

He says he resides with his ma in
Mayfair
Though his letters are postmarked
E.C.
He looks very well that's beyond all
dispute
For at *Blackford's* he's rigged up
and down,
For *Blackford* lends suits, from the
hat to the boots,
And that just suits the Boy about
Town."

Blackfriars (thieves' slang), used as a warning; "look out!" French thieves would say, "ac-resto!"

Blackguard (common), a low, disreputable fellow. Dr. Johnson, Gifford, and others derive this from an attendant on the devil, and also from the mean dependants of a great house, who were generally called the *black guard* as early at least as the beginning of the sixteenth century.

We have neither school nor hospital for the distressed children called the *blackguards*.—*Nelson: Address to Persons of Quality*.

A lousy knave, that within this twenty years rode with the *blackguards* in the duke's carriage, 'mongst spits and dripping-pans.—*Webster: The White Devil*.

Thieves and murderers took upon them the cross to escape the gallows; adulterers did penance in their armour. A lamentable case that the devil's *blackguards* should be God's soldiers.—*Fuller: The Holy War*.

C. G. Leland says:—"It is probably the old Dutch thieves' slang word *blagaart*, from *blag*, meaning a man (but always in an inferior sense), and *art*, the

commonest termination for a noun. 'The greater part of the nouns in slang which are of Dutch origin, are formed with the ending *aard* (*aart*, *erd*, *ert*), *er*, *rik*, *heid*, and *ing*.'—*James Teirlinck, Woordenboek van Bargoensch*. To those who would object that man does not necessarily mean a vulgar or low person, I would suggest that in thieves' patois it means nothing else, and that in our British tinkers' dialect, *subil siableach* (Gaelic for a vagabond) is used simply to denote any man."

Likewise in the French argot, *gonce*, originally a fool (occasionally used with that meaning now), has the signification of man, individual. Wright has, however, shown that the entirely English term *blackguard*, as applied to scullions, was in general use at an early date.

Her Majesty, by some means I know not, was lodged at his house Ewston, farre unmeet for her highness, but fitter for the *black garde*.—*Lodge's Illustrations*, ii. 188.

I was alone among a coachful of women, and those of the elector's duchesse chamber, forsooth, which you would have said to have been of the *blacke guard*.—*Morison's Itinerarie*.

Though some of them are inferior to those of their own ranke, as the *blackeguard* in a prince's court.—*Burton: Anatomy of Melancholy*.

Nor must her cousin be forgot, prefer'd
From many years' command in the *black guard*,

To be an ensign.
Whose tatter'd colours well do represent
His first estate i' th' ragged regiment.

—*Earl of Rochester's Works*.