

A FIRST BOOK IN OLD
ENGLISH

*GRAMMAR, READER, NOTES, AND
VOCABULARY*

BY

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TO
JAMES MORGAN HART
Author of "German Universities"
and
Scholar in Old English

PREFACE TO FIRST EDITION.

THE present volume is an attempt to be of service to those who are beginning the study of our language, or who desire to acquaint themselves with a few specimens of our earliest literature. It has seemed to the author that there were two extremes to be avoided in its compilation—the treatment of Old English as though it consisted of wholly isolated phenomena, and the procedure upon a virtual assumption that the student was already acquainted with the cognate Germanic tongues and with the problems and methods of comparative philology. The former treatment robs the study of its significance and value, which, like that of most other subjects, is found in its relations; the latter repels and confounds the student at a stage when he is most in need of encouragement and attraction.

How well the author has succeeded must be left to the judgment of others—the masters whom he follows at a distance, and the students whose interests he has constantly borne in mind. Of one thing, however, he can assure such as may care to inspect his book—that he has spared no pains in treading the path which seemed to be thus marked out for him in advance. Errors there doubtless are — errors of judgment, and errors of fact; but for both he must plead the best excuse ever