

**REPRESENTATIVE
NAMES IN THE HISTORY
OF ENGLISH LITERATURE**

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Representative names in the history of English literature by H. H. Morgan

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ENGLISH LITERATURE

BY H. IL. MORGAN

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DEDICATED
TO
THOSE WHO FEEL THE NECESSITY
FOR A
Wider Diffusion of the Results attained by Students,
AND
SEEKING THE APPROVAL OF THOSE WHO,
BY THEIR
Acquaintance with Literature,
ARE
RENDERED COMPETENT TO EXPRESS
A
Rational Opinion.

PREFACE.

THE wants of a busy age require some inexpensive book which shall furnish general information, together with a firm grasp of the movement in each field of effort. As auxiliary to our anthologies, dictionaries of authors, bibliographies, and manuals of literature, it has seemed not undesirable to have some "vade mecum" in which should be collected information otherwise accessible only by long and continuous labor. The plan adopted aims at an answer to the various rational questions which might be asked about an author as an author: when did he live, who were his contemporaries, what was his standpoint, what are his representative works, for what and how far can we trust him, who vouched for his reliability, and what did he do to further the progress of literature?

The selection of names has been made with reference to the authors whom the world has accepted as representative of English literature; as minor writers there have been added those whose services have an historical value. Literature has been understood in the strictest sense—the perfect adaptation of the form to the thought expressed; judgment is pronounced from the æsthetic point of view, and not from that of Ethics, Politics, or Commerce; Oratory, Theology, Physics, and Metaphysics have been excluded except when their form has entitled them to literary recognition.

The time of any author has been indicated by giving the date of his birth and death, together with the "Era" in which he would be classed. The classification of Wm. Francis Collier is noticeably simple and serviceable, and has been used; it is as follows:—

i st Era.	From the birth of Chaucer, 1328, to the Introduction of Printing, 1474.
ii ^d "	" " " Introduction of Printing, 1474, to the accession of Elizabeth, 1558.
iii ^d "	" " " Accession of Elizabeth, 1558, to the shutting of the Theatres, 1648.
iv th "	" " " Shutting of the Theatres, 1648, to the Death of Milton, 1674.
v th "	" " " Death of Milton, 1674, to the Publication of the Tatler, 1709.
vi th "	" " " Publication of the Tatler, 1709, to the Publication of Pamela, 1740.
vii th Era.	" " " " Pamela, 1740, to the Death of Johnson, 1784.
viii th "	" " " " Death of Johnson, 1784, to the Death of Scott, 1832.
ix th "	" " " " " Scott, 1832, to the Present Time.

In the case of American writers the "Eras" are not used, as contemporaneity is of small consequence; it may be added that less exclusiveness has been thought desirable in the case of those belonging to our own country.

The classification of authors and literary forms is believed to be at once simple and exhaustive: if this belief be well-founded, there will be one less want among the many which oppress the earnest scholar.

Disregarding the almost valueless distinction of Prose and Verse, (although for convenience prose works are indicated by *Italics*,) literary forms may be reduced to nine:

1. Letter.	2. Essay.	3. Treatise.	Written.
4. Tale.	5. Narration.	6. History.	Written or Spoken.
7. Oration.	8. Address.	9. Lecture.	Spoken.

The Letter, Tale, and Oration agree in their standpoint, which is that of the author, and in their aim, which is to impress.

The Essay, Narration, and Address recognize the standpoint of both author and reader, are tentative, and aim to stimulate.

The Treatise, History, and Lecture assume the standpoint of the reader, are exhaustive in their mode of treatment, and aim to convince.

Authors are classified by their work and not by their personal biographies. Seven phases seem sufficient for the expression of mental differences, and while the complete man will manifest each one of them, less gifted mortals will be limited to one or to several.

1. Critic,	whose treatment of themes is judicial.
2. Satirist,	“ “ “ “ recognizes only contradictions.
3. Humorist,	“ “ “ “ regards simply seeming irrationalities.
4. Sentimentalist,	“ “ “ “ is based upon the feelings.
5. Rhetorician,	“ “ “ “ regards mainly effectiveness of presentation.
6. Metaphysician,	“ “ “ “ is speculative.
7. Physicist,	“ “ “ “ is based upon experiment.

He to whom each of these manifestations is but a phase, is alone the master artist, poet, philosopher, or man; such are indeed “not one but all mankind’s epitome,” and these are the immortal few whose reputation and whose influence is confined to no country, and to no times.

Representative Works only have been named.

The Characterization consists of criticisms which fairly represent the strength and weakness of the author; and these criticisms have as far as possible been taken from critics whose opinion is known by all to be beyond dispute; as soon as a critic transcends the limit assigned to him by the world at large, his opinion is not presented.

Finally, this little book is offered for its serviceableness; if it lacks merit, the author would not care to give it any factitious aid by extended reference to authorities, or by any recital of his own possible fitness for the office which he has undertaken to fill.

H. H. M.

St. Louis, Jan., 1875.

