

PREFACE

THIS translation of the Nibelungenlied is published with the simple purpose of placing one of the world's great epic poems within the reach of English readers. Translations are at best but poor substitutes for originals. A new translation of a poem implies also a criticism of those that have preceded it. My apology for presenting this new English version of the Nibelungenlied is that none of those hitherto made has reproduced the metrical form of the original. In the hope of making the outlines of the poem clearer for the modern reader, I have endeavored to supply in the Introduction a historical background by summing up the results of investigation into its origin and growth. The translation itself was begun many years ago, when I studied the original under Zarncke in Leipzig.

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