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## THE PEDIGREE AND KINSHIP OF WORDS.

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Words have their histories as well as men. Those of a great many are, in the early stages of their careers, involved in obscurity; but those of others, which can be traced with more or less certainty, are exceedingly interesting, and, in many cases, not a little curious.

In ascertaining their pedigree, also, we are frequently led to the discovery of very strange relationships. For instance, who would imagine, at first sight, that the venerable "bishop," the exceptionable "skeptical," and the useful "telescope" were all descended from the same Hellenic ancestor? Yet such is the incontrovertible fact. No word that we know of has undergone more changes in the course of its adoption by the various nations of Christendom than the "episkopos" of the New Testament. In Latin it became "episcopus," which was close enough to the original; but among the Neo-Latin languages we soon find it disguised almost beyond recognition. In Provençal it was corrupted into "evesque" or "vesque," which in modern French has been modified into "évêque." In Italian it is "vescovo;" in Spanish, "obispo;" in Portuguese, "bispo." In all the Teutonic and Norse languages, it took a form more or less resembling our own, which is a softening of the Anglo-Saxon, "biscop." Well, the root of all these forms is the Greek "skop" or "skop," signifying "to look at," "to give attention to," "to consider." With the addition of "epi," it means "to oversee," and the primary meaning of "bishop,"

therefore, is "one who oversees others." In such sense "episkopos" was used by the Greeks long before it became an ecclesiastical term, and, indeed, is so used in the Septuagint or Greek translation of the Old Testament.

"Skeptical"—without any prefix—indicates "one who gives himself up to examination or reflexion," and had, primarily, no odium attached to it—any more than "heretic" which literally means "one who chooses for himself."

"Telescope," the third member of this extensive family which we have selected for illustration, means "that by which we are enabled to see to a distance"—the prefix "tele" being exactly the same which is found in "telegraph." We might mention a personage who unites in himself the characteristics of these three kindred words, who is bishop and skeptical, and who claims to see farther than most of his contemporaries; but it is better not to be personal. If etymology may have a moral (and why should it not?) that of this instance is to make bishops humble, to remind skeptics of the respect they owe to their episcopai kindred, and to teach us all that, however far we may think we see, there is still an awful bounding line to our utmost earthly vision.

"Sycophant" and "phenomenon" are also relations, both being derived from a Greek verb, signifying "to shew." "Phenomenon" simply means "that which shews itself," "an appearance," by custom reserved for some "remarkable or unusual