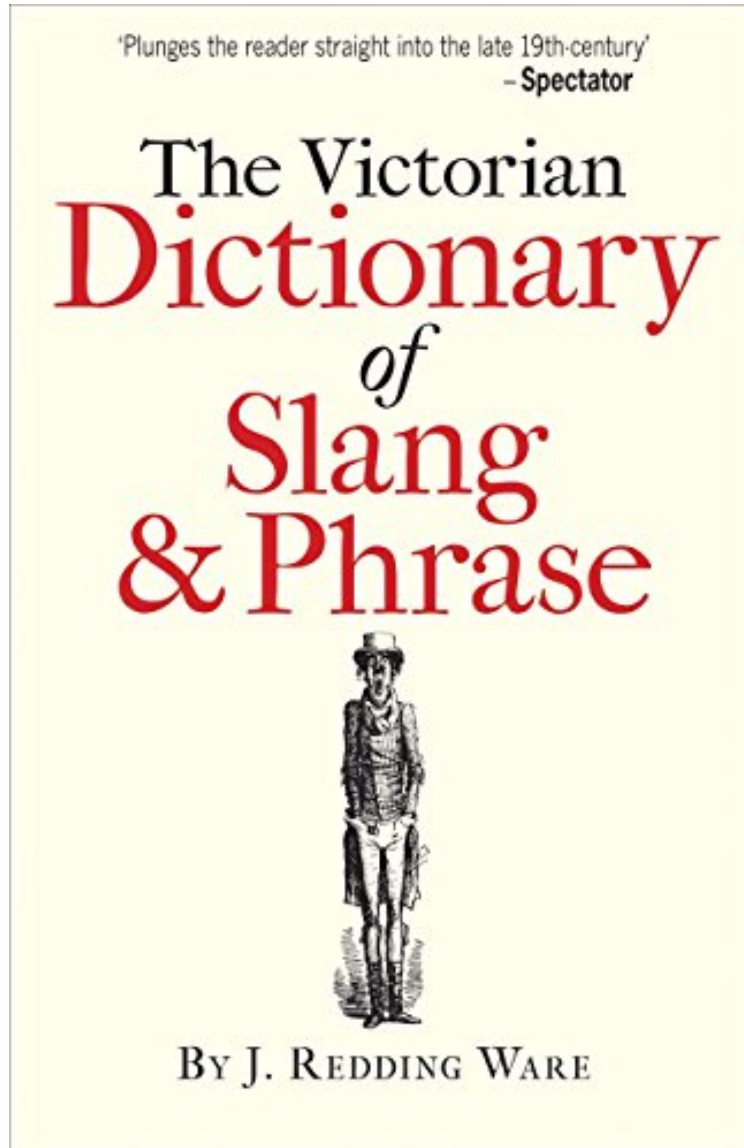


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The Victorian Dictionary of Slang Phrase

J. Redding Ware

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Acutely aware of the changes affecting English at the end of the Victorian era, writer and journalist J. Redding Ware set out to record words and turns of phrase from all walks of life, from the curses in common use by sailors to the rhyming slang of the street and the jargon of the theater dandies. In doing so, he extended the lifespan of words like air-hole, lally-gagging, and bow-wow mutton. First published in 1909 and reproduced here with a new introduction by Oxford English Dictionary former editor John Simpson, *The Victorian Dictionary of Slang and Phrase 1909* reflects the rich history of unofficial English. Many of the expressions are obsolete; one is not likely to have the misfortune of encountering a parlour jumper. Order a shant of bivvy at the pub and you'll be met with a blank stare. But some of the entries reveal the origins of expressions still in use today, such as calling someone a bad egg to indicate that they are dishonest or of ill-repute. While showing the significant influence of American English on Victorian slang, the Dictionary also demonstrates how impressively innovative its speakers were. A treasure trove of everyday language of the nineteenth century, this book has much to offer in terms of insight into the intriguing history of English and will be of interest to anyone with a passion for words.

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*About the AuthorJ. Redding Ware (1832-1909) was a journalist and lexicographer. Under the pseudonym Andrew Forrester, he was also an author of detective stories, including *The Private Detective*, *Revelations of the Private Detective*, and *The Female Detective*, the last published by the British Library.