proverb."

By "folk-lore" is to be understood oral tradition,—information and belief handed down from generation to generation without the use of writing. There are reasons why the mass of knowledge (including history, theology, and romance) which has been orally preserved in any people should be set aside as capable of independent treatment. Such matter must express the common opinion, or it would not be remembered; it must be on a level with the notions of the average rather than of the exceptional person; it must belong, that is, to the folk rather than to individuels.

The term "folk-lore" has its most definite significance in connection with civilized peoples of modern Europe, having been invented by an anonymous correspondent of the London Athenæum (Aug. 23, 1816), who signed his name Ambrose Merton, understood to be a pseudonym for W. J. Thoms. He included under this title "manners, customs, observances, superstitions, ballads, etc.

1 Abstract of an address to the New York Academy of Science, March 24, 1890, by William Wells Newell, secretary of the American Folk-Lore Society.
Science ns-16 (400), 183-196.