

## NEW WORD MEANINGS

---

*The Gift of the Magi*  
by O. Henry

**Mendicancy** – the condition of being a beggar or the practice of begging (1790)

**Prosperity** – the condition of being successful or thriving; *especially* : economic well-being (13<sup>th</sup> century)

**Meretricious** – of or relating to a prostitute : having the nature of prostitution <*meretricious* relationship> (1626)

**Quail** – to recoil in dread or terror (15<sup>th</sup> century)

**Laboriously** – involving or characterized by hard or toilsome effort (14<sup>th</sup> century)

**Nimble** – quick and light in motion (14<sup>th</sup> century)

**Magi** – a member of a hereditary priestly class among the ancient Medes and Persians **b** *often capitalized* : one of the traditionally three wise men from the East paying homage to the infant Jesus (1621)

**Necessitating** – to make necessary (1628)

**Ravages** – damage resulting from ravaging : violently destructive effect <the *ravages* of time> (1611)

**Cascades** – something arranged or occurring in a series or in a succession of stages so that each stage derives from or acts upon the product of the preceding (1641)

**Faltered** – to walk unsteadily : **STUMBLE b** : to give way (14<sup>th</sup> century)

**Unassuming** – not assuming : not arrogant or presuming (1726)

**Tremendous** – being such as may excite trembling or arouse dread, awe, or terror (1632)

**Possessions** – **a** : the act of having or taking into control **b** : control or occupancy of property without regard to ownership (14<sup>th</sup> century)

**Ornamentation** – the act or process of ornamenting : the state of being (1851)