THE ASPIRATE, OR, THE USE OF THE LETTER 'H' IN ENGLISH, LATIN, GREEK AND GAELIC

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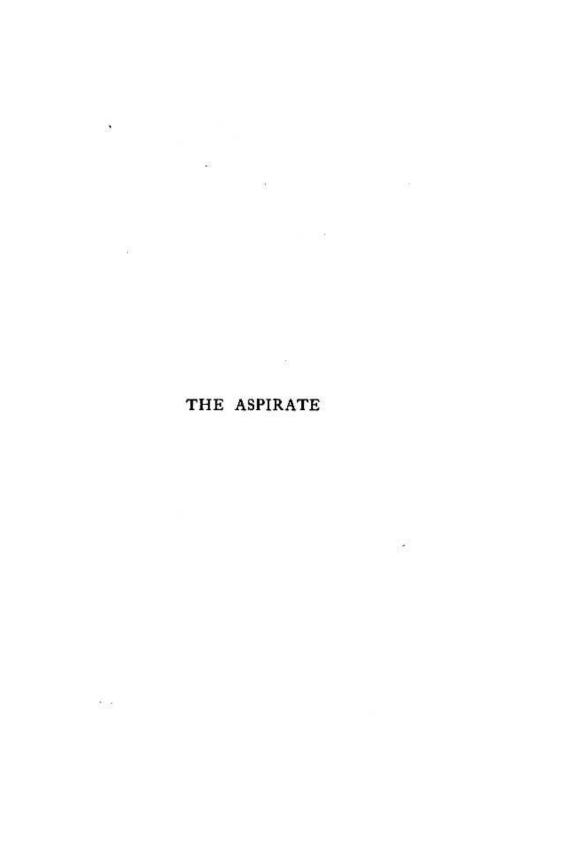
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IN ENGLISH, LATIN, GREEK
AND GAELIC

BY THE

REV. GEOFFRY HILL

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PREFACE

O's informing a friend whose opinion was to be relied on that I intended to write something upon the Aspirate, I was strongly advised not to let my remarks appear in print until I knew what German scholars had to say on the subject. Accordingly I attempted to consult Eduard Sievers' Grundzüge der Phonetik, but was told that it was out of print. Not knowing when a new edition would be issued, I decided not to wait for it: it has, however, now been published, and I have been enabled, through the kindness of Mr. Capel Pownall, to make use of it. I find that the method of forming the 'h' in the throat is fully discussed, a

¹ Leipzig, 1901.

subject which I have not treated, since, if I had, I should have treated it badly, but that nothing is said upon the improper dropping or the equally improper addition of h's, nor upon the use to which the letter is sometimes put in grammar and in the expression of a person's feelings. The reason, Mr. Pownall tells me, is simple, because the Germans never drop or add h's for any reason or under any pretext, though it must be stated that they are sometimes mute in the middle of a word in order to show that a syllable is long.1 I must, therefore, qualify my statement made on p. 39 that in 1880 the German Government abolished certain h's as unnecessary: I now find that what was actually done was this-the Prussian Minister of Instruction abolished the 'h' in those words beginning with 'th' in which the 'h' had been mute.

My thanks are due and are here given

[&]quot;"H' is always aspirated except when it follows a vowel in the same syllable where it only serves to signify the protraction of the vowel. St and sp are as soft as in English. It would be a fault to pronounce these after the Swiss manner, namely, scht and schp" (Kaltschmidt's German Dict.).

to the Right Rev. the Bishop of Edinburgh; Dr. Law of the Signet Library, Edinburgh; the Rev. Dr. Keating, Chancellor of S. Mary's Cathedral, Edinburgh; the Rev. Dr. Bourne, Canon and Treasurer of Salisbury Cathedral; the Rev. H. Carpenter, Precentor of Salisbury Cathedral; Colonel Cox; Mr. D. de Castro; Mr. A. R. Malden; and Mr. G. E. Dartnell, either for the stories with which they have supplied me for the illustration of my points, or for the advice which they have given me as to books of reference. Nor must I omit to thank Professor Mackinnon for the amount of knowledge of Gaelic Grammar acquired at his Lectures.

GEOFFRY HILL.