

Tucholsky Wagner Zola Scott
Turgenev Wallace Fonatne Sydow
Twain Walther von der Vogelweide Fouqué Schlegel
Weber Freiligrath Ernst Frey
Fechner Fichte Weiße Rose von Fallersleben Kant Richthofen Frommel
Engels Fielding Hölderlin
Fehrs Faber Flaubert Eichendorff Tacitus Dumas
Feuerbach Maximilian I. von Habsburg Fock Eliasberg Ebner Eschenbach
Ewald Eliot Zweig Vergil
Goethe London
Mendelssohn Balzac Shakespeare Elisabeth von Österreich Ganghofer
Trackl Stevenson Lichtenberg Rathenau Dostojewski Gjellerup
Mommssen Thoma Tolstoi Lenz Hambruch
Dach Verne von Arnim Hägele Hanrieder Droste-Hülshoff
Karrillon Reuter Rousseau Hagen Hauff Humboldt
Garschin Defoe Hauptmann Gautier
Damaschke Descartes Hebbel Baudelaire
Wolfram von Eschenbach Dickens Schopenhauer Hegel Kussmaul Herder
Bronner Darwin Melville Grimm Jerome Rilke George
Campe Horváth Aristoteles Voltaire Federer Bebel Proust
Bismarck Vigny Gengenbach Barlach Heine Herodot
Storm Casanova Lessing Tersteegen Gilm Grillparzer Georgy
Chamberlain Langbein Gryphius
Brentano Claudius Schiller Lafontaine Kralik Iffland Sokrates
Strachwitz Katharina II. von Rußland Bellamy Gerstäcker Raabe Gibbon Tschechow
Löns Hesse Hoffmann Gogol Wilde Gleim Vulpis
Luther Heym Hofmannsthal Klee Hölty Morgenstern Goedicke
Roth Heyse Klopstock Puschkin Homer Kleist
Luxemburg La Roche Horaz Mörike Musil
Machiavelli Kierkegaard Kraft Kraus
Navarra Aurel Musset Lamprecht Kind Kirchhoff Hugo Moltke
Nestroy Marie de France Laotse Ipsen Liebknecht
Nietzsche Nansen Lassalle Gorki Klett Ringelnatz
von Ossietzky May vom Stein Lawrence Leibniz Irving
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Literary Blunders

Henry Benjamin Wheatley

Imprint

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PREFACE. — —

EVERY reader of *The Caxtons* will remember the description, in that charming novel, of the gradual growth of Augustine Caxton's great work "*The History of Human Error*," and how, in fact, the existence of that work forms the pivot round which the incidents turn. It was modestly expected to extend to five quarto volumes, but only the first seven sheets were printed by Uncle Jack's Anti-Publishers' Society, "with sundry unfinished plates depicting the various developments of the human skull (that temple of Human Error)," <p> and the remainder has not been heard of since.

In introducing to the reader a small branch of this inexhaustible subject, I have ventured to make use of Augustine Caxton's title; but I trust that no one will allow himself to imagine that I intend, in the future, to produce the thousand or so volumes which will be required to complete the work.

A satirical friend who has seen the proofs of this little volume says it should be entitled "*Jokes Old and New*"; but I find that he seldom acknowledges that a joke is new, and I hope, therefore, my readers will transpose the adjectives, and accept the old jokes for the sake of the new ones. I may claim, at least, that the series of answers to examination questions, which Prof. Oliver Lodge has so kindly supplied me with, comes within the later class. <p>

I trust that if some parts of the book are thought to be frivolous, the chapters on lists of errata and misprints may be found to contain some useful literary information.

I have availed myself of the published communications of my friends Professors Hales and Skeat and Dr. Murray on Literary Blunders, and my best thanks are also due to several friends who have helped me with some curious instances, and I would specially mention Sir George Birdwood, K.C.I.E., C.S.I., Mr. Edward Clodd, Mr. R. B. Prosser, and Sir Henry Trueman Wood. <p>

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LITERARY BLUNDERS.

CHAPTER I.

BLUNDERS IN GENERAL.

THE words "blunder" and "mistake" are often treated as synonyms; thus we usually call our own blunders mistakes, and our friends style our mistakes blunders. In truth the class of blunders is a sub-division of the *genus* mistakes. Many mistakes are very serious in their consequences, but there is almost always some sense of fun connected with a blunder, which is a mistake usually caused by some mental confusion. Lexicographers state that it is an error due to stupidity and carelessness, but blunders are often caused by a too great sharpness and quickness. Sometimes a blunder is no mistake at all, as when a man blunders on the right explanation; thus he arrives at the right goal, but by an unorthodox road. Sir Roger L'Estrange says that "it is one thing to forget a matter of fact, and another to *blunder* upon the reason of it."

Some years ago there was an article in the *Saturday Review* on "the knowledge necessary to make a blunder," and this title gives the clue to what a blunder really is. It is caused by a confusion of two or more things, and unless something is known of these things a blunder cannot be made. A perfectly ignorant man has not sufficient knowledge to make a blunder.

An ordinary blunder may die, and do no great harm, but a literary blunder often has an extraordinary life. Of literary blunders probably the philological are the most persistent and the most difficult to kill. In this class may be mentioned (1) Ghost words, as they are called by Professor Skeat—words, that is, which have been registered, but which never really existed; (2) Real words that exist through a mistake; and (3) Absurd etymologies, a large division crammed with delicious blunders.

1. Professor Skeat, in his presidential address to the members of the Philological Society in 1886, gave a most interesting account of some hundred ghost words, or words which have no real existence.

Those who wish to follow out this subject must refer to the *Philological Transactions*, but four specially curious instances may be mentioned here. These four words are "abacot," "knise," "morse," and "polien." *Abacot* is defined by Webster as "the cap of state formerly used by English kings, wrought into the figure of two crowns"; but Dr. Murray, when he was preparing the *New English Dictionary*, discovered that this was an interloper, and unworthy of a place in the language. It was found to be a mistake for *by-cocket*, which is the correct word. In spite of this exposure of the impostor, the word was allowed to stand, with a woodcut of an abacot, in an important dictionary published subsequently, although Dr. Murray's remarks were quoted. This shows how difficult it is to kill a word which has once found shelter in our dictionaries. *Knise* is a charming word which first appeared in a number of the *Edinburgh Review* in 1808. Fortunately for the fun of the thing, the word occurred in an article on Indian Missions, by Sydney Smith. We read, "The Hindoos have some very strange customs, which it would be desirable to abolish. Some swing on hooks, some run *knises* through their hands, and widows burn themselves to death." The reviewer was attacked for his statement by Mr. John Styles, and he replied in an article on Methodism printed in the *Edinburgh* in the following year. Sydney Smith wrote: "Mr. Styles is peculiarly severe upon us for not being more shocked at their piercing their limbs with *knises* . . . it is for us to explain the plan and nature of this terrible and unknown piece of mechanism. A *knise*, then, is neither more nor less than a false print in the *Edinburgh Review* for a knife; and from this blunder of the printer has Mr. Styles manufactured this dalean instrument of torture called a *knise*." A similar instance occurs in a misprint of a passage of one of Scott's novels, but here there is the further amusing circumstance that the etymology of the false word was settled to the satisfaction of some of the readers. In the majority of editions of *The Monastery*, chapter x., we read: "Hardened wretch (said Father Eustace), art thou but this instant delivered from death, and dost thou so soon morse thoughts of slaughter?" This word is nothing but a misprint of *nurse*; but in *Notes and Queries* two independent correspondents accounted for the word *morse* etymologically. One explained it as "to prime," as when one primes a musket, from O. Fr. *amorce*, powder for the touchhole (Cotgrave), and the other by "to bite" (Lat. *mordere*),

hence "to indulge in biting, stinging or gnawing thoughts of slaughter." The latter writes: "That the word as a misprint should have been printed and read by millions for fifty years without being challenged and altered exceeds the bounds of probability." Yet when the original MS. of Sir Walter Scott was consulted, it was found that the word was there plainly written *nurse*.

The Saxon letter for *th* (<?p>) has long <p 6>been a sore puzzle to the uninitiated, and it came to be represented by the letter *y*. Most of those who think they are writing in a specially archaic manner when they spell "ye" for "the" are ignorant of this, and pronounce the article as if it were the pronoun. Dr. Skeat quotes a curious instance of the misreading of the thorn (<?p>) as *p*, by which a strange ghost word is evolved. Whitaker, in his edition of *Piers Plowman*, reads that Christ "*poledede* for man," which should be *tholedede*, from *tholien*, to suffer, as there is no such verb as *polien*.

Dr. J. A. H. Murray, the learned editor of the Philological Society's *New English Dictionary*, quotes two amusing instances of ghost words in a communication to *Notes and Queries* (7th S., vii. 305). He says: "Possessors of Jamieson's Scottish Dictionary will do well to strike out the fictitious entry *cietezour*, cited from Bellenden's *Chronicle* in the plural *cietezouris*, which is merely a misreading of *cietezanis* (i.e. with Scottish *z* = <?z> = *y*), *cieteyanis* or *citeyanis*, Bellenden's regular word for *citizens*. One regrets to see this absurd <p 7>mistake copied from Jamieson (unfortunately without acknowledgment) by the compilers of Cassell's *Encyclopædic Dictionary*."

"Some editions of Drayton's *Barons Wars*, Bk. VI., st. xxxvii., read —

"`And ciffy Cynthus with a thousand birds,'

which nonsense is solemnly reproduced in Campbell's *Specimens of the British Poets*, iii. 16. It may save some readers a needless reference to the dictionary to remember that it is a misprint for *cliffy*, a favourite word of Drayton's."

2. In contrast to supposed words that never did exist, are real words that exist through a mistake, such as *apron* and *adder*, where the *n*, which really belongs to the word itself, has been supposed,

mistakenly, to belong to the article; thus apron should be napron (Fr. *naperon*), and adder should be nadder (A.-S. *næddre*). An amusing confusion has arisen in respect to the Ridings of Yorkshire, of which there are three. The word should be *triding*, but the *t* has got lost in the adjective, as West Triding became West Riding. The origin of the word has thus been quite lost sight of, and at the first organisation of the Province of Upper Canada, in 1798, the county of Lincoln was divided into *four* ridings and the county of York into *two*. York was afterwards supplied with *four*.

Sir Henry Bennet, in the reign of Charles II., took his title of Earl of Arlington owing to a blunder. The proper name of the village in Middlesex is Harlington.

A curious misunderstanding in the Marriage Service has given us two words instead of one. We now vow to remain united till death us *do part*, but the original declaration, as given in the first Prayer Book of Edward VI., was: "I, N., take thee N., to my wedded wife, to have and to hold from this day forward, for better, for worse, for richer, for poorer, in sickness and in health, to love and to cherish, till death us depart [or separate]."

It is not worth while here to register the many words which have taken their present spelling through a mistaken view of their etymology. They are too numerous, and the consideration of them would open up a question quite distinct from the one now under consideration.

3. Absurd etymology was once the rule, because guessing without any knowledge of the historical forms of words was general; and still, in spite of the modern school of philology, which has shown us the right way, much wild guessing continues to be prevalent. It is not, however, often that we can point to such a brilliant instance of blundering etymology as that to be found in Barlow's English Dictionary (1772). The word *porcelain* is there said to be "derived from *pour cent annes*, French for a hundred years, it having been imagined that the materials were matured underground for that term of years."

Richardson, the novelist, suggests an etymology almost equal to this. He writes, "What does correspondence mean? It is a word of Latin origin: a compound word; and the two elements here brought together are *respondeo*, I answer, and *cor*, the heart: *i.e.*, I answer feelingly, I reply not so much to the head as to the heart."

Dr. Ash's English Dictionary, published in 1775, is an exceedingly useful work, as <p 10>containing many words and forms of words nowhere else registered, but it contains some curious mistakes. The chief and best-known one is the explanation of the word *curmudgeon*—"from the French <oe>ur, unknown, and *mechant*, a correspondent." The only explanation of this absurdly confused etymology is that an ignorant man was employed to copy from Johnson's Dictionary, where the authority was given as "an unknown correspondent," and he, supposing these words to be a translation of the French, set them down as such. The two words *esoteric* and *exoteric* were not so frequently used in the last century as they are now; so perhaps there may be some excuse for the following entry: "Esoteric (adj. an incorrect spelling) exoteric." Dr. Ash could not have been well read in Arthurian literature, or he would not have turned the noble knight Sir Gawaine into a woman, "the sister of King Arthur." There is a story of a blunder in Littleton's Latin Dictionary, which further research has proved to be no mistake at all. It is said that when the Doctor was compiling his work, and <p 11>announced the word *concurro* to his amanuensis, the scribe, imagining from the sound that the six first letters would give the translation of the verb, said "Concur, sir, I suppose?" to which the Doctor peevishly replied, "Concur—condog!" and in the edition of 1678 "condog" is printed as one interpretation of *concurro*. Now, an answer to this story is that, however odd a word "condog" may appear, it will be found in Henry Cockeram's *English Dictionarie*, first published in 1623. The entry is as follows: "to agree, concurre, cohere, condog, condescend."

Mistakes are frequently made in respect of foreign words which retain their original form, especially those which retain their Latin plurals, the feminine singular being often confused with the neuter plural. For instance, there is the word *animalcule* (plural *animalcules*), also written *animalculum* (plural *animalcula*). Now, the plural *animalcula* is often supposed to be the feminine singular, and a new plural

is at once made—*animalculæ*. This blunder is one constantly being made, while it is only occasionally we see a supposed plural *strata* in geology from a supposed singular *strata*, and the supposed singular *formulum* from a supposed plural *formula* will probably turn up some day.

In connection with popular etymology, it seems proper to make a passing mention of the sailors' perversion of the Bellerophon into the Billy Ruffian, the Hironnelle into the Iron Devil, and La Bonne Corvette into the Bonny Cravat. Some of the supposed changes in public-house signs, such as Bull and Mouth from "Boulogne mouth," and Goat and Compasses from "God encompasseth us," are more than doubtful; but the Bacchanals has certainly changed into the Bag o' nails, and the George Canning into the George and Cannon. The words in the language that have been formed from a false analogy are so numerous and have so often been noted that we must not allow them to detain us here longer.

Imaginary persons have been brought into being owing to blundering misreading. For instance, there are many saints in the Roman calendar whose individuality it would not be easy to prove. All know how St. Veronica came into being, and equally well known is the origin of St. Ursula and her eleven thousand virgins. In this case, through the misreading of her name, the unfortunate virgin martyr Undecimilla has dropped out of the calendar.

Less known is the origin of Saint Xynoris, the martyr of Antioch, who is noticed in the *Martyrologie Romaine* of Baronius. Her name was obtained by a misreading of Chrysostom, who, referring to two martyrs, uses the word *xunwr* (couple or pair).

In the City of London there is a church dedicated to St. Vedast, which is situated in Foster Lane, and is often described as St. Vedast, *alias* Foster. This has puzzled many, and James Paterson, in his *Pietas Londinensis* (1714), hazarded the opinion that the church was dedicated to "two conjunct saints." He writes: "At the first it was called St. Foster's in memory of some founder or ancient benefactor, but afterwards it was dedicated to St. Vedast, Bishop of Arras." Newcourt makes a similar mistake in his *Reperitorium*, but Thomas Fuller knew the truth, and in his *Church History* refers to "St. Vedastus, *anglice* St. Fosters." This is the fact, and the name St.

Fauster or Foster is nothing more than a corruption of St. Vedast, all the steps of which we now know. My friend Mr. Danby P. Fry worked this out some years ago, but his difficulty rested with the second syllable of the name Foster; but the links in the chain of evidence have been completed by reference to Mr. H. C. Maxwell Lyte's valuable Report on the Manuscripts of the Dean and Chapter of St. Paul's. The first stage in the corruption took place in France, and the name must have been introduced into this country as Vast. This loss of the middle consonant is in accordance with the constant practice in early French of dropping out the consonant preceding an accented vowel, as *reine* from *regina*. The change of *Augustine* to *Austin* is an analogous instance. *Vast* would here be pronounced *Vaust*, in the same way as the word *vase* is still sometimes pronounced *vause*. The interchange of *v* and *f*, as in the cases of <p 15>*Vane* and *Fane* and *fox* and *vixen*, is too common to need more than a passing notice. We have now arrived at the form St. Faust, and the evidence of the old deeds of St. Paul's explains the rest, showing us that the second syllable has grown out of the possessive case. In one of 8 Edward III. we read of the "King's highway, called Seint Fastes lane." Of course this was pronounced St. *Faust*<e'>s, and we at once have the two syllables. The next form is in a deed of May 1360, where it stands as "Seyn Fastreslane." We have here, not a final *r* as in the latest form, but merely an intrusive trill. This follows the rule by which thesaurus became *treasure*, *Hebudas*, *Hebrides*, and *culpatus*, *culprit*. After the great Fire of London, the church was re-named St. Vedast (*alias* Foster)—a form of the name which it had never borne before, except in Latin deeds as Vedastus.[1] More might be said <p 16>of the corruptions of names in the cases of other saints, but these corruptions are more the cause of blunders in others than blunders in themselves. It is not often that a new saint is evolved with such an English name as Foster.

[1] See an article by the Author in *The Athenaeum*, January 3rd, 1885, p. 15; and a paper by the Rev. W. Sparrow Simpson in the *Journal of the British Archaeological Association* (vol. xliii., p. 56).

The existence of the famous St. Vitus has been doubted, and his dance (*Chorea Sancti Vit<ae>*) is supposed to have been originally *chorea invita*. But the strangest of saints was S. Viar, who is thus accounted for by D'Israeli in his *Curiosities of Literature*:—

“Mabillon has preserved a curious literary blunder of some pious Spaniards who applied to the Pope for consecrating a day in honour of Saint Viar. His Holiness in the voluminous catalogue of his saints was ignorant of this one. The only proof brought forward for his existence was this inscription:—

S. VIAR.

An antiquary, however, hindered one more festival in the Catholic calendar by convincing them that these letters were only the remains of an inscription erected for <p 17>an ancient surveyor of the roads; and he read their saintship thus:—

[PREFECTV]S VIAR[VM]."

Foreign travellers in England have usually made sad havoc of the names of places. Hentzner spelt Gray's Inn and Lincoln's Inn phonetically as Grezin and Linconsin, and so puzzled his editor that he supposed these to be the names of two giants. A similar mistake to this was that of the man who boasted that “not all the British House of Commons, not the whole bench of Bishops, not even Leviticus himself, should prevent him from marrying his deceased wife's sister.” One of the jokes in Mark Twain's *Huckleberry Finn* (ch. xxiii.) turns on the use of this same expression “Leviticus himself.”

The picturesque writer who draws a well-filled-in picture from insufficient data is peculiarly liable to fall into blunders, and when he does fall it is not surprising that less imaginative writers should chuckle over his fall. A few years ago an American editor is said to have received the telegram “Oxford Music Hall <p 18>burned to the ground.” There was not much information here, and he was ignorant of the fact that this building was in London and in Oxford Street, but he was equal to the occasion. He elaborated a remarkable account of the destruction by fire of the principal music hall of aca-

demic Oxford. He told how it was situated in the midst of historic colleges which had miraculously escaped destruction by the flames. These flames, fanned into a fury by a favourable wind, lit up the academic spires and groves as they ran along the rich cornices, lapped the gorgeous pillars, shrivelled up the roof and grasped the mighty walls of the ancient building in their destructive embraces.

In 1882 an announcement was made in a weekly paper that some prehistoric remains had been found near the Church of San Francisco, Florence. The note was reproduced in an evening paper and in an antiquarian monthly with words in both cases implying that the locality of the find was San Francisco, California. It is a common mistake of those who <p 19>have heard of Grolier bindings to suppose that the eminent book collector was a binder; but this is nothing to that of the workman who told the writer of this that he had found out the secret of making the famous Henri II. or Oiron ware. "In fact," he added, "I could make it as well as Henry Deux himself." The idea of the king of France working in the potteries is exceedingly fine.

Family pride is sometimes the cause of exceedingly foolish blunders. The following amusing passage in Anderson's *Genealogical History of the House of Yvery* (1742) illustrates a form of pride ridiculed by Lord Chesterfield when he set up on his walls the portraits of Adam de Stanhope and Eve de Stanhope. The having a stutterer in the family will appear to most readers to be a strange cause of pride. The author writes: "It was usual in ancient times with the greatest families, and is by all genealogists allowed to be a mighty evidence of dignity, to use certain nicknames which the French call *sobriquets* . . . such as 'the Lame' or 'the Black.' . . The house of Yvery, not deficient in any <p 20>mark or proof of greatness and antiquity, abounds at different periods in instances of this nature. Roger, a younger son of William Youel de Perceval, was surnamed Balbus or the Stutterer."

Sometimes a blunder has turned out fortunate in its consequences; and a striking instance of this is recorded in the history of Prussia. Frederic I. charged his ambassador Bartholdi with the mission of procuring from the Emperor of Germany an acknowledgment of the regal dignity which he had just assumed. It is said that instruc-

tions written in cypher were sent to him, with particular directions that he should not apply on this subject to Father Wolff, the Emperor's confessor. The person who copied these instructions, however, happened to omit the word *not* in the copy in cypher. Bartholdi was surprised at the order, but obeyed it and made the matter known to Wolff; who, in the greatest astonishment, declared that although he had always been hostile to the measure, he could not resist this proof of the Elector's confidence, which had made a deep impression upon him. <p 21>It was thought that the mediation of the confessor had much to do with the accomplishment of the Elector's wishes.

Misquotations form a branch of literary blunders which may be mentioned here.

The text "He may run that readeth it" (Hab. ii. 2) is almost invariably quoted as "He who runs may read"; and the Divine condemnation "In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread" (Gen. iii. 19) is usually quoted as "sweat of thy brow."

The manner in which Dr. Johnson selected the quotations for his Dictionary is well known, and as a general rule these are tolerably accurate; but under the thirteenth heading of the verb to sit will be found a curious perversion of a text of Scripture. There we read, "Asses are ye that sit in judgement— *Judges*," but of course there is no such passage in the Bible. The correct reading of the tenth verse of the fifth chapter is: "Speak, ye that ride on white asses, ye that sit in judgment, and walk by the way."

From misquotations it is an easy step <p 22>to pass to mispronunciations. These are mostly too common to be amusing, but sometimes the blunderers manage to hit upon something which is rather comic. Thus an ignorant reader coming upon a reference to an angle of forty-five degrees was puzzled, and astonished his hearers by giving it out as *angel* of forty-five degrees. This blunderer, however, was outdone by the speaker who described a distinguished personage "as a very indefatigable young man," adding, "but even he must succumb" (suck 'um) at last.

As has already been said, blunders are often made by those who are what we usually call "too clever by half." Surely it was a blunder to change the time-honoured name of King's Bench to Queen's

Bench. A queen is a female king, and she reigns as a king; the absurdity of the change of sex in the description is more clearly seen when we find in a Prayer-book published soon after the Queen's accession Her Majesty described as "our Queen and *Governess*."

Editors of classical authors are often laughed at for their emendations, but <p 23>sometimes unjustly. When we consider the crop of blunders that have gathered about the texts of celebrated books, we shall be grateful for the labours of brilliant scholars who have cleared these away and made obscure passages intelligible.

One of the most remarkable emendations ever made by an editor is that of Theobald in Mrs. Quickly's description of Falstaff's death-bed (*King Henry V.*, act ii., sc. 4). The original is unintelligible: "his nose was as sharp as a pen and a table of greene fields." A friend suggested that it should read "'a talked," and Theobald then suggested "'a babbled," a reading which has found its way into all texts, and is never likely to be ousted from its place. Collier's MS. corrector turned the sentence into "'as a pen on a table of green frieze." Very few who quote this passage from Shakespeare have any notion of how much they owe to Theobald.

Sometimes blunders are intentionally made—malapropisms which are understood by the speaker's intimates, but often astonish strangers—such as the expressions "the sinecure of every eye," "as white <p 24>as the drivelling snow." [2] Of intentional mistakes, the best known are those which have been called cross readings, in which the reader is supposed to read across the page instead of down the column of a newspaper, with such results as the following:—

[2] See *Spectator*, December 24th, 1887, for specimens of family lingo.

“A new Bank was lately opened at Northampton—no money returned.”

“The Speaker's public dinners will commence next week—admittance, 3/- to see the animals fed.”

As blunders are a class of mistakes, so “bulls” are a sub-class of blunders. No satisfactory explanation of the word has been given, although it appears to be intimately connected with the word blunder. Equally the thing itself has not been very accurately defined.

The author of *A New Booke of Mistakes*, 1637, which treats of “Quips, Taunts, Retorts, Flowts, Frumps, Mockes, Gibes, Jestes, etc.,” says in his address to the Reader, “There are moreover other simple mistakes in speech which pass <p 25>under the name of Bulls, but if any man shall demand of mee why they be so called, I must put them off with this woman's reason, they are so because they bee so.” All the author can affirm is that they have no connection with the inns and playhouses of his time styled the Black Bulls and the Red Bulls. Coleridge's definition is the best: “A bull consists in a mental juxtaposition of incongruous ideas with the sensation but without the sense of connection.”[3]

[3] Southey's *Omniana*, vol. i., p. 220.

Bulls are usually associated with the Irish, but most other nations are quite capable of making them, and Swift is said to have intended to write an essay on English bulls and blunders. Sir Thomas Trevor, a Baron of the Exchequer 1625-49, when presiding at the Bury Assizes, had a cause about wintering of cattle before him. He thought the charge immoderate, and said, “Why, friend, this is most unreasonable; I wonder thou art not ashamed, for I myself have known a beast wintered one whole summer for a noble.” The man at <p 26>once, with ready wit, cried, “That was a *bull*, my lord.” Whereat the company was highly amused.[4]