to be used mainly on account of its intrinsic merit, and not because it is a wrong word, it is already ceasing to be slang. So long as the usage of good society continues to proscribe it, it may be called a vulgarism; but unless the need which it serves is supplied in some other way, it is likely to find its way into the standard speech.

The account here given of the distinctive characteristics of slang conflicts with the view of those writers who so define the term as to make it include all words and uses of words that are current only among persons belonging to some particular class, trade or profession. But such an extended application of the word is not supported by general usage. It is true that it is not uncommon to apply the name of slang to the technical language of trades and professions, or even of arts and sciences. This, however, is really a consciously metaphorical use, and is intended to convey the imputation that the employment of technical language has no better motive than the desire to be unintelligible to the uninitiated, to or excite admiration by a display of learning. If the imputation were true, the designation would be strictly applicable. Technical and scientific terms may justly be stigmatized as slang when they are used pretentiously without any good reason, but not when they are chosen because, to those who understand them, they afford a clearer, more precise, or more convenient expression of the meaning than is found in the ordinary vocabulary. At the same time, it is true that every trade or profession has a real slang of its own; that is to say, a body of peculiar words and expressions that serve as flippant or undignified substitutes for the terms that are recog­nized as correct. It happens not infrequently that words of this kind, owing to frequency of use and the development of specific meanings, lose the character of slang and pass into the category of accepted technicalities.

A class of words that has a certain affinity with slang, though admitting of being clearly distinguished from it, consists of those which are proscribed from the intercourse of reputable society because they express too plainly ideas that are deemed indelicate, or because they are brutally insulting. Such words share with slang the characteristic that they are ordinarily employed only in intentional defiance of propriety; they differ from it in being really part of the original vernacular, and not of an artificial vocabulary which is substituted for it. The customary euphem­isms which take the place of these condemned words are, of course, far removed from slang; but the name is strictly ap­plicable to those grotesque metaphors which are sometimes sub­stituted, and emphasize the offensiveness of the notion instead of veiling it.

The known history of European slang begins (leaving out of account the meagre references in German documents hereafter to be mentioned) with the "Ballades” of François Villon in the 15th century. The French *argot* of these compositions contains much that is still obscure, but the origin of some of its words is evident enough. Facetious expressions relating to the destined end of the malefactor are prominent. *Paroir* and *montjoye* (for which later the less ironical *monte à regret* was substituted) are nicknames for the scaffold. *Acollez,* hanged, corresponds to the English "scragged the synonymous *grup* seems to be an onomatopoeic formation sug­gestive of choking. There are some derivatives formed with the suffix *art: riflart* is a police-officer, *abrouart* fog. A few words from foreign languages occur: *audinos,* prayer, is the Latin *audi nos* of the litanies; *arton,* bread, is obviously Greek, and its appearance in the 15th century is somewhat hard to account for. *Moller,* to eat, may perhaps be the Latin *molere* to grind. *Anse,* the ear, is no doubt the Latin *ansa,* handle. In the 15th century and later the ranks of vagabondage were often recruited from the class of poor students, so that the presence of some words of learned origin in the vocabulary of the vagrant and criminal classes is not surprising. Among the prominent features of later French slang may be noted the use of the suffix *mare* to form derivatives such as *perruquemare,* a wig-maker, and the practice of rendering conversation unintelligible to outsiders by tacking on some unmeaning ending to every word.

In Germany the word *Rotwalsch* (the modern *Rotwelsch,* still the name for the cant of vagrants) occurs as early as the middle of the 13th century, and during the following century there appear lists of slang terms for various species of malefactors and begging impostors. The earliest attempt at a vocabulary of “ Rotwelsch ” is that of Gerold Edlibach, compiled about 1490. A second vocabulary, containing nearly the same set of words, is contained in the famous *Liber vagatorum,* first printed in 1510 in High German; versions in Low German and the dialect of the Lower Rhine appeared shortly afterwards. An edition of this work printed in 1529 has a preface by Martin Luther. The most remarkable feature of the jargon represented in these early glossaries is the large number of Hebrew words that it contains. It is not clear whether this fact indicates that Jews formed a large proportion of the German vagabond class at the beginning of the 16th century; the explanation may be simply that the Hebrew words contributed by Jewish vagrants found acceptance because they were unintelligible to ordinary people. However this may be, the later dictionaries of "Rotwelsch ” not only retain most of the Hebrew words found in the earliest authorities, but add greatly to their number. There are some words from Italian, as *bregan,* to beg, from *pregare,* and *barlen,* to speak, from *parlare.* The language of the gipsies seems to have contributed nothing, nor are there any words from Latin or Greek. Some of the words are ordinary German words used mataphorically, like *wetterhan* (weathercock) for a hat, *zwicker (twitcher)* for the hangman, *brief* (letter) for a playing-card. Others are descriptive compounds such as *breitfuss* (broad-foot) for a duck or goose, or derivatives formed by means of the suffixes *-hart* (or *-art)* and *-ling,* as *grunhart* (from *grün,* green), a field, *glathart* (from *glatt,* smooth), a table, *fluckart (from flug,* flight), a bird, *funckart* (from *funke,* spark), fire, *flossart* (from *floss,* stream), water, *flossling,* a fish, *lüssling* (from *lüssnen* to listen), the ear. It is noteworthy that modern Dutch thieves’ cant, as presented in the dictionary of I. Teirlinck, is closely similar in its principles of formation, and in many of its actual words, to that of the early German vocabularies.

The earliest English “ cant ” or "Pedlers’ French,” as exhibited in R. Copland’s *The Hye Waye to the Spyttel House* (1517), John Awdeley’s *Fraternitye of Vacabondes* (1561), Thomas Harman’s *Caueat for Cursetours* (1567) and various later writers, bears a close resemblance in its general character to the German *Rotwelsch* of the *. Liber vagatorum,* the most noteworthy point of difference being the absence of Hebrew words. The suffix corresponding to the *-hart* and *-ling* of German slang is *-mans,* as in *lightmans,* day, *darkmans,* night, *ruffmans,* the woods. The word *cheat,* a thing (whether this is etymologically connected with the verb *to cheat* is uncertain), is used to form a great variety of descriptive compounds, such as *grunting cheat,* a pig, *bleting cheat,* a sheep, *cackling cheat,* a cock or capon, *mofling* *cheat,* a napkin, *smelling cheat,* the nose, *pratling cheat,* the tongue. There are some ordinary English words used as descriptive nicknames for things, as *glasyers,* eyes, *stampes,* legs, *stampers,* shoes, *prauncer,* a horse, *glymmar,* fire, *lap,* buttermilk or whey, *high pad,* the highway, *pek,* meat. Obviously of Latin origin are *grannam,* corn, *pannam,* bread, *cassan,* cheese. *Commission,* a shirt, is from the Late Latin *camisia;* it afterwards appears shortened to *mish.* Perhaps *boon* and *bene,* good, may be Latin, but a French origin is possible. *Vyle,* a town, is probably French; *deuse a vyle,* the country, seems to be a compound of this. A few words seem to be of Dutch or Low German origin, as *bung,* a purse (Low Ger. *pung), kinchin,* a child, *cranke,* a malingerer, and perhaps *feague* or *feak* (Low Ger. *fegen),* which appears in modern slang as *fake.* Certainly from this source is the gambling term *foist,* to palm a die, which has become recognized English in a figurative sense. Harman’s list includes a considerable number of words of obscure and perhaps undiscoverable origin, as *towre,* to see, *lowre,* money, *wyn,* a penny, *trine,* to hang, *cofe* or *cove,* a man, *mart,* a woman. Attempts to discover an etymology for some of these in Romany are unsuccessful. *Ken,* a house, is used by English gipsies, but may be an importation from cant. Even in later English slang the number of Romany words is surprisingly small; *pal,* originally meaning brother, is one of the few certain examples.

From the 17th century onwards it has been more and more difficult to distinguish between the cant of thieves and vagrants and the slang of other classes more or less characterized by disorderly habits of life, such as pugilists, the lower orders of strolling players, professional gamblers and persons of all ranks addicted to low pleasures. Many words that were once peculiar to the outcasts from society are now in general slang use. While a few of the words of the “ Pedlers’ French ” of the 16th century have survived to the present or recent times, the majority have been superseded by later inventions. The older slang names of coins or sums of money, for instance, are nearly all obsolete, and their modern synonyms, mostly of obscure origin, cannot be traced very far back. *Quid, a.* guinea or sovereign, was used in the 17th century; *bob,* a shilling, *bull,* a crown piece, *tanner,* a sixpence, and others, are of 19th-century date. In recent times the vocabulary of low-class slang has obtained several words from Yiddish or Jewish-German, such as *gonnof,* a thief (Hebrew *gannābh* as pronounced by German Jews), *foont,* a pound (German *Pfund), ooftish,* contracted to *oof,* money (from the German *auftischen,* to regale a person with something). A peculiar growth of the 19th century is the so-called “ back slang,” current chiefly among London costermongers, which is a cryptic jargon formed by pronouncing words backwards, as in *ecilop* or *slop lor* "police,” "eno dunop and a flah,” one pound and a half, thirty shillings. What is called "riming slang,” consisting of such fantastic expressions as *mutton-pie* for eye, *lord of the manor* for ” tanner,” *i.e.* sixpence, is a jocular invention which does not seem to have had any considerable currency except in the columns of the sporting newspapers.