

A strange) mixture of all sorts

derivations from
John Macdonald, *A Telegraphic
Dictionary, Numerically Arranged* (1817)

VOL. I

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<http://asfaltics.tumblr.com>
<http://asfaltics.tumblr.com/tagged/john-macdonald>

directory at
<http://jmcvey.net/astrangemixtureofallsorts/index.htm>

John Macdonald and his telegraphic dictionary discussed
further at
<http://jmcvey.net/cable/signal/index.htm>

THESE FIRST TWO VOLUMES of *A strange mixture of all sorts* present 42 derivations from a telegraphic vocabulary that was years in the making, but never adopted. That volume is John Macdonald's *A Naval, Military and Political Telegraphic Dictionary, Numerically Arranged*, which was published together in one volume with his *Treatise Explanatory of a New System of Naval, Military and Political Telegraphic Communication &c., &c.* in 1817. A scan of the New York Public Library copy is available via Google Books; I have also consulted the copy at Harvard's Houghton Library.

All 42 of these pieces were posted at *asfaltics* between September 23, 2012 and June 11, 2015. Two of them were slightly revised for this print version.

I adopted the erasure mode of de/composition in order to retain the directional opportunities afforded by the three-column arrangement of the vocabulary, whereby one might read – or write – down or up, left or right, as the array might best work in a particular reading or circumstance. Method involved printing out three copies of a source page: one (untouched) for reference, two for marking up in two or more colors of pen or pencil. Some pages yielded several derivations. As a signal officer might pore back and forth through a code book to gain familiarity with its phrases, so did I conduct my reading/writing, and so might my reader. Any one of these pieces can be read more than one way, and any page, or sequence of pages of Macdonald's telegraphic vocabulary can theoretically yield countless different results.

That vocabulary is arranged in 99 Classes, each containing 999 phrases, followed by 42 classes in roman numerals X-XL, XL-LII (also containing 999 phrases). The vocabulary is enormous ($141 \times 999 = 140,859$ terms), thorough, occasionally idiosyncratic. The system of classes is a function of economy in signalling at land or sea (three masts), by flag or other means.

My derivations are arranged by Class, not chronology; each is accompanied by index terms (tags in the *asfaltics* posts) and date of posting.

Volume III presents a further 15 derivations, in a conventional (non-erasure) format, accompanied by images where they had initially been so paired.

JOHN MACDONALD (1759?-1831) was a polymath military engineer whose career with the East India Company spanned the years 1780-1806. Stationed for years in India and at Bencoolen (West Sumatra), he carried out various surveying and engineering projects, and also experimented with fuses. He devoted his retirement to devising a signal system and this telegraphic vocabulary, and to penning scientific and other articles and letters for literary and philosophical journals of the day. He wrote a treatise on the practice, theory and harmonic system of the violincello.

And all your 374

.An ample field for 397
And every thing 393
And even then 394

Annals of history — 470

an ample field for

Class 2
ands; annals of history
May 12, 2013

And all for nothing 372
And all that 375

Annal

Bleasid } Blest }	62			
Blinded	67			
		To book		208
Blows off shore	103			
Blae pendant	108	Bolder	174	
Blander	112	Bold undertaking	178	
Blaulerd	114			
Blundering	115			
Blunt	119			
		Both at once		253
				Both

blinded blunt, bolder, both at once, both to look

Class 5
blind; blundering; boths
April 23, 2013

Blind — — 65
Blinds — — 66

•Blows a hard gale — 100

Blowing a contrary wind 104

Bisc 106
Bisc flag 107 Bold

Bold action
Bold attempt

173 To borrow — — 240
176 Borrows 242
177 Borrowed 243

•Both alike — — 250

blind borrowings, bold, both alike

Class 2

blind borrowings; bold; both alike; wind, contrary

April 23, 2013

To bring in 593
To bring off 594

To bring up 598

Bring down 603

Bring on 606
Bring on board 607
Bring on shore 608
Bring out 609

Bridge 545

Bridge of boats 547
Bridge of wood 548

Breath
Breath of wind

482
483

Breathe

485

Breathing

488

to bring in, bring out

Class 5
breath; breathings; bridges; brings
August 28, 2014

Bright 573
Brighter 574

Depths 733
Depth of formation 734
Depth of water is — 735

Descried 801
Descried a sail 802

To despatch 884

Despatches are arrived 889
from
Despatches will be sent 890

To derive 762

Dernier resort 768

Describe — 790
Describe in writing 791

to derive, descried

Class 10
depths; descried
December 28, 2012

Destroyed			
	Determination	14	
948	Determinations —	15	Detrimental effect 79
	Determination of	16	
	Determination is	17	
	To determine	18	
	To determine on the	19	
	Determine —	20	
	Determine how it is to be done	21	
	Determine in what manner	22	
	Determine the	23	
	Determine the case	24	
	Determine the matter —	25	
	Determine what is to be done	26	
	Determines	27	
	Determines to proceed	28	
	Determined	29	
	Determined by —	30	
	Determined in a	31	
	Determined on	32	
	Determined on the	33	
	Determined to attempt	34	
	Determined to do —	35	
	Determined to have	36	
	Determined to try	37	
	Determined you shall	38	
	Determining	39	
	Determining on —	40	

determinations, 3

Classes 10 and 11

indeterminate; determinations; determined; soundings

December 28, 2012

Did not this retard
Did not this turn out

322 Difficult to be done
 323 Difficult to do
 387 Difficult to enter
 388 Difficult to go out
 389 Difficult to have
 390

Dim 457

Dim day 460
Dim weather 461

403 Diffuse
 404 Diffused

Dimness 480
Dimness of sight 481

Differed from them all 358

Differences 365

436 Digression
 437 Digressions

446 Dilatory
 447 Dilatory character

Difficult business 384
Difficult to be 385

differences, digressions

Class 11
 difficulties; differences; diffuse; digressions; dilatory; dimness of light
 June 11, 2015

Emotions

866

Encamped in a fine country 955

Classes 13 and 14
emptiness; encampment; ends
April 4, 2015

emptied, emptied out, encamped in a fine country

**Emptiness
To empty
To empty out**

**906
907
908**

End will it answer

41

Ends

45

**Emptied
Emptied out**

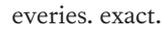
**914
915**

Even supposing that — 850
 Even with 851
 Even without 852

Evening you will 856
 Eyewide 858

Exacts — 5

Exactly 8



everies. exact.

Classes 14 and 15
 evens; eventide; everies; toll
 December 9, 2012

Every course 889
 Every day you are — 890
 Every day you must 891
 Every effect 892
 Every effort 893
 Every evening — 895
 Every hour 896
 Every man 898
 Every morning 899
 Every now and then — 900
 Every offer 901
 Every occasion 902
 Every one 903

Every part 948
 Every person 949
 Every reason — 950
 Every reason to think 952
 Every ship 953
 Every thing — 955
 Every time 956
 Every use 958
 Every way — 960
 Every way it may be 961
 Every year 962
 Every where 963

Few instances Few of them	802 803	Filtering stone Filtering stones	933 934
Few will be wanted	— 810		
Field Fields	827 828	To find out Find a difficulty	959 960
			—
		Finding out Finding what	971 973
		Fine day Fine effect Fine figure Fine	982 983 984 Fine

find a difficulty

Class 16

fields; difficulty; instances; filtering stones; findings

May 25, 2014

He was half way 56

He was from the — 5
He was, from the begin- 6
ning

he was, or were, I

Class 41
he was or were's; incompletion
December 6, 2012

— was incomplete — 150

— was

— was less 234

He was long 241
He was long ago 242
He was lost 243

He was not anchored — 310

— was irregular 211

He was no 278
He was no conjuror 279
He was no great things— 280

He was not above — 285

He was not certain — 355

He

He would then
He would there

348
349

Headlong into the busi-
ness — — 415

He would when
He would, where

381
382

He would with
He would without

386
387 Heaps of

449

He would write
He would wrong

391
392

a few words set loose in the heat

epigram from Jacques Dupin (1927-2012), “Songs of Rescue” (Une Apparence de Soupirail) no. 60, Paul Auster, trans., in Jacques Dupin, *Selected Poems* (1992)

Class 45

a few words; heat; words; he would write; he would wrong
July 15, 2013

Heat of the action 503
Heat of the weather 504

Heave to — — 515

Hove } 517
Heaved }

Knotty point — **145** **Knowing the** 209 **Labyrinth** — **275**

Lack 289

Known for a long time 227
He) lacks understanding 293

Laconic answer — **300**
Laconic manner **301**

Labour 257

Labouring all he can 269

knowing as he did, that

Class 55
autisms; knotty points; laconics
June 14, 2013

Lark — 535
Lark must not be up be-
fore you 536

Last did no good 563

Last reason — 575
Last ship 576
Last time 577
Last year 579

Lay 713
Lay apart 714

Lay by 717
Lay down 718
Lay hold of 719
Lay in — 720
Lay in a good stock of 721

late. late intelligence. lateness

Class 55
larks; lasts; lates; lay apart; lay down
January 3, 2014

Less there 301
Less these, or those 302
Less this 304
Less this is heard of, the
better. 305
Less time 306

Less to be 309
Less to be ashamed of 310
Less to do 311
Less to get 312
Less to make him uneasy 314
Less to say for himself 315

Less tried 319
Less troubled 320

Lettered 438
Lettering 439
Lettuces and greens on
board, 440

Level 443
Level all with the ground 444

Let less be given 394
Let more 395

Less you do, the less you
will be noticed. 350
Let the expedition pro-
ceed 408

Lesser 355
Lesson 356
Lessons 357
Lesson to him in future, 338
*Lest any thing should 359
Lest he should 360

Many subjects — 755

Many superfluities 763

Many temptations — 770

To march away 837
To march back 838
To march down 839
To march from 841

To march to 847

Many rivers 721
Many roads 722

Many schemes 728

March on — 860

Many situations 739
Many snares — 740

Many you know 811

Many pursuits	—	690	Many submissions	756	Marred my design	822
Many qualities		691				
Many reasons		693				
Many reasons against it		694				

Many reverses	717	Many trials	783
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Many signs	738	Many wonders	802
		Many woods	803

Many sorts	744		
		Map	813
		Maps	814
		Map of the world	817

	Marred		821
	Many successions	759	
Many reductions	696	Many sums	763
Many references	6:7		
	Many there	773	
Many representations	709		
	Many truths	786	849
	March		
	Marches	799	864
	Many voyages		
Many specimens	746		
	Map of	815	880
	Marched		

Many suppositions — 765

Many remarks 702

Many repetitions 707

Many times 777

Many returns 716

Many tricks 784
 Many troubles — 785

Many wants — 800

Many wrongs 808 Marches of 874
 Marches on 876

Many squalls 748

Many stipulations — 750 Map of the 816

Many storms 752

Many that would 772

Many tumults	787	March after March away	—	850 851
		March for March from	—	854 855

Many shall

733

many, 5

Class 58
many; would; tumults
May 5, 2013

Many would — 805

Many yet 809

Mishaps
Mishmash

556
557

Misling rain

587

**He) mistakes the matter
quite; — 710**

missings

Class 60

mishaps; mishmash; misling rain; missings; mistakes

June 19, 2013

**Miss the
Miss the object**

663
664

**Missed his
He has) missed his object
Missed it
Missed that
Missed the
He) missed the object in
view ;**

669
670
671
672
673
674

**He, quite) mistakes the
thing 736**

