

and in other rare cases to exhibit only the crude base. Sometimes I have merely given the nominative case masculine of adjectives, omitting the feminine when that alone appeared doubtful, and leaving the neuter to be inferred; but throughout the Dictionary the omission of a nominative case has been quite an exception. Thus I have endeavoured to increase the usefulness of this publication even at the risk of occasionally misleading.

Another point requires a few words of explanation. I shall probably be told that meanings and synonyms are needlessly multiplied; but before the book is hastily censured on this score, let it be fairly tested by a repeated and extended application to various branches of the literature. I can with truth affirm that having myself constantly put these pages to a trial during their progress through the press, so far from having to regret any superfluity or surplusage, I have too often had to lament sins of omission, and have frequently discovered, when too late, that some one meaning has been rejected, because thought to be a mere synonym, when this very apparent synonym was really the precise word required to suit a particular passage.

With reference to the philological comparisons given throughout this work, I fear that occasional inconsistencies and violations of orthography will be found. For indeed I do not pretend to even a limited knowledge of some of the numerous languages compared, and my private library has not furnished the means of verifying all the words. It should be noted that I have not generally indicated the cognate English words with the Anglo-Saxon, because these are self-evident, and will generally be found among the meanings. As to other comparisons, I can only say that when I commenced my compilation, Bopp was considered the chief authority in comparative philology. I have not generally adopted what more modern scholars substitute for his teaching, because some of these later writers have themselves yet to undergo the full test of an extended criticism, which may not always support their opinions. Besides trusting to Bopp, I have generally followed Professors Benfey and Curtius, and I request that the comparisons given be accepted on the authority of these three scholars, subject to the understanding that more recent views have been propounded on many points.

Most of the errors and omissions hitherto discovered, whether typographical or caused by my own want of knowledge, have, I trust, been corrected and supplied in the supplementary matter at the end of the volume.

With these explanations I close my present labours, profoundly conscious of their imperfection, but full of thankfulness that my life has been spared to bring them, such as they are, to a completion.

MONIER WILLIAMS.

OXFORD, *May* 1872.