II.—ON THE NAMES OF THE WOOD-LOUSE.

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I will commence my examination of the synonymes of the *wood-louse* with an extract from a Lecture delivered by Mr. Wright before the Historic Society of Lancashire and Cheshire (1857) for the purpose of introducing the singular name *Lockchester*. "An English-Latin Dictionary of the 15th century, known by the title of the *Promptorium Parvulorum*, furnishes us with another example (i. e. of words not found in Anglo-Saxon literature, but still surviving in our provincial dialects). You will there find, under the letter *L*, the words "*Locchester, wyrm*", meaning that *Locchester* was the name of a kind of worm, and the Latin equivalent *multipes* is added. Now as the word worm had in A. S. and O. E. a very extensive meaning, and as the Latin *multipes*, meaning simply an animal with many feet, was not much more definite, the modern editor of the *Prompt. Parv.*, Mr. Way, was unable to fix the exact meaning of the English word; and there seemed no means left of ascertaining it, until two or three years ago my friend, Mr. Halliwell, walking in a garden in Oxfordshire, accidentally overheard the gardener talking about *Lock-chesters*, and immediately asking what these were, received for answer that they were *wood-lice*. On a further enquiry he ascertained that *lock-chest* or *lock-chester* was not an uncommon word in some parts of Oxfordshire for a wood-louse, although it was rapidly going out of use. As the *Prompt. Parv.* was compiled in Norfolk, this must in the 15th century have been an ordinary word for a wood-louse and not confined to a special locality."

From this extract we may infer that Mr. Wright considers it an A. S. word which, from its non-occurrence in the extant A. S. literature, has never found its way into the dictionaries of that language. In default of a more satisfactory explanation, the following is suggested. The passage in the *Promptorium* to which Mr. Wright refers, is as follows: "*Lokdore, wyrm, or locchester, multipes*" (p. 311). On com-

paring the terms *lok-dore* and *loc-chester*, it is evident that the first portion of the word is an independent element, *lok*; and this is still further confirmed by another synonyme for the wood-louse recorded by Halliwell with no indication of time or locality, viz. *lug-dor*. This I assume to be another form of *lok-dore*. The termination *dor* is that general name for a beetle or fly to which I have alluded in a former paper. What is the meaning of *lok*, *log* or *lug*? In Hampshire, and I believe in other counties, the word *lug* is frequently applied to a certain salt-mud worm used in fishing called *lug-worms*, and in Manx *lugg* means "a sea or sand-worm used for bait". Halliwell says that "the term *lug* was applied to anything *slow in movement*", and hence I imagine the name of these worms. Compare the words *luggard*, a sluggard; *luggish*, dull; *lug-loaf*, a heavy fellow; *lugsome*, heavy, and the phrase "I cry *lug*", meaning 'I am in no hurry'. Again the root *lug* appears with an initial *s*; as we find *mask* and *smash*, *moulder* and *smoulder*, *lug-gard* and *sluggard* &c., so we have *lug* and *slug*. Hence the name of that slow-moving mollusk that infests our gardens; and further, the modern English *slow* is a later development of this word *slug*. Hence we meet with the term *slow-worm*, as well as *lug-worm*.

I imagine then that the element *lock* means 'sluggish' or 'slow', and the propriety of its application to the wood-louse cannot be doubted, if we reflect that its common name in ancient times was *ovos* and *asellus*—if we watch the asinine movements of the animal, and recall the solemn march of the "*lente gradientis aselli*".

With regard to the second element *chester*, I believe that it has originated in a false orthography. The primitive form of the word appears to have been *log-*, or *lok-estre*, a termination which is generally assumed by Anglo-Saxon grammarians to be a feminine suffix, but which is not unfrequently found as an affix simply denoting the agent. Mouffet speaks of "those wall-lice, which the Dutch call *Knol-sters* and *Qual-sters*" (L. I, 29). Compare the A. S. *lopp-estre*, the 'leap-er', which appears in modern English as '*lob-ster*'.

I believe this suffix will also be found disguised in the North-country word for a wood-louse, *lobstrous-louse*, a word which I cannot pass by without adding a few remarks on the element *lob*.

In addition to the forms *lok*, *log*, *lug*, we find the collateral forms *lop*, *lob*, *lub*, with an identity of meaning so striking as to induce a suspicion of an identity of origin. Labial and guttural forms are frequently interchanged. Thus at our last meeting I called your attention to *cop-web*, *cob-web*, and *cock-web*; and Skinner says that '*Cop of Hay*' is '*vox agro Cantiano usitata*' for a *Hay-cock*.

In Hampshire, and elsewhere, there are not only *lug-worms*, but *lob-worms*. The large, sluggish, garden worms are so called. Skinner mentions them as the food for trout. "*Lob-worm*, *vermis Troitae piscis esca*", but when he proceeds to derive it "*ab A. S. Loppe, pulex*", and to describe it as a "*vermis valde vividus, vivax et vegetus*", I believe that he is utterly wrong both in theory and fact. The word *lob* is evidently akin in meaning to *lug*: e. g. *Lob-cock*, a term of contempt not uncommon in Old E., is thus employed by Cotgrave, "*Baligant, an unweldie lubber, great lob-cock*"; and if we compare the O. E. *loby*, and the modern terms *looby* and *lubber*, this idea of slow, sluggish, movement is confirmed. The word appears in the O. N., where *lubbi* means '*servus ignavus*'. The Lancashire word *lobb* is "*a heavy, clumsy fellow*"; the Welsh *lob*, "*a heavy lump, a blockhead*", and the Gaelic *liobar*, "*a lubberly, awkward fellow*"—(see *Trans. Phil. Soc.* 1855, p. 235). Shakspeare's '*Lob of spirits*' and Milton's '*lubber-fiend*' must be included in this family. Mr. Davies, however, has claimed for them a Welsh parentage.

The word sometimes appears under the form *lop*. In the North a leech is called a *lop-loach*, and it is probable that the word *lop-sided* means heavy on one side. To *lop*, in Kent, is '*to lounge slowly*'; *lop-lolly*, in the West, is '*a lazy fellow*', and *loppet* is an old adjective meaning '*loitering, idle*'. We have already seen a similar change in the word *lop-web*, from the A. S. *lobbe*, a spider. I infer

then that the term *lobstrous-louse* is identical in meaning with *lock-chester*, 'a loitering, sluggish louse'.

I would take this opportunity of pointing out that we possess, in English, three distinct *lobsters*, as I believe, from three distinct sources.

(1) The well-known crustacean, derived from the A. S. *loppestre*, a 'leaper', from its quick, jerking movements in its native element; hence called *locusta marina* by Latin writers.

(2) The wood-louse, from the root *lob-*, "the sluggish mover".

(3) I find that a stoat or weasel is called a *lobster* in the Eastern counties. In this word the *ster* has no connection with the suffix in the other two. I find the following synonymes for the animal, *lob-stert* and *lop-start*. This is the A. S. *stert*, 'a tail', and the word means 'heavy tail'. Compare the *Start Point*, and the bird *Red-start*, which is also known as a *Red-tail*, a *Fire-tail*, and a *Bran-tail*. Another name for the stoat, *clubster*, is derived from the club-shaped-tail.

Before passing from Lockchester I would mention another very singular word for a wood-louse, quoted by Mr. Wright from a MS. of the 15th century. It is *Socchetre*. I cannot avoid the suspicion that the initial *S* is merely a clerical error of the transcriber of the MS., and that *Locchetre* is a mere corruption of *Lok-estre*, just as the French *être* is a softened form of *estre*.

The following extract from Topsell's *Serpents* (p. 786) will introduce another, and a very perplexing, synonyme. "In rotten and hollow trees there are also to be found exceeding black spiders having great bodies, short feet, and keeping together with the *Cheeselips*, or those creeping vermine with manie feet called of some *Sowes*". Mouffet devotes a separate chapter to *Cheslips*. The word had evidently perplexed our forefathers, for Mouffet, who commonly ventures upon a derivation of any unusual term, candidly writes: "In some places also they call them *Cherbugs* and *Cheslips*, but I know not why", (L. II, c. 9), and Skinner

(v. *Cheslip*) remarks: "Hoc animalculum vulgo *Sowes* vocamus; nescio an ab aliqua hujus bestiolae et ventriculi (quod A. S. *ceosol* dicitur) similitudine." As I can find no satisfactory explanation of the word, I am again compelled to offer a speculative solution.

If we compare the word *cheese-lip* with another synonyme *cheese-boll* and *chissel-bol*, it is clear that we may separate the element *lip* as a distinct word. I will deal with this first. I believe it to be merely a modified form of the word *lop*, and I am supported in this belief by the Swedish name *sugga-loppe*, 'sow-lop'. But the element *cheese* or *ches* presents greater difficulties. The solution of the difficulty may possibly be found in the Gothic *sæs-lip*. The word *sæs* I interpret as *sows*, and with the entire word would compare the Swedish *sugga-loppe*, the German *schwein-laus*, the O. Eng. *Hog-louse*, *Sow-louse*, and the modern Somersetshire *Pigs-louse*.

To account for the change in the later form of the word, it is necessary to bear in mind, that there exists another, and, as I believe, totally distinct word, *Cheese-lope*, *Ches-lop*, or *Kes-lop*, meaning *rennet*, derived from the A. S. *ceselib*, a word which may be connected either with *ceosol*, a paunch, or with *cese*, cheese. I imagine that some confusion has existed in the popular mind between these two words.

If this explanation of the element *ches* is correct, it will equally apply to the first part of the synonymes *chese-bolle* and *chissel-bol*. The last part of these words is identical with the modern English *Ball*. *Bolle* in O. E. means a seed-pod, and the plant *Ball-weed* was formerly called *Bolle-wed*. The same root appears in *Bull-feist*, a provincial word for *Puff-ball*, in *Bull-head*, a tadpole, and in *Bullies*, round pebbles. The name is applied to the wood-louse from the animal's well-known habit of rolling itself up into a ball when disturbed; a habit mentioned by Bacon in his Nat. Hist. (Cent. VII, 696): "We see that the worms with many feet, which round themselves into *balls*, are bred chiefly under logs of timber." Hence also the names *Kitchen-bole*, *Kitchen-ball*, and *Kitchen-bell*.

With the word *Kitchen* compare the Hungarian name *Pincze-bogár*, a 'cellar-bug', and the German *Keller-wurm* and *Keller-esel*; the latter a name of some antiquity, for it is thus mentioned by Mouffet (L. II, c. 9): "George Agricola calls it also a *schefflein* and vulgarly *Keller-esel*, as if you would say a *cellar-hog*."

Not to disguise the difficulty attending the investigation of this word, I think it right to mention the fact that the term *Cheese-bol* is constantly employed to designate a poppy-head, and that too from a very early date. Whether the name was applied to the plant from the animal, or whether it springs from a different source, I am quite unable to determine.

The name *Sow* appears to be of considerable antiquity. In an old MS., cited by Wright, containing remedies against various diseases, we find: "also give him of these *sowes* that creep with many feet and fall out of howce rovys" (MS. Lambeth, 306, f. 177). We have seen that the term is recognized by Topsell and Skinner, and Mouffet speaks of it thus: "The English from their form call them *sowes*, i. e. little Hogs" (L. II, c. 9). They are also known in O. E. as *Dirty-Hogs*. In various modern dialects they are called *Pigs*; in the Eastern counties *Hogs* and *Old-Sows*; in Cornwall *Grammer-sows*, and in Northampt. *Tiggy-Hogs*; *Tiggy* being, I presume, a diminutive of *Tick* or *Tike*, a louse. In Italian they are known as *Porcelli* and *Porcelletto*; in Swedish as *Grås-sugga* 'grass-sow', and in A. S. as *gærs-swýn* 'grass-hogs'. The term *Hog-lice* is also recognized in O. Eng. They were highly esteemed in those times as a specific against asthma. Thus Mouffet writes (L. II, c. 9): "Aselepias also building on the authority of the ancient physicians much commends live *Hog-lice*, burnt in the fire and taken to a spoonful, for by their property they cure asthma. Hollerius and Johannes Agricola make good this opinion by their practice. Some do torriffe in a dish a small quantity of them into most white ashes and then give them with honey, &c." But, rendered somewhat sceptical by experience, he adds: "To conceal nothing from you I

thought fit to add that Pennius himself, lying sick of the Asthma, used for a long time *Hog-lice* steeped in wine: but having done it always to no effect, by my advice at last he did take in the smoke of brimstone through a tunnel, and he grew perfectly well from that horrid symptom.

In French it is sometimes known by the name *Truyette*, little sow; but the common name is *Cloporte*. The derivation of this word appears to be quite unknown; but I believe the explanation is to be found in a synonyme in the Walloon dialect, *gros-porc*, or 'fat-pig'. This will account for the apparent anomaly that *Cloporte*, with a feminine termination, is masculine in modern French. In provincial Swiss it is called *Holz-mohre*, 'wood-sow'.

The Portuguese name *Porquinha de santo Antão* contains an allusion to a tradition widely diffused in mediæval times that pigs were placed under the special guardianship of St. Anthony. An amusing account of the origin of the phrase 'St. Anthony's pigs' may be seen in Brand's *Antiquities* (vol. I, p. 358), and in Hone's *Every Day Book*. In Kent to the present day the youngest of a litter is called *T'Anthony-pig*.

The ordinary Spanish name is *Cucaracha*, but it was also called *Cochinilla*. Hence, as Mr. Wedgwood remarks in his *Dictionary* (v. *Cochineal*), "when the Spaniards came to America, they transferred the name to the animal producing the scarlet dye (the *Cochineal* insect), which somewhat resembles a wood-louse in shape."

A certain marine species of wood-louse is abundant on the sea-shore, and it is to this, I presume, that Mouffet refers in the following passage: "The *Flea*, or *Sea-asellus*, is like to a soft squilla. From its bunched back it is called a *sow*."

Another animal which frequently supplies the wood-louse with a specific designation, is the Ass. Aristotle in his *Hist. Animal.* (IV, 1. 6) calls it *ονος* and *πολυπους*; Theophrastus in his *Hist. Plant.* (IV, 3. 6), *ονος*, *ονισκος*, and *ιουλος*, and Mouffet states that in his time the Germans named it *esel*, *eselchen*, and *Kellar-esel*. He observes that

“it is called *ovog*, not from the forme or slownesse of an ass, but because it is of the same colour” (L. II, c. 9), and this remark he repeats on two other occasions. “It is a little creature of many feet, asse-coloured”, and again: “the Saxons call it *eselchen* from its asse-colour.” Its denomination in modern science is *oniscus asellus*.

The ordinary English name *Wood-louse* appears to be recognized by most of the European nations. The animals are so called, not from being wood-borers, but because, as Mouffet remarks, “they are oft times found between the bark and the tree.” In his time the Germans knew them as *Holz-wantzel*. In Dutch they are *Hout-luis*; in French *Pou de Bois*; in modern German *Holz-lauss*, and in Swedish *Trå-lus*. In O. Eng. we find them mentioned as *Wood-Pews* (Mouff.); *Pews* being an Anglicised form of the French *Pou*. The Irish call it *Reudan*, ‘timber-worm’.

Another O. E. synonyme, *Tylers-louse*, is thus explained by Mouffet: “The English call them, from the place where they dwell, *Tylers-louse*, i. e. lice from the roofs of houses.” The old MS. before quoted asserts that they “falle oute of howce rovys”.

The same MS. gives them the singular name of *White-worms*: “also give him *White-worms* that breed between the bark and the tree”, and this may perhaps explain the German *Weisse-Ameise*, the Dutch *Witte-Mier*, and the French *Fourmi-blanche*. I am somewhat at a loss to account for this name; but modern Coleopterists, who in their search after myrmecophilous beetles have had the temerity to disturb the internal arrangements of an ant-hill, must frequently have observed numerous individuals of this order, living in perfect harmony with their irascible neighbours, and uniformly *white*.

Among the miscellaneous names by which the animal is known, are the following. Mouffet states that “the Asiatic Greeks call them *xyapov* from their likeness to a bean (Galen), for it looks like it when the Cheslip rolls itself up into a round body.” In Hampshire they are popularly known as *Carpenters*, evidently from their connection with

wood. I am informed, on the authority of a Kentish coast-guard-man, that the inhabitants of his district uniformly call the creature a *Monkey-Pee*. The explanation of this mysterious word I obtained last summer, on exhibiting a specimen of the animal to an urchin who was tending pigs in a rural part of Kent. He unhesitatingly pronounced it to be a *Molti-pee*, and was supported by a young companion who was invited to give his opinion. This is of course the Kentish form of the Latin *multipes*. I confess I was somewhat surprised at the time, because from that class of English boys, in a thoroughly rural district, I had expected a lawful Saxon word rather than a miserable specimen of corrupt Latin. It was the ghost of Aristotle's *πολυπους* troubling these shores. We find the good O. E. term *Many-feet* in the West of England, sometimes with an addition, *Maggy-many-feet*; and in the North we meet with the variation *Meggy-mony-legs*. The term *Many-feet* appears in Mouffet's time to have had a rather more extended signification; he says (L. II, c. 8): "The *Scolopendræ* and *Juli* and *Cheeselips* march in the last rank. They far surpass in the number of their feet Caterpillars, Staphylini and Whurl-worms and all kindes of Insects, whence they are called *Many-feet* by a peculiar name belonging to them." In Hungarian the wood-louse is also distinguished by the term *Száz-láb*, 'hundred-feet', and in English it is sometimes called *millepede* and *Pill-millepede*. It also bears the name *Armadillo*.

We have seen above that Mouffet professed his inability to explain the term *Cher-bug*. I find an Old Eng. word *chire*, meaning 'a blade of grass', and Halliwell quotes a '*chyer* of grasse' from Drayton's *Harmonie* (1591). If we consider the Saxon *Gærs-swýn*, and the Swedish *Gräs-sugga*, we may possibly make *cher-bug* an equivalent of 'grass-bug'. The name *chur-worm*, a cricket, is from a totally different source.

The origin of the names *Wel-bode* and *Wol-bode* is somewhat uncertain. I have heard it suggested that *wel* or *wol* is our English word *wall*, and reference was made to the German *Wand-lauss* or 'wall-louse'. My objection is that

the *Wall-louse* of the Gothic nations is a member of another, and far more offensive, order of insects. I venture to suggest the following explanation of these words. The element *bode*, seen in such words as *sharn-bode*, I have explained on a former occasion as meaning 'worm' or 'beetle'. Of the two forms *wel* and *wol* the latter is the earlier, as in the case of *Kitchen-bell* and *Kitchen-bol*. The root *wol* must, I think, be connected with a verb used in the Eastern counties, *wold-er*, 'to roll up'. That the *d* in this word is not radical, is shown by another form of the verb recorded by Halliwell, *wole*. This, I presume, is the root of the verb *wallow*, A. S. *wealt-ian*, where the *t* is a strengthening affix. The same root appears in the Latin *volve* and the Greek $\epsilon\lambda\lambda\alpha\iota\omega$ in the word $\epsilon\lambda\lambda\alpha\iota\omega$, a snail, and in the English *whelk*. If this theory be correct, *wol-bode* simply means 'the worm that rolls itself up', a name well suited to the character and habits of the insect.

I will conclude these remarks on the wood-louse with a brief examination of the name *Thrush-louse*. A careful consideration of this name will, I think, throw some light upon a vexed question which has frequently tasked the ingenuity and research of commentators on the *Midsummer-Night's Dream*, viz. the origin of Puck. Critics have travelled far in search of his prototype, to Arabia, Persia, India, Scandinavia, and where not, and Dr. Bell, in his elaborate volume on the subject, arrives at the rather unsatisfactory conclusion that he is the "Man in the moon". I believe that the object of their search was lurking in this island buried among our national traditions, and that he once held a subordinate, though definite, position in the mythological system of our Saxon forefathers. The name *Thrush-louse* is a North-country synonyme of the Cheslip. Who or what was *Thrush*? An earlier form of the word is contained in the O. Eng. *Thurs-louse*. This *Thurse* (A. S. *thirs* or *thyrs*) was an old Anglo-Saxon spirit of a very uncertain character. He is sometimes represented as a malignant giant or spectre; at other times as a good natured, harmless goblin. In some aspects of his character he resembles the Norse *Troll*; in

others the mocking, mischievous, or, if kindly treated, helpful goblin, called Robin-good-fellow. Bosworth compares him with the Icelandic *Thuss*, bipes bellua, gigas, and describes him as "a giant, spectre, hobgoblin, ignis fatuus". His harmless character is maintained by Mouffet in the following passage: "They are also called *Thurs-lows*, or *Jovial lice*, from a *spirit that was not hurtful*, to whom our ancestors superstitiously attributed the sending them to us" (L. II, c. 9). The 'hairy strength' of the 'lubber fiend' is a reminiscence of his giant form, and his *ignis fatuus* freaks are familiar to all readers of our Fairy Mythology. In Lancashire he is viewed in the light of Orcus, or Hades, and is called *Thruse*, a connecting link between *Thurs* and *Thrush*. We find traces of him again in the word *Thurs-house* which Kennett describes as "a hollow vault in a rock that serves as a dwelling house to a poor family". The name evidently implying that the cave was the native haunt of the *Thurse*. I would remind you of the mixed character of Puck, as drawn by a master hand:

Either I mistake your shape and making quite
Or else you are that shrew'd and knavish sprite
Called *Robin-good-fellow*. Are you not he
That fright the maidens of the villagery;
Skim milk; and sometimes labour in the queru,
And bootless make the breathless housewife churn,
And sometimes make the drink to bear no barm;
Mislead night-wanderers, laughing at their harm;
Those that *Hobgoblin* call you and *sweet Puck*,
You do their work, and they shall have good luck;
Are you not he?

Evidently then there exists a striking similarity of character in the *Thurse* and *Puck*. But this similarity might be accidental. Evidence is still required to prove that our ancestors positively identified the *Thurse* with the *Hobgoblin* or *Robin-good-fellow* so popular in their day. That link in the chain of evidence can be supplied. Wright furnishes us with the name *Hob-thrush*, and explains it as "an old name of a goblin or spirit", and accordingly we find the millepede bearing the designation *Hob-thrush-louse*. This is

an approximation to *Hob*, the goblin. But all reasonable doubt respecting the identity of the two spirits should be removed, when we learn that Huloet (1552) supplies us with another synonyme for the Cheslip, *Robin-good-fellows-louse*.

That the Saxon *Thyrs* is the true prototype of Puck appears at least highly probable. Robin-good-fellow had undoubtedly been introduced to the reading world before the creation of the *Midsummer-night's Dream*, but in a coarser form; and our great poet seems to have employed the gross materials, but, with his marvellous genius, to have transmuted them into gold, and stamped them with his imperial die.

In the passage quoted above Mouffet interprets *Thurslows* by the phrase '*Jovial lice*'. In this he was apparently wavering between two opinions. He was evidently acquainted with the popular tradition that associated the name with "a spirit that was not hurtful"; but as a literary man he was also fully conscious that the scholars of his time, probably ignorant of the current superstition, sought for an explanation of the term in the god *Thor*, or Jupiter. This, the bookworm's view of the word, is clearly stated by Skinner, who adds a remarkable excuse for associating the Thunderer's name with so lowly and undignified an animal. He writes: "*Thurselice*, Millepedes, Aselli, *οριζοι*, a *Thor* priscorum Saxonum et Gothorum Jove, q. d. Joviales vel Jovi sacri pediculi. Et sane hoc animalculum licet aspectu sordidum, tamen ob eximias virtutes quibus contra Calculum, Icterum, Ophthalmiam, et alios morbos pollet, dignum est quod Jovi consecratur."

I may remark that I have been unable to meet with any account of this Saxon goblin in those works to which I naturally referred for such information, viz. Brand's *Antiquities*, Hones' *Every Day Book*, Wright's *Essays on the Lit. and Superstitions of England in the Middle Ages*, &c. &c. The Thurse seems to have been overlooked.