

said to be "thrown upon his beam ends."

He laughed the idea down completely; and Tom abandoning it, was thrown upon his beam-ends again for some other solution.—*Charles Dickens: Martin Chuzzlewit.*

The French would express a state of embarrassment by "il est au bout de son latin," or "il ne sait sur quel pied danser."

The phrase also means to be in great need, when the "ballast" (money)—to continue the nautical metaphor—is gone.

When a fellow is on his beam-ends, as I was then, he must keep his eyes about him and have impudence enough for anything, or else he may stop and starve.—*Mayhew: London Labour and the London Poor.*

"On one's beam-ends," in a sitting posture.

You get on stunningly, gig-lamps, and haven't been on your beam-ends more than once a minute.—*C. Bede: Verdant Green.*

**Bean.** This word occurs in several colloquial phrases, such as "three blue beans in a blue bladder," and refers to a rattle-head, a foolish fellow.

They say—  
That putting all his words together,  
Tis three blue beans in a blue bladder.  
—*Prior: Alma Cant.*

The phrase is evidently from a jester's bladder with beans or peas in it. It must be noted, as a coincidence, that the idea of a bladder was uppermost in the minds of those who coined the French word *fol*, fool, jes-

ter, from the low Latin *folis*, bellows or bladder.

"Not worth a bean," or "the black of a bean," corresponds to the Latin *ne hilum* (literally "not the black of a bean"), contracted into *nihil*. There is a Dutch proverb, "Every bean has its black," i.e., "Every man has his faults," which gives force to the English expression.

(American slang), a bean is specially a five-dollar gold piece, and "bean-traps" is synonymous with stylish sharpers.

Formerly bean meant a guinea. This is possibly from the French *bien*, used in old canting among other meanings for property or money.

"Couldn't you let him pike if I come down with a thimble and ten beans?"

The detective shook his head.—*On the Trail.*

**Bean feast** (tailors), a good feast, also an annual excursion of workpeople.

**Beano** (printers). See 'GOOSE. Abbreviation of word "bean-feast," mostly used by machine-printers. Compositors generally employ the term "'goose" or "wayzgoose" for this festive event.

**Beans, he don't know** (American). The natives of New England, but especially of Boston, are celebrated for culture or intelligence of the highest order, and also for an extraordinary fondness for beans baked in a