

VI.—A GROUP OF GHOST-WORDS. By the
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It once fell to my lot, viz., on Friday, May 21, 1886, to read to the Society a Presidential Address. I ventured, on that occasion, to introduce the subject of 'ghost-words,' a word which I myself coined for the occasion. I defined them as "words which never had any real existence, being mere coinages due to the blunders of printers or scribes, or to the perfervid imagination of ignorant or blundering editors." I showed that many of them were due to the confusion of symbols that were similar in appearance, especially *n* and *u*, *c* and *t*, *e* and *o*, long *s* and *f*, *r* and *v*, and the like; and I gave examples amounting to a little over a hundred. I now propose to give about seventy more examples; of which only two, *efters* and *reuk*, were noticed by me in 1886. I have also included *bravi* because of its incorrect form, and such words as *masterte*, *tacoy*, *tapere*, and *thremot*, which can only be explained by the complete coalescence of two words into one. These are all explained in due course. In my former paper most of the examples were taken from editions by Ritson, Weber, Whitaker, and others, whose knowledge of Middle-English was insufficient for their needs, although we must remember that handy appliances, in the way of helpful glossaries, hardly existed in their days, so that they had little to depend upon. In the present case, nearly all my examples are from the black-letter editions of Chaucer's Works, as the book was called, though it contained much of which Chaucer was wholly innocent. These words were gathered up by Speght, who warily omitted the references, and afterwards by Skinner, who, with a most praiseworthy diligence, supplied references to many of them, or quoted a part of the context, by way of help towards explaining them. Very often, his reference is vague or hard to follow. I think, for example, his edition of *Piers Plowman* must have been Rogers' edition of 1561. In many cases the discovery

of the reference and the context was no very easy matter; and it is partly with the view of assisting the editors of the Dictionary that I have tried to dispose of these words, as it is, and ever has been, their special desire to avoid them.

Abent. Coles, Kersey, and Bailey all have: "*Abent*, a steep place." Skinner gives *abent* as meaning a mountain-slope. The reference is obviously to Chaucer's Knight's Tale, A. 1981: "And downward from an hille, under a *bente*." The black-letter editions have a *bent*, and Skinner has produced a ghost-word by taking the two words together. So also *Agiler* (below). Even in MSS., the *a* is often written with its sb., in one word. Compare *abos*, i.e. 'a boose,' in my Notes on Eng. Etymology (see below).

Abos. I have already noted, in my Notes on Eng. Etymology, pp. 3, 13, that the word printed as *abos*, in Allit. Poems, ed. Morris, B. 1075, is really *two* words, viz. a *bōs*. *Bōs* is the M.E. form of the mod. E. *boose*, for which the earliest quotation in N.E.D. is dated 1440.

Agiler. Given by Skinner as an old word. The N.E.D. merely notes that it is also given by Ash, who has: "*Agiler*, a deceiver." Many of Skinner's examples are from Piers Plowman; and the reference is obviously to B. ii. 120, where the reading is: "thou hast given hire to a *gyloure*," also spelt *giler*; see *Guiler* in N.E.D. Thus *agiler*, as it stands, is a mere ghost-word, composed of the two real words, *a* and *giler*; see *Abent*. Bailey has it as: "*Agiler*, an observer, informer" (1735).

Agipe. The N.E.D. has: "*Agipe*, Coles (1692); error for *a gipe*." This is the right solution; but it is worth while adding that Coles may have copied it from Skinner (1671); and Skinner may have got it by misunderstanding Speght's Chaucer. The reference is to the Romaunt of the Rose, 7262, where Speght has *a gipe* in two words.

Aker. *Aker* occurs in Gawain and the Grene Knight, l. 1421, and is explained by 'field, plain,' in the Glossary. Sir F. Madden wished to emend the passage. But, as shown in my Notes on Eng. Etymology, s.v. *Ker*, it is only an example of the common trick which the scribes often exhibit, of joining the indefinite article to the sb., as in *Abos* for 'a boose' (above). So here, the line runs: "Sone they calle of a *guést* in a *kér-syde*," as the alliteration shows; and *ker* means 'a rock,' as in l. 1431, where the expression is repeated in the form "at the *kerre-syde*." The N.E.D. duly has *carr*; but not the compound *carr-side*.

Apies. Skinner explains *apies* as meaning 'opiates,' and the sense is right. All the same, there is no such word. *Apies* is Thynne's misprint for *opies*; and the other black-letter editions follow him. The reference is to Chaucer's Legend of Good Women, l. 2670. Bailey, ed. 1735, has: "*Apies*, opiates; *Chauc.*"

Autremite. Coles, following Skinner, explains *autremite* as 'another attire'; and Bailey has the same. Kersey has: "*Autremite*, a kind of vestment. *Chaucer.*" The history of the origin of this word is curious. Thynne had to print the line in the Monkes Tale which runs thus: "Shal on her heed now were a *uitremite*," with reference to Zenobia. But the letter *i* seems to have dropped out at press, and at the same time the indefinite article was joined to the substantive. Hence, as a fact, he printed: "Shal on her heed nowe were *autremyte*." This extraordinary error occurs in all the succeeding black-letter editions; and *autremite* is thus seen to be a ghost-word. I first pointed this out in N. and Q., 9th S. ii. 341.

Belle I saude. Skinner has this phrase, and remarks that it is truly wonderful. He explains it to mean 'beautifully I said.' Hence Coles (1684) has: "*Belle I saude*, I said or spoke very well." As a fact, the reference is to the House of Fame, 1796, where the right reading is 'bele Isaude,' the beautiful Isault or Iseult, the well-known lover of Tristram. Stowe and Speght have *belle I saude*, with the initial *I* apart from the rest of the word; which turns *saude* into a ghost-word. The edition of 1550 is correct; and so is Thynne.

Belperopis. This extraordinary form occurs in the third edition of Crowley's print of Piers Plowman, and is duly explained by Skinner after his manner, from the Latin *pyropus*, a kind of bronze mentioned by Pliny. However, the MSS. have *bele paroles*, i.e. 'fair words'; B. xv. 113. It is clear that Crowley's MS. had the syllable '*par*' denoted in the usual way by a *p* with a stroke through the tail. He neglected the stroke, turned the final *e* into an *o*, and ran the words together, so that his first edition has *belopolis*. When he came to print the second edition, he noticed the stroke, and this time it appeared as *Belperolis*. Finally, by a misprint, it became, in the third edition, *Belperopis*. I first noted this in N. and Q., 9th S. ii. 406.

Bravi. Skinner has the form *bravi*, and explains it quite rightly as representing the Late Lat. *brabium*, Gk. *βραβεῖον*, a prize, a reward. It is not really a ghost-word, though it is an

incorrect form; it should rather be *bravie*, with a final *e*. It is given in the N.E.D. as occurring in Bullokar (1676); but it is two centuries older; for it occurs in the black-letter editions of Chaucer, in l. 65 of a poem by Lydgate called *A Commendation of Our Lady*. See *Chaucerian Pieces*, p. 277.

Caitisned. It is observed, in the N.E.D., that *caitisned* is an error for *caytifued*, i.e. *caytived* or 'held captive'; and that *caitisned* has been copied in some Dictionaries. References are given to Phillips and Bailey. It is also in Skinner, who explains that it means 'chained,' as it is corrupted from the Latin *catenatus*. I have already noted this word in N. and Q., 9th S. ii. 485, as well as in my edition of Chatterton. It first appeared in Thynne's edition (in 1532) of the Testament of Love, book i. ch. i. l. 16:—"in this derke prisone, *caytisned* fro frendshippe and acquaintance"; where *caytisned* is an error for *caytifued*, i.e. *caytived*, held captive; due to misreading an *f* as a long *s*, and a *u* (for *v*) as an *n*. Hence it was copied into the later black-letter editions, and thus became, so to speak, an established word. The interesting point is that it attracted the attention of Chatterton, who found in Kersey the entry: "*Caitisned*, chained, or bound with chains. *Chaucer*." Hence, in the fifth stanza of his tragedy of *Ælla*, he has:—"When holy priest, the lechemanne of the soul, Did knit us bothe in a *caytysnede* vow." And Chatterton himself tells us that he believed the word to have the sense of 'enforcing,' i.e. 'chaining,' which could not possibly be right, seeing that it is a past participle passive.

Cheffes. Skinner quotes this word as occurring in the phrase "or with *cheffes* fat," in the *Romaunt of the Rose*. The reference is to l. 7041, where a list of delicate eatables is given. The black-letter editions have: "With tender gees, and with capons, With tartes or with *cheffes* fatte, With deynte flaunes, brode and flatte." The Glasgow MS. has *cheffis*, for which Morris proposed to read *chessis*. But it is best to read *choses* at once, as the F. text has *fromages*.

Cherisaunce, Cherisaunie. I have already noted this, in my *Notes on Eng. Etymology*, p. 35. In the *Romaunt of the Rose*, 3335-7, we find: "Than, dismayed, I leftte all sool [remained all alone], Forwery, forwandred as a fool; For I ne knew no *chevisaunce*," i.e. no resource, no comfort. That *chevisaunce* is the right word, we know from its occurrence in the French text; besides, it has the right sense; see N.E.D. But by an unlucky

error, it was miswritten *cherisaunce*, with *r* for *v*, in the original MS., which was the common source of the existing MS. at Glasgow and of Thynne's text; and hence it appears as a ghost-word in all the black-letter editions. But the sense of 'comfort' seemed to be so obvious that it was given by Speght; and Skinner duly opined that it was a derivative of the verb *to cherish*, and meant 'cherishing.' But the misfortunes of the word did not end here. When Kersey came to give the word, he turned the final *ce* into *ie*, and then transposed the *ie* to *ei*. Hence we actually find, in Kersey, the entry: "*Cherisaunei*, [O.] Comfort"; where 'O.' means 'Old word.' Bailey saw that *ei* could not be right, and altered it to *ie*; so that he gives it as *cherisaunie*. Chatterton, who took most of his 'old words' from those marked 'O.' in Kersey, was only too glad to adopt it. Hence the first line in his "Entroductionne" to "*Ælla*" runs thus: "*Somme cherisaunei* 'tys to gentle mynde."

Clenge. This is a truly absurd mistake. Skinner quotes it as occurring thus in Piers Plowman: "where the Cat is a kitling, the Courte is full *clenge*"; see B. prol. 190. He attempts to derive it from the A.S. *clingan*, which shows that he fully believed in the correctness of the reading. But the right word is *elenge*, i.e. miserable, wretched. Thus the initial *c* is an error for *e*.

Comaunce. Skinner has *comaunce*, and explains it as 'community.' But there is no such word. The *a* should be *o*, and the *ce* should be *te*. The right form is *comounte*; for which see *Commonty* in N.E.D.

Congayne. In Coles' Dict. (1684) we find: "*Congayne*, to convince," and "*Congaye*, to send away." Both entries are copied from Skinner.

Congaye is a less desirable spelling of *congeye*, which is the Anglo-French equivalent of O.F. *congeier*, mod. F. *congédiér*, to dismiss. The reference is to P. Plowman, B. iv. 4:—"Nay, quod Conscience, *congeye* me for evere," i.e. "Nay, said Conscience, dismiss me for ever"; where the black-letter editions have *congayne*.

The word recurs in another passage, where the printer, thinking the *g* to be hard, imagined that there should have been a mark over the *y*, to signify that an *n* had been omitted. Hence, in the same black-letter editions, we find, in Pass. iii. 173, the same expression repeated, in the form "to *congayne* thee for evere." And here Skinner has fallen into the trap, giving us the explanation: "ut te *convincat*; *gayne* enim est vincere."

Fortunately, the hybrid word *to congain* has no real existence. I call it a hybrid, because *con-* is of Latin origin, whereas *gain*, though from French, is ultimately Teutonic. Bailey (1735) has: "*Congayn*, to convince"; where the dropping of the final *e* makes matters worse.

Denwere. This extraordinary word, rejected by the N.E.D., is only known from one quotation from *The Testament of Love*, book i. ch. vi. l. 193; where we have only Thynne's text to depend upon, in which something has certainly gone wrong. I have explained in my note what I believe to be the nature of the error. I suppose that the right reading was: "And, for comers hereafter shullen fully, out of | *were*, al the sothe knowe of these thinges | *don* in acte," etc.; i.e. "And, in order that future comers shall fully know hereafter, without doubt, all the truth of these things as they were actually done." It is so printed in Thynne that *out of* ends one line, and *thinges* the next; and the word *denwere* could easily be produced by transferring *don* so as to stand before *were*, i.e. by shifting it from one end of the line to the other. After which *den* may have been put for *don* by way of making some imaginary improvement. But whatever the explanation may be, we may at any rate well believe that *denwere* is a ghost-word. But it duly appears in Speght's Glossary, in Skinner, in Coles, in Kersey, and in Bailey; always with the explanation 'doubt,' which is the sense of *were* without the *den*. Thus Barbour has *forontyn weyr*, without doubt; Bruce, vii. 219. This singular form was adopted by Chatterton, in his poem on Godwin, st. 16: "No *denwere* in my breast I of them feel"; i.e. no doubt.

Drafty. Although *drafty* is a ghost-word, it is entered in N.E.D., because it was accepted as genuine by Stanyhurst, Bishop Hall, and Sir W. Scott. It is an error for *drasty* in Chaucer's Prologue to *Melibeus*, B. 2113, 2120. Not only all the black-letter editions have *drafty*, but Tyrwhitt has it likewise, and explains it in his Glossary as "of no more value than draffe." In T. Wright's text the right form *drasty* appears, from the Harleian MS.; but his Glossary has *drafty*, explained as by Tyrwhitt. Morris has *drasty*, also from the Harl. MS., but his glossary explains it by "like dross, rubbishing, good for nothing." Yet it is in no way connected with *dross*. It is rather due to the A.S. *drestan*, *dærestan*, dregs, lees, and was so explained by me in my edition of Chaucer's *Prioresses Tale*; probably for the first time. The word *drafty* is impossible, because the adj. from *draff* is *druffy*; for which see N.E.D.

Durense. This word, noted by Skinner, occurs in Speght's edition of Chaucer's *Dream*, l. 1201. The best copy of this *Dream* is in the Longleat MS., lately edited by Dr. Jane B. Sherzer, Berlin, 1903. The context shows that the writer relates how he was all but dead, when he was at once restored to life and full vigour by an apple given him; whereat he was overjoyed. He says: "all my bones For the newe *onrewse* plesauce, So as they cothe, desyred to daunce." Here *onrewse*, lit. 'onerous,' means simply 'very great' or 'extreme.' In many MSS., a short fat *d* is not unlike an *o*; and here, conversely, an *o* has been read as a *d*. Then the *n* has become *u*, and the *w*, properly a *u*, has become *n*; giving a form *durense*, which is purely a ghost-word. In the Glossary to his six-volume Chaucer, Morris explains *durense* as meaning *duresse*, i.e. 'constraint.' But this solution is obviously impossible, as 'constraint' is not an adjective. There is a third MS., viz. Addit. 10303, in the Brit. Mus., which obtains sense by turning *durense* into 'durings,' i.e. enduring, lasting. This makes the best sense of all, but is difficult to account for. Either way, *durense* is wrong.

Efters. Given by Skinner as occurring in the *Romaunt of the Rose*, and explained as "ways, galleries, entries, walks." It is Thynne's reading in l. 1448 of the *Romaunt*: "In the *efters* that men might seen"; and, unfortunately, a leaf is here lost from the Glasgow MS., so that there is no other authority. It is the old error of mistaking a long *s* for an *f*. The right reading is *esters*, or rather *estres*; for the French text has: "tout *l'estre* Du vergier." Chaucer has *estres* in three other passages; see my Glossary.

Eynes. I have already noted this in my Notes on Eng. Etymology, p. 86. It occurs in the *Allit. Morte Arthure* nine times. But it should be *eyues*, i.e. eaves; see *Eaves* in N.E.D.

Forvise. Skinner quotes "it needeth me naught long thee *forvise*," from Chaucer's *Troilus*, bk. ii. The reference is to l. 1390 of that book, where the true reading is *forbyse*; so that *forvise* is a ghost-word. The remarkable point is, however, that *forbyse* is likewise an incorrect form. The reading is: "It nedeth me nought thee longe to *forbyse*," i.e. it needs not that I should long instruct you by examples. The sb. *forbysen* means 'an example'; but Chaucer has turned it into a verb, with the sense 'to provide with examples.' But he has mistaken the final *n*, which is an essential part of the word, for the usual infinitive ending, and so has wrongly dropped it! See my Glossary and N.E.D.

Gofish. Coles, Kersey, and Bailey, following the lead of Speght and Skinner, all have: "*Gofish*, sottish." I have already explained this in my Notes on Eng. Etymology. It is due to Chaucer, Troil. iii. 584: "For to be war of *goosish* peples speche." The black-letter editions have *gofish*. Even Morris's Glossary to Chaucer has: "*Goofish*, adj. foolish."

Gratch. Speght's Glossary has: "*gratch*, apparel"; which is repeated in Skinner, Coles, Kersey, and Bailey. Skinner probably took it to be a substantive, as he derives it from the Latin *gratia*. But it is a verb. In the Rom. Rose, 7368, the Glasgow MS. has *gracche*, and Thynne has *gratche*, a reading which appears in all the black-letter editions. The lines are: "[She] took on a robe of cameline, And gan hir *gratche* as a Begyne"; and the French text has: "Et s'atorne comme Beguine," i.e., and attires herself, or apparels herself, as a Beguine. The correction to *graihe* is so obvious that it was made by Morris without any comment. Hence *gratch* is a ghost-word.

Hanylowes. Given by Skinner as occurring in P. Plowman, B. x, 129. But certainly a false form; see *Havelon* in N.E.D. Another false form is *Hamloun*. Whether it should be *havelon* or *hamilon* is none too clear. The references in N.E.D. to O.F. *havellon*, *havillon*, *havrillon*, do not help us much; for Godefroy gives no example of *havillon* or *havrillon*, and only one doubtful example of *havellon*, without any explanation.

Hauselines. The curious word *hanselynes*, i.e. short jackets, only occurs once, viz. in Chaucer's Parson's Tale. See N.E.D. and my Glossary. Skinner, Coles, Kersey, and Bailey all give this word twice over; once as *Hanselynes* and once as *Hauselynes*. They cannot both be correct; so that the latter is a ghost-word. The derivation from the O.F. *hainselins* settles the question; see my note on the word; vol. v. p. 459. Speght's Glossary has "*hauselines*, breches."

Holstaines. The reference is to *hail-stanis*, i.e. hail-stones, in Henryson's Testament of Cresseid, l. 168; where Thynne has *holstayns*. The N.E.D. has *havel-stones* from Trevisa; which might perhaps give a form *hol-*; but it is a very questionable one.

Houton. In the Plowman's Tale, l. 872, the black-letter editions have: "Hoppen and *houten* with heve and hale," i.e. they dance and hoot (or shout) with might and main. Speght, in his Glossary, has: "*Howten*, hallow"; where 'hallow' means halloo or shout out; the entry being quite correct. But Coles turns the

final *-en* into *-on*, and enters it as: "*Houton*, hollow"; i.e. as if it were an adjective. And this is reproduced by Kersey and Bailey. Chatterton fell into the trap, and in l. 6 of his Epitaph on Robert Canynge has: "*Houton* are wordes for to telle his doe."

Intenuate. In 1561, Stowe added to "Chaucer's Workes" a few new poems on his own account. One of the most ridiculous, though somewhat ingenious, is the piece called *The Craft of Lovers*, dated MCCCXLVIII in Stowe's edition, but "One thousand foure hundred fifty and ix" in the two manuscript copies (MS. Addit. 34360 and Harl. 2251).

It is really a dialogue between a lover and his mistress, and the gentleman begins in a very high-flown style, after this sort:—

"Most souerain lady, surmounting your nobleness,
O *intenuate* Ienipre and daisy delicious."

At least, this is what Stowe gives us.

To call a lady 'a delicious daisy' is pardonable; but to call her 'an intenuate juniper' is really too much. It savours of calling her a parallelogram, or something equally abstruse. Speght retains the reading, but I cannot find it in his glossary.

Skinner's explanation is remarkable, as follows: "mirum sanè epitheton, credo voluisse O *odorata* Junipere, i.e. O Junipere in suaves halitus intenuata seu attenuata." He clearly regarded *intenuate* as a playful variant of *attenuate*, which I suppose means 'skinny.' 'A skinny juniper' is, I submit, an infelicitous epithet.

Fortunately, the MSS. are better. They not only correct *your* to *in* in the former of the two lines, but they supply the original form of *intenuate*, which happens to have been *intemerate*, borrowed from the Latin *intemerata*, inviolate. This redeems the epithet altogether, as far as the adjective is concerned; but even thus, I am ill satisfied with the substantive. It may be added that the lover proceeds to call the lady a "sanative medicine," a "comfortable creature," and an "excellente herber [herb-garden] of lovely countenance." The lady, with some spirit, declares that his "painted eloquence" is "so gay, so fresh, and eke so talkative" that she is disinclined to believe it all; but even this does not prevent him from calling her "a rubicund rose," and "a clarified crystal," and "a carbuncle shining pure." And this is the kind of stuff which, according to Stowe, was "compiled by Chaucer." But he really ought not to have dropped a C from the date.

Lucker. Skinner's Dictionary has the word *Lucker*, with reference to a passage in *Piers the Plowman*, which he gives in

the following form:—"How that lewd men light¹ *luckere* then lettred were saved." This he explains to mean, "quod laici plerumque sæpius quam clerici in altero mundo servantur; *light* est *lightly* vel *likely*; verisimilius *luckere* est *luckily*, felicius."

He has given the general sense well enough; but he is all abroad as to *luckere*; for there is no such word in the language.

Luckere must be joined on to *light*; then we have a form *light-lucker*, for which the best MSS. and the two earliest editions substitute *lightloker*. See P. Plowman, B. xii. 158.

This involves a curious point of A.S. and M.E. grammar. When an A.S. adjective ended in *-lic* (mod. E. *-ly*), the corresponding adverb, when used in the comparative degree, invariably ended in *-licor*. Owing to these A.S. forms in *-licor*, we frequently find M.E. forms in *-loker*. Modern English uses the suffix *-lier*; so that the M.E. *lightloker* is now spelt *lightlier*, meaning 'more lightly,' or 'more easily.' Hence the sense is that laymen are *more easily* saved than the learned. The text 1 Cor. iii. 19 has been quoted a few lines above.

Maches. See my Notes on E. Etymology, p. 175. The form should be *marches*.

Mansell, Masnel. Both are ghost-forms; the right form is *masuel*. See my Notes on E. Etymology, p. 177.

Masterte. This is not, strictly speaking, a ghost-word, when rightly understood. Skinner gives it as: "*Avaunt masterte*, locus sane valdè obscurus." But the reference is to Thynne's reading of Troilus, i. 1050: "And yet me athinketh that this avaunt *masterte*"; i.e. and yet I am sorry that this boast escaped me. *Masterte* is composed of the two words *me asterte*, run together into one.

Mavis (as a plural). The genuine word *mavis*, in the sense of 'song-thrush,' is too well known to need comment. But there is another *mavis*, which poses as a *plural* substantive, and originated in some mistake. It occurs in the Romaunt of the Rose, l. 5590: "An hundred *mavis* of whetè greyn."

Mavis is the reading in the Glasgow MS.; Thynne and the printed editions have *mauys*, *mauis*, or *mavis*. Speght explains it by 'a bushel,' which Skinner accepts, though it is obviously a plural.

Tyrwhitt's Glossary to Chaucer long ago gave the right solution, as follows: "*Mavis* is probably a mistake for *muis*, n. pl. (French).

¹ Misprinted *light*; but it is a mere misprint, as the context shows.

The original has *Cent muys de froment*. The Paris *muid* contains something more than five quarters English."

It is clear that the translator simply copied the French word unaltered. The O.F. form was *mui*, and the pl. was *muīs*; see Littré, who quotes this very passage. It is simply from Lat. *modius*. The sense is, of course, 'bushels,' as the context imperatively demands.

It is not improbable that the scribe of the MS. from which the Glasgow MS. and Thynne's MS. were both derived, did not understand *muīs*; so he promptly substituted *mavis*, because he knew such a form was real. Unfortunately, it is out of place here.

Momblishness. In the Assembly of Ladies, l. 57, there is mention of some daisies; and in l. 62, of some pansies. Besides these, two more flowers are mentioned in l. 61, which runs thus in MS. Addit. 34360: "*Ne-m'oubliemies* and *sovenez* also," i.e. forget-me-nots and remember-me's also. The *remember-me* was a name for the germander speedwell; see E.D.D. But all the black-letter editions make a terrible hash of this line. Thynne has: "*Ne momblysnese* and *souenese* also." Hence the astonishing entries in Speght and those who follow him. "*Momblishness*, talk," in Speght and Skinner; "*Momblishness*, talk, muttering," Coles (1684), Kersey, Bailey, and the Century Dictionary; "*Sonenesse*, a noise," Bailey; "*Sonesse*, a noise," Speght, Skinner, Coles. I have noted these words before; perhaps they are the most extraordinary of all the ghost-words on record.

Moneresse. Coles (1684) has: "*Moneresse*, a she-mourner at funerals." He found the word in Skinner, with a similar guess at the meaning. The word meant is *moveresse*, a female mover or promoter of strife. It occurs in the Romaunt of the Rose, l. 149, and in the French text; in the allegorical description of Hate.

Nakoners. *Nakoners*, explained by 'brazen horns,' occurs in Thynne and the black-letter editions; the explanation is in Skinner, Coles, and Bailey; but Speght explains it by 'cimbals.' But there is no such word. The right reading is *Nakers*, in Cant. Tales, A. 2511; and the true sense is 'kettle-drums.' Tyrwhitt shows that Chaucer obtained the word from Boccaccio; and explains it correctly. Dr. Conan Doyle has fallen into the trap; in his novel named "The White Company," he has "blew their nakers." But a kettle-drum cannot be blown.

Nerth. This is one of the most extraordinary of all the words that have ever come under my notice. But it admits of a complete explanation.

Skinner gives it in his Glossary, quoting from Speght's Glossary to Chaucer. Speght has: "*Nerthes*, heardmen"; which has not even the merit of suiting his context. If he had said 'heardman's,' it might have passed.

I confess that I was quite unable to guess the passage referred to, but I lighted upon it quite accidentally (as is often the case) whilst trying to solve another similar problem. It occurs in the black-letter editions, in the Tale of Melibeus [Group B, 2746, in the Six-text edition]. I quote from Thynne's edition of 1532, fol. xcii, back: "And therfore sayth Pamphillus: If a *nerthes* doughter, he saythe, be ryche, she may chese of a thousande men." Skinner evidently looked up the passage, and made a brilliant guess. He suggested that a *nerth* means 'a neat-herd.' And so it does.

In the first place, the original Latin of Pamphilus has "*nata bubulci*"; see my note on the passage.

Secondly, the readings in the Six-text are as follows: E. a netherdes; Hn. Anetherdes; C. Auerthes (*so printed*); Cp. eny gaddes; Pt. an neterdes; Ln. any goddes (!). The Harl. MS. has 'a neet-hurdes.'

The right reading is that of E., according to the usual spelling of the period, which was adopted by Tyrwhitt. My edition and the "Globe" edition follow suit. It is clear that *nerth* arose from a succession of mistakes, and is a pure ghost-word.

It may have arisen thus. A scribe, having before him the form *anetherdes* (for the coalition of *a* with its substantive is common enough), jumped from the first *e* to the second, in the usual way, producing *anerderdes*. This became *an erdes* (or was so read), which suggested *an erthes*; because *erde* and *erthe* were common variants of the word now spelt 'earth.' This was again divided as *a nerthes*, producing a form *nerthes* as the genitive case of *nerth*; note the reading in C. So a *nerth* is really a *neat-herd* after all.

There is a piece of common-land near East Dereham, Norfolk, called Neatherd Moor. The local pronunciation is *netterd*.

Nolne. The solution of the absurd form *nolne* would have been almost impossible, but for Skinner's kindness in quoting the passage and referring us to the Man of Lawes Tale [Group B, l. 512].

He quotes it thus: "That thence *nolne* it not of all a tyde."

He explains it as standing for *ne woln*, i.e. 'will not'; but does not tell us why *it* requires a plural form.

It arose from a misprint in Stowe's edition (1561). The edition of 1550 correctly has *nolde*, but Stowe's printer misprinted the *d* as an *n*. *Nolde* is 'would not,' i.e. would not go. And this is all.

All the old editions turn the dissyllabic *thennes* into the monosyllabic *thence*. This ruins the metre, but that was a matter of no consequence, as it never dawned upon men's minds, even as a possibility, that Chaucer had any regard for metre. A disability to entertain the notion that he was really a past master in metrical skill, is only too prevalent at the present day.

Olmeres, elm-trees. The entry "*Olmeres*, elm-trees," occurs in Coles, who copied it from Skinner. It is due to the fact that *olivieres*, i.e. olive-trees, occurs twice in the Romaunt of the Rose, ll. 1314, 1381. In the former passage it occurs as *Olmeres* in the black-letter editions, and there is no equivalent French word; but in the second passage they read *olyuieres*, and the French equivalent is *oliviers*. The Glasgow MS. is right in both places. It follows that *olmere* is a ghost-word; and it does not mean an elm-tree.

Overly. The adverb *overly*, in the sense of 'excessively,' etc., is duly given in N.E.D. But it never occurs in Chaucer; and had no business to appear in Speght's Glossary, where its presence is due to a misprint. In Troilus, i. 382, we have a line ending with *al-outrely*, i.e. all-utterly, completely. In this word a *t* was accidentally dropped in the printing, so that this appears in Stowe's edition (1561) as *al ouerly* (for *al outerly*). Then came Speght, who boldly altered the *u* to *v*, by a stroke of genius.

Overwheled. Henryson's fine poem called The Testament of Cresseid, l. 401, according to Thynne's first edition, states that: "The cloudes blake ouerheled al the skye," This is quite correct, except that the Scottish form should rather have been *ourhelit*. The verb *overhelen*, to cover over, is duly given in Stratmann, with examples from Wyclif and others.

The printers usually omit letters, but in this case ed. 1550 (followed by Stowe and Speght) inserted a *w*, and produced the absurd form *overwheled*. How it is possible to 'overwheel' the sky, by help of 'black clouds' or otherwise, no one has told us. Nevertheless, *overwhole* is not a ghost-word, as it is duly given in N.E.D. But it is not the right reading in the above context.

Pentrelniarie. This word is given by Skinner, but he suspected it to be wrong; and it has been dropped by later writers of glossaries. There are three errors in it. The *p* should have a stroke

through it, as it stands for 'par'; *re* should be *er*; and *ni* should be *in*. The right form is *par enterlinarie*, i.e. 'with inter-lineations'; in P. Plowm. B. xi. 298.

Probatine piscant. In Speght's Glossary to Chaucer we have the entry: "*Probatine piscant*, the sheep's pool." The same forms are given in Skinner's Dictionary and by Coles (1684).

This is a double error; both forms are wrong. Speght's carelessness is here to blame, as his glossary differs from his text. The reference is to "A Ballad in Commendation of Our Lady," st. 19; see my Chaucerian Pieces, p. 280, l. 1.

Speght's text gives the following line, addressed to the Virgin:—

"The mighty arch, probatife piscine."

And this shows at once that there is no such word as *piscant*.

Further, I have shown that *probatife* is an error for *probatik*; and that *probatik piscine* is taken from the Latin *probatrica piscina* in John v. 2, called in our English version "a pool by the sheep-market." Since *probatife* is an erroneous reading, it follows that *probatine* (which misrepresents it) is wholly a ghost-word; and so is *piscant*.

Proroke. In Coles' Dictionary (1684) we find the entry: "*Proroked himself*, hid himself in a rock." It is really rather comic, when you know the story.

He obtained this from Skinner, who, having got hold of the ghost-verb *to proroke*, set himself to discover an etymology for it; and opined that this "ridiculè conficta vox" was derived from *pro* and *rock*, "quia, scilicet, inter rupes se condidit." The man who *pro-rocked* himself was Paul the hermit.

The reference is to a passage in Piers Plowman, B. xv. 281:—

"Poule *primus heremita* had *parroked* hymselfue,
That no man mighte him see for mosse and for leues."

In other words, "Paul the first hermit had (so) enclosed himself that no man could see him because of the moss and the leaves."

The verb *to parroke* is queer enough; still Langland coined it fairly from the sb. *parrok*, mod. E. *park*,¹ signifying 'an enclosure.' But we see what comes of using contractions. The scribe whom Crowley followed in his print had written 'par' as a contraction, with *p* and a straight stroke through the tail. But it was misread as a *p* with a curly stroke through the tail, which signified 'pro.' And this is the whole mystery of the origin of the verb *to proroke*.

¹ Otherwise, *paddock*; with *dd* for *rr*.

Ragounces. *Ragounces* is explained in Skinner as “a kind of precious stone”; and the same entry occurs in Coles and Bailey. It is the reading in l. 1117 of the Romaunt of the Rose, both in the Glasgow MS. and in all the black-letter editions. It is, however, a false form, and was corrected by Tyrwhitt to *jagounces*, by help of the French text. It occurs as *jagounces* in Morris’s edition, and as *iagounces* in my own; and is so given in the N.E.D. It is clear that the initial *i* was mistaken for an *r*. An *iagounce* was the stone also known as a *jacinth*.

Reathen. Skinner quotes from P. Plowman the line: “and if I reape over *reathen*”; and thinks *reathen* is allied to M.E. *rathe*, quickly; “contextus tamen est valdè obscurus.” But the right reading is *ouer-rechen*, i.e. over-reach; B. xiii. 374. It is the old error of mistaking a *c* for a *t*.

Resagor. Coles has: “*Resagor*, rat’s bane”; as in Speght’s Glossary to Chaucer and in Skinner. The right form *Resalgor* occurs in Thynne, but in the reprinting the letter *l* dropped out, so that both Stowe’s edition and the one preceding it have *Resagor*. The MSS. have *resalgar*, the old form of *realgar*, i.e. red arsenick. It occurs in the Canon’s Yeoman’s Tale, G. 814.

Reukes. Skinner thinks it means ‘rooks,’ and is used jocosely. But the right form is *renkes*, i.e. men; P. Plowman, B. vii. 181.

Sarlinish. In the Rom. Rose, 1188, we have the form *sarlynysh* in the Glasgow MS. and *Sarlynysshe* in Thynne. Speght has *sarlinish*, and explains it “a kind of silk like Sarcenet.” Coles has: “*Sarlinish*, a kind of sarcenet”; and Bailey has: “*Sarlinishe*, sarcenet; *Chauc.*” For all this, the form is wrong, and obviously arose from misreading a long *s* as an *l*. The French is: “Largece ot robe toute fresche D’une porpre Sarrazinesche”; and the corresponding English is: “Largesse hadde on a robe fresshe Of riche purpur Sarsinesshe.” See *Sarasinois* in Godefroy. The sense ‘sarsnet’ is doubtless right.

Sarplexis. Speght’s Glossary to Chaucer has: “*Sarplexis*, sachels, packs, or fardels.” This hopeless word is due to a piece of carelessness on Speght’s part; for *his own text*, like the other black-letter editions, has *sarpleris*. Another, and perhaps better reading is *sarpulers*, which occurs in Chaucer’s translation of Boethius, bk. i, prose 3, near the end; and Speght’s explanation is not wrong; so that he clearly knew the right word. But this shows how easily a ghost-word may arise.

I beg leave to quote my note on the passage. "*Sarpulers*, sacks made of coarse canvas; in Caxton, *sarpleris*; Lat. text, *sarcinulas*. 'Cotgrave has:—'*Serpillere*, a Sarpler, or Sarp-cloth; a piece of course (*sic*) canvas to pack up things in.' Cf. mod. F. *serpillière*."

Sased; (*alias*) **Fassed**. Very few, I think, know the origin of the mysterious verb *to sase*; of which the p.p. *sased* is given by Skinner, and by Coles (1684), explained by "stuffed."

Skinner tells us himself that he had it from Chaucer's Prologue, l. 233:—"His tipet was ay farsed ful of knyves," i.e. his tippet was always stuffed full of knives. Most MSS. have *farsed*, correctly, but the Petworth MS. has *fassed*, a false reading which the black-letter editions followed. Hence we find, in Speght's Glossary, the entry "*fassed*, stuffed." This accounts for the ghost-word *fassed*.

Unfortunately, Skinner read the *f* as a long *s*, and put *s* for *ss*; for he gives the reading as: "His tippet was aye *sased* full of knives." Then, being much put to it to explain the word, he suggests that it is an error for *seised*; i.e. his tippet was seised (or possessed) of knives.

Setrone. This I believe to be certainly a ghost-word, though it is not very easy to explain it. Skinner gives it as *Setron*, and thinks it means 'bright of hue.' He then derives it from Lat. *citrinus*, i.e. like citron. Indeed, *citron* is the form of word that it most resembles. The context is to be found in the poem by Lydgate entitled *The Flour of Curtesye*, l. 195, printed by Thynne in his 'Chaucer.' He is reckoning up the good qualities of a fair lady, and mentions, among the rest, that she was "therto as *setrone* As was of Troye the whyte Antigone." Of this poem there is no MS., and we are left to conjecture the true reading. My explanation of the matter is as follows. In the first place, Lydgate doubtless copied the name of *Antigone* from Chaucer's *Troilus*, ii. 887, where we find "*Antigone* the whyte." And, of course, the original reading for *setrone* must have been an adjective intended as a complimentary epithet, and ending in *-ee*. The obvious word is *secree*, i.e. one to be trusted with secrets, one who is trusty and reticent. But as *c* and *t* are so frequently confused, it is probable that *secree* was misread as *setree*, which made no sense. The scribe must then have misread *Antigon-e* (in four syllables) as if it were *Anti-gone* (in three syllables); in consequence of which he naturally altered *setree* to *setrone*, whereby he at least secured an imaginary rhyme, which was the next best

thing (or so it seemed to him) to securing sense. Whether this is the right explanation or not, *setrone* is certainly a ghost-word, because it will not really rhyme to the name *Ant-i-gon-ē*.

Shrake. Skinner quotes the phrase: "And shame *shraketh* his clothes," from Crowley's print of *Piers Plowman*. The reference is to P. Pl., B. xi. 423, where the right reading is: "And shame *shrapeth* (i.e. scrapes, wipes) his clothes." There is no verb to *shrake* in this connexion.

Sonenesse, Sonesse, said to mean 'a noise.' Explained under **Momblishness**.

Sord. Given in Skinner, and explained as 'sorrell-coloured'; with a reference to Henryson's *Testament of Cresseid*, l. 211, where Thynne has: "The first was *sorde*." This is in the description of the four horses of Phœbus' chariot; and the sense 'sorrel-coloured' is correct. The old Scottish edition has, however, the reading *soyr*, another spelling of *sore*, used by G. Douglas in the same sense. It is possible that *sord* is meant to stand for *sorit*, similarly used in Scottish; but it is more likely that the *d* is a misprint for *e*, and that the right spelling is *sore*. See F. *saur*, "sorrell of colour," in Cotgrave.

Sper. Skinner gives *sper* as a sb., from the verb *speir*, to enquire. The reference is to Henryson's *Testament of Cresseid*, l. 272, where most of the black-letter editions, followed by Chalmers, have the reading: "*Sper* is the cause of that vacacioun." But the old Scottish text has *Speiris*, i.e. enquires, in one word, and the right reading is: "*Speiris* the cause." Hence no such word as *Sper* can be inferred from this passage, unless we regard it as a variant of *speir*. It cannot be a substantive.

Spinge. Skinner has '*Spinge*,' which he says is explained by 'sprinkle.' I cannot find the passage; but it may confidently be said that *spinge* is a ghost-word, and an error for *springe*. Chaucer has *springen*, to sprinkle; in C.T., B. 1183.

Stod. Skinner quotes from *Piers Plowman* the phrase—"and of the *stods* and of the *sters*"; and suggests that *stod* is the same as *stot*. But the reference is obviously to P. Pl., B. xii. 223, which begins: "And of the *stones* and of the *sterres*." Hence *stod* is here an error, and there is no authority for it as being a variant of *stot*.

Subaltar. All the black-letter editions of Chaucer have the reading "*Subaltar* and *septe*" in the *Man of Lawes Tale*, B. 947. But we know that the right form is *Iubaltar*, i.e. Gibraltar.

Sweight. Noted by Skinner as occurring in the second book of Troilus. But there is no such word, although it occurs in the black-letter editions. The true form is *sweigh*, i.e. sway, force; Troil. ii. 1383.

Tacoy. Skinner quotes *tacoy*, and connects it with the verb *to take*. The reference is to Troil. v. 782: "He niste how best hir herte for *tacoye*." However, *tacoye* is not a ghost-word altogether. It arose from the conjunction of *to* with *acoye*. The sense is 'to calm' or 'to allure.'

Tapere. It is worth noting that Richardson quotes the following line to illustrate the sb. *taper*: "And in the nyght she lysteth best *tapere*." However, *tapere* is not really a ghost-word here; it is merely a short form of *to apere*, i.e. 'to appear.' The subject is Cynthia, i.e. the moon. Cf. Troil. ii. 909: "For lak of light, and sterres for *to appere*," where the Harleian and Corpus MSS. have *tapere*.

Teneling. An error for *teueling*; see Notes on Eng. Etymology, p. 297.

Thacces. This is only a ghost-word if misunderstood. It is composed of the two words *the* and *acces*, run into one. See Notes on Eng. Etymology, p. 298.

Thremot. Explained by Speght (who has *thre mot*) as "the blast of a horn." Skinner adopts this, but derives it from *terra motus*, an earthquake, because the hunter blew so loud that the earth shook. So Coles has: "*Thremot* (*q. terra mot*), the blast of a horn." Bailey has: "*Thremote*, the blast of an horn. *Chauc.*" However, the black-letter editions are right: "With his horne blewe *thre mote*." The Fairfax MS. has: "With a gret horne blewe *three mote*"; Book of the Duchess, l. 376. Hence the mysterious *thremot* is really made up of two words run together; and the sense is not 'a blast of a horn,' but *three* blasts.

Tought. Skinner quotes from the black-letter editions of Chaucer, Troil. v. 101, the line: "If that I speke of loue, or make it *to tought*"; where *to tought* is a double error, in place of the simple word *tough*. Thus *tought*, in this connexion, is a ghost-word.

Trancilers. Skinner quotes from P. Plowman: "for al true *trancilers* and tillers of the earth." Here *n* is for *u*, and *c* for *e*, and the right word is *traueilers*, i.e. travellers or toilers; B. xiii. 239.

Trayeres. An error for *crayeres*; see Notes on Eng. Etymology, p. 306.

Trene. Skinner gives the word *trene* with a reference to Piers Plowman, B. vi. 332. But the right reading is *trewe*, i.e. a truce. It is clear that *treue* was written for *trewe*, and then *n* was printed for *u*. Hence *trene* is here a ghost-word.

Trichlich. Skinner gives *trichlich*, and refers to P. Plowman, B. prol. 14. The right reading is *trielich*; and *trichlich* is a mere ghost-word. Perhaps *trielich* was turned into *trichlich*, with *c* for *e*; and then *c* became *ch*; or else the scribe wrote *ch*, by anticipation of the *ch* that was coming.

Troce. Speght has: "*Troce*, a wreath or withy"; which Skinner would correct to *tress*, though it would make no sense. The reference is to the Wyf of Bathes Prologue (D. 484): "I made him of the same wode a *croce*," i.e. a staff, or stick; see *Croce* in the N.E.D. The *c* was misread as *t*, so that *troce* appears in Thynne and the black-letter editions. The correction to *croce* was made by Tyrwhitt. Speght's explanation is copied by Coles, but *Troce* does not occur in Kersey or Bailey.

Tulsure-like. This astonishing word is quoted by Skinner from Speght, and is explained from the F. *tuile*, a tile, as if it meant 'tile-coloured' or 'reddish.' It would be past all hope if we could not find the context. However, it actually occurs in the black-letter editions of Chaucer, viz. in Henryson's Testament of Cresseid, l. 194, where a boar is described as whetting his tusks "*right tulsure-like*." And now the Scottish text comes to our rescue, with the variant "*right tuilyeour*"; where the *-our* is an agential suffix, and the sb. is derived from the verb *tuilye*, to quarrel, to squabble, to fight. Jamieson aptly defines *tuilyeour* as "one who is addicted to fighting or engaging in broils," an admirable epithet for a boar. It is from the O.F. *touillier*, M.F. *touiller*, to dirty, to mix, to wallow, to muddle up, whence the O.F. *touille*, used of the confusion of a general fight. Cotgrave's definition is remarkable; he gives:—" *Touilleur*, a polipragman, filthy meddler, shuffling or troublesome fellow; one that mars things by a beastly mingling of them." Further, we can explain Thynne's form by remembering that the word would be written *tuilzeour* in Scottish; and he evidently took the *z* for a *z*, and then substituted *-sure* for the awkward-looking suffix *-zeour*. Hence *tulsure* is not absolutely absurd; it is only a very poor attempt at imitating the original form.

Twyereth. Skinner quotes from Speght: "*Twyereth*, singeth." But the right word is *twytereth*, i.e. twitters; Boethius, bk. iii. met. 2, l. 21; in Thynne's edition. But the second *t* dropped out at press. Of the later black-letter editions the third has *twyareth*, and Stowe has *twirethe*. Speght has *twireth*, but his Glossary has *twiereth*. Kersey has: "*To twyer*, to sing"; Bailey has: "*Twire*, to whisper; *Chauc.*"

Unkek. An error for *unlek*; see Notes on Eng. Etymology, p. 311.

Vechon. In Speght's Glossary to Chaucer occurs the absurd entry: "*Vechons*, hedgehogs." This form is due to pure carelessness. The reference is to the Romaunt of the Rose, 3135, where Speght's own text, like the other texts, has *vrochons*. It is now easily seen that the initial letter is really a vowel, and *urchon* is merely the word which, with a slight modification in form and a greater one in sense, is preserved in modern E. as *urchin*.

The matter becomes truly ridiculous when we find *vechons* in Skinner's Dictionary; for, whilst he accepts the explanation 'hedgehogs,' he is sorely put to it to find the etymology. He opines that *vechon* represents the Mid. Du. *vercken*, a pig. But, not wishing to tie us down too closely to this ingenious derivation, he tells us that we may, if we please, derive *vechon* from the Latin *porcus*. But it hardly seems worth our while to attempt to do so.

Vinart. Explained by Skinner as a variant of 'vineyard.' The sense is right, but the form is inadmissible. The reference is to A Ballad in Commendation of Our Lady (doubtless by Lydgate), l. 45. The black-letter editions have *Vynarie*, and Skinner (or some one else) has misread the *i* as a *t*. I observe that, in the undated edition of 1550, the *i* has a dash above it, and the word looks very like *Vynarte*. This has been altered to *Vinart* by putting *i* for *y*, and dropping the final *e*.

Vinere. Stratmann notes that *vinere* in the Cursor Mundi, l. 13764, is an error for *viuere*, a fish-pond. I observe that *vyneres*, similarly misprinted for *vyueres*, occurs thrice in one page of Halliwell's edition of Maundevile's Travels, viz. on p. 216.

Waltsome. Chaucer twice uses the word *waltsom*, i.e. abominable, in the C.T., B. 3814, 4243. In neither case does it appear in the black-letter editions. The first time it is represented by *lothsome*; and the second time by *waltsome*. But *waltsome* is a ghost-word.

Where. Skinner quotes from the Rom. Rose, 5699, where both Thynne and the MS. alike have: "His herte in sich a *where*

is set." It is quite certain that the word ought to be *were* or *werre*, meaning 'doubt' or 'confusion'; for the F. text has *guerre*. *Where*, as a sb., is a ghost-word.

Winer. Speght's Glossary has: "*Welked wyners*, withered vine-branches." It is quite certain that *wyner* does not mean 'a vine-branch,' and that there is no such word.

The passage referred to is in The Testament of Love, bk. iii. c. 5, l. 34, where the author speaks of "*welked wivers* and *venomous serpentis*," where 'a wiver' means a viper. The author is really referring to the passage in Troilus, iii. 1010, where Cresseid refers to the personification of Jealousy, and calls it "a wicked wiver." It is not improbable that *welked*, though it makes some sense, ought rather to be *wikked*. [The error is partly corrected in the reprint of Speght in 1687, where *wyners* is altered to *wyuers*.] But the word 'wivers' is printed *winers* (with *n* for *u*) in ed. 1550 and ed. 1561, and in Speght's text. In his Glossary he has further altered the *i* into a *y*. Skinner preserves it in his Dictionary, but reverts to the spelling *winers*, as in Speght's text. The use of *y* for *i* makes no difference, but the use of *n* for *u* turns sense into nonsense.

Wishippers. Skinner gives this word, and takes it to be connected with diviners of the future state of the weather; he also refers us to P. Plowman, fol. 90. As this reference does not suit any of Crowley's editions, he must mean the reprint by Owen Rogers in 1561, made from Crowley's third edition. The reference is really to B. xv. 350, which (correctly) runs thus: "Wederwise shipmen and witty clerkes also." But Crowley has, in his first edition, the reading *Wether wysheppers*, altered in the third edition to *Wether wyshyppers*, which accounts for the form in Skinner at once. We thus see that the *wys-* belongs to the previous word, and that what is meant is *Wether-wys shippers*, where *shippers* is a variant for *shipmen*, i.e. sailors. It follows that *wysheppers* or *wishippers* is altogether a ghost-word.

Yemp. The ridiculous adjective *yemp* appears in Skinner's Glossary. He obtained it from the black-letter editions of P. Plowman, B. xi. 17, where we find the expression: "thou art yong and *yemp*." However, *yemp* is a printer's error for 'yep' (with long *e*), as in all the MSS., the *m* having been inserted by some error. *Yep* is a M.E. word, signifying 'active,' and is derived from the A.S. *gēap*, signifying crooked, cunning, shrewd, astute. See *gēap* in Stratmann's Dictionary.

Youk. Skinner quotes *youk* from the Book of St. Albans; the sentence is: "Youre hauke *Ioukith*, and not slepith"; fol. *a* 6. The verb *to jouk* is duly explained in N.E.D. In this case the *i*, meaning *j*, has been wrongly turned into *y*. There is no verb *to youk*.

Yuly. An error in Ritson for *ynly* = *inly*; see Notes on Eng. Etymology, p. 325.
