

## PREFACE TO THE FOURTH EDITION.

TEN years have passed since the publication of the last edition of this book. But they have not been very eventful in the history of linguistic science. No fresh revolution has taken place in the methods or results of comparative philology, nor has much been done towards solving the problems which still await solution in the philosophy and science of language. Apart from Bréal's delightful *Essai de Sémantique*, in which the foundations of a science of sematology are at last laid, the work of the last ten years has been almost entirely confined to matters of detail. Even Delbrück's elaborate volume on "Comparative Syntax," which has appeared as an Appendix to Brugmann's "Outlines of the Comparative Grammar of the Indo-European Languages," can hardly be said to be an exception to this rule, any more than Professor Regnaud's assaults on the fashionable doctrine which sees in phonetic decay one of the main causes of change in language. I find, therefore, very little to alter in the text of my book. The most important modifications of it which may be made in accordance with the views of the younger school of Indo-European scholars have already been indicated in the Preface to the second edition, but as the older views still find many