

study of individual words that we now desire to fasten the attention of the reader. It is a work of primary importance to all who wish to speak with accuracy, but especially to those whose mission, business or desire it is to persuade men either with golden mouth or golden pen. Most happily for the student, the subject is as interesting as it is important, as will readily be admitted by every intelligent reader of Archbishop Trench's "Study of Words" and "The English Language, Past and Present," Dean Hoare's "English Roots" and other kindred works that might be named. Indeed there are few books more interesting and instructive as a companion for a leisure hour than a good dictionary—one which gives the history and traces the ramifications of the meanings of the leading words of the language, and thus reveals their life and power. Of such a revelation Trench has well observed that "for many a young man his first discovery of the fact that words are living powers, are the vesture, yea even the body which thoughts weave for themselves, has been like the dropping of scales from his eyes, like the acquiring another sense, or like the introduction into a new world."

"Living powers." Yes! that is a true description of words given by one of their great masters—S. T. Coleridge, who on that very ground urged the study of their derivation and history. But their vital force depends mainly on their being used by those who know their value, and by virtue of intimate acquaintance, can choose and marshal them with skill, always putting the right word in the right place. It is then that we see and feel "how forcible are right words."

But how is the right word to be known? What is the true test of verbal rectitude? An attentive regard of the leading idea involved in the word *right* will supply the answer to these queries. In the passage just quoted from the book of Job, a more literal rendering of the original would give "words of straightness" in the place of "right words," the verbal root signifying to be straight, as we find exemplified in the prophetic command to "make straight in the desert a highway for our God" (Isa. xl. 3). The primary idea of our English word *right* exactly corresponds with this. To be right is to be straight, even. The common phrase,