

THE
HISTORY
OF
ENGLISH LITERATURE;

WITH
AN OUTLINE OF THE ORIGIN AND GROWTH
OF THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE:

ILLUSTRATED BY EXTRACTS.

For the Use of Schools and of Private Students.

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ADVERTISEMENT TO THE ELEVENTH EDITION.

IN issuing another Edition of this "History," the Publishers beg to direct attention to the circumstance that the chapters relating to the Authors of the Victorian Age have been re-written, and the record of events brought down to the present time. It is hoped that the additions thus made will tend to increase the value of the Work, not only as a Scholastic Text-Book, but also as a popular Handbook for Private Students.

AUGUST 1870.

PREFACE.

THIS volume is offered, as an Elementary Text-Book, to those who are interested in the instruction of young persons.

The tenor of my own pursuits, and my hearty concurrence in the wish to see the systematic study of English Literature occupying a wider place in the course of a liberal education, seemed to justify me in attempting, at the request of the publishers, to frame an unambitious Manual, which should relate and explain some of the leading facts in the Intellectual History of our Nation. Those youthful students, for whose benefit the book is intended, will, I would fain hope, find it not ill calculated to serve, whether in the class-room or in the closet, as an incitement to the perusal, and a clue through the details, of works possessing higher pretensions, and imparting fuller information.

It is for others to decide whether, in ushering young readers into the field of Literary History, I have been able to make the study interesting or attractive to them. I am at least confident that the book does not contain any thing that is beyond their comprehension, either in its manner of describing facts, or in its criticisms of works, or in its incidental suggestion of critical and historical principles. But, on the other hand, having much faith in the vigour of youthful intelligence, and a strong desire to aid in the right guidance of youthful feeling, I have not shrunk from availing myself freely of the opportunities, furnished profusely by a theme so noble, for endeavouring to prompt active thinking and to awaken refined and elevating sentiments. I have frequently invited the student to reflect, how closely the world of letters is related, in all its regions, to that world of reality and action in the midst of which it comes into being : how Literature is, in its origin, an effusion and perpetuation of human thoughts, and emotions, and wishes ; how it is,