

**AN HISTORICAL SKETCH OF
THE PROGRESS AND PRESENT
STATE OF ANGLO-SAXON
LITERATURE IN ENGLAND**

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An historical sketch of the progress and present state of Anglo-Saxon literature in England by
John Petheram

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JOHN PETHERAM

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BY
JOHN PETHERAM.

"The ground of our own appertaineth to the old Saxon."
CAMDEN'S Remaines.

LONDON:
EDWARD LUMLEY, 56, CHANCERY LANE.
M.DCCC.XL.

PREFACE.

THE increasing attention which the subject of Anglo-Saxon Literature has received in the present century, has rendered the subject of the following pages a desideratum in literary history. Occasional notices of the progress which this comparatively new study is making amongst us have, from time to time, appeared in our Magazines and Reviews; but in the connected form which has been attempted in this Sketch, it is new to me, and, I believe, new to the world. I have not presumption enough to imagine that the subject is exhausted, or that the attention which, at short intervals of leisure only, I have been enabled to devote to it, from the pressure of sterner duties, has not allowed some notices to escape which might have been inserted.

The publication of Bosworth's Dictionary suggested first the plan of a complete Anglo-Saxon Bibliography, which I had proceeded in to some extent before I became acquainted with the Bibliothèque Anglo-Saxonne of M. Michel. Being superseded in this, the idea of

a connected sketch occurred, and materials were immediately sought from every source which previous reading, and after suggestion, dictated. The original intention was to complete the work in about six or seven sheets ; but, after having collected materials, I found compression was absolutely necessary ; but this has been effected so as least to affect the original plan ; notwithstanding which, it has extended to nearly twice that number. An occasional digression has been allowed, which seemed almost necessary to enable the reader to peruse a long, and, to some, perhaps, a tedious catalogue of the titles of books and dates of their publication ; but these will be found to possess a connection with the main subject.

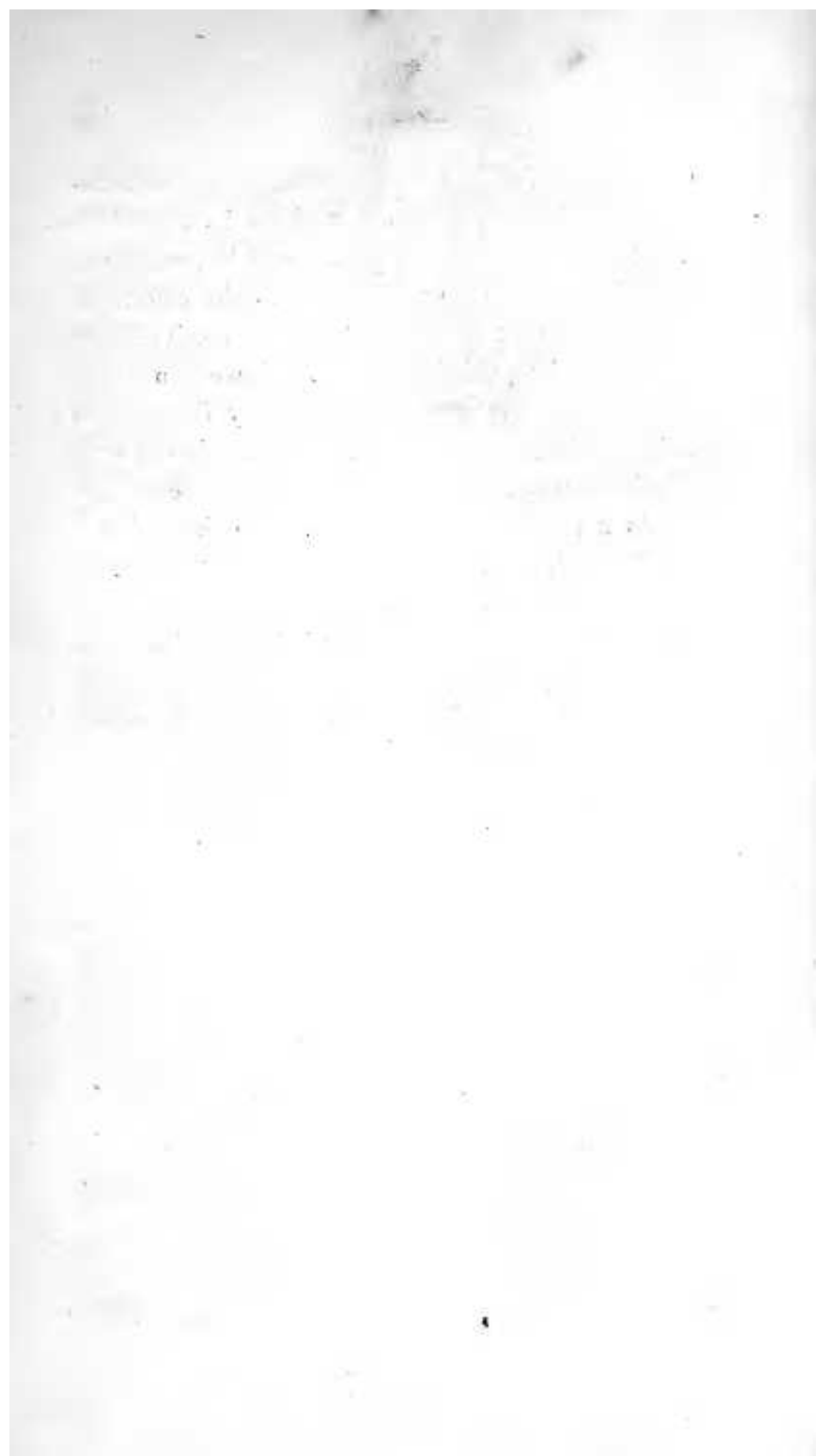
Some apology, perhaps, may be thought necessary for the introduction of so many quotations. In some cases, as in those of Fox and L'Isle, I preferred letting the writers tell their own story ; in others, the language required little or no alteration, so that it was unnecessary. The Prospectus of the Saxon Laws, and that of the Saxon Homilies, by the Elstobs, and of the Society of Antiquaries, together with some other plans of the kind, have been inserted as documents which it seemed desirable to preserve ; and such are of more value when existing in a collected form than distributed in several volumes, and some of those, from their scarcity or expense, not accessible to every one.

It remains now to acknowledge the assistance which I have received from others. And, in the first place,

my thanks are due to a gentleman connected with the London Institution, by whose kindness I was enabled to avail myself of the noble library which it contains ; and I sincerely return my thanks to the officers of that Institution for the attention which I received from them. To the publisher of this volume I owe my thanks for placing some works at my disposal, to which I could not obtain easy access elsewhere ; and, for looking over the proof sheets, I am under obligations to a much-esteemed friend. To the public I leave the rest, from whose decision, generally just in the end, there is no appeal.

Being unacquainted with what is termed the "literary world," I had neither friendship to mislead on the one hand, nor resentment to gratify on the other, in commenting on the works which it was necessary to mention. My sole aim has been, in all, nothing to extenuate, nor set down aught in malice.

LONDON, *February 5, 1840.*



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