THE VULGAR TONGUE

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Slang forms a significant part of the English language. The first slang dictionary appeared over 300 years ago, recording terms that are now mostly obsolete. Some of the old favourites survived though, and a few were thought too vulgar to include in standard dictionaries until quite recently. Even today, the sanitised family edition of the American *Official Scrabble Players Dictionary* omits dozens of supposedly offensive words. What a wimpy bunch of woolly woofers! We should be celebrating our colourful slanguage, not censoring it. Here is an A-to-Z collection from the 1811 *Dictionary of the Vulgar Tongue*. Note that none of these is allowed in Scrabble.

**ABEL-WACKETS** blows given on the palm of the hand with a twisted handkerchief (a jocular punishment among sailors)
**BRISTOL-MAN** the son of an Irish thief and a Welsh whore
**CLEYMES** artificial sores made by beggars to excite charity
**DILBERRIES** small pieces of excrement adhering to the hairs near the fundament
**EQUIPT** rich, or having new clothes
**FLAYBOTTOMIST** a bum-brusher, or schoolmaster
**GUNDIGUTS** a fat, pursy fellow
**HARK-YE-ING** whispering on one side to borrow money
**ITCHLAND** Scotland (also called Scratchland and Louseland)
**JAW-ME-DEAD** a talkative person
**KONOBLIN-RIG** stealing large pieces of coal from coal sheds
**LANSPRISADO** one who has only twopence in his pocket
**MAW-WALLOP** a filthy composition, sufficient to provoke vomiting
**NIMGIMMER** a physician who cures venereal disease
**ODD-COME-SHORTLYS** some time or another
**PUZZLE-TEXT** an ignorant blustering parson
**QUOT** a man who meddles in women’s household business
**RANDLE** a nonsensical rhyme recited by Irish schoolboys as an apology for breaking wind near friends
**SLIPGIBBET** one who deserves and has narrowly escaped the gallows
**THINGSTABLE** a ludicrous designation for a constable, avoiding the first syllable which sounds somewhat indecent
**UNGUENTUM AUREUM** a bribe
**VAN-NECK** a woman with large breasts
**WATER-SCRIGER** a doctor who prescribes from inspecting the water of his patients; a piss-prophet
**XANTIPPE** a shrew or scolding wife
**YAFFLING** eating
**ZOUCH** a slovenly ungenteeel man who stoops while walking