

A NEW ENGLISH DICTIONARY ON HISTORICAL PRINCIPLES.

(VOLUME IX. FIRST HALF. SL.—ST.)

SLEEP—SNIGGLE.

BY

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PREFATORY NOTE.

THIS double section contains 1678 Main words, 278 Combinations explained under these, and 222 Subordinate entries of obsolete or variant forms, in all 2178. The obvious Combinations, recorded and illustrated by quotations, but not requiring to be explained, number 1025 more, and bring up the total to 3203. Of the Main words, 311 are marked † as obsolete, and 8 are marked ‖ as alien or not fully naturalized.

The following figures exhibit the result of comparison with Johnson's and some recent Dictionaries :—

	Johnson.	Cassell's 'Encyclopædic'.	'Century' Dict.	Funk's 'Standard'.	Here.
Words recorded	282	997	1404	1163	3203
Words illustrated by quotations	224	395	564	131	3066
Number of quotations	820	674	1488	189	17,387

The number of quotations in the corresponding portion of Richardson is 702.

The words contained in this portion of the Dictionary comprise about two-thirds of those beginning with SL-, the whole of SM-, and fully half of SN-. Among the words with initial SL- and SM-, which occupy about five-sixths of the space, those which are clearly or presumably of native origin are by far the most numerous and important, and include many in common use, such as *sleep, sleeve, slide, slime, slink, slow, small, smart, smear, smite, smith, smooth*, etc., together with many derivative forms. The relationship between variant forms of the same word, or different formations from the same root, is often interesting, as in the cases of *sleuth* and *sloth, slew* and *slough, smack* and *smatch, smeech* and *smeeh, smoke* and *smook, smeeth* and *smooth*, etc. It is curious that *smell*, occurring very early in ME., is not recorded in OE., and not found in any of the cognate languages. The close connexion between English and Frisian is illustrated by their common use of *sleeve*, for which all the remaining Teutonic languages have other designations.

A considerable number of words in SL- and SM- are apparently of Flem., Du., or LG. origin, the proportion being larger than usual. Clear instances are *sleigh, slim* (recently re-adopted in a special sense), *sloop, slot* sb.¹, *slump* sb.¹; those in SM- are more uncertain, but the probabilities are in favour of this source for *smack* sb.² and v.², *smelt* v., *smile, smuggle*, and *smut*.

Words of Scand. origin are chiefly prominent in SL-, where they include the related *sleight, sloyd*, and *sly, sleuth* (mainly surviving in *sleuth-hound*), *slight, sling* v.¹, and *slug*. In SM- the only important instance is *smithy*, a northern word rarely used by southern writers before the 19th century.

Most of the important words not clearly assignable to one or other of the above classes have some obscurity attaching to their origin. The majority are old, as *slender, slouch, slough* (skin, etc.), *sloven, slur* sb.¹, *slut, smatter, smoulder* (once almost extinct, but revived by Scott), *smudge*, and *smug*. A few are more recent, as the nautical *slew* or *slue*, and the (originally) slang or colloquial *slog, slum, smash*.

From other sources there are very few notable words. OF. has contributed *sluce, slot* sb.² and sb.³, *sluice*, and *smalt*. Greek is represented by *smaragd, smectic, smegma*, and some related forms. *Slogan* is from Sc. Gaelic, and one of its early forms has given rise to a poetic misunderstanding (see *slug-horn*).

In SN- the number of important native words is much smaller, the chief being *snail, snake*, and *sneeze* (an alteration of the earlier *fnese*). Of Scand. origin are *snag, snare, sneap*, and *snib* v.¹ The most interesting adoptions from Du., etc., are *snaphance* and *snickersnee*; the origin of the latter is now made clear by the evidence of the early forms. The proportion of words not clearly represented in other languages (some of them obviously imitative) is fairly large, as *snaffle, snatch, sneak, sneck, sneer, sniff, snigger*, etc.