A Crux in the Text of Donne

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a shifting of the stress to the first syllable and the dropping of the final -n would give the O.E. form *nicor* and the O.N. *nykr*, though it would not explain the O.H.G. *nihhus*.

ERNEST CLASSEN.

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A CRUX IN THE TEXT OF DONNE.

In John Donne's Elegy beginning 'Since she must go,' which was first printed in full as the fourteenth elegy in the edition of 1669, there is a phrase which has never been satisfactorily explained. The poet is accusing Love of having dealt harshly with him and his mistress:

Was't not enough, that thou didst hazard us
To paths in love so dark, and dangerous:
And those so ambush'd round with household spies,
And over all thy husbands trowing eyes
Inflam'd with th'ouglie sweat of jealousy. ll. 39-43.

In l. 42 the word 'thy' shows that he changes by an abrupt turn from Love, whom he has been addressing, to his mistress; but the curious expression 'trowing eyes' has gravelled all Donne's editors. There is no help to be got from those MSS. which differ here from the text of 1669 given above; three of them, the Phillipps MS., the O'Flaherty MS. at Harvard, and the Brit. Mus. Stowe MS. 961, read 'towed' for 'trowing'; the Brit. Mus. Harl. MS. 4064 reads 'the towred husbands eyes'; and the Rawlinson Poetical MS. 31 in the Bodleian reads 'the Loured, husbandes eyes.' It will be seen that this last MS. alone gives any suggestion of a more plausible reading; and the Grolier Club editors have tacitly taken the hint and changed 'trowing' to 'lowering,' which certainly gives the sense required by the passage at the cost of altering a single letter. Grosart less happily split the dangerous word, and conjectured 'two red' eyes; Mr E. K. Chambers (in whose edition the Elegy is No. XIII) prints 'towering' without comment of any kind; and Mr Gosse, quoting the lines in his *Life of Donne*, does not attempt to explain the phrase. In the excellent text of the Clarendon Press edition of 1912, the Elegy appears as the twelfth, and Professor Grierson, though he finds 'trowing' a 'strange' epithet, regards it as 'probably correct, being a bold metaphor from hawking, and having the force practically of "threatening." The hawk towers threateningly above its prey before it "sousing kills with a grace." If "trowing" is not right, "lowering" is the most probable emendation.'

It is quite clear however from a consideration of the passage that the sense required is 'peering' or something which suggests the suspicious, inquisitive side-glances of the jealous husband, who certainly would not throw his eyes up to the heavens that they might descend falcon-wise upon the guilty pair. And this notion of spying was intended by Donne, and understood by his copyists, except the unintelligent or over-intelligent scribe of the Rawlinson MS.; it is only the spelling that sets the modern reader upon false trails. The word 'twire' is found in the best poets of the period in the general sense of peeping; Shakespeare tells his friend that

When sparkling stars twire not thow guildst the eauen,
Sonnet xxviii,

and Balurdo, in Marston's *Antonio and Mellida*, Part I, Act IV, says

I sawe a thing stirre under a hedge, and I peep't, and I spyed a thing: and I peer'd, and I tweerd underneath.

So Maudlin the witch, in Ben Jonson's *Sad Shepherd*, II, ii, speaks of that

Which maids will twire at 'tween their fingers thus.

The word was also used specially of the ogling of lovers; in Fletcher's *Women Pleas'd* it occurs in the line

I saw the wench that twired and twinkled at thee;
and it is to be found so late as Steele;

If I was rich, I could twire and loll as well as the best of them, says Phillis the waiting maid in *The Conscious Lovers*, I, i.

I have no doubt that the form 'towr' represented the same word, and was readily understood by Donne's contemporaries. His very phrase is reproduced in the satire *On the Dominical Nose of O.C.* (Oliver Cromwell) in Harl. MS. 4126, where the Lord Protector is said to possess

A proud ambitious Nose! that still doth rise
Ten hand-fulls higher than his towring Eyes.

The author of this production, Henry Tubbe, was born thirteen years before Donne's death.

The *New English Dictionary* naturally affords no help under 'tower,' and it has not yet reached 'twire.' It mentions 'tour,' however, as an obsolete form of both these words. And I think there is some significance in the use of 'tour' as Jacobean slang in the same sentence with 'twire' by Sir Walter Scott, who must have had some actual example in his

mind. When Lord Glenvarloch entered the sanctuary at Whitefriars, he was met by a couple of Duke Hildebrod's bullies, who noticed one of the Alsatian nymphs eyeing the courtier from a casement. "'Tour out,' said the one ruffian to the other; 'tour the bien mort twirling at the gentry cove!'" and Scott translates in a footnote, 'Look sharp. See how the girl is coquetting with the strange gallants.' (*The Fortunes of Nigel*, Ch. xvii.)

Here the two forms are used together with slightly different shades of meaning, but they clearly represent the same word; the word which Donne spelt in yet a third way, and used with the same suggestion of jealous alertness with which it was employed by the imaginary rascal of Alsatia.

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THE POLYGLOT VERNACULAR OF THE CANADIAN NORTH WEST.

There are several factors which have contributed to the formation of the everyday language of the rancher and trapper, and many languages have added words and phrases to the vocabulary of the woods and plains. Many of these have already become standard English, and doubtless others will in time find their way into the dictionary and so into more common usage.

The general presence of the Indians throughout the country, and their intermingling with white men, have naturally lent to the language of the plains many words from their various dialects—generally names of objects which have no English equivalent. Thus every Indian woman is a 'squaw' and her baby a 'papoose'; the 'cayuse' or Indian pony lends his name to every horse of small dimensions; the 'chinook' is the warm winter wind blowing from the south-west; 'medicine' is commonly used in its Indian signification. 'Nitchie' is an alternate name for Indian and is also applied to the small native ponies; the 'cayote' or prairie wolf is never known by any other name; and 'moccasin' has long become standardised. 'Cheechacho,' though often used by trappers, belongs properly to the Yukon; its ordinary Western synonym is 'tenderfoot.'

From the Indians too have been borrowed many place-names, some retaining their pristine form, as Moosmin, Muskoka, Wabegan, and Manitou, whilst others have perhaps lost a little of their picturesqueness by such translations as Kicking Horse, Yellowhead, Crow's Nest, and Red Deer.