

ENGLISH LITERATURE

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English literature by Stopford Augustus Brooke & Jacob Harris Patton

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STOPFORD AUGUSTUS BROOKE & JACOB HARRIS PATTON

ENGLISH LITERATURE

LITERATURE PRIMER, *edited*

by JOHN RICHARD GREEN, M. A.

ENGLISH.

Literature Primers.

Edited by JOHN RICHARD GREEN, M.A.

ENGLISH
LITERATURE.

BY THE
REV. STOPFORD BROOKE, M.A.

NEW EDITION, REVISED AND CORRECTED.

WITH AN APPENDIX ON AMERICAN LITERATURE,

By J. HARRIS PATTON, M. A., Ph. D.,

AUTHOR OF "FOUR HUNDRED YEARS OF AMERICAN HISTORY,"

"NATURAL RESOURCES OF THE UNITED STATES,"

"POLITICAL ECONOMY FOR AMERICAN YOUTH," ETC.

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Dr. Horace Ivis

CONTENTS.

	PAGE
CHAPTER I.	
WRITERS BEFORE THE NORMAN CONQUEST, 670—	
1066	5
CHAPTER II.	
FROM THE CONQUEST TO CHAUCER'S DEATH,	
1066—1400	22
CHAPTER III.	
FROM CHAUCER, 1400, TO ELIZABETH, 1559 .	50
CHAPTER IV.	
FROM 1559 TO 1603	71
CHAPTER V.	
FROM ELIZABETH'S DEATH TO THE RESTORATION,	
1603—1660	108
CHAPTER VI.	
FROM THE RESTORATION TO THE DEATH OF	
POPE AND SWIFT, 1660—1745	125
CHAPTER VII.	
PROSE LITERATURE FROM DEATH OF POPE	
AND SWIFT TO THE FRENCH REVOLUTION,	
AND FROM THE FRENCH REVOLUTION TO	
DEATH OF SCOTT, 1745—1832	145

CHAPTER VIII.

	PAGE
POETRY, FROM 1730—1832	158

CHAPTER IX.

AMERICAN LITERATURE, FROM 1647—1895 . . .	186
---	-----

CHAPTER X.

AMERICAN LITERATURE (CONTINUED), FROM 1647—1895	208
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PRIMER

OF

ENGLISH LITERATURE.

CHAPTER I.

WRITERS BEFORE THE NORMAN CONQUEST, 670—1066.

1. Continental Poems.—*The Traveller's Song*.—*Deor's Complaint*.—*The Fight at Finnesburg*.—*Beowulf*, before 800.
2. Poems in England.—*Cædmon's Paraphrase*, 670.—*Judith*.—*Cynewulf's Poems*, and others in Exeter and Vercelli books.—*Odes* in A. S. Chronicle.—*Song of Brunanburh*, 937.—*Fight at Maldon*, 991.
3. PROSE.—*Beda's translation of St. John*, 735.—King *Ælfred's work during his two times of peace*, 880—893 and 897—901.—*Ælfric's prose works*, 990—995.—*Wulfstan's work*, 1002—1023.—*The English Chronicle*, ends 1154.

1. **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 begins still earlier on the Continent, in the old Angle-Land, and it is still going on in the year 1879. Into this little book then is to be put the story of more than 1,200 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 and delighting the world for more than 1,000 years." And that is a fact in which those who write and those who read English literature ought to feel a noble pride.

2. **The English and the Welsh.**—This literature is written in English, the tongue of our fathers. They lived, while this island of ours was still called Britain, in Sleswick, Jutland, and Holstein; but, either because they were pressed from the inland, or for pure love of adventure, they took to the sea, and, landing at various parts of Britain at various times, drove back, after 150 years of hard fighting, the Britons, whom they called Welsh, to the land now called Wales, and to Cornwall. It is well for those who study English literature to remember that in these two places the Britons remained as a distinct race with a distinct literature of their own, because the stories and the poetry of the Britons crept afterwards into English literature and had a great influence upon it. The whole tale of King Arthur, of which English poetry and even English prose is so full, was a British tale. The imaginative work of the conquered afterwards took captive their fierce conquerors.

3. **The English Tongue.**—Of the language in which our literature is written we can say little here; it is fully discussed in the Primer of English Grammar. Of course it has changed its look very much since it began to be written. The earliest form of our English tongue is very different from modern English in form, pronunciation, and appearance, and one must learn it almost as if it were a foreign tongue; but still the language written in the year 700 is the same as that in which the prose of the Bible is written, just as much as the tree planted a hundred years ago is the same tree to-day. It is this sameness of language, as well as the sameness of national spirit,