

like emigrants in quarantine, awaiting the time when they are to be admitted to the regular haven of the Standard Dictionary. But this increase has been so enormous and so rapid that no standard lexicographer could do it justice. It is generally admitted that to keep pace with modern French journalism or novels, a "Dictionnaire d'Argot" is absolutely indispensable, and this is now quite as much the case with English. And when we consider that it is not possible to take up a copy of any of the leading London society journals without finding very often in one single article a dozen slang phrases which have never yet been given in any dictionary whatever, it will be admitted that a time has certainly come to publish a dictionary upon new lines in which every effort shall be made to define such expressions without regard to what the department is called to which they belong.

To show what a need there is of such a work, one only has to reflect that a vast number of more recent American slang phrases (not old English provincialisms established *ab initio* in New England, but those chiefly of modern Western manufacture) have never been collected and published. And the same may be said of those which have cropped up and developed themselves in the English-speaking colonies, in the bush of Australia, or South Africa. The real amount of Romany, Dutch, Celtic, and Yiddish, in the various slangs, has never yet been decided by writers who had a thorough knowledge of these languages, and Mr. Hotten, while declaring that to the gypsies we are in great measure indebted for the cant language, and that it was the corner-stone and a great part of the edifice of English slang, was still so utterly ignorant of it as to have recourse to a vocabulary of Roumanian gypsy to explain the very few words of English Romany in his work, the great majority of which were in some way erroneous. The present is the first Slang Dictionary ever written which has had the benefit of contributors who thoroughly understood Celtic dialects, Dutch, German, and French slang, and who were thus enabled to establish their relations with English cant, and one of these gentlemen is equally at home in Pidgin-English, Gypsy, and Shelta or tinker's slang, which by-the-bye is one of the three principal slangs of the kingdom,