

gypsies and vagabonds in their cavern among the hills. It is to be observed that Harman, a magistrate who was not only very familiar with every type of criminals, but who was the first who ever published a canting vocabulary, declares that *it was only within thirty years previous to 1567 that the dangerous classes had begun to use a familiar jargon at all*. Mr. Turner says that this statement is little better than a guess at the truth; but Harman, who seems to have been an earnest and honest writer, explicitly declares that his statement was the result of inquiry among many, or to use his own words: "As far as I can learne or understand by the examination of *a number* of them, their language—which they terme peddelars Frenche or canting—began but within these xxx yeeres or lyttle above."

What confirms this statement, if it does not actually prove it, is the fact that Harman, though he evidently laboured hard to make a full vocabulary and had many facilities for collecting words, gives us in all only about 160, while those who came after him in the field are accused of only repeating him. But the truth probably is, that Harman was quite right; canting was really young in his time, and small in proportion to its age. Its growth may be very clearly traced in dramatic, comic, or criminal literature from 1535, as shown by Robert Copland in his "Hye Way to the Spyttel House," down to the present day.

In old canting the most striking element is the large proportion of Celtic words, drawn from all parts of Great Britain. Turner has observed that the Act 5 Edward III. c. 14, affords evidence that the Welsh *gwestwr*, "unbidden guest," or vagabond, was a public nuisance in England prior to 1331. In fact the Welsh and Irish stroller, or professional rogue and beggar, was a common type represented and ridiculed in broadsides or plays till within a century.* Edicts and Acts of Parliament, and the most vigorous punishment and reshipment of "ye vacabones" to their homes, were utterly ineffectual to keep them out of England. In the English "kennick" or canting of the lowest classes of the present day, the greater proportion of

* A majority of those travellers and tramps in England, who are simply beggars and thieves, and who do not seek for work, are still Irish. Full information on this subject may be found in the "History of Vagrants and Vagrancy," by C. J. Ribton Turner; and it may be said with truth that all the criminals of the towns and cities put together do not injure the country at large so much as these creatures, who carry vice into every hamlet, and into the remotest corners of the kingdom.