

render its readers independent of the authors themselves or relieve them from the duty and pleasure of studying the original works. In no case will one rise from articles of ours flattering himself that now he knows his author and may consider that subject settled. What we give him is little more than a *catalogue raisonné*, an illustrated conspectus, a finger-post to the best books, a guide to that of which he is in search, to what he needs, to what will interest him, to what he can read with pleasure and profit. The very shortness and fewness of the excerpts is a security that they shall only be taken as samples; they are meant to whet the appetite, to stimulate curiosity, to be stepping-stones to the veritable books.

The essential plan of the original *Cyclopædia of English Literature*, approved by generations of diligent readers and the testimonies of many who have themselves earned the best right to testify, has been adhered to and developed. The extension from two to three volumes of like size has made room for the much-required addition of new materials in all sections of the work. Old English literature, formerly discussed in three pages, now occupies more than ten times the space; Middle English has no longer only some twenty pages allotted to it, but ninety. In the first volume alone over fifty authors not named or hardly named in the older issues are treated—shortly, but it is hoped fairly—and illustrated by selections from their works: Roper and Cranmer, Sir Thomas North and Philemon Holland, Florio and Zachary Boyd, Gervase Markham and Kenelm Digby, William Prynne and Samuel Rutherford. Thomas Campion, who had been forgotten by the world, is now in his rightful place; Aubrey, formerly dismissed in a sentence or two, is now represented by a series of characteristic paragraphs. And as it is profitable not merely for the relief of contrast but for our insight into progress and decadence to glance at the handiwork of the eccentric, the hopelessly mediocre, and even those justly or unjustly condemned to the lower circles of literary lost souls, the Ogilbys and the Flecknoes, the Stanyhursts and the Drunken Barnabys, Coryate's Crudities and Boorde's Peregrinations, are treated as having their part in our literary history. Additions and changes of all kinds are innumerable.

The inconvenient arrangement by which an author was dealt with as poet, dramatist, novelist, essayist, and historian in separate sections of the work has been departed from.

Johnson will no longer have a hundred and thirty pages intercalated between the sections devoted to him, nor Scott more than two hundred pages; each author is presented continuously and once for all. Reference is further facilitated by improved typography.

The historical surveys prefixed to the several sections are entirely new, and so are a large proportion of the critical and biographical articles; a larger number have been almost entirely rewritten; no single article remains as it was, historical facts having been verified and corrected, and critical judgments carefully reconsidered. In very many cases the illustrative extracts are all different from those formerly given; where the passages in the old issue seemed well suited for the purpose in hand, they have been scrupulously verified, and, in the case of the more interesting authors, as a rule extended and added to. There has been a constant effort to secure passages interesting in themselves, and least likely to suffer through separation from their context. Appropriating a famous classification, we trust there may in our three volumes be found no passages that are not for some reason worth reading at least once, few that are worth reading once but once only, far more that are worth at least two or three readings in a lifetime, and very many that are worth reading again and again for ever.

The work of the editorial staff has been much more largely supplemented than formerly by contributions or series of contributions from the admirably competent pens of writers of approved authority, as from Dr Stopford Brooke, Professor Bradley, Professor Hume Brown, Mr A. H. Bullen, Mr Austin Dobson, Dr Samuel R. Gardiner, Mr Gosse, Professor W. P. Ker, Mr Lang, Dr T. G. Law, Mr Sidney Lee, Mr A. W. Pollard, Professor Saintsbury, Mr Gregory Smith, Dr William Wallace, and others whose names will be found appended to their articles. American authors will, in the second and third volumes, contribute articles on American men of letters and their works.

In this first volume old English literature as a whole and all the writers who used to be called Anglo-Saxon—Cædmon, Bæda, Ælfred, and the rest—are dealt with by Dr Stopford Brooke. Mr A. W. Pollard has charged himself with Middle English and almost all the writers down to Reformation times—Layamon, the Ormulum, the Chronicles and Romances,