

readily intelligible to the pupil. I find my students, even the lazy ones, understand his ordinary phraseology very well and read his lines correctly after four or five lessons. Every word in Chaucer looks backward and forward like a sign-post in the history of our language. Half a dozen lines well chosen from Chaucer might serve as a mnemonic to keep the pupil in mind of three-fourths of the facts and principles in English philology. My only fear on this side is that the teacher would find the study of philology on the basis of Chaucer so easy and fascinating that he would devote too much time to it. For Chaucer's "Prologue" has other qualities equally valuable in the sight of the teacher. There are, for example, beautifully simple studies in rhythm, easy varieties of accent natural to the simple and naive art of the time; with just enough doubt about a final *e* or the syllabication of a word to call for a constant activity of judgment from the pupil, simple as the rhythm is. Then there is the claim which Chaucer's "Prologue" has as being an exquisite combination of as simple, as profound, and as interesting matter as could well be put before the young student. Even the least skilful of teachers could hardly make Chaucer's "Prologue" uninteresting.

And, lastly, he is the first of our great poets. With his simple naive narrative English poetry takes its new departure, and proceeds with a beautifully clear development of thought and form down to Shakespeare—a development so clear, so transparent, I might say, that the teacher has in this period the very simplest example he can put before his pupils of the historical development of literature, of all the phenomena which claim the attention of the student in this department. For just as in choosing reading books for the pupil in his elementary stage, we must as a rule

choose contemporary works in which the style and sentiment are those of his own time; and therefore from his point of view the simplest to understand, so when he is sufficiently advanced to study the historical development of literature, he ought to begin with an early period, the period for example from Chaucer to Shakespeare. For within this period we shall find all the chief forms of poetic literature originating and developing under simpler conditions than those which determine the development of the more complex literary phenomena of the seventeenth, eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. I think, therefore, that the study of such a period within well defined limits ought to form a portion of the work done for Honours Matriculation. Otherwise I cannot see how this examination is to be brought into line with a first year's study at the University. With the time left at my disposal I can do no more than suggest the points he should take up and to which I think he should confine himself. Let us suppose that the pupil is reading, or has already read, Chaucer's "Prologue." In the characteristic simplicity of thought, style and metre of this early narrative literature the teacher gets his starting-point. He finds a variety of these in the older ballads and a prose variety in Malory's famous history of King Arthur. Both of these should be treated in some detail, accompanied by selections; the ballad literature on account of its high æsthetic value for the young mind, and Malory's book as a central point in the growth of the Arthurian legends in English literature. His version of the "Mort D'Arthur" may be very instructively compared with Tennyson's. In Dunbar the steady rise of reflective thought may be noticed and contrasted with the decay of poetic art. Skelton best exemplifies development of this reflective thought into satire and self-