A COMPENDIOUS GRAMMAR OF THE PRIMITIVE ENGLISH OR ANGLO-SAXON LANGUAGE

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A Compendious Grammar of the Primitive English Or Anglo-Saxon Language by J. Bosworth

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J. BOSWORTH

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Trieste

A

COMPENDIOUS GRAMMAR

OF THE

PRIMITIVE ENGLISH

OR

ANGLO-SAXON LANGUAGE,

A KNOWLEDGE OF WHICH IS ESSENTIAL TO EVERY MODERN ENGLISH GRAMMARIAN WHO WOULD FULLY UNDERSTAND THE TRUE ORIGIN AND IDIOM OF HIS OWN LANGUAGE:

BEING CHIEFLY

A SELECTION OF WHAT IS MOST VALUABLE AND PRACTICAL

IN

The Elements of the Anglo-Saxon Grammar,

WITH

SOME ADDITIONAL OBSERVATIONS.

By The Rev. J. BOSWORTH, M.A. F.A.S.

FELLOW OF THE ROYAL SOCIETY OF LITERATURE,
HONORARY MEMBER OF THE COPENHAGEN SOCIETY FOR ANCIENT LITERATURE OF THE NORTH, AND VICAR OF LITTLE HORWOOD, BUCKS.

Ic Ælfric polde þay lytlan boc apendan to Englisenne geþeoðde, forþan þe Stæf-cræft is seo cæg þe þara boca andgit unlycð:

I, Ælfric, would translate this little book into the English tongue, because that Grammar (Letter-craft) is the key which unlocketh the sense of books.

Preface to Ælfric's Grammar.

Du hæbe me apendan of Lebene on Englisc þa boc Geneysis:

Thou badest me to translate from the Latin into English the book of Genesis.

Ælfric's Pref. to Genesis.

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SHOE-LANE.

TO HIS GRACE

RICHARD

DUKE OF BUCKINGHAM AND CHANDOS,

MARQUESS OF CHANDOS,

AND EARL TEMPLE OF STOWE, &c.

KNIGHT OF THE MOST NOBLE ORDER OF THE GARTER, &c.

L.L.D. F.A.S.

A CONSTANT PATRON OF LITERATURE,
WHOSE PATRIOTIC ZEAL
FOR THE MOST ANCIENT HISTORIC RECORDS,
PARTICULARLY OF THE BRITISH ISLANDS,
HAS BEEN MANIFEST
IN THE COLLECTION AND CAREFUL PRESERVATION
OF THE INVALUABLE
IRISH AND ANGLO-SAXON MANUSCRIPTS
WHICH NOW ENRICH
THE MAGNIFICENT LIBRARY AT STOWE,

THIS LITTLE WORK IS INSCRIBED,

AS A SMALL TRIBUTE OF THE GREATEST RESPECT
FOR EXALTED RANK AND TALENTS,
BY
HIS GRACE'S MOST OBEDIENT HUMBLE SERVANT,

JOSEPH BOSWORTH.

PREFACE.

THE Saxons were a people of Germany. Their origin and extent of power will be clearly understood by attending to the following short historical detail.

The sons of Japhet, migrating from Asia, spread themselves over Europe. The earliest tribes that reached and peopled the European coasts in the west were the Kelts *, and the Kimmerians, Commerians, or Gomerians, from Gomer the eldest son of Japhet; such changes of names not being uncommon. It cannot now be ascertained at what time the Kimmerians passed out of Asia, but it was probably eight or nine hundred years before the Christian æra, as Homer † mentions them; and, according to Herodotus ‡, they were settled in Europe long before the Scythians. The ancient Kimbri, so formidable in the earlier ages of the Roman history, were a nation of this primitive race, which, in the days of Tacitus, had almost disappeared on the Continent.

The Kelts were a branch of the Kimmerian stock that dwelt more towards the south and west than the other Kimmerian tribes. The Kelts spread themselves

* Κελτοι. † Odys. Λ. v. 14. ‡ Melpom. sec. xi.

over a considerable part of Europe, and from Gaul entered into the British Isles. Though Phœnician and Carthaginian navigators probably visited Britain, the aboriginal inhabitants, the ancient Britons, were Kelts, who were conquered and driven into Wales by the Romans. The descendants of the Kelts still occupy Bretagne in France, Wales, the Highlands of Scotland, Ireland, and the Isle of Man.

The Scythian or Gothic tribes, descended from Magog*, were the second source of European population. Like their predecessors the Kelts, these tribes came out of Asia into Europe, over the Kimmerian Bosphorus, between the Black Sea and the Sea of Azoph, but at a later period, perhaps about B.C. 680. Before the Gothic tribes came into Europe, part of them were settled in Armenia, the richest part of which was called Sakasina; and "they must have come into Armenia from the northern regions of Persia†." This will account for the Persian words which occur in the Gothic tongues, but particularly in Saxon. About B.C. 450, in the time of Herodotus, the Gothic tribes were on the Danube, and extended towards the south. Fifty years before the Christian æra, in Cæsar's time, they were called Germans, and had established themselves so far to the westward as to have obliged the Kelts to withdraw from the eastern banks of the Rhine. In later ages they became known by the name of Getæ or Goths.

The third and most recent stream of population which flowed into Europe, conveyed the Sclavonian or Sar-

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* Parson's *Remains of Japhet*, ch. iii. p. 68.

† See Turner's *History of the Anglo-Saxons*, vol. i. p. 99, fourth edition, 8vo.

matian nations: they are mentioned by Herodotus as being on the borders of Europe in his time; they therefore probably entered Europe about B.C. 300. These coming last, occupied the most eastern parts, as Russia, Poland, Eastern Prussia, Moravia, Bohemia, and their vicinity. From these Sclavonic tribes a third genus of European languages arose, as the Russian, Polish, Bohemian, Livonian, Lusatian, Moravian, Dalmatian, &c.

As the tribes of Keltic origin, the first source of European population, are clearly distinguished from the Gothic, and as the Sclavonic or Sarmatian tribes, the third wave of population, have never extended so far west as England, nor made any settlement among us, no further notice will be taken of them or of their language. We are most concerned with the Gothic, or second stream of European population, and the languages which have flowed from the original tongue of these tribes. The following tabular arrangement of the Gothic languages differs in some particulars from the table in "*The Elements of the Anglo-Saxon Grammar;*" but, as it is established upon legitimate principles, the author has no more hesitation in adopting it, than he has in specifying the source from which his information is derived. He is indebted to a letter of the indefatigable and learned Professor Rask of Copenhagen for the division of the Gothic languages into the *Scandinavian* and *Germanic* branches*. Before he was favoured with this communication, he had not observed this important distinction

* Den store *Gotiske* Folkestamme og Sprogklasse deler sig nemlig först i to store Grene *den Skandinaviske* og *Germaniske*, &c. See *Preface to Angelsaksisk Sprogläre*, p. 32; and for the evidence in support of the distinction between the Gothic and Scandinavian branches, see *Preface*, p. 7, &c.