

**ON THE STUDY OF WORDS:
LECTURES ADDRESSED
(ORIGINALLY) TO THE PUPILS AT
THE DIOCESAN TRAINING-
SCHOOL, WINCHESTER**

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On the Study of Words: Lectures Addressed (Originally) to the Pupils at the Diocesan Training-School, Winchester by Richard Chenevix Trench

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RICHARD CHENEVIX TRENCH

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LECTURES

ADDRESSED (ORIGINALLY) TO
THE PUPILS OF THE DIOCESAN TRAINING-SCHOOL
WINCHESTER

BY
RICHARD CHENEVIX TRENCH, D.D.
DEAN OF WESTMINSTER

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

TWENTY-FIVE AMERICAN FROM THE FIFTH ENGLISH EDITION
ENLARGED AND REVISED



NEW YORK
W. J. WIDDLETON
SUCCESSOR TO J. S. REDFIELD
1860

PREFACE TO THE FIRST EDITION.

THESE lectures will not, I trust, be found any where 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 whos

profit in writing and in publishing I had mainly in view, namely, schoolmasters and those preparing to be such.

Had I known any book entering with any fulness, and in a popular manner, into the subject-matter of these pages, and making it its exclusive theme, I might still have delivered these lectures, but should scarcely have sought for them a wider audience than their first, gladly leaving the matter in their hands, whose studies in language had been fuller and riper than my own. But abundant and ready to hand as are the materials for such a book, I did not ; while yet it seems to me that the subject is one to which it is beyond measure desirable that their attention, who are teaching, or shall have hereafter to teach, others should be directed ; so that they shall learn to regard language as one of the chiefest organs of their own education and that of others. For I am persuaded that I have used no exaggeration in saying, that for many a young man " his first discovery that words are living powers, has been like the dropping of scales from his eyes, like the acquiring of another sense, or the introduction into a new world,"—while yet all this may be indefinitely deferred, may, indeed, never find place at all, unless there is some one at hand to help for him, and to hasten the process ; and he who so does, will ever after be esteemed by him as one of his very foremost bene-

factors. Whatever may be Horne Tooke's shortcomings (and they are great), whether in details of etymology, or in the philosophy of grammar, or in matters more serious still, yet, with all this, what an epoch in many a student's intellectual life has been his first acquaintance with *The Diversions of Purley*. And they were not among the least of the obligations which the young men of our time owed to Coleridge, that he so often himself weighed words in the balances, and so earnestly pressed upon all with whom his voice went for any thing, the profit which they would find in so doing. Nor, with the certainty that I am anticipating much in my little volume, can I refrain from quoting some words which were not present with me during its composition, although I must have been familiar with them long ago ; words which express excellently well why it is that these studies profit so much, and which will also explain the motives which induced me to add my little contribution to their furtherance :

" A language will often be wiser, not merely than the vulgar, but even than the wisest of those who speak it. Being like amber in its efficacy to circulate the electric spirit of truth, it is also like amber in embalming and preserving the relics of ancient wisdom, although one is not seldom puzzled to decipher its contents. Sometimes it locks up truths which were once well known, but which, in the course of ages, have

passed out of sight and been forgotten. In other cases it holds the germs of truths, of which, though they were never plainly discerned, the genius of its framers caught a glimpse in a happy moment of divination. A meditative man cannot refrain from wonder, when he digs down to the deep thought lying at the root of many a metaphorical term, employed for the designation of spiritual things, even of those with regard to which professing philosophers have blundered grossly ; and often it would seem as though rays of truths, which were still below the intellectual horizon, had dawned upon the imagination as it was looking up to heaven. Hence they who feel an inward call to teach and enlighten their countrymen, should deem it an important part of their duty to draw out the stores of thought which are already latent in their native language, to purify it from the corruptions which Time brings upon all things, and from which language has no exemption, and to endeavor to give distinctness and precision to whatever in it is confused, or obscure, or dimly seen."

—*Guesses at Truth, First Series*, p. 295.

ИОНКИНТОКЪ, Oct. 9, 1851.

ON
THE STUDY OF WORDS.

INTRODUCTORY LECTURE.

THERE are few who would not readily acknowledge that mainly in worthy books are preserved and hoarded the treasures of wisdom and knowledge which the world has accumulated ; and that chiefly by aid of these they are handed down from one generation to another. I shall urge on you in these lectures something different from this ; namely, that not in books only, which all acknowledge, nor yet in connected oral discourse, but often also in words contemplated singly, there are boundless stores of moral and historic truth, and no less of passion and imagination, laid up,—that from these, lessons of infinite worth may be derived, if only our attention is roused to their existence. I shall urge on you, (though with teaching such as you enjoy, the subject will not be new,) how well it will repay you to study the words which you are in the habit of using or of meeting, be they such as relate to highest spiritual things, or our common words of the shop and the market, and of all the familiar intercourse of life. It will indeed repay you far better than you can easily believe. I am sure, at least, that for many