

# **BIOGRAPHICAL OUTLINES OF ENGLISH LITERATURE**

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Biographical Outlines of English Literature by David Pryde

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**DAVID PRYDE**

**BIOGRAPHICAL  
OUTLINES OF  
ENGLISH LITERATURE**



BIOGRAPHICAL OUTLINES  
OF  
ENGLISH LITERATURE.

BY DAVID PRYDE, M.A.

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JOHN RAXTER, PAINTER, JAMES COURT, HEAD OF MOUND,  
EDINBURGH.

## PREFACE.

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THIS work is distinctly a School-book. It makes no pretensions to philosophical method or completeness. Everything has been planned and stated with the view of making it clear and interesting to youthful minds.

The less notable authors I have mentioned very shortly. They made no deep impress upon the Literature; and many of them are now very seldom read, even by literary men. Like a crowd of ordinary, though highly respectable persons, they would merely confuse the minds of the young, and prevent them from concentrating their attention upon the important characters in the great spectacle. Only the founders and moulders of taste and opinion have been described at length. These are representative men, and embody in their works the various characteristics of their respective ages. Accordingly, they occupy, as it were, the foreground of the picture, and the less remarkable writers retire, in the character of followers or attendants, into the background.

A piece of criticism by itself is a mere patch of information. It is fixed to no palpable fact, and is apt to elude the grasp of the mind. A framework of biographical details is necessary, on which it may be hung up to view. Its consistency will then be apparent, and the reason of its shape and complexion may very often be detected. The notice of an Author, therefore, has, in most cases, been introduced by a short biography.

Every biography should present some outstanding feature. In proportion to the prominence of this feature, is the consistency and interest of the biography. I have, therefore, endeavoured to make the details bring out this characteristic. Wherever it was possible, these details have also been made to suggest the personal character of the writer under review.

I have not attempted to make the length of the notices strictly proportionate to the importance of the respective Authors. When the materials have been interesting, their interest has not been destroyed by undue condensation. When they have been meagre or unimportant, they have not been drawn out to fill up a prescribed space. The nature of the estimate, and not the quantity of the letterpress, has been made the index of the relative greatness of the different Authors.

D. P.

EDINBURGH, *February*, 1862.



## CONTENTS.

### FIRST PERIOD.

#### ERRATA.

Page 97.—*For* D. ab. 1834. *read* D. 1884.  
" 104.— " B. 1775. " B. 1771.  
" 141.— " Thackeray. " Thackeray.

### SECOND PERIOD.

#### THE AGE OF CHAUCER, AND HIS SUCCESSORS.

1350—1800.

**Characteristics:**—The subjects more natural, and the diction more melodious and expressive.

*Improvement of Society, and its Good Effect upon the Literature—  
Relics of the Dark Ages, and their Bad Effect upon the Literature.*

**POETS:**—Langland—Chaucer—Barbour—James I. of Scotland—  
Dunbar—Other Poets.

**PROSE WRITERS:**—Mandeville—Wycliffe—Other Writers, Page 9

### THIRD PERIOD.

#### THE AGE OF THE REFORMATION.

1500—1558.

**Characteristics:**—An earnest practical spirit expressing itself in the plainest and most direct language.

*New Agencies—Revival of Classical Learning—The Reformation—The Art of Printing—Effect of these Agencies on Literature.*

**PROSE WRITERS:**—More—Latimer—Fox—Ascham—Other Writers.  
**POETS:**—Surrey—Other Poets.

**SCOTTISH WRITERS:**—Knox—Buchanan, Page 19

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## CONTENTS.

### FIRST PERIOD.

#### THE AGE OF THE FORMATION OF THE LANGUAGE.

449-1350.

Characteristics :—Meagreness in diction, and clumsiness in execution.

*Illiterate State of the Saxons—Spirit of their Literature—Style of their Poetry—Caedmon—Bede—Alfred—The Saxon Chronicle. Norman Invasion—Extinction of Saxon Literature under the Normans—Improvement of the Saxon Tongue into Old English—Its Triumph over the Norman-French.*

Page 3

### SECOND PERIOD.

#### THE AGE OF CHAUCER, AND HIS SUCCESSORS.

1350-1500.

Characteristics :—The subjects more natural, and the diction more melodious and expressive.

*Improvement of Society, and its Good Effect upon the Literature—Relics of the Dark Ages, and their Bad Effect upon the Literature. POETS :—Langland—Chaucer—Barbour—James I. of Scotland—Dunbar—Other Poets.*

PROSE WRITERS :—Mandeville—Wyatcliffe—Other Writers, Page 9

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PROSE WRITERS :—More—Latimer—Fox—Ascham—Other Writers.

POETS :—Surrey—Other Poets.

SCOTTISH WRITERS :—Knox—Buchanan,

Page 19