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978-1-107-65888-2 - The Roxburghshire Word-Book: Being a Record of the Special Vernacular Vocabulary of the County of Roxburgh, with an Appendix of Specimens

George Watson

Frontmatter

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THE
ROXBURGHSHIRE WORD-BOOK
BEING A RECORD OF THE SPECIAL
VERNACULAR VOCABULARY OF THE
COUNTY OF ROXBURGH, WITH AN
APPENDIX OF SPECIMENS

BY
GEORGE WATSON
OF THE STAFF OF THE
OXFORD ENGLISH DICTIONARY

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DEDICATED TO

WILLIAM ALEXANDER CRAIGIE,

M.A., LL.D., D.LITT.,
PROFESSOR OF ANGLO-SAXON IN THE UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD,
JOINT EDITOR OF THE *OXFORD ENGLISH DICTIONARY*, AND
SOMETIME PRESIDENT OF THE PHILOLOGICAL SOCIETY

IN ADMIRATION OF HIS LEARNING
AND APPRECIATION OF HIS HELP

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PREFACE

THE result of several years' investigation and study during leisure hours, this work forms a record of the vernacular speech of Roxburghshire. Its various districts, in which a word is known to have or have had currency, are denoted by N, W, S, etc. (see p. viii), or by C (denoting *centre* of the shire), or by G (when used *generally*, or throughout the county). The contractions "Rxb.," "Td.," "Ld.," denote that in his *Dictionary* Jamieson recorded the instance so marked as current in Roxburghshire, Teviotdale, or Liddesdale. Frequently "Sibbald" and occasionally "Leyden" (cf. p. 3) are similarly used—the former authority denoting that the word was current in the north-west, the latter signifying former currency in the centre, of Roxburghshire.

Since there are already various useful Scottish dictionaries, it was concluded that to record the full vocabulary of this county in necessarily brief entries would serve no special purpose. This work, then, does not aim at being nor claim to be a complete vocabulary of the Scottish vernacular of Roxburghshire, but rather a WORD-BOOK of its distinctive terms—past and present—with illustrative quotations. To this end I have explored its literature (see Bibliography, pp. 3–5), and listed its wordlore, which together with the vocabulary of well-nigh a century from living witnesses, has been subjected to careful analysis.

The chief feature of the present work is the Vocabulary, in which is entered every word, current in the shire, that is not Standard English or generally Scottish; *i.e.* if a vernacular term used in Roxburghshire has an equal or greater currency north of the Forth, or of the Tay, it is considered not a provincial, but a national word. Exceptions to this rule are such words or senses as are put within braces, thus: { }. These may be regarded as having a general Scottish currency (and often used in this shire), but are here inserted because necessary for etymological reference, or for showing clearly the origin or development of the senses. Other exceptions entered herein are such words as, having special philological interest, and becoming obsolescent north as well as south of the Forth, it may help to preserve by thus recording. Of my remaining collections of Roxburgh words also generally Scottish, copious use has been made in pages 7–37, many are given in the illustrative quotations, while others appear as synonyms, italicised, in the definitions, and many more are recorded in the etymologies.

Since the work is also based upon the literary vernacular, it has been necessary at times to follow the spelling of my printed authorities rather than a strictly analogical one. So as clearly to show the usage, abundant literary as well as oral illustrations are provided; but sometimes only the reference—too valuable to be lost—is given, should the passage be too long for quotation. When a word found in this county's literature is not corroborated by living witnesses, no locality is assigned to it: the quotation and its source only are furnished. While the Vocabulary is alphabetical, less important forms are sometimes included under a cognate entry, to economise space. For the same reason, frequent cross-references have been made. The symbols † (denoting "obsolete") and ‡ (denoting "obsolescent") have been used with some reserve, since many expressions commonly thought obsolete or nearly so, are used daily in various households; and moreover words or forms obsolescent in one district are sometimes actively current in others.

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In defining transitive verbs, the “object” is put within parenthesis; and usually an italicised preposition or adverb in a definition shows the syntactical construction. In the etymologies conciseness and contractions are imperative. Where obvious, as from an adjacent word, from general Scottish or English, or from its sound (onomatopoeic), the etymology is not (or but rarely) given. Owing to the great freedom with which dialects coin, adapt, or transform words, etymologies are frequently difficult to trace; but yielding to careful research and a close acquaintance with the living vernacular and its phonetic changes, many interesting histories and unsuspected origins are herein brought to light. Contrariwise, many words are practically unchanged in sound since the times of our early Anglian forefathers. A feature of the etymologies is the period when a particular word was apparently first recorded in a language or dialect. “E.” denotes an English word as such at the date given; whether now obsolete, or current in dialect, need not here be traced. While a word is frequently said to be “med. E. and med. Sc.,” sometimes but one of these terms is used; but this does not signify that the word may not also be found in the other speech.

In this work numerous words generally regarded as current only in northern English dialects are claimed for Roxburghshire; many expressions or senses appear on record for the first time; and various terms marked in dialect works as obsolete, are shown to be in living use. No pains have been spared to make the work as complete as possible by correspondence and tour; and in my inquiries I have conferred with acquaintances of the poet Andrew Scott and Jamieson’s helpers, thus securing a chronological chain of word-lore evidence. Since my investigations have been prosecuted to all the confines of the county, this work may well serve as a Dictionary for the shires of Berwick, Selkirk, and Dumfries also. While complete in itself, this volume harmonises in plan with the *Transactions of the Scottish Dialects Committee*, of which it forms a Special Number.

Whereas every English county boasts of at least one dialect glossary, Scotland has produced only four in all. True, Jamieson’s *Dictionary and Supplement* (1808–25) partly supply this lack; but besides being a century old, the work is defective and faulty. Even for Roxburghshire, which gave him several prolific helpers (including T. Wilkie, James Fair, and the Shortreeds), his evidence is sometimes untrustworthy. On various irrelevant entries I have written in *Notes and Queries*, 24th March, 1923. By “Roxburghs.” Jamieson evidently meant the northern part of the county, as distinct from the valley of the Teviot with its tributaries (his “Teviotd.”) and that of the Liddel.

The vernacular of Roxburghshire is my native speech, which I used in Jedburgh until twenty-six years of age. Being repeatedly struck, in the course of my work on the *Oxford English Dictionary* (since 1907), with the historic value and philological interest of Roxburgh words, I began some years ago to compile evidence with a view to promote the aims of the Scottish Dialects Committee. But the present store of word-lore would have been far from complete, had I not enlisted the sympathies of zealous helpers in each district, to whom I systematically sent innumerable lists of vernacular words methodically extracted from our county’s voluminous literature. (Convulsed as the country was with the Great War, this work was carried on with no little difficulty; and the garnering was still prosecuted under much greater disadvantages during two years “on active service” on the Western Front, 1917–8.) Much supplementary evidence has been accorded by these helpers in conclave as well as by letter. The special word-lore of all circumjacent counties

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was similarly tested to glean Roxburgh words, with rich results. For loyal, long-sustained aid thus accorded to me I acknowledge my indebtedness to—

Mr E. Douglas, Broomcroft (died June, 1923)	<i>representing</i> Kelso and district.
Rev. Alexander Grieve, M.A., D.Phil., Pollokshields	Smailholm.
Mrs Jean Lang, 2, Salisbury Road, Edinburgh	Bowden.
Rev. T. Lawrie, M.A., Laurencekirk	St Boswells.
Councillor W. Wells Mabon, J.P., Jedburgh	Jedburgh.
Mrs Charles Paterson, Laurencekirk (died 1919, aged 85)	Melrose.
Mr Thomas Scott, Rigfoot (now of Hyndlee)	Liddesdale, etc.
Mrs Annie Smith, Old Trafford, Manchester	{ Hawick, Liddel,
Mr Elliot Cowan Smith, Do. (died 21st April 1917, aged 26)	{ and St Boswells.
Mr W. E. Wilson, Riverview, Hawick	Hawick.

Much Roxburgh word-lore has been received from Mr J. G. Allan, J.P., Gullane; Mr John Allan, British Museum; Mr R. P. Brotherston, Tynninghame; Mr D. M. Campbell, Kelso; the late Mr Adam Laing, Hawick; Miss M. Y. Lawrie, St Boswells; Miss Mason, Holm Cottage, Newcastleton; the late Mr Wm. Murray, Hawick; Mr G. Rutherford, Myreidykes; the late Mr Robert Scott, Jedburgh; Mr J. D. Smith, Manchester; Mr T. L. Stirling, St Boswells; the late Mr G. Thomson, Bowden. The following have contributed words from these localities:—Yetholm, etc.: Mrs J. E. F. Cowan, the late Mr T. Cuthbert and Mr G. Mather. Kelso, etc.: Mr M. Hilson, Mr J. Purves. Jedburgh, etc.: Mr D. Baird, Mr G. Baird, Ex-Provost J. S. Boyd, Mr T. Clark (Pleasants), Mr and Mrs Walter Easton, Mr J. Lindsay Hilson, Ex-Provost O. Hilson (who also lent me his father's *Jedburgh Words* [see page 5]), Mrs Rae Scott (Ancrum), Mr and Mrs John Tait, Ex-Bailie Veitch, Mr R. Waldie, Mr Wm. Watson. Hawick, etc.: Mr T. Cowan, Mr T. Culbertson (Hobkirk), Mrs Jenoure, Mr J. W. Kennedy, Mr A. S. Michie (Kensington), Mrs Scott (Hyndlee). To these, and all others who have helped this work in any way, I render appreciative thanks.

For advice and guidance on special points I record my thanks to Professor W. A. Craigie, Mr C. T. Onions, M.A., Oxford, and Rev. Dr Grieve. My best thanks are also due to Mr William Grant, M.A., Convener of the Scottish Dialects Committee, for much valuable advice bearing especially on the phonetic sections and supervision of the proofs. For useful help in reading the proofs I am likewise indebted to Sir James Wilson, K.C.S.I., Mr John Allan, M.A., British Museum, Mrs Smith and Mr James D. Smith, Manchester. Especially am I grateful to the CARNEGIE TRUSTEES for a guarantee of £150 against loss, which makes the publication of this work possible. To the Printers of the Cambridge University Press also I owe thanks for their painstaking care in sheeting this work straightway from the manuscript—a performance seldom achieved in such involved work.

The Syndics of the Cambridge University Press have rendered an important service to the study of the Scottish vernacular, not only by so effectively printing this work, but also by sharing financially the responsibility of its production.

GEORGE WATSON.

OXFORD, June 1923.

CONTRACTIONS, SIGNS, ETC.

A.S.	Anglo-Saxon	Fr.	Frisian	N.	Norse
c	Centre of Roxburgh	G.	German	Northumb.	Northumbrian
Cf.	Compare	G	Generally used, <i>i.e.</i>	Norw.	Norwegian
Cumbld.	Cumberland		used in each district	Rxb. ²	Roxburghshire
Da.	Danish	Icel.	Icelandic	Roxb.	Roxburghshire
E. ¹	English (Southern)	Jam.	Jamieson	Sc.	Scottish
F.	French	L.	Latin	Sw.	Swedish
Fl.	Flemish	Ld. ²	Liddesdale	Td. ²	Teviotdale

¹ But "Old E." (=Old English) signifies Old Northumbrian or Anglian.
² These show that according to Jamieson a particular word has been used there.

Geographical contractions refer to the following districts:—NE, Kelso, Smailholm, etc.; N, St Boswells, Bowden, etc.; NW, Melrose; N embraces these three districts; E, Yetholm and district; C, Jedburgh, Jedwater, etc.; W, Hawick and district; S, Liddesdale. (As the vocabulary of Yetholm differs little from that of Kelso, N is only employed when I have no record from Kelso, or when the special nature of the word demands the additional record.)

c.	century	occas.	occasionally	sb.	substantive
cf.	compare	prec.	preceding sense	t.	tense
esp.	especially		or word	usu.	usually
freq.	frequently	s.v. (=sub voce)	under that word	v.	verb

med.=mediæval, or belonging to the middle period.

n., e., s., w., etc., are used as geographical terms.

"same" I have preferred herein to L. *idem*, to denote "the same sense or thing."

a. (=ante)	before (a date)	conj.	conjunction	sb.	substantive
a., adj.	adjective	int.	intransitive	t.	tense
adv.	adverb	interj.	interjection	tr.	transitive
c.	commonly or	pl.	plural	v.	verb
	frequently used	pple.	participle,	vbl.	verbal
c. (=circa)	about		participial		

(c.= "commonly used," has not been so freely inserted as it might.)

- :- signifies "derived or descended from" the word following.
† denotes that the word is believed to be obsolete in this county or district.
‡ " " " is obsolescent.
§ " " " is but occasionally heard.
* " a normal, but unrecorded, form.
§ followed by a numeral refers to the section in the Phonetics (pp. 7-37).
[] in mid-sentence denotes an editorial insertion of explanatory words, etc., or an authority; placed finally, it marks the etymology.
{ } denotes that the word or sense so embraced is generally Scottish.
(or () in the etymologies marks off doublet spellings of a word.
... denotes the omission of some words from a quotation.
In the Vocabulary, a word-entry to which cross-reference is made is denoted thus:
LUNT sb.¹