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INTRUSIVE NASALS IN ENGLISH

A few years ago the present writer directed attention to some instances of intrusive nasals in contemporary speech, American and English, and suggested that in the greater part of these instances associative interference was responsible for the added consonants.¹ The bearing of the material presented on the much discussed topic of Middle English added *n*, for

¹ *Englische Studien*, XLV (1912).

which many varying explanations have been offered,² was also treated. Some further instances, heterogeneous in character, of infixed *n*, noted since the article cited was printed but reinforcing, it is believed, the position taken there, are these:

Anthens, Athens. "The city of Anthens."

Used persistently by a pupil in a secondary school. The inserted *n* might have been carried over from the second syllable; but, in this pupil's usage, there seemed to be confusion of the name with the word *anthem*.

ballant, ballad, a Scotch form. "A beuk of old ballants as yellow as the cowslips." J. Wilson, *Noctes Ambrosianae* (1825), Works, I, 2. Cited in *N. E. D.* See also the ballad *Geordie's Wife* (Child, 209, Text C).

'Gar print me ballants weel,' she said,
'Gar print me ballants many,
Gar print me ballants weel,' she said,
'That I am a worthy ladie.'

The intrusive *n* in *ballant* probably arises from association with the common *-ant*, *-ent* suffixes of nouns and adjectives, as in *talent*, *element*, *gallant*, *pedant*, *peasant*, *current*.

cementary, cemetery. "I made a trip to the cementary." Same usage as *Athens*. The added consonant is due to *momentary*, *commentary*, *sedentary*, etc.

comontie, comedy. "Is not a comontie a Christmas gambold?" Sly's word in Shakespeare's *Taming of the Shrew*, Ind. ii, 140. A mongrel form arising from the fusing with *comedy* of *common*.

daintive, dative. "The daintive case." Used by a pupil in a secondary school; not a nonce-formation, but spoken under the impression that it was the proper form.

² See especially O. Jespersen *Englische Studien*, XXXI (1902), also *Modern English Grammar*, I (1910); H. Logeman, *Englische Studien*, XXXIV (1904); Otto Ritter, *Archiv*, CXIII (1904); Karl Luick, *ibid.*, CXIV (1905).

The speaker was influenced by the words *dainty*, *plaintive*, etc.

denont, denote. "The place 'from which' is denonted in Latin by the ablative." Same usage as *daintive*.

incindent, incident. "That was an interesting incindent." Same usage as *daintive*. This form has the added *n* of unaccented middle syllables earliest to receive attention.

marcantant, merchant. "A marcantant or a pedant." Shakespeare's *Taming of the Shrew*, IV, ii, 63. From Italian *mercante* and *merchant* (*marchant*).

rumfle, to ruffle, rumple. See Wright's *English Dialect Dictionary*. A crossing of *ruffle* and *rumple*.

sumple, supple, pliant. "Her skin is as sumple as a Duchess's." Hardy, *Tess* (1891). Wright. From *supple* influenced by *limber* or *pliant*.

trinkling, trickling. Form used invariably in a version repeated in Nebraska of the Old-World ballad "Lord Lovel." Obviously a crossing of *trickling* and *twinkling*.

He ordered her grave to be opened wide,
Her shroud to be folded down,
And there he kissed her pale cold cheeks
Till the tears came trinkling down.

Trinkling has been heard also in children's usage in the phrase "trinkling tears."

Among nonce-formations showing intrusive *n* were noted *dinky* for *dickey*, said under the influence of the slang epithet "dinky" used just before, *shenkel* for *shekel*, and *coumplet* spoken for *couplet*.

To Professor Jespersen's instances of names with unstable medial *n*, as *Robinson*, *Robison*, *Edmundstone*, *Edmiston*, *Hutchinson*, *Hutchison*, and the like,³ giving rise, he suggests, to analogous unstable medial *n* (afterward becoming permanent) in *nightingale*, *messenger*, etc., may be added the name *Higginson*, or *Higgesson*, of the American colonist:

"At this meeting information was given by Mr. Nowell by letters ffrom Izake Johnson,

³ *Modern English Grammar*, I, p. 35.

that one Mr. Higgeson of Lester, an able minister" . . . "and if Mr. Higgeson may conveniently be had to goe this present voiage."⁴

"Mr. Francis Higgeson & Mr. Samuell Sketton intended ministers of the plantaçon", etc.⁵

The word *flounder* has been explained as a nasalized form of the Dutch *flodderen*, through the influence of *flounce*, or of *flounder*, the fish.⁶ *Galantine*, from French *galatine*, a special sauce for fish, has an added *n*, through association with *gallant*; but the added *n* is brought from French, which has the nasalized form alongside the unnasalized. Blending is probably responsible also for the *n*'s in the two words of doubtful etymology, *chump* and *jumper*, the garment. The former, *i. e.*, a man as unintelligent as a block or chump (*i. e.*, short thick lump) of wood is perhaps an amalgamation of *chop* and *lump*.⁷ A derivation from *chub* has also been suggested,⁸ in which case the term would still be a blend, gaining its *n* from *lump*, *bump*, etc. If *chump* is a by-form of *chunk*, the nasal is accounted for without the assumption of intrusion. Probably, however, none of these derivations is sufficient in itself, but the word is rather to be classed as an "echoic composite" or "indefinite blend."⁹ A plausible etymology for *jumper*, from the obsolete *jump*, blouse, short coat, connects it with the French *juppe*, associated with *jump*, the verb and substantive, *i. e.*, the garment is one which may be "jumped on" in a hurry.¹⁰ Compare a "slip." If this be the case, blending is again responsible for the added nasal.

The etymology of most of the words cited in the last paragraph is too uncertain for much weight to be given to their testimony.

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⁴ *Records of the Governor and Company of Massachusetts Bay*, I, 37, 38. Cited in T. W. Higginson's *Life of Francis Higginson*, N. Y., 1891, p. 32.

⁵ From Young's *Chronicle of Massachusetts*, p. 316. Cited in T. W. Higginson's *Life*, p. 36.

⁶ *The Century Dictionary*.

⁷ *The New English Dictionary*.

⁸ *The Century Dictionary*.

⁹ See "Indefinite Composites and Word-Coinage," *The Modern Language Review*, July, 1913.

¹⁰ *The New English Dictionary*, also *The Century Dictionary*.