

Contents

Preface	7
1 Anglo-Saxon Prelude	10
2 The Age of Chaucer	16
Poets of the Fourteenth Century	17
The End of the Middle Ages	32
3 The English Renaissance	35
Pre-Elizabethan Verse and Prose	35
4 The Elizabethan Age	41
The Rise of the English Drama	41
Shakespearian Heyday	48
'The Faerie Queene'	66
'Rare Ben Jonson'	70
Song-writers and Sonneteers	75
Courtier Poets	80
Elizabethan Prose	90
5 The Seventeenth Century	93
The Jacobean Drama	94
King James's Bible	108
Bacon and the Pursuit of Truth	113
Poets Sacred and Profane	117
Prose Writers	142
John Milton	153
Later Seventeenth-Century Prose	162
Diarists	175
Later Seventeenth-Century Verse	178
Tragedy and Comedy	184
Restoration Comedy	186
John Dryden	196

6	The Eighteenth Century	202
	Alexander Pope	203
	Swift and the Age of Anne	210
	The Birth of the Modern Novel	221
	Eighteenth-Century Verse	225
	The Growth of the Novel	248
	Johnson and Boswell	267
	Eighteenth-Century Prose	275
	Gothic Fantasy	283
	Sheridan and the Comedy of Manners	288
7	The Nineteenth Century	291
	Crabbe and the Romantic Revolution	292
	The Nineteenth-Century Novel	323
	Critics, Essayists and Men of Letters	370
	The Art of Prose	384
	Later Nineteenth-Century Verse	399
	The Pre-Raphaelite Poets	421
	The Aesthetic Movement	433
8	Twentieth-Century Epilogue	438
	The Novel	438
	The New Novel	457
	English Verse 1914-45	470
	The Drama	492
	Critics and Biographers	495
	Bibliography	498
	Index	500