

ENGLISH LITERATURE

CHAPTER I

WRITERS BEFORE THE NORMAN CONQUEST, 670-1066

I. **The History of English Literature** is the story of what great English men and women thought and felt, and then wrote down in good prose and beautiful poetry in the English language. The story is a long one. It begins in England about the year 670; it had its unwritten beginnings still earlier on the Continent, in the old Angle-Land; it was still going on in the year which closes this book, 1832; nor has our literature lost any of its creative force in the years which have followed 1832. Into this little book then is to be briefly put the story of nearly 1200 years of the thoughts, feelings, and imagination of a great people. Every English man and woman has good reason to be proud of the work done by their forefathers in prose and poetry. Every one who can write a good book or a good song may say to himself, "I belong to a noble company, which has been teaching