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978-1-107-66095-3 - Two Lectures on the Science of Language

James Hope Moulton

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TWO LECTURES
ON THE
SCIENCE OF LANGUAGE

by

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IOANNI PEILE, Litt. D.

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PREFACE.

THIS little book consists of two lectures delivered on August 19th and 20th, 1902, to students of the University Extension at Cambridge. In deference to the kindly expressed wish of many in my audience, and in view of the non-existence (so far as I know) of anything in English giving a purely popular introduction to the Science of Language in its latest developments, I ventured to offer the lectures to the University Press for publication, hoping that they might serve to stimulate interest in a most fascinating study, sadly neglected in this country. I was encouraged in this resolution by my friend Professor Ridgeway, who very kindly read the lectures in MS. and helped me with many suggestions. The first lecture is printed nearly as delivered; the second, which was given extempore, was written out immediately after, and follows the general lines of my notes. I have added a brief Bibliography for those

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who may be tempted to pursue the study. It seemed best to preserve the lecture form, which to some extent mitigates the apparent absurdity of putting such a title as “The Science of Language” over a booklet of fifty or sixty pages. There are many things here which would be out of place in a scientific summary: there are many things absent which even an article for a small encyclopaedia ought to contain. Popular lectures will only be expected to include what will rouse interest and lead to further reading. As such I venture to put forth what is almost the only published product of my sixteen years’ teaching in Cambridge, so far as the general subject is concerned. Writing from a new sphere, where Hellenistic Greek will claim yet more rigorously the time that might have been given to Comparative Philology, I feel as if I were hanging a *votiva tabula* in the temple of Aius Locutius—if that shadowy divinity may be persuaded to take under his patronage a subject so clearly appropriate to him.

It only remains to express my gratitude to some of my old Cambridge friends for obligations very deeply felt. The Master of Christ’s, who has kindly allowed me to inscribe these lectures to him, was the teacher to whom, in undergraduate days, I owed my introduction to the “New Grammarians,” then very

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new. Aius Locutius has long received Dr Peile's votive tablet, to the sincere regret of all his old pupils, who will not forget the lucidity, wide knowledge, and unfailing judgment which always informed his lectures. His successor in the Readership of Comparative Philology, Mr Giles, has most kindly read my proofs and helped me with a number of suggestions. His learning and acuteness have been an invaluable help to me, as most of my pages would show if space permitted separate mention of the modifications due to his criticism. I need not say, however, that the responsibility for statements made here remains wholly my own. I have also been helped, not for the first time, by my old friend and colleague, Mr E. E. Kellett, of The Leys, who has carefully read the proofs. The last acknowledgement, alas! is one which its recipient is no longer here to see. Professor Cowell, with whom I had the privilege of reading for a short time in Sanskrit, and for some fifteen years in Zend, leaves a venerated memory behind for all who received out of his boundless stores. What he knew not was not knowledge, in Aryan subjects certainly, and in many other fields; but his pupils always had to struggle with the impression that they were there really to impart information to him. The man in the street knows of him as the "onlie begetter" of

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Fitzgerald's Omar. Happily there are scholars enough left to preserve in grateful memory more solid titles to the fame of the greatest English Orientalist of his time.

I should like to have named in closing at least two other great scholars whose friendship, though their work lies in very different fields, has been a powerful stimulus to me. But since their influence on this little book is only indirect, it seems hardly fair to make them apparent contributories. I must be content with merging these debts in the comprehensive acknowledgement to the *genius loci*, whose influence is realised most keenly when a long residence in Cambridge is just closed. I would that my parting tribute were worthier of the shrine.

J. H. M.

DIDSBURY,
March, 1903.