

ON THE STUDY OF WORDS

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On the Study of Words by Richard Chenevix Trench & A. Smythe Palmer

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RICHARD CHENEVIX TRENCH & A. SMYTHE PALMER

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Word-Love" etc*



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“Language is the armoury of the human
mind, and at once contains the trophies of its
past, and the weapons of its future, conquests.”

EDITOR'S PREFACE

THE copyright of the tenth edition of Archbishop Trench's *Study of Words* having expired through lapse of time, it seemed to the publishers that a new and revised edition, at a popular price, of what is now become an English classic, would prove a boon to the large and ever-growing circle of readers who take an intelligent interest in the growth and history of their mother tongue.

When we look back to the time—now more than half a century ago—when these chapters were first delivered as lectures to the students of the Winchester Training College, we can perceive what a 'path-making' piece of work he then achieved. The popular treatises then current on English etymology were Horne Tooke's *Divisions of Purley* and Charles Richardson's *Study of Language*. In the English dictionary of the latter English lexicography had reached its high-water mark; wherein indeed might be found a well-plenished storehouse of quotations piled together somewhat at random, but its etymological part a mere undigested *réchauffé* of all the old unscientific guess-work of Verstegan, Minshew, Skinner, Junius, *et hoc genus omne*. The author

thus laboured under the disadvantage of writing on linguistic subjects at a time when the science of language had hardly as yet gained a footing in this country. Nevertheless, such were his scholarly instincts and soundness of judgment that he seldom goes far wrong, and we rather marvel that there is so little in his admirable lectures that needs correction. All that seemed required in this way has been added in the notes and placed within square brackets to distinguish it from the original annotations. No alterations have been made in the text. It might seem presumptuous for one who is proud to call the great Archbishop his master, and was first imbued with a taste for such studies by reading the very book which he now ventures to edit, that he should take it on himself to revise the conclusions of so eminent a scholar. It must be remembered, however, that etymological discovery has made immense strides during the last few decades, and that the author of *The Study of Words* has himself largely helped to supply the means for such revision and emendation by having initiated that great *Lexicon Totius Angliæ*, *The New English Dictionary*, the ground-plan of which was outlined by his hand. That monumental work, so ably carried into effect by Dr. Murray, Mr. Bradley and their assistants, must ever remain the ultimate court of appeal when any points of English philology are in question.¹ I have so used it, as I am sure the Archbishop himself would have done; for though himself "the first scholar in Europe" (as a

¹ In one instance, however, I have had the hardihood to dissent from this high authority (see p. 53).

contemporary pronounced him) he was ever learning to the end of his life, and ever correcting and adding to his published works. I well remember seeing an interleaved copy of the present work lying open on his table, in which from time to time he used to enter the results of his later acquisitions and more mature judgments. None could draw a lesson or enforce a moral from the teaching of a word with such wisdom and insight as the Archbishop. He is here altogether unrivalled. And apart from the value of his etymologies, the all-pervading charm of his chaste and dignified style, which could invest even commonplaces with a grace of its own, will prevent his works ever being superseded as out-of-date. In the judgment of the Editor, the present generation, if they desire to enter upon the most interesting of all studies, the Study of Words, wherever else they may complete it, cannot begin better than by putting themselves under the guidance of Archbishop Trench.

A. SMYTHE PALMER.

HERMON HILL, S. WOODFORD.

AUTHOR'S PREFACE TO THE FIRST EDITION

THESE lectures will not, I trust, be found anywhere to have left out of sight seriously, or for long, the peculiar needs of those for whom they were originally intended, and to whom they were primarily addressed. I am conscious indeed, here and there, of a certain departure from my first intention, having been in part seduced to this by a circumstance which I had not in the least contemplated when I obtained permission to deliver them, by finding, namely, that I should have other hearers besides the pupils of the Training School. Some matter adapted for those rather than for these I was thus led to introduce—which afterwards I was unwilling, in preparing for the press, to remove; on the contrary adding to it rather, in the hope of obtaining thus a somewhat wider circle of readers than I could have hoped, had I more rigidly restricted myself in the choice of my materials. Yet I should greatly regret to have admitted so much of this as should deprive these lectures of their fitness for those whose profit in writing and in publishing I had mainly in view, namely, schoolmasters and those preparing to be such.