

**SKETCH OF ENGLISH
LITERATURE, WITH
THE LIVES AND WORKS
OF THE CHIEF AUTHORS**

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Sketch of English literature, with the lives and works of the chief authors by S. M Du Pré

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S. M DU PRÉ

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BY

S. M. DU PRÉ

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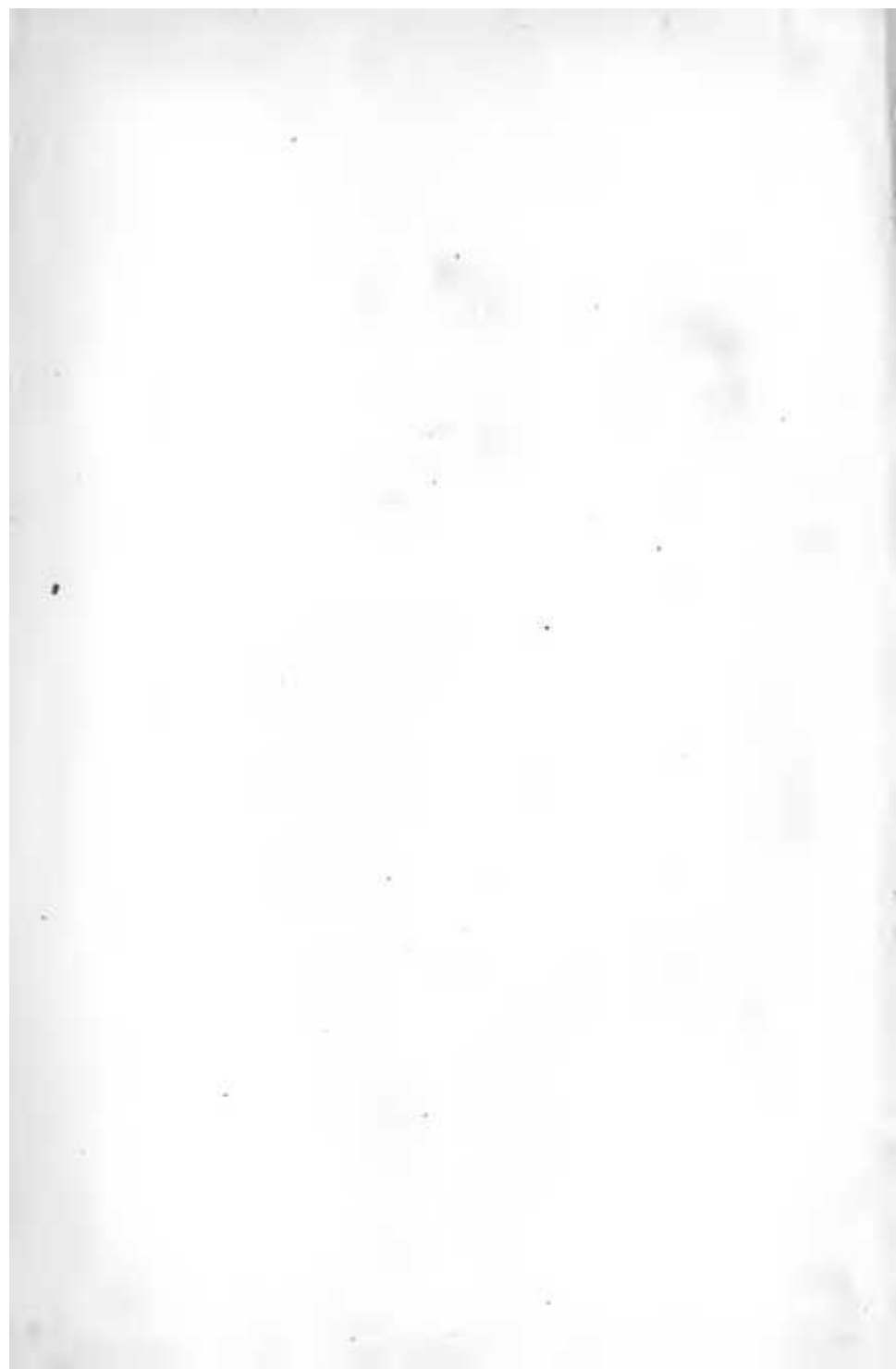
INTRODUCTION

THIS short outline of the Chief Periods in English Literature does not in any wise claim to be more than an introduction to the subject, but it is intended to form a basis for good oral lessons, and to be used as a text-book in conjunction with such lessons.

I have endeavoured to preserve the consecutive narrative as far as possible, so that the book may form a Literature Reader to be used with some book of Specimen Extracts.

The chief object of the compiler of such an outline literature ought to be to encourage pupils to read for themselves the works of our great authors, and one great step in accomplishing this is to arouse interest in the growth and development of our literature, and in the personality of the great men who form its central figures. Apart even from their literary interest, the lives and characters of such men as Milton, Dr. Johnson, Scott, or Wordsworth, are quite invaluable for study.

I have added a short Bibliography, which I hope will be found useful both to young teachers and students of the subject.



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SKETCH OF ENGLISH LITERATURE

PERIOD I

EARLY TIMES TO ABOUT 1350

Literature—Its beginnings in England—Celtic—Saxon—Effects of Danish invasions—Ælfred's work—Norman Conquest—Chronicles and romances—Thirteenth century.

LITERATURE may be defined as the expression of thought and feeling in good prose or beautiful poetry. It gives us the thoughts of the great men of a nation—not those great in rank, or in their opportunities of acquiring knowledge, but

What
Literature
is.

great in that Heaven-given power which it is difficult to define in words, a power which has in it something of the prophetic nature, as the Romans felt when they named the poet among them the "vates," or seer; something of the creative power, as the Greeks realized when they took their title from "poëin," to create, and the Scotch when they called him a "makkar."

All literature worthy of the name must possess certain characteristics in common. It must have thought, and it must have style or character in the expression of this thought. It must also, if it is to influence many in the present or future, be put into *written* form, but this condition is not necessarily attached to literature. Long before writing was known, or, at any rate, familiar, poetry was learnt and handed down as a precious possession from father to son. At