

PROFESSOR JAMES BALDWIN'S "Introduction to the Study of English Literature and Literary Criticism" (John E. Potter & Co.), of which only the first volume, devoted to poetry, has yet appeared, is upon a new plan which was well worth trying. After two chapters devoted respectively to Anglo-Saxon poetry and to poetry of the transition period, there are a dozen chapters in each of which one department of poetical literature (as epic, lyric, dramatic, etc.) is historically treated. This treatment by classes has obvious advantages as well as disadvantages. One advantage is that it shows distinctly in what categories the wealth of English literature lies, and in what it is poor. There are indexes respectively of authors, of poems, and of criticisms, so that in case the student should wish to depart from the plan of the work and study literature by authors

instead of by classes, it would still be easy to do so. The author recognizes the importance of an acquaintance on the part of the student with the best criticism, and perhaps the greater part of the comments consists of quotations, made generally with good judgment, from critics of acknowledged eminence; though it seems odd to see Shaw gravely set on a level with Hallam, Lowell, Warton, etc. The danger of random reading is still further guarded against by the very full lists, inserted at the close of each chapter, of texts and historical and critical works relating to the subjects and works under discussion. Not the least of the merits of the book is that it gives due space to the best American poets; though the absence of any reference to Emerson is an omission which is more charitably to be accounted for as a blunder than a deliberate intention. The poets treated are Barlow, Bryant, Wm. Allen Butler, Holland, Holmes, Longfellow, Lowell, Poe, Saxe, Bayard Taylor, Trumbull, Whitman, Whittier. Many of these receive but the briefest mention, but the treatment is usually sound. Some of the notices are like sign-boards, with the Carlylean legend, "Dry rubbish shot here." Of course such a work may be misused to the promotion of chatter about books instead of familiarity with letters; but this one is perhaps as well adapted as any to send the student to the authors of which it treats. It would be misleading not to mention that the book contains many errors, some of which may be typographical, while others must be laid at the author's door. These should be corrected in a second edition.