

**FORGOTTEN MEANINGS;
OR, AN HOUR WITH A
DICTIONARY**

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Forgotten Meanings; Or, An Hour with a Dictionary by Alfred Waites

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ALFRED WAITES

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BY

ALFRED WAITES

Author of "The Student's Historical Manual"

BOSTON

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1886

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FORGOTTEN MEANINGS.

PREFACE.

IN collecting these FORGOTTEN MEANINGS, I have been upon my guard against the enticements of conjectural etymology, and have rejected much that was most alluring, bearing in mind the warning afforded by Peter Le Loyer, who though he had read more books, perhaps, than any other man in the world, went raving mad about etymons.

When a skilful anatomist observes the action of a pugilist's biceps, he can calculate very nearly the extent of its impetus, and knows why an argument from that source invariably carries conviction with it: in like manner, the etymologist, the dissector of language, knows to a nicety the degree of force

209382

with which a muscular word will impinge upon an intellectual structure.

The anatomist, too, becomes acquainted with peculiar formations in the human fabric, for which he perceives no use, which seem to him a detriment rather; and the etymologist occasionally finds in the genesis of words meanings which seem useless, significations which he cannot understand. Nevertheless, in the one case as in the other, there are underlying reasons, which, if only once got at, might explain many a perplexing fact connected with our common history.

A. W.

FEBRUARY, 1886.

ABBREVIATIONS.

- A. L.* Andrews's Latin Lexicon.
A. R. A. Adams's Roman Antiquities.
B. Brewer's Dictionary of Phrase and Fable.
C. Chambers's Etymological Dictionary.
F. A. Fosbroke's Encyclopædia of Antiquities.
J. Johnson's Dictionary (first edition).
L. & S. Liddell and Scott's Greek Lexicon.
P. Pliny's Natural History (Bohn).
W. Webster's Unabridged Dictionary.



FORGOTTEN MEANINGS;

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ABANDON. To abandon, means to desert your colors. (L. *a*, from; *bandum*, an ensign.) *B.*

ABJURATION. "Till Henry VIII., his time, if a man having committed felony, could go into a church, or churchyard, before he were apprehended, he might not be taken thence to the usual trial of law, but confessing his fault to the justices, or the coroner, give his oath to forsake the realm forever, which was called abjuration." *Ayliffe's Par. Jur. Canonick. Dr. Johnson.*

ABOMINATE. We should abominate a thing when it is ominous or portentous of evil. (L. *abominatus*; *ab*, from; *omen*, *ominis*, a portent.)

ABOVE-BOARD. A figurative expression, borrowed from gamesters, who, when they put