

**THE ART GALLERY
OF THE ENGLISH
LANGUAGE**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649097548

The art gallery of the English language by A. H. Morrison

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A. H. MORRISON

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OF THE ENGLISH
LANGUAGE**

~~THE ART GALLERY~~

THE ART GALLERY
OF THE
ENGLISH LANGUAGE.

BY

A. H. MORRISON,

Assistant Master Brantford Collegiate Institute.

Dedicated to all Lovers of Literature and Art.

"There is not any matter, nor any spirit, nor any creature, but it is capable of a unity of some kind with other creatures; and in that unity is its perfection and theirs, and a pleasure also for the beholding of all other creatures that can behold."—RUSKIN.



Toronto :
WILLIAMSON & CO.

1886.

PE
1095
M6

Entered according to Act of Parliament of Canada, in the year one thousand eight hundred and eighty-six, by A. H. MORRISON, in the office of the Minister of Agriculture.

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P R E F A C E.

My sole apology for launching this little craft on the sea of authorship

“A promised prize to hope,”

is my love for the English language.

Again in the words of Byron :

“Would I were worthier”

to accomplish the task I have set myself. Luckily, my part in the construction of the little vessel is but a secondary one, and if I succeed in presenting some few score of what I consider to be masterpieces of their respective types before the English reader, without detracting from their beauties by my own suggestions or criticisms, I shall be satisfied.

Especially would I enlist the sympathy of the Teacher in the subject of my text. He is the true high-priest of language, officiating at many an altar to many a neophyte, whose plastic mind and nascent tastes have not only to be regulated, but verily formed at the prompting of the minister.

The glorious heritage of letters with all its wealth of grandeur, of strength, of beauty, and of music is for him who has the right of entry ; who holds in faith the talisman of sympathy ; in love the key of desire. That talis-

man may be transmitted by the earnest soul, himself believer, seeker, finder, to scores of humbler worshippers. That key may be turned by the resolute hand of the keeper for hundreds of waverers now groping at the gates, yet making plaintive moan for the inner light.

This heritage has been too long neglected, too long unknown—suppressed by the autocratic fiat of the usurper, and the inflexible dogma of fashion. To the many, its palaced apartments are never opened, its consoled profiles are unfamiliar, its pictured glories are but misty daubs, its musical accords are unheard or unheeded.

How long shall this be so? Till the iron bars of educational prejudice are lowered for ever. Till we are taught to believe that erudition consists not solely in the knowledge of antiquities. Till we forget to despise the flowers growing at our very feet, while seeking alone the exotics of other lands. Till we forego the exclusive consideration of dimensions, abstractions, and computations, to come back to the voices of earth and home; to sit once more as at the feet of a mother; to drink in anew, but purified, refined, etherialized, the language lessons of nature, which prompted the first utterance, which will syllable the last farewell, which, perchance will go out with our better selves into the temporal dark and the eternal light!

The Mother Tongue!—What name should be dearer to the student? What worthier his desire and his choice? The twin sister of art, the imperishable and the true. Dear name, inseparable from that little land

“bound in with the triumphant sea!”

Be its success what it may, to all lovers of art and literature, I dedicate my first born, this child of my heart. May it find some few sponsors to say a kind word for it at the baptismal font. Be its faults what they may, and I fear they are many, it is at least the child of affection, the legitimate offspring of love and faith—love for the dear, dead names that adorn its pages; faith in the mission of the glorious language they have immortalised—stamped with their own undying fame.

As I commenced my preface with a metaphor borrowed from the sea, let me conclude with another, that though

" I have ventured
Like little wanton boys that swim on bladders,
in a sea of glory,"

it may not prove to be altogether

" far beyond my depth."

A. H. MORRISON.

BRANTFORD, January 18th, 1886.



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