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NEW HIGH GERMAN

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NEW HIGH GERMAN

A COMPARATIVE STUDY

BY

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IN TWO VOLUMES

VOL. I.—PHONOLOGY AND MORPHOLOGY

ISBISTER & CO. LIMITED

TAVISTOCK STREET COVENT GARDEN LONDON,

1894

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И-43292-50

PREFACE.

It was with some reluctance that I accepted Mr. Mann S. Valentine's invitation to visit Richmond in the autumn of the year 1889, for the purpose of looking over the MS. of his brother William W. Valentine's comprehensive treatise on the German language, with a view to publication. This particular subject had not engaged my attention for some time, and I naturally feared that the preparation of the work for the press might involve some hard reading to bring it into harmony with the views of the "New Grammarians," and of other advanced workers in the field of German philology. But a rapid inspection of the MS. made it evident that this would not be needed, or needed only to a limited extent, unless the treatise was to be written *de novo*, which I did not conceive to be the duty of the editor of a posthumous work. I, therefore, felt that the trust might be accepted, although it soon became apparent from the unfinished and, in parts, defective state of the MS., that its preparation for publication might entail more time than could well be spared from other pursuits.

Owing partly to this cause, partly to the death in October, 1892, of Mr. M. S. Valentine himself, who had charge of his brother's affairs, the publication has been delayed till the present year, though this may, perhaps, be considered as of little consequence in the case of a work which possesses some claim to be regarded as of permanent value. Even as it stands, it is certainly the most comprehensive original English work that has yet appeared on the German language, one might almost say on the Teutonic linguistic group, so copious and systematic are the references for comparative purposes, not only to the older forms of High German itself, but also to Gothic, Anglo-Saxon, and the other sister tongues.

Yet it is only too evident, from the many regrettable gaps left by

the learned author in the MS., that the scope of the work, as originally planned, was even of much wider compass. It will be seen that, especially where phonetic change is involved, numerous illustrations are also drawn from Greek, Latin, Sanskrit, and other more distantly allied members of the Aryan family. But had he lived to fully carry out the proposed task, it is scarcely an exaggeration to say that, under the modest title of "New High German—a Comparative Study," Mr. Valentine would have bequeathed to posterity an elaborate treatise on Aryan philology generally.

Nevertheless, what is here presented to the public is by no means a mere *torso*, or fragment of a greater work, but a work complete in itself so far as regards the historic evolution and present condition of standard German speech. No doubt, even within these narrower limits, the manuscript was left in a somewhat imperfect state, and the extremely full section devoted to syntax—the whole of the second volume—was, in fact, never finished. But I have endeavoured to the best of my ability to supply the omissions here indicated, keeping as far as possible to the comparative and historic methods followed by the author.

For these additions, which, with one exception, are everywhere included in square brackets, I am consequently alone responsible. They comprise, amongst other less important matters, the whole of Chapter IV., on "The Reformed Spelling," introduced for reasons fully set forth at pp. 71-2 of Vol. I., and the concluding Chapter XXI., on "Arrangement," this subject having been included in the author's rough summary, but left untouched by him. At least a diligent search amongst his papers has failed to bring to light any memoranda, or even suggestions as to how he intended treating this most important feature of German Syntax. The section on "Strong Verbs which admit of Classification" (Vol. I., pp. 256-63), taken over from my treatise on "The True Theory of German Declension and Conjugation," has not been bracketed, because it will be seen, from a reference at p. 256, that it was the author's intention to adopt this treatment of the strong verbs. It would have appeared probably as it now stands, had he lived long enough to prepare the work for publication.

It should be stated that with me also rests the responsibility for the Tables of Contents, the general division into chapters, and the minor divisions into paragraphs, running in consecutive numbers through both volumes, in accordance with the convenient plan usual in German books of this class. On the other hand, all the sub-headings are the author's, as is also the broad arrangement of the