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A

SHORT HISTORICAL
ENGLISH GRAMMAR

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SHORT HISTORICAL
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BY

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'A New English Grammar'
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PREFACE



For some years the want has been felt of a short historical English grammar up to date, especially as regards phonology, dialectology and chronology, the last implying careful discrimination between what is really in living use and what is obsolete. The present work is an attempt to supply this want. It is an abridgment of the historical portions of my *New English Grammar*. It does not include syntax, for the good reason that a grammar which attempted to deal—even if only superficially—with such a vast and difficult subject as historical English syntax could not possibly be designated as a ‘short’ grammar. But within the limits of phonology and accidence, including composition and derivation, it will, I hope, be found to contain all that is really essential to the beginner.

Some teachers will be disappointed at not finding here any exposition of that time-honoured generalization ‘Grimm’s Law,’ and the still more popular ‘Verner’s Law.’ I have for the present excluded them, because they do not belong to historical English grammar, but to comparative Arian philology; because, if studied adequately, they are too difficult for beginners; and because, without a detailed knowledge of