
Guide To Chaucer And Spenser

Fleay Frederick Gard

Title: Guide To Chaucer And Spenser

Author: Fleay Frederick Gard

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· G U I D E

TO

CHAUCER AND SPENSER.

BY

F. G. FLEAY,

AUTHOR OF 'THE SHAKESPEARE MANUAL'

Man.



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Part I.



GUIDE TO CHAUCER.





GUIDE TO CHAUCER.

INTRODUCTION.

THE reasons for the publication of this *Guide* are the following :

1. There is no accessible trustworthy work on the subject at a moderate price.

2. The information necessary for a student of Chaucer is scattered through a number of works, some expensive, some of small intrinsic value, some difficult to obtain.

3. The valuable additions to our critical knowledge of Chaucer, made of late years by Messrs Bradshaw, Skeat, Morris, Furnival, Lowell, Ten Brink, and others, have been so overlaid with premature conclusions and insufficiently founded hypotheses, as to rhyme-tests, hopeless early love, and other matters, that it is needful to recall students to a juster appreciation of the value of the old traditions, and to vindicate the Chaucerian authorship of some of the rejected writings.

4. The received hypotheses as to the chronology of the poems seem capable of improvement in various ways.

Of course, in so small a work, it cannot be expected that all these ends have been fully attained. I hope, however, that some advance has been made toward their attainment ; and that a scheme has been laid down for the order of study of these works which is practicable and desirable. It has been in no way my intention to infringe on the duties of the editor or commentator on Chaucer, but to give such information as can properly be given, apart from the consideration of any special poem or particular passages of poems ; so that by the help of a glossary (which can be found in most editions), a sound treatise on English grammar, such as Dr Morris's *Historical Accidence*, and a good text, such as that

in Wright's *Canterbury Tales*, or Morris's *Complete Works* of our author, no further aid should be needful for any student who desires a sound, but not a specially critical acquaintance with our earliest and our all but greatest poet. Of the need of such an acquaintance for every one who wishes for a knowledge of English literature, it is useless to say a word; of the practicability of acquiring it at the age of thirteen or thereabouts, I have had many proofs among my own pupils, from the time when I first introduced English literature as a specific subject of education in our grammar schools, now twenty years ago. The methods I was then almost, if not quite, alone in using, are now in general practice, and I am desirous of continuing to aid their diffusion by the publication of this manual. It is the result (however imperfect) of continued and long study, and if it gives anything like the same advantage to the reader that its production has to the author, it will more than answer its design.