

and is here made known for the first time in a work of this kind ; this being also the first Slang Dictionary to which the rich and racy slang of the fifth continent—the mighty Australian commonwealth of the future—has been contributed by one long resident in the country and familiar both with its life and its literature. Information has been gathered at its very source from all classes of society, and in every department contributors have been employed who were perfectly at home in their respective specialities.

We began our preface with trying to define, or discover, the nature of that slippery Proteus, slang ; after doing which to the best of our power, we proceeded to show the necessity for a dictionary such as the present, and to instance the precautions taken to make it exhaustive. We might have added that the majority of the contributors selected were men not only intimate with their subject, but also of proved ability in literature. We could hardly conclude without making some allusion to the volume which was the forerunner of this, “Argot and Slang.” One passage in its preface has attracted much attention for its terse enunciation of what is generally recognised.

“Slang has invaded all classes of society, and is often used for want of terms sufficiently strong to convey the speaker's real feelings. It seems to be resorted to in order to make up for the shortcomings of a well-balanced and polished tongue which will not lend itself to exaggeration and violence of utterance. Journalists, artists, politicians, men of fashion, soldiers, even women, talk argot, sometimes unawares.” A curious illustration of this has just been brought under the editor's notice. A gentleman had been publishing for some years with the same firm of publishers, but with very varying success. “I can never for the life of me,” he used to complain, “tell whether Mr. Pompous means that my new book is a poor one or a bad one. His letters are tissues of *under certain circumstances, we should not feel justified in advising* (or not advising), *in the present state of the public taste it is impossible to predict*, conceivably, &c.” But a year or two ago a college friend of this author became a member of this firm of publishers. In due time another book was submitted, and the answer came from the new partner –