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ON HISTORICAL PRINCIPLES.

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PLAT—PREMIOUS.

BY

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PREFATORY NOTES.

THIS Third Part of the letter P includes 5496 Main words, 1220 Combinations explained under these, and 1162 Subordinate entries of obsolete forms, etc., 7878 in all. The *obvious combinations* recorded and illustrated under the Main words number 1602 more, raising the total to 9480. Of the 5496 Main words 4198 (76.38 %) are now current and naturalized English, 965 (17.56 %) are marked † as obsolete, and 333 (6.06 %) as || alien, or not fully naturalized.

Comparison with Dr. Johnson's and some more recent Dictionaries shows the following figures :-

	Johnson.	Cassell's 'Encyclopædic'.	'Century' Dict.	Funk's 'Standard'.	Here.
Words recorded	800	3657	4923	5180	9480
Words illustrated by quotations	663	1166	1504	482	7445
Number of illustrative quotations	2153	1771	3961	694	32813

The quotations in Richardson in the corresponding words are 1829.

Plat to Polygenistic. Among the more important articles in this section are those on PLAY *sb.* and *v.* (17 cols.), POINT *sb.* and *v.* (about 88 senses in the *sb.*, as if to satirize the Euclidean definition 'a point is that which hath no parts'), PLOUGH and its compounds, POLICE and its family, the POEM—POETRY group, also *pocket*, and *polarize*. The words and senses of historical interest are many: the articles on PLATFORM, *pleasance*, *polder*, PLUMBAGO, PLUM-pudding (with its predecessors *plum-porridge* and *plum-pie*), PLUNDER, *plurality* in voting, PLUS, *Phymouth cloak*, POINT-BLANK, *pole-axe*, and the juridical words PLEA, *plead*, *pledge*, *plevin*, *poind*, show how much early history and folk-lore, early science, and legal antiquities are here illustrated.

As to their origin, very few words in this section have any claim to be considered original Germanic, but *play sb.* and *v.*, *plight v.*¹ (*sb.*¹), *plough*, *pluck*, and *pock*, are common to Old English with other Teutonic languages. PLOUGH does not appear till the very end of the Old English period, indeed (as name of the implement) not certainly till sixty years after the Norman Conquest. As Old High German *phluog* occurs in literature c 830, and in a collection of glosses a century older, testifying to the existence of a West Germanic *plōg* before the date of the OHG. sound-shift, the late appearance of the word in England is remarkable. Does it point to the introduction at a late date of a new or improved type of the implement with its continental name? Words of Latin origin, already in OE., are *plum*, *po* (= peacock), and *pole* (of wood). But the great majority of the words here included came in from Old French. The Old French words themselves were mainly from Latin; but there are not a few of which the origin is unknown to French etymologists, and which come to us with all the mystery of their origin to add to our native problems. More recent words from Latin direct, or through French, also abound; groups of them occur under *pleni-*, *plur(i)*, *polar(i)*, etc. Still more numerous groups of scientific words from Greek appear in *platy-*, *pleio-*, *pleo-*, *plesio-*, *pleuro-*, *pneumo-*, *podo-*, and *poly-* of which last only about one-third are here included. Of words from distant languages, examples appear of Carib, Hawaiian, Maori, Marāthī, Persian, Quichua, Telugu, Tupi, and various American Indian tongues. The recognition of the historical fact that POINT in English represents *two* French and Romanic words, never confused in those languages, has made it possible to arrange the numerous senses in a clearer order than has hitherto been done in English Dictionaries.

Polygenous to Premious. This section contains two-thirds of the words in POLY-, and the first half of those in PRE-, with all the intervening words, including those in POST-. In the introductory articles on PRE- and POST-, the less important words compounded with these prefixes are grouped. The modernity of most of these compounds is notable: see PRE- B. 1. Among the Main words of Historical interest are POLYNESIA, PORT in its many applications, with

portman, *portmote*, *port-reeve*, and other compounds of *port* in its Old English sense of 'town'; also *port*⁶ = larboard, and *portage* in its nautical use, *portcullis*, (the Ottoman) *PORTE*, *POTWALLER*, with its popular variant *potwalloper*, *POUND*, *poundage*, *Powdike*, *PREFERENCE*, *premier*. But the most important historical article is that on *Post*², under which and its many derivatives, *postage*, *postal*, *postman*, *postmaster*, *post-office*, etc., will be found much that illustrates the history of the postal system from 1506 onward. Law and legal antiquities are represented by *pone*, *posse*, *possession*, *pourallee*, *præcipe*, *præmunientes*, and *PRÆMUNIRE*; the formula 'and your petitioners will ever pray' is treated under *PRAY* v. 5 c. Ecclesiastical and theological terms are exemplified by *portas*, *prebend*, *prebendary*, *precentor*, and *predestination*. Among names of Plants, the premier place is taken by *POTATO*, the article on which clears up various points in the early history of the word and the plant, taking us back to a time when 'common potatoes' were the *Sweet Potato* or *Batata*, and the common potato of our day was 'Bastard Potatoes'. Thanks are due to the Royal Society for extracts from their MS. Journals of 1663 and 1693, the first recommending the potato for cultivation in England 'in time of scarcity', and the second mentioning (for the first time) the 'grandfather's tale' that associated it with the name of Sir Walter Raleigh. Other interesting words of this class are *pomegranate*, *POMPELMOOSE*, *pompion*, *popple*, *poppy*. Zoology is represented by *polyp*, *POPINJAY*, *PORCUPINE*, *PORPOISE*, *pourcuttle*, *prawn*, *preke*; Geology and Mineralogy by *PORPHYRY* and its derivatives; Chemistry by the history of *POTASH* and its family; Physics by *potential*; Astronomy by the history of *PRECSSION*. Among other words worth notice are *pomander*, *pomp* ('the pomps and vanities'), *pool* in stakes and speculation, *poping-crease*, *porcelain*, *porter* (the drink), *post-captain*, *pot*, *poultry*, *powder*, *power*, *powwow*, *pox*, *practic* and the *practice* group, *pragmatism*, *prank*, *precarious* (at first a term of feudal law).

Words already in Old English are rather more numerous than in earlier sections of P; they include *pond* (?), *pool*, *pope*, *port* (in several senses), *post* (wooden), *pol*, *pote*, *pough*, *pound*¹ and ², *preen*; but most of these were early adoptions from Latin. To Latin, ultimately, have to be referred the vast majority of the words in this section, though they came to us immediately from French: to enumerate these would more than fill this Prefatory Note; but they include many of our commonest words, e. g. *poor*, *pony* (?), *porch*, *pork*, *port*, *portion*, *possible*, *post*, *pouch*, *pounce*, *powder*, *power*, *preach*, *praise*, and *pray*. There are also numerous words directly from Latin, some retaining even their Latin form, as *pomatum*, *posse*, *post-mortem*, *præmunire*. Words from Greek are mainly those in *poly-* and *porno-*; others, as *pomp*, *porism*, *porphyry*, *practice*, etc., come to us through Latin and French. Romanic tongues, other than French, have given *ponent*, *portfolio*, *portico*, *predella*; German contributes *poodle* and *posaune*, Russian *pood*. Distant languages, American, Oriental, African, and Polynesian, have lent us some two dozen names of native animals, vegetable products, persons, and customs; such are *pone*, *pongee*, *pongo*, *poajah*, *poookoo*, *poonghie*, etc. Among numerous words of uncertain origin are the two common verbs *poor* and *pour*; *pong*, *pooh*! *pop*, *popple*, and others are onomatopœic. The poverty of language is again exemplified in the fact that there are 3 substantives and 3 verbs expressed by *poop*, 8 sbs. and 5 vbs. by *port*, 10 sbs., 5 vbs., an adv. and a prep. by *post*, which, taking all things into account, is the hardest-worked monosyllable between *polygenous* and *premier*.

The materials for this, as for some earlier parts of P, were arranged and sub-edited by the late Miss J. E. A. Brown of Further Barton, Cirencester, an accomplished lady, whose lamented death on 19th February last deprived the Dictionary of one of its most indefatigable workers, and the Editor of an honoured personal friend. After helping in the collection of materials by reading and excerpting numerous books, Miss Brown assisted us by arranging the quotations for part of P alphabetically and chronologically, and from 1882 by sub-editing large portions of B, C, I, and P, in advance of the final work in the Scriptorium.

Still more recently we have lost another of our most esteemed voluntary workers in the person of Lord Aldenham, who died on 13th September last. As Mr. Henry Hucks Gibbs, he took as a Member of Council of the Philological Society a keen interest in the project of the Society's Dictionary at its inception in 1858, and himself undertook the sub-editing of the letters C and K. Much of this he accomplished with eminent success; and when the Dictionary was undertaken by the Delegates of the Oxford University Press, his counsel and co-operation in settling the features of the present work were invaluable. He has moreover read, and, when occasion required, annotated every column of proof down to the points in M, N, and P, which the work had reached a few weeks before his death. The articles on many words, especially, but by no means exclusively, those relating to Banking, Currency, and Finance, were greatly indebted to his research and revision, the last word in this part to which he contributed being *Pound*. The Dictionary was only one of many interests to which his sagacity and beneficence extended themselves; but he watched over its progress as assiduously as if it had been his only interest. The other helpers and collaborators who have assisted in the production of this Part, and who are still with us, are too numerous to name in this temporary Note; acknowledgement will be made of their services in the Preface to the volume.

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