

**ENGLISH, PAST AND
PRESENT:
FIVE LECTURES**

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English, past and present: five lectures by Richard Chenevix Trench

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RICHARD CHENEVIX TRENCH

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ENGLISH:

PAST AND PRESENT.

George D. Wood.

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FIVE LECTURES.

BY

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PREFACE. 1855

A SERIES of four lectures which I delivered last spring to the pupils of King's College School, London, supplied the foundation to this present volume. These lectures, which I was obliged to prepare in haste, on a brief invitation, and under the pressure of other engagements, were subsequently enlarged and recast; and delivered in the autumn somewhat more nearly in their present shape to the pupils of the Training School, Winchester; although of course with those alterations, omissions and additions, which the difference in my hearers suggested as necessary or desirable. I have found it convenient to keep the lectures, as regards the persons presumed to be addressed, in that earlier form which I had sketched out at the first; and as it helps much to keep lectures vivid and real that one should have some well defined audience, if not actually before one, yet before the mind's eye, to suppose myself throughout addressing my first hearers. I have supposed myself, that is, addressing a body of young Englishmen, all with a fair amount of classical knowledge (in my explanations I have sometimes had others with less than theirs in my eye), not wholly unac-

quainted with modern languages ; but not yet with any special designation as to their future work ; having only as yet marked out to them the duty in general of living lives worthy of those who have England for their native country, and English for their native tongue. To lead such through a more intimate knowledge of this into a greater love of that, has been a principal aim which I have set before myself throughout.

In a few places I have been obliged again to go over ground which I had before gone over in a little book, "*On the Study of Words*;" but I believe that I have never merely repeated myself, nor given to the readers of my former work and now of this any right to complain that I am compelling them to travel a second time by the same paths. At least it has been my endeavour, whenever I have found myself at points where the two books come necessarily into contact, that what was treated with any fulness before, should be here touched on more lightly ; and only what there was slightly handled, should here be entered on more at large.

ITCHENSTOKE, *Feb.* 7, 1855.

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ENGLISH, PAST AND PRESENT.

LECTURE I.

THE ENGLISH A COMPOSITE LANGUAGE.

I HAVE chosen our English language, its past and its present, as the subject of that short course of lectures, which I have been invited to deliver to you in this place. It is an argument, which I confidently trust will find an answer and an echo in the hearts of all who hear me; which would have found such at any time; which will do so especially at the present. For these are times which naturally rouse into liveliest activity all our latent affections for the land of our birth. It is one of the compensations, indeed the greatest of all, for the wastefulness, the woe, the cruel losses of war, that it causes a people to know itself a people; and leads each one to esteem and prize most that which he has in common with his fellow countrymen, and not now any longer those things which separate and divide him from them.

And the love of our own language, what is it in fact, but the love of our country expressing itself in one particular direction? If the great acts of