

object. Hence I have devoted much space to enquiries into the exact meanings of words, and have attempted to show how a knowledge of the origin and history of words is essential to their correct employment. Words are now-a-days so loosely used, both by speakers and by writers, that unless, in our schools, some resistance be made to the growing habit of verbal carelessness, not only will those delicate shades of meaning by which so-called synonymous words are to be distinguished, soon be totally lost, but even those grosser characteristics, which no good writer now thinks of losing sight of, will also be obliterated. There is no branch of analytic language study so helpful to a mastery of language as the study of etymology when not carried to pedantic lengths, and I have tried to be of some service to the student in this respect, and to set him in the way of doing more for himself. In what I have written I have of course made free use of the best authorities attainable, and would acknowledge much indebtedness to SKEAT's large *Etymological Dictionary of the English Language*, to his smaller *Concise Etymological Dictionary*, to *The Imperial English Dictionary*, to *The Concise Imperial English Dictionary*, and to STORMONTH's *Etymological English Dictionary*. I have also made free use of MR. CONNOR's *Elements of English Etymology*, and would especially call the attention of students to that most compendious little work.

The text of *The Task* here given is that of MR. BENHAM's *Globe Edition*, copied almost *verbatim et literatim*; and the very few changes (all in punctuation) which I have ventured to make, are, in nearly every case, referred to in the *Notes*. MR. BENHAM's text is, so far as I am able to judge, the best yet published.

In conclusion, I beg leave to tender my thanks to MR. L. E. Embree, Principal of the Collegiate Institute, Whitby, and to MR. R. Balmer, Modern Languages Master of the Collegiate Institute, Kingston, for useful hints and kind assistance. I would also especially acknowledge my obligations to MR. W. H. Huston, English Master of the Collegiate Institute, Toronto, to whom, with other things, I am indebted for the entire annotation of *The Winter Evening*.

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