

**OLDER ENGLAND, ILLUSTRATED
BY THE ANGLO-SAXON
ANTIQUITIES IN THE BRITISH
MUSEUM IN A COURSE OF SIX
LECTURES**

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Older England, illustrated by the Anglo-Saxon antiquities in the British museum in a course of six lectures by J. Frederick Hodgetts

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J. FREDERICK HODGETTS

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Older England,

ILLUSTRATED BY THE

ANGLO-SAXON ANTIQUITIES

IN THE

BRITISH MUSEUM

IN A

COURSE OF SIX LECTURES.



BY

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WHITING AND CO., LIMITED SARDINIA STREET, LINCOLNS-INN-FIELDS, W.C.

TO
EDWARD AUGUSTUS BOND, Esq., LL.D., F.S.A.,
ETC., ETC., ETC.,

THIS LITTLE VOLUME,

IN GRATEFUL REMEMBRANCE OF HIS KIND AND ACTIVE AID

IN BRINGING BEFORE THE ENGLISH PUBLIC

THIS ATTEMPT TO

ILLUSTRATE THE EARLY HISTORY OF THEIR ANCESTORS,

IS DEDICATED

BY

THE AUTHOR.

P R E F A C E.

THE following Lectures were delivered, by the kind permission of the Officers of the British Museum, to a private audience, necessarily a small one on account of the size of the Anglo-Saxon room, but they were so warmly received by those who honoured me with their presence on the occasion of their delivery, that I have been led to repeat them as Lectures, and to publish them in the form of a book.

For many years past I have been engaged in work which has rendered some degree of philological research indispensable, and in the course of my experience in many parts of the globe I found most civilized nations convinced of the great importance of first studying their own language, history, and development and then those of other lands. England alone, with all her wealth of literature, and with the most interesting of all Teutonic forms of speech, was lamentably behind the rest, choosing to draw her supplies of mythological, linguistic, and historic teachings from a source upon which she had no claim, in the first place, and which was ludicrously ill-suited to her requirements, tastes, and feelings, in the next.

I found that although I had been what in my youth was called well educated, I knew nothing of the real history and structure of our noble tongue, and this wrong

done to me by our wretched system I had to correct in Germany at a comparatively advanced period of my life. In Germany I first learned the history of the English language, and the value of its literature. I learned that our own mythology was a thing to be studied and to be proud of. In Germany, Russia, and Scandinavia, Latin and Greek are studied, but they are not put in the place of the maternal idiom, as if that were unworthy of careful thought.

To our shame be it said, the Germans first discovered the linguistic importance and classic wealth of the English language, and on my return to England I find the hint thrown out by them acted on, although not generally taken up. My friend, Dr. Morris, has done much to awaken us to a sense of the need there is of studying our own language, and to the wealth of materials existing for doing so. Professor Morley has laboured well and zealously in the field; Professor Skeat has produced his valuable Dictionary; Mr. Sweet has compiled an Anglo-Saxon Reader; so that there are some signs of life among us. But these works, excellent as they are, seem not to be so generally known as could be wished. In fact, I believe the "*Historic Outlines of English Accidence*", by Dr. Morris, is more popular on the Continent than in England! The reason of this is that, on the one hand we have been blocked by a false system for so many years, so that it is difficult to get into a new groove now; on the other, the bulk of the nation has not had the opportunity of having these things brought home to them. But the desire to know more about themselves is becoming every day more emphatically expressed; and, feeling the existence of this wish, I was very glad of the suggestion that some degree of publicity should be given to these private Lectures

on Anglo-Saxon History, or, the Tale of Older England as far as it could be evolved from the specimens of Anglo-Saxon Art preserved in the British Museum, and illustrated by them.

The success of my attempt was beyond my most sanguine expectations. To obtain a little form and order on the occasion of the first meeting, I requested the Rev. Sir Talbot Baker, F.S.A., a member of the British Archæological Association, to take the chair. At the conclusion of the Lecture he commented upon some of my remarks in a manner highly expressive of his satisfaction with the soundness of the opinions I had advanced, and his corroboration as an antiquary of the statements I had made.

Professor Ruskin stated that what he had heard from me was a new revelation of truth and poetry for him; that he had had no idea of the wealth and beauty of ancient English teachings until he heard them from my lips; that I had overturned some of his most cherished opinions, but had given him a new field of thought instead. So much I can say, because the matter of my subject is inexhaustible in its beauty and capability of supplying our intellectual wants. His remarks were noticed by the public journals at the time. For his cordial good-will and endeavour to assist me in my object I wish to thank him thus publicly.

My warm thanks are also due to Sir Talbot Baker for his timely support, and also to General Sir James Alexander, who has so ably filled the chair on subsequent occasions.

To Dr. Bond, both my audience and myself are indebted for permission to meet in the Anglo-Saxon room for the purpose of discussing these interesting points; and we owe