamberlain's unique coinage. In a speech given by him on the twenty-ninth of April, 1885, he declared that he did not believe that "any sensible men will commit their fortunes to a party or a statesman who would run such tremendous hazards in such a *gambolous* way"—words that even that great opportunist, Mr. Lloyd George, may perhaps find wise to adopt in his new political campaign.

FRANK H. VIZETELLY
NEW YORK

173 West 188th Street,
April 12, 1926.

Wilfrid Bovey, Esq.,
McGill University,
Montreal, Ont., Canada.

Dear Sir: --

My suggestion of the issuance of a Canadian Dictionary to your Principal was not so much concerned with the spellings of the English language as indorsed by Oxford University as it was concerned with the language of your own people throughout the Dominion, on which Oxford University can not reasonably be said to exercise any power.

The language of the Canadian people, in so far as its particular vernacular is concerned, is singularly idiomatic. It belongs to them, and whereas a Canadian university, such as McGill, might well exert its influence upon the purification, if it is deemed desirable, of that vernacular, it would not be called upon to in any way modify even Orders in Council which, after all, are, in so far as the language itself is concerned, nothing more than mere scraps of paper.

You will pardon me for writing to you again upon the subject but, as in thirty-five years of work in lexicography, I have found the need of such a book as was outlined, it is only natural that I should bring the matter to the attention of other educational institutions, or to that of my good friend, the Right Honorable Mackenzie King, for further consideration.

In so far as I am personally concerned, all I hope is that I may live long enough to see the Canadians with a book worthy of their race that reflects the different varieties of speech to be found throughout the Dominion. Naturally, interested in the languages of the English-speaking races, I made a similar suggestion that has met with favor to the Australian Commonwealth and the Dominion of New Zealand, and I feel quite sure that somewhere in Canada, I shall find an institution willing to embark in such an enterprise for the good of the country or itself, even if it be not affiliated with an educational establishment.

I came to Ottawa hoping to interest your institution; I shall now go to Toronto hoping to interest some one there. Failing in this, it may be necessary for me to turn to the Canadian press. It is a somewhat sad reflection that a half a continent, peopled by 8,788,483 souls, seems to take little interest in the language that it speaks outside of that which is based upon the Mother tongue.

It is a truism that no dictionary can be authority for words that it does not contain. How the Oxford Dictionary can be authority for terms in use in Canada that are not to be found in that work is a matter which, of course, only the omniscient can explain.

I take pleasure in sending to you under separate cover a paper that I have recently written bearing upon the subject of the vocabulary of our speech which may perhaps be of sufficient interest to repay perusal.

Yours very faithfully,

Frank H. Vizetelly

Mail & Empir
Toronto, Canada
MAR 24 1926

MANY PEOPLE GET ON WITH VERY FEW WORDS

DR. FRANK H. VIZETELLY, editor of the New Standard Dictionary, is said to possess the largest vocabulary in the world. Of course this is mere guess work, nobody being able to say who has the largest vocabulary and who the next largest, nor the precise number of words which Dr. Vizetelly could use if a crisis arose, but it is one of those statements which form useful texts for American—and perhaps Canadian—newspaper writers on occasion. At any rate, it is no guess to say that Dr. Vizetelly knows a whole lot of words and a lot about them. The dictionary of which he is the editor is reputed to contain the largest number of words ever collected, more than 455,000, and Dr. Vizetelly may reasonably be expected to have looked at them all. But he does not pretend that the New Standard Dictionary contains all the words in the English language. Indeed, he asserts that nobody can say how many words there are. They are like the sands of the sea.

Wilson and Shakespeare.

But if it is not possible to say who has the largest vocabulary, Dr. Vizetelly has no doubt as to what class of man possesses it. A competent newspaper editor, he says, knows 45,000 words, while the average uneducated person knows only 400. The intelligent artizan uses 5,000 words, a minister knows 14,296 and a physician 25,000. The average business man has a command of from 3,000 to 10,000, while the average college man or woman uses 5,000 words and knows 8,000 more. The average literary person uses 12,000 words and the scholar knows and uses 20,000. The late Woodrow Wilson was supposed to have one of the largest vocabularies in our time and Dr. Vizetelly says that in his seventy-five speeches addressed to the American people between the years 1913 and 1918, he made use of 6,221 different words. But if one reviews his writings, which one is not greatly tempted to do, he will probably come to the conclusion that the former President of the United States had a vocabulary of more than 62,000 words. This gives him a vast advantage over Shakespeare, who had to content himself with 24,000 different words even though one of them was "honorificabilitudinity," which may be found in "Love's Labour's Lost" and is frequently cited as the longest word in the English language.

How One Acquires Words.

A man's vocabulary depends a great deal upon his occupation, and Dr. Vizetelly gives the following instances in support of this assertion:

"A churchman, familiar with the terminology of the Bible, will know the meaning of 8,674 different Hebrew words in the Old Testament and of 5,624 Greek words in the New Testament, or 14,296 words in all, with some duplicates, of course. This is an exceptional case. The physician or surgeon knows more than this number. Take a rough summary of matters with which he must be familiar. There are in the body of man 707 arteries, 71 bones, 79 convolutions, 433 muscles, 233 nerves, 85 plexuses and 103 veins—total, 1,711. In addition to this there are 1,300 bacteria, 224 eponymic diseases, 500 pigments, 295 poisons, 88 eponymic signs and symptoms of diseases, 744 tests and 109 tumors, or a total of 4,968 matters relating to his profession alone. Then there are the names of some 10,000 chemicals and drugs of which he must have more than mere passing knowledge—total 14,968 in all, and we have not referred to the science of hygiene, or to allied professions, as dentistry, etc., or to his home life, his motor car or airplane, and the world at large, of which he is so important a figure. These can barely be covered by 10,000 more—approximately 25,000 words."

Business Men's Favorites.

Some time ago Dr. John C. French, of Johns Hopkins University, said that the average man in business knows about 50,000 words. But Dr. Vizetelly thinks this a ridiculous exaggeration and that if the average business man commands 10,000 words he will have a full vocabulary. As a matter of fact, the average man of business is prone to fall in love with a few words and keep on repeating them, rather than expand his vocabulary with more precise terms. We have such words as "service," "conference," "reaction," "worth while," "efficiency," being worked to death, and we suspect that it was the average American business man who took the word "hectic," meaning habitual, and insisted that it should mean "feverish." That is now what it seems to mean to everybody who uses it, and we have not the slightest doubt that Dr. Vizetelly, in his new dictionary will set the seal of his approval upon this impudent fraud.

A Remarkable Play.

A curious thing, according to Dr. Vizetelly, is that not long ago a play was a success in New York though only 318 different words were used. Of these 264 were spoken by the actors and actresses portraying North Carolina types, while the additional words were contributed by a man from the city who had lost his way in the mountains and at nightfall entered the cabin where the other characters were found. Dr. Vizetelly suggests that it is an interesting thing for a man to test his own vocabulary, and this he may do by keeping his eyes open as well as his ears. For example, the average citizen in the first hour after rising, if he were to express his thoughts, that is to say, if he were to name the objects which pass under his eye in bedroom, bathroom and at the breakfast table, would find that he would require 288 different words. He has still fourteen hours before bedtime, and in those fourteen hours he will meet acquaintances, discuss business matters, and perhaps go to a concert or a theatre. We believe a valuable monograph might be compiled to show how the use of profanity limits vocabulary. The idea that there are such things as eloquent and even magniloquent masters of profanity is, we believe, an illusion. Most people who swear use not more than a score of words, and each of them probably takes the place of a score or a hundred words with which a man, but for this habit, might enrich his vocabulary and define his feelings.

April 7, 1926.

Frank H. Vizetelly,
173, West 108th Street,
New York.

Dear Sir:-

Reference your letter of March 8th last addressed to the Principal; we have made inquiries regarding the authority for spelling in this country, and we find an existing Order in Council and a resolution of the House approving the English practice with the Oxford Dictionary as an authority. We feel very doubtful therefore of the advisability of entering upon the compilation of a new Dictionary.

Yours faithfully,

Wilfrid Bovey.

March 18, 1926.

King's Printer,

Ottawa, Ontario.

Dear Sir:-

I am enclosing you herewith copy of a letter received by us recently. We should regard it as a favour if you would inform us whether any dictionary has been officially adopted in this country.

Yours faithfully,

Wilfrid Bovey.

FRANK H. VIZETELLY
NEW YORK

173 West 188th Street,
March 8, 1926.

Sir Arthur W. Currie, G.C.M.G., K.C.B., LL.D.,
Principal, McGill University,
Montreal, Canada.

Dear Sir:

In view of the fact that the Dominion of Canada has no official dictionary of the language used by its people, may I suggest to you that the time is ripe for such an educational institution as that over which you preside to undertake the production of such a work?

You are no doubt aware that Dr. Wm. A. Craigie, formerly Professor of Anglo-Saxon at Oxford University, has arranged with the University of Chicago to produce under the egis of this institution a Dictionary of the American Language.

The unique vocabulary used by many of the Canadian people, together with the vernacular, might well be enshrined in a work that would prove a permanent memorial to the erudition of the Canadian people.

On my shelves here, I have but a scant collection of books reflecting Canadian speech and, judging from my own needs, I feel sure that such a work would meet with a very ready support, not merely by institutions of learning, but by libraries and the public at large, and scholars in particular.

Hoping that this suggestion may appeal to you,

Yours very faithfully,

Frank H. Vizetelly.

King's Printer —
authority of spelling etc

KING'S PRINTER
CANADA

Ottawa, March 23, 1926.

Dear Sir,-

I received yesterday your note of the 18th instant, enclosing copy of a letter addressed over the signature of Mr. Wilfrid Bovey to Sir Arthur Currie, G.C.M.G., K.C.B., LL.D, Principal, McGill University, with respect to some aspects of the question of an official dictionary "of the language used" by the people of Canada.

You ask whether or not "any dictionary has been officially adopted in this country", and in reply I enclose you a copy of the text of a memorandum proceeding from a meeting of the Joint Committee of both Houses on the Printing of Parliament, held on the 14th July, 1899, as follows, namely;-

> "That in order to secure uniformity in the printing of parliamentary documents, the 'style' and the rules of composition in use in the Clarendon Press of the University of Oxford be followed by the Queen's Printer."

This memorandum was not included in any report presented by the Committee to Parliament but has been accepted generally as indicating a correct line of procedure, also as including matters of spelling, and the Oxford Dictionary being the output of the Clarendon Press that publication has been accepted throughout the Government Service as the standard of spelling and is the authority accepted in all official printing executed under the jurisdiction of the undersigned.

Yours truly,

F. A. Acland,
King's Printer.

Professor Wilfrid Bovey,
Office of the Principal,
McGill University,
MONTREAL, Canada.

McGILL UNIVERSITY
PRINCIPAL AND VICE-CHANCELLOR
L. W. DOUGLAS

February 9, 1938

Dear Sir,

I am afraid that I am not a scientist and that it may be difficult for me to help you but if you will mail your thesis to me I will do my best and probably submit it to whatever branch of our Science Division may best assist you in the matter.

Yours faithfully,

J.H.H.Dixon, Esq.,
342 A. Victoria Avenue,
Westmount, Que.

342 A Victoria Ave
Westmount,
Feb 8th '38

Dr Lewis Williams Douglas,
Principal. McGill University

Sir

I respectfully take the liberty of writing to you to know if I could have a brief interview with you regarding a scientific "work" of mine that I greatly wish to see published soon.

It is very brief, pleasant and to the point. Could be thoroughly read in an hour or hour and a half. And believe would interest you very much. I would not want to leave it with any one but yourself. And its title, purpose and contents not to be disclosed to any one but yourself. The "work" is typewritten.

After reading it you could then kindly let me know when and where to call for it.

Though I work during the day I would endeavor to call for it at the time you would desire for me to do so. May be then you would ~~truly~~ kindly suggest the names of one or more honest and enterprising publishers that could publish the "work," for sale internationally. I am an elderly man well on in years, being financially poor. A big sale of the "work," would greatly help my sister, brother, myself and would prove of essential importance to humanity

Yours Very Respectfully

J. H. H. Dixon

W Macneile Dixon

University College, Toronto
PRINCIPAL'S OFFICE

May 27, 1933.

President Currie,

McGill University,

Montreal, P.Q.

Dear President Currie,-

Professor W. Macneile Dixon of the University of Glasgow has been invited to give the Alexander Lectures in the University of Toronto during the academic year 1934-1935. Professor Dixon writes me that he should like very much to accept our invitation, but as we are able to offer him only six hundred dollars for a course of lectures, he will find it necessary to secure lectureship engagements at other Universities on this side of the water in order to cover his travelling expenses.

I am writing to ask you if you would care to invite Professor Dixon to give one or more lectures in your University, and to what extent you would be able to enable him to solve his financial problem. I am sending a letter similar to this to a number of American and Canadian Universities, and when I have received replies I shall probably be able to get a final answer from Professor Dixon, after which I can write you again to make the engagement definite.

Very sincerely yours,

Malcolm W. Wallace

Principal

May 31st, 1933.

Dr. Malolm W. Wallace,
Principal,
University College,
Toronto, Ontario.

My dear Dr. Wallace,

Let me acknowledge your letter of May the 27th, in which you tell me of the forthcoming visit of Professor W. Macneile Dixon to this side of the water in the academic year 1934-35.

It is quite probable that McGill University would wish to avail herself of the opportunity of having one lecture by Professor Dixon, but this would depend upon the month he is available. We find it impossible to arrange these lectures after March 15th. If you can give me an idea of the time of year he will be in Canada, I can probably be a little more definite.

We are at present greatly handicapped by lack of funds for this sort of thing, and I am afraid we cannot offer more than $75.00 for the lecture. Professor Dixon would have to look after his own travelling expenses, but I should be glad to have him stay with me while in Montreal.

With all kind wishes,

I am,

Ever yours faithfully,

Principal.

May 31st, 1933.

Dr. Malcolm W. Wallace,
Principal,
University College,
Toronto, Ontario.

My dear Dr. Wallace,

Let me acknowledge your letter of May 27th in which you tell me of the forthcoming visit of Professor W. Macneile Dixon to this side of the water in the academic year 1934-35.

It is probable that McGill University would be glad to avail herself of the opportunity to have perhaps one lecture by Professor Dixon, but this would depend upon the time of year at which he comes. We find it impossible to arrange these lectures after about March 15th. If you can give me any idea of the month or months he will be in Canada I could probably be a little more definite. We are at present greatly handicapped by lack of funds for this sort of thing, and I am afraid we could not offer him more than $100.00 for the lecture; and he would have to look after his

(over)

own travelling expenses.

With all kind wishes,

I am,

Ever yours faithfully,

Principal.

University College, Toronto
PRINCIPAL'S OFFICE

1 June, 1933.

Principal Currie,
McGill University,
K i n g s t o n, Ont.

Dear Principal Currie,-

I must thank you for your prompt reply to my recent letter. I am very glad indeed to know that there is ~~at least~~ a possibility that you would be able to arrange for at least one lecture from Professor Dixon. There is as yet nothing definite about the date of his coming. In my letter of invitation to him I suggested any date that he found convenient between October 1934 and March, 1935. If we are able to make final arrangements I shall write you again giving you more definite information. In the meantime please do not trouble to reply to this letter.

With kindest regards, I am,
Very sincerely yours,

Malcolm W. Wallace
Principal

Dear Sir Arthur,

It was extremely good of you to write Mother and to send her the sympathy of Lady Currie and yourself. I valued your letter the more because I know how Dad admired you and your work in the University. McGill meant a lot to Dad and he

appreciated very much all you have done for his Alma Mater.

Thank you again on behalf of my mother and myself.

Yours.

Shirley Dixon