

Blue-blazes (common), hell. As there is probably no man who has ever heard of hell who has not been taught to associate it with burning sulphur or brimstone, the expression does not seem to be so meaningless as some writers suppose. (Popular), spirituous liquors.

Blue boar (old cant), the vulgar term for a venereal disease.

Blue-bottle (general), a policeman, a constable, termed also a "blue devil."

The Bobby's big boot, though, is nudging her now,
And she sleepily stutters, "All right!
Whatsh th' row?"

Then the buzz of the *blue bottle's* borne on the breeze—

"Now move yourself, 'Liza! Come, pass along, please!"

—*Sporting Times*.

It occurs in Shakspeare in the Second Part of King Henry IV., where Doll Tearsheet calls the beadle "a *blue-bottle* rogue." Most etymologists agree in ascribing the appellation to the colour of a policeman's uniform. The term was formerly applied to servants dressed in blue liveries. The police force is sometimes spoken of as the "blues." The old French city police were termed by thieves *les verts*, from their green uniforms, and nowadays a French rogue will talk of *les serins* (canaries), *i.e.*, *gendarmes*, with yellow facings. The rebel *chouans* called the Republican

soldiers *les bleus*. The Austrians and the English were respectively styled *les blancs* and *habits rouges* by French soldiery. Again, "blue bellies" was a term applied by the Confederate soldiery during the Civil War to the Federals, on account of their blue gaberdines, and the latter dubbed their adversaries "grey-backs." Many other examples might be given in support of the above derivation of *blue-bottles*.

Blue boy (popular), a bubo.

Blue butter (popular), mercurial ointment.

Blue cheek (popular), explained by quotation.

There were three fashions for whiskers when I was a child, and they were variously known as *blue cheek*, the whisker shaved off and leaving the cheek blue; "bacca pipe," the whisker curled in tiny ringlets; and "touzle," or whisker worn bushy. — *J. Greenwood: Outcasts of London*.

Blue flag (popular), a blue apron worn by butchers, greengrocers, &c. "He has hoisted the *blue flag*."

Blue funk (English and American), extreme fright.

It put me in a regular *blue funk*. — *Punch*.

Blue moon (proverbial), an undefined period, used in the phrase, "Once in a *blue moon*."

Blue murders (popular), a great and unusual noise. To call *blue*