

**ENGLISH AND AMERICAN
LITERATURE FOR
SCHOOLS AND COLLEGES**

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English and American Literature for Schools and Colleges by Horace H. Morgan

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BY

HORACE H. MORGAN, LL.D.,

FORMERLY PRINCIPAL OF THE ST. LOUIS HIGH SCHOOL; AUTHOR OF REPRESENTATIVE NAMES IN ENGLISH LITERATURE, LITERARY STUDIES FROM THE GREAT BRITISH AUTHORS, TOPICAL SHAKESPEARIANA, ETC.



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To

JOHN BASCOM, D.D., LL.D.,

LATE PRESIDENT OF THE UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN,

THIS

ENGLISH LITERATURE

Is Dedicated.

PREFACE.

THE growing interest in the study of English literature has multiplied the number of manuals and books of specimens, and thus increased the probability of reaching many circles of students. But, as the wants of mankind are as various as their temperaments and their interests, there seems reason to believe, that, despite the excellences of books which have already been offered to the public, there is an office to be filled by one which shall meet wants not adequately recognized in such efforts as have already been made. It is not to be supposed that this book will satisfy the needs of all students without reference to their maturity; nor is it the expectation that it will be entirely exempt from criticism. It is put forward as a practical working text-book for schools and colleges, as well as for the general reader.

To attempt to include within a single volume specimens of the writings of even a few of the standard authors, in number, length, and variety sufficient to convey to the student any adequate idea of their style, their method of treating a subject, and the purpose for which they wrote, would make a volume too large and costly, if not objectionable on other grounds. It is believed that complete compositions rather than fragments are desirable, and that teachers often, if not generally, will prefer to make their own selections for study from among the masterpieces, a

great variety of which can be obtained in a convenient and inexpensive form.

Any criticism which shows defect of plan, or inaccuracy in execution will be used in any revisions which the book may undergo, should it otherwise find favor. The manuscript has been criticised and revised by eminent specialists and teachers in the field of literature, to whom the thanks of the author and the publishers are extended.

DISTINCTIVE FEATURES OF THE BOOK.

I. The great British authors to whom we owe the masterpieces of our literature are presented in such a way that no reasonable question concerning them remains unanswered.

II. Subordinate to these authors are those less famous with whom all but the most superficial students should be acquainted, and who would necessarily be excluded in a briefer consideration of our literature.

III. Authors belonging to "the literature of knowledge," rather than to "the literature of power," writers whose services must always be remembered in any complete history of literature, these, together with their works, are mentioned in the introductory paragraphs of each chapter.

IV. English authors have been chronologically divided into six groups for the purpose of giving the student a clearer idea of what writers were contemporaneous, and, at the same time, effectively to present the movement during each epoch. It is believed that the classification is a natural one, and that while doing no violence to similar and well-settled plans, it more exactly discriminates the periods of actual change in the literary spirit.

The six eras are thus distinguished :

1. From Chaucer to Spenser — the beginnings of English literature.
2. From Spenser to Milton — generally, but less exactly called the Elizabethan age.
3. From Milton to Dryden — a brief period, but one, essentially distinct from any other era.
4. From Dryden to Johnson — a period usually separated into two ; the one represented by Dryden, and the other by Pope. But as Dryden is most certainly the founder of the school in which Pope became the master, this division tends to confuse, rather than to aid.
5. From Johnson to Cowper — the period of transition towards modern times.
6. From Cowper to the Present Time — literature which we read without thought of chronology.

V. The preliminary chapter, which treats of literature, the study of literature, and the qualities of fine writing, will, it is hoped, render more possible to the student, that appreciation of literary beauties which is certainly the object of such a study.

VI. The biographies have been written with the view of including all that is essential, and of *excluding all that is non-essential* to the full appreciation of the place and work of the author in the field of literature.

VII. Any attempt at originality has been freely sacrificed in the endeavor to secure what will prove permanently useful, and, whenever practicable, citations have been made from the works of standard critics.

VIII. An attempt has been made to introduce as much variety as is consistent with the fact that about the same kind of information is desired in regard to each author. As the book is to be studied and not merely read, general statements are not often repeated.