

Letters to the Editor.

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Welsh Romani.

I HAVE just read Prof. Turner's review of my "Dialect of the Gypsies of Wales" in NATURE of August 28, and trust you will permit me to make a few comments.

Prof. Turner refers to the "well-established rules of Gypsy," i.e. the phonetic correspondences between Sanskrit and Romani, but omits to mention that my book is the first to supply a full and systematic series of these phonetic equations; for the earlier lists of Ascoli and Miklosich are too incomplete to be of service. These equations have been deduced in the first place from examples where the correspondence between a Sanskrit and Romani word is indisputable, and afterwards applied to the elucidation of words the etymology of which is in doubt. Hence my etymologies, which he appears to assign to guess-work, have all been based upon a belief in that "constancy of sound-laws" which he charges me with ignoring. By no other method would it have been possible to arrive at such new derivations as *bār*, 'stone,' from Skr. *vaṭa*; *bivan*, 'unripe,' from Skr. *vimlāna*; *lil*, 'book,' from Skr. *likhita*; *phabai*, 'apple,' by reduplication from Skr. *phala*, and many others. I am therefore in agreement with Prof. Turner as to the principle that "a given sound in a given dialect will develop in the same way in all words in which it appears under the same conditions," and only question his application of this rule.

In the single example cited by Prof. Turner, namely, Rom. *śukār* < Skr. *sukṛta*, he emphasises his point by the statement that I give this derivation "without hesitation," although in the vocabulary I first quote Miklosich's *śukra*, following it by a doubtful "rather perhaps to be connected with Skr. *sukṛta*"; while in my chapter on the History of Romani Sounds (§ 130) I cite it with a prefixed query mark. My reason for connecting Gypsy *śukār* with Skr. *sukṛta* is the analogy of three other Romani words from the same Skr. \sqrt{kr} , compounded with prefixes ending in a vowel, where the -k-, though intervocalic, remains. These are:

vaker- (Gk. Gyp. *vaker-*, Arm. Gyp. *pakr-*), 'to talk,' derived by Finck from Skr. *prakṛ*, Prakr. *pakar-*—an etymology which the Sanskritist Ernst Kuhn in 1909 hails as 'sehr glücklich,' explaining as it does the forms in Eastern and Western dialects; *pariker-*, 'to thank' < Skr. *pratīkr*, Prakr. *paḍiker-*; *dūrker-*, *duriker-*, 'to foretell' < Skr. *dūrīkr*. In stating dogmatically that Skr. *sukṛta* "would have become something like **suil*"—a word of singularly unGypsy-like appearance—Prof. Turner assumes that intervocalic Skr. -t-, if it survives, must necessarily have become European Gypsy -l-; but it might equally well have become -r- (§ 130, No. 3), e.g. Skr. *pat-* > Prakr. *paḍ-* > Rom. *per-*, 'to fall'; Skr. prefix *prati-* > Prakr. *paḍi-* > Rom. *pari-*.

Prof. Turner's second adverse criticism arises, I think, from a misapprehension of the scope and purpose of my book. When in my vocabulary, appended to Romani words of Indian origin, I cite Sanskrit, Prakrit, and Hindi forms, I do so with very different degrees of reverence. Sanskrit in almost every case is quoted as the source in which we find preserved the primitive form of Gypsy words, while

Prakrit serves mainly to illustrate processes of sound-change which are often identical with those found in Romani. The Hindi words are in an entirely different category, and from the Gypsy viewpoint practically negligible. I supply them (as I explain in § 76) merely to indicate the usage in the central Modern Indian speech of to-day. But since the Gypsies had left India at least 200 years before the rise of Hindi and other vernaculars, these recent forms cannot have affected Romani.

Prof. Turner assumes that where the Hindi word is given by me I regard it in every instance as a true cognate. But this is not so. The distinction between *tadbhavas* (lineal descendants of Sanskrit words) and *tatsamas* (modern resuscitations from Sanskrit) is so well-known, and the examples in my vocabulary so obvious, that it would have been superfluous to have differentiated the two classes. He selects for rebuke (with judicious omissions which suggest that I try to connect a Romani word with a Hindi *tatsama*) the Gypsy *thulo*, 'fat.' In my vocabulary it appears thus: "*thulo*, adj. [Skr. *sthūla*, 'thick,' 'bulky,' 'gross'; Prakr. *thulla*; Hind. *sthūl*; Dard. *tūla*, *tullo*, *tul*, 'fat']," where the Hindi *sthūl* stands out prominently as an unmistakable *tatsama*. Hindi being historically out of account, it seemed to me to be of first importance to the student of Gypsy to direct attention to the fact that an inherited word, which has survived in Romani, should have been lost and artificially restored in the Modern Indian vernaculars. Prof. Turner, writing as though my book were designed as a text-book on Modern Indian dialects rather than a work on comparative Romani, says: "Such an attitude and such mistakes invalidate the whole of [my] comparative work"—a remark which sheds a curious light on the attitude of the "Junggrammatiker."

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THE main ground of my criticism of Dr. Sampson's book was that in it he pays little regard to the principle of the constancy of sound-laws. In his reply, however, he professes his adherence to this principle; and proceeds forthwith to deny it. For by this method, he says, he arrived at the new conclusion, among others, that *bār*, 'stone,' is derived from Sanskrit *vaṭa*. It is true that initial *v-* regularly becomes *b*, and that intervocalic *-t-* regularly becomes *r*. So far, so good. But it is a well-established law that in European Romani Skt. *ṣ* followed by one consonant only becomes *e*, as appears to be admitted by Dr. Sampson on p. 44 of his book. Therefore if *bār* is to be derived from *vaṭa*, a special explanation of the presence of *ā* (instead of *e*) is required: Dr. Sampson offers none, nor even indicates the need. He has already betrayed the principle of the constancy of sound laws. Actually this word is derived from a Middle Indian **vaṭṭa-* (cf. Pali *vaṭṭo*, 'round, rolling'), common in the N.W. languages, e.g. Panjabi *waṭṭā*, which Khovar *bōrt* shows to be from earlier *varta-*.

I regret having seemed to ascribe to Dr. Sampson greater confidence in his etymology of *śukār* from *sukṛta-* than he expressed: by the words 'without hesitation' I intended to imply 'without directing attention to the phonetic irregularities involved in his etymology.' Nevertheless, he still stoutly upholds this etymology. But it behoves him, as a professed follower of the Junggrammatiker he sneers at, to explain why the word has *ś* in all the dialects except the Greek (in which *ś* usually appears as *s*). He neither solves, nor even poses, the problem. The