

To KIRN, *v. a.* 1. To churn milk, S.

For you nse mair the thrifty gudewife sees
Her lasses *kirn*, or birse the dainty cheesa.
Fergusson's Poems, p. 74,

2. To toss hither and thither, to throw any thing into a disorderly state, to mix in a disgusting manner, to handle over much, S.

A.-S. *cern-an*, *agitare butyrum*, Teut. *kern-en*, Su.-G. *kern-a*.

These verbs seem derived from others which have a more primitive form; A.-S. *cyr-an*, Germ. *kehr-en*, *vert-ere*, Isl. *keir-a*, *vi pellere*. What is churning, but driving with force?

[To KIRN, *v. n.* To work at or with any thing in an awkward or disgusting way: part. pr. *kirnin'*, *kirnan*, used also as a *s.* and as an *adj.*; as an *adj.* it implies awkward, unskilful, Banffs.]

KIRN, *s.* 1. A churn, S. *kern*, A. Bor.

Miss Hamilton, in her useful work meant for the instruction of the peasantry, introduces, on this subject, a singular superstition, which is directly at war with cleanliness.

"But do you not clean the churn before ye put in the cream?"—"Na, na," returned Mrs MacClarty, "that wad no' be canny, ye ken. Naeboddy hereabouts would clean their *kirn* for ony consideration. I never heard o' sic a thing i' my life.—I ne'er kend gude come o' new gaits a' my days. There was Tibby Bell at the head o' the Glen, she fell to cleaning her *kirn* ae day, and the very first kirning after, her butter was burstet, and gude for naething.—Twa or three hairs are better than the blink o' an ill ee.'" Cottagers of Glenburnie, p. 201, 261, 262.

"Eith to learn the cat to the *kirn*;" S. Prov.

"An ill custom is soon learn'd, but not so soon forgotten." Kelly, p. 93.

Teut. *kerne*, id. Su.-G. *kerna*.

2. Metaph. applied to a mire, a disgusting mixture, S. "The ground's a mere *kirn*."

[3. The act of handling over much, over-nursing, Banffs.]

4. The act of doing any kind of work in an awkward, lazy, or disgusting manner, *ibid.*]

KIRN-MILK, *s.* Buttermilk, S. Yorks.

"—Thai maid grit cheir of euyrie sort of mylk baytht of ky mylk & youe mylk, sueit mylk & sour mylk,—grene cheis, *kyrn mylk*." Compl. S., p. 66.

Teut. *kern-melck*, id. V. KIRN, *v.*

KIRN-RUNG, KIRNAN-RUNG, *s.* The instrument employed for stirring the milk in a churn, S. O.

—Gin ye please our John and me,

Ye'se get the *kirnan rung*

To lick, this day.

A. Wilson's Poems, 1790, p. 59.

KIRN-STAFF, *s.* The same with the preceding word, *Kirnan-Rung*.

"*Kirn-staff*, that long staff with a circular frame on the head of it, used anciently when upstanding *kirns* were fashionable." Gall. Encycl.

KIRN-SWEE, *s.* An instrument for facilitating the churning of milk. It is composed of an

axis moving between two joists—into which axis are mortised two sticks at right angles, the one a great deal longer than the other. The churn-staff is attached to the shorter one, and the longer one is held in the hand, and pushed backwards and forwards, which greatly lightens the labour of churning; it being much more easy to move a vertical body from side to side than upwards and downwards, S.

"A gentlewoman in the vicinity of Edinburgh, who has been much accustomed to the management of a dairy, states, that she has always been used to churn the whole milk in a plunge churn, with a *swee*, a lever applied to the end of the churn-staff." Agr. Surv. Mid-Loth., p. 148.

KIRNEN, *s.* Familiarity, Gl. Shirr., S. B., *q.* mixing together.

"I believe she was a leel maiden, an' I canna say bat I had a *kirnen* wi' her, an' a kine o' a harlin favour for her." Journal from London, p. 7.

KIRN, *s.* 1. The feast of harvest-home, S., synon. *maiden-feast*.

As bleak-fac'd Hallowmas returns,
They get the jovial, ranting *kirns*,
When rural life, o' ev'ry station,
Unite in common recreation. Burns, iii. 6. 7.

2. The name sometimes given to the last handful of grain cut down on the harvest-field, S.

"The Cameronian—reserved several handfuls of the fairest and straightest corn for the Harvest *kirn*." Blackw. Mag., Jan. 1821, p. 400.

The person who carries off this, is said to win the *kirn*, Ang. It is formed into a little figure, dressed like a child's doll, called the *Maiden*; also the *kirn-baby*, Loth., and the *Hare* or *Hair* in Ayrsh.

In the North of E. *kern-baby* denotes "an image dressed up with corn, carried before the reapers to their mell-supper, or harvest home." Grose's Prov. Gl.

It may be supposed, that this use of the term refers to the *kirn* or *churn* being used on this occasion. For a churn-full of cream forms a principal part of the entertainment.

Ait-cakes, twa riddle-fu', in ranks
Fil'd up they gard appear;
An', reamin owre, the *Kirn* down clanks,
An' sets their chaffs asteer,
Fu' fast that night.

Rev. J. Nicol's Poems, i. 154.

It is in favour of this as the origin, that as *Kern-baby* is used, A. Bor., to denote the *maiden*, *churn* is synon. For *churn-gotting* is expl. "a nightly feast after the corn is out [f. cut.] North." Gl. Grose.

But neither the custom of introducing the *churn*, nor the orthography, are decisive proofs; because both might originate from an idea that the churn was the thing referred to.

It may respect the *quern* or hand-miln, as anciently used at this time in preparing the first portion of the new grain. But the origin is quite uncertain. V. MAIDEN and RAPEGRYNE.

Brand views *Kern Baby* as "plainly a corruption of *Corn Baby* or *Image*, as is the *Kern* or *Churn Supper* or *Corn Supper*." He derives the name *Mell-supper* from "Fr. *mesl-er*, to mingle or mix together, the master and servant being promiscuously at one table, all being on an equal footing. Popular Antiq., p. 307.

Towards the end of December, the Romans celebrated the *Ludi Juvenales*; and the harvest being gathered

in, the inhabitants of the country observed the feast of the goddess *Vacuna*, so named, as has been conjectured, because she presided over those who were released from labour, *vacantibus* et otiosis praeesset. V. Rosin. *Antiq. Rom.*, p. 174. Some have supposed that this is the origin of our *Harvest-home*.

I am informed by a learned friend, that he has seen figures of the kind described above, in the houses of the peasantry in the vicinity of Petersburg; whence he is inclined to think that the same custom must be prevalent in Russia.

Durandus has observed, that "there was a custom among the heathens, much like this, at the gathering in of their harvest, when servants were indulged with liberty and being on an equality with their masters for a certain time." *Rational. ap. Brand, ut sup.*, p. 303. Hospinian supposes that the heathen copied this custom from the Jews. It has been conjectured that it has been transmitted to us by the former. The Saxons, among their holidays, set apart a week at harvest. It has been already observed, that among the Romans, *Vacuna*, also called *Vacina*, was the name of the goddess to whom the rustics sacrificed at the conclusion of harvest. *Ibid.*, p. 304-306.

To CRY THE KIRN. After the *kirn* is won, or the last handful of grain cut down, to go to the nearest eminence, and give three cheers, to let the neighbours know that harvest is finished, Teviotd., Loth. After this the ceremony of *throwing the hooks* takes place. V. HOOK.

To WIN THE KIRN. To gain the honour of cutting down the last handful of corn on the harvest-field, S.

"I shall either gain a kiss from some fair lip for winning the *kirn*, or some shall have hot brows for it." *Blackw. Mag.*, ut sup.

KIRN-CUT, s. "The name sometimes given to the last handful of grain cut down on the harvest field;" South of S.

"From the same pin depended the *kirn cut* of corn, curiously braided and adorned with ribbons." Remains of Nithdale Song, p. 260. V. MAIDEN.

"If thou wilt be my partner, I have seen as great a marvel happen as the *kirn-cut* of corn coming to as sackless hands as thine and mine." *Blackw. Mag.*, Jan. 1821, p. 400.

KIRN-DOLLIE, s. A sort of female figure made of the last handful of corn that is reaped in the harvest-field, Roxb.; the same with *Maiden*, and *Kirn-baby*. V. KIRN, sense 2.

Dollie is a dimin. from E. *Doll*, a little girl's puppet. This is perhaps allied to Isl. *doell*, nymphe, if not to *dole*, *doli*, servus.

KIRNEL, KYRNEILL, s. "One of the low interstices of wall on the battlements," Pink.

A cruk thai maid at thair diuiss,
Off irne, that wes styth and squar,
That fra it in ane *kyrneill* war,
And the leddre tharfra straitly
Strekit, it suld stand sekryly.

Barbour, x. 365, MS.

Kyrnels, R. Brunne, Chaucer.

L. B. *kernellae, quarnelli, crenealz*; Rom. Rose. V. Warton's *Hist.*, i. 68. Fr. *creneaux*, the battlements of a wall; *crenelé*, embattled.

KIRNIE, s. "A little pert, impudent boy, who would wish to be considered a man;" *Gall. Encycl.*

C. B. *coryn*, a dwarf or pigmy, from *cor*, id. Lhuyd writes it *korryn*.

[KIRR, *interj.* Hush, Shetl.]

[To KIRR, *v. a.* To hush, to silence; chiefly used by shepherds, *ibid.*

No. *kyrr*, Isl. *kirra*, to hush.]

KIRRYWERY, CARRIWARE, s. A sort of burlesque serenade; the noise of mock-music, made with pots, kettles, frying-pans, shouting, screaming, &c., at or near the doors and windows of old people who marry a second time, especially of old women and widows who marry young men, W. Loth., Fife.

Fr. *charivaris* is used exactly in the same sense. "A publique defamation, or traducing of; a foule noise made, blacke *Santus* rung, to the shame and disgrace of another; hence, an infamous (or infaming) ballade sung, by an armed troope, under the window of an old dotard married, the day before, unto a yong wanton, in mockerie of them both.—The carting of an infamous person, graced with the harmonie of tinging kettles, and frying-pan musiche;" *Cotgr.*

L. B. *charivari-um*, ludus turpis tinnitibus et clamoribus variis, quibus illudant iis, qui ad secundas convolant nuptias. Du Cange, in vo. The council of Tours, A. 1445, prohibited this absurd amusement under pain of excommunication. A particular account is given of the irregularities denoted by this term, in the statutes of the Synod of Avignon, A. 1337. When the bride reached the house of the bridegroom, the rioters violently seized part of the household-goods, which they would not give up unless redeemed by money, which they expended in the most dissolute manner; making such odious sports as, say the good fathers, cannot be expressed in decent language. *Id. vo. Chalvaricum, Chalvaritum.* The term is also written *Chevealet*.

We learn, from the *Dict. Trev.*, that this uproar was made on occasion of great inequality of ages between the persons who were married, or when they had married a second or a third time. The origin of the term is totally uncertain. It has given rise to a good deal of controversy among the learned.

To KIRSEN, KRISSEN, v. a. To baptise, S., Westmorel.; *kers'n*, Lancash.; corr. from E. *christen*; a term used improperly, in whatever language, as proceeding on the false idea, that the children of church-members are not to be accounted *Christians* before baptism; although their right to baptism arises from their being born within pale of the church. Hence,

KIRSNIN, s. Baptism, S.

KIRSP, s. Fine linen, or cobweb lawn.

"Item, iiii pecis of *kirsp.*" *Inventories*, A. 1516, p. 25.