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will be read, without any teaching, by those whose taste lies that way; and scarcely any teaching could give them interest where it is not native to the student.

In Chaucer, we have the real beginning of the literary eminence of our country. No reading would dispense with Chaucer. But is an English master justified in taking up much time with him? True, he is so far charged with obsolete phraseology and forms, that he cannot be read without the assistance of a commentary. But it is not sufficient that the text should be edited and explained, and his beauties indicated in printed annotations? When you are sufficiently matured for the enjoyment of poetry of any kind, you will take delight in reading Chaucer for yourself, with no other aid than the notes of the "able editor." You will also find abundance of reviews and even attractive style, which you need no one by your elbow to expound. Doubtless the discussions on Chaucer's metre are a little dry, and might be the better for a coach; but I should say to the person that could not master the point without such help, that neither he nor mankind at large would be much worse if he left the matter alone.

It will be obvious that this line of remark upon Chaucer has an application far wider; that at least it extends to all the great poets. I mean it to be so extended. I hold that an English poet that has not of himself sufficient attractions to be read, understood, and relished, without the prelections of a university professor, is by that very fact a failure. He undertakes to charm the sense and fill the imagination of the ordinary reader, without more effort of study than is repaid on the spot at the moment; his return for any labor expended on him is immediate or nothing. Any special difficulties ensuing from remoteness of age, from the wide scope of his imagery, or from any accidental defects of his composition, may be removed by his elegant and admiring commentator, or be redeemed by his irresistible charms in other respects. If we are to allow a coach in addition to the editor and the review critic, the popular evening lecturer is quite enough. The youthful pupil's forenoon hours are too precious for this kind of work.

Let us come now to modern English, dating from Elizabeth. Here we have our greatest poet, and some of our greatest names in prose. Let us first dispose of the poet. I speak with the common sentiment of profound homage to the genius of Shakespeare.

On Teaching English.

(BY PROFESSOR BAIN, ABERDEEN UNIVERSITY.)

(Concluded.)

III.

The reasons why these critical exercises should be chiefly derived from good modern authors will be given under the remarks to be made on third division of the course of English—namely, ENGLISH LITERATURE.

In this wide field we have, first, the claim of the early English authors—those before Chaucer. If the criterion of utility is allowed, they may be soon disposed of. It is scarcely supposable that a student of this day should get one useful hint from the whole mass of these authors put together. They belong partly to the history of the language, and partly to the history of the country. They are proper to be published, edited, and commented on; they enter into the department of curious reading for the grown man; they do not belong, further than by cursory allusion, to the schoolmaster, hemmed in as he is at the present moment within such narrow limits of time. Either they do not require, or they are not susceptible of, the master's aid. They