

MODERN LANGUAGES.

[Embracing Practical School Work in English, French and German subjects.]

DEFINITIONS OF OLD WORDS AND PHRASES.

BEHOLD, compounded of *be* and *hold*, signifies to hold or fix the eye on an object. We may see without looking, and we may look without seeing. The eye sees; the person looks. That which is seen may disappear in an instant, but what is looked at must make some stay. We look at objects to observe their external properties; but to behold is to look at for a continuance, and excites a moral or intellectual interest. We behold any spectacle which excites our admiration, our pity, or love. "The most unpardonable malefactor in the world, going to his death, and bearing it with composure, would win the pity of those who should behold him."

Eclipse, from the Greek, to fail, and is therefore what causes a failure of light. Obscure, from *obscurus*, means interrupted by a shadow, thence a diminution of light. Obscure is opposed to bright. What is obscure is not to be seen distinctly or without effort.

"In dim eclipse, disastrous twilight sheds
On half the nations, and with fear of change
Perplexes monarchs."—*Milton*.

"His form had yet not lost
All her original brightness, nor appeared
Less than archangel ruined and the excess
Of glory obscured."—*Milton*.

Retrospect, from *retro*, behind, and *specio*, to behold or cast an eye upon. Review is a view repeated. Survey is a looking over at once, from *sur*, over, and *voir*, to see.

"Believe me, my lord, I look upon you as a spirit entered into another life, where you ought to despise all little views and mean retrospects."—*Pope to Atterbury*.

"The retrospect of life is seldom wholly unattended by uneasiness and shame. It too much resembles the review which a traveller takes from some eminence of a barren country."—*Blair*.

"Every man accustomed to take a survey of his own notions will, by a slight retrospection, be able to discover that his mind has undergone many revolutions."—*Johnson*.

Prospect, from *prospectus*, to see before, that is to see a thing before we think of it or do it. A prospect implies that which directly presents itself to the eye. A drawing of an object is a view, though not a prospect.

"We're charmed at distant views of happiness,
But near approaches make the prospect less."—*Yolden*.

Flame,* from the Greek, to burn, means the heated and bright exhalations sent out from fire. Blaze, from the German, *blazen*, to blow, that is, the flame blown up into an extended flame. A candle burns by flame, paper by a blaze. Illustrate, from *illustro*, that is, to make a thing bright that it can easily be surveyed and examined. Elucidate, from *elucidatus*, that is, to bring forth into, that it can be fully seen, understood, and made clear.

Serve, from *servu*, a servant, to work for or obey as an inferior, or as under another.

"A thousand years scarce serve to form a state;
An hour may lay it in the dust."—*Byron*.

Desolate, from *desolatus*, made alone, without any other one.

"None are so desolate but something dear—
Dearer than self—possesses or possessed."
—*Byron*.

* See note at end of article.