The dark ages

Ker W P
Periods of European Literature

EDITED BY

PROFESSOR SAINSTSBURY

I.

THE DARK AGES
PERIODS OF EUROPEAN LITERATURE.
EDITED BY PROFESSOR SAINTSBURY.

A COMPLETE AND CONTINUOUS HISTORY OF THE SUBJECT.
In 12 Crown 8vo Volumes.

"The criticism which alone can much help us for the future is a criticism which regards Europe as being, for intellectual and spiritual purposes, one great confederation, bound to a joint action and working to a common result."
—MATTHEW ARNOLD.

I. The DARK AGES . . . . . . Professor W. P. Ker.

II. The FLOURISHING OF ROMANCE AND THE RISE OF ALLEGORY . The Editor.

III. The FOURTEENTH CENTURY . . F. J. Snell.

IV. The TRANSITION PERIOD . . . G. Gregory Smith.

V. The EARLIER RENAISSANCE . . The Editor.

VI. The LATER RENAISSANCE . . David Hannay.

VII. The FIRST HALF of 17th CENTURY. Professor H. J. C. Grierson.

VIII. The AUGUSTAN AGES . . . . Professor O. Elton.

IX. The MID-EIGHTEENTH CENTURY . J. H. Millar.

X. The ROMANTIC REVOLT . . . Professor C. E. Vaughan.

XI. The ROMANTIC TRIUMPH . . . T. S. Omond.

XII. The LATER NINETEENTH CENTURY The Editor.

CHARLES SCRIBNER'S SONS, New York.
THE DARK AGES

BY

W. P. KER

FELLOW OF ALL SOULS COLLEGE, OXFORD;
PROFESSOR OF ENGLISH LITERATURE IN UNIVERSITY COLLEGE, LONDON

SECOND IMPRESSION

NEW YORK
CHARLES SCRIBNER'S SONS
153-157 FIFTH AVENUE
1911

All Rights reserved
Replacing 149110
PREFACE.

The scope of this book is described in the Introduction (chapter i.) and in the Editor's account of the whole series, in the next volume, so that there is the less need for a formal Preface. It may be explained, however, that some freedom has been used in the selection and arrangement of matter. Old English literature has been treated, for example, with less detail than Icelandic, because it is more familiar ground in this country, and has been well described in many recent works. In Icelandic, the poems of the Elder Edda have been taken as more important than anything else, but very little is said of the problems of their date and origin. The notes on Irish and Welsh literature are intended merely as illustrations of certain general topics; a fuller account was hardly possible: as it is, this chapter trespasses too far in regions where the author has no special credentials. At the end of the book it was found unnecessary to
make any recapitulation, because things are summed up already, to the best of the writer's power, in chapter ii. (The Elements), and also because the way is easy and unimpeded from Roncesvalles at the close of this volume to the French heroic poetry in the next period. I regret that the newly discovered Chacun de Willame should have appeared too late to be recorded in its proper place. I take this opportunity of referring to the article on the subject by M. Paul Meyer in Romania, and of thanking the unknown benefactor who has printed this epic of William of Orange—older, it would seem, than the poem of Aliscans.

The following works, among others, have been of very great service: Ebert, Allgemeine Geschichte der Literatur des Mittelalters in Abendlande, 1874-1887; Gröber's account of mediæval Latin literature in his Grundriss der romanischen Philologie; Mone, Lateinische Hymnen des Mittelalters, 1853-1855; Edélestand du Méril, Poésies populaires latines antérieuses au douzième Siècle, 1843 (in which will be found the specimens of Latin popular poetry quoted in chapter iii. pp. 208-217); Poole, Illustrations of the History of Medieval Thought, 1884; Paul, Grundriss der germanischen Philologie; Corpus Poeticum Boreale, edited by Gudbrand Vigfusson and F. York Powell, Oxford, 1883; Eddaica Minoru, by Ranisch and Heusler, 1903, containing the old-fashioned Northern poems that are not included in the great Copenhagen manuscript;