



**Delightful Words
in Washington Irving's *Astoria***

The party now revelled in abundance. They had suffered from hunger, cold, fatigue, and all their perils from treacherous and sudden changes in the snugness and security of their island. They thought, even from the prying eyes of the natives, and stored with creature comforts; and they had come to a winter of peace and quietness; and they were broiling, and feasting upon venison, and broiling bones, and other hunter's dainties, and of dosing themselves with fire, and telling long hunting stories, until spring they would make canoes of buffalo skin and go down the river.

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From such halcyon dreams, they were awakened at daybreak, by a savage yelp. The yelp was repeated by their rifles. The yelp was repeated

Tom Kinsella read *Astoria* over Christmas break 2013-14 as background for his Columbia River research. He made this glossary during that same break, using his rather worn first edition, and pdfs of early nineteenth-century dictionaries available on archive.org. The text was set with InDesign in a 12 point adobe caslon pro font.

Delightful Words

In the introduction to Washington Irving's *Astoria, or Anecdotes of an Enterprise beyond the Rocky Mountains* (1836), Irving reveals a youthful interest in the fur-trading ventures that centered around Montreal in the early nineteenth century. With wistful nostalgia he describes the exploits of company partners, clerks, and "hardy fur traders": the romantic touchstones of his bygone youth. When John Jacob Astor suggested, years later, that Irving chronicle the rise and fall of his fur trading enterprise, dated between 1810 and 1813 and centered around Astoria at the mouth of the Columbia River, Irving agreed, producing a two-volume travelogue that chronicles the experiences of two groups of men: those who travelled to the Columbia by ship around the cape of South America and those who crossed the continent by river, horse, and on foot. Along the way, Irving provides illuminating details about the geography, weather, and most especially the Native Americans. The work is provocative and enjoyable to read.

Irving's language, revealing about the Indian and white cultures of the day, is descriptive, entertaining, and readable. It makes use of a highly literate and precise vocabulary that, at times, is used in ways rare or obsolete in today's usage. In order to expand my own understanding of early nineteenth-century English, and in the hopes of providing entertainment for like-minded enthusiasts, I have created a glossary of words that caught my especial attention. Definitions are primarily derived from *An American Dictionary of the English Language . . . by Noah Webster* (New York: N. and G. White, 1834) and *Johnson's Dictionary*,

Improved by Todd, Abridged for the Use of Schools (Boston: Charles J. Hendee, 1836), with limited reference to the current on-line *Oxford English Dictionary*. I have made generous selections of word usage found in *Astoria*, hoping to convey some of the flavor and story of the work through these examples.



Abide. *v. t.* To wait for; to be prepared for; to await. To endure or sustain. To bear or endure; to bear patiently. *v. i. pret.* and part. *abode*. To rest or dwell. To stay for a short time. To continue permanently, or in the same state; to be firm and immovable. To remain; to continue.

“He represented to the men that the malady of Mr. Crooks could not be of long duration, and that in all probability, he would be able to travel in the course of a few days. It was with great difficulty, however, that he prevailed upon them to abide the event” (2. 150).

Abject. *adj.* Sunk to a low condition; worthless, mean, despicable, low in estimation, without hope or regard. *v. t.* To throw away; to cast out. *n.* A person in the lowest condition, and despicable.

“The poor wretch approached with hesitation, the alternate dread of famine and of white men operating upon his mind. He made the most abject signs, imploring Mr. Hunt not to carry off his food” (2. 22). ❧

“The bands of the culprits were then removed, and they lost no time in taking their departure, still under the influence of abject terror, and scarcely crediting their senses that they had escaped the merited punishment of their offences” (2. 115).

Abstract. *v. t.* To draw from, or to separate. To separate ideas by the operation of the mind; to consider one part of a complex object, or to have a partial idea of it in the mind. To select or separate the substance of a book or writing; to epitomize or reduce to a summary. *In chemistry*, to separate, as the more volatile parts of a substance by repeated distillation, or at least by distillation. *Irving's usage*, to steal, *is a lovely extension of meaning*.

“Notwithstanding a strict guard maintained round the camp, various implements were stolen, and several horses carried off. Among the latter, we have to include the long cherished steed of Pierre Dorion. From some willful caprice, that worthy pitched his tent at some distance from the main body, and tethered his invaluable steed beside it, from whence it was abstracted in the night, to the infinite chagrin and mortification of the hybrid interpreter” (2. 73).

Acclivity. A slope, or inclination of the earth, as the side of a hill, considered as *ascending*, in opposition to *declivity*, or a side *descending*; rising ground; ascent; the talus of a rampart. TALUS. In fortification, the slope of a work or earthwork; a sloping mass of rock fragments at the foot of a cliff.

“Sometimes these unwieldy animals were seen moving in long procession across the silent landscape; at other times they were scattered about, singly or in groups, on the broad enameled prairies and green acclivities, some cropping the rich pasturage, others reclining amidst the flowery herbage; the whole scene realizing in a manner the old scriptural descriptions of the vast pastoral countries of the Orient, with ‘cattle upon a thousand hills’ (1. 207).

Accost. *v. t.* [Fr. *accoster.*] To speak first to; to address; to salute. To approach; to draw near; to come side by side, or face to face; [*not in use*].

“The poor squaws in question expected some such fate at the hands of the white strangers, and though the latter accosted them in the kindest manner, and made them presents of dried buffalo meat, it was impossible to soothe their alarm, or get any information from them” (2. 182).

Accoutrements. Dress equipage; furniture for the body; *appropriately*, military dress and arms; equipage for military service; equipage. *In common usage*, an old or unusual dress.

“Mr. Hunt immediately proceeded to construct canoes. As he would have to leave his horses and their accoutrements here, he determined to make this a trading post, where the trappers and hunters, to be distributed about the country, might repair; and where the traders might touch on their way through the mountains to and from the establishment at the mouth of the Columbia” (2. 14). ❧ “By the 5th of October, some simple prescriptions, together with an ‘Indian sweat,’ had so far benefited Mr. Crooks, that he was enabled to move about; they, therefore, set forward slowly dividing his pack and accoutrements among them, and made a creeping day’s progress of eight miles south” (2. 152).

Adroit. Dexterous; skillful; active in the use of the hands, and *figuratively*, in the exercise of the mental faculties; ingenious; ready in invention or execution.

“Among the hired men of the party was one William Cannon, who had been a soldier at one of the frontier

posts, and entered into the employ of Mr. Hunt at Macknaw. He was an inexperienced hunter and a poor shot for which he was much bantered by his more adroit comrades" (1. 258).

Advert. [*L. adverteo.*] *v. i.* To turn the mind or attention to; to regard, observe, or notice; to attend to, to heed, to regard; with *to. v. t.* To regard; to advise.

"About two years ago, not long after my return from a tour upon the prairies of the far west, I had a conversation with my friend Mr. John Jacob Astor, relative to that portion of our country, and to the adventurous traders to Santa Fé and the Columbia. This led him to advert to a great enterprise set on foot and conducted by him, between twenty and thirty years since, having for its object to carry the fur trade across the Rocky Mountains, and to sweep the shores of the Pacific" (1. 4).

Affright. *v. t.* [*OE afyrhtan.*] To impress with sudden fear; to frighten; to terrify or alarm; to confuse. *n.* Sudden or great fear; terror; also, the cause of terror; a frightful object.

"Striking into a trail or path which led up from the river, he guided them for some distance in the prairie, until they came in sight of a number of lodges made of straw, and shaped like hay stacks. Their approach, as on former occasions, caused the wildest affright among the inhabitants" (2. 35).

Alacrity. Cheerfulness; gayety; sprightliness; a cheerful readiness or promptitude to do some act. Willingness, readiness.

"Crooks and M'Lellan, therefore, turned back with feigned alacrity; and, landing, had an interview with

the Sioux” (1. 179). ¶ “The hunters sallied forth with keen alacrity, and soon returned laden with provisions” (1. 280). ¶ “All present, who had borne a part in the sufferings of that journey, were eager now to press forward, and bring relief to a lost comrade. Early the next morning, therefore, they pushed forward with unusual alacrity” (2. 123).

Allay. *v. t.* [OE in derivation; the word has a complex etymology; it is related to the modern verb *lay*.] To make quiet; to pacify, or appease. To abate, mitigate, subdue, or destroy. To obtund or repress as acrimony. *Formerly*, to reduce the purity of; as, to allay metals. But in this sense, *alloy* is now exclusively used. **OBTUND.** *v. t.* To dull; to blunt; to quell; to deaden; to reduce the edge, pungency or violent action of any thing.

“At one time they had twenty-five miles of painful travel, without a drop of water, until they arrived at a small running stream. Here they eagerly slaked their thirst; but, this being allayed, the calls of hunger became equally importunate” (1. 262).

Alluvial. Pertaining to alluvion; added to land by the wash of water; washed ashore or down a stream; formed by a current of water; that which is carried by water, and lodged upon something else. **ALLUVION** (Alluvium). The insensible increase of earth on a shore, or bank of a river, by the force of water, as by a current or by waves; a gradual washing or carrying of earth or other substances to a shore or bank; the earth thus added.

“Here and there, on the sides of the hills, or along the alluvial borders and bottoms of the ravines, are groves and skirts of forest; but for the most part the country presented to the eye a boundless waste, covered with

herbage, but without trees" (1. 191). ¶ "Their march was slow and toilsome; part of the time through an alluvial bottom, thickly grown with cotton wood, hawthorn and willows, and part of the time over rough hills" (2. 146). ¶ "Accordingly, on the 27th of December they faced about, retraced their steps, and on the 30th, regained the part of the river in question. Here the alluvial bottom was from one to two miles wide, and thickly covered with a forest of cottonwood trees; while herds of buffalo were scattered about the neighboring prairie, several of which soon fell beneath their rifles" (2. 179).

Amalgamate. *v. i.* To mix quicksilver with another metal. To mix different things; to make a compound; to unite; To mix or unite in an amalgam; to blend. **AMALGAM.** *n.* A mixture of mercury or quicksilver with another metal. A mixture or compound of different things.

"Such are the fluctuating fortunes of these savage nations. War, famine, pestilence, together or singly, bring down their strength and thin their numbers. Whole tribes are rooted up from their native places, wander for a time about these immense regions, become amalgamated with other tribes, or disappear from the face of the earth" (1. 241).

Amicable. Friendly; peaceable; harmonious in social or mutual transactions. Disposed to peace and friendship.

"He now came to where lodges were frequent along the banks, and, after a day's journey of twenty-six miles to the northwest, encamped in a populous neighborhood. Forty or fifty of the natives soon visited the camp, conducting themselves in a very amicable manner" (2. 35).

Anomalous. *adj.* Irregular; deviating from a general rule, method or analogy. **ANOMALY.** *n.* Irregularity; deviation from the common rule.

“Mr. Hunt, therefore, considered himself fortunate in having met with a man who might be of great use to him in any intercourse he might have with the tribe. This was a wandering individual named Edward Rose, whom he had picked up somewhere on the Missouri—one of those anomalous beings found on the frontier, who seem to have neither kin or country” (1. 234).

Aperture. An opening; a gap, cleft or chasm; a passage perforated. An opening of meaning; explanation.

“Here he took his post beside the aperture for the emission of smoke, and the admission of light; the chief dictated from within what he was to proclaim, and he bawled it forth with a force of lungs that resounded over all the village” (1. 214).

Apprehend. [*L. apprehendo.*] To take or seize; to take hold of. To take with the understanding, that is, to conceive in the mind; to understand, without passing judgment, or making an inference. To think; to believe or to be of opinion, but without positive certainty. To fear: to entertain suspicion or fear of future evil.

“The Canadians, however, began to apprehend an ambush in every thicket, and to regard the broad, tranquil plain as a sailor eyes some shallow and perfidious sea, which, though smooth and safe to the eye, conceals the lurking rock or treacherous shoal” (1. 192). ❧ “Some may gradually become pastoral hordes, like those rude and migratory people, half shepherd, half warrior, who, with their flocks and herds, roam the plains of upper Asia; but,

others, it is to be apprehended, will become predatory bands, mounted on the fleet steeds of the prairies, with the open plains for their marauding grounds, and the mountains for their retreats and lurking places" (1. 232).
☞ "The apprehensions thus awakened in the minds of some of the men came well nigh proving detrimental to the expedition" (1. 234).

Apprize. Also *apprise*. *v. t.* To inform; to give notice, verbal or written. **APPRISED.** *p. part.* Informed; having notice or knowledge communicated. **APPRIZE.** *v. t.* To value; to set a value in pursuance of authority.

"If so, by continuing down it much further they must arrive among the Indians, from whom the river takes its name [the Cheyenne]. Among these they would be sure to meet some of the Sioux tribe. These would apprize their relatives, the piratical Sioux of the Missouri, of the approach of a band of white traders; so that, in the spring time, they would be likely to be waylaid and robbed on their way down the river, by some party in ambush upon its banks" (2. 169).

Aqueline. Belonging to the eagle. Resembling an eagle; applied to the nose, curved or crooked. Curving; hooked; prominent.

"During a fortnight that the travelers lingered at this place, their encampment was continually thronged by the Cheyennes. They were a civil, well-behaved people, cleanly in their persons and decorous in their habits. The men were tall, straight and vigorous, with aqueline noses, and high cheek bones" (1. 239).

Assail. *v. t.* [*< O Fr. asalir, assailir* (modern *assaillir*).] To leap or fall upon by violence; to assault; to attack suddenly. To invade or attack in a hostile manner. To attack with arguments, censure, abuse, or criticism.

“The grizzly bear is the only really formidable quadruped of our continent. He is the favorite theme of the hunters of the far west, who describe him as equal in size to a common cow and of prodigious strength. He makes battle if assailed, and often, if pressed by hunger, is the assailant” (1. 257).

Assiduity. Constant or close application to any business or enterprise; diligence; close application. Attention; attentiveness to persons. *Assiduities*, in the plural, are services rendered with zeal and constancy.

“While he continued, therefore, with great apparent earnestness and assiduity, the construction of the trading house, he despatched [sic] the hunters and trappers of his party in a canoe, to make their way up the river to the original place of destination, there to busy themselves in trapping and collecting peltries, and to await his arrival at some future period” (1. 179).

Augment. *v. t.* [*Fr. augmenter.*] To increase; to enlarge in size or extent; to swell; to make bigger. To increase or swell the degree, amount or magnitude. **AUGMENTING.** Increasing; enlarging.

“Between these are deep valleys, with small streams winding through them, which find their way into the lower plains, augmenting as they proceed, and ultimately discharging themselves into those vast rivers, which traverse the prairies like great arteries, and drain the continent” (1. 265).

Avail. *v. t.* [Fr. *valoir*.] To profit one's self; to turn to advantage; followed by the pronouns *myself*, *thysself*, *himself*, &c. To assist or profit; to effect the object, or bring to a successful issue. *v. i.* To be of use, or advantage; to answer the purpose. *n.* Profit; advantage towards success; benefit. **AVAILABLE.** *adj.* Profitable; advantageous; having efficacy. Having sufficient power, force, or efficacy, for the object; valid.

“Their wants being supplied they ceased all further traffic, much to the dissatisfaction of the Crows, who became extremely urgent to continue the trade, and, finding their importunities of no avail, assumed an insolent and menacing tone” (1. 269).

Avidity. *n.* Greediness; strong appetite. Eagerness; intenseness of desire.

“The good feelings of Ben Jones the Kentuckian, at length overcame his fears, and he ventured over. The supply he brought was received with trembling avidity” (2. 52).

Bark. The rind of a tree. A small ship. *In specific nautical terms*, a ship which carries three masts without a mizzen top-sail.

“While they were regarding the village, they beheld a singular fleet coming down the river. It consisted of a number of canoes, each made of a single buffalo hide stretched on sticks, so as to form a kind of circular trough. Each one was navigated by a single squaw, who knelt in the bottom and paddled; towing after her frail bark a bundle of floating wood intended for firing” (212).

Basilisk. A fabulous serpent, called a *cockatrice*, said to kill by looking. *In military affairs*, a large piece of ordnance, so called

from its supposed resemblance to the serpent of that name, or from its size.

“Lisa rose to reply, and the eyes of Hunt and his companions were eagerly turned upon him, those of M’Lellan glaring like a basilisks [sic]” (1. 215).

Bawl. To cry out with a loud, full sound; to hoot; to cry loud, as a child. To proclaim by outcry, as a common crier.

“Here he took his post beside the aperture for the emission of smoke, and the admission of light; the chief dictated from within what he was to proclaim, and he bawled it forth with a force of lungs that resounded over all the village” (1. 214).

Bedlamites. An inhabitant of a mad house; a madman; a noisy person.

“In this way, the savage chivalry of the village to the number of five hundred, poured forth, helter skelter riding and running, with hideous yells and war-whoops, like so many bedlamites or demoniacs let loose” (1. 222).

Beetling. *pres. part.* Jutting; being prominent. **BEETLE.** *v. i.* To jut; to be prominent; to hang or extend out.

“The mountains were broken and precipitous, with huge bluffs protruding from among the forests. Their rocky recesses, and beetling cliffs, afforded retreats to innumerable flocks of the bighorn, while their woody summits and ravines abounded with bears, and black-tailed deer” (2. 170).

Bivouack. *n.* The guard or watch of a whole army, as in cases of great danger of surprise or attack. *v.* To watch, or be on guard, as a whole army.

“The tents and the men wrapped in their blankets and bivouacking on skins in the open air, surrounded the baggage at night” (1. 216). ¶ “The encampments at night were as before; some sleeping under tents, and others bivouacking in the open air” (1. 237). ¶ “That night they had to encamp on the open prairie, near a scanty pool of water, and without any wood to make a fire. The north-east wind blew keenly across the naked waste, and they were fain to decamp from their inhospitable bivouac before dawn” (2. 165). ¶ “In two days they arrived at the vast naked prairie, the wintry aspect of which had caused them, in December, to pause and turn back. It was now clothed in the early verdure of spring, and plentifully stocked with game. Still, when obliged to bivouac on its bare surface, without any shelter, and by a scanty fire of dry buffalo dung, they found the night blasts piercing cold” (2. 180-81).

Boisterous. *adj.* Loud; roaring; violent; stormy. Turbulent; furious; tumultuous; noisy. Large; unwieldy; huge; clumsily violent, *obs.*

“They had kept along the river with great difficulty for two days, and found it a narrow, crooked, turbulent stream, confined in a rocky channel, with many rapids, and occasionally overhung with precipices. From the summit of one of these they had caught a bird’s eye view of its boisterous career, for a great distance, through the heart of the mountain, with impending rocks and cliffs” (2. 12).

Bourne. Also spelled *bourne* and *borne*. *n.* [Fr. *borne*.] A bound; a limit. A brook; a torrent; a rivulet, *obs.*

“All these matters were forgotten in the joy at seeing the first landmarks of the Columbia, that river which formed the bourne of the expedition” (1. 280).

Brawling. *n.* The act of quarreling. BRAWL. *v. t.* To drive or beat away; to quarrel; to speak loudly. *n.* Noise; quarrel; scurrility; uproar. *Formerly*, a kind of dance. BRAWLER. *n.* A noisy fellow; a wrangler; a quarrelsome person.

“They were shagged with dense and gloomy forests, and cut up by deep and precipitous ravines, extremely toilsome to the horses. Sometimes the travelers had to follow the course of some brawling stream, with a broken, rocky bed, which the shouldering cliffs and promontories on either side, obliged them frequently to cross and recross” (2. 121).

Cabal. *n.* A number of persons united in some close design, usually to promote their private views in church or state by intrigue. A junto. Intrigue; secret artifices of a few men united in a close design. This name was given to the ministry of Charles II., Clifford, Ashley, Buckingham, Arlington, and Lauderdale, the initials of whose names compose the word (*this last is not attested to by the OED*). JUNTO. *n.* A cabal; a meeting or collection of men combined for secreted deliberation and intrigue for party purposes; a faction. The name taken by Ben Franklin’s club in Philadelphia.

“The first wife, however, takes rank of all the others, and is considered mistress of the house. Still the domestic establishment is liable to jealousies and cabals, and the lord and master has much difficulty in maintaining harmony in his jangling household” (2. 90).

Cache. A term used by traders and explorers in the unsettled western country belonging to the United States, for a hole dug in the ground, for the purpose of preserving and concealing such provisions and commodities as it may be inconvenient to carry with them throughout their journey. *Webster took this definition from Lewis and Clark's Travels; Johnson offers no definition.*

“Mr. Hunt now set to work with all diligence, to prepare *caches*, in which to deposite [sic] the baggage and merchandize, of which it would be necessary to disburthen themselves, preparatory to their weary march by land; and here we shall give a brief description of those contrivances, so noted in the wilderness” (2. 28).

Caitiff. A base fellow, a wretch, a knave; a mean villain, a despicable knave; base, servile.

“It is only when he descends from the clouds to pounce upon carrion that he betrays his low propensities, and reveals his caitiff character” (1. 162).

Calumet. *n.* Among the aboriginals of America, a pipe used for smoking tobacco.

“Their offers of course were accepted; the calumet of peace was produced, and the two forlorn powers smoked eternal friendship between themselves, and vengeance upon their common spoilers, the Crows” (2. 160).

CANNIBALISM, HINTS.

“One of their horses was stolen among the mountains by the Snake Indians; the other, they said, was carried off by Cass, who, according to their account, ‘villainously left them in their extremities.’ Certain dark doubts and surmises were afterwards

circulated concerning the fate of that poor fellow, which, if true, showed to what a desperate state of famine his comrades had been reduced" (2. 128-29). ¶ "As they were preparing for the third time to lay down to sleep without a mouthful to eat, Le Clerc, one of the Canadians, gaunt and wild with hunger, approached Mr. Stuart with his gun in his hand. 'It was all in vain,' he said, 'to attempt to proceed any further without food. They had a barren plain before them, three or four days' journey in extent, on which nothing was to be procured. They must all perish before they could get to the end of it. It was better, therefore, that one should die to save the rest.' He proposed, therefore, that they should cast lots; adding, as an inducement for Mr. Stuart to assent to the proposition, that he, as leader of the party, should be exempted" (2. 156). ¶ "This discrepancy, of which, of course, Reed could have had no knowledge at the time, concurred with other circumstances, to occasion afterwards some mysterious speculations and dark surmises, as to the real fate of Cass; but as no substantial grounds were ever adduced for them, we forbear to throw any deeper shades into this story of sufferings in the wilderness" (2. 197).

Cantonment. A part or division of a town or village, assigned to a particular regiment of soldiers when quartered in a town; thus a camp; *in Irving*, winter quarters.

"Mr. Bradbury, in the course of his botanical researches, found a surprising number in a half torpid state, under flat stones upon the banks which overhung the cantonment, and narrowly escaped being struck by a rattlesnake, which darted at him from a cleft in the rock, but fortunately gave him warning by its rattle" (1. 163). ¶ "The party were more fortunate in this their second cantonment" (2. 180).

Caparison. *v. t.* To cover with cloth, as a horse. To dress pompously; to adorn with rich dress. *n.* A superb dress for a horse; a cloth or covering laid over the saddle or furniture of a horse.

“In the course of the morning, as they were entangled in a defile, they beheld a small band of savages, as wild looking as the surrounding scenery, who reconnoitred them warily from the rocks before they ventured to advance. Some of them were mounted on horses rudely caparisoned, with bridles or halters of buffalo hide, one end trailing after them on the ground” (1. 274).

Capricious. *adj.* Freakish; whimsical; apt to change opinions suddenly, or to start from one’s purpose; unsteady; changeable; fickle; fanciful; odd; subject to change or irregularity. **FREAKISH.** *adj.* Apt to change the mind suddenly; whimsical; capricious. **FREAK.** *n.* *Literally*, a sudden starting or change of place. A sudden, causeless change or turn of the mind; a whim or fancy; a capricious prank. *v. t.* To variegate; to checker.

“An Indian toilet is an operation of some toil and trouble; the warrior often has to paint himself from head to foot, and is extremely capricious and difficult to please, as to the hideous distribution of streaks and colors” (1. 226). ❧ “They tried every means to get within shot of them, but they were too shy and fleet, and after alternately bounding to a distance, and then stopping to gaze with capricious curiosity at the hunter, they at length scampered out of sight” (2. 122).

Career. *n.* A course; a race, or running, a rapid running; speed in motion. General course of action or movement; procedure; course of proceeding. The ground on which a race is run. *v. i.*

To move or run rapidly. *According to the OED, CAREER in its modern sense as a course of professional life or employment is a twentieth-century usage, although in the nineteenth century it was used to describe a person's course or progress through life, esp. when publicly conspicuous, or abounding in remarkable incidents. For comparison I place the following unrelated word:* CAREEN. *v. t.* To heave or bring a ship to lie on one side, for the purpose of repairing. *v. i.* To incline to one side, as a ship under a press of sail. CAREENING. Heaving down on one side; inclining.

“The Crow horsemen, as they escorted them, appeared to take a pride in shewing off their equestrian skill and hardihood; careering at full speed on their half-savage steeds, and dashing among rocks and crags, and up and down the most rugged and dangerous places with perfect ease and unconcern” (1. 268). ❧ “They had kept along the river with great difficulty for two days, and found it a narrow, crooked, turbulent stream, confined in a rocky channel, with many rapids, and occasionally overhung with precipices. From the summit of one of these they had caught a bird's eye view of its boisterous career, for a great distance, through the heart of the mountain, with impending rocks and cliffs” (2. 12).

Casque. *Also spelled cask.* A head-piece; a helmet; a piece of defensive armor, to cover and protect the head and neck in battle.

“Their arms were bows and arrows, spears, and war clubs. Some wore a corslet, formed of pieces of hard wood, laced together with bear grass, so as to form a light coat of mail, pliant to the body; and a kind of casque of cedar bark, leather, and bear grass, sufficient to protect the head from an arrow or a war club” (2. 87).

Castellated. Adorned with turrets and battlements like a castle. Enclosed in a building, as a fountain or cistern.

“The Black hills are chiefly composed of sand stone, and in many places are broken into savage cliffs and precipices, and present the most singular and fantastic forms; sometimes resembling towns and castellated fortresses” (1. 253).

Cavalcade. A procession of persons on horseback.

“With all his exertions, Mr. Hunt had been unable to obtain a sufficient number of horses for the accommodation of all his people. His cavalcade consisted of eighty-two horses, most of them heavily laden with Indian goods, beaver traps, ammunition, Indian corn, corn meal and other necessities” (1. 235).

☞ “They had not gone far before they fell in with the whole party of Crows, who, they now found, were going the same road with themselves. The two cavalcades of white and red men, therefore, pushed on together, and presented a wild and picturesque spectacle, as, equipped with various weapons and in various garbs, with trains of pack horses, they wound in long lines through the rugged defiles, and up and down the crags and steeps of the mountain” (1. 271-72).

Centinelled. *Most often spelled with an initial S. Neither Webster nor Johnson provide examples of usage as adjective or verb.*

SENTINEL. A soldier set to watch or guard an army, camp or other place from surprise, to observe the approach of danger and give notice of; sentry.

“It was not to be expected that our travelers could pass unseen through a region thus vigilantly centinelled;

accordingly, in the edge of the evening, not long after they had encamped at the foot of the Big Horn Sierra, a couple of wild-looking beings, scantily clad in skins, but well armed, and mounted on horses as wild-looking as themselves, were seen approaching with great caution from among the rocks" (1. 267).

Chamois. An animal of the goat kind, whose skin is made into soft leather, called *shammy*.

"The Arickaras generally go naked, but, like all savages, they have their gala dress of which they are not a little vain. This usually consists of a gay surcoat and leggings of the dressed skin of the antelope, resembling chamois leather, and embroidered with porcupine quills brilliantly dyed" (1. 226).

Chary. [OE *cearig*.] Careful; cautious; wary; frugal; diligent.
"Fortunately, however chary the Indians might be of their horses, they were liberal of their dogs" (1. 223).

Circumspection. Caution; attention to all the facts and circumstances of a case; watchfulness.

"As the Crows, however, were reputed to be perfidious in the extreme, and as errant freebooters as the bird after which they were so worthily named; and as their general feelings towards the whites were known to be by no means friendly, the intercourse with them was conducted with great circumspection" (1. 269). ¶ "That cautious commander recollected the instructions given him by Mr. Astor, and determined to proceed with great circumspection. He was well aware of Indian treachery and cunning" (2. 108).

Clamoursly. *adv.* With loud noise or words. **CLAMOROUS.** *adj.* Speaking and repeating loud words; noisy; vociferous; loud; turbulent.

“On the following morning, another raft was made, on which Mr. Crooks and Le Clerc again attempted to ferry themselves across the river, but after repeated trials, had to give up in despair. This caused additional delay: after which, they continued to crawl forward at a snail’s pace. Some of the men who had remained with Mr. Hunt now became impatient of these incumbrances, and urged him, clamorously, to push forward, crying out that they should all starve” (2. 48).

Collateral. *adj.* Being by the side, side by side, on the side, or side to side. *In genealogy*, descending from the same stock or ancestor, but not one from the other; as distinguished from *lineal*. *Collateral security* is security for the performance of covenants or the payment of money, besides the principal security. Running parallel. Diffused on either side; springing from relations. Not direct, or immediate. Concurrent.

“The Rocky mountains, as we have already observed, occur sometimes singly or in groups, and occasionally in collateral ridges” (1. 264).

Confluence. A flowing together; the meeting or junction of two or more streams of water, or other fluid; also, the place of meeting. The running together of people; the act of meeting and crowding in a place; a crowd; a concourse. A collection; meeting; assemblage.

“Here it was joined by a river of greater magnitude and swifter current, and their united waters swept off through the valley in one impetuous stream, which,

from its rapidity and turbulence, had received the name of Mad river. At the confluence of these streams the travellers encamped” (1. 285).

Confrere. A fellow-member of a fraternity, religious order, college, guild, etc., a colleague in office. A fellow-member of a learned profession, scientific body, or the like (*OED*). *Not in Webster or Johnson.*

“As to the Canadian voyageurs, their mutual felicitations, as usual, were loud and vociferous, and it was almost ludicrous to behold these ancient ‘comrades’ and ‘confreres,’ hugging and kissing each other on the river bank” (2. 74).

Confute. *v. t.* To disprove; to prove to be false, defective or invalid; to overthrow. To prove to be wrong; to convict of error, by argument or proof. **CONFUTED.** *pp.* Disproved; proved to be false, defective or unsound; overthrown by argument, fact or proof.

“As doctors are prone to disagree, so these medicine men have now and then a violent altercation as to the malady of the patient, or the treatment of it. To settle this they beat their idols soundly against each other; which ever first loses a tooth or a claw is considered as confuted, and his votary retires from the field” (2. 89).

Consign. *v. t.* To give, send or set over; to transfer or deliver into the possession of another, or into a different state, with the sense of fixedness in that state, or permanence of possession. To deliver or transfer, as a charge or trust; to commit. To set over or commit, for permanent preservation. To appropriate.

“He took a ceremonious leave of the Crow chieftain, and his vagabond warriors, and, according to previous

arrangements, consigned to their cherishing friendship and fraternal adoption, their worthy confederate, Rose; who, having figured among the water pirates of the Mississippi, was well fitted to rise to distinction among the land pirates of the Rocky mountains" (1. 269).

Consternation. *n.* Astonishment; amazement or horror that confounds the faculties, and incapacitates a person for consultation and execution; excessive terror, wonder or surprise.

"In the course of one of their excursions, some of the men came in sight of a small party of Indians, who instantly fled in great apparent consternation" (1. 282).

Cordial. *adj.* Proceeding from the heart; hearty; sincere; not hypocritical; warm; affectionate. Reviving the spirits; cheering; invigorating; giving strength or spirits. *n.* *In medicine*, that which suddenly excites the system, and increases the action of the heart or circulation when languid; any medicine which increases strength, raises the spirits, and gives life and cheerfulness to a person when weak and depressed; a cherishing, comforting draught. Any thing that comforts, gladdens and exhilarates. **CORDIALITY.** Sincerity; freedom from hypocrisy; sincere affection and kindness.

"He found it difficult, however, to remove their distrust; the conference, therefore, ended without producing any cordial understanding; and M'Lellan recurred to his old threat of shooting Lisa the instant he discovered any thing like treachery in his proceedings" (1. 210).

☞ "Those only, who have experienced the warm cordiality that grows up between comrades in wild and adventurous expeditions of the kind, can picture to themselves the hearty cheering with which the stragglers were welcomed to the camp" (1. 250).

Corslet. *n.* A little cuirass, or an armor to cover the body for protection, worn formerly by pike-men; a light armor for the fore part of the body. **CUIRRASS.** A breastplate of leather or steel.

“Their arms were bows and arrows, spears, and war clubs. Some wore a corslet, formed of pieces of hard wood, laced together with bear grass, so as to form a light coat of mail, pliant to the body; and a kind of casque of cedar bark, leather, and bear grass, sufficient to protect the head from an arrow or a war club” (2. 87).

Craven. *n.* A word of obloquy, used formerly by one vanquished in trial by battle, and yielding to the conqueror. Hence, a recreant; a coward; a weak-hearted, spiritless fellow. A vanquished, dispirited cock. **OBLOQUY.** *n.* Censorious speech; reproachful language; language that casts contempt on men or their actions. Cause of reproach; blame; slander; disgrace. **RECREANT.** *adj.* Crying for mercy, as a combatant in the trial by battle; yielding; hence cowardly; mean-spirited. Apostate; false. *n.* One who yields in combat and cries *craven*; one who begs for mercy; hence, a mean-spirited, cowardly wretch.

“It was in vain that Mr. Stuart represented to him the rashness of his conduct, and the dangers to which he exposed himself: he rejected such counsel as craven” (2. 148).

Cupidity. *n.* An eager desire to possess something; an ardent wishing or longing; an inordinate or unlawful desire of wealth or power. Unlawful sensual desire.

“The worthies of Wish-ram, however, were not disposed to part so easily with their visiters [sic]. Their cupidity had been quickened by the plunder which they had already taken, and their confidence increased by the impunity with which their outrage had passed” (2. 96).

Dauntless. Bold; fearless; intrepid; not timid; not discouraged; not dejected. **DAUNT.** To discourage; to intimidate; to repress or subdue courage; to dishearten; to check by fear of danger.

“The acquisition of two such hardy, experienced and dauntless hunters was peculiarly desirable at the present moment” (1. 182).

Decamp. *v. i.* To remove or depart from a camp; to march off.

“This gentleman had been in a gloomy and irritated state of mind for some time past, being troubled with a bodily malady that rendered travelling on horseback extremely irksome to him, and being, moreover, discontented with having a smaller share in the expedition than his comrades. His unreasonable objections to a further march by land were overruled, and the party prepared to decamp” (2. 12). ¶ “That night they had to encamp on the open prairie, near a scanty pool of water, and without any wood to make a fire. The north-east wind blew keenly across the naked waste, and they were fain to decamp from their inhospitable bivouac before dawn” (2. 165).

Declivity. [*L. declivitas.*] Declination from a horizontal line; descent of land; inclination downward; a slope; a gradual descent.

“The travelers continued their course to the south of west for about forty miles, through a region so elevated that patches of snow lay on the highest summits, and on the northern declivities” (1. 280). ¶ “The stream which they had followed throughout the preceding day was now swollen by the influx of another river; the declivities of the hills were green and the valleys were

clothed with grass" (2. 62). ❧ "Here leveling his rifle he took so sure an aim, that the bighorn fell dead on the spot; a fortunate circumstance, for, to pursue it, if merely wounded, would have been impossible in his emaciated state. The declivity of the hill enabled him to roll the carcass down to his companions, who were too feeble to climb the rocks" (2. 76).

Defile. *n.* A narrow passage or way, in which troops may march only in a file, or with a narrow front. A long narrow pass, as between hills. A narrow passage, a lane. *v.* [Fr. *defiler.*] To march off in a line, or file by file; to file off. *v.* [Fr. *defouler* but associated with A-S *befoul* and *befile.*] To make unclean, to make foul, pollute, vitiate.

"The rugged defiles and deep valleys of this vast chain form sheltering places for restless and ferocious bands of savages, many of them the remnants of tribes, once inhabitants of the prairies, but broken up by war and violence, and who carry into their mountain haunts the fierce passions and reckless habits of desperadoes" (1. 231).

Demoniac. A human being possessed by a demon; one possessed with a demon.

"In this way, the savage chivalry of the village to the number of five hundred, poured forth, helter skelter riding and running, with hideous yells and war-whoops, like so many bedlamites or demoniacs let loose" (1. 222).

Descry. *v. t.* To espy; to explore; to examine by observation. To detect; to spy out; to find out; to discover any thing concealed. To see; to behold; to have a sight of from a distance. *ESPY.* *v. t.*

To see at a distance; to have the first sight of a thing remote. To see or discover something intended to be hid. To discover unexpectedly. To inspect narrowly. *v. i.* To look narrowly; to look about; to watch.

“As the day broke Indians were descried in considerable number on the bluffs, three or four miles down the river”(1. 225). ¶ “Having seen no Indians in this neighborhood as they passed down the river; they must have subsequently come out from among the mountains. Mr. Hunt, who first descried them, checked the eagerness of his companions, knowing the unwillingness of these Indians to part with their horses, and their aptness to hurry them off and conceal them, in case of alarm” (2. 51). ¶ “They succeeded in getting some distance above the canoes without being discovered, and were crossing the river to post themselves on the side along which the white men were coasting, when they were fortunately descried”(2. 100).

DESCRIPTION OF INDIAN HOUSES.

“In general, the dwellings of the savages on the Pacific side of that great barrier, were mere tents and cabins of mats, or skins, or straw, the country being destitute of timber. In *Wish-ram* [*a few miles east of The Dalles; the area would have been well-known to Alvan Waller*], on the contrary, the houses were built of wood, with long sloping roofs. The floor was sunk about six feet below the surface of the ground, with a low door at the gabel end, extremely narrow and partly sunk. Through this it was necessary to crawl, and then to descend a short ladder. This inconvenient entrance was probably for the purpose of defence; there were loop holes also under the eaves, apparently for the discharge of arrows. The houses were larger, generally

containing two or three families. Immediately within the door were sleeping places, ranged along the walls, like berths in a ship and furnished with pallets of matting. These extended along one half of the building; the remaining half was appropriated to the storing of dried fish" (2. 70).

Despatches. Also spelled *dispatches*. DESPATCH, DISPATCH. *v. t.* To send away hastily; *particularly applied* to the sending of messengers, agents and letters on special business, and often implying haste. To send out of the world; to put to death; to kill. To perform; to execute speedily; to finish. *v. i.* To conclude an affair with another; to transact and finish. *n.* Speedy performance; execution or transaction of business with due diligence. Speed; haste; expedition, by a messenger express; or a letter on some affair of state, or of public concern; or a packet of letters, sent by some public officer, on public business. An express.

"A third object of moment was to send despatches overland to Mr. Astor at New York, informing him of the state of affairs at the settlement, and the fortunes of the several expeditions" (2. 93). ❧ "Le Clerc, one of the Canadians, was instantly dispatched by Mr. Stuart, to reconnoiter; and the travellers sat up till a late hour, watching and listening for his return, hoping he might bring them food" (2. 155).

Detritus. *In geology*, a mass of substances worn off or detached from solid bodies by attrition. DETRITION. The act of wearing away. A wearing off.

"These plains [surrounding the Rocky Mountains] are often of a desolate sterility; mere sandy wastes, formed of the detritus of the granite heights, destitute of trees

and herbage, scorched by the ardent and reflected rays of the summer's sun, and, in winter, swept by chilling blasts from the snow clad mountains" (1. 264).

DEVIL'S SCUTTLE HOLE.

"A lingering hope which had been indulged by some of the party, of proceeding by water, was now finally given up: the long and terrific strait of the river set all further progress at defiance, and in their disgust at the place, and their vexation at the disasters sustained there, they gave it the indignant, though not very decorous appellation, of the Devil's Scuttle Hole" (2. 31).

Devious. *adj.* Out of the common way or track. Wandering; roving; rambling. Erring. Going astray from rectitude or the divine precepts.

"In the after part of the day, they came to another scene, surpassing in savage grandeur those already described. They had been travelling for some distance through a pass of the mountains, keeping parallel with the river, as it roared along, out of sight, through a deep ravine. Sometimes their devious path approached the margin of cliffs below which the river foamed and boiled and whirled among the masses of rock that had fallen into its channel" (2. 167).

Disburthen. *Spelled* disburden *in Webster and Johnson.* *v. t.* To remove a burden from; to unload; to discharge. To throw off a burden; to disencumber; to clear of any thing weighty, troublesome or cumberson. *v. i.* To ease the mind; to be relieved.

"Mr. Hunt now set to work with all diligence, to prepare *caches*, in which to deposite [sic] the baggage

and merchandize, of which it would be necessary to disburthen themselves, preparatory to their weary march by land; and here we shall give a brief description of those contrivances, so noted in the wilderness" (2. 28).

Disembogue. *v. t.* To pour out or discharge at the mouth, as a stream; to vent; to discharge into the ocean or a lake. *v. i.* To flow at the mouth, as a river; to discharge waters into the ocean, or into a lake. To pass out of a gulf or bay.

"A number of men, also, under the command of some of the clerks, were sent to quarter themselves on the banks of the Wollamut (the Multnomah of Lewis and Clark), a fine river which disembogues itself into the Columbia, about sixty miles above Astoria" (2. 199-200).

Draggling. *pres. part.* Drawing on the ground; making dirty by drawing on the ground or wet grass. **DRAGGLE.** *v. t.* To wet and dirty by drawing on the ground or mud, or on wet grass; to drabble. **DRAGGLE-TAIL.** *n.* A slut. **DRABBLE.** *v. t.* To draggle; to make dirty by drawing in mud and water; to wet and befoul.

"We should observe, that at the heels of Pierre Delaunay came draggling an Indian wife, whom he had picked up in his wanderings; having grown weary of celibacy among the savages" (2. 196).

Dudgeon. Anger; resentment; malice, ill-will; discord. A small dagger.

"A violent quarrel arose between him and Lisa, and he left the boat in high dudgeon" (1. 205).

Duello. A duel; a duel undertaken within the rules and customs of dueling. **DUEL.** Single combat; a premeditated combat

between two persons, for the purpose of deciding some private difference or quarrel. Any contention or contest.

“There was accordingly a universal restlessness and commotion throughout the plain; and the amorous herds gave utterance to their feelings in low bellowings that resounded like distant thunder. Here and there fierce duellos took place between rival enamorados; butting their huge shagged fronts together, goring each other with their short black horns, and tearing up the earth with their feet in perfect fury” (1. 247).

Elasticity. The quality in bodies by which, on being bent or compressed, they spring back and make efforts to resume their original form and tension. *I'm not sure I understand Irving's usage here. The OED adds figurative meanings:* Energy, vigour, buoyancy of mind or character; capacity for resisting or overcoming depression. *I'm not sure they fit either.*

“The monotony of these immense landscapes, also, would be as wearisome as that of the ocean, were it not relieved in some degree by the purity and elasticity of the atmosphere, and the beauty of the heavens. The sky has that delicious blue for which the sky of Italy is renowned; the sun shines with a splendor, unobscured by any cloud or vapor, and a starlight night on the prairies is glorious. This purity and elasticity of atmosphere increases as the traveler approaches the mountains, and gradually rises into the more elevated prairies” (1. 236-37).

Embarkation. *n.* The act of putting on board of a ship or other vessel, or the act of going aboard. That which is embarked. A small vessel or boat [*unusual*]. **EMBARK.** *v. t.* To put or cause to enter on board a ship or other vessel or boat. To engage a

person in any affair. *v. i.* To go on board of a ship, boat or vessel. To engage in any business; to undertake in; to take a share in.

“The vote, as might have been expected, was almost unanimous for embarkation; for when men are in difficulties every change seems to be for the better” (2. 9-10).

Empyreal. Formed of pure fire or light; refined beyond aerial substance; pertaining to the highest and purest region of heaven; pure, vital, dephlogisticated. **DEPHLOGISTICATED.** To deprive of phlogiston, or the supposed principle of inflammability. *Eighteenth-century chemists posited a substance, phlogiston, that existed in all combustible bodies; in composition with other bodies it allowed fire.*

“Usurping the empyreal realm of the eagle, he assumes for a time the port and dignity of that majestic bird, and often is mistaken for him by ignorant crawlers upon earth” (1.162).

Enameled. Overlaid with enamel; adorned with any thing resembling enamel. **ENAMEL.** *n.* substance of the nature of glass, differing from it by a greater degree of fusibility or opacity; that which is enameled; a smooth, glossy surface of various colors, resembling enamel; *v.* to inlay, variegate with colours.

“Below them was the valley of the Missouri, about seven miles in breadth, clad in the fresh verdure of spring; enameled with flowers and interspersed with clumps and groves of noble trees, between which the mighty river poured its turbulent and turbid stream” (1. 166). ❧❧

“Sometimes these unwieldy animals were seen moving in long procession across the silent landscape; at other times they were scattered about, singly or in groups, on the broad enameled prairies and green acclivities, some

cropping the rich pasturage, others reclining amidst the flowery herbage; the whole scene realizing in a manner the old scriptural descriptions of the vast pastoral countries of the Orient, with ‘cattle upon a thousand hills’”(1. 207).

Enamorado. One deeply in love.

“There was accordingly a universal restlessness and commotion throughout the plain; and the amorous herds gave utterance to their feelings in low bellowings that resounded like distant thunder. Here and there fierce duellos took place between rival enamorados; butting their huge shagged fronts together, goring each other with their short black horns, and tearing up the earth with their feet in perfect fury” (1. 247).

Emporium. A place of merchandise; a mart; a town or city of trade; *particularly*, a city or town of extensive commerce. *In medicine*, the common sensory in the brain.

“The establishment of a trading emporium at such a point, also, was calculated to cause a sensation to the most remote parts of the vast wilderness beyond the mountains. It, in a manner, struck the pulse of the great vital river, and vibrated up all its tributary streams” (2. 69).

Enigma. A dark saying, in which some known thing is concealed under obscure language; an obscure question; a riddle.

THE ENIGMA OF THE ABORIGINAL POPULATION: “Such are the fluctuating fortunes of these savage nations. War, famine, pestilence, together or singly, bring down their strength and thin their numbers. Whole tribes are rooted up from their native places, wander for a time

about these immense regions, become amalgamated with other tribes, or disappear from the face of the earth. There appears to be a tendency to extinction among all the savage nations; and this tendency would seem to have been in operation among the aborigines of this country long before the advent of the white men, if we may judge from the traces and traditions of ancient populousness in regions which were silent and deserted at the time of the discovery; and from the mysterious and perplexing vestiges of unknown races, predecessors of those found in actual possession, and who must long since have become gradually extinguished or been destroyed. The whole history of the aboriginal population of this country, however, is an enigma, and a grand one—will it every be solved?” (1. 240).

Enmity. *n.* The quality of being an enemy; the opposite of friendship; ill will; hatred; unfriendly dispositions; malevolence. It expresses more than *aversion*, and less than *malice*, and differs from *displeasure* in denoting a fixed or rooted hatred, whereas *displeasure* is more transient. A state of opposition.

“It is proper to add that the ruffian was well received among the tribe and appeared to be perfectly satisfied with the compromise he had made; feeling much more at his ease among savages than among white men. It is outcasts from civilization, fugitives from justice, and heartless desperadoes of this kind, who sow the seeds of enmity and bitterness among the unfortunate tribes of the frontier” (1. 270).

Ensign. The flag or banner of a military band; a banner of colors; a standard. A signal to assemble or to give notice. A

badge; a mark of distinction, rank or office. The officer who carries the flag or colors, being the lowest commissioned officer in a company of infantry.

“The bands marched in separate bodies under their several leaders. The warriors on foot came first, in platoons of ten or twelve abreast; then the horsemen. Each band bore as an ensign a spear or bow decorated with beads, porcupine quills and painted feathers” (1. 227).

Entail. *v. t.* To settle the descent of lands and tenements, by gift to a man and to certain heirs specified, so that neither the donee nor any subsequent possessor can alienate or bequeath it. To fix unalienably on a person or thing, or on a person and his descendants. To cut; to carve for ornament, *obs. n.* An estate of fee entailed, or limited in descent to a particular heir or heirs. Rule of descent settled for an estate. *In the example it is a name that is being entailed upon a geographical feature.*

“On the evening of the 23d (July) they encamped on the banks of what they term Big river; and here we cannot but pause to lament the stupid, common-place, and often ribald names entailed upon the rivers and other features of the great west, by traders and settlers” (1. 237).

Epicure. *n.* One devoted to sensual enjoyments; one who indulges in the luxuries of the table.

“Here they killed three [buffalo] cows, which were the first they had been able to get, having hitherto had to content themselves with bull beef, which at this season of the year is very poor. The hump meat afforded them a repast fit for an epicure” (2. 166).

Equability. *n.* Equality in motion; continued equality, at all times, in velocity or movement; uniformity. Continued equality; evenness or uniformity.

“A remarkable fact, characteristic of the country west of the Rocky mountains, is the mildness and equability of the climate” (2. 81).

Esculent. *adj.* Eatable; that is or may be used by man for food.
n. Edible; good for food.

“Here, therefore, during the fishing season, the Snake Indians resort from far and near, to lay in their stock of salmon, which, with esculent roots, forms the principal food of the inhabitants of these barren regions” (2. 123).

Excursive. Rambling; wandering; deviating. *Related to* EXCURSION. A rambling; a deviating from a started or settled path. Progression beyond fixed limits. Digression; a wandering from a subject or main design. *Only in its fourth and final usage does the word approach modern usage:* An expedition or journey; any rambling from a point or place, and return to the same point or place.

“We are wandering, however, into excursive speculations, when our intention was merely to give an idea of the nature of the wilderness which Mr. Hunt was about to traverse; and which at that time was far less known than at present; though it still remains in a great measure an unknown land” (1. 233). ❧ “It is now necessary, in linking together the parts of this excursive narrative, that we notice the proceedings of Mr. Astor, in support of his great undertaking” (2. 185).

Exigency. Also *exigence*. *n.* Demand; urgency; urgent need or want. Pressing necessity; distress; any case that demands immediate action, supply or remedy. *Exigent*. *n.* Pressing business; occasion that calls for immediate help. End; extremity, *obs. adj.* Pressing; requiring immediate aid.

“There dismay, however, was but transient, and they immediately set to work, with that prompt expediency produced by the exigencies of the wilderness, to fit themselves for the change in their condition” (2. 142).
“The month of March arrived, and the Lark was ordered by Mr. Astor, to put to sea. The officer who was to command her, shrunk from his engagement, and in the exigency of the moment, she was given in charge to Mr. Northrop, the mate” (2. 188).

Facility. *n.* Easiness to be performed; freedom from difficulty; ease. Ease of performance; readiness proceeding from skill or use; dexterity. Pliancy; ductility; easiness to be pursued; readiness of compliance, *usually in a bad sense*. Easiness of access; complaisance; condescension, affability.

“Fifteen days were consumed in ascending from the foot of the first rapid, to the head of the falls, a distance of about eighty miles, but full of all kinds of obstructions. Having happily accomplished these difficult portages, the party, on the 19th of July, arrived at a smoother part of the river, and pursued their way up the stream with greater speed and facility” (2. 114).

Factory. A house or place where factors reside, to transact business for their employers. The body of factors in any place. Contracted from *manufactory*, a building or collection of buildings, appropriated to the manufacture of goods. **FACTOR.** *In commerce,*

an agent employed by merchants, residing in other places, to buy and sell, and to transact business on their account. An agent; a substitute. *In arithmetic*, the multiplier and multiplicand, from the multiplication of which proceeds the product. FACTORAGE. The allowance given to a factor by his employer, as a compensation for his services; called also a *commission*.

“As the uthlecan [‘a small kind of fish, about six inches long, called by the natives the uthlecan, and resembling smelt’] is only found in the lower part of the river, the arrival of it soon brought back the natives to the coast; who again resorted to the factory to trade, and from that time furnished plentiful supplies of fish” (2. 79).

Fain. [OE *fægen*, *fægn*.] *adj.* Glad; pleased; rejoiced. Forced; obliged. *adv.* Gladly; with joy or pleasure. *v. i.* To wish or desire.

“The Blackfeet had now a vast advantage [guns], and soon dispossessed the poor Snakes of their favorite hunting grounds, their land of plenty, and drove them from place to place, until they were fain to take refuge in the wildest and most desolate recesses of the Rocky Mountains” (1. 275). ¶ “The chief promised to recover the stolen articles; but failed to do so, alleging that the thieves belonged to a distant tribe, and had made off with their booty. With this excuse Mr. Clarke was fain to content himself, though he laid up in his heart a bitter grudge against the whole pierced-nose race, which it will be found he took occasion subsequently to gratify in a signal manner” (2. 191-92). ¶ “The Snakes determined on a hunting match on the buffalo prairies, to lay in a supply of beef, that they might live in plenty, as became men of their improved condition. The three newly mounted cavaliers must fain accompany them” (2. 195).

Famishing. Starving; killing; perishing by want of food. **FAMISH.** To starve; to kill or destroy with hunger. To exhaust the strength of, by hunger or thirst; to distress with hunger. To kill by deprivation or denial of any thing necessary for life.

“Being utterly destitute of provisions, they were again compelled to kill one of their horses to appease their famishing hunger” (2. 43).

Fell. *adj.* Cruel; barbarous; inhuman; fierce; savage; bloody.

“The most valuable prize obtained from them, however, was a horse: it was a sorry old animal in truth, but it was the only one that remained to the poor fellows, after the fell swoop of the Crows; yet this they were prevailed upon to part with to their guests for a pistol, an axe, a knife, and few other trifling articles” (2. 160).

Festal. *adj.* [*L. festus.*] Pertaining to a feast; joyous; gay; mirthful.

“The village was now a scene of the utmost festivity and triumph. The banners, and trophies, and scalps, and painted shields were elevated on poles near the lodges. There were war-feasts, and scalp-dances, with warlike songs and savage music; all the inhabitants were arrayed in their festal dresses; while the old heralds went round from lodge to lodge, promulgating with loud voices the events of the battle and the exploits of the various warriors” (1. 228).

Fiat. [*L. from fīo; let it be done.*] A decree; a command to do something.

“By these and similar exploits, he made himself the pride and boast of his people, and became popular among them, notwithstanding his death-denouncing fiat” (1. 173).

Foment. *v. t.* [L. *fomento*.] To apply warm lotions to; to bathe with warm liquors. To cherish with heat; to encourage growth. To encourage; to abet; to cherish and promote by excitements.

“All this was attributed by Mr. Hunt and his associates, to the perfidious instigations of Rose the interpreter, who they suspected of the desire to foment ill-will between them and the savages, for the promotion of nefarious plans” (1. 269).

Foray. [ultimately from Romance **fodro*; the precise formation and the mutual relation of the verb and noun are somewhat obscure (*OED*); spelled *forray* by Webster, not in Johnson.] *n.* The act of ravaging. *v. t.* To scour or ravage (a country) in search of forage or booty; to pillage; to seize and carry off (goods); to plunder the property of (a person). Revived in the 19th c. by Sir Walter Scott (def. of *v.* from *OED*).

“The truth of the matter was now ascertained. The Indians upon the distant hills were three hundred Arickara braves, returning from a foray” (1. 225).

Foreboding. *n.* Prognostication. *v. t.* To foretell; to prognosticate. To foreknow; to be prescient of; to feel a secret sense of something future. **PROGNOSTICATE.** To foreshow; to indicate a future event by present signs. To foretell by means of present signs; to predict. **PRESCIENT.** *adj.* Foreknowing; having knowledge of events before they take place.

“Mr. Hunt was startled by this intelligence, and made further inquiries. They informed him that the Indians had lashed their canoes to the ship, and fought until they killed him and all his people. This is another instance of the clearness with which intelligence is transmitted from mouth to mouth among the Indian tribes. These

tidings, though but partially credited by Mr. Hunt, filled his mind with anxious forebodings" (2. 71).

Fortuitously. *adv.* Accidentally; casually. *adj.* [L. *fortuitous*.] ACCIDENTAL; casual; happening by chance; coming or occurring unexpectedly, or without any known cause. FORTUITY. *n.* Chance; accident. FORTUNATE. *adj.* Coming by good luck or favorable chance; bringing some unexpected good. Lucky; successful; receiving some unforeseen or unexpected good. Successful; happy; prosperous.

"After wandering for several days without meeting with Indians, or obtaining any supplies, they came together fortuitously among the Snake river mountains, some distance below that disastrous pass or straight, which had received the appellation of the Devil's Scuttle Hole" (2. 74).

Freebooter. [*< Dutch vrijbouter* privateer, pirate, robber.] One who wanders about for plunder; a robber; a pillager; a plunderer. FREEBOOTING. Robbery; plunder; a pillaging. According to the *OED*, originally a privateer, and later more generally a pirate or any person who goes about in search for plunder.

"As the Crows, however, were reputed to be perfidious in the extreme, and as errant freebooters as the bird after which they were so worthily named; and as their general feelings towards the whites were known to be by no means friendly, the intercourse with them was conducted with great circumspection" (1. 269). "Mr. Hunt found the inhabitants shrewder and more intelligent than any Indians he had met with. Trade had sharpened their wits, though it had not improved their honesty for they were a community of arrant rogues and freebooters" (2. 70).

Furze. A prickly shrub, used for fuel; gorse; a thorny plant of the genus *ulex*.

“While the granitic summits of the Rocky mountains are bleak and bare, many of the inferior ridges are scantily clothed with scrubbed pines, oaks, cedar and furze” (1. 265).

Gala. A *gala day* is a day of pomp, show or festivity, when persons appear in their best apparel. A grand festivity or procession.

“The Arickaras generally go naked, but, like all savages, they have their gala dress of which they are not a little vain” (1. 226).

Galled. Having the skin or surface worn or down by wearing or rubbing; fretted; teased; injured; vexed. GALL. *v. t.* [Fr. *galer.*] To fret and wear away by friction; to excoriate; to hurt or break the skin by rubbing. To impair; to wear away. To tease; to fret; to vex. To chagrin. To wound; to break the surface of any thing by rubbing. To injure; to harass; to annoy. *n.* A wound in the skin by rubbing.

“The following day was passed in trading with the Crows for buffalo robes and skins, and in bartering galled and jaded horses for others that were in good condition” (1. 269).

Garde vin. A case or closet for wine bottles (*OED*). *Not in Webster or Johnson.*

“He was stately, too, in his appointments, and had a silver goblet or drinking cup, out of which he would drink with a magnificent air, and then lock it up in a large *garde vin*, which accompanied him in his travels, and stood in his tent. This goblet had originally been

sent as a present from Mr. Astor to Mr. M'Kay, the partner who had unfortunately been blown up in the Tonquin. As it reached Astoria after the departure of that gentleman, it had remained in the possession of Mr. Clarke" (2. 207).

Genial. *adj.* [L. *genialis*.] Contributing to propagation or production; that causes to produce. Gay; merry. Enlivening; contributing to life and cheerfulness; supporting life. Native; natural [*not usual*]. **Genially.** *adv.* Gayly; cheerfully. By genius or nature; naturally [*little used*].

"A day was now given up to jubilee, to celebrate the arrival of Mr. Hunt and his companions, and the joyful meeting of the various scattered bands of adventurers at Astoria. The colors were hoisted; the guns, great and small, were fired; there was a feast of fish, of beaver, and venison, which relished well with men who had so long been glad to revel on horse flesh and dogs' meat; a genial allowance of grog was issued, to increase the general animation, and the festivities wound up, as usual, with a grand dance at night, by the Canadian voyageurs" (2. 77).

Genii. [< French *génie*, < Latin *genius*.] A sort of imaginary intermediate beings between men and angels; some good and some bad.

"Thus the wandering tribes of the prairies who often behold clouds gathering round the summits of these hills, and lightning flashing, and thunder pealing from them, when all the neighboring plains are serene and sunny, consider them the abode of the genii or thunder spirits, who fabricate storms and tempests" (1. 253).

Gog and Magog. Ezekiel chapters 38-39 prophesies an invasion from the north by Gog of Magog (here a place, though in Genesis, Magog is the second son of Japheth). It is an interesting, apocryphal vision, ending with the coming of the lord and a reassertion of the good fortunes of the Israelites. This is part of an interesting discussion of the fate of the Indian (1. 231-32), a fate to which the whites contribute "by the transfer of whole tribes of savages from the east of the Mississippi to the great wastes of the far west." Irving suggests that the difficult geography of the west almost assures a lack of civilization: "Such is the nature of this immense wilderness of the far west; which apparently defies cultivation, and the habitation of civilized life."

"Some may gradually become pastoral hordes, like those rude and migratory people, half shepherd, half warrior, who, with their flocks and herds, roam the plains of upper Asia; but, others, it is to be apprehended, will become predatory bands, mounted on the fleet steeds of the prairies, with the open plains for their marauding grounds, and the mountains for their retreats and lurking places. Here they may resemble those great hordes of the north; 'Gog and Magog with their bands,' that haunted the gloomy imaginations of the prophets. 'A great company and a mighty host, all riding upon horses, and warring upon those nations which were at rest, and dwelt peaceably, and had gotten cattle and goods'"(1. 232). *In this last Irving is apparently paraphrasing Ezekial 38:15.*

Gourmand. A greedy or ravenous eater; a glutton; a great feeder.

"It is difficult, therefore, to get within shot of it. Ben

Jones the hunter, however, in one of the passes of the Black hills, succeeded in bringing down a bighorn from the verge of a precipice, the flesh of which was pronounced by the gourmands of the camp to have the flavor of excellent mutton" (1. 255-56). ¶ "The rafters were soon eased of their burthen; venison and beef were passed out to the crew before the door, and a scene of gormandizing commenced, of which few can have an idea, who have not witnessed the gastronomic powers of an Indian, after an interval of fasting" (2. 174).

Habituate. *v. t.* To accustom; to make familiar by frequent use or practice. To settle as an inhabitant in a place. *adj.* Inveterate by custom. Formed by habit.

"Their weary march that day had been forty-five miles, over a tract that might rival the deserts of Africa for aridity. Indeed, the sufferings of the traveler on these American deserts, is frequently more severe than in the wastes of Africa or Asia, from being less habituated and prepared to cope with them" (2. 120).

Habitude. Customary manner or mode of life; repetition of the same acts. Custom; habit. Relation; respect; state with regard to something else [*little used*]. Frequent intercourse; familiarity [*not usual*].

"The travellers had again an opportunity to see and admire the equestrian habitudes and address of this hard-riding tribe. They were all mounted, man, woman and child, for the Crows have horses in abundance, so that no one goes on foot. The children are perfect imps on horseback" (1. 272). ¶ "When recruits were sought in the preceding year among experienced hunters and

voyageurs at Montreal and St. Louis, it was considered dangerous to attempt to cross the Rocky mountains with less than sixty men; and yet here we find Reed ready to push his way across those barriers with merely three companions. Such is the fearlessness, the insensibility to danger, which men acquire by the habitude of constant risk" (2. 95).

Haggard. *adj.* Literally, having a ragged look, as if hacked or gashed. Hence, lean; meager; rough; having eyes sunk in their orbits; ugly. Wild; fierce; intractable. *n.* Any thing wild and intractable. A species of hawk. A hag. HAG. An ugly old woman. A witch; a sorceress; an enchantress. A fury; a she-monster. A cartilaginous fish. Appearances of light and fire on horses' manes or men's hair were formerly called *hags*. HAGGARDLY. *adv.* In a haggard or ugly manner; with deformity.

"When all was ready, however, no one would undertake to ferry the meat across. A vague, and almost superstitious, terror had infected the minds of Mr. Hunt's followers, enfeebled and rendered imaginative of horrors by the dismal scenes and sufferings through which they had passed. They regarded the haggard crew, hovering like spectres of famine on the opposite bank with indefinite feelings of awe and apprehension, as if something desperate and dangerous was to be feared from them" (2. 52).

Hairbrained. Also *harebrained*. *adj.* Wild; giddy; volatile; heedless. According to the OED, one who has the brain like hare's, thus giddy, etc.

"M'Lellan, moreover, was a man of peculiar temperament, ungovernable in his will, of a courage that absolutely knew not fear, and somewhat of a braggart

spirit, that took a pride in doing desperate and hair-brained things" (2. 148). ❧ "M'Kenzie offered to cross the river, and demand the rifle, if any one would accompany him. It was a hair-brained project, for these villages were noted for the ruffian character of their inhabitants; yet two volunteers promptly stepped forward; Alfred Seton, the clerk, and Joe de la Pierre, the cook" (2. 203).

Halcyon. *adj.* Calm; quiet; peaceful; undisturbed; happy. *Halcyon days* were seven days before and as many after the winter solstice, when the weather was calm. Hence, by *halcyon days* are now understood days of peace and tranquility. The name anciently given to the king-fisher.

"From such halcyon dreams, they were startled one morning, at daybreak, by a savage yelp" (2. 172).

Harangue. *n.* A speech addressed to an assembly or an army; a popular oration; a public address. Declamation; a noisy, pompous or irregular address. *v.* To make an address or speech to a large assembly; to make a noisy speech. To address by oration; as, 'the general harangued his troops.' HARANGUING. Declaiming; addressing with noisy eloquence.

"The heart of the gloomy savage was touched by this appeal; he threw aside his robe; made an harangue upon what he had done; and from that time forward seemed to have thrown the load of grief and remorse from his mind" (1. 174). ❧ "The chief made an harangue welcoming the white men to his village, and expressing his happiness in taking them by the hand as his friends; but at the same time complaining of the poverty of himself and his people; the usual prelude among Indians to begging or hard bargaining" (1. 215).

☞ “The women and children gathered on the tops of the lodges and heightened the confusion of the scene by their vociferation. Old men who could no longer bear arms took similar stations, and harangued the warriors as they passed, exhorting them to valorous deeds” (1. 222). ☞ “A gibbet was accordingly constructed of oars: the chief of the village and his people were assembled, and the culprit was produced, with his legs and arms pinioned. Clarke then made a harangue. He reminded the tribe of the benefits he had bestowed upon them during his former visit, and the many thefts and other misdeeds which he had overlooked” (2. 208).

Harbinger. *n.* In *England*, an officer of the king’s household, who rides a day’s journey before the court when traveling, to provide lodgings and other accommodations. A forerunner; a precursor; that which precedes and gives notice of the expected arrival of something else. A messenger.

“The winds prevalent at this season are from the south and southeast, which usually bring rain. Those from the north to the southwest are the harbingers of fair weather and a clear sky” (2. 82). ☞ “In picking up drift wood for fuel, also, they found on some pieces the mark of an axe, which caused much speculation as to the time when and the persons by whom the trees had been felled. Thus they went on, like sailors at sea, who perceive in every floating weed and wandering bird, harbingers of the wished-for land” (2. 181-82).

Haw. The berry and seed of the hawthorn. A small piece of ground adjoining a house; a small field. *In farriery*, an excrescence resembling a gristle, growing under the nether eyelid and eye

of a horse. A dale, *obs. v. i.* [corrupted from *hawk*, or *hack*.] To stop in speaking with a haw, or to speak with interruption and hesitation.

“Even in adopting this course, he had to make up his mind to the certainty of several days of famine at the outset, for it would take that time to reach the last Indian lodges from which he had parted, and until they should arrive there, his people would have nothing to subsist upon but haws and wild berries, excepting one miserable horse, which was little better than skin and bone” (2. 47).

Herbage. Herbs collectively; grass; pasture; green food for beasts. *In law*, the liberty or right of pasture in the forest or grounds of another man.

“At one place the course of the river was nearly in a straight line for about fifteen miles. The banks sloped gently to its margin, without a single tree, but bordered with grass and herbage of a vivid green” (1. 191). ¶ “Now and then a herd of deer would be seen feeding tranquilly among the flowery herbage, or a line of buffaloes, like a caravan on its march, moving across the distant profile of the prairie” (1. 192). ¶ “Sometimes these unwieldy animals were seen moving in long procession across the silent landscape; at other times they were scattered about, singly or in groups, on the broad enameled prairies and green acclivities, some cropping the rich pasturage, others reclining amidst the flowery herbage; the whole scene realizing in a manner the old scriptural descriptions of the vast pastoral countries of the Orient, with ‘cattle upon a thousand hills’ (1. 207).

Heterogeneous. Of a different kind or nature; unlike or dissimilar in kind. *Webster provides heterogeneal as an alternate spelling.*

“We are contributing incessantly to swell this singular and heterogeneous cloud of wild population that is to hang about our frontier, by the transfer of whole tribes of savages from the east of the Mississippi to the great wastes of the far west” (1. 232).

Implacable. *adj.* Not to be appeased; that cannot be pacified and rendered peaceable; inexorable; stubborn or constant in enmity. Not to be appeased or subdued. **PLACATE.** *v. t.* To appease or pacify; to conciliate.

“The Blackfeet had now a vast advantage [guns], and soon dispossessed the poor Snakes of their favorite hunting grounds, their land of plenty, and drove them from place to place, until they were fain to take refuge in the wildest and most desolate recesses of the Rocky Mountains. Even here they are subjected to occasional visits from their implacable foes, as long as they have horses, or any other property to tempt the plunderer” (1. 275).

Importunity. *n.* Pressing or incessant solicitation; urgent request; application for a claim or favor, which is urged with troublesome frequency or pertinacity.

“Their wants being supplied they ceased all further traffic, much to the dissatisfaction of the Crows, who became extremely urgent to continue the trade, and, finding their importunities of no avail, assumed an insolent and menacing tone” (1. 269).

Imp. A son; offspring; progeny. A subaltern or puny devil.

“The children are perfect imps on horseback. Among them was one so young that he could not yet speak. He was tied on a colt of two years old, but managed the reins as if by instinct, and plied the whip with true Indian prodigality” (1. 272).

Imputation. *n.* The act of imputing or charging; attribution; generally in an ill sense. Sometimes in a good sense. Charge or attribution of evil; censure; reproach. Hint, slight notice.

“As to the Indian women, they are far from complaining of their lot. On the contrary, they would despise their husbands could they stoop to any menial office, and would think it conveyed an imputation upon their own conduct” (1. 221).

Incommod. *v. t.* To give inconvenience to; to give trouble to; to disturb or molest. To embarrass.

“The Indians of the lodges pointed out a distant gap through which they must pass in traversing the ridge of mountains. They assured them that they would be but little incommoded by snow, and in three days would arrive among the Sciatoegas” (2. 61). ❧ “The mild temperature prevalent throughout the country is attributed by some to the succession of winds from the Pacific ocean, extending from latitude twenty degrees to at least fifty degrees north. These temper the heat of summer, so that in the shade no one is incommoded by perspiration; they also soften the rigors of winter, and produce such a moderation in the climate, that the inhabitants can wear the same dress throughout the year” (2. 82).

Incurious. *adj.* Destitute of curiosity; not curious or inquisitive; inattentive. Careless; without care.

“It is surprising to notice how well this remote tribe of savages had learnt through intermediate gossips, the private feelings of the colonists at Astoria; it shows that Indians are not the incurious and indifferent observers that they have been represented” (2. 69).

Indemnify. To save harmless; to secure against loss, damage or penalty. To make good; to reimburse to one what he has lost.

“No one was allowed to dispute the prices fixed by the white trader upon his articles; who took care to indemnify himself five times over for the goods set apart by the chief” (1. 171).

Inexorable. *adj.* Not to be persuaded or moved by entreaty or prayer; too firm and determined in purpose to yield to supplication. Unyielding; that cannot be made to bend.

“The Indians now gathered round Mr. Clarke, and interceded for the culprit. They were willing he should be punished severely, but implored that his life might be spared. The companions, too, of Mr. Clarke considered the sentence too severe, and advised him to mitigate it; but he was inexorable” (2. 208).

INDIAN ALLIES.

“Mr. Stuart assured them that the day was not far distant when the whites would make their power to be felt throughout that country, and take signal vengeance on the perpetrators of these misdeeds. The Snakes expressed great joy at the intelligence, and offered their services to aid the righteous cause, brightening at the thoughts of taking the field with such potent allies,

and doubtless anticipating their turn at stealing horses and abducting squaws. Their offers of course were accepted; the calumet of peace was produced, and the two forlorn powers smoked eternal friendship between themselves, and vengeance upon their common spoilers, the Crows" (2. 160).

Indolence. *Literally*, freedom from pain. Habitual idleness; indisposition to labor; laziness; inaction or want of exertion of body or mind, proceeding from love of ease or aversion to toil. Inattention. *Indolence*, like *laziness*, implies a constitutional or habitual love of ease; *idleness* does not.

"The life of an Indian when at home in his village is a life of indolence and amusement" (1. 220).

Interpose. *v. t.* To place between; as, to *interpose* a body between the sun and the earth. To place between or among; to thrust in; to intrude, as an obstruction, interruption or inconvenience. To offer, as aid or services, for relief or the adjustment of differences. *v. i.* To step in between parties at variance; to mediate. To put in by way of interruption.

"Indeed these treeless wastes between the Rocky mountains and the Pacific, are even more desolate and barren than the naked, upper prairies on the Atlantic side; they present vast desert tracts that must ever defy cultivation, and interpose dreary and thirsty wilds between the habitations of man, in traversing which, the wanderer will often be in danger of perishing" (2. 33).

Irascible. *adj.* Very susceptible of anger; easily provoked or inflamed with resentment; irritable.

"It was thought most advisable, therefore, to strike directly across the mountain, since the route, though rugged

and difficult, would be most secure. This counsel was indignantly derided by M'Lellan as pusillanimous. Hot-headed and impatient at all times, he had been rendered irascible by the fatigues of the journey, and the condition of his feet, which were chafed and sore" (2. 147).

Ishmaelites. According to the Bible, Ishmael is the son of Abraham, born of Hagar, handmaiden to Sarah who could not conceive. Various sources trace the genealogy of the Arabs tribes to the twelve sons of Ishmael. Irving, I suppose, is using the term in this sense to describe the nomadic life of the Indians. The sense is unfavorable.

"The snow which had fallen in the night made it late in the morning before the party loaded their solitary pack-horse, and resumed their march. They had not gone far before the Crow trace which they were following, changed its direction, and bore to the north of east. They had already begun to feel themselves on dangerous ground in keeping along it, as they might be descried by some scouts and spies of that race of Ishmaelites, whose predatory life required them to be constantly on the alert" (2. 162).

Jade. *n.* A mean or poor horse; a tired horse; a worthless nag. A mean woman; *a word of contempt, noting sometimes age, but generally vice.* A young woman, *in irony or slight contempt.* *v.* To tire; to fatigue; to weary with hard service. To weary with attention or study; to tire. To harass; to crush. To tire or wear out in mean offices. To rule with tyranny.

"They came slowly lagging into the camp, with weary looks, and horses jaded and way worn" (1. 250). ❧❧

"Here they halted for the night, and Ben Jones having

luckily trapped a beaver, and killed two buffalo bulls, they remained all the next day encamped, feasting and reposing, and allowing their jaded horse to rest from his labors” (2. 166).

Jangling. *part.* Wrangling; quarreling; sounding discordantly. *n.* A noisy dispute; a wrangling. Jangle. *v. i.* To quarrel in words; to altercate; to bicker; to wrangle. *v. t.* To cause to sound discordantly. *n.* Prate; babble; discordant sound.

“The first wife, however, takes rank of all the others, and is considered mistress of the house. Still the domestic establishment is liable to jealousies and cabals, and the lord and master has much difficulty in maintaining harmony in his jangling household” (2. 90).

Jerkin. *n.* A jacket; a short coat; a close waistcoat. A kind of hawk.

“A more complete article of defensive armor was a buff jerkin or shirt of great thickness, made of doublings of elk skin, and reaching to the feet, holes being left for the head and arms” (2. 87).

Jirk. An alternate spelling for *jerk*, *jerked*. The *OED* comments on the etymology: “apparently echoic.” JERK. *v. t.* To thrust out; to thrust with a sudden effort; to give a sudden pull, twitch, thrust or push. To throw with a quick, smart motion. To accost eagerly. *n.* A short, sudden thrust, push or twitch; striking against something with a short, quick motion. A sudden spring.

“In the distribution of burthens, it was his turn to carry the old beaver trap. Piqued and irritated, he suddenly came to a halt, swore he would carry it no further, and jirked it half way down the hill” (2. 148).

Lag. *adj.* Coming after or behind; slow; sluggish; tardy. Last; long-delayed. *n.* The lowest class; the rump; the fag end. He that comes behind. *v.* To walk or move slowly; to loiter; to stay behind, to slacken. LAGGING. Loitering; moving slowly and falling behind.

“They came slowly lagging into the camp, with weary looks, and horses jaded and way worn” (1. 250).

Leathern. *adj.* Made of leather; consisting of leather.

“A ride of sixteen miles brought them, in the afternoon, in sight of the Crow camp. It was composed of leathern tents pitched in a meadow on the border of a small clear stream at the foot of the mountain” (1. 268).

Magazine. A store of arms, ammunition or provisions; or the building in which such a store is deposited. *In ships of war*, a close room in the hold, where the gunpowder is kept. A storehouse for provisions. A pamphlet periodically published, containing miscellaneous papers or compositions.

“After eleven months wandering in the wilderness, a great part of the time over trackless wastes, where the sight of a savage wigwam was a rarity, we may imagine the delight of the poor weatherbeaten travellers, at beholding the embryo establishment, with its magazines, habitations, and picketed bulwarks, seated on a high point of land, dominating a beautiful little bay, in which was a trim-built shallop riding quietly at anchor” (2. 73-74).

Malediction. *n.* Evil speaking; denunciation of evil; a cursing; curse or execration.

“After the day’s exertions they encamped together on

the banks of the river. This was the last night they were to spend upon its borders. More than eight hundred miles of hard travelling, and many weary days, had it cost them; and the sufferings connected with it, rendered it hateful in their remembrance, so that the Canadian voyageurs always spoke of it as ‘*La maudite riviere enragée*’—the accursed mad river; thus coupling a malediction with its name” (2. 57).

Marauding. Roving or ranging in search of plunder.

“It was composed of leathern tents pitched in a meadow on the border of a small clear stream at the foot of the mountain. A great number of horses were grazing in the vicinity, many of the doubtless captured in marauding excursions” (1. 268).

Memento. A hint, suggestion, notice or memorial to awaken memory; that which reminds.

“As the aboriginal tribes of these magnificent regions are yet in existence, the Indian names might easily be recovered; which beside being in general more sonorous and musical, would remain mementoes of the primitive lords of the soil, of whom in a little while scarce any traces will be left” (1. 237-38). ¶ “Having purchased a good supply of salmon from the fishermen, the party resumed their journey, and on the twenty-ninth, arrived at the Caldron Linn; the eventful scene of the preceding autumn. Here, the first thing that met their eyes, was a memento of the perplexities of that period: the wreck of a canoe, lodged between two ledges of rocks. They endeavored to get down to it, but the river banks were too high and precipitous” (2. 131).

Mollify. To soften; to make soft or tender. To assuage, as pain or irritation. To appease; to pacify; to calm or quiet; to qualify; to reduce in harshness or asperity.

“Mr. Breckenridge, who had tried in vain to mollify his ire, accompanied him to the scene of action” (1. 205).

Miscreant. *n.* An infidel, or one who embraces a false faith. A vile wretch; an unprincipled fellow. **MISCREANCE.** *n.* Unbelief; false faith; adherence to a false religion.

“Not knowing what active course to take, they remained under arms all night, without closing an eye, and at the very first peep of dawn, when objects were yet scarce visible, every thing was hastily embarked, and, without seeking to recover the stolen effects, they pushed off from shore; ‘glad to bid adieu,’ as they said, ‘to this abominable nest of miscreants’” (2. 96).

Nefarious. *adj.* Wicked in the extreme; abominable; atrociously sinful or villanous; detestably vile; heinous. **NEFANDOUS.** *adj.* Not to be named; abominable. *The nefandous name of Harry Potter’s enemy is . . . well . . . not to be spoken.*

“Their wants being supplied they ceased all further traffic, much to the dissatisfaction of the Crows, who became extremely urgent to continue the trade, and, finding their importunities of no avail, assumed an insolent and menacing tone. All this was attributed by Mr. Hunt and his associates, to the perfidious instigations of Rose the interpreter, who[m] they suspected of the desire to foment ill-will between them and the savages, for the promotion of his nefarious plans” (1. 269).

Nestor. Nestor was a king of Pylos in Peloponnesus. In old age he participated in the Trojan War. His wisdom and eloquence were proverbial.

“As they passed in triumph through the village they were cheered by the men, women, and children, collected as usual on the tops of the lodges, and were exhorted by the Nestors of the village to be generous in their dealings with the white men” (1. 223).

Nigh. [OE *nēah*.] *adj.* Near; not distant or remote in place or time. *Formerly*, Closely allied by blood. Easy to be obtained or learnt; of easy access. Ready to support, to forgive, or to aid and defend. Close in fellowship; intimate in relation. Near in progress or condition. *adv.* Near; at a small distance in place or time, or in the course of events. Near to a place. Almost; near.

“The apprehensions thus awakened in the minds of some of the men came well nigh proving detrimental to the expedition” (1. 234).

Noisome. *adj.* Noxious to health; hurtful; mischievous; unwholesome; insalubrious; destructive. Noxious; injurious. Offensive to the smell or other sense; disgusting; fetid.

“In traversing this plain, they passed, close to the skirts of the hills, a great pool of water, three hundred yards in circumference, fed by a sulphur spring, about ten feet in diameter, boiling up in one corner. The vapor from this pool was extremely noisome, and tainted the air for a considerable distance” (2. 122).

Ochre. A variety of clay deeply colored by the oxyd of iron.

“These mountains abound also with mineral earths, or chalks of various colors; especially two kinds of ochre,

one a pale, the other a bright red, like vermilion; much used by the Indians, in painting their bodies" (2. 154).

Opprobrious. *adj.* Reproachful and contemptuous; scurrilous. Blasted with infamy; despised; rendered hateful. **OPPROBRIUM.** *n.* Reproach mingled with contempt or disdain.

"His comrades endeavored to divert his mind and to draw him into rational conversation, but he only became the more exasperated, uttering wild and incoherent ravings. The sight of any of the natives put him in an absolute fury, and he would heap on them the most opprobrious epithets; recollecting, no doubt, what he had suffered from Indian robbers" (2. 112).

Osier. *n.* A willow or water-willow, or the twig of the willow used in making baskets. *adj.* Made of such willow twigs.

"The whole extended about three quarters of a mile along the river bank, and was composed of conical lodges, that looked like so many small hillocks, being wooden frames intertwined with osier, and covered with earth" (1. 212).

Outrageous. *adj.* Violent; furious; excessive. **OUTRAGE.** *v. t.* To treat with violence and wrong; to abuse by rude or insolent language; to injure by rough, rude treatment of any kind. *v. i.* To commit exorbitances; to be guilty of violent rudeness. *n.* Injurious violence offered to persons or things; excessive abuse; wanton mischief. **EXORBITANCE.** Also *exorbitancy.* *n.* Literally, a going beyond or without the track of usual limit. Hence, enormity; extravagance; a deviation from rule or the ordinary limits of right or propriety.

"Clarke was now outrageous. All the past vexations that

he had suffered from this pilfering community rose to mind, and he threatened, that, unless the goblet were promptly returned, he would hang the thief should he eventually discover him" (2. 207).

Pacificator. *n.* A mediator, or a peacemaker.

"The warriors were evidently baffled by these precautions, and, having smoked their pipe, and vaped off their valor, took their departure. The farce, however, did not end here. After a little while, the warriors returned, ushering in another savage, still more heroically arrayed. This they announced as the chief of the belligerent village, but as a great pacificator. His people had been furiously bent upon the attack, and would have doubtless carried it into effect, but this gallant chief had stood forth as the friend of white men, and had dispersed the throng by his own authority and prowess" (2. 72).

Park. *n.* A large piece of ground inclosed and privileged for wild beasts of chase, *in England*, by the king's grant or by prescription. *v. t.* To inclose in a park. *adj.* *In military usage*, the area reserved for the artillery, vehicles, stores, etc., in an encampment. Now usually with modifying word, as artillery park (this last definition from the *OED*).

"Vasconcelles a Jesuit father, describes one which he heard in the Sierra, or mountain region of Piratininga, and which he compares to the discharges of a park of artillery" (1. 253).

Parley. *n.* Mutual discourse or conversation; discussion; *but appropriately*, a conference with an enemy in war. *v. i.* To confer with on some point of mutual concern; to discuss orally; hence,

to confer with an enemy; to treat with by words. PARLE. *n.* Conversation; talk; oral treaty or discussion. PARL. *v. i.* To talk; to converse; to discuss any thing orally.

“Rose was immediately sent out to hold a parley with them [the Crows], and invite them to the camp” (1. 267). ¶ “Not yet,’ replied Stuart; ‘it will not do to show fear or distrust; we must first hold a parley. Some one must go out and meet them as a friend” (2. 172).

Partisan. An adherent to a party or faction. In war, the commander of a party or detachment of troops, sent on a special enterprise. A person able in commanding a party, or dextrous [sic] in obtaining intelligence, intercepting convoys, or otherwise annoying an enemy. A commander’s leading staff.

“Rose evidently was not a favorite among his comrades, and it was hoped that he had not been able to make any real partisans” (1. 247-48).

Pay. *In seamen’s language*, to daub or besmear the surface of any body, to preserve it from injury by water or weather. *Pay is an interesting word with extensive, variable usage that I have not here noted.*

“Accordingly, in a couple of days, the Indians employed by that gentleman, constructed for them a canoe twenty feet long, four feet wide, and eighteen inches deep. The frame was of poles and willow twigs, on which were stretched five elk and buffalo hides, sewed together with sinews, and the seams payed with unctuous mud” (2. 183).

Peregrination. *n.* A traveling from one country to another; a wandering; abode in foreign countries. PEREGRINATE. *v. i.* To travel from place to place or from one country to another; to

live in a foreign country. PEREGRINE. *adj.* Foreign, not native [*little used, but consider Peregrine Falcon*].

“Of the perils that attend the lonely trapper, the reader will have sufficient proof, when he comes, in the after part of this work, to learn the hard fortunes of these poor fellows in the course of their wild peregrinations” (2. 11). ¶ “This little handful of adventurous men we propose to accompany in its long and perilous peregrinations” (2. 111).

Perfidy. The act of violating faith, a promise, vow or allegiance; treachery; the violation of a trust reposed. PERFIDIOUS. *adj.* Violating good faith or vows; false to trust or confidence reposed; treacherous. Proceeding from treachery, or consisting in breach of faith. Guilty of violated allegiance.

“He feared, too, that Crooks and M’Lellan would take this opportunity to retort upon him the perfidy which they accused him of having used, two years previously among these very Sioux” (1. 186). ¶ “The Canadians, however, began to apprehend an ambush in every thicket, and to regard the broad, tranquil plain as a sailor eyes some shallow and perfidious sea, which, though smooth and safe to the eye, conceals the lurking rock or treacherous shoal” (1. 192). ¶ “As the Crows, however, were reputed to be perfidious in the extreme, and as errant freebooters as the bird after which they were so worthily named; and as their general feelings towards the whites were known to be by no means friendly, the intercourse with them was conducted with great circumspection” (1. 268). ¶ “They were now in the neighborhood where Mr. Crooks and John Day had been so perfidiously robbed and stripped a few months

previously" (2. 115). ❧ "The perfidy of the white men who revealed the secret of the caches, was, however, perfectly inexplicable" (2. 194).

Piebald. *adj.* Of various colors; diversified in color; as a *piebald* horse.

"They were accompanied by an interpreter; a French creole; one of those haphazard wights of Gallic origin, who abound upon our frontier, living among the Indians like one of their own race. He had been twenty years among the Arickaras, had a squaw and a troop of piebald children, and officiated as interpreter to the chiefs" (1. 211).

Piqued. Irritated; nettled; offended, excited. **PIQUE.** *v. t.* To offend; to nettle; to irritate; to sting; to fret; to excite to a degree of anger. To stimulate; to excite to action; to touch with envy, jealousy or other passion. *v. i.* To cause irritation. *n.* An offense taken; *usually*, slight anger. A strong passion. Point; nicety; punctilio. **PIQUANT.** *adj.* Pricking; stimulating to the tongue. Sharp; tart; pungent; severe. **PIQUANCY.** *n.* Sharpness; pungency; tartness; severity.

"He was an inexperienced hunter and a poor shot, for which he was much bantered by his more adroit comrades. Piqued at their raillery, he had been practicing ever since he had joined the expedition, but without success. (1. 258). ❧ "The menace of Mr. Stuart, in their first interview, to shoot the giant chief with his pistol, and the fright caused among the warriors by presenting the rifles, had probably added the stimulus of pique to their usual horse-stealing propensities, and in this mood of mind they would doubtless have followed the party

throughout their whole course over the Rocky mountains, rather than be disappointed in their scheme”(2. 141).
“There was a forlorn satisfaction in thus balking the Crows, by the destruction of their own property; and, having thus gratified their pique, they shouldered their packs, about ten o’clock in the morning, and set out on their pedestrian wayfaring” (2. 143).

Piscatory. *adj.* Relating to fish or fishing.

“The salmon, which are the prime fish of the Columbia, and as important to the piscatory tribes as are the buffaloes to the hunters of the prairies, do not enter the river until towards the latter part of May, from which time, until the middle of August, they abound, and are taken in vast quantities, either with the spear or seine, and mostly in shallow water” (2. 79-80).

Plat. *n.* A small piece of ground, usually a portion of flat, even ground.

“Extensive plains likewise occur among the higher regions of the mountains, of considerable fertility. Indeed, these lofty plats of table land seem to form a peculiar feature in the American continents” (1. 264).

Poltroon. *n.* An arrant coward; a dastard; a wretch without spirit or courage. *adj.* Base, vile; contemptible. **DASTARD.** *n.* A coward; a poltroon; one who meanly shrinks from danger. *adj.* Cowardly; meanly shrinking from danger. *v. t.* To make cowardly; to intimidate; to dispirit. **DASTARDLY.** *adj.* Cowardly; meanly timid; base.

“They are much given also to predatory inroads into the territories of their enemies, and sometimes of their

friendly neighbors. Should they fall upon a band of inferior force, or upon a village, weakly defended, they act with the ferocity of true poltroons, slaying all the men and carrying off the women and children as slaves” (2. 90).

Potentate. A person who possesses great power or sway; a prince; a sovereign; an emperor, king or monarch.

“Mr. Hunt opened some of the packages and made the chief a present of a scarlet blanket, and a quantity of powder and ball; he gave him also some knives, trinkets and tobacco to be distributed among his warriors, with all which the grim potentate seemed for the time, well pleased” (1. 268).

Predacious. Also *predaceous*. *adj.* Living by prey or plunder.

“The travellers kept on their way due east, over a chain of hills. The recent recontre showed them that they were now in a land of danger, subject to the wide roamings of a predacious tribe; nor, in fact, had they gone many miles, before they beheld sights calculated to inspire anxiety and alarm” (2. 136).

Predilection. A previous liking; a prepossession of mind in favor of something.

“He took occasion, accordingly, in the course of conversation, to inform Rose that, having engaged him chiefly as a guide and interpreter through the country of the Crows, they would not stand in need of his services beyond. Knowing, therefore, his connexion by marriage with that tribe, and his predilection for a residence among them, they would put no constraint upon his will, but, whenever they met with a part of that people,

would leave him at liberty to remain among his adopted brethren. Furthermore that, in thus parting with him, they would pay him half a year's wages in consideration of his past services, and would give him a horse, three beaver traps, and sundry other articles calculated to set him up in the world" (1. 248).

Presentiment. Previous conception, sentiment or opinion; notion previously formed; previous apprehension of something future.

"They had been accustomed to each other's appearance, and to the gradual operation of hunger and hardship upon their frames, but the change in the looks of these men, since last they parted, was a type of famine and desolation of the land; and they now began to indulge the horrible presentiment that they would all starve together, or be reduced to the direful alternative of casting lots!" (2. 45).

Prodigality. Extravagance in the expenditure of what one possesses, particularly of money; profusion; waste; excessive liberality. Profuse liberality. **PRODIGAL.** *n.* A spendthrift, a waster. *adj.* profuse, wasteful.

"Among them was one so young that he could not yet speak. He was tied on a colt of two years old, but managed the reins as if by instinct, and plied the whip with true Indian prodigality" (1. 272).

Promontory. *n.* In *geography*, a high point of land or rock, projecting into the sea beyond the line of the coast; a headland. It differs from a *cape* in denoting high land.

"Sometimes the banks advanced so close upon the river,

that they were obliged to scramble up and down their rugged promontories, or to skirt along their bases where there was scarce a foothold" (1. 284).

Promulgate. *v. t.* To publish; to make known by open declaration; to teach openly.

"On the day following the alarm just mentioned, several parties arrived from different directions, and were met and conducted by some of the braves to the council lodge, where they reported the events and success of their expeditions, whether of war or hunting; which news was afterwards promulgated throughout the village, by certain old men who acted as heralds or town criers" (1. 223). ❧ "There were war-feasts, and scalp-dances, with warlike songs and savage music; all the inhabitants were arrayed in their festal dresses; while the old heralds went round from lodge to lodge, promulgating with loud voices the events of the battle and the exploits of the various warriors" (1. 228).

Propitiate. To conciliate; to appease one offended and render him favorable; to make propitious; to induce to favor, to gain.

"The river deities, however, like those of the sea, were to be propitiated by a bribe, and the infliction of these rude honors to be parried by a treat to the adepts" (1. 165). ❧ "On entering their defiles, therefore, they often hang offerings on the trees, or place them on the rocks, to propitiate the invisible 'lords of the mountains,' and procure good weather and successful hunting; and they attach unusual significance to the echoes which haunt the precipices (1. 253).

Prurient. *adj.* Itching; hot, eager; uneasy with desire. Overly curious. *Webster and Johnson are nearly silent on the lewd overtones of prurient (Webster offers “uneasy with desire”), but the OED suggests lascivious and salacious usages as early as the sixteenth century, essentially from its earliest use.*

While they [antelopes] thus keep to the open plain and trust to their speed, they are safe; but they have a prurient curiosity that sometimes betrays them to their ruin. When they have scud for some distance and left their pursuer behind, they will suddenly stop and turn to gaze at the object of their alarm. If the pursuit is not followed up they will, after a time, yield to their inquisitive hankering, and return to the place from whence they have been frightened” (1. 209).

Pugnacious. *adj.* Disposed to fight; inclined to fighting; quarrelsome; fighting.

“These, in general, are animals of peaceable demeanor [buffalo], grazing quietly like domestic cattle; but this was the season when they were in heat, and when the bulls are unusually fierce and pugnacious” (1. 247).

Pulse. *n.* [The etymology is uncertain but apparently < classical Latin *pult-*, *puls* pottage made of meal, pulse, etc., of uncertain origin, perhaps < ancient Greek πόλτος porridge, of uncertain origin, perhaps related to πάλη fine flour, or to classical Latin pollen fine flour (*OED*).] Leguminous plants or their seeds; as beans, peas, &c. All sorts of grain contained in pods.

“The life of an Indian when at home in his village is a life of indolence and amusement. To the woman is consigned the labors of the household and the field; she arranges the lodge; brings wood for the fire; cooks;

jerks venison and buffalo meat; dresses the skins of the animals killed in the chase; cultivates the little patch of maize, pumpkins, and pulse, which furnishes a great part of their provisions" (1. 220).

Punctilious. Very nice or exact in the forms of behavior, ceremony or mutual intercourse; very exact in the observance of rules prescribed by law or custom; sometimes, exact to excess.

"The arrival of this deputation was the signal for another of those ceremonials which occupy so much of Indian life; for no being is more courtly and punctilious, and more observant of etiquette and formality than an American savage" (1. 224).

Purlieu. An enclosure; a border; a district; a certain limited extent or district; a limit.

"The village soon presented the appearance of a busy fair; and as horses were in demand, the purlieus and the adjacent plain were like the vicinity of a Tartar encampment; horses were put through all their paces, and horsemen were careering about with that dexterity and grace for which the Arickaras are noted" (1. 218).

Purloined. [Fr. *pour* and *loin*; though the *OED* suggest a far muddier etymology.] *Literally*, to take or carry away for one's self; hence, to steal, to take by theft; to pilfer. To take by plagiarism; to steal from books or manuscripts.

"Some of them determined to desert, and to make their way back to St. Louis. They accordingly purloined several weapons and a barrel of gunpowder, as ammunition for their enterprise, and buried them in the river back, intending to seize one of the boats and make off in the night" (1. 234).

Pusillanimous. *adj.* Destitute of that strength and firmness of mind that constitutes courage, bravery and fortitude; being of weak courage; mean-spirited; cowardly. Proceeding from weakness of mind or want of courage; feeble.

“It was thought most advisable, therefore, to strike directly across the mountain, since the route, though rugged and difficult, would be most secure. This counsel was indignantly derided by M’Lellan as pusillanimous. Hot-headed and impatient at all times, he had been rendered irascible by the fatigues of the journey, and the condition of his feet, which were chafed and sore” (2. 147). ¶ “The resolution announced in these letters, to break up and depart from Astoria, was condemned by both Clarke and Stuart. These two gentlemen had been very successful at their posts, and considered it rash and pusillanimous [sic] to abandon, on the first difficulty, an enterprise of such great cost and ample promise” (2. 206).

Quidnunc. [L. what now.] One who is curious to know every thing that passes; one who knows or pretends to know all occurrences.

“A great part of the idle leisure of the Indians when at home, is passed in groups, squatted together on the bank of a river, on the top of a mound on the prairie, or on the roof of one of their earth-covered lodges, talking over the news of the day, the affairs of the tribe, the events and exploits of their last hunting or fighting expedition; or listening to the stories of old times told by some veteran chronicler; resembling a group of our village quidnuncs and politicians, listening to the prosings of some superannuated oracle, or discussing the contents of an ancient newspaper” (1. 221).

Quondam. *Used adjectivally.* Having been formerly; former; as, a *quondam* friend.

“He kept his word, and, as he no longer said any thing to Mr. Stuart on the subject of the pet horse, they journeyed very harmoniously together; though now and then, the Snake would regard his quondam steed with a wistful eye” (2. 126).

Ramification. *n.* The process of branching or shooting branches from a stem; division or separation into branches; a branching out. A branch; a small division proceeding from a main stock or channel. A division or subdivision. *In botony*, the manner in which a tree produces its branches or boughs. *Ramify.* *v.* To separate into branches; to divide into branches or parts. To shoot into branches, as the stem of a plant. To be divided or subdivided. *According to the OED*, “*ramification*” *appears to enter the English language with the sense given above during the early modern period as a borrowing from post-classical Latin. The sense of the word that by extension comes to mean “An offshoot; something that develops from or grows out of something else; an extension, esp. of an idea, concept, etc.” appears to be developing during Washington Irving’s lifetime.*

“The vegetation in these valleys is much more abundant than near the coast; in fact, it is in these fertile intervals, locked up between rocky sierras, or scooped out from barren wastes, that population must extend itself, as it were, in veins and ramifications, if ever the regions beyond the mountains should be come civilized” (2. 83).

Recontre. *Not in Webster or Johnson in this spelling. The OED suggests the alternate spelling recounter and compares the word with rencounter, which is in Webster and Johnson. RECOUNTER. A*

meeting, esp. a hostile one; an encounter (*OED*). **RENCONTRE**. *n.* *Literally*, a meeting of two bodies. A meeting in opposition or contest. A casual combat; a sudden contest of fight without premeditation. A casual action; a personal opposition. An engagement between armies of fleets. Any combat, action or engagement.

“The travellers kept on their way due east, over a chain of hills. The recent *recontre* showed them that they were now in a land of danger, subject to the wide roamings of a predacious tribe; nor, in fact, had they gone many miles, before they beheld sights calculated to inspire anxiety and alarm” (2. 136).

Recruit. *v. t.* To repair by fresh supplies any thing wasted. To supply with new men any deficiency of troops. *v. i.* To gain new supplies of any thing wasted; to gain flesh, health, spirits, &c. *n.* The supply of any thing wasted; *chiefly*, a new-raised soldier to supply the deficiency of any army.

“For several days they remained in the neighborhood of these Indians, reposing after all their hardships, and feasting upon horse flesh and roots, obtained in subsequent traffic. Many of the people ate to such excess as to render themselves sick, others were lame from their past journey; but all gradually recruited in the repose and abundance of the valley” (2. 64). ¶ “In the course of their march they killed a grizzly bear, with fat on its flanks upwards of three inches in thickness. This was an acceptable addition to their stock of elk meat. The next day, Mr. Crooks was sufficiently recruited in strength to be able to carry his rifle and pistols, and they made a march of seventeen miles along the borders of the plain” (2. 152). ¶ “The next morning the feasting

was resumed, and about midday, feeling somewhat recruited and refreshed, they set out on their journey with renovated spirits, shaping their course towards a mountain, the summit of which they saw towering in the east, and near to which they expected to find the head waters of the Missouri" (2. 158). ¶¶ "They got one of their canoes a few miles down it, with extreme difficulty, sometimes wading, and dragging it over the shoals; at length they had to abandon the attempt, and to resume their journey on foot, aided by their faithful old pack horse, who had recruited strength during the repose of the winter" (2. 180).

Redolent. *adj.* Having or diffusing a sweet scent; fragrant.

"They wound their way between the cabins which looked like dirt-heaps huddled together without any plan, and surrounded by old palisades; all filthy in the extreme, and redolent of villanous smells" (1. 213).

Regale. *v. t.* To refresh; to entertain with something that delights; to gratify, as the senses. *v. i.* To feast; to fare sumptuously. *n.* A magnificent entertainment or treat given to ambassadors [sic] and other persons of distinction.

"Cannon had heard so much of the invulnerability of this tremendous animal [the grizzly bear] that he never attempted to fire, but, slipping the strap from his forehead, let go the buffalo meat and ran for his life. The bear did not regale himself with the game, but kept on after the hunter" (1. 258). ¶¶ "This was the tribe over which Comcomly, the one eyed chieftain, held sway; it boasted two hundred and fourteen fighting men. Their chief subsistence was on fish, with an occasional regale

of the flesh of elk and deer, and of wild fowl from the neighboring ponds" (2. 84). ¶ "The choicest of the buffalo meat, with tongues, and humps, and marrow bones, were devoured in quantities that would astonish any one that has not lived among hunters or Indians; and as an extra regale, having no tobacco left, they cut up an old tobacco pouch, still redolent with the potent herb, and smoked it in the honor of the day" (2. 180).

Remonstrate. *v. t.* To show by a strong representation of reasons. *v. i.* To exhibit or present strong reasons against an act, measure or any course of proceedings; to expostulate. To suggest urgent reasons in opposition to a measure.

"Much as this wayward conduct gave them anxiety, the partners saw it was in vain to remonstrate" (2. 16).

Repose. *v. t.* To lay at rest. To lay; to rest, as the mind, in confidence or trust. To lay up; to deposit; to lodge. To place in confidence. *v. i.* To lie at rest; to sleep. To rest in confidence. To lie; to rest. *n.* A lying at rest. Sleep; rest; quiet. Rest of mind, tranquility; freedom from uneasiness. Cause of rest. *In poetry,* a rest; a pause.

"The poor horses needed repose. They had been urged on, by forced marches, over rugged heights, among rocks and fallen timber, or over low swampy valleys, inundated by the labors of the beaver" (2. 138). ¶ "It was concluded, therefore, that the elk had been hunted by some of that wandering and hostile tribe who, of course, must be in the neighborhood. The idea put an end to the transient solace they had enjoyed in the comparative repose and abundance of the river" (2. 146). ¶ "After all that they had suffered from hunger,

cold, fatigue and watchfulness; after all their perils from treacherous and savage men, they exulted in the snugness and security of their isolated cabin, hidden, as they thought, even from the prying eyes of Indian scouts, and stored with creature comforts: and they looked forward to a winter of peace and quietness; of roasting, and boiling, and broiling, and feasting upon venison, and mountain mutton, and bear's meat, and marrow bones, and buffalo humps, and other hunter's dainties, and of dosing and reposing round their fire, and gossiping over past dangers and adventures, and telling long hunting stories, until spring should return; when they would make canoes of buffalo skins, and float themselves down the river" (2. 172). ❧ "Accordingly, on the 13th of December, they bade adieu, with many a regret, to their comfortable quarters, where, for five weeks, they had been indulging the sweets of repose, of plenty, and of fancied security" (2. 176).

Requisite. *n.* That which is necessary; something indispensable.
adj. Required by the nature of things or by circumstances; necessary; so needful that it cannot be dispensed with.

"No people understand better the value of a horse, than these equestrian tribes; and no where is speed a greater requisite, as they frequently engage in the chase of the antelope, one of the fleetest of animals" (2. 117).

Retort. *v. t.* To throw back; to reverberate. To return an argument, accusation, censure or incivility. To bend or curve back. *v. i.* To return an argument or charge; to make a severe reply. *n.* The return of an argument, charge or incivility in reply.
"He feared, too, that Crooks and M'Lellan would take

this opportunity to retort upon him the perfidy which they accused him of having used, two years previously among these very Sioux" (1. 186).

Retrograde. *adj.* Going or moving backwards; contrary. *In astronomy*, apparently moving backward and contrary to the succession of the signs, as a planet. Declining from a better to a worse state.

"A momentary joy was diffused through the camp, for they supposed succor to be at hand. It was soon dispelled. Mr. Crooks and his companions had become completely disheartened by this retrograde march through a bleak and barren country; and had found, computing from their progress and the accumulating difficulties besetting every step, that it would be impossible to reach Henry's fort, and return to the main body in the course of the winter. They had determined, therefore, to rejoin their comrades, and share their lot" (2. 30).

Ribald. *n.* A low, vulgar, brutal wretch; a lewd fellow. *adj.* Low; base; mean.

"On the evening of the 23d (July) they encamped on the banks of what they term Big river; and here we cannot but pause to lament the stupid, common-place, and often ribald names entailed upon the rivers and other features of the great west, by traders and settlers" (1. 237).

Rill. *n.* A small brook; a rivulet; a streamlet. *v. i.* To run in a small stream, or in streamlets.

"Arrived at the foot of the mountain, the travellers found a rill of water oozing out of the earth, and resembling in look and taste, the water of the Missouri" (2. 164).

Ruffling. *part.* Disturbing; agitating; furnishing with ruffles. *n.* Commotion; disturbance; agitation. **RUFFLE.** *v. t.* *Properly,* to wrinkle; to draw or contract into wrinkles, open plaits of folds. To disorder by disturbing a smooth surface; to make uneven by agitation. To discompose by disturbing a calm state of; to agitate; to disturb. It expresses less than *fret* and *vex*. To throw into disorder or confusion. To throw together in a disorderly manner. To furnish with ruffles. *v. i.* To grow rough or turbulent. To play loosely; to flutter. To be rough; to jar; to be in contention, *obs.*

“Towards evening, a number of warriors entered the camp in ruffling style; painted and dressed out as if for battle, and armed with lances, bows and arrows, and scalping knives” (2. 72).

Sagacious. *adj.* Quick of thought; acute in discernment or penetration. Quick of scent. **SAGACITY.** *n.* Quickness or acuteness of discernment or penetration; readiness of apprehension. Quickness or acuteness of scent, *applied to animals.*

“The Indians were overjoyed when they found this band of white men intended to return and trade with them. They promised to use all diligence in collecting quantities of beaver skins, and no doubt proceeded to make deadly war upon that sagacious, but ill-fated animal, who, in general, lived in peaceful insignificance among his Indian neighbors, before the intrusion of the white trader” (2. 66).

Sally. *v. i.* To issue or rush out, as a body of troops from a fortified place to attack besiegers. To issue suddenly; to make a sudden eruption. *n.* An issue or rushing of troops from a besieged place to attack the besiegers. A spring or darting of intellect, fancy

or imagination; flight; sprightly exertion. Excursion from the usual track; range. Act of levity or extravagance; wild gayety; frolick.

“The cry was up that the Sioux were coming. In an instant the village was in an uproar. Men, women and children were all brawling and shouting; dogs barking, yelping and howling. Some of the warriors ran for the horses to gather and drive them in from the prairie, some for their weapons. As fast as they could arm and equip they sallied forth; some on horseback, some on foot” (1. 222). ¶ “They soon found that they were in a dangerous neighborhood. On the 12th of September, having encamped early, they sallied forth with their rods to angle for their supper. On returning, they beheld a number of Indians prowling about their camp, whom, to their infinite disquiet, they soon perceived to be Upsarokas, or Crows” (2. 134). ¶ “On the 2nd of November, therefore, they pitched their camp for the winter, on the woody point, and their first thought was, to obtain a supply of provisions. Ben Jones and the two Canadians accordingly sallied forth, accompanied by two others of the party, leaving but one to watch the camp” (2. 170).

Sauciness. *n.* Impudence; impertinent boldness; petulance; contempt of superiors. **SAUCY.** *adj.* Impudent; bold to excess; rude; transgressing the rules of decorum; treating superiors with contempt. It expresses more than *pert*. Expressive of impudence.

“The Indians in this vicinity were better clad and altogether in more prosperous condition than those above, and, as Mr. Hunt thought, showed their consciousness of ease by something like sauciness of manner” (2. 68).

Scoria. *n.* Dross; the recrement of metals in fusion, or the mass produced by melting metals and ores. **Dross.** The recrement or despumption of metals; the scum or extraneous matter of metals, thrown off in the process of melting. Rust; crust of metals. Waste matter, refuse; any worthless matter separated from the better part; impure matter. **RECREMENT.** *n.* Superfluous matter separated from that which is useful; dross; scoria; spume.

“Various parts of the mountains also bear traces of volcanic action. Some of the interior valleys are strewn with scoria and broken stones, evidently of volcanic origin; the surrounding rocks bear the like character, and vestiges of extinguished craters are to be seen on the elevated heights” (1. 265).

Seine. Also *sein.* *n.* A large net for catching fish. A fishing net.

“There were also vessels of willow and grass, so closely wrought as to hold water, and a seine neatly made with meshes, in the ordinary manner, of the fibres of wild flax or nettle. The humble effects of the poor savages remained unmolested by their visitors, and a few small articles, with a knife or two, were left in the camp, and were no doubt regarded as invaluable prizes” (2. 21).

Seneschal. *n.* A steward; an officer in the houses of princes and dignitaries, who has the superintendence of feasts and domestic ceremonies. A high bailiff.

“The chief then made a sign to the old pipebearer, who seemed to fill, likewise, the station of herald, seneschal, and public crier, for he ascended to the top of the lodge to make proclamation” (1. 214).

Sepulture. *n.* Burial; interment; the act of depositing the dead body of a human being in the grave. SEPULCHRE/SEPULCHER. *n.* A grave; a tomb; the place in which the dead body of a human being is interred. *v. t.* To bury; to inter; to entomb. SEPULCHRAL. *adj.* Pertaining to burial, to the grave, or to monuments erected to the memory of the dead.

“Of these they had a thousand inquiries to make concerning all affairs, foreign and domestic, during their year of sepulture in the wilderness; and especially about the events of the existing war” (2. 183).

Shagged. *v. t.* To make rough or hairy. To make rough or shaggy; to deform. *While neither Webster nor Johnson provide a usage close to Irving’s, the OED does so:* To render rough or shaggy, esp. the surface of the earth, a hill-side, a rock, etc. (with a growth of trees or the like); *chiefly in past participle.*

“They were shagged with dense and gloomy forests, and cut up by deep and precipitous ravines, extremely toilsome to the horses. Sometimes the travelers had to follow the course of some brawling stream, with a broken, rocky bed, which the shouldering cliffs and promontories on either side, obliged them frequently to cross and recross” (2. 121).

Shallop. *n.* A sort of large boat with two masts, and usually rigged like a schooner. A small, light vessel.

“After eleven months wandering in the wilderness, a great part of the time over trackless wastes, where the sight of a savage wigwam was a rarity, we may imagine the delight of the poor weatherbeaten travellers, at beholding the embryo establishment, with its magazines, habitations, and picketed bulwarks, seated on a high point of land,

dominating a beautiful little bay, in which was a trim-built shallop riding quietly at anchor" (2. 73-74).

Singular. *adj.* Single; not complex or compound. Particular; existing by itself; unexampled. Remarkable; eminent; unusual; rare. Not common; odd, implying something censurable or not approved. Being alone; that of which there is but one.

"While they were regarding the village, they beheld a singular fleet coming down the river. It consisted of a number of canoes, each made of a single buffalo hide stretched on sticks, so as to form a kind of circular trough. Each one was navigated by a single squaw, who knelt in the bottom and paddled; towing after her frail bark a bundle of floating wood intended for firing" (212).

Slake. *v. t.* To quench; to extinguish; as, to *slake* thirst. *v. i.* To go out; to become extinct.

"At one time they had twenty-five miles of painful travel, without a drop of water, until they arrived at a small running stream. Here they eagerly slaked their thirst; but, this being allayed, the calls of hunger became equally importunate" (1. 262).

Sojourn. *v. i.* To dwell for a time; to dwell or live in a place as a temporary resident, or as a stranger, not considering the place as his permanent habitation. *n.* A temporary residence, as that of a traveler in a foreign land.

"The river on the banks of which they were encamped, emptied into the Columbia, was called by the natives the Eu-o-tal-la, or Umatalla, and abounded with beaver. In the course of their sojourn in the valley which it watered, they twice shifted their camp, proceeding about

thirty miles down its course, which was to the west” (2. 65). ¶ “Here they found Lieutenant Brownson still in command; the officer who had given the expedition a hospitable reception on its way up the river, eighteen months previously. He received this remnant of the party with a cordial welcome, and endeavored in every way to promote their comfort and enjoyment during their sojourn at the fort” (2. 184). ¶ “In pursuance of the resolution, they suspended all trade with the natives, except for provisions, having already more peltries than they could carry away, and having need of all the goods for the clothing and subsistence of their people, during the remainder of their sojourn, and on their journey across the mountains” (2. 202).

Solicitude. *n.* Carefulness; concern; anxiety; uneasiness of mind. **SOLICITIOUS.** *a.* Careful; anxious; very desirous, as to obtain something. Careful; anxious; concerned; as respecting an unknown but interesting event. Anxious; concerned; followed by *for*, as when something is to be obtained. **SOLICITRESS.** *n.* A female who solicits or petitions.

“The Beaver sailed from New York on the 10th of October, 1811, and reached the Sandwich Islands without any occurrence of moment. Here a rumor was heard of the disastrous fate of the Tonquin. Deep solicitude was felt by every one on board for the fate of both expeditions, by sea and land” (2. 107).

Specious. Showy, pleasing to the view; apparently right; superficially fair, just or correct; appearing well at first view; plausible. **PLAUSIBLE.** That may be applauded; that may gain favor or approbation; hence, superficially pleasing; apparently

right; specious, popular; using specious arguments or discourse.

“The turkey-buzzard (*vultur aura*, or golden vulture), when on the wing, is one of the most specious and imposing of birds” (1. 162).

Succor. *v. t.* *Literally*, to run to, or run to support; hence to help or relieve when in difficulty, want or distress; to assist and deliver from suffering. *n.* Aid; help; assistance; *particularly*, assistance that relieves and delivers from difficulty, want or distress. The person or thing that brings relief.

“On the banks of the Wallah-Wallah lived the hospitable tribe of the same name who had succored Mr. Crooks and John Day in the time of their extremity” (2. 116).

☞ “By this agreement, which was ratified by Mr. Astor in 1813, the two companies bound themselves not to interfere with each other’s trading and hunting grounds, nor to furnish arms and ammunition to the Indians. They were to act in concert, also, against all interlopers, and to succor each other in case of danger” (2. 185).

Superannuated. Impaired by old age. **SUPERANNUATE.** *v. t.* To impair or disqualify by old age and infirmity. *v. i.* To last beyond the year.

“A great part of the idle leisure of the Indians when at home, is passed in groups, squatted together on the bank of a river, on the top of a mound on the prairie, or on the roof of one of their earth-covered lodges, talking over the news of the day, the affairs of the tribe, the events and exploits of their last hunting or fighting expedition; or listening to the stories of old times told by some veteran chronicler; resembling a group of our village quidnuncs and politicians, listening to the prosings of

some superannuated oracle, or discussing the contents of an ancient newspaper” (1. 221).

Supercargo. *n.* An officer or person in a merchant’s ship, whose business is to manage the sales and superintend all the commercial concerns of the voyage.

“Mr. Nicholas G. Ogden, a gentleman on whose talents and integrity the highest reliance could be placed, sailed as supercargo” (2. 188).

Surcoat. *n.* A short coat worn over the other clothes.

“The Arickaras generally go naked, but, like all savages, they have their gala dress of which they are not a little vain. This usually consists of a gay surcoat and leggings of the dressed skin of the antelope, resembling chamois leather, and embroidered with porcupine quills brilliantly dyed” (1. 226). ❧ “The weapons of every man were put in order, and his cartridge-box replenished. Each one wore a kind of surcoat made of the skin of the elk, reaching from his neck to his knees, and answering the purpose of a shirt of mail, for it was arrow proof, and could even resist a musket ball at the distance of ninety yards” (2. 113).

Tranchant. Also *trenchant*. [Fr. *tranchant*.] *adj.* Cutting; sharp.

“M’Leellan, with his usual *tranchant* mode of dealing out justice, resolved to shoot the desperado on the spot in case of any outbreak” (1. 269).

Turbid. [Lat. *turbidus*.] *Properly*, having the lees disturbed; *but in a more general sense*, muddy; foul with extraneous matter; thick, not clear.

“Below them was the valley of the Missouri, about seven miles in breadth, clad in the fresh verdure of spring; enameled with flowers and interspersed with clumps and groves of noble trees, between which the mighty river poured its turbulent and turbid stream” (1. 166).

Umbrageous. *adj.* Shading; forming a shade. Shady; shaded. Obscure. **UMBRAGE.** *n.* A shade; a screen of trees. Shadow; shade; slight appearance, *obs.* Suspicious of injury; offense; resentment.

“Occasionally, there were intervals of pasturage, and the banks of the river were fringed with willows and cotton wood, so that its course might be traced from the hill tops, winding under an umbrageous covert, through a wide sunburnt landscape” (2. 133).

Unwonted. *adj.* Unaccustomed; unused; not made familiar by practice. Uncommon; unusual; infrequent; rare.

“The men were now set to work to fell trees, and the mountains echoed to the unwonted sounds of their axes” (2. 10).

Vagabond. A vagrant; one who wanders from town to town or place to place, having no certain dwelling, or not abiding in it.

“Mr. Hunt and his companions were more and more sensible how much it would be in the power of this sullen and daring vagabond Rose, to do them mischief, when they should become entangled in the defiles of the mountains, with the passes of which they were wholly unacquainted, and which were infested by his freebooting friends, the Crows” (1. 249).

Vainglorious. Vain without merit. Vain to excess of one's own achievements; elated beyond due measure; boastful. Boastful; proceeding from vanity.

"They were in continual war with each other, and their wars were of the most harassing kind; consisting, not merely of main conflicts and expeditions of moment, involving the sackings, burnings and massacres of towns and villages, but of individual acts of treachery, murder, and cold-blooded cruelty; or of vaunting and foolhardy exploits of single warriors, either to avenge some personal wrong, or gain the vainglorious trophy of a scalp" (1. 170). ❧ "A negotiation was accordingly opened with the white men, and after some diplomacy, the matter was compromised for a blanket to cover the dead, and some tobacco to be smoked by the living. This being granted, the heroes of Wish-ram crossed the river once more, returned to their village to feast upon the horses whose blood they had so vaingloriously drunk, and the travellers pursued their voyage without further molestation" (2. 101).

Valorous. Brave; courageous; stout; intrepid; valiant.

"The women and children gathered on the tops of the lodges and heightened the confusion of the scene by their vociferation. Old men who could no longer bear arms took similar stations, and harangued the warriors as they passed, exhorting them to valorous deeds" (1. 222).

Varmint. *Apparently a variant of or derived from* vermin. An animal of a noxious or objectionable kind (*OED*).

"Day's young companion reproached him for not practicing the caution which he enjoined upon others.

‘Why, boy,’ replied the veteran, ‘caution is caution, but one must not put up with too much even from a bear. Would you have me suffer myself to be bullied all day by a varmint?’” (1. 260).

Vaunt. *v. t.* To boast of; to make a vain display of. *v. i.* To boast; to make a vain display of one’s own worth, attainments or decorations; to talk with vain ostentation; to brag. *n.* Boast; a vain display of what one is or has, or has done; ostentation from vanity.

“His people had been furiously bent upon the attack, and would have doubtless carried it into effect, but this gallant chief had stood forth as the friend of white men, and had dispersed the throng by his own authority and prowess. Having vaunted this signal piece of service, there was a significant pause; all evidently expecting some adequate reward. Mr. Hunt again produced the pipe, smoked with the chieftain and his worthy compeers; but made no further demonstrations of gratitude” (2. 72).

Vehement. Violent; acting with great force; furious; very forcible. Very ardent; very eager or urgent; very fervent; earnest.

“The tops of the lodges were crowded with the inhabitants, all earnestly looking towards the hills, and keeping up a vehement chattering” (1. 225).

Venery. [OFr. *venerie* < L. *venārī* to hunt.] The act or exercise of hunting; the sports of the chase. *Etymologically unrelated to*

VENERY [< Latin *Vener-*, *Venus*] The pleasures of the bed.

“Piqued at their raillery, he had been practicing ever since he had joined the expedition, but without success. In the course of the present afternoon, he went forth

by himself to take a lesson in venerie, and, to his great delight, had the good fortune to kill a buffalo" (1. 258).

Verdant. *adj.* Green; fresh; covered with growing plants or grass. Flourishing.

"There is scarcely any rain throughout this time, yet the face of the country is kept fresh and verdant by nightly dews, and occasionally by humid fogs in the mornings" (2. 82).

Verdure. *n.* Green; greenness; freshness of vegetation.

"Below them was the valley of the Missouri, about seven miles in breadth, clad in the fresh verdure of spring; enameled with flowers and interspersed with clumps and groves of noble trees, between which the mighty river poured its turbulent and turbid stream" (1. 166).

Verge. The extreme side or end of any thing which has some extent of length; the brink; edge; border; margin. *Among gardeners*, the edge or outside of a border. *In another sense, not clearly related*, a rod, or something in the form of a rod or staff, carried as an emblem of authority.

"It is difficult, therefore, to get within shot of it. Ben Jones the hunter, however, in one of the passes of the Black hills, succeeded in bringing down a bighorn from the verge of a precipice, the flesh of which was pronounced by the gourmands of the camp to have the flavor of excellent mutton" (1. 255-56).

Vermilion. *n.* The cochineal, a small insect found on a particular plant. Red sulphuret of mercury; a bright, beautiful red color of two sorts, natural and artificial. Any beautiful red color. *v.* To dye red; to cover with a delicate red.

“In a little while, however, they began to appear in more gorgeous array, tricked out in the finery obtained from the white men; bright cloths; brass rings; beads of various colors, and happy was he who could render himself hideous with vermilion” (1. 239).

Vernal. Belonging to the spring; appearing in spring. Belonging to youth, the spring of life.

“Mr. Nuttall seems to have been exclusively devoted to his scientific pursuits. He was a zealous botanist, and all his enthusiasm was awakened at beholding a new world as it were, opening upon him in the boundless prairies, clad in the vernal and variegated robe of unknown flowers” (1. 182).

Viand. Meat dressed; food.

“At one place the natives had just returned from hunting, and had brought back a large quantity of elk and deer meat, but asked so high a price for it as to be beyond the funds of the travellers, so they had to content themselves with dog flesh. They had by this time, however, come to consider it a very choice food, superior to horse flesh, and the minutes of the expedition speak rather exultingly now and then, of their having made a ‘famous repast,’ where this viand happened to be unusually plenty” (2. 67).

Vicissitude. *n.* [L. *vicissitude*.] Regular change or succession of one thing to another. Change; revolution, as in human affairs.

“It [a cache] is, in fact, the only mode that migratory hordes have of preserving their valuables from robbery, during their long absences from their villages or accustomed haunts, on hunting expeditions, or during the vicissitudes of war” (2. 28).

Villanous. Also *villainous*. *adj.* Base; very vile, *little used*. Wicked; extremely depraved. Proceeding from extreme depravity. Sorry; vile; mischievous. VILLAN/VILLAIN. *In law*, a *villain* or *villein* is one who holds lands by a base or servile tenure, or in *villenage*. A vile, wicked person; a man extremely depraved, and capable or guilty of great crimes.

“They wound their way between the cabins which looked like dirt-heaps huddled together without any plan, and surrounded by old palisades; all filthy in the extreme, and redolent of villanous smells” (1. 213).

Vindictive. Revengeful, malicious; given to revenge.

“The habitual gratification of his vindictive impulses, however, had taken away from him all mastery over his passions and rendered him liable to the most furious transports of rage” (1. 173-74).

Virago. [L. *vir*.] A woman of extraordinary stature, strength and courage, a female who has the robust body and masculine mind of a man; a female warrior. A bold, resolute woman. *In common usage*, a bold, impudent, turbulent woman; a termagant.

“As to the Indian women, they are far from complaining of their lot. On the contrary, they would despise their husbands could they stoop to any menial office, and would think it conveyed an imputation upon their own conduct. It is the worst insult one virago can cast upon another in a moment of altercation. ‘Infamous woman!’ will she cry, ‘I have seen your husband carrying wood into his lodge to make the fire. Where was his squaw, that he should be obliged to make a woman of himself!’” (1. 221).

Vivacity. *n.* Liveliness; sprightliness of temper or behavior. Air of life and activity. Life; animation; spirits; Power of living, *obs.* Longevity, *obs.*

“Day was hunting in company with one of the clerks of the Company, a lively youngster, who was a great favorite with the veteran, but whose vivacity he had continually to keep in check” (1. 259).

Vociferation. *n.* A violent outcry; a vehement utterance of the voice. **VOCIFERATE.** *v.* To utter with a loud cry. To cry out with vehemence; to exclaim. **VOCIFEROUS.** *adj.* Making a loud outcry; clamorous; noisy; loud.

“The women and children gathered on the tops of the lodges and heightened the confusion of the scene by their vociferation” (1. 222). ❧ “On the 9th of July, just before daybreak a great noise and vociferation was heard in the village” (1. 225). ❧ “As to the Canadian voyageurs, their mutual felicitations, as usual, were loud and vociferous, and it was almost ludicrous to behold these ancient ‘comrades’ and ‘confreres,’ hugging and kissing each other on the river bank” (2. 74).

Vouchsafe. *v.t.* [*vouch* and *safe*.] To permit to be done without danger. To condescend to grant. **VOUCHSAFING.** Condescending to grant; deigning.

“To all this, Miller replied abruptly, that it was useless to argue with him, as his mind was made up. They might furnish him, or not, as they pleased, with the necessary supplies, but he was determined to part company here, and set off with the trappers. So saying, he flung out of their presence without vouchsafing any further conversation” (2. 15).

Wight. [OE *wiht*.] *n.* A being, a person; man or woman; *often implying some contempt or commiseration.* *adj.* powerful; swift, nimble, quick; agile.

“They were accompanied by an interpreter; a French creole; one of those haphazard wights of Gallic origin who abound upon our frontier, living among the Indians like one of their own race” (1. 211).

Yawl. A small ship’s boat, usually rowed by four or six oars.

“They took leave of their comrades and started off on their several courses with stout hearts, and cheerful countenances; though these lonely cruising into a wild and hostile wilderness seem to the uninitiated equivalent to being cast adrift in the ship’s yawl in the midst of the ocean” (2. 11).

Pangur Ban

Pangur Ban and I
each of us plies a special trade;
he pursues the hunt
while I employ the pen.

Far from worldly fame
I seek repose
in thoughtful study;
not envious is Pangur Ban;
he delights in his nimble game.

Though we are two alone
neither one grows bored
attending to our tasks;
we have unlimited sport,
plentiful opportunities
for accuracy and skill.

It is understood
by feats of valor Pangur Ban
in time will catch his prey;
Less sure, I catch at phrases,
seek the intricate paths
that higher thoughts traverse.

His eye, glancing and attentive,
he points against the corner wall:
my eye weak though willing
inclines toward obscured truth.

His is a joyous speed,
pouncing upon the mouse;
Mine a fleeting flash of wit,
grasping the hard idea.

Contented with our lives
we are always thus;
neither hinders the other:
each gains pleasure through his art.
Pangur Ban is master of the task
he performs each day;
I meditate upon existence,
seek design through well-chosen words.

Adapted from *Thesaurus Paleohibernicus*, edited and translated by Whitley Stokes, Cambridge, 1903, pp. 293-94.

