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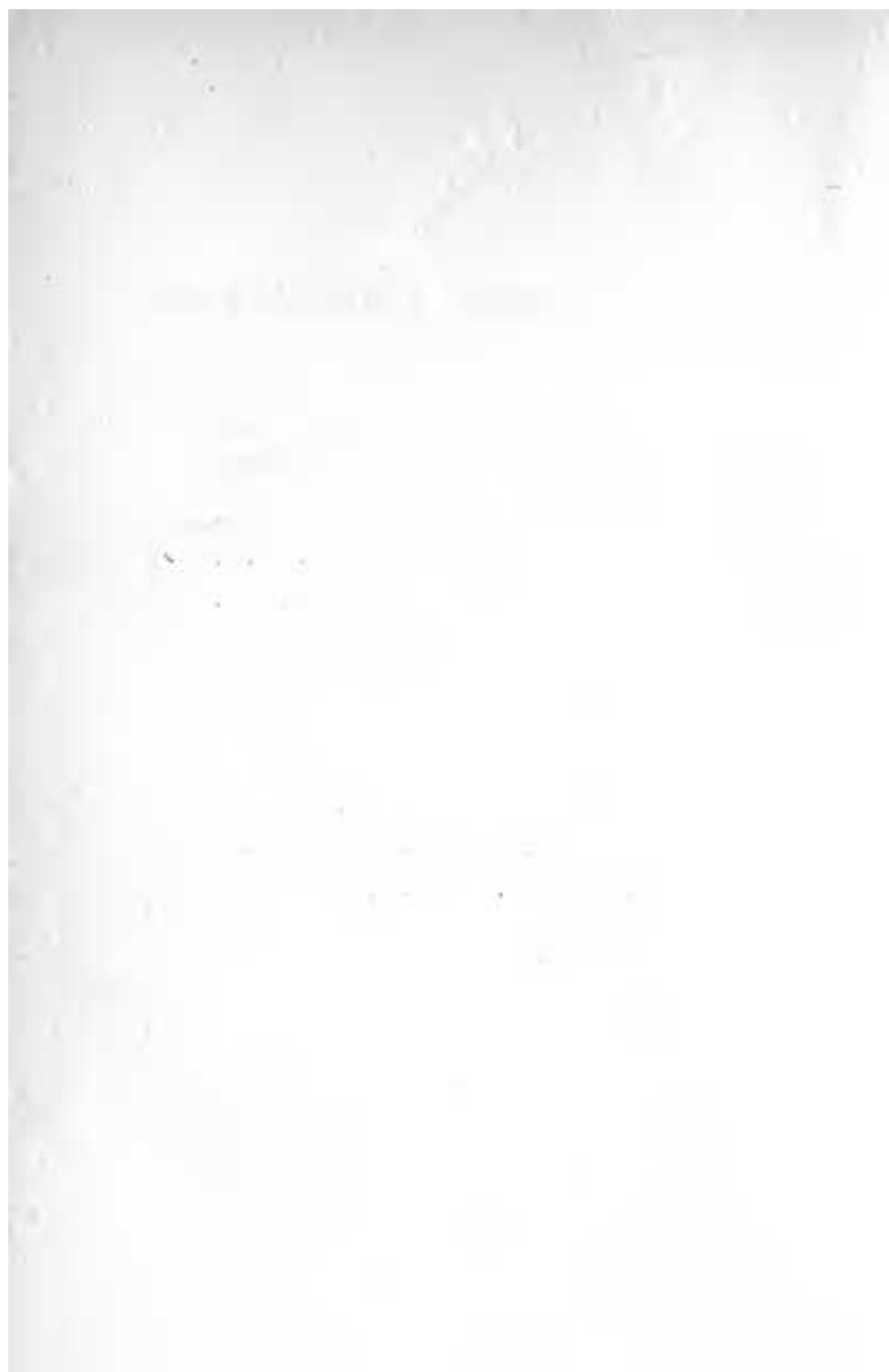
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# THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE

## CHAPTER I

### THE ORIGINS OF THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE

AMONG the many living forms of human speech, and those countless others which have arisen and perished in the past, the English language, which has now spread over so large a portion of the world, is as humble and obscure in its origin as any other. It is, of course, in no sense native to England, but was brought thither by the German tribes who conquered the island in the Vth and VIth Centuries; and its nearest relations are to be found among the humble dialects of a few barren islands on the German coast. When our Anglo-Saxon ancestors came first to ravage Britain, and finally to settle there, they found the island inhabited by a people weaker, indeed, but infinitely more civilized than themselves. For several centuries the