

There is a strong suspicion among men whose heads are level that the minstrel variety performance is a *bluff* of the "messenger" to keep from the public the real motives of the murders.—*Bret Harte: Gabriel Conroy.*

Bluffer (provincial), an innkeeper, or landlord of a public-house. (Nautical), a boatswain of a ship.

Bluffing (American, cards), betting high on poor cards at poker, in the hopes of frightening the other players into going out. A crafty player will often allow himself to be called for a small *bluff*, so as to establish a reputation for doing it, in order to lie by and win a good stake when he has a really good hand, on which he has thus induced his antagonists to suppose that he is *bluffing*. The English equivalent for this term is "bragging."

Blunderbuss (popular), a stupid, blundering fellow.

Blunt (thieves), money.

When the slow coach paused, and the gemmen storm'd,

I bore the brunt—

And the only sound which my grave lips form'd

Was *blunt*—still *blunt*!

—*Lord Lytton: Paul Clifford.*

"Take care of your watches, gentlemen!" said the polite policeman, endeavouring to divide the mob.

"Take care of your *blunt*, you devils!" yelled the gallant Primrose Leaguer, who had come to see the fun.—*Bird o' Freedom.*

By some the word is derived from Mr. John Blunt, the

chairman of the South Sea Company, the famous bubble by which a few fortunes were won, and many fortunes were lost, in 1720. By others it is thought that the word originated in the French *blond*. But *blunt* (sometimes varied to *the blunt*) is more probably derived, as the latter appellation implies, from an allusion to the blunt rim of coins or to their hardness, as in the phrase "hard cash," "soft" being bank notes, and "stiffs" cheques or bills.

Blunted (popular, and thieves), possessed of money.

Bly-hunka (tinker), a horse.

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Board, to (military), to borrow.

Board him (nautical), a colloquialism for I'll ask, demand, or accost him (Admiral Smyth). Shakspeare makes Polonius say of Hamlet:—

"I'll *board him* presently."

To "*board him* in the smoke," means to take a person by surprise, from the simile of firing a broadside and taking advantage of the smoke to board.

Boarding school (old cant), the name given by thieves and similar characters to Newgate or any other prison. "To go to *boarding school*" was to go to gaol. French thieves call a