

medicine, it has emetic and cathartic qualities, and has had some reputation as a remedy for rheumatism. It was formerly called in Virginia, *pocan*. *Bigelow.*

POKE, *v. t.* [Corn. *pokkia*, to thrust or push. In Armoric, *pochan* is one that dives or plunges.]

1. Properly, to thrust; hence, to feel or search for with a long instrument.

Brown.

2. To thrust at with the horns, as an ox; a popular use of the word in *New England*. And intransitively, to *poke at*, is to thrust the horns at.

POKE, *n.* In *New England*, a machine to prevent unruly beasts from leaping fences, consisting of a yoke with a pole inserted, pointing forward.

POKE, *v. t.* To put a poke on; as, to *poke* an ox. *New England.*

PO'KER, *n.* [from *poke*.] An iron bar used in stirring the fire when coal is used for fuel. *Swift.*

PO'KER, *n.* [Dan. *pokker*, the duse; W. *pwca*, a hobgoblin; bug, id.; *bugan*, a bugbear; *bw*, terror, fright. These words seem to be allied to *buic*, *buic*, an ox or cow, L. *bos*, *bovis*, and all perhaps from the bellowing of bulls.]

Any frightful object, especially in the dark; a bugbear; a word in common popular use in America.

PO'KING, *ppr.* Feeling in the dark; stirring with a poker; thrusting at with the horns; putting a poke on.

PO KING, *a.* Drudging; servile. [*Colloquial.*]

PO'KING-STICK, *n.* An instrument formerly used in adjusting the plaits of ruffs then worn. *Middleton. Shak.*

POLA'CRE, *n.* [Sp. id.; Port. *polaca*, *pol-hacra*; Fr. *polacre*, *polaque*.]

A vessel with three masts, used in the Mediterranean. The masts are usually of one piece, so that they have neither tops, caps nor cross-trees, nor horses to their upper yards. *Mar. Dict. Encyc.*

PO'LAR, *a.* [Fr. *polaire*; It. *polare*; Sp. *pol-ar*. See *Pole*.]

1. Pertaining to the poles of the earth, north or south, or to the poles of artificial globes; situated near one of the poles; as *polar* regions; *polar* seas; *polar* ice or climates.

2. Proceeding from one of the regions near the poles; as *polar* winds.

3. Pertaining to the magnetic pole, or to the point to which the magnetic needle is directed.

POLARITY, *n.* That quality of a body in virtue of which peculiar properties reside in certain points; usually, as in electrified or magnetized bodies, properties of attraction or repulsion, or the power of taking a certain direction. Thus we speak of the polarity of the magnet or magnetic needle, whose *pole* is not always that of the earth, but a point somewhat easterly or westerly; and the deviation of the needle from a north and south line is called its variation. A mineral is said to possess *polarity*, when it attracts one pole of a magnetic needle and repels the other.

POLARIZA'TION, *n.* The act of giving polarity to a body.

Polarization of light, a change produced upon light by the action of certain media, by which it exhibits the appearance of having *polarity*, or poles possessing different properties. This property of light was first discovered by Huygens in his investigation of the cause of double refraction, as seen in the Iceland crystal. The attention of opticians was more particularly directed towards it by the discoveries of Malus, in 1810. The knowledge of this singular property of light, has afforded an explanation of several very intricate phenomena in optics.

PO'LARIZE, *v. t.* To communicate polarity to.

PO'LARIZED, *ppr.* Having polarity communicated to.

PO'LARIZING, *ppr.* Giving polarity to.

PO'LARY, *a.* [See *Polar*.] Tending to a pole; having a direction to a pole.

Brown.

POLE, *n.* [Sax. *pol*, *pal*; G. *pfahl*; D. *paul*; Sw. *påle*; Dan. *pæl*; W. *pawl*; L. *palus*. See *Pale*.]

1. A long slender piece of wood, or the stem of a small tree deprived of its branches. Thus seamen use *poles* for setting or driving boats in shallow water; the stems of small trees are used for hoops and called *hoop-poles*; the stems of small, but tall straight trees, are used as *poles* for supporting the scaffolding in building.

2. A rod; a perch; a measure of length of five yards and a half.

[In *New England*, *rod* is generally used.]

3. An instrument for measuring. *Bacon.*

Bare poles. A ship is under *bare poles*, when her sails are all furled. *Mar. Dict.*

POLE, *n.* [Fr. *pole*; It. Sp. *polo*; G. Dan. Sw. *pol*; D. *pool*; L. *polus*; Gr. *πολος*, from *πολεω*, to turn.]

1. In *astronomy*, one of the extremities of the axis on which the sphere revolves. These two points are called the *poles* of the world.

2. In *spherics*, a point equally distant from every part of the circumference of a great circle of the sphere; or it is a point 90° distant from the plane of a circle, and in a line passing perpendicularly through the center, called the axis. Thus the zenith and nadir are the *poles* of the horizon.

3. In *geography*, the extremity of the earth's axis, or one of the points on the surface of our globe through which the axis passes.

4. The star which is vertical to the pole of the earth; the *pole*-star.

Poles of the ecliptic, are two points on the surface of the sphere, 23° 30' distant from the poles of the world.

Magnetic poles, two points in a lodestone, corresponding to the poles of the world: the one pointing to the north, the other to the south.

POLE, *n.* [from *Poland*.] A native of Poland.

POLE, *v. t.* To furnish with poles for support; as, to *pole* beans.

2. To bear or convey on poles; as, to *pole* hay into a barn.

3. To impel by poles, as a boat; to push forward by the use of poles.

PO'LE-AX, } An ax fixed to a pole or
PO'LE-AXE, } *n.* handle; or rather a sort of hatchet with a handle about fifteen inches in length, and a point or claw bending downward from the back of its head.

It is principally used in actions at sea, to cut away the rigging of the enemy attempting to board; sometimes it is thrust into the side of a ship to assist in mounting the enemy's ship, and it is sometimes called a *boarding-ax*. *Mar. Dict. Encyc.*

PO'LECAT, *n.* [Qu. *foul cat*, or Gr. *φαλος*.] A quadruped of the genus *Mustela*; the fitchew or fitchet. *Encyc.*

PO'LE-DAVY, *n.* A sort of coarse cloth. *Ainsworth.*

POL'EMARCH, *n.* [Gr. *πολεμαρχος*; *πολεμος*, war, and *αρχη*, rule, or *αρχος*, chief.]

1. Anciently, a magistrate of Athens and Thebes, who had under his care all strangers and sojourners in the city, and all children of parents who had lost their lives in the service of their country. *Encyc. Mitford.*

2. A military officer in Lacedæmon.

POLEM'IC, } *a.* [Gr. *πολεμικος*, from *πολεμος*, war.]

POLEM'ICAL, }
1. Controversial; disputative; intended to maintain an opinion or system in opposition to others; as a *polemic* treatise, discourse, essay or book; *polemic* divinity.

2. Engaged in supporting an opinion or system by controversy; as a *polemic* writer.

South.

POLEM'IC, *n.* A disputant; a controversialist; one who writes in support of an opinion or system in opposition to another. *Pope.*

POLEMOSCOPE, *n.* [Gr. *πολεμος*, war, and *σκοπεω*, to view.]

An oblique perspective glass contrived for seeing objects that do not lie directly before the eye. It consists of a concave glass placed near a plane mirror in the end of a short round tube, and a convex glass in a hole in the side of the tube. It is called *opera-glass*, or *diagonal opera-glass*. *Encyc.*

PO'LE-STAR, *n.* A star which is vertical, or nearly so, to the pole of the earth; a lodestar. The northern pole-star is of great use to navigators in the northern hemisphere.

2. That which serves as a guide or director. *Burton.*

PO'LEY-GRASS, *n.* A plant of the genus *Lythrum*. *Fam. of Plants.*

PO'LEY-MOUNTAIN, *n.* A plant of the genus *Teucrium*. *ib.*

POLICE, *n.* [Fr. from L. *politia*; Gr. *πολιτια*, from *πολις*, city.]

1. The government of a city or town; the administration of the laws and regulations of a city or incorporated town or borough; as the *police* of London, of New York or Boston. The word is applied also to the government of all towns in New England which are made corporations by a general statute, for certain purposes.

2. The internal regulation and government of a kingdom or state. *Blackstone.*

3. The corporation or body of men governing a city. *Junius.*

4. In Scottish, the pleasure-ground about a gentleman's seat.