

“My dear —, it would be *rot* publishing a thing like this. The public would *snort* at it. Yours very truly, —.” The author’s confidence in his publisher went up a hundred per cent. There was now a member of the firm sufficiently intimate with him to employ “slang” in their communications, and the author knew that from that time he would be able to tell to a fraction the exact grade of value they put upon every work he offered them. “Slang” is an essential of the age. Even a bishop has used it in the pulpit, in a modified form, when he said that “Society would be impossible without white lies.” It seems as if the day was not far off when it might be true to say that “Society would be impossible without slang.”

One thing is certain, that the taste of the age is to learn specialities from those who have a special knowledge of them. The public that goes to see the life of the Wild West and the prize-ring, rejoice also in realistic novels by those whose special knowledge best qualifies them for the work, whether it be an uncanny familiarity with the mysteries of the Far West, or the mysteries of Paris; and these kind of works, as a rule, abound above all others in technical expressions and argot. Granted that people of the same country as the author are generally able to understand these by the context without the labour of a dictionary, a very small percentage of the intelligent foreigners who make a practice of reading English works of note could, without the aid of a vocabulary, be able to decipher the multifarious “lingos” which enter into these books, and this is just the class who will be most assisted by the arrangement adopted in this work of giving all the various departments of slang together.

A. B.