

"Talisman," one must also notice as a specimen of the author's weaker and flimsier style; but it is so hard to find works which are of the first rank, and yet of a kind to interest young readers, that we may readily forgive the framer of the list for falling back on this attractive, though somewhat superficial romance. Yet I do not see why, unless for reasons which I am reluctant to think should be sufficient to limit the scope of studies in a great state university. I do not see why such a work as the "Monastery," or "The Fair Maid of Perth," might not have taken its place. For this much is certain, that you can see Scott in his genuine strength nowhere but on Scottish soil.

But, on the whole, one has only to praise this junior part of the matriculation, as far as English is concerned, and to be thankful for the liberal, enlightened, and, in general, discriminating spirit which it shows.

I wish I could say that a similar spirit of progress had been present when the list of subjects for Honours in English was drawn up. In that department "all is in its ancient state." Shakespeare and Milton, and Shakespeare and Milton alone, are the authors here prescribed for study. Now, in the first place, I would remark that although these two stand side by side very naturally in a critical survey, as the two great poetic chiefs of our older literature, yet it by no means follows that there is the same propriety in placing them together as subjects for the elementary instruction of the school-boy. There is no parity between them here. The effects in Shakespeare's dramas, particularly in such dramas as "The Merchant of Venice," "Julius Cæsar," are comparatively obvious for the youthful mind, comparatively natural and easy of explanation, while those in Milton's poetry, at least in such works as "Samson Agonistes," "Co-

mus," and "Paradise Lost," are comparatively erudite, obscure, dependent on remote analogies and difficult of explanation. And this is true equally of the thought, the phraseology, and the rhythm of these two poets. For example, it might not matter much to the teacher who had no definite notions on the subject of versification or methods of teaching it, whether the boy began with Milton or Shakespeare. Both write blank verse with a normal number of five accents, he might think, and the one is as easy to scan as the other—Milton he might think rather the easier of the two. But any teacher who knows this side of his work thoroughly, knows that some preliminary exercise in the simple rhythmical effects of Chaucer, some preliminary knowledge of the natural freedom, even license, with which dramatic blank verse developed in the hands of Marlowe and Shakespeare, is necessary before the pupil can understand the character of Milton's versification, with its greater restraint, its occasional audacities, and the conscious subtlety which characterizes it throughout. He must have this preliminary training before he can see its place in the history of literature, and even, I believe, before his ear can discern and appreciate Miltonic rhythms at all. And this is equally true of Milton's phraseology and thought. For the student, Milton is a stage further on than Shakespeare.

And I think we can scarcely have any doubt as to who should occupy Milton's place at this stage. There are few works which have so strong a claim to the student's attention at this stage as Chaucer's "Prologue." It is of the very highest service to the teacher in enabling him to give his pupils a real hold of English philology and the history of the language proper. You have in Chaucer the last stage of transitional English, and yet a stage