

Brick in the hat (common), intoxicated, top-heavy. The derivation is obvious.

Bricklayer's clerk (nautical), a contemptuous expression for lubberly people pretending to having seen better days, but who were forced to betake themselves to sea life.

Bridge (card-sharpers), a cheating trick at cards, by which any particular card is cut by previously curving it. French card-sharpers term it "faire le pont."

I've found out the way that Yankee fellow does the king. It's not the common bridge that everybody knows.—*Charles Lever: Davenport Dunn.*

To *bridge* a person or throw him over the *bridge*, is, in a general sense, to deceive him by betraying the confidence he has reposed in you. In the game the confederates so play into each other's hands that the victim must inevitably be "thrown over the *bridge*."

Bridle-cull (old cant), a highwayman.

A booty of £10 looks as great in the eye of a *bridle-cull*, and gives as much real happiness to his fancy, as that of as many thousands to the statesman.—*Fielding: Jonathan Wild.*

Brief (prison), a note or letter.

"Just look what I've had sent me. An order to go over the Bank of England." . . .

"Can't you alter the *brief*, to admit three?"

"Oh lor, no; wouldn't try it on; might queer the pitch before starting."—*Bird o' Freedom.*

Brief is a survival of an old English term of common ecclesiastical use in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. In French *brief*, both from the Latin *brevis*. See rubric in the Prayer-book. Here *briefs*, citations, and excommunications are to be read. *Briefs* were circular letters issued by authority asking for charitable collections in all churches.

(Thieves), a ticket, pocket-book, pawnbroker's duplicate.

So I claimed (stole) them, . . . and guyed (ran) to the rattler (railway), and took a *brief* to London Bridge.—*Rev. J. Horsley: Jottings from Jail.*

"Take it from me," exclaimed the gentleman with the pink may twined round his hat, as he gracefully reclined on the seat of a third-class carriage in the Ascot "special," and leisurely sucked a piece of fried fish, "these 'ere six and sixpenny 'rattlers' may be all right in their way, but give me a thirty-two-blow weekly (*brief*)! They goes at twice the bloomin' speed, an' you meets a different class o' company!"—*Bird o' Freedom.*

I have snatched at *briefs*, the property of others,

But the punishment was too much to sustain.

Oh send your boy a pound, thou best of mothers;

I'll refund it when the Gee-gees run again.

—*When the Gee-gees Run Again.*

Briefs (cardsharpers), cards constructed on a cheating principle. Like the German *Briefe*, which Baron Heinecken says was the name given to the cards manufactured at Ulm. *Brief* is also the synonym for a card in German slang, and *briefen* means to play at cards.