

PREFACE

THE FIRST EDITION

It is now nearly fifty years since I first projected a system of verbal classification similar to that on which the present Work is founded. Conceiving that such a compilation might help to supply my own deficiencies, I had, in the year 1808, completed a classed catalogue of words on a small scale, but on the same principle, and nearly in the same form, as the Thesaurus now published. I had often during that long interval found this little collection useful and important as it was to me in literary composition and often contemplated its extension and improvement; but a sense of the magnitude of the task, and a multitude of other avocations, deterred me from the attempt. Since my retirement from the duties of Secretary of the Royal Society, however, finding myself possessed of more leisure, and believing that a repository of which I had myself experienced the advantages might be useful to others, I resolved to extend it to a larger scale, and in the last time of that year, has given me incessant occupation and has indeed imposed upon me an amount of labour very much greater than I had anticipated. Notwithstanding all the pains I have bestowed on its execution, I am fully aware of its imperfections and imperfections, and of the falling far short of the degree of excellence that might be attained. Had it a Work of this nature whose perfection is placed at so great a distance, I have thought it best to limit my edition to that moderate share of merit which is now given in its present form, trusting to the indulgence of those to whose hands it is intrusted, and to the number of others who will find it easy to detect faults, and to the same time daily experience its utility.

J. M. Roget

At the Office of the Royal Society, London.
April 20th 1869.

EDITOR'S PREFACE.

THE FIRST EDITION of Dr. Roget's Thesaurus was published in the year 1852, and a second in the ensuing spring. On the issue of the third, in 1855, the volume was stereotyped. Since that time until now, the work has been reprinted in the same form and with little alteration, in rapidly succeeding editions, the printing of which has worn out the original plates.

During the last years of the author's life, which closed, at a very advanced age, in the month of September, 1869, he was engaged in the task of collecting additional words and phrases, for an enlarged edition which he had long projected. This he did not live to complete, and it became my duty, as his son, to attempt to carry the design into execution.

The result of the author's labours was embodied in a copy of the Thesaurus, in which the margins and spaces about the letter-press were closely covered with written words and phrases, without any very precise indication of the places in the text where additions or alterations were intended to be made. On a careful examination of these *addenda*, I came to the conclusion that, in order to introduce them with advantage, it would be necessary to make some slight changes; without, however, interfering at all with the framework of the book, and but little with the details of its system. In this proceeding my course has been mainly determined by the following considerations.

Any attempt at a philosophical arrangement, under categories, of the words of our language, must reveal the fact that it is impossible to separate and circumscribe the several groups by absolutely distinct boundary lines. There will always be found to exist, between the words in one group and those in another, a variety of mutual affinities, corresponding with similar relations among the ideas expressed. Many words, originally employed to express simple conceptions, are found to be capable, with perhaps a very slight modification of meaning, of being applied in many varied

associations. Repetitions of these words have a tendency to spread themselves, as it were, in transitional films, around the clusters of expressions into which we may have attempted to marshal our vocabulary. Connecting links, thus formed, induce an approach between the categories; and a danger arises that the outlines of our classification may, by their means, become confused and eventually merged. Owing to the employment, in innumerable instances, of one and the same word in a variety of different bearings and relations, the fabric of our language has become a texture woven into one by the interlacing of countless branches, springing from separate stems; and these are further complicated by cross relations among themselves.

Were we to disengage these interwoven ramifications, and seek to confine every word to its main or original import, we should find that some secondary meaning has become so firmly associated with many words and phrases, that to sever the alliance would be to deprive our language of the richness due to an infinity of natural adaptations.

Were we, on the other hand, to attempt to include, in each category of the Thesaurus, every word and phrase which could by any possibility be appropriately used in relation to the leading idea for which that category was designed, we should impair, if not destroy, the whole use and value of the book. For, in the endeavour to enrich our treasury of expression, we might easily allow ourselves to be led imperceptibly onward by the natural association of one word with another, and to add word after word, until group after group would successively be absorbed under some single heading, and the fundamental divisions of the system be effaced. The presentation to the eye, at one view, of too large a medley of allied expressions would have a tendency to distract the mind of the inquirer, and he would feel the want of further classification. The small cluster of nearly synonymous words, which had formed the nucleus of a category, would be lost in a sea of phrases, and it would become difficult to recognize those which were peculiarly adapted to express the leading ideas.

Hence it is necessary for the compiler to steer a mean course between the dangers of being too concise on the one hand, and too diffuse on the other.

These considerations were material in dealing with the new and multitudinous store of words and phrases which the author had accumulated. Many of these were altogether new to the Thesaurus. Many were merely repetitions in new places of words already included in its pages. With reference to cases similar to the latter,

the author had declared it to have been a general rule with him 'to place words and phrases which appertain more especially to one head, also under other heads to which they have a relation,' whenever it appeared to him 'that this repetition would suit the convenience of the inquirer and spare him the trouble of turning to other parts of the work.*' But, with the now increased mass of words, it became a question, in many cases, whether such repetition would still prove convenient. Where categories might by that course be unduly swollen, or where they might, by reason of their being separated from each other by subtle distinctions or faint lines of demarcation, be thereby too nearly assimilated, I thought it would often be better to confine words of the kind referred to to their primary headings. The necessity of keeping the book within reasonable dimensions had also to be borne in mind.

Under these circumstances, the best method of ensuring the ready accessibility of the multitude of words now to be dealt with, and at the same time preserving unimpaired the unity of the several categories, appeared to me to lie in the copious use of references from one place in the book to another. Relying on this contrivance as a means of opening more widely the resources of the collection, by making the groups of words mutually suggestive, and thereby leading, not only to more varied forms of expression, but to kindred ideas, I have added largely to the references already inserted by the author. I have also ventured occasionally to substitute a reference for a group of words,† when the identical group existed in another place, and could thus be made immediately available.

In order, at the same time, to make the value of the references more appreciable, I have (whenever it has appeared to me to be necessary) inserted, in a parenthesis, a word indicating the nature of the group or category referred to. Any one using the book will thereby be enabled to judge whether it will be worth his while to turn to the place in question. He will, in some cases, perceive at once that it is useless to look there for the expression he seeks. In other cases, an appropriate word may occur to his mind on the mere suggestion of the class to which it belongs. In none of these cases will further search be necessary.

The cross references may also be looked upon as indicating in some degree the natural points of connection between the categories, and the ramification of the ideas which they embody. As would be the case under any classification of language, a large proportion of

* Introduction, p. xxiv.

† When a word has been thus withdrawn from the text, I have been careful to retain in the Index a reference to the place from which it has been removed.

the expressions, to find which recourse is had to the Thesaurus, lie on an ill-defined border land between one category and another; and it is not always easy, even with the aid of a carefully compiled index, to determine under which of several allied headings they should be sought. In the present edition, when the inquirer has once started on his voyage of discovery, the references enable him to pass freely from one division to another without recurring to the Index.

While endeavouring to pay due regard to the author's disposition of all the words which he had proposed to add to the Thesaurus, or to repeat in its pages, I have thus sought rather to connect than to separate the several parts of the work, and, without obscuring the independence of each by too much blending, to combine them in an entire structure which might adequately represent the complex vocabulary of our language.

Many new words have also been inserted which were not contained in the author's manuscript.

Except in a very few cases, where distinct ideas were obviously united under one head, I have not had the presumption to meddle with the author's division into categories; but, within each category, I have endeavoured to carry somewhat further the sorting of words according to the ideas which they convey. I should not, indeed, have deemed myself qualified to undertake the present task, except under a conviction that the improvements which I contemplated were almost entirely of a practical nature, demanding industry and attention, rather than philosophic culture or the learning of a philologist. My main object has been to place in the hands of all who employ the Thesaurus the most ready means of availing themselves of the enlarged collection of words and phrases which it now contains, and thus to render the search for appropriate expressions as easy and as short as possible, consistently with the greatest practicable extension of the field of inquiry.

With these objects in view, I have supplied the work with a new and elaborate Index, much more complete than that which was appended to the previous editions. Although, in the original design of his work, the author appears to have conceived the process of search for a required expression as one, in which the system of classification would be first consulted, and the Index afterwards called in aid if necessary,* I believe that almost everyone who uses the

* See Introduction, p. xvii. The original catalogue of words in manuscript which was the germ of the Thesaurus, and is now in my possession, contains no verbal index.

book finds it more convenient to have recourse to the Index first. It thus becomes a very important part of the work.

From the peculiar nature and use of the Thesaurus, its Index will be found to differ, in some of its essential functions, from an alphabetical table of contents. The present Index does not merely afford an indication of the place where every given word or topic occurs or is dealt with in the text; but it is intended as a guide to other expressions which may be found there. The word we look out in this Index is not that which we require, but that which we wish to avoid. It is, therefore, not necessary that every word there given should be a repetition of one in the text. It may even happen that the word selected as a guide, though suggestive of the group wanted, is wholly unfit to be comprised within it. On this account many references have been inserted in the Index when the word given will not itself be found in the text.

The new Index contains not only all the *words* in the book (without needless repetition of conjugate forms), but likewise the *phrases*, all of which had been excluded from the Index to the previous editions. This extensive enlargement has been made in the belief that many ideas present themselves to the mind in the form of a combination of several words. It is hoped that these additions, although they increase the bulk of the book, will have the effect of extending its usefulness in at least a corresponding degree.

Some changes of detail have also been made, where the form of the work seemed susceptible of improvement, and there was no reason to suppose that the author would have disapproved of the alteration. In the previous editions, the *phrases* were in general placed in separate paragraphs, under the heading *Phr.*, in each of the subdivisions assigned to the different grammatical parts of speech comprised within nearly every category. In the present edition, *words* and *phrases* are placed together, and the latter are arranged as if the nouns, adjectives, &c., to which they are regarded as equivalent, were expressible in single words. The heading *Phr.* is only employed in the case of phrases which have no convenient place in such an arrangement. The grouping of words within each category, in stricter accordance with their meaning, is thus facilitated; and a subheading is dispensed with, which had a tendency to confuse the eye. Much space has been saved, and many repetitions have been avoided, by the use of lines and hyphens, where words or phrases in the same group have syllables or parts in common, and by references from one part of speech to another. These abbreviations may be best explained by examples, of which the following are a few:—

'with relation, - reference, - respect, - regard - to;' is meant to include the phrases 'with relation to,' 'with reference to,' 'with respect to,' 'with regard to.'

'root -, weed -, grub -, rake -up, - out;' includes 'root up,' 'root out,' 'weed up,' 'weed out,' 'grub up,' 'grub out,' 'rake up,' 'rake out.'

'away from -, foreign to -, beside- the -purpose, - question, - transaction, - point;' includes 'away from the purpose,' 'foreign to the purpose,' 'beside the purpose,' 'away from the question,' 'foreign to the question,' 'foreign to the transaction,' 'beside the question,' 'away from the point,' 'beside the transaction,' 'foreign to the point,' 'away from the transaction,' 'beside the point.'

'raze, - to the ground;' includes 'raze,' and 'raze to the ground.'

'campan-iform, -ulate, -iliform;' includes 'campaniform,' 'campanulate,' and 'campaniliform.'

'goodness &c. *adj.*;' 'badly &c. *adj.*;' 'hindered &c. *v.*;' include all words similarly formed from synonyms of 'good,' 'bad,' and 'hinder,' respectively, given under the headings *Adj.* and *V.* in the same categories where the abbreviations occur.

The particle 'to' before a verb has in all cases been rejected, the heading *V.* being thought sufficiently distinctive; the use of capitals for the initial letters of the first words of paragraphs has been abandoned, as giving those words undue importance; and the title of each category has been kept distinct from the collection of words under its heading.

I should be ungrateful were I not to acknowledge the assistance derived, both by my father and myself, from various suggestions made by well-wishers to the work, some of whom have been personally unknown to either of us; and also to record my thanks to several kind friends, and to Messrs. Spottiswoode and Co.'s careful reader, for valuable aid during the passage of the sheets through the press.

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March 17th, 1879.

INTRODUCTION.

[Notes within brackets are by the editor.]

THE present Work is intended to supply, with respect to the English language, a desideratum hitherto unsupplied in any language; namely, a collection of the words it contains and of the idiomatic combinations peculiar to it, arranged, not in alphabetical order as they are in a Dictionary, but according to the *ideas* which they express.* The purpose of an ordinary dictionary is simply to explain the meaning of words; and the problem of which it professes to furnish the solution may be stated thus:—The word being given, to find its signification, or the idea it is intended to convey. The object aimed at in the present undertaking is exactly the converse of this. namely,—The idea being given, to find the word, or words, by which that idea may be most fitly and aptly expressed. For this purpose, the words and phrases of the language are here classed, not according to their sound or their orthography, but strictly according to their *signification*.

The communication of our thoughts by means of language, whether spoken or written, like every other object of mental exertion, constitutes a peculiar art, which, like other arts, cannot be acquired in any perfection but by long and continued practice. Some, indeed, there are more highly gifted than others with a facility of expression, and naturally endowed with the power of eloquence; but to none is it at all times an easy process to embody, in exact and appropriate language, the various trains of ideas that are passing through the mind, or to depict in their true colours and proportions, the diversified and nicer shades of feeling which accompany them. To those who are unpractised in the art of composition, or unused to extempore speaking, these difficulties present themselves in their most formidable aspect. However distinct may be views, however vivid our conceptions, or however fervent our

* See note in p. xxviih.