



(tramps and beggars),  
a detective.

Still I play shoeblack odd times. I have a few friends among the *D's* (detectives), who give me the job to watch a house occasionally. Then I take up the box and brushes and place myself in a suitable position. It pays well while it lasts. Nor is it the only way in which my friends the *D's* find me useful. I have free entry into all sorts of haunts, and can go and come as I like without arousing suspicion.—*Thor Freddur: Sketches from Shady Places.*

**D's, the two** (army), short pay.

The residue left a soldier, part of whose pay is stopped by sentence of court-martial for "sponting" or pawing his kit. However large the amount to be recovered, he must be allowed to retain twopence, 2d., as daily pay.

**D. H. F.** (cycling slang), really letters signifying a peculiar form of fork used for bicycles, and known as the "Double Hollow Fork." Applied to a man means a stupid ass.

**Dab.** In the slang of "water rats," *i.e.*, river thieves who plunder the bodies of drowned persons, the body of a poor ragged woman is called a *dab*; from *dab*, vulgarly used in contempt for a woman, as a dirty *dab*, a slut, *dabs* being rags.

(Theatrical), a bed.

(Common), to be a *dab* at anything is to be more than usually expert at it.

Sir Peter Lawrie, on a recent visit to Billingsgate for the purpose of making what he calls a piscatory tour, was much astonished at the vigorous performance of various of the real "live fish," some of which, as he sagely remarked, appeared to be perfect *dabs* at jumping.—*Punch.*

Generally supposed to be derived from "adept," but to *dab* means to strike gently, and a *dab* is therefore one skilful in dabbing, one with a light touch, a skilful hand, a "good hand" at, hence expert in.

In old cant the term "rum dabe" was applied to one expert at roguery. Literally, a "good hand;" possibly from German *tappe*, fist, paw, and this may be the origin of the modern *dab*. The French slang has *dab*, meaning master, chief, father.

(Costermongers' back slang), bad.

I've been doing awful *dab* with my tol (lot) or stock, haven't made a yennep (penny).—*Diprose: London Life.*

**Dab it up, to** (thieves), to cohabit with a woman. From *dab*, a contemptuous term for a woman. Also to agree.

**Dab out, to** (popular), to wash.

His wife at this moment advantaging herself of Sabbath leisure to *dab out* her solitary cotton gown.—*J. Greenwood: Undercurrents of London Life.*

**Dabster.** *Vide* DAB.

**Dab wash.** Among the lower classes a *dab wash* is a small intermediate wash between the large ones.