

"Be in office with the king and gather treasure in a hepe,
And the *franchise* of holi church hii laten
ligge slepe,
ful stille." *

Occasionally, too, the Archbishop's logic is at fault. In his fourth lecture on the English language he is treating of the recovery of words which, after falling into disuse, are now well known again. To augment the number of these he quotes lists, such as the one annexed to Spenser's Shepherd's Calendar, in which many old words are explained for the benefit of the reader, such as "askance, bevy, flowret," etc., which would need no such glossary now. But in the same breath he quotes other lists which do not purport to be explanations of *old* words, but of old and *obscure* words, and of words "*not familiar* to the vulgar reader," which evidently embrace entirely different classes of words from those of which he is treating. A newly introduced word may be so obscure or unfamiliar as to need explanation when it first appears, but that is no reason why we, who now understand it, should call it a recovered word.

There are also instances of harshness in style which should have been removed before the work arrived at such a late edition. The expression "as in instances innumerable cases may be seen," jars upon our ears, and a very little trouble would put it right. The next example is, however, radically wrong and foreign in its construction. Speaking of some compound verbs, such as "to wit-wanton" or "to cankerfret," he says, "these words, tho' never in public use, seem to me *happier than that they should be allowed to die.*"† The close of the introductory lecture on the Study of Words is another example of "how not to" express a simple thought in simple language.

Still, in spite of these and of yet graver faults, the books are fascinating enough to make us regret having to put them down. There is a mystery and a charm about words that attracts us to follow, while all the time

we know that however searching our quest may be there is a limit to our discoveries, and that when we fancy we have traced back a word to its beginning, and see upon it the delicate bloom of a freshly expressed thought, we must expect to find a yawning abyss of years open before us, and to learn that our new word is, alas, but some battered fragment, floated to us from the wreck of a dead or dying tongue. Archbishop Trench naturally magnifies his subject. To him Hobbes was a "false prophet," especially when he said that words were wise men's counters and the coins of fools. The same thought had occurred to Montaigne, when in speaking of wordy and pedantical learning, he says, it is passed from hand to hand "only to make a show in conversation . . . like those glittering counters, which are of no other use or service but to play or count a game with." It seems hard to believe that our author was incapable of appreciating the wholesome truth embodied in this saying of Hobbes, or that he could not see that the blame was attached to the fool who so misused the word, and not to the word itself. In the abstract, and as viewed by the philologist, a word is the same wherever it occurs, but the Archbishop would be the last to say, as a man, that as much weight is to be given to a word in a scurrilous tale as to the same word in an impassioned soliloquy by Shakespeare.

It is very curious to notice the blindness that hinders critics from distinguishing among a crowd of new candidates for admission into our vocabulary, those few favoured individuals which will eventually succeed. A good example occurs at page sixty-five of "English, Past and Present," where a list of glaring Americanisms are given in a note, and the author overwhelms them all with one common disdain. We agree cordially with his abhorrence of "eventuate," "happify,"

* Montaigne's Essays. On Pedantry, vol. 1, p. 149. 9th edition, 1811.

On the same point cf., "The Two Gentlemen of Verona;" Act 2, s. 4:

Thurio. Sir, if you spend word for word with me, I shall make your wit bankrupt.

Valentine. I know it well, sir, you have an exchequer of words, and I fancy no other treasure.

* Camden Society's Political Songs, p. 325.

† English, Past and Present, p. 221.