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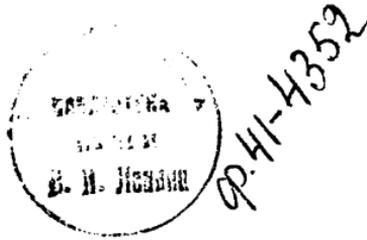
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## PREFACE

**D**URING the last few years the importance of English Literature in any system of education—whether Primary, Secondary, or University—has been gradually recognised. And, partly as a consequence of this recognition, there is an increasing number of older readers who desire to know a little more about our great authors and their works.

Among the many excellent works dealing with English Literature, there appears to be room for something between a mere primer on the one hand, and a long and advanced history of literature on the other. The present volume, written in a simple style with as few technicalities as possible, is designed to fill this intermediate position. It is primarily intended for pupils in the Upper Forms of Secondary Schools, but it will be found equally suitable for the general reader.

Its aim is to review in a general but critical manner the groundwork of English Literature. Special attention has therefore been paid to the course of development of our literature, to the general characteristics of each period, and to the external influences which have from time to time affected its progress.

The work and style of the greater authors have been discussed somewhat fully, and brief illustrative extracts from their works have been added. Lesser authors have been treated in due proportion, care having been taken not to crowd the book with names, dates, or unimportant details. Questions have been appended to each chapter; some of these are of a simple nature, whilst others are intended for those who are able to give further thought and study to the subject.

The book should be useful in preparation for such examinations as the Senior Cambridge Local and London Matriculation, and