

~~bull~~
"Corvade" — The Genesis of an Anthropological
Term. (~~In reply to Dr. A. H. Murray~~)

Correct

Had Dr Murray communicated with me
before sending to last week's Academy
his letter on Corvade, part of that letter
would probably have been suppressed.

In it he censures me for introducing, on
what he considers insufficient grounds, the
word "corvade" into the English language.

(When ~~in~~ 1865, in my Early History of Mankind,
(Chap. V.) I was discussing the group of customs
of which the principal one is that on the
birth of a child the father goes to bed, as if
he were the mother. ~~Finding the want of~~ ^{Wanting}
a general term for such customs, and
finding ~~I stated~~ ^{statements} in books that this male

~~which~~ lasted ~~on~~ until modern times in the South of France, and was there called convade, that is, brooding or hatching (couvet)

~~I recommended the adoption of this~~ COUVERT
I adopted this word for the set of customs, and it has since become established in English. ~~anthropology~~ Dr Murray, however, likes it so little as to remark on ~~the~~ its "anthropological use (or abuse)", which sounds a somewhat strong expression, even between philologists. By an ~~an~~ elaborate argument which it will not be necessary to reproduce here, and which indeed I ~~do not~~ cannot altogether follow, he demonstrates that "it is quite certain that neither in 1865 nor in 1829, nor at any date preceding, was convade an existing name for the alleged practice in any European language." To explain ~~its being used in this way~~ ~~being~~ ~~(since by the change he describes as)~~ ~~loose and picturesque~~ its being used in modern times by "loose and picturesque" 2

writers," ~~since~~ ^{as he calls them,} he propounds a theory of
its ~~being~~ having been accidentally brought up
~~into use~~ through a line in a serio-comic
poem on Midwifery, the Luciniade of
Sacombe, ^{not far from} ~~towards~~ the beginning of the
present century.

If now Dr Murray will do what
he might have done before criticizing ~~before me,~~ that is, examine
~~he had better have done at first~~ ^{the foot-note in Early History of} ~~the~~ ^{book} ~~Manhood~~ referring to the
~~criticism~~ ~~the~~ ~~remarks~~ ~~on~~ ~~this~~ ~~point~~
French word cohvade, he will find there ~~and look to~~
in Early History of Manhood, ~~he will~~
~~find~~ ~~the~~ ~~foot-note~~ ~~referring~~ ~~to~~ ~~the~~
~~French word~~ ^{an indication leading him}

to the following passage from Rochefort's
Histoire des Iles Antilles, (2^d ed. 1665,
p. 550, corresponding to ~~the first~~ 1st ed.
1658, p. 494) ^{in describing} ~~the~~ ^{of} ~~the~~ ^{the} Caribs, ^{it is here} ~~the author~~
writes: "C'est qu'au même tems que la femme
est delivrée le mary se met au lit, pour s'y

plaindre et y faire l'accouchée: coutume,
qui bien que Sauvage et ridicule, se trouve
néanmoins à ce que l'on dit, parmi les
payans d'une certaine Province de France
Et ils appellent ~~ce~~ cela faire la couvade."

^{Mae} Being occupied with the development
not of the word but of the custom, I
was content to refer to this passage
without quoting it. There is ~~no fact~~ ^{a singular one}
passage in Lafitau, Moeurs des Sauvages

Ameriquains, (1724, vol I. p. 50) Even
the verses of the accoucheur-poet ~~read~~ ^{really}
fairly show by their details that he knew
~~was well acquainted with~~
~~tell both the custom and the name~~
was well informed as to the custom and was ~~which~~
calling it by its accepted name, ~~as indeed~~
of couvade, which indeed
being a native of Carcassone he was
~~likely to~~ ^{likely} ~~sure~~ to know. How much
How much older than 1658 ^{word} ~~the name of couvade~~ may be, does ^{not} appear. (4)

direction. I had quoted Legrand d'Aussy:
in the 3rd ed of his Fabliaux, as mentioning it ^{as mentioning it in a note}
it "les Normans le cust^{ent} avec reference
to the fool's Kingdom of Terefore
the custom as evidently still in some canton
of Normandy "ce qu'ils appellent faire la courbe."
St. Minny ^{by extension} shows that through the 1st edition
mentioned the custom, the mention of the
word was not there

~~Dr~~ Murray's remark ~~as to~~ ^{that} the note
on ~~the~~ ~~the~~ cowade in Béarn quoted by
me from Legend d'Aussy's Fabliaux
should have been ascribed to A.A. Renouard,
the editor of the 3rd edition, ^{is quite true,} but it
does not ^{materially} alter the case, both author
and editor being respectable authorities.
There are I ~~doubt not~~ ^{suppose} ~~exact~~ other early
passages scattered about in literature,
and Dr Murray must not be surprised
at their not having found their way
into dictionaries, ^{when he remembers how far} ~~remembering that~~
the older dictionary-writers were from
attempting the exhaustive completeness
which ^{is} ~~so~~ ^{great a merit in} his own.
Even Littré has only taken the word "cowade",
old as it is, from a translation of

an essay by ^{Professor} Max Müller, ~~which is~~ in fact a review of ^{my} Early History of Manhood, which, ~~as~~ as I have not forgotten, went far ~~to~~ to bring about its success. We all trust ~~may~~ ^{hope} that Dr Murray will live to see ~~the end of~~ ^{the completion of} the New English Dictionary, ~~to~~ at once so great a credit and so great a responsibility to the University of Oxford. May I express a hope that ~~Dr Murray~~, with his hands already full, ^{too} he will not often go out of his way to become, as ~~he has done~~ in this case, a supervisor of new ~~terms to~~ words. He is ^{not} the editor ~~not~~ of the English language, but of an English dictionary. People who want words will ^{in their own way} make them, and it is of little use to call the adoption

~~of a word an abuse, because he might
have preferred it otherwise.~~

and if a word gains currency, ~~it~~ ^{there is} is
of little ~~use to~~ ^{good in} calling its introduction
an "abuse", seeing that ^{the lexicographer,} whether he
likes the word or not, ~~he~~ has to
take it.

Edward B. Tylor

Oxford, Nov. 2. 1892

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TYLOR, Sir Edward Burnett (1832-1917)

Ms. on seven folio pages of a letter to an editor, dated Oxford, 2 Nov. 1892, in which Tylor replies to Dr. A. H. Murray. Murray had attacked Tylor for using the anthropological term "convade"; Tylor replies by citing his authority and spiritedly reminding Murray that he is the editor of the New English Dictionary and not the general supervisor of the English language. The Ms. is heavily corrected.