HISTORY OF ENGLISH LITERATURE

FROM

"BEOWULF" TO SWINBURNE

BY

ANDREW LANG, M.A.

LATE HON. FELLOW OF MERTON COLLEGE
OXFORD

NEW IMPRESSION

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PREFACE.

A Preface to a book on the History of English Literature is apt to be an apology, for a writer must be conscious of his inability to deal with a subject so immense and so multiplex in its aspects. This volume does not pretend to be an encyclopædia of our literature; or to include all the names of authors and of their works. Selection has been necessary, and in the fields of philosophy and theology but a few names appear. The writer, indeed, would willingly have omitted not a few of the minor authors in pure literature, and devoted his space only to the masters. But each of these springs from an underwood, as it were, of the thought and effort of men less conspicuous, whom it were ungrateful, and is practically impossible, to pass by in silence. Nevertheless the attempt has been made to deal most fully with the greatest names.

The author's object has been to arouse a living interest, if it may be, in the books of the past, and to induce the reader to turn to them for himself. Scantiness of space forbids the presentation of extracts; for poetry there is perhaps no better selection than that of the Oxford Book of Verse by Sir

Arthur Quiller-Couch.[1] For prose, the Anthologies of Mrs. Barnett and Mrs. Dale may be recommended.[2]

It is unhappily the fact that the works of a majority of the earlier authors are scarcely accessible except in the publications of learned societies or in very limited editions; but from Chaucer onwards the Globe Editions are open to all; and the great Cambridge "History of English Literature" is invaluable as a guide to the Bibliography. It is better to study even a little of the greatest authors than to read many books about them. If the writer should perchance succeed in bringing any readers to the works of the immortals his purpose will be fulfilled But readers, like poets and anglers, are "born to be so"; and when born under a fortunate star do not need to be allured or compelled to come into the Muses' paradise.

That sins of commission as well as of omission will be discovered the author cannot doubt, for through much reading and writing they that look out of window are darkened, and errors come.

[1] University Press.

[2] Longmans, Green & Co.

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CHAPTER I.

ANGLO-SAXON LITERATURE.

The literature of every modern country is made up of many elements, contributed by various races; and has been modified at different times by foreign influences. Thus, among the ancient Celtic inhabitants of our islands, the peoples whom the Romans found here, the Welsh have given us the materials of the famous romances of King Arthur, and from the Gaelic tribes of Ireland and Scotland come the romances of heroes less universally known, Finn, Diarmaid, Cuchulain, and the rest. But the main stock of our earliest poetry and prose, like the main stock of our language, is Anglo-Saxon. The Anglo-Saxon tribes who invaded Britain, and after the departure of the Romans (411) conquered the greater part of the island, must have had a literature of their own, and must have brought it with them over sea.

For all early peoples, even the least civilized, possess the germs of literature. They have their hymns to their Divine Father above the sky, and to gods and spirits; they have magic songs, to win the love of women, or to cause the deaths of men; they have love-songs, and songs of feats of war. They possess fairy-tales, and legends in prose concerning gods and fabulous heroes; they have tales of talking birds and beasts; and they have dances in which the legends of old heroes are acted and sung. These dances are the germ of the drama: the songs are the germs of lyric poetry; the beast-stories are the sources of books like Æsop's Fables and Ovid's "Metamorphoses"; and the fairy-tales are the earliest kind of novels.

The Anglo-Saxon invaders were, of course, on a very much higher level than that of savages. They were living in the age of iron; they did not use

bronze for their swords, spears, and axes; much more remote were they from the period of stone axes, stone, knives, and stone arrow-heads. They could write, not in the Roman alphabet, but in "Runes," adapted at some unknown time by the Germanic peoples, probably from the Greek characters; and there is no reason why they should not have used this writing to preserve their poetry, though it is not certain that they did so at this early, period.

One early Anglo-Saxon poem, indeed, "The Husband's Message," professes to be written in runic characters on a staff or tablet of wood. Even more ancient poems may have been written and preserved in this way, but the wood, the *bóc* (book) as it was called, has perished, while brief runic inscriptions on metal and on stone remain.

The Anglo-Saxon Way of Living.

The society of the Anglo-Saxons, as described in the oldest surviving poems, was like that of the early Irish about A.D. 200 as depicted in their oldest romances, and like that of the early Icelanders as painted in the sagas, or stories of 1100, and later. Each free man had his house, with its large hall, and a fire in the centre. In the hall, usually built of timber, the people ate and passed their time when not out of doors, and also slept at night, while there were other rooms (probably each was a small separately roofed house) for other purposes. The women had their "bower," the married people had their little bedclosets off the hall, and there were store-rooms. The house stood in a wide yard or court, where geese and other fowls were kept; it was fenced about with a palisade, or a bank and hedge. Tilling the soil, keeping cattle, hunting, and war and raiding, by sea and land, were the occupations of the men; the women sewed and span, and kept house.

A group of such homesteads, each house well apart from its neighbours, made the village or settlement: there were no towns with streets, such as the Romans left in Britain.

A number of such villages were united in the tribe, each tribe had its king, while the other chief men, the richest and best born, constituted a class of gentry. Later, tribes were gathered into small kingdoms, with a "Bretwalda" or "Over-Lord," the most powerful of the kings, at the head of all.

This kind of society is almost exactly the same as that which Homer describes among the Greeks, more than a thousand years before Christ. As in Homer, each Anglo-Saxon king had his Gleeman (*scop*) or minstrel, who sang to his household and to the guests in hall. The songs might be new, of his own making, or lays handed down from of old.

We shall see that the longer Anglo-Saxon poems, before Christianity came in, were stories about fabulous heroes; or real kings of times past, concerning whom many fables were told. Most of these tales, or "myths," were not true; they were mere ancient "fairy stories," in which sometimes real but half-forgotten warriors and princes play their parts. The traditions, however, were looked on as being true, and the listeners to the gleemen thought that they were learning history as well as being amused. Meanwhile any man might make and sing verses for his own pleasure, about his own deeds and his own fancies, sorrows, and loves.

There was no lack of old legends of times before the English invasion of Britain, or of legends quite fabulous about gods and heroes. We know from Roman and early Christian authors, that the other Germanic peoples, on the Continent, had abundance of this material for poetry: thus the Germans sang of Arminius, the Lombards sang of Alboin, or Ælfwine (died A.D. 573), and the Scandinavians and Germans had legends of Attila, the great Hun conqueror, in the fifth century, and of Sigurd, who slew Fafnir, the Snake-Man; of the vengeance of Brynhild, and all the other adventures of the Volsungs and Niblungs; in Germany fashioned, much later, into the famous "Nibelungenlied".[1]

The Anglo-Saxons, too, knew forms of these legends; and mention the heroes of them in their poetry. Thus there is no reason why the Anglo-Saxons should not have produced poems as magnificent as those of the early Greeks, except that they, like all other peoples, had not the genius of the Greeks for poetry, and for the arts; and had not their musical language, and glorious forms of verse. They were a rough country folk, and for long did not, like the Greeks, live in towns.

But even if they had possessed more genius than they did, much of their old literature would probably have been lost when they became Christians; and when the clergy, who had, most to do with writing, generally devoted themselves only to verses on Biblical or other Christian subjects, or to prose

sermons; and to learned books *in Latin.* While plenty of Anglo-Saxon *Christian* poetry survives, of poetry derived from the heathen times of the Anglo-Saxons there is comparatively little, and much of it has been more or less re-written, and affected by later changes and additions, in early Christian times.

The fragments of old poetry enable us to understand the poetic genius of our remote ancestors as it was before they had wholly adopted Christianity, or come under Latin, French, and Norman influences. From the descendants of the Britons whom they had conquered, or who survived as their Welsh neighbours, they seem, at this time, to have borrowed little or nothing in the way of song or story.

Before beginning to try to understand the Anglo-Saxon literature, we ought to set before our minds two or three considerations. Though the language of these very old poems is the early form of our own English, we cannot understand them except in translations, unless we learn Anglo-Saxon. However well a translator may render the ideas of a poem, he cannot give the original words of it in another language. Now the poet's very own words have a beauty and harmony and appropriateness which a translation cannot reproduce. The ideas remain, but the essence of the poem is lost: gone is the vigour, the humour is weakened; the harmony is impaired. Once more we are accustomed to *rhyme*, and to certain forms of versification in our poetry. The early Anglo-Saxons did not employ rhyme; the peculiar cadence, with alliteration, of their verse cannot easily be reproduced; and there is much difference of opinion as to the prosody or scansion of Anglo-Saxon verse. Thus, till we can read Anglo-Saxon easily, and while we only read its poetry through translations, we are apt to think less highly of it than it deserves.

Again, the ideas and manners of the Anglo-Saxons were not like our own in many details. Their poets did not write for us, but for men of their own time, whose taste and ways of thinking and living were in many respects very different from ours.

If many people cannot now take pleasure in the novels of Fielding, Scott, Miss Austen, Thackeray, and Dickens—the novels of 1745-1870—because these seem "so old-fashioned," they will certainly be unable to admire the poetry of 500-800. Yet it may be excellent poetry, when we put ourselves as far as we can in the place of the hearers for whom it was composed. If we

fail to do this we may read Anglo-Saxon poetry as a matter of history, but, as poetry, we cannot enjoy it.

Minstrels, Story-tellers, and Stories.

Perhaps the oldest of the Anglo-Saxon poems is that called "Widsith," after the name of the far-travelled minstrel or gleeman who sang it before the people in the hall of a prince or noble. This short poem tells us what kind of tales the people liked to hear. It begins:—

> Widsith spoke
> His word-hoard unlocked,

that is, he opened his treasure of stories as a travelling pedlar opens his box of goods. He says that he has wandered, gathering songs and tales, all over the world from the German Ocean to Egypt and India. He means that he knows all, stories; he is merely giving his hearers their choice of a tale about any king and people in the known world.

Let us suppose that they choose to hear about Ælfwine, or Alboin, king of the Longobards or Lombards, whom Widsith says that he had visited. We know what tales were told of Ælfwine. One of these is a fair example of the rest; it is probably not true. Ælfwine had killed the father of his wife Rosamund, and had a cup made out of the skull, and he made Rosamund drink out of it at a feast. She determined to be revenged for this cruel insult, and took counsel with the king's shield-bearer and guardsman. By his advice she entrapped Beartheow, a very strong man, by a trick, so that he became guilty of high treason. He was now at her mercy, for she threatened to inform against him, and thus compelled him to murder her husband, Ælfwine, in his bed. After that, the king's shield-bearer tried to win the kingdom. But Rosamund gave him poisoned wine, and he, when he knew that it was poisoned, made her drink out the cup, and they two died in the same hour.

This makes a noble tragic song, but the story is only a form of a much older Greek tale which Herodotus, 1000 years earlier, tells of King Candaules of Lydia, of his wife, whom he insulted, and of the Captain of his guard, whom she induced to kill King Candaules.

Probably an Anglo-Saxon minstrel would recite the poem called "Widsith," and then the listeners would ask him for any of the stories which he had mentioned, perhaps for one about Ælfwine; or Alexander the Great; or Sigurd of the Volsungs, who slew the Serpent-Man, Fafnir; or of Hygelac (who is believed to have been the man named, in Latin, Chochilaicus, a real king of about 520); or of Hrothgar, whom Widsith mentions. This king is befriended by Beowulf, in the great Anglo-Saxon poem of that name, the noblest and most famous of all these old songs. The minstrel makes requests for gifts of rings and bracelets; and speaks of his desire to meet generous princes. In the same way Homer loves to tell how golden cups and beautiful swords were given by princes to the minstrels in Greece. The last verses of "Widsith" run thus, in modern English, and are a fair example of early Anglo-Saxon versification:—[2]

Swa scrithende	So wandering on
gesceapum hweorfath	the world about,
glee men gumena	gleemen do roam
geond grunda fela;	through many lands;
thearfe secgath	they say their needs
thonc word sprecath,	they speak their thanks,
Simle suth oththe north	sure, south or north
sumne gemetath,	some one to meet,
gydda gleawne	of songs to judge
geofam unhncawne	and gifts not grudge.

There are few early Anglo-Saxon poems that can be called "lyrics"; they are rather narratives, as in the case of the songs of war, the battles of Brunanburh and Maldon; or "elegiac," and reflective, as in "The Ruined City," though personal emotion, a characteristic of the lyric, often appears in the Christian poems and elsewhere as we shall see.

"Beowulf" the chief poem may be called a brief "epic," a narrative of over 3000 lines, on great heroic adventures. Such a poem would be sung in hall, to beguile more than one long winter night.

BEOWULF.

It is impossible to be certain about the date when the original form of this great old poem, "Beowulf," was first composed, because it contains, on the one hand, descriptions of the ancient heathen way of living, thinking, manners, and customs; and, on the other hand, has many allusions to Christian doctrine, which the Anglo-Saxons knew nothing of till after they had quite conquered this country. The poet of "Beowulf" as it now exists, had read the Bible, or knew part of its contents. We must look first at the poem as it stands, and the story as it is told, or rather at the stories, for there are several.

One Beowulf, not our hero, was the son of Scyld. Scyld died, and, in place of Christian burial, was placed in his ship, with arms and treasures, and so sailed out to sea at the wind's will. Not so, when his time came, was *our* Beowulf buried; that is, Beowulf the hero of the poem, for the earlier Beowulf, son of Scyld, was another man.

The grandson of Scyld was Hrothgar (whose name becomes Roger in later times), and Hrothgar was a Danish king, builder of Heorot, a princely hall. His happiness awoke the envy of Grendel, a fiend of the wilds.

The Christian author of the poem, as it stands, thinks that Grendel and other monsters are descendants of Cain!

The nobles slept in the great hall, whither Grendel came and caught away thirty of them. Men sought other sleeping-rooms, but Grendel still came and slew them. The house was empty, and men promised sacrifices to their false gods all in vain: "they knew not the true God," yet the poet often forgets their ignorance, and makes them speak like Christians:

There was a king of Gothland named Hygelac, a real king living at the beginning of the sixth century. The king's nephew, Beowulf, heard of the evil deeds of Grendel, and set sail with some of Hygelac's men to help the unhappy Hrothgar. They all wore shirts of mail made curiously of interlaced iron rings, they had spears with iron heads, and helmets crowned with the

figure of a boar made in iron; some of these shirts of chain-mail and helmets still exist. Coming into the great hall, built of timber plated with gold, the heroes explained their errand, and were well received. As Grendel cannot be harmed with stroke of steel, Beowulf will carry neither sword nor shield, but be slain by Grendel; or slay him with his hands. If Grendel eats him, Hrothgar will not need to give him due burial—burning his body, and burying the bones in a mound of earth; the custom is that of the *unconverted* German tribes. Hrothgar accepts the offer, the warriors sit at their ale (they had not much wine), and listen to the clear voice of the minstrel as he sings of old adventures. But Hunferth, a thane of Hrothgar, out of jealousy, taunts Beowulf with having been beaten in a swimming match that lasted for seven nights. Beowulf replies that Hunferth "has drunk too much beer": he himself swam better than his opponent for five nights, and slew nine sea-monsters with his sword; Hunferth, on they other hand, dare not face Grendel, and has been the destroyer of his own brothers. Yet Hunferth does not draw his sword, after these insults, which is strange; and the feast in hall goes on merrily.

Such scenes of boasting and quarrelling were, no doubt, common over the ale cups, but Waltheow, Queen of Hrothgar, "the golden-garlanded lady, the peace-weaver," enters the throng, and bears the cup of welcome to Beowulf, thanking God that she has found a helper to her heart's desire. Then she takes her place by her lord Hrothgar.

Night fell, Beowulf, committing himself "to the all-knowing God," takes off his armour and lays his head on the bolster—the word is the same in Anglo-Saxon. Grendel arrived, burst in the iron-bolted door, and laughed as he saw the sleeping men. One warrior he tore to pieces and devoured; but Beowulf, who had the strength of thirty, gripped the fiend, and the hall echoed with their wrestling and stamping up and down; the clamped benches were torn from the floor. Men smote at Grendel with swords, but the steel did not bite on his body. Beowulf tore his arm and shoulder clean away, and Grendel, flying to a haunted pool, described as a terrible place, dived down through the bloodstained water, and "hell caught hold of him".

In Heorot men now made merry, and the minstrel sang a new song of the fight.

After, the rejoicings, eight horses and princely armour are given to Beowulf. The minstrel sings of the hero Finn, with a pleasant description of the coming of spring after a long winter. The poem is not all about fiends and fighting; the descriptions of wild rocks and seas, and of happy nature, are beautiful. Then the gracious wife of Hrothgar bids Beowulf farewell, giving him a cup of gold. Other presents are offered, and on so happy a day, wine, not ale, is drunk in hall.

But Beowulf s adventure is not ended. That night he slept, not in hall, but in a separate room, and the mother of Grendel, a creature more terrible than himself, came to avenge her son, and slew a warrior.

Next day Hrothgar described to Beowulf the home of the fiends; they abode in dark wolf-haunted places, windy "nesses," or headlands, wild marshlands, where the hill-stream rushes through black shadows into a pool or perhaps sea-inlet, under the earth. The boughs of trees hang dense over the water, and at night a fire shines from it. Even the stag that ranges the moors, when he flies from the hounds to the lake, dies rather than venture there to take the water. This is a fine example of the descriptions of nature in the poem. Beowulf is not alarmed; we must all die at last, he says, but while we live we should try to win glory.

So they all rode to the haunted pool, Beowulf in his iron armour and helmet. The man who had insulted him now repents, and gives Beowulf the best of iron swords, named *Hrunting*; for famous swords in these days had names, like King Arthur's blade, *Excalibur*, or Roland's *Durendal.* "I will gain glory with *Hrunting*, or death shall take me," says Beowulf.[3]

Beowulf dived into the black water, the fiend strove to crush him, but his iron shirt of mail protected him, and she dragged him into the dreadful hall, her home, where the water did not enter. A strange light burned; Beowulf saw his hideous foe and smote at her with *Hrunting*; but the edge did not bite on her body. He threw away the useless sword, and they wrestled; they fell, Beowulf was under her, and she drew her short sword. She could not pierce his armour, but he saw and seized a huge sword, made for a giant in times long ago. With this he cut her down from the neck to the breast-bone, and his friends on shore saw the pool turn to blood; all but his own men had believed that Beowulf was dead, and had gone home.

Meanwhile the blade of the great sword melted away in the poisoned blood of his foe, and he swam to shore with the hilt, and with the heads of the two monsters, Grendel and his mother. With these he came gloriously to Hrothgar, who wondered at that sword hilt, covered with plates of gold, engraved with a poem in Runic letters; for the poet is fond of describing beautiful swords and armour.

Hrothgar now made a long speech about the goodness of God, which, of course, is a Christian addition to the poem. Beowulf gave back *Hrunting* to Hunferth, saying no word against the weapon though it had been of no service. Then they all departed in high honour, and their swift ship under sail cut the sea into foam as she flew homeward.

In time Hygelac and his son fell in battle, and Beowulf was for fifty years "the shepherd of the people". The last adventure of his old age was a fight with a fiery dragon which dwelt among the golden treasures in an ancient burial mound. In the tomb, says the poet, "there is no sound of swords or harness, no joy of the harp; the good hawk flits not through the hall; the swift horse does not beat the ground at the gate". Anglo-Saxon poetry is full of the melancholy of death, and of mournful thoughts awakened in presence of the ruined homes of men long dead.

In his last fight and his best fight, Beowulf, with a young prince to aid him, slew the Fire Drake, but he was mortally hurt by its poisonous flaming breath, and spoke his latest words: "Bid the brave men pile up a mound for me, high and far-seen on the headland, that seafaring men in time to come may call it Beowulf's mound". These are almost the very words of the ghost of the dead oarsman, Elpenor, to Odysseus in Homer.

So much has been said about the poem of "Beowulf," because it is by far the greatest poem that the Anglo-Saxons have left to us, and best shows how they lived. From "Beowulf" we learn that our ancestors lived almost exactly as did the ancestors of the Greeks, in Homer's poems, made perhaps 1600 years before the making of "Beowulf". Both these ancient Greeks and our own ancestors had, and expressed in poetry, the same love, of life and of the beauty of the world; and the same belief that, after death, hope was hopeless, and joy was ended. Both had the same sense of the mystery of existence, and, when they took time to think, had the same melancholy. Our

poetry thus began like that of Greece, and, in the end, became the rival of the greatness of Greece.

We know from broken pieces of these old songs which have come down to us that the Anglo-Saxons, like their German neighbours on the Continent, had even better stories than "Beowulf". But they have been lost, and "Beowulf" was perhaps saved by the Christian parts of it, which must have been put in by some one who wrote it over again after the Anglo-Saxons were converted: the language is like what was spoken and written about 750. One beautiful poem is "The Ruined City". The minstrel, beholding the desolation of the towers and baths of some Roman town which the Anglo-Saxons have overthrown, laments its fall and the perishable state of human fortunes. Other poems may be briefly mentioned.

The Wanderer.

In "The Wanderer" there is abundance of gloom, but it is a less noble poem than "The Ruined City," for the speaker is in sorrow, not for the griefs of all mankind, but for his own. He is an exile, homeless, in fact a tramp, *Eardstapa.* He has lost his lord, his patron; and dreams of his kindness, in the old happy days; and wakens, an aged man, friendless, to see the snow falling in the ocean, and the seabirds flitting with their white wings through the snow. The house where he had been young has fallen, and he laments over the ruins.

The Plaint of Deor.

This complaint is also rueful, but it is manly. The poet calk to mind old heroes and heroines, such as Weland (remembered still as Wayland Smith, in Scott's "Kenilworth"), who suffered many misfortunes, but endured them bravely. The poem is in stanzas; each ending with the burden or refrain,

That evil he overcame,
So may I this!

It is like the often repeated word of Odysseus in Homer:—

Endure my heart,
Worse hast thou endured!

One sorrow of the poet is that his lord has taken from him the land which he held as a minstrel, and given it to another singer. Now he is in new trouble.

That I surmounted,
So may I this!

Probably there were many other poems with refrains, or recurring lines at the end of each stanza; this is a very old poetic device; originally the refrains were sung in chorus by the listeners as they danced to the music of the minstrels.

The Seafarer.

In this poem, as in "Beowulf," the sea is spoken of as it would be by men who knew its wild moods; cold, tempest, biting salt water, danger, and grey waves under driving rain, yet the seafarer loves, it. The poet says that (like

The gentlemen of England
Who live at home at ease,)

many a one knows not the dangers of the deep, while the minstrel has heard the swan sing through the ice-cold showers of hail and the spindrift. But the coming of spring and the cuckoo's cry, admonish the brave man to go seafaring, despite the distresses; they are more inspiriting than life on land. He is a Christian, but he falls back on the old melancholy for the passing of kings and gold-givers. Though he preaches over much, he still thinks of the bale-fire as the mode of burial, as if Christian rites of earth to earth were not yet adopted.

Waldhere.

Of this poem only some sixty lines exist. They were found at Copenhagen, written on two pieces of vellum which had been used in binding a book: it is common to find fragments of early printed books or manuscripts in the bindings of books more recent. One page of "Waldhere" contains a speech by the heroine of the tale, Hildeguthe, urging Waldhere to fight Guthere; the other fragment has portions of a dialogue between the two combatants.

The names of the personages show that the poem was one of which we have other versions, the most intelligible is a Latin form in verse.[4] The story deals with an adventure, real or romantic, in the wars of Attila with the Franks. Waldhere, an Aquitanian hostage, brought up in Attila's court, with his betrothed lady, Hildeguthe, daughter of the King of the Burgundians, is now keeper of Attila's treasures; he and his friend Hagen escape; Hagen, who first fled, reached the court of Guthere, King of the Franks, and hearing there that a lady and a knight, with a treasure, are wandering about, he recognizes his friends, and follows them with King Guthere (who mainly wants the treasure), and with eleven other warriors. Hildeguthe sees them coming, and Waldhere, who will not give up the treasures, slays the eleven companions of Guthere, who are chivalrous enough to "set him man for man," as the Scottish ballad says, in place of overpowering him by numbers. Hagen, of course, does not want to fight his friend Waldhere, but Fate, the Anglo-Saxon *Wyrd*, is too strong: Waldhere has to encounter both Guthere and Hagen, for Hagen is Guthere's man, or thegn, and may not disobey him; moreover, he *must* avenge his nephew, whom Waldhere has already slain. All three men receive terrible wounds, and then they make friends; and Waldhere keeps both his lady and the treasure.

This version of the story is more like a later romance than the other Germanic epics. In these, as in this tale, there is usually a tragic conflict of passions and duties, as when the law of blood-vengeance compels a woman to avenge a slain father or brother, or her husband or her lover. The end is always tragic, but the Latin poet has probably contrived "a happy ending," while retaining the many good fights, and the conflict of friendship and duty to a hero's lord, which make the interest of the story.

In the Anglo-Saxon fragments, Hildeguthe, encouraging, her lover to fight, praises the swordsmith, the old German hero, Weland, the Tubal Cain of the race. He made the sword Miming, the best of all swords, which never fails the fighter. Hildeguthe has never seen Waldhere flee the fight; now he must not be less noble than himself. The other fragment is like the dialogues of the heroes in the Iliad before they come to blows.

The whole of "Waldhere" must have been, when complete, a poem much more complex, and even more interesting (at least to modern readers) than "Beowulf". It had "love interest," a brave heroine, good duels, and the tragic

conflict of duties, while it was full of allusions to other ancient epics of the Germanic peoples.

The Fight at Finnsburg.

In a song of the gleeman at Hrothgar's house in "Beowulf," there are obscure references to the slaying of Hnæf, brother of Hildeburh, wife of the Frisian King Finn, and the slaying of Hildeburh's own sons by the men of Hnæf, in a fight within the royal hall of Finn. They are all burned together on the funeral pyre, while Hildeburh weeps for sons and brother. A fragment of an Anglo-Saxon epic on this affair exists only in one copy, the original is lost. It is a complicated story of slayings and revenges among folk akin by marriage, and the interest clearly lay in the tragic situation of Hildeburh, who owes vengeance against her husband, Finn, and also against the family of her brother, who have slain her sons. As Hildeburh returns to her own people, the Danes, after her husband is killed, she probably preferred her own blood kindred to those of her husband.

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[1] The best versions for English readers of these splendid stories are to be found in "The Volsungs and the Niblungs," translated by William Morris and Magnusson, and in "The Corpus Poeticum Boreale," with translations by F. York Powell and Vigfusson.

[2] This form of verse has been described thus by Prof. Saintsbury:—

"The staple line of this verse consists of two halves or sections, each containing two 'long,' 'strong,' 'stressed,' 'accented' syllables, these same syllables being, to the extent of three out of the four, alliterated. At the first casting of the eye on a page of Anglo-Saxon poetry no common resemblance except these seem to emerge, but we see on some pages an altogether extraordinary difference in the lengths of the lines, or, in other words, of the number of 'short,' 'weak,' 'unstressed,' 'unaccented' syllables, which are allowed to group themselves round the pivots or posts of the rhythm, that is, round the syllables on which strong stress is laid."

The eye and ear of the reader soon find out the essential facts of the measures; the strong pause in the middle of each verse, the alliteration, the accent, and the great variety in the number of the syllables which are slurred, or not dwelt upon, in each case. The poetry avoids rhymes, except in "The Rhyming Poem," later than King Alfred's time, and in two or three Other instances.

[3] The words are:—

Ic me mid Hruntinge
dóm gewyrce, otthe mec death nimeth.

I (Ic, German *Ich*) with (German *mit*) *Hrunting*, glory will win, otherwise (*otthe*) me (*mec*) death taketh (*nimmeth*), German *nehmen* ("to take").

[4] Translated from a lost German form; the Latin is of the tenth century, by Ekkehard of St. Gall.

CHAPTER II.

ANGLO-SAXON CHRISTIAN POETRY.

When the Anglo-Saxons became Christians (597-655) they took the Gospel, and the rules of the Church, in the North, from the Irish missionaries who, under St. Columba of Ireland, settled in the Isle of Iona: in the South from Roman teachers, such as Theodore of Tarsus, who had studied at Athens, and, in 668 became Archbishop of Canterbury. Both in the South, and North, in Northumberland, great schools were established, in connexion with the monkish settlements: in the monasteries Greek was not unknown, and the language of Rome, Latin, was taught and was used in writing all learned works, and hymns. With the language of Rome, almost dead as a living speech, came knowledge of ancient history, and of the great Roman poets, especially Virgil. The seventh and eighth centuries were thus a new epoch, a century of learning, and of division between the educated and the unlearned. The learned, mainly priests, no longer cared much for making songs and stories about fighting, love, and the adventures of their heathen heroes. They were occupied with the history of Rome and of the old world; and still more with their new religion, and the stories of apostles and saints and Hebrew kings and patriarchs, and with the making of sermons and hymns. Thus the old heathen tales and poems were lost or half forgotten.

Cædmon.

The first sacred poet of whom we hear is Cædmon. His tale is told by the great and learned Bede, born at Wearmouth in Northumberland in 673, and trained in the new monastery there. Says Bede: "There was in the monastery of St. Hilda at Whitby, a Brother who, when he heard the Scriptures interpreted, could instantly turn the lesson into sweet verses." Just so the minstrel of Hrothgar, when he heard the nobles talk about

Beowulf's defeat of Grendel, turned the story *at once* into a song. This was "improvisation," and Cædmon "improvised" religious poems; no man has equalled them since, says Bede. But he began when he was far from young, and was not yet a priest. Till then he had not been a poet; indeed, if he were at a feast where every man sang in his turn, when the harp was brought to people near him at table, he arose and went home.

One night he ran away from the harp into the stalls of the cattle, and there fell asleep on the straw. In a dream One appeared to him, and bade him sing. He answered that he had left the feast because he could not sing.

"You must sing."

"About what am I to sing?"

"The beginning of things created."

Cædmon then made in his sleep a poem about the Creation, and when he awoke he remembered it, as Coleridge made "Kubla Khan" in a dream, and remembered part of it until he was disturbed by a person on business from Porlock. After this Cædmon made sacred poems, doing Scripture into verse, with perfect ease, and he became a monk.

Now there exist long Anglo-Saxon poems on parts of Genesis, Exodus, and Daniel, and it has been very naturally supposed that these are the poems of Cædmon, which, as Bede thought, had never been equalled in the Anglian tongue. Nothing is known for certain, and only one short hymn has a good chance to be by the poet Cædmon. The ideas of the poet singing of the war in Heaven, so closely resemble those of Milton, in "Paradise Lost," that Milton has been supposed to have known something of the Anglo-Saxon poem.[1] No lines in "Paradise Lost," are more familiar than those which describe a land of fire,

> Yet from these flames,
> No light, but rather darkness visible,
> Served only to discover sights of woe.

The old Anglo-Saxon poet says:—

> They sought another land,
> That was devoid of light,
> And was full of flame.

The speech of Satan, too, in Anglo-Saxon, the speech in which he blames the justice of God; his threat of what he would do, were he free for but one winter; his design to avenge himself on Adam and his posterity, are all like Milton, whose

> Fairest of her daughters, Eve,

is exactly like

> The fairest of women,
> That have come into the world.

In the fighting scenes of these Anglo-Saxon Biblical poems, the poets appear to enjoy themselves most and to feel most at home. They have only to write in the manner of their own old battle songs, about the howling of wolves and crying of ravens to whom the victor gives their meat.

Indeed Anglo-Saxon poetry reminds us of an ancient casket of whalebone in the British Museum, with its scenes from the heathen story of Weland or Weyland Smith, the adoration of the Magi, Romulus and Remus and the wolf, and a battle between Titus and the Jews: such is the mixture of Christianity, heathenism, and learning in the Christian Anglo-Saxon literature.[2]

Thus in the long fragment "Judith," based on the well-known story of Judith and Holofernes in the Apocrypha, there is vigour in the descriptions of the intoxicated roaring Holofernes; and of the cries of wolf, raven, and eagle; and of the clash of swords and shields.

Cynewulf.

The best Christian poem, called "Crist," is full of the happiness bestowed by the new religion. The verses are by a poet named Cynewulf of whom nothing is known but his name, recorded in a kind of acrostic written in the Runic alphabet. He took his matter from sermons and hymns in Latin, but Cynewulf makes the poetry his own. He is joyously religious. After all the melancholy of the heathen or half-heathen minstrels, their wistful doubts about the meaning and value of our little life, the author of the "Crist" comes as one who "has seen a great light". He rejoices like the shepherds who heard good tidings of great joy at Bethlehem on the first Christmas

night. It is as when spring comes to the world and the thrushes cannot have enough of singing: the night and the darkness are over: the grave has lost its sting and Death his victory. The poet is as happy as the birds in March. To him the message of Christ is no old story, but a new certainty; he has no doubt, no fear, and this gladness of faith is all his own, whether he sings of Our Lord or of Our Lady. That is the charm of Cynewulf; his fresh delight in his work.

> Thou to us
> The bright sun sendest,
> And thyself comest,
> That thou may'st enlighten
> Those who long ago
> With vapour covered,
> And in darkness here
> Sat, in continual night.

The legends of "St. Guthlac" and "St. Juliana," on the other hand, are not, it must be confessed, such spontaneous bursts of song.

Andreas.

In the "Andreas" the poet, whoever he was, sings of what he has heard, adventures of St. Andrew and St. Mark. St. Matthew has fallen into the hands of the cannibals of old Greek legend, the Læstrygonians, the poet calls them the "Mermedonians".[3]

The cannibals have caught, and are about to eat St. Matthew, but the Lord appears first to him, in his dungeon, and then to St. Andrew, who is living among the Achæans, in Greece. The voyage, the fighting, are in the old heathen style, and the Deity appears with two angels, all three disguised as sailors. It is impossible to give the whole tale, which appealed to the natural man as a great story of adventure in waves and war, while it introduced religion. The adventures are many, and much more startling and wild than any that survive from the Anglo-Saxon poetry of heathen times.

Dream of the Rood.

There is a singular poem "The Dream of the Rood," which with many other "masterless" poems, some critics assign to Cynewulf, on account of the style, and the deep personal feeling which we admire in the "Crist": others attribute it to Cædmon. This opinion was partly based on a curious set of facts. The followers of the great Reformer, John Knox, in Scotland (1560) destroyed almost all the "monuments of idolatry" as they called works of Christian art. But they forgot to break to powder a tall ancient cross of red sandstone, beautifully carved, and marked with Runic characters, in the church of Ruthwell, near Dumfries. Some eighty years later (1642) when the Covenanters were in arms against Charles I, the preachers began a new war against works of Christian art, and ordered the Ruthwell Cross to be destroyed. It was broken into several fragments, which have now been pieced together, and the Cross stands in an apse-shaped building adjoining the church. The Runic characters record a part of the poem styled "The Dream of the Rood," and give the inscription "*Cædmon me made"*, probably Cædmon was really the artist who made and carved the stone cross: indeed the name is rather hard to read.

The poem speaks of the author's wonderful dream of the gold adorned and jewelled True Cross, and, in "Elene," Cynewulf also speaks of the revelation to him of the light of the Truth of the Cross. Conceivably, then, Cynewulf really had a dream or vision, and became devout after a life of war and minstrelsy.

Elene.

It would, in that case, be in old age that Cynewulf wrote, in the "Elene," a poetic version of the legend of the discovery of the True Cross by Helena, mother of the Emperor Constantine. This poem, probably based on a Latin legend, has been very highly praised. But before we can take any pleasure in it, we must try to think ourselves back into the state of mind of England when the heathen poetry of war was still popular, and Christianity, with many mediaeval legends, was a fresh inspiration. Even when we have done that as well as we can, the "Elene" awakens only an historical kind of rapture. The natural man is much more at home with "Beowulf" and "Waldhere" than with "Elene".

The poet begins with an imaginary battle: allied Franks and Huns attack the Emperor Constantine. The motive of Cynewulf is to introduce plenty of fighting: probably he never fought himself, but like other men of peace, he loves to sing of war. His treatment of war is conventional; he introduces the usual cries of wolf, eagle, and raven. Constantine is encouraged by a dream of a bright being who urges him to trust in God; he also sees a vision of the Cross, gay with jewels (as in "The Dream of the Rood") and letters making the words "In this sign conquer". Then the battle is described, with more zest than originality, and the heathen are routed; many are converted. Helena next takes a large force, and sails to Palestine to look for the True Cross. The usual formulæ descriptive of a seafaring are employed.

Helena preaches to the Jews in the mediaeval way, and they, naturally, reply, "We know not, lady, why you are so angry with us". A crafty Jew, Judas, guesses that she has come to demand from them the True Cross, which he is reluctant to give up. Helena threatens to burn the Jews, and does put Judas in a pit, without meat or drink, for seven days. Broken in spirit at last, he says that he will do his best; he prays; a miraculous vapour arises from the spot where, twenty feet underground, three crosses are discovered. Another miracle points out which of the three is the Holy Rood; Judas is baptized, and the shining nails of the Cross are discovered. Then follow the verses in which the poet describes his own old age, and his beholding the true light that lighteneth all men.

Riddles.

Among other poems vaguely assigned, in part, to Cynewulf are Riddles. The Sword describes itself, so do the byrnie, or shirt made of iron rings, the helmet, the shield; and there are many other riddles, some derived from late Latin. The best are really poetical. In addition to the Riddles there are several curious magical songs, or charms, for curing diseases, and removing spells of witchcraft. In these there are remains of the old heathen magical songs.

Phœnix.

The "Phœnix," assigned to Cynewulf as usual, is based on a late Latin poem attributed to Lactantius (290-325) and ends as an allegory of Christ. It is interesting to observe in the "Phœnix" a description of an ideal land of peace "where comes not hail or rain or any snow," the picture is borrowed from Homer's lines on Olympus, the home of the gods, and Elysium, the abode reserved for Helen of Troy and Menelaus, in the Odyssey. Anglo-Saxon poetry, without knowing it, came in touch, through Lactantius, with the most beautiful verses in the most ancient poetry of Greece, verses paraphrased in Latin, by Lucretius, and in English by Tennyson, twice ("Lucretius," and the "Morte d'Arthur"), and in "Atalanta in Calydon," by Mr. Swinburne. The golden thread of ancient Greek poetry thus runs through Roman, Anglo-Saxon, and English literature.

[1] First published in his time (1655) by Francis Junius (of course not the Junius who has been identified with Francis).

[2] find that Mr. W. P. Ker has made the same comparison.

[3] Apparently he has confused the *Læstrygonians* who devoured some of the companions of Odysseus, with the *Myrmidonians* (Myrmidones) the Greeks who followed Achilles to Troy.

CHAPTER III.

ANGLO-SAXON LEARNING AND PROSE.

Latin Among the Anglo-Saxons.

Books written on English soil in the Latin language are no part of English literature. It is necessary, however, to notice them, because they testify to the knowledge and taste of the educated; while the ideas expressed in Latin reached the less instructed people through sermons and in conversation, and through the translations into Anglo-Saxon which were directed and in part executed by King Alfred.

Though written by a native of our island we may omit the Latin book of Gildas, of about 516-570, for he was a Briton of the Romanized sort, who fled to Brittany. His book, where it does not contain mere lamentations, gives a kind of history, very vague, of events in the country, and of the sins and crimes of the British princes down to about 550. Such as the information was, Bede, the great early Anglo-Saxon historian, used it, as did the author of "The History of the Britons" attributed to Nennius (say 800), who, like Gildas, mentions the battle of Badon hill, but, unlike Gildas, brings in King Arthur. As we shall see later, Bede does not mention Arthur.

Leaving these vague British writers in Latin, we come to Bede.

Bede.

When we think of the time in which Bede, the greatest of our early scholars, lived and worked, it seems amazing that he had such a wide knowledge of books and so comparatively clear an idea of the way in which history

should be written. Born in 673 (died 735), he was in his thirteenth year when his king, Egfrid of Northumbria, was killed by the Piets (practically Gaelic-speaking Highlanders), in the great battle of Nectan's mere (685), in Angus beyond the Tay, for so far into what is now Scotland had English Northumbria pushed her conquests. Great part of these was lost, and in the eighth century, there came an age of anarchy and civil war, as fierce as the contests of the old times of heathendom. To us the Anglo-Saxons of these ages seem barbarous enough, but Bede speaks of the Piets of Scotland as "barbarians". He constantly deplores the greed and ignorance of the clergy, in terms much like those used by the Protestants before the Reformation. In an ignorant age Bede wrote unceasingly and copiously about such natural science as was within his reach, especially using that popular and fanciful book of Pliny, mere fairy-tales of natural (or unnatural) history. He wrote much and usefully on chronology in relation to history; and on theology, of course, he wrote abundantly. Most important is his "Church History of the Race of Angles," without which we should know little indeed concerning the Anglo-Saxon invasions of Britain, and the development of events both in England and Scotland. His tale of the reception of Christianity by Edwin is very commonly quoted: it is of much literary interest, and proves that the sense of the mystery and melancholy of the world, so often expressed in Anglo-Saxon poetry, weighed heavily on men who were not poets.

A council or *Witanagemot* was held to consider the Christian doctrines preached by Paulinus. One noble, Coifi, said, in jest or earnest, that the heathen religion was useless, "for no man among your people does more to please our gods than I, but many are more favoured by you and by fortune". Coifi, therefore, voted that Christianity deserved consideration. But another noble, agreeing so far, added, "Human life, oh King,... seems to me to resemble the flight of a sparrow, which flits into your warm hall at a feast in winter weather. The bird flies into the bright hall by one door, and out by another, and after a moment of quiet, slips from the wintry darkness into the wintry darkness again. Such is the life of man, that is for a moment, but what went before, and what comes after, as yet we know not." The practical Coifi then proposed to destroy the old temples of the old gods; rode off, and threw his spear into a shrine.

Coifi's idea was merely to "change the luck," and to enjoy the pleasures of destruction; he was of a common type of reformers; while the other speaker

desired intellectual satisfaction, and the understanding of the mystery of existence.

Latin and even Greek learning, we have seen, found footing in southern England with the arrival of Archbishop Theodore and Abbot Hadrian at Canterbury in 669. Latin had never been quite extinct. A non-English writer in Latin, in Scotland, is Adamnan (died 704), author of a Life of the Irish St. Columba, who brought Christianity to the Picts of Scotland, while later from his little holy Isle of Iona missionaries reached Northumbria. Adamnan's book may be read with more pleasure than any other of the time; it is so rich in pictures of Highland life and sport on sea and land, and in tales of magic and the second sight. This was one of the works used by Bede in writing his "History".

The numerous books which were within the reach of Bede were brought, in five journeys, by Benedict Biscop, Abbot of Wearmouth, from Rome to Northumberland. Before Bede, such books had been studied by Aldhelm (Bishop of Sherborne, died 709). He wrote poetry in the native language, which King Alfred greatly admired, but none of the extant poems are attributed to him. His Latin would have surprised Cicero; he delighted in strange words, and in strings of alliterations. He wrote edifying treatises on Christian virtues as exemplified by Biblical characters and by saints, some of them rather fabulous personages. He knew many early Christian authors, and Virgil, Cicero, Ovid, and Lucan, but his own style was as absurdly bombastic as that of many of the ancient Irish romances. He had disciples in style, who manufactured acrostics in Latin verse.

The Latin literature of the southern Anglo-Saxons thus fell for a time into full decadence; very different was the learning of the northern Bede. His taste was uncorrupted by the sudden arrival of ancient literature among a people almost barbarous. He wrote in plain Latin without affectation concerning things worthy to be known and remembered: he gave us a frank and charming picture of the great St. Cuthbert; he had, no doubt, too great a love of miracles, and rather exaggerated some which he found in earlier lives of early English saints, such as the said Cuthbert, the saint of the Border, whose body sleeps in Durham Cathedral. The authors whom he quotes are mainly Christian, including many of the chief Fathers of the Church, and he is not certain about the propriety of studying the heathen classics, though he cannot abstain from Virgil, who, it was fancied,

predicted the coming of Christ. He had Greek enough to read the Greek New Testament, but this learning was lost, in England, in later times. The translation of Bede's "History" into Anglo-Saxon under King Alfred was not the least of his gifts to his people.

ALCUIN.

Alcuin (735-804), a pupil of the school of York, lived at the worst period of the savage attacks made by the still heathen Danes on England. What the Anglo-Saxons had done to the Britons, the Danes after 780 did to the Anglo-Saxons, slaying, plundering, torturing, and burning, wherever they came. Happily for Alcuin he passed most of his life abroad, aiding the great Emperor Charlemagne in founding schools and fostering education. Charlemagne collected the old war-songs of his people, little dreaming that in three centuries he would become as fabulous a hero, in the French epic poems of the eleventh to the thirteenth century, as Beowulf or Alboin had been in Germanic lays. Alcuin had far more influence as a lecturer and as a writer of letters than as an author; in a poem he preserves the names of the books in the libraries of York and Wearmouth, beautiful manuscripts that would now be almost priceless, but the Danes burned them all. Other Latin writers there were, they mainly dealt with religious themes, and their works are of very little importance.

ALFRED.

Not till the kingdom of the West Saxons, Wessex, became the most powerful state in England, and made successful resistance to the Scandinavian invaders, who had destroyed monasteries everywhere, were learning and literature able to raise their heads again. It was the most famous of English kings, Alfred (849-901), that, among all his other labours as warrior and ruler, restored education.

It is unfortunate that so many matters of interest in Anglo-Saxon times are veiled in obscurity. The "Life of Alfred," by Asser, a Welshman, Bishop of Sherborne, is a confused record.

Alfred was certainly taken to Rome by his father at a very early age, but all that is told on this subject is most perplexing. He is said to have been

untaught in the art of reading till he was 12 years old, but he heard Anglo-Saxon poems repeated by others, and knew many of them by heart. The famous tale that his mother offered a book of Anglo-Saxon poems to the first of her sons who should "learn it," and that Alfred was taken by the beauty of the illuminations, learned to read, and won the prize, is absolutely unintelligible in Asser's Latin. But Asser says, and Alfred, in his Preface to an Anglo-Saxon translation of Pope Gregory's "Pastoral Care" himself avers, that learning was almost or quite extinct south of the Humber, when his reign began, while in Northumbria matters were little better. But his father's second wife, Judith, was daughter to the Emperor, Charles the Bald, and though Judith, a young girl, was far from being sedate and erudite, the connexion with the Continent enabled Alfred to bring over Frankish scholars, such as Grimbald, while from Wales came Asser, who, for part of each year, lived with Alfred as his tutor.

The king wrote a Handbook, or commonplace book, of Latin extracts, which he translated into his own native tongue; and later he translated, or caused to be translated, the "Pastoral Care" of Pope Gregory; the very popular work on "Consolation" by Boëthius, a philosopher who was slain about 524; the "Church History" of Bede; and a kind of "History of the World" by Orosius, a Christian writer of the fifth century. Of these books, the "History" by Bede was of the greatest value for Englishmen; the "Consolations" of Boëthius are at least as consolatory as any others, and were long popular; while whoever reads Orosius will learn many things, though he will learn them wrong, about the whole history of the human race. Still, the Anglo-Saxon reader became aware of the elements of geography, and of the existence of the powers of ancient Assyria, Egypt, Crete, and Athens, while much space is devoted to the empire of the Amazons.[1] "It is shameful," says Orosius, nobly, "to speak of such a state of things, when such miserable women, *and so foreign*, had subdued the bravest men of all this earth," a conquest which the women repeated, he says, during the Peloponnesian war!

When Orosius reaches Roman history he is much more copious, and not so amusingly incorrect. Alfred, as a rule, paraphrased rather than translated his originals, omitting and adding at pleasure, and amplifying the geography of the North, by information received through Otthere and Wulfstan, contemporary voyagers.

He found learning on its deathbed and he restored and revived it, saving erudition from the natural contempt of men by the royal example of a great statesman, sportsman, and warrior. It was plain to the world that, in spite of the human tendency to despise books, learning was not merely an affair for shavelings in cloisters, for the great king himself loved reading and writing.

The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle.

To the influence of Alfred is attributed, with much probability, the organization of the earlier parts of the "Anglo-Saxon Chronicle," which briefly tells the history of the country from year to year. There were several versions of these annals, containing the most notable events of each year. It seems that copies of one manuscript, containing the remotest events, beginning with the invasion of Britain by Julius Cæsar, and going on to Alfred's own age, were given to several monasteries. In each the scribe afterwards continued to make, as it were, a diary of the chief occurrences, and, later, various additions about *past* events would be inserted in various religious houses, so that the dates are not always to be trusted. After the year of Alfred's birth, the records become more full. In his "Life of Alfred," Asser turned much of the "Chronicle" for Alfred's reign into Latin: the materials of the "Chronicle," therefore, existed in his day (an early part of it was by a Northumbrian writer). The "Chronicle" now exists in several versions, done by various hands in various monasteries. Some "Chronicles" are lost, such as that of Kent, whence much matter has been borrowed by that of Peterborough, which is the longest, and reaches the year 1154.

The early entries in the "Chronicle" are very short: here is the history of the year 774.

"In this year a red Cross appeared in the heavens after sunset; and in this year the Mercians and Kentish men fought at Otford, and wondrous serpents were seen in the South Saxons' land."

This reads like a journal kept by a child. In later days events are recorded at more length, such as fights with the Danes; meetings of the *Witanagemot*, or great Council of the Wise; slayings of Kings and Earls; even foreign facts of interest about Popes and Emperors. But as late as 1066, the chronicler is brief enough, when he tells how William, Count of Normandy, sailed to Pevensey on Michaelmas Eve.

"This was then made known to King Harold, and he gathered a great army, and came to meet Count William at the hoar apple tree. And William came against him unawares, ere his people were in battle order. But the king, nevertheless, fought boldly against him with those men who would follow him, and there was a great slaughter made on each side. There were slain King Harold, and Earl Leofwine his brother, and Earl Gyrth his brother, and many good men; and the French held possession of the place of carnage, as to them God granted for the people's sins." We who write long books about a single battle, such as Waterloo, are surprised by the brevity of the "Chronicle".

Some seventy years later, just before it ends, the "Chronicle" has a long and famous passage about the cruel oppressions in Stephen's reign (1137). By that date the language has changed so much, that the meaning can easily be made out, even by readers who do not know Anglo-Saxon. The style of the "Chronicle" is always extremely simple, and the good monks are usually more interested in events affecting their own monasteries, than in matters which are of more importance to the history of the country. Nevertheless, there are records of periods in the "war-age" when the Danes were burning, plundering, and slaying through England, and there are characters of great interest among the kings, earls, and counsellors, lay or clerical, of whom we should know little or nothing if the monks had ceased to make their entries in the "Chronicle". To students of language, with its dialects and changes, the "Chronicle" is priceless, and a few poems and ballads are contained in its pages.

The most famous poem in the "Chronicle" is on the battle of Brunanburh (937), when the English, under Æthelstan, defeated the Scots and Danes. This song, translated by Tennyson, does not so much describe the fighting as the triumph after the battle.

> Five lay
> On that battle-stead,
> Young kings
> By swords laid to sleep:
> So seven eke
> Of Olaf's earls,
> Of the country countless
> Shipmen and Scots.

Olaf fled in his ship over the barren sea, the aged Constantine, King of the Scots, left his son dead on the field. As usual the raven, wolf, and eagle have their share of the corpses: an Anglo-Saxon poet could not omit these animals. This poet boasts that there has been no such victory since first the Anglo-Saxons "the Welsh overcame". Perhaps the enthusiasm of English students rather overrates the poetical merits of this war-song.

There is more poetry, and more originality in "Byrhtnoth," a song of a defeat at the hands of the Danes. The warrior entering the field of battle

> Let from his hands his lief hawk fly,
> His hawk to the holt, and to battle he stepped.

He haughtily refuses to accept peace in exchange for tribute which the Danes demand. The armies are divided from each other by a tidal river, and Byrhtnoth chivalrously allows the heathen to cross, at low tide, and meet him in fair field. There are descriptions of hand to hand single combats; and of the wounds given and taken, and the boasts of the slayers, who throw their spears, piercing iron mail, and shields of linden wood; and strip the slain of their armour and jewels. The friends of the fallen fight across the corpses. Byrhtnoth falls, some of his company flee, the rest make a ring of spears about the hero, one cries

> The more the mood, as lessens our might,

that is,

> The braver be we, as our strength fails.

The whole poem might be translated, almost without a change, into "the strong-winged music of Homer," or the verse of the old French "Song of Roland". The song is not conventional, it is a noble war-poem. For some reason the best war-poems are inspired by glorious defeats, at Maldon, at Flodden, at Bosworth, at Roncesvaux, at Culloden.

The Monks and Learning.

The "Anglo-Saxon Chronicle," running from Alfred's day to King Stephen's, and thus surviving the Norman Conquest, is the earliest historical writing in English prose. As we have seen, it was the work of the monks, *regular* soldiers of learning, living together under strict rules. On the other

hand the secular clergy, parish priests and others, were the irregular levies against ignorance. The monks were fallen on evil times for learning and literature.

During the long cruel wars against the Danish raiders and settlers (900-960) many monasteries were overthrown; others, like Abingdon, became poor neglected places; into others the kings and nobles placed their younger children, to live comfortably on the rents and revenues of the Church, and neglect prayer and books. Under Eadwig the Fair, St. Dunstan (born 925) appeared as a reformer, making the rule of the Church respected, and being therefore at feud with Eadwig, as Thomas à Becket was with Henry II. Under Edgar (957-975), peace was restored, and Dunstan could carry out reforms as Archbishop of Canterbury. He brought back from Flanders the new rule-of the Order of St. Benedict (which the monk in Chaucer despises as not up to date) for the strict living of monks, and was backed by Bishops Oswald and Æthelwald, men of learning and reformers of education.

New monasteries, which often had schools attached to them, were built, and old monasteries were restored. Dunstan was an artist (a picture of him as a monk is still preserved, and is said to have been drawn by himself). He was skilled in music and metalworking, and fond of the old Anglo-Saxon poetry. He has left no books of his own writing, but there are curious early Lives of him in Latin. As a boy he climbed in his sleep to the roof of a church; he used to see visions of people at the time of their deaths; a large stone is said to have flown at him of its own accord; and, before his death, his bed, with him in it, was slowly raised up in air, and softly let down again. According to these tales, Dunstan must have been a "medium"; there is nothing saintly in such prodigies. Like many people of genius who were not saints, he was of a visionary nature, though a thoroughly practical and energetic man.

Thus he, with Oswald, Bishop of Worcester, later Archbishop of York; Abbo; Æthelwold; Byrthferth; and others, introduced "regulars"—Benedictine monks—in place of married priests into the cathedrals, and encouraged schools and learning of all kinds. Æthelwold himself taught Latin to boys at Winchester, and had the Latin book of the rules of the Benedictine monks done into Anglo-Saxon. A set of Anglo-Saxon sermons survives from this age called "The Blickling Homilies" (from Blickling, a house of Lord Lothian, where the manuscript has been preserved). Homilies are simple statements of Scriptural facts for simple hearers. The preacher

already addresses the congregation as "my dearest brethren" (*mine gebrothra tha leofostan*). "Bethlehem," says the preacher, "means being interpreted, the House of Bread, and in it was Christ, the true bread, brought forth." "The Divine nature is not mingled with the human nature, nor is there any separation: we might explain this to you by a little comparison, if it were not too lowly; see an egg, the white is not mixed with the yolk, yet it is *one* egg." The sermons (these quoted are by Ælfric) are all plain teaching for plain people, but there is a famous address by Bishop Wulfstan, encouraging the English, by Biblical examples of Hebrew fighting patriots, to defend themselves against the cruel heathen Danes (1014).

ÆLFRIC.

In the school at Winchester Ælfric was trained (born 955?) and thence went to instruct the young monks in the abbey of Cerne in Dorset, where he preached homilies; he wrote them both in English and in Latin. His sermon on the "Holy Housel," that is the Holy Communion, contained ideas which the Protestants, at the Reformation, thought similar to their own, and they printed this homily. "All is to be understood spiritually." "It skills not to ask how it is done, but to believe firmly that done it is." The style of the prose is more or less alliterative, and a kind of rhythm is detected in some of the sermons, as if they were intended to be chanted.

The Latin grammars written by Ælfric do not concern English literature; his Dialogue (*Colloquium*) between a priest and a number of persons of various occupations, throws light on ways of living. He wrote Latin "Lives of Saints," and edited part of an English translation or paraphrase of the Bible, suitable as material for homilies. He produced many other theological works, and died about 102-(?) being Abbot of Eynsham in Oxfordshire.

The interest of Ælfric, Wulfstan, and the rest, for us, is that they upheld a standard of learning and of godly living, in evil times of fire and sword, and that English prose became a rather better literary instrument in their hands.

The "Leechdoms," and works on herb-lore and medicine of the period, partly derived from late Latin books, partly from popular charm songs, are merely curious; they are full of folk-lore. After the Conquest, Anglo-Saxon prose, save in the "Chronicle," was almost submerged, though, in poetry, there were doubtless plenty of popular ballads, for the most part lost or

faintly traceable as translated into the Latin prose of some of the writers of history. There would be songs chanted among the country people about the deeds of Hereward the Wake and other popular heroes; minstrels, now poor wanderers, would sing in the farmhouses, and in the halls of the English squires, but not much of their compositions remains.

We have, however, a few famous brief passages of verse, like the poem of "The Grave," familiar through Longfellow's translation, and probably earlier than the Conquest. It is written on the margin of a book of sermons, and the author's mood is truly sepulchral. The "Rhymed Poem" is celebrated only because it is in rhyme, which was a novelty with a great future before it; it is older than 1046, its muse is that of moral reflection.

The one verse of a song of King Canute is handed down by a monkish chronicler who lived more than a century later. The king in a boat on the Ouse, near a church, bids his men row near the shore to hear the monks sing:—

> Merie sungen the munaches binnen Ely,
> Tha Cnut ching rew therby:
> "Roweth cnihtes neer the land,
> And here we thes munches sang."

This contains a kind of rhyme, or incomplete rhyme, of the vowel sounds only (assonance) in Ely, ther*by*, "*land*", "*sang*."

St. Godric (died 1170) also left a hymn to Our Lady, in rhymed couplets, with the music.

Of about the same period is a rhymed version of the Lord's Prayer; the number of syllables to each line varies much, as in Anglo-Saxon poetry, contrary to the rule in the poetry of France.

There are other examples all showing the untaught tendency of the songs of the people towards rhyme and towards measures unknown to the early Anglo-Saxons.

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[1] The Amazons appear to have been the armed priestesses of the Hittite empire in Asia Minor, about 1200 B.C.

CHAPTER IV.

AFTER THE NORMAN CONQUEST.

At the time of the Norman Conquest (1066), the invaders possessed a literature in their own language, poems on the adventures of Charlemagne, and of Roland and the other peers and paladins. But perhaps none of the French poems on Charlemagne, or only one, the "Song of Roland," now exists in a form as early as the date of the Conquest, and they did not then reach the English people.

On the other hand the Norman clergy, many of whom obtained bishoprics and abbeys in England, were much more learned than they of England; and Lanfranc, the Conqueror's Archbishop of Canterbury, threatened to depose Wulfstan, the English Bishop of Worcester, for his ignorance of philosophy and literature. Yet Wulfstan excelled "in miracles and the gift of prophecy". Many new monasteries were founded by the Norman kings, homes of learning, each with its *scriptorium* (writers' room), in which new books were written, and old books were copied, almost all of them in Latin. St. Albans became a specially learned monastery and home of historians, while Roman law, medicine, and theology were closely studied, and books were lent out to students from the monastic libraries, a pledge of value being deposited by the borrower.

Latin Literature.

The books of the age which most interest us are the histories written in Latin, by various authors of known names, who often were not cloistered monks, but clergymen who lived much at court, and knew the men who were making history, kings and great nobles.

Of all of these authors the most important in the interests of literature, not of history, is Geoffrey of Monmouth, a Welshman, whose "History of the Kings of Britain" is really no veracious chronicle, but a romance pretending to be a history of Britain, especially of King Arthur. The name of Arthur spells romance, and Geoffrey's book is almost the first written source of all the poems and tales of Arthur which fill the literature of England and the

Continent. But it is more convenient to discuss Geoffrey when we reach the age of the Arthurian romance.

It is not necessary to speak here of all the writers of Latin histories in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. In the North were Simeon of Durham, and Richard, Prior of Hexham, who wrote "The Deeds of King Stephen," and Ailred, whose account of the defeat of David I of Scotland at the Battle of the Standard (1138) is very well told and full of spirit. In reading Ailred we find ourselves, as it were, among modern men: he speaks as a good English patriot, yet as a friend and admirer, in private life, of the invading Scottish king and prince. Florence of Worcester attempted a history of the world, compiled out of other books, called "Chronicon ex chronicis". The habit of "beginning at the beginning," namely with the creation, took hold of some of these historians, whose books are of little use till they reach their own times (if they live to do so), and speak of men and events known to themselves.

Eadmer, on the other hand, wrote of what he himself knew, a "History of Recent Times in England," down to 1122, and especially about the Archbishop of Canterbury, Anselm, and his dealings with William Rufus and Henry I (Henry Fairclerk, a patron of learning).

William of Malmesbury (1095?-1143?) like Geoffrey of Monmouth, was patronized by Robert, Earl of Gloucester, to whom they dedicated books. William understood, and said that there were two Arthurs, one a warrior of about 500-516 (?) the other a hero of fairy-land; but, as time went on, people began to confuse them, and to believe as historical the stories of Arthur which Geoffrey had written as a romance. William wrote the "History of the Kings of England," with several lives of saints and books on theology. The "History of the Kings" begins with the coming of the Anglo-Saxons, and ends in 1127, the reign of Henry; towards the close of its sequel, the "Historia Novella," his patron, Robert of Gloucester, an enemy of Stephen, is his hero. The book contains a history of the First Crusade.

William sometimes treats history in almost a modern way, he quotes his sources of information, chiefly Bede and the "Anglo-Saxon Chronicle". He refuses to vouch for the exact truth of events before his own time: he throws the responsibility on earlier authors, his authorities. Later, he speaks of what he has seen, or learned from trustworthy witnesses. When he reaches the

time of the British resistance to the Anglo-Saxons, he mentions "warlike Arthur, of whom the Bretons fondly tell so many fables, even to the present day, a man worthy to be celebrated, not by idle tales, but by authentic history".

Happily for his readers, William is not above telling anecdotes like the romance of the statue at Rome, with an inscription on the head, "Strike here". How this was misunderstood, how at last a wise man marked the place where the shadow of the fore-finger of the statue fell at noon, and what wonderful adventures followed when men dug there, and found a golden palace lighted up by a blazing carbuncle stone, is narrated in a captivating way, but is not scientific history. (Bk. II, Ch. X.) William mingles real letters and other documents with miracles and ghost stories: indeed, he is determined to amuse as well as to instruct, and he succeeds. In describing the enthusiasm stirred by the preaching of the First Crusade, he falls into the very manner of Macaulay. "The Welshman left his hunting, the Scot his fellowship with lice, the Dane his drinking-party, the Norwegian his raw fish."

Certainly William was not a wholly scientific historian. He is never uninteresting. If he finds any set of events tedious, he says so plainly, and passes onwards. He is very fair, is learned in the manner of his age, and his love of digressions and good stories reminds us of the Greek Herodotus, "the Father of History," and the most entertaining of historians.

Among the names of other Latin chroniclers is that of Henry of Huntingdon (writing in 1125-1154). The author of the "Deeds of King Stephen" is unknown: the work of William of Newburgh in the reigns of Henry II and Richard Cœur de Lion, is well remembered for his attack on the "lies" of Geoffrey of Monmouth. The assault on Geoffrey's truthfulness was not so superfluous as it seems, because his romance won the belief of many generations.

Richard Fitz Neale, who was Treasurer of England and for nine years Bishop of London (1189-1198), wrote the Dialogue "De Scaccario," "concerning the Exchequer," which is still studied as the best authority on mediaeval national finance in England, and on our early constitutional history.

Jocelin de Brakelond left a "Chronicle" (1173-1202) much concerned with life in his own monastery at St. Edmundsbury, and with the wise rule of Abbot Sampson. This book forms the text on which Carlyle preaches in his "Past and Present": it proves sufficiently that the monks were not the lazy drones of popular tradition and abounds in vivid pictures of men and of society.

Gerald of Wales (Girald de Barri, called Cambrensis, "the Welshman," 1147-1217?) was of royal Welsh and noble Norman birth, his family, the de Barris, were among the foremost Norman knights who took part in the invasion (it can hardly be called the conquest) of Ireland, under Strongbow; and he himself was a great fighter in the disputes of churchmen. There was not much schooling to be had in wild Wales, then very rebellious, but he probably learned Latin from the chaplains of his uncle, a Bishop, before he went to the University of Paris, to study law and science. Gerald was more like a modern literary man than a mediaeval chronicler. He never ceased from travelling, now following the Court, now rushing to Paris, now to Rome. When Archdeacon of St. David's, which the Welsh wanted to make a Canterbury of their own, with their own Archbishop, he stood up against the Bishop of St. Asaph; when the Bishop threatened to excommunicate him, he had bell, book, and candle ready to excommunicate the Bishop, whom he frightened away.

But Henry II would not permit Gerald to be Bishop of St. David's, thinking him certain to stand up for Wales against England. In 1184, Gerald went to Ireland with Henry's son, Prince John, who cannot be better described, as an insolent ribald young man, than he is in Scott's "Ivanhoe".

Gerald wrote a "Topography of Ireland," which is really "A Little Tour in Ireland". His chapters on the "Marvels of Ireland" lead us to suppose that the natives hoaxed him with strange stories, for example the tale of a church bell that wandered about the country of its own will: the innumerable fleas at St. Nannan's in Connaught is more credible, but the tale of the wolves who asked to receive the Holy Communion was not believed in England. One miracle was only a beautifully illuminated manuscript of the kind decorated by Irish artists 400 years earlier. The art had been lost, and the artist was supposed to have copied the designs of an angel.

Gerald found the Irish very ignorant, lazy, dirty, and ferocious. Every man used a battle-axe in place of a walking stick, and man-slayings were frequent. The Irish clergy were devout and chaste, but drank too much. On the wild beasts and birds of Ireland Gerald wrote like a naturalist and a sportsman, though he supposed that salmon, before leaping a fall, put their tails in their mouths, and letting go, fly upward by the spring thus obtained.

His "History of the Invasion of Ireland" is valuable, but he introduced, in the manner of some Greek and many Roman historians, long speeches which were never made. He also, after an energetic wandering life, always fighting to be made Bishop of St. David's, wrote his own autobiography, an amusing conceited book, full of adventures of travel. He wrote, too, on the natural history and the inhabitants of Wales, a book very valuable to this day. He died after reaching the age of 70.

Walter Map.

Among his friends was a native of the Welsh border, Walter Map, Archdeacon of Oxford. "You write much, Master Gerald," said Map to him, "and you will write more; and I deliver many discourses. Your books are better than my speeches, and will be remembered longer; but I am much more popular, for you write in Latin, and I speak in the vulgar tongue," meaning *French.* Poor Gerald confesses that he made nothing by his books, and looked for his reward, not in vain, to the applause of future ages.

But Map has had his own share of praise, more than he should get, if, as he said, he wrote little. He was born about 1137, studied at Paris, was one of the king's judges who rode on circuit, and, in 1197, was made Archdeacon of Oxford. One book which he certainly wrote, "On Courtly Trifles" ("De Nugis Curialium," in Latin) is a collection of anecdotes clumsily told, and of reflections, with stories of the Welsh, historical jottings, folk-lore, tales, and attacks on the clergy of the Cistercian Order. As a judge he said that he was fair, except to Jews and Cistercians, "who did not deserve justice, for they gave none". Satirical Latin poems against Golias, a type of a noisy licentious Bishop, are also attributed to him. In the confession of this Bishop occur the famous lines, thus translated by Leigh Hunt,

> I devise to end my days—in a tavern drinking;
> May some Christian hold for me—the glass when I am shrinking;

That the Cherubim may cry—when they see me sinking,
God be merciful to a soul—of this gentleman's way of thinking.

The lines, in rhyming Latin, became a drinking catch, conceivably they were that before, and were merely put into the Bishop's mouth as a proof of his bad character. The word "Golias" as a nickname for a ribald "Philistine" priest was hundreds of years older than Map's time. A long romance in French, on Launcelot, the Holy Grail, and the death of Arthur, is attributed to Map in some manuscripts, and as a contemporary romancer says that Map "could lie as well as himself"—that is, like himself wrote romances of love and tournaments—he may possibly have been the author of "the great book in Latin which treats openly of the history of the Holy Grail". But no copy of that Latin book is known to exist, nor is it certain that it ever existed, while Map, as we know, said that he did not write much of any sort, especially not in Latin.

Changes Since the Conquest.

It is plain that, within a century from the battle of Hastings, new influences of many kinds were working in England, and changing the national character and intellect. There was the learning from Paris University, and from the Continent in general; there was the clearer intellect and energy of the Normans; the vivacity of such Welshmen or men from the Welsh marches as Geoffrey of Monmouth, Gerald, and Map. Anglo-Saxon literature had never been vivacious.

There were the new topics, "the matter of Britain," the Celtic legends of Arthur, whether derived from Wales or from Brittany—matter most romantic, and suited to the coming poets who, unlike the Anglo-Saxons, were to glorify love. There was, too, the constant excitement and variety that came from travel, whether in the Crusades, in pilgrimages, or to France and Rome on public or private business, or in search of books and teachers. In various ways knowledge of Saracen science and learning, translations of Aristotle from the Arabic into the Latin, and romantic ideas derived from the fables and tales of far-off India, filtered into England.

These things were for priests and book-loving lords and courtiers. Their wits were sharpened by knowledge of several tongues. All educated men knew Latin; "all men of this land," said Robert of Gloucester (about 1270)

"who are of Norman blood, hold to French, and low men hold to English," but high men of English blood would talk in English to their farmers and servants. All who learned Latin learned it through French books, but country priests would preach in English.

The Anglo-Saxon language and grammar were slowly changing, though very few new words from French or Latin had yet come into common use. Cow, sheep, calf, and swine were Anglo-Saxon words, as Gurth the swineherd says in "Ivanhoe". Englishmen herded the animals, but the meat of them was called by French names derived from Latin, like beef, mutton, veal, and pork. From the Conquest (1066) to 1200, learning, Latin, and knowledge of French books would filter slowly into the native English mind, partly through sermons; and rich Franklins, and Englishmen in the service of the conquering race, and English priests would be Anglicizing French words.

CHAPTER V.

GEOFFREY OF MONMOUTH.

THE STORIES OF ARTHUR.

Of all these Latin chroniclers by far the most important was Geoffrey of Monmouth, Bishop of St. Asaph, who finished his "History of the Britons" about 1147. Geoffrey, as has been said, is not a real historian, but something much more interesting. He introduced to the world the story of King Arthur, which at once became the source and centre of hundreds of French romances, in verse or prose, and of poetry down to Tennyson and William Morris. To Geoffrey, or to later English chroniclers who had read Geoffrey, Shakespeare owed the stories of his plays, "Cymbeline" and "King Lear". Though Geoffrey did not write in English but in Latin, he is one of the chief influences in the literature, not only of England, but of Europe, mediaeval and modern.

All readers of the "Morte d'Arthur" of Sir Thomas Malory (about 1470), and the "Idylls of the King," and William Morris's short poems about Arthur

and Guinevere, are naturally curious to know if ever there were a real fighting Arthur, and to trace the sources of the countless French and English romances about him and his Court. Where did Geoffrey of Monmouth get his information about this island, from the days of the fabulous Roman who settled it (Brut, or Brutus), to King Arthur's time? We must look at what is known or reported about Arthur.

Bede, the historian, writing about 700-730, *says nothing about Arthur*, but he does speak briefly about the period (500-516) in which Arthur, if there were such a prince, must have existed. Bede takes from the Welsh writer in Latin, Gildas (about 550) the fact that, up to the date of the siege of Badon Hill (516), forty-four years after the Anglo-Saxons came into Britain, "the British (Welsh) had considerable successes under Ambrosius Aurelianus," perhaps the last of the Romans. "*But more of this later*," says Bede, who never returns to the subject. He may have expected to get more information, and that information might have included some account of Arthur, of whom Gildas makes no mention. Bede says nothing of the fable of Brut, which may not have been invented in his time, or, if known to him, was regarded by him as fabulous. Next we have a book attributed to the Welsh Nennius, a "History of the Britons," which is really a patchwork of several older records, and there is the "Annales Cambriæ," annals of Wales. Nennius (about 800?) makes Arthur ("the war-leader" *not the king*) win twelve great battles, ending with Badon Hill.

The names of the battles are given, the first is on the river Glein. Now one Glein is in Northumberland, the other in Ayrshire. Four battles are "on the Douglas water in the country called Linnuis"; if "Linnuis" is the Lennox, there are two Douglas waters there, which fall into Loch Lomond, between them is *Ben Arthur.* The sixth battle was "by the river Bassas," a "Bass" being a hill shaped like an artificial mound, for example the isle called "the Bass" in the Firth of Forth. There are two Basses on the river Carron, in Stirlingshire, and here may have been the sixth battle. The seventh was "Cat Coit Celidon," "the battle (*cat*) of the wood of Celyddon," that is Ettrick Forest, perhaps the fight was on the upper Tweed. The eighth battle is thought to have been waged at Wedale, in the strath of Gala water, a tributary of Tweed, which it reaches at Galashiels; the ninth at Dumbarton, which means "the castle of the Britons"; the tenth near Stirling, where a very late writer says that Arthur kept the Round Table; the eleventh at

"Agned Hill"; that is Mynyd Agned—Edinburgh Castle rock; and the twelfth was "the siege of Badon Hill," perhaps a hill on the Avon, near Linlithgow, which has remains of strong fortifications, and is called "the Buden Hill," or "Bouden Hill". (It is not easy, however, to see how the *a* in Badon became the *u* in Buden.) Finally the great battle of Camlon, where Arthur fell, is taken to be at a place long called Camelon on the Carron, in Stirlingshire, where Arthur met Saxons, Picts, and Scots, under Medraut, (Modred), son of Llew, or Lothus, to whom Arthur had granted Lothian. On the other side of the river was an ancient building called, as far back as 1293, "Arthur's Oven"; it was destroyed by a laird at the end of the eighteenth century.

If all these conclusions, drawn by Mr. Skene from legends, Nennius, and place-names, be correct, Arthur was a real war-leader, fighting for the Britons, that is the Welsh of Strathclyde, whose country stretched from Dumbarton down through Cumberland. Even Geoffrey of Monmouth makes Arthur fight between Loch Lomond and Edinburgh, and give Lothian to King Lot, that is Llew, whose son, Medraut (Modred), turns traitor to Arthur. Bede places the battles at a time when the Picts had made an alliance with the Saxons, and these two peoples were in contact with each other not down in Cornwall, where later writers place "the last battle in the west," but exactly where Arthur seems to have fought, in the fighting place of Edward I and the Scots—from Carlisle to Dumbarton and Falkirk, and in Ettrick Forest and round Edinburgh, a region where several hills bear Arthur's name.

We need not, then, give up Arthur as a fabulous being, though legends far older than himself came to be told about him. In the oldest Welsh poems that survive he is mentioned among scores of other old heroes, now forgotten, and is always named as a great war-leader, "Emperor and conductor of the toil".

One mention is important. In a long Welsh poem on the graves of many heroes now forgotten, we read:—

> The grave of March, the grave of Gwythar,
> The grave of Gwgwan Gleddyvrudd,
> *A mystery to the world*, *the grave of Arthur.*
> (*Or* "not wise to ask where is the grave of Arthur.")

Thus it appears that, even in very early Welsh poetry, the Grave of Arthur (like that of James IV, slain at Flodden), was unknown; hence he was believed, like King James, not to be dead; he was in "the island valley of Avilion," and would come again to help his people, when he was healed of his grievous wound.

Several of his companions in the later French and English romances, such as Geraint, Kay, and Bedivere, were also known to these very early Welsh poets. Moreover, there exist in the Welsh "Mabinogion" ("Tales for the Young"), very ancient stories of Arthur which do not resemble the ordinary later romances about him, but are infinitely older and more poetical: such are "Kulhwch and Olwen" and "The Dream of Rhonabwy".

Probably about 1066 there were many tales of Arthur surviving in Brittany, a Brython (Welsh) country from which the exiled prince of South Wales returned home in 1077. If he brought these tales back and if the Welsh poets took them up, there would be plenty of Welsh Arthurian literature between 1077 and 1140, or thereabouts, when Geoffrey of Monmouth produced his "History of the Britons". He says that he has had the advantage of using a book in the Breton tongue, which Walter, Archdeacon of Oxford, brought out of Brittany; this book he translates into Latin.

No such book can be found. It is probable that Geoffrey used Welsh and Breton traditions, and the patchwork book, parts of it very early, called the "History of the Britons," attributed to Nennius (about 796). In this we have a mixture of the real fighting Arthur of about 520, and the fabulous Arthur, a wonderful, powerful being, like all the old heroes of fable, who goes down to the mysterious land of darkness, like Odysseus and the Finnish Waïnamoïnen.

The patchwork book of Nennius derives the name of Britain from that person of pure fantasy, "Brut," "Brutus," great-grandson of Æneas; who sailed to the Isle of Albion. Now "Brut" was invented merely to explain the name "Britain," and to connect the Britons, or Welsh, with the Trojans. In the same way the Scots had framed false histories of their ancestress Scota, who came from Scythia to Ireland, by way of Egypt, Athens, and Spain.

All these legendary and fictitious materials, and others, were used by Geoffrey in what he called a "History"; and his "History," in spite of criticism, became the most popular book of the age. He begins with the

flight of Æneas from Troy, and the flight of the great-grandson of Æneas, Brutus, to the Isle of Albion, "inhabited by none but a few giants". Brut builds New Troy (London) on the Thames, and so the romance runs on, a mere novel of adventures, those of Shakespeare's "King Lear" and "Cymbeline," for example, mixed up with history from Bede, till we come to Merlin the Enchanter, and Uther Pendragon, and the mysterious birth of Arthur, who is crowned king, and slays 900 Saxons with his own sword in one battle, conquers all Northern Europe and France, and defeats the Romans, all of which is sheer mediaeval fable. At home, in a great fight ("the battle of Camlan" it is called in older books than Geoffrey's) he kills Modred, and is carried to the Isle of Avallon or Avilion, to be healed of his wounds.

Geoffrey ends by requesting historians, his contemporaries, such as William of Malmesbury, "to be silent concerning the "History of the Britons," since they have not that book written in the British tongue, which Walter, Archdeacon of Oxford, brought out of Brittany". This is mere open banter. Geoffrey was not likely to show them that book!

Even in the old Welsh tale of the great boar-hunt, a story far earlier than Geoffrey's time, Arthur is surrounded by many fabulous heroes, really characters of fairy-tale, like them who followed Jason in the search for the Fleece of Gold. All of them can do miraculous feats, like the heroes of "the dream-time," "the dark backward" of unknown ages. These companions of Arthur become, at least some of them do, the Knights of the Round Table in the later romances, but we do not yet hear of Launcelot, or of the Holy Grail.

From Geoffrey's book come the French poetical and adorned version of Wace (1155), many French romances, and finally a vast throng of chivalrous and romantic fancies cluster round the great name of Arthur. Geoffrey's was a book that gave delight to every one, ladies as well as men, for in the marriage of the traitor Modred with Guinevere the wife of Arthur, and in Arthur's revenge, was the germ of a world of romances. The conquest, too, by Arthur, of Gaul and Aquitaine, inspired, and, to their minds, gave an historical excuse for the ambition of English kings to recover these old dominions of Britain. Caxton, our first printer, long afterwards wrote that not to believe in Arthur was almost atheism.

Geoffrey also translated into Latin out of Welsh the prophecies attributed to the enchanter Merlin. If they had any meaning in Welsh, in Latin they have none. Hotspur, in Shakespeare's "Henry IV," is weary of Owen Glendower's talk

> Of the dreamer Merlin and his prophecies,
> And of a dragon and a finless fish,
> A clip-wing'd griffin and a moulten raven,
> A couching lion, and a ramping cat,
> And such a deal of skimble-skamble stuff.

Nevertheless, three centuries after Geoffrey wrote, men who thought themselves wise and learned believed that not only Merlin but Bede were true prophets, who foretold the victories of Joan of Arc (1429).

It must be kept in mind that Geoffrey says nothing about these great characters in later Arthurian romances, Launcelot, Galahad, Tristram and Iseult, and nothing about the mysterious Holy Grail, and the Quest of the Grail. How and whence these parts of the Arthurian legend arose, how much of them comes from ancient Celtic legend, how much from the invention of French romancers, is still a mystery. Geoffrey, however, made Arthur, Merlin, Guinevere, and Modred familiar to all his readers. All Englishmen were proud of Arthur of Britain, though, of course; in his life he was the deadly foe of the English.

CHAPTER VI.

LAYAMON'S "BRUT".

Thanks to Geoffrey, at last, some time about 1200-1220, came an English poet, Layamon, a true poet (now and then), whose work reminds us occasionally at once of the Greeks whom he had never read, of masters whom he did not know; and of the things most romantic in the verses of the last great poet of England. Layamon, the author of "The Brut," had no ambition; he had no hope of gain; the king and the courtiers would never hear of him.

Layamon was an English priest in a quiet country parish, not far from the Welsh Border, at Ernley, near Radestone, on the Severn, as he tells us. Yet the new French culture had reached him and inspired him; he gave it to Englishmen in their own English language and he is therefore readable: is more than a mere name. It "came into his mind" to tell the history of England, in verse, and he says that he travelled far to get the books of Bede (in Anglo-Saxon), "the fair Austin and St. Albin," in Latin, and the book made in French by a French clerk, Master Wace, "who well could write". "Lovingly he beheld these books," but, in fact, he only used one of them, namely Wace's *French* version (1155) of Geoffrey of Monmouth's romance. Wace had altered Geoffrey as he pleased, and Layamon took the same liberty with Wace; his book is twice as long as that of the French clerk; he also inserted many things not to be found in the text of Wace as now printed, but derived partly from still unprinted manuscripts of Wace, partly from other sources; perhaps from Welsh legends known to this priest who dwelt beside the Severn. Wace added to Geoffrey's account of Arthur, the story wherever he found it, of "The Table Round," so shaped that the knights could not quarrel about the highest place. Layamon adds that the Fairy ladies came to Arthur's birth—as in a very old belief, found in ancient Greece and ancient Egypt—and that they later carried him away to Avalon, there to be healed of his wounds.

He calls the fairy Queen "Argante," possibly a French corruption of a Breton name. His account of the birth of the enchanter Merlin, "No man's son," is romance itself. Merlin's mother, who had become a nun, knew not who was her child's father, only that in her dreams there came to her "the fairest thing that ever was born, as it were a tall knight, all dight in gold. This thing glided before me and glistened with gold. Oft me it kissed, and oft embraced."

What can be more romantic than this tale of the golden shadow of love that glides through the darkling bower—told by a nun with bowed head, shamefast! We are reminded of the lines in which Io, in Æschylus, tells of the shadowy approaches of Zeus, the king of gods; and the voice that spoke to her in dreams.

The Greeks had another such tale of the gold that fell in the tower of Danaë before the birth of Perseus. The origin of Layamon's story may be in some

ancient Celtic myth of the loves of gods and mortal women, and of Merlin, son of a god.

From his shadowy nameless father, Merlin received his gift of prophecy, and, from the first, foretold the Passing of Arthur.

In Layamon's poem we find what does not occur in the older Anglo-Saxon poems, such as "Beowulf," the use of similes in the manner of Homer, whose warriors charge like lions, hungry, and beaten on by wind and snow. Thus, too, in Layamon's verse,

"Up caught Arthur his shield, before his breast, and he 'gan to rush as doth the howling wolf when he cometh from the wood, flecked with snow, and thinketh to seize what beasts he will."

Arthur defeats the Saxons, and drives them from the ford of the river, through the deep marshland,

"And as the wild crane in the fen, when the falcons follow him through air, and he wearies in his flight, but the hounds meet him in the reeds; as *he* can find no safety whether in field or flood, even so the Saxons were smitten in ford and field, and went blindly wandering."

These similes give clear, vivid pictures of life in fen and forest, and enliven the poem in the true epic way, and Layamon gives, perhaps, the first English picture of an English fox-hunt. In his poem, Guinevere does not love Launcelot, but the traitor Modred, and when Modred is defeated by her husband, Arthur, she flies to Caerleon, where "she hooded her and made her a nun," and her end is unknown.

In the last great battle in the west, both hosts fall—it is a field of the dead and dying. Arthur bears fifteen wounds. He is alone with Constantine, to whom he entrusts his kingdom. "But I will pass to Avalun, to the fairest of all maidens, to Argante the Queen, an elf most beautiful, and she shall make my wounds all whole with draughts of healing. And afterwards I will come again to my kingdom....

"Then came floating from the sea a little boat, and two women therein, shaped wonderfully; and they took Arthur anon, and bore him to that boat, and laid him softly down, and went their way. Bretons believe that he liveth yet, and wonneth in Avalun, with the fairest Queens of Faery."

Do we not already seem to hear the voice of Tennyson's weeping queens, as the king floats into the night?

Romance has come to England, and from the mingling of races and tongues —Celtic, French, English—an English poet has been born: a man who sees with the eyes of imagination, and who can make us share his visions of the golden shadow that was father of Merlin; of the wolf with the snow caked on his matted hide as he rushes from the wood; of the hawking party in the fens; of the battle by the tidal waters of the west.

Layamon is full of promise of good things to come, as in his description of Goneril and her husband, when she begins to grudge to her father, King Lear, the expensive service of his forty knights; while her husband feebly opposes her unnatural avarice. (The story of Lear is also in Geoffrey of Monmouth, and is based on a common folk-tale.)

Again, when Layamon's Arthur laughs over the slain Colgrem, "...Lie there, now, Colgrem; high hadst thou climbed this hill, as if thou wouldst win heaven, now shalt thou fare to hell, and there find thy kinsfolk,..." we are carried back to the boasts over the dead that Greeks and Trojans utter in the Iliad. But these great touches are rare in the 30,000 lines of Layamon, the mass of his poem "is blank enough".

Layamon thought himself a chronicler in rhyme, a historian; in his book he has many tales, not that of Arthur alone; he has dull passages in plenty, none the less the good priest had many qualities of the great poet.

The verse of Layamon is sometimes of the old Anglo-Saxon sort already described, with alliteration and without rhyme; and in other parts consists of rhyming couplets varying in length, all intermixed. A rhyming couplet is

> *Thet avere either other*
> *luvede alse if brother*.
>
> That ever either other
> Loved as if brother.

In the words the tendency is to drop the old inflections, the language is shaking off its original grammar and approaching modern English. In the later of two manuscripts of the poem this tendency is much more strong. Thus the older manuscript has

He wes a swithe aehte gume
And he streonde (begat) threo *snelle* sunen.

The later copy has

He was a strong gome
And he streonede threo sones.

The word "snell" in the older version still survives in Scots,

"There cam a wind out o' the East
A sharp wind and a *snell*,"

snell meaning "keen".

ORMULUM.

Layamon was too great a poet to mingle sermons with his song. The pulpit was his preaching place, he scarcely ever preaches in his poem. On the other hand the worthy brother Ormin or Orm did nothing but preach in his versified book "The Ormulum". He was an Augustinian canon of the North Midlands who, about 1200, paraphrased the Gospels read on each day, and the homily which followed, often drawn from Bede (for Orm was not an advanced theologian), in a kind of blank verse. Nothing could be more simply edifying to plain congregations, but edification is not the aim of literature. Orm is best known for his determination to have English properly pronounced. A vowel, in English is, and was, sounded short before two consonants, and Orm was bent on making the reader pronounce the vowels thus and not otherwise. He therefore *wrote* the two consonants after every short vowel, and explained himself thus, the lines also give the metre of his verses:—

And whase wilenn shall thiss hoc
Efft others sithe writenn
Him bidde Icc thatt het write rihht
Swa summ thiss hoc him teachethh....
And tatt he loke wel thatt he
An bocstaff write twiyess
Eyywhaer thaes itt upo thiss boc
Iss written o thatt wise.

By using some Scots words we may translate this in the original metre.

And whasae willen shall this book
Another time be writing
Him do I bid that he write richt
Even as this book him teacheth.
And that he do look well that he
Ane letter writeth twice
Aye there where it upon this book
Is written in that wise.

The metre is very like that of the Scottish rhymed version of the Psalms, though Orm (as in the second verse above) only uses rhyme by accident. The "Ormulum" is not to be "read for human pleasure," though it is interesting to students of the language and versification while in a state of transition.

The same may be said of a number of works in prose or verse which are to be found by students in editions published by learned societies. It is necessary to say something of them, because it is a kind of duty to be aware of their existence, though few but specialists can be enthusiastic over their merits, save in one or two cases. They show how the language and the modes of versifying were going forward, and becoming such as a great poet like Chaucer could improve; or, on the other hand; language and verse were going backwards, deserting rhyme and depending (as in Anglo-Saxon) on alliteration, or alliteration mixed with rhyme.

Ancren Riwle.

Among the works of this period which were useful or pleasant in their day, the longest book in prose is the "Ancren Riwle," or "Rule of Anchoresses," ladies who were not exactly female solitaries, but lived together religiously, each with her maid. The author, whoever he may have been, bids them say, if any one inquires, that they are "of the Order of St. James". There was no such Order, but St. James bids us visit the widow and the orphan, and keep ourselves unspotted from the world. *This*, says he, is true religion. The three ladies dwelt together at Tarente in Dorset. The language is of the same period as Layamon's "Brut," very early in the thirteenth century. The style is simple and free from decoration, the dialect is that of western England. The

advice to the ladies is excellently pious; no severe austerities are recommended, except silence at meals. An anchoress "should not speak with any man often or long," and should have a witness (probably out of ear-shot), even when she confesses, since "the innocent are often belied for want of a witness". Flirting, and belief in luck and in dreams and witchcraft, are severely reprobated. Scepticism is attributed to intellectual pride. "Wear no iron" (James IV wore an iron girdle under his clothes), "nor hair cloth, nor hedgehog skins"; the ladies are not to flog themselves, unless their confessor permits, and their shoes are to be thick and warm. The author remarks that, God knows, he would rather set out on a voyage to Rome than write his book over again: he may have feared that the ladies would lose their copy.

Other religious books of the time are the "Poema Morale," in lines of fourteen syllables ending in a double rhyme, as *lorè, morè, deedè, redè*, and a new metrical paraphrase of Genesis and Exodus. The story is told with some vivacity, in rhyming couplets of eight syllables.

> The drempte pharaoh king a drem
> That he stod by the flodes strem
> And the then ut come VII neat
> Everile wel swithe fet and gret,
> And VII lene after the.

In places the metre of Coleridge's "Christabel," which was the model of Scott's "Lay of the Last Minstrel," is recognized in the casual couplets, thus: —

> For sextenè yer Joseph was old
> Quane he was into Egypte sold.

But it is a far cry from this to

> The feast was over in Branksome tower;

and the metre, when Scott's "Lay" appeared, seemed to be a novelty.

THE OWL AND THE NIGHTINGALE.

in rhyming eight-syllable couplets, seems to have been written about 1250 (?). The theme is a *debate*, in the fashion of French poetry, between the owl

and the nightingale, as to the comparative merit of their songs. The nightingale, deserting her art, rather feebly asserts the moral influence of her own music, and attacks the owl in a very personal strain of invective, reflecting on his want of good looks, and on his taste in food. We are far indeed from Keats's "Ode to the Nightingale", "If you are so great a teacher," replied the owl, "why do you not sing to men in Ireland, Norway, and Galloway?" La Fontaine might have made a witty poem on the dispute of the owl and the nightingale, but the poet was not a wit, and made a poor use of his opportunities. He is supposed, but not with certainty, to have been Nicholas of Guildford, who is credited with being neglected by the Bishop in the distribution of patronage.

The owl quotes the "Proverbs of King Alfred," of which there is a thirteenth century collection in rhyme; there are also the "Proverbs of Hendyng": the latter in stanzas of six lines each, the first two rhyming with each other, as do the last two, while the third line rhymes with the sixth: a very popular jingle.

Lyrics.

Far more interesting than these things, whether moral or religious, are the rhyming songs, the voice of the English people, laymen, not priests, the love lyrics (1300?), for example, one on Alison, beginning

> Bytuene Mershe ant Averil
> When spray biginneth to springe,
> The lutel fowl hath hire wyll
> On hyre lud to synge,

each stanza ending

> From alle wymen mi loue is lent
> Ant lyht on Alisoun.

This is the first sweet English love-song that has escaped the ruins of time. Everyone knows by heart

> Sumer is icumen in;

and

Blow, northerne wynd,
Send thou me my suetyng,

reminds us of

O gentle wind that bloweth south
From where my love repaireth.

There were all the sounds and scents of spring in the hearts and songs of the poets:—

Lenten is come with love to toune,
With blosmen ant with briddes roune,
That all this blisse bryngeth.

This metre came to be used in telling stories in verse, a purpose for which it is not well fitted. But truly English poetry, with rich re-echoing rhymes and many forms of verse, is awake at last.

Political Songs.

To politics as well as to love and the delights of spring the Muse of the people was alive. The popular hatred of Richard of Cornwall, brother of Henry III, expressed itself thus after the battle of Lewes (1264). The English is here but slightly modernized:—

Be thou lief, be thou loth, Sir Edward,
Thou shalt ride spurless on thy lyard
All the right way to Doverward
Shalt thou never more break forward,
Edward, thou did'st as a shreward,
Forsook thine uncle's lore,
Richard, though thou be ever trichard
Trick shalt thou never more.

(A lyard is a grey, spoken of a horse,

The Dinlay snaws were ne'er so white
As the lyart locks o' Harden's hair,

says the ballad of "Jamie Telfer".)

The English view of Wallace, the patriot knight of Scotland, cruelly executed, is thus set forth:—

To warn all the gentlemen that be in Scotland
The Wallace was drawn, thereafter hanged,
Beheaded alive, his bowels burned,
The head to London Bridge was sent,
To abide
After Simon Frysel,
That was traitor and fickle
And known full wide.

(Frysel or Fraser; a later Simon Fraser, Lord Lovat of 1745, was traitor and fickle enough.)

Robert of Gloucester.

By no means so lively, though useful in its day, is the very long metrical chronicle (about 1300) of Robert of Gloucester, whether it be by two hands or by one. One, at least, named Robert, was living at the dates of a great Oxford town and gown row, which he describes, and of the battle of Evesham (1265). He was fortunately not nearer than a distance of thirty miles from that stricken field, and records his own fear of a dense darkness which prevented the monks from reading service in church. Robert dwelt in Gloucester, as his minute local allusions prove. He began his chronicle by versifying the fabulous work of Geoffrey of Monmouth, but put into it not a glimmer of the poetry of Layamon. For the rest, till he reached his own time, he copied Henry of Huntingdon, William of Malmesbury, and "Lives of the Saints".

Robert's learned modern editor, Mr. Aldis Wright, outworn by all the tediousness which the poet bestows on us, says "as literature, the book is as worthless as twelve thousand lines of verse without one spark of poetry can be". But Robert's praises of England, "a wel god loud," and of English folk, so clean and handsome, have a sound spontaneous note of patriotism, and there is a swing in what Mr. Wright cruelly styles his "doggerel verse in ballad metre," which is not to be despised. To be sure he has, without knowing it, several different sorts of verse, and is nearly as irregular as Layamon himself, in his measures. His readers would not be offended by

these defects, and they learned from him, with a great deal of inaccurate history, a sense of pride in their country, and to speak English, though the nobles and gentry, he says, spoke French.

Cursor Mundi.

A book in verse about twice as long as the lengthy world-chronicle of Robert is the "Cursor Mundi," "the Over-Runner of the World". The author, like the makers of many pretty lyrics on religious subjects, perceived that people preferred songs to sermons, and romance to homilies. To modernize his language

> Men yearn jests to hear
> And romances read in divers mannere.

He gives the themes of the romances, "Matter of Rome"—which includes all antiquity, Troy, and Greece as well as Rome—"Matter of Britain," the stories of Arthur and his Knights—and "Matter of France," concerning Charlemagne, and his Twelve Peers. Nothing is in fashion but love and lovers: but this poet will sing of Her whose love never fails, namely Our Lady. He begins before Satan and his angels fell, and goes on endlessly, yet, to his readers, perhaps not tediously, for he enlivens the Biblical narrative with legends to the full as fantastic as could be found in any romance. There is the story of how Moses found, through a dream, three wands that grew from three pips placed under Adam's tongue. David, through another dream, found these wands in the grave of Moses, which, like that of Arthur, "is a mystery to the world". The wands turned ugly black Saracens into handsome white men: the branches grew into a tree, and round that tree were thirty circles of silver. The wood was made into the True Cross, and Judas received the thirty pieces of silver. The most absurd tales are told of the boyhood, by no means exemplary, of our Lord, variegated by miracles not wholly beneficent.

Thus the "Cursor Mundi" may have been found amusing enough in its day, when the ceaseless octosyllabic rhyming couplets were not reckoned tedious (they are sometimes varied), and adventures wholly unknown to the authors of the Gospels occur in every page.

Devotional Books.

Books more purely devotional are "The Ayenbite of Inwyt" ("The Biting of Conscience") and "The Pricke of Conscience". The former states itself to be written "in English of Kent," by "dan Michelis of Northgate," and to be in the library of St. Austin's of Canterbury. The author, or rather translator from a French book of 1274, finished his writing in 1340. The author of "The Ayenbite" classifies sins and virtues in the allegorical manner: his moral advice, for example, as to the duty of giving alms promptly, gladly, and without the discourtesies with which too many accompany them, is excellent. But nothing, he says, is to be given to minstrels, he "calls their harmless art a crime". The dialect is uncouth and rather difficult.

"The Pricke of Conscience" is in octosyllabic rhyming couplets, about 10,000 lines in all, and is the work of a singular person, Richard Rolle, who, after being a wandering hermit, settled at Hampole, and died in 1349. A Latin biographer of Richard states that he was born at Thornton in the diocese of York, was well educated by the care of his parents, was sent to Oxford by Thomas Neville, Archdeacon of Durham, and made good progress in his studies, especially in theology. In his nineteenth year he left the temptations of Oxford, went home, and turned two dresses of his sister's, one white, one gray, into what he thought the appropriate costume of a hermit, covering his head with his father's rain-hood. His sister fled from before him, thinking him insane: he took

Lady Dalton's seat in church, was allowed to preach a sermon, and was kindly received by the lady's husband, Sir John. In a cell provided by the knight he had unspeakable raptures, and felt as if he were being burned by a physical fire, which proved to be that of Divine love. Some ladies found him writing at a great pace, while he simultaneously discoursed to them for two hours. It seems to follow that either his writing or his preaching was "automatic". He wrought some miracles of healing, and he must have written rapidly indeed if he produced all the works attributed to him, His prose treatises of religion are as fervent as the Letters of Samuel Rutherford, the Covenanter: his anecdotes of his own temptation by the phantasm of "a full, fair young woman" who loved him dearly; and of a repentant scholar, who wrote out a list of his own sins which vanished from the paper, are interesting. He allows that the brains of eagerly pious people sometimes "turn in their heads," thereby causing empty hallucinations, and the hearing of wonderful songs that are merely subjective impressions. This strange being, with the ardour of Crashaw, had something of Crashaw's poetic fire.

MINOT.

The verses of Laurence Minot, celebrating events from 1333 to 1352 are of almost no literary merit. The Muse of Laurence is the patriotic; he crows, for example, over the defeat of the Scots by English archers at Halidon Hill, in 1333, but he merely babbles in the vague, and does not give a single detail as to the fighting. When he promises to tell of the battle of Bannockburn, in place of doing that he glories in the recovery of Berwick by Edward III.

The best praise we can give him is that he loved to celebrate the victories of his countrymen; and had at his command many metres that were ready for some better poet to use. It must also be admitted that there are very few successes in our British essays in patriotic poetry, and that an enemy of the Scots, as Minot was, may be not impartially judged by a critic of that race.

CHAPTER VII.

THE ROMANCES IN RHYME.

When romance "is in," and, after Geoffrey of Monmouth, romance *was* in, every other kind of literature "is out"; is unfashionable and little regarded. The English rhyming chroniclers, and even religious writers such as the author of the "Cursor Mundi," felt constrained to make their works resemble fiction as nearly as possible; owing to the supremacy of French romances and English translations and adaptations of French romances, in the late twelfth, thirteenth, and fourteenth centuries.

Many of these productions grouped themselves round the Table of King Arthur, "matter of Britain"; others dealt with "matter of Rome," that is all the ancient world; others with "matter of France"; others with legends or

fancies, English or foreign. Their subject was often the chivalrous theory and practice of love, as a kind of religion, a fantastic semi-idealized devotion to the beloved, who, as a rule, was another man's wife. This breach of recognized religion and morality was often set down to fate, to the power that the Anglo-Saxons named *Wyrd.*

The two greatest cycles of romantic love are found in the lives of Tristram and Iseult (the wife of King Mark of Cornwall, and aunt by marriage of Tristram), and of Lancelot and Guinevere, the wife of King Arthur. Tristram (whose name seems to be altered from the Welsh name Drysdan), has but little original connexion with the Court of Arthur, though he is a mythical hero of a very old Welsh "triad". He and Iseult love each other because they have by mischance drunk together of a love potion intended for Mark and his wife; their love is fatal and inevitable, and immortal.

Lancelot, on the other hand, has been sent to bring the bride Guinevere to Arthur, and they fall in love before the lady has seen her lord. Every one knows their joys and sorrows, from Malory's "Morte d'Arthur," (1470)—a prose selection and compilation of "the French books," which excels them and supersedes them—and from the poems of Tennyson, Matthew Arnold, and Mr. Swinburne.

The romances of love and tournament are pervaded and darkened by the influence of the Celtic Merlin, the enchanter and prophet whom men call Devil's son; he represents Destiny. A wide circle of romances, "Merlin" and the "Suite de Merlin," attributed to Robert de Borron, at the end of the twelfth century, are concerned with him.

As if to counteract the fanaticism of love which, in the romances, becomes a non-moral counter-religion, the mysterious story of the Holy Grail came into literature, French, German, and English. The Grail is perhaps originally one of the many magical things of Celtic legend, a vessel as rich in food inexhaustible as the purse of Fortunatus in gold, but conceived by the romance writers to be a mystic dish or cup, used by our Lord before His passion, and still existing, but only to be seen by the pure of heart, such as Sir Percival, and Sir Galahad, the maiden son of Lancelot.

By accident or design the romances fall into a tragic sequence: the youth of Arthur, and his unconscious sin; the mysterious birth of Merlin; the fatal loves of Lancelot and Guinevere; the coming of the Grail and the search for

the Grail by many knights; the failure of all but Galahad and Percival; the falling of Lancelot and Guinevere to their old love again; and the sorrows and treacheries that precede and lead up to the king's last battle in the west, and his passing to Avilion.

France and Ireland, like England, have their own romances on the adventures of knights under the feudal sway of a chief king; in France, Charlemagne; in Ireland, Conchobar or Fionn; in England, Arthur, and in all these cases the king becomes much less interesting than his knights, such as Roland and Oliver in France; Cuchulain and Diarmaid in Ireland; Lancelot, Tristram, Gawain, and Percival in England. Yet Arthur, at first and at the last, is the supreme as well as the central figure in the epic, or cycle, of romances. These are a great treasury of brilliant imaginations, rising from Celtic traditions of unknown antiquity, and then transfigured, first by the chivalrous counter-religion of love; next by the reaction to celibacy, and the yearning after some visible and tangible Christian relic and sign, "the vision of the Holy Grail". From this hoard of mediaeval fancies later poets have taken what they could, have placed the jewels in settings of their own fashioning.

The romance writers were by no means restricted to "matter of Britain," with Celtic traditions; or to "matter of France," the epics of Charlemagne and his peers, or even to "matter of Rome," ranging through all antiquity. Material came in from popular tales of all countries, and from recent historical events, as in the romance of Richard Cœur de Lion. In the fifteenth century there was a romance of Jeanne d'Arc, as fantastic as any; the matter of it survives partly in the prose of the "Chronique de Lorraine," and has drifted into "Henry VI," Pt. I. In France the most famous and fashionable novelists of the late twelfth century were Chrétien de Troyes and Benoît de Ste.-Maure, author of the great romance of Troy, whose manner, long-winded and elaborately courtly, was strangely revived by the French romancers of the years preceding Molière.

Tristram.

The earliest English romances, or novels of chivalrous adventures, are couched in metre. Among the first is "Sir Tristrem" (usually spelled Tristram); certainly this has been the most popular in modern times. Sir

Walter Scott edited it, from the copy in the Auchinleck Manuscript (a collection of early poems once in the possession of Boswell of Auchinleck, father of Dr. Johnson's Boswell).[1]

Sir Walter was persuaded that "Sir Tristrem" was written from local Celtic tradition, by the famed Thomas of Ercildoune, called the Rhymer. Thomas, who dwelt at Ercildoune (Earlstone on Leader water), was a neighbour, as it were, of Scott at Abbotsford; he died between 1286 and 1299, and he had great though obviously accidental fame, as a prophet.

The poem on Tristram begins with the words,

I was at Erceldoune
With Thomas spake I there,
There heard I rede in roune
Who Tristram gat and bare,
(that is, "I heard who the father and mother of Tristram were")
Who was King with croun;
And who him fostered yare;
And who was bold baroun.
As their elders ware,
Bi yere:—
Thomas tells in toun,
This auventours as thai ware.

The English poet uses this difficult stanza in place of the simple rhymes of a French original which knew nothing of Ercildoune. In similar stanzas, of French origin as usual, the whole romance is told. Throughout "Tomas" is mentioned as the source of the story—"as Tomas hath us taught".

There are fragments of an earlier French romance in which Tomas is also quoted as the source, and an early German version, by Godfrey of Strasbourg refers to Thomas of Britanie.

Scott was well aware that the story of Tristram was popular in France long before the time of Thomas of Ercildoune, but he liked to believe that Thomas collected Celtic traditions of Tristram from the people of Leaderdale and Tweeddale, though they, by 1220-1290, were English in blood and speech.

In the romance, Tristram is peerless in music, chess-playing, the fine art of hunting, and of cutting up the deer; and his main virtue is constancy to Iseult, wife of his uncle, King Mark. This unfortunate prince is not the crafty avenger of his own wrongs, as in Malory's "Morte d'Arthur," but a guileless, good-natured being, constantly and ludicrously deceived. Iseult is treacherous and cruel, but everything is forgiven to her, and, as the manuscript, is defective, we do not know how the poet handled the close of the tale, the episode of the other Iseult "of the white hands". Scott finished the tale in the metre and language of the original. Tristram is dying in Brittany, only Iseult of Cornwall can heal him, as only Œnone could heal Paris. Tristram sends for her, the vessel is to carry white sails if it bears her; black, if it does not. The idea is from the Greek saga of Theseus. The second Iseult, wife of Tristram, falsely reports that the sails of the vessel are black. Tristram dies, and Iseult of Cornwall falls dead when she beholds him.

> Swiche lovers als thei
> Neer shall be moe,"

concludes Sir Walter.

Havelok.

In "Havelok" we naturally expect, thinking of our historical hero Havelock, to find a true English romance. The scene is partly in England, the tale is of a Danish king's son kept out of his own by one of the most fearsome guardians of romance (who chops up the hero's little sisters), is saved by the thrall Grim, who was ordered to murder him, and, after adventures as a kitchen lad, marries an English princess who is in the hands of another usurper. The story is truly English in sentiment and style. The poet curses Godard, the murderous oppressor of Havelok, in a thoroughly satisfactory fashion. The noble birth of the hero is recognized by the "battle-flame" of the ancient Irish romances; the flame with which Athene crowns Achilles in Homer shines round Havelok. This light warns Grim not to drown Havelok, and teaches the oppressed lady whom he wins that her wooer is no kitchen-knave but a prince in disguise. The story has abundance of spirit, and may be read with more pleasure than the romance of the perfidies of Iseult. It is written in no affected and entangled rhymes, but in rhyming couplets.

King Horn.

In "King Horn" we have a novel that must have been reckoned most satisfactory. The course of true love is interrupted by accidents which caused the utmost anxiety to the readers, who probably looked at the end to see "if she got him". "He" was Prince Horn, son of Murry, King of Saddene; the realm is "by west," and is invaded by Saracens. They spare Horn, for his beauty's sake, but launch him in a boat with his friends, Athulf and Fikenhild; his land they overrun, and disestablish the Church, being themselves professors of the Moslem religion. Horn drifts to the shore of the realm of Westerness, under King Aylmar. Here the king's daughter Rymenhild, falls in love with Horn, but cannot have an opportunity of declaring her passion. In the romances the lady, as a rule, begins the wooing. By Athelbrus, the steward, Athulf is brought to her bower, apparently in the dark, for she addresses him as Horn.

> "Horn" quoth she, "well long
> I have thee loved strong."

Athulf undeceives her; Horn is brought, in the absence of King Aylmar: Rymenhild again speaks the secret of her heart, and when Horn alludes to their unequal ranks, she faints away—one of the earliest faints executed by any heroine in English fiction. Horn kisses her into consciousness, and she devises that he shall be knighted. The king consents, giving him a ring which secures him from "dread of dunts," sends him to win glory. Horn at once kills a hundred Saracens. But Fikenhild, his false friend, finds Horn consoling Rymenhild for a dream of a great fish that burst her landing net. Fikenhild, in jealousy, warns King Aylmar, who discovers Horn and his daughter embracing. Horn is exiled, and bids Rymenhild wait seven years, and then marry if she will. Like the daughter of "that Turk," in "The Loving Ballad of Lord Bateman," she "takes a vow and keeps it strong".

At another court Horn, now styled Cutberd, not only slays giants, but encounters and routs the very Saracens who had invaded his father's dominions. The king of the country offers Horn his daughter and realm: he, however, is true to his vow, but, at the end of seven years, Rymenhild is betrothed to a king. She sends a boy to Horn with a message. In returning with Horn's reply the boy is drowned; the princess finds his dead body. Disguised as a palmer, like Ivanhoe, Horn returns to Westerness, and, like

Odysseus, sits on the ground at the palace, as a beggar. Rymenhild does not recognize him, asks him if he has met Horn, and is shown her own ring. Horn, she is told, is dead. She had secreted a knife to kill her bridegroom, like the Bride of Lammermoor. Then Horn reveals himself, the pair are wedded, but he has still to recover his own kingdom. This he does, but Fikenhild has carried off Rymenhild. Disguised as minstrels, Horn and his friends surprise him in his new castle, and all ends happily.

"Horn" is a fair example, happily short, of the novels of the period, which, in essence, are like all good novels that end well. Assonance (rhyme of vowels but not of consonants) occurs in the verse:—

> He lokede on his rynge,
> And thogte on Rymenhilde.

It is not necessary to analyze the plots of all the romances: two or three enable us to estimate the kind of fiction that was popular with ladies in bower.

Beues of Hamtoun.

"Sir Beues of Hamtoun" is another English romance, concerning the son of the Earl of Southampton and his wife, a princess of Scotland. The Earl is old, and his bride proposes to the Kaiser to kill the Earl and wed herself. The Emperor promptly invades England and cuts off the head of the good Earl. The Scottish traitress orders the murder of her son, Beues, but is deceived by her agent, and Beues knocks down the Kaiser.

The boy is sold and sent to Armenia, where he refuses to worship Apolyn (Apollo). The pagan king has a fair daughter, Josian, who becomes the mistress of Beues, while he has a conquered giant, Ascopart, for page. After a thousand adventures, Beues and Josian, being true lovers, make a good end, and die together. The English writer, prolix as he is, has shortened his French original, in places, made additions in others, and generally writes with freedom.

Guy of Warwick.

The same happy end, simultaneous death, rewards the hero and heroine of "Guy of Warwick". The hero's unexplained forgetfulness of his lady, Felice, is borrowed from the ancient popular tale in Scots, "The Black Bull of Noroway," where the forgetfulness is explained. Many stock incidents of the romances come from popular tales ("Märchen") of unknown antiquity. Felice is a very learned and rather hard-hearted maiden, and Guy, when in love, faints frequently. The romance contains every kind of adventure with dragons, lions, and human foes, and as much religion as devout damsels could desire, or even more, for Guy, in a devout mood, deserts the learned Felice for a life of chastity and military adventure. As usual he returns in the guise of a palmer.

Arthur and Merlin.

The "Arthour and Merlin," a rhymed romance of the old story, from the Auchinleck manuscript, about 1320, has not the gleams of true poetry that shine in Layamon's "Brut," and is verbose and incomplete—the tragedy of Arthur is absent. We find, however, the story of how Arthur won the sword Excalibur, thereby proving himself a true prince, for no other man could pluck it from the stone into which it was driven. King Lot (Llew, a historical personage apparently), could not draw forth Excalibur. Sir Kay, one of Arthur's companions in the oldest Welsh tales, appears, with Sir Gawain, whose character, as in the Welsh romances, is far above that which he displays in the "Idylls of the King"; Merlin continually exercises the art of glamour, appearing in various forms, and Arthur loves Guinevere, but the poet wearied of his toil long before the last battle in the west.

He professes that, as many gentlemen know not French, and as

> Right is that Inglische understand
> That was born in Inglond.

he sings in English of the glory of England, Arthur. The final English-form of the great Arthurian tale may best be considered when we arrive at the date of Sir Thomas Malory and Caxton. In Malory's "Morte Arthur" the long dull wars of the king against the Anglo-Saxon invaders are much compressed, while the epic, tragic, and mystic elements, the great character of Lancelot, the mournful victory of the winning of the Grail, and the end of all, are handled with genius.

The Tale of Troy.

The story of Troy had a hold on the mediaeval mind only less strong than the story of Arthur. In early English, at the end of the fourteenth century, we find the romance in *the revived Anglo-Saxon alliterative form*; it is the "Geste Hystoriale" concerning the Destruction of Troy, and the story is told once more in the rhyming couplets of the "Troy Book". The manuscript of the "Troy Book" is marked "Liber Guilielmi Laud, Archiepiscopi Cantuar et Cancellarii Universitatis Oxon 1633". (The book of William Laud, Archbishop of Canterbury and Chancellor of the University of Oxford.)

The author of the alliterative romance begins by saying that learned men wrote the history in Latin, but that poets have corrupted it by fables and partisanship. Homer, he says, was notoriously partial to the Greeks; moreover, he introduced incredible gods fighting like men. Ovid, on the other hand, was "honest"; Virgil was true to the rightful cause, that of Troy; but the best authority is Gydo (Guido de Colonna).

Such was the nature of historical criticism as understood by the mediaeval romancer. For love of lost causes, and, as descendants of the Trojans through the Brut of mediaeval myth, the romancers detested the Achæans, the conquering Greeks.

The Story of Troy from Homer to Shakespeare.

The history of the development of the "Tale of Troy," as Chaucer and even as Shakespeare knew it, is very curious. Homer himself, perhaps living about 1100-1000 B.C., tells, in the Iliad and Odyssey, parts of the "Tale" as it was known to his own people, the conquering Achæans, who were to the older dwellers in Greece what the Normans were to the English. They finally melted into the older population, who, about 800-700 B.C., wrote poems of their own about the "Tale of Troy," altered the facts, and blackened the characters of Homer's greatest heroes. Later, again, the great Athenian tragedians, of the fifth century B.C., wrote dramas more on the lines of the conquered population of Greece than on those of Homer, and they still more deeply degraded some of the heroes of Homer. The Romans, looking on themselves as descended from the Trojans, persevered in the same course, and a Greek, after the Christian era, wrote a prose version of the "Tale of Troy," pretending that it was a manuscript by Dictys of Crete,

who was a spectator of the Trojan war. A similar prose book was attributed —to another spectator, Dares of Phrygia. These books tell the story of Troilus and Cressida, of Palamedes, and many other tales unknown to Homer. But, in Western Europe, Homer was unread, and unknown in England till Chapman translated him: and all the romancers about Troy—Lydgate, Chaucer, Caxton, and the rest, down to Shakespeare,—depend on the false tales whose growth we have described.

Probably the first romancer who expanded the bald prose narratives of Dares and Dictys, was Benoît de Sainte-Maure (1160) in a long French rhyming poem. He unites the fates of Briseida (Briseis, daughter of Calchas, the Greek priest who is made a Trojan), and Troilus, son of King Priam. Briseida, through a confusion with Homer's "Chryseis," daughter of Chryses, the Phrygian priest of Apollo, later becomes the "Cressid" of Chaucer and Shakespeare. Meanwhile "Gydo" or Guido de Colonna, did the French of Benoît into Latin prose (1287) and Guido is the source of the English authors of the alliterative and the rhyming romances of Troy. The pedigree of the story is

Pseudo-Dares—Pseudo-Dictys
|
Benoît de Sainte-Maure
|
Guido de Colonna
|
The English Romances.

Through Caxton's printed "Book of Troy," the story continued popular, a cheap edition appeared in the eighteenth century.

Each of Homer's poems, the Iliad and the Odyssey, deals but with the adventures of a fortnight, or six weeks, but the mediaeval readers wanted, and from the romancers received, the whole history of the ten years' siege, and more, with Christian legends thrown in, with minute descriptions of all the characters—Cassandra "gleyit a little," had a slight cast of the eye like Mary Stuart. The heroes fight as mounted knights, not in chariots; they use cross-bows as well as long-bows; and Hector kills men by the thousand, with more than Irish exaggeration. As Hector *must* be killed, Achilles suddenly charges him in front, while his shield is slung behind. Had a

Trojan poet left an epic on the war he would not have told the story otherwise. The poet of the Laud "Troy Book" bids God curse Æneas as a traitor, forgetting, apparently, that the British are descendants of Æneas.

King Alisaundre.

The history of Alexander with all manner of romantic and fabulous additions, under the name "King Alisaundre," is in rhyming couplets of eight syllables to each line; the couplets are often irregular, as in Coleridge's "Christabel," and the story, like most of the English romances of this period, is borrowed through the French, from a late fabulous Greek work.

This kind of versified romance endured till Chaucer thought it tiresome, and parodied it, in "Sir Thopas". These *rhyming* English romances, in various forms of verse, were made for ladies and gentlemen who, already, were not able to read the more artistic and elaborate French romances for themselves; but were very well able to take pleasure in stories of true love and miraculous adventures. The romances set a fashion which was continued in the endless heroic novels in prose, French, and English, down to the end of the seventeenth century. The Middle Ages had no taste for novels of ordinary life, about people of their own time. These, in England, do not begin to appear till the reign of Queen Elizabeth, and then nearly a century and a half passed before they became really popular.

If much has been said about these old romances it is because they have so powerfully impressed themselves on the fancy of all later English poets, from Shakespeare and Milton, who dreamed of an epic on Arthur, and delighted in the sonorous names of Arthur's knights, to Tennyson and William Morris.

The romances, composed of fancies from so many sources and times, Greek, Celtic, Roman, and French, and English, are like that Corinthian bronze composed of gold and silver, copper and lead, all molten together at the burning of Corinth. In this rich metal poets of later times have moulded figures in their own fashion.

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[1] Scott's edition of 1819 is the fourth, while other romances in verse are to be read in the volumes of learned societies. No doubt people bought the book for

the interesting essays and notes of Sir Walter; few of them would look at the old romance itself.

CHAPTER VIII.

ALLITERATIVE ROMANCES AND POEMS.

Though English poets, in the fourteenth century, had a full command of rhyme, and of many forms, simple or complicated, of rhyming verse, there began a return to the old Anglo-Saxon alliterative verse, sometimes combined with rhyme. Chaucer, later, makes his parson say,

> I am a Southren man,
> I can nat geste—*rum, ram*, *ruf*—by lettre;
> Ne, God wot, rym holde I but litel bettre.

The parson's Opinion is his own, not that of Chaucer, who certainly "liked rhyme," whether he liked alliterative rhythm or not.

Gawain and the Green Knight.

A famous and really amusing alliterative romance, with a rhymed close to each passage, is "Gawain and the Green Knight". This tale is found in a manuscript which also contains two devout poems, "Patience," and "Cleanness," with an elegy of remarkable merit, "The Pearl". All four poems are attributed by several critics to the same author, and some of the Scottish learned believe that author to have been a very prolific and accomplished Scot. A few words may be said on this question later, meanwhile "Gawain and the Green Knight" has the merit of being readable. Though Gawain is best known in modern times through Tennyson's "Idylls of the King," in the romance he was by no means the "false, fleeting, perjured" knight of the great Laureate. In the Welsh Triads and other early Welsh versions, he is one of the three "golden-mouthed heroes," one of the three most courteous. He was the eldest son of King Llew, Loth or Lot, a contemporary of Arthur, from whom he received Lothian. In Geoffrey of Monmouth, Gawain appears as Walwainus. The figure of Lancelot comes later, as we saw, into romance, and Lancelot and Gawain then become foes.

When Tristram (or Tristan) was introduced into the circle of Arthur, later, the authors of the Tristan (under Henry II and Henry III) had, for some reason, a bitter spite against King Lot and all his family; and calumniated Gawain on every occasion. This vein of detraction pervades Malory's "Morte Arthur," where Tennyson, looking for a false fleeting knight, found the Gawain of the "Idylls".

In "Gawain and the Green Knight," Arthur's friend displays great courage, courtesy, tact, and chastity under severe temptations, while, if he falls for a moment short of heroic virtue, he redeems his character by frank confession. The story is too good to be spoiled by a brief summary: grotesque as is the figure of the gigantic Green Knight, who suffers no inconvenience from the loss of his head, the trials of Gawain are most ingeniously invented, and he overcomes them like the Flower of Chivalry. He is rewarded by the magical "green lace" which may, it has been suggested, symbolize the Order of the Garter (about 1345), though the ribbon of the Garter is now dark blue.

Pearl.

In the manuscript volume containing "Gawain and the Green Knight," is the singular poem, "Pearl," which has been described as the "In Memoriam" of the fourteenth century. It is, indeed, an elegy by one who has lost a "Pearl," probably a Margaret, who dies before she is two years old. The poet bewails his loss, and speaks, in a vision, with his Pearl, concerning religion and the future life. The poem (edited, paraphrased, and annotated by Mr. Gollancz) was praised by Tennyson as "True pearl of our poetic prime".

"Pearl" is written in stanzas of twelve lines, with some resemblance to the form of the Italian sonnet (in fourteen lines), with which the author may have been familiar. The system of rhyming may be roughly illustrated thus,

> Pearl that for princes' pleasure may
> Be cleanly closed in gold so clear,
> Out of the Orient dare I say,
> Never I proved her precious peer;
> So round, so rich, and in such array,
> So small, so smooth the sides of her were,
> Whenever I judged of jewels gay

Shapeliest still was the sight of her.
Alas, in an arbour I lost her here,
Through grass to ground she passed, I wot,
I dwine, forsaken of sweet love's cheer,
Of my privy Pearl without a spot.

The same rhymes persevere through the first eight lines, as in a sonnet, the rhyme of the second, fourth, sixth, and eighth lines continues in the ninth and eleventh; a new rhyme appears in the tenth and twelfth lines: and throughout there is much alliteration. In stanzas 1 to 5, "pearl withouten spot" comes always as a "refrain" at the close, and other refrains end each set of five or six stanzas, as in the old French *ballade.* The form is thus difficult and highly artificial, the making of the poem was, as Tennyson says, "the dull mechanic exercise" to deaden the pain of the singer.

The poet, fallen on the grassy grave of the lost child, lies entranced, but his spirit floats forth to a strange land of cliffs and woods, where the leaves shine as burnished silver, and birds of strange hues float and sing. He comes to a river crystal-clear, whose pearls glow like sapphire and emerald, but that river has no ford, and may not be crossed by living man. On the farther shore he sees a maiden clad in white and in pearls, fresh as a fleur-de-lis; she is the Blessed Damosel, the Lady Pearl. Her locks are golden, and her crown is of pearls and gold. She tells the dreamer that she is not lost: his Pearl is in a coffer; safely set in the garden of Paradise. She comforts him with the hope and comfort of Christ. Henceforward her discourse is religious: he strives to cross that River, and to reach the shining city of the Apocalypse; but he wakes on the grave of his child; and consoles himself with the promise of the Communion of the Saints. The machinery of the Dream, and the River, are borrowed (as all poets then borrowed), from the famous French "Roman de la Rose" (1240) with its allegorical characters. This fashion of poetry, always beginning with a dream, in which the dreamer has visionary adventures with allegorical personages, became a kind of literary epidemic, terribly tedious and conventional, as time went on.

The poet has given to his lay the charm of sorrow not without hope, and a dainty grace of artifice that is not insincere; "of his tears are pearls made".

As to the author of "Pearl," there is much difference of opinion. Nothing in the two edifying poems in the same manuscript, "Cleanness" and "Patience," makes it improbable that he wrote them. "Gawain and the Green Knight" is a very different composition, yet of lofty character; the author of "Pearl" may have written it, just as the author of "The Lotus Eaters" wrote "The Northern Farmer," and "The Charge of the Light Brigade".

HUCHOWN.

With a number of other poems, "Pearl" has been claimed for a Scot, Huchown, Sir Hugh of Eglintoun, an Ayrshire laird, known as a fighting man, a diplomatist, and a judge, in the reign of David II of Scotland; he "flourished" between 1342 and 1377. Or perhaps Huchown was a priest, nobody knows.

The process of argument is this; some forty-three years after Sir Hugh died, in 1420, a Scottish writer of history in rhyme, Wyntoun, produced his "Orygynale Cronykil" (his spelling is original enough). He says that "Huchown of the Awle Ryale," wrote learnedly, on the Brut and Arthur themes, in his "Geste Hystorialle," that is a rhymed romance named "Morte Arthur". Wyntoun also says that Huchown made the "Gret Gest off Arthure" (apparently the "Morte Arthur"), the "Awntyre off Gawaine" (perhaps "Gawain and the Green Knight," or perhaps the "Awntyrs of Arthur"), and the "Pystyll of Swete Susane" (a poem still extant, on Susannah and the Elders, the story in the Apocrypha).

Some claim for Huchown not only these pieces, but "Pearl," "Cleanness," and "Patience," and long poems on Alexander the Great, and the Tale of Troy, and much more. Huchown, on this theory, must have been a professional poet, yet he has been identified, we saw, with Sir Hugh of Eglintoun, a soldier, diplomatist, and man of affairs.

It is certainly improbable that a man so busy as Sir Hugh of Eglintoun wrote such a huge mass of poetry unless he were as energetic as Sir Walter Scott.

The great alliterative "Morte Arthur" wanders from the true way, pointed out in the ancient Welsh verses on "The Graves of Heroes," and by Layamon. "The Grave of Arthur" is no mystery to honest Huchown; of the

King it cannot be said "in Avalon he groweth old," he does not dwell with "the fairest of all Elves": he is buried at Glastonbury, a fable invented late, in the honour of that beautiful and desolate home of old religion.

Huchown shows that he was intimately familiar with minutiæ of English law, which Sir Hugh of Eglintoun was more likely to know than an obscure parish priest. Many other curious arguments in favour of Sir Hugh of Eglintoun as author of the "Morte Arthur" have been set forth (by the learned ingenuity of Mr. George Neilson, who also claims for him "Pearl"), but we still marvel how a busy man like Sir Hugh, living in a rough age, found time for all his labours.

The "Pistyl of Susan" adds little, save in one passage, to the laurels of Huchown. It is a tale of Susannah and the Elders, told in stanzas, both alliterative and rhyming, of eight lines, followed by one short line of two syllables, then come three, rhyming lines of three feet, and a fourth rhyming to the first in this set: thus,

> And told
> How their wickedness comes
> Of the wrongous dooms
> That they have given to gomes (men)
> These Judges of old.

The garden of Susan is described in a manner both copious, florid, and inconsistent with botanical science, but there is a touching scene between the falsely-accused Susan and her husband.

Huchown is also credited with the "Awntyrs (Adventures) of Arthur"; which contains a curious appearance of the ghost of Guinevere's mother to Sir Gawain and "Dame Gayenour," Guinevere. This is certainly "the gryseleste gaste,"—the grisliest of ghosts, but she has all of Huchown's delight in theology and edification, prophecy, heraldry, and hunting. The metre is not unlike but is not identical with that of "Susan".

By Scottish critics the "Morte Arthur" and "Susan," at least, are claimed for the Ayrshire bard, Sir Hugh, and, if they are right, Scotland was civilized enough, and fortunate enough, to have a considerable poet before Barbour, author of "The Brus" (1376), a rhymed history of King Robert Bruce, the

great hero of his country. But the literature of Scotland is more conveniently to be treated in a separate chapter.

CHAPTER IX.

CHAUCER.

Hitherto we have known scarcely anything about the lives, and usually have not even known the names, of the writers in English verse and prose. About

> The Morning Star of Song who made
> His music heard below,

about Geoffrey Chaucer, we know more than we do of Shakespeare.

Chaucer is the earliest English poet who is still read for human pleasure, as well as by specialists in the studies of literature, language, and prosody. A few of his lines are part of the common stock of familiar quotations. Coming between two periods of literary twilight—the second saddened rather than cheered by notes more like those of the owl than of the lark and nightingale,—Chaucer is himself the sun of England during the age of the glory and decline of the Plantagenets. His "Canterbury Tales" show us the world in which he lived, or at least part of that world; his pilgrims are personages in that glorious pageant which Froissart painted—kings, ladies, nobles and knights in steel, or in velvet and cloth of gold; tournaments glitter in all the colours and devices of the heralds—while the horizon is dim with the smoke of burning towns and villages.

It is not really possible to say what conditions produce great poets: they may arise in times of peace or war; in times quiet or revolutionary; at prosperous Courts or in the clay-built cottages of peasants. At least Chaucer lived a long time in an age eagerly astir, lived through the light cast by the great victories of Edward III,—Crécy and Poitiers,—the years when London knew two captive Kings, John of France and David of Scotland; the years when Edward turned away from the all-but conquered Scotland to fight the France which he could not conquer. Chaucer knew the Court triumphant, and the Court overshadowed by the discredited old age of

Edward III, the fatal malady of the Black Prince, the troubles of the minority of Richard II, and the peasant rising of Wat Tyler. He had his part in the patronage of that art-loving King, by character and fate more resembling a Stuart than a Plantagenet; and he was in friendly relations with the rising House of Lancaster. He marked the dawn of the religious and social revolution in the doctrines of Wyclif and of the Lollards, the hatred of the rich and noble, the scorn of priests and monks and friars. He felt the poetic influences of France and Italy, and, if not in Italy, certainly in France, had poetic friends. He bore arms in France: in Italy and France he fulfilled diplomatic duties; at home he held a courtly place; he sat in Parliament; he was a complete man of the world and of affairs, as well as a man of learning and of letters. He was always of open, kind, and cheerful humour; still, when nicknamed "Old Grizzle" by his friends, dipping a white beard contentedly in the Gascon wine; still "not without the lyre," not a deserter of the Muse. His portrait, as Old Grizzle, white-bearded and white-haired, a rosary in his hand, shows a face refined, kindly, and humane.

The father of the poet, John Chaucer, was a citizen of London, a prosperous vintner, or wine-merchant. The date of the poet's birth is unknown, that he died an old man in 1400 is certain. His birth year was for long given as 1328, when his father was scarcely 16, and was unmarried. The date 1328 for the poet's birth must be wrong, and the year 1340 is uncertain. In a trial of 1386, to decide whether the Scropes or Grosvenors had the better right to blazon the famous "Bend Or," Chaucer was described as "of the age of forty years and more, having borne arms for twenty-seven years". "And more" is vague, we cannot be certain that it means "just over forty years of age," though that (as far as I have observed) is the usual meaning in old records of ages of witnesses. In some cases, on the other hand, they are given most incorrectly. Chaucer's own remarks about his "eld" in late poems, tell us little; at 40 Thackeray wrote of himself as if he "lay in Methusalem's cradle".

As, in 1386, Chaucer had borne arms for twenty-seven years, that takes us back to 1359, when he went, under the standard of Lionel, Duke of Clarence, on a far from triumphant expedition of Edward III against France. He is unlikely, at that date (1359) to have been under 15 years of age; he may have been born as late as 1343, or anywhere between 1340 and 1343. The household accounts of the wife of the Duke of Clarence prove that

Chaucer was a member of her household, and, in 1357, she, and Chaucer, were staying with John of Gaunt, at Hatfield, in Yorkshire.

In the campaign of 1359, when Chaucer bore arms, Edward III failed to take Rheims and Paris: he wasted the country vainly, and made peace, at Bretigny, in 1360. Somewhere and somehow Chaucer was taken prisoner by the French, whether in a skirmish, or while foraging, or when visiting his lady, or absorbed in a book, or meditating the Muse, and contending with the difficulties of rhyme. His captors thought that there was money in his case, or they would have knocked him on the head. There *was* money. Edward III paid, sixteen pounds, whether as the whole or as part of his ransom (1 March, 1360). The sum (equivalent to our £200) was not then insignificant for a youth not of noble birth, though, in 1368, an Esquire.

Account books show Chaucer (1367) as a valet of the Royal chamber, like Molière (and Shakespeare!) in France during the time of war in 1369; salaried by the King; a married man; pensioned by John of Gaunt in 1374, and receiving a daily pitcher of wine, commuted for money in 1378. In 1372-1373, he went on a mission to Genoa and Florence. Whether he then met the famous poet Petrarch or not, is uncertain: in his "Clerk's Tale," the Clerk says that *he* met Petrarch; it does not follow that Chaucer was so fortunate. In 1374 he got a good place in the Custom House, in the wool department, and, 1375-1376, had valuable gifts from the King. In 1377 he went on a mission to Flanders, and on another to France. Froissart the delightful chronicler mentions him in this connexion. In the following year he went on a mission to Visconti in Milan, and to the celebrated English commander of mercenaries, Sir John Hawkwood.

His experiences made Chaucer equally fit to sing of "the Court, the camp, the grove": his various posts in the Civil Service brought him acquainted with merchant-men, architects, all sorts and conditions of men. In 1386 he sat in Parliament for a division of Kent. Parliament made an attack on the Court, and Chaucer lost his offices, which he had for some time performed by deputy. Later he received valuable appointments, but by 1398 he needed and obtained royal protection from his creditors; probably he was never a frugal man, he was not in the best circumstances towards the end of his life, but neither Richard II or Henry IV let Old Grizzle starve. Henry was no sooner on the throne (30 September, 1399) than (3 October) he gave the poet a pension of forty marks and ratified a pension given by the ill-fated

Richard five years previously. If Chaucer's wife, Philippa, was the sister of Catherine, mistress and (1396) wife of John of Gaunt, father of Henry IV, the poet had a friend in the Lancastrian party. But the fact is uncertain, unimportant, and a great cause of the spilling of ink. Chaucer died on 25 October, 1400.

We only know, as regards Chaucer's children, that he had a little boy, Lewis, whom, in his prose work on the astrolabe, he addresses in a style that makes us love him. He gives him, at his earnest prayer, an astrolabe and writes for him, in English, a little treatise on its use, "for Latin can'st thou but small, my little son". The poet, the friend of that less charming minstrel, "moral Gower," left a fragrant memory.

When we open Chaucer's works at the Prologue to the "Canterbury Tales," usually placed in the forefront, and when we remember the wilderness of long romances through which we have wandered, the happy change of scene, the return to actual human life, is surprising.

Chaucer is by no means free from the blemishes of "middle English" literature. If he is not to be called prolix in his narratives, "when his eye is on the object"—the main object,—he is none the less profuse in digressions. His mastery of verse was not born fully armed; he had to acquire it by effort, by experiment; he had to feel his way. An unusually large number of his poems are unfinished: some he seems to have abandoned, like the "Legend of Good Women," because he felt that he was on the wrong path; that his task was no longer pleasant to himself, and therefore certainly could not give pleasure to his readers. He was, at first, eager to impart information, as the early *scops* conceived it their duty to do. Gathering his materials from all sources, Latin, French, and Italian, he, in "The Book of the Duchess" (about 1369), makes the bereaved husband not only allude to many classical tales of sorrow, but actually give his authorities for each case; "And so seyth Dares Frights," or "*Aurora* telleth so". Even the old habit of preaching at great length, the habit of edifying, clung to Chaucer. He was a man of the world, the last man to risk martyrdom for any advanced theological ideas which he might be inclined to entertain; and not the first to suppose that any set of opinions contained the absolute truth. In his day a fierce attack was made against the wealth of the Church and the luxury into which many members of the Regulars, of the various monkish Orders, had fallen. The curse of a parson was no longer so

much feared as it had been. The exhibition of saintly relics for money, the arrival of pardons "hot from Rome," could safely be derided. The friars had been the butts of the French authors of *fabliaux*, tales of coarse popular humour, for two centuries.

Such censures were not heterodox, they did not assail matters of faith, and the satire of Chaucer is always as good-humoured as it is humorous. To him the Pardoner and Summonour of the "Canterbury Tales," and the rest of the riff-raff of the Church are amusing knaves: he has Shakespeare's smiling tolerance for such a rogue as Parolles. He is earnestly sympathetic in his famous portrait of the good and gentle parish priest, a man of "true religion and undefiled," a man of "the Order of St. James," like the ladies in the "Ancren Riwle".

It were much more pleasant, perhaps more profitable, to linger over and lovingly enumerate the charms of Chaucer at his best, than to trace him through his early experiments to such masterpieces as the blending of old Greek romance and manners with the manners and romance of chivalry in "The Knight's Tale," and in "Troilus and Criseyde". But it is customary to trace the "making" of Chaucer, not only through his experiences of Court, and camp, and grove, and city, but through his literary work. It is certain that in youth he translated that great popular French poem, the "Roman de la Rose," for he says so in his prologue to his "Legend of Good Women". The French poem was begun by Guillaume de Lorris about a century before the birth of Chaucer, as an allegory on the refinements of the doctrine of Love, as taught in the Courts of Love. Guillaume says that he has the warrant of Macrobius, in his "Dream of Scipio," for supposing that dreams are not wholly to be neglected: so he dreams, of course in May, of how the birds sang, and how he walked beside that very stream which the author of "Pearl" borrowed, and converted into the River that sunders the living and the dead. He encounters allegorical works of art, representative of all things evil, outside the walls of a beautiful garden, within which are Love and all things good. The ideas have a sweet vernal freshness, on their first presentation, but by repetition become as artificial as those of the "Carte du Tendre," the map of Love's land which amused the "Précieuses," the affected literary ladies, in the youth of Molière (1650-1660). The dreamer desires a lovely Rose, watched by a squire "Bel Accueil" (Fair Welcome) and the adventures, and fables from Ovid, are of a kind so taking to

mediaeval readers that henceforth every poet had his May dream, birds, river, Love, Venus, allegorical personages, and the rest of the "machinery". De Lorris left the lover in despair, but Jean de Meung continued the poem at enormous length, and in a spirit far from chivalrous: he introduced every kind of new heresy against the feudal ideals, and so began a controversy in which Gerson, who lived to befriend the cause of Jeanne d'Arc (1429) took up his pen in defence of Christianity and chastity.

This "Roman de la Rose," or much of it, Chaucer assuredly did translate, but on the question as to whether the "Romaunt of the Rose," printed in his works, is wholly, or only in part, or is not at all from his hand, scholars dispute endlessly. It is not possible, here, to follow the mazes of the dispute, which turns on the quality of the work, the closeness or laxity of the translation in various parts, the presence or absence of traces of the northern dialect (Chaucer wrote Midland English), the correctness or incorrectness of the rhymes, and other details. The opinion that the first 1700 lines or so are Chaucer's, that his manuscript was defective, that the later portions, some 6000 lines, were filled up from manuscripts by other hands, is not certain, but is not improbable. Many other views are defended.

Early Poems.

Though we do not often know the dates of Chaucer's poems, the development of his genius can be traced with much probability. Roughly speaking, in his first period he is mainly inspired by French influences; in his second are added Italian influences; he was always reading such Latin authors as he could procure; he was suppling his style by experiments in French measures demanding much search for rhymes; and finally, in the "Canterbury Tales," his best work is purely English in character, though he still introduces translations from other languages when it suits his purpose.

The Dethe of the Duchesse.

is of 1369-1370, for it deplores the decease of Blanche, wife of John of Gaunt (Lancaster), and the lady departed this life in 1369. Here Chaucer works in accordance with the usual formula of the "Roman de la Rose". He begins with a dream, but his sleep is a respite in a period of eight years of

insomnia, described so pitifully that the passage seems autobiographical. He cannot tell, he says why he is unable to sleep,

> I holdë hit be a siknesse
> That I have suffred this eight yere.

Perhaps his nerves were shattered by the circumstances of his capture and durance in 1360, for prisoners of war were treated with great cruelty, placed in holes under heavy stones, or locked up in wooden cages.

Unable to sleep, Chaucer has Ovid's story of Ceyx and Alcyone read to him. He says elsewhere that in youth he made a poem on this tale; now he probably utilized his old material in the poem on the Duchess. In the Ceyx tale, Alcyone prays to Juno for the grace of sleep and dream, and Chaucer, humorous always, vows that he will even risk the heresy of presenting gifts to heathen gods, Morpheus and Juno, if they will give him slumber. His prayer is heard, and this prologue is by far the best part of "The Dethe of Blanche the Duchesse". It is personal, it is touching, and the story is charmingly told.

In his sleep comes the usual dream of the chamber decorated with works of mythological art (a stock feature, as in the "Roman de la Rose"), there is a hunting scene, with French terms of venery, and then Chaucer meets a mourner, John of Gaunt, whose long plaint and narration of similar sorrows in fable, with due reference to authorities, is prolix and pedantic, to a modern taste.

This piece is in rhymed octosyllabic couplets.

Other Early Poems.

"The Compleynte unto Pite" (Pity) is the earliest of Chaucer's poems in "Rhyme Royal" (so called, some think, because James I of Scotland used it much later in "The King's Quhair," a far-fetched guess). The poet seeks Pity, and finds her dead; he adds the petition which he meant to have presented to her, that of a despairing lover. The ideas are hackneyed, and the piece is a mere exercise. The metre, later much used by Chaucer in narrative runs thus:—

This is to seyne, I wol be youres ever;
Though ye me slee by Crueltee, your fo,
Algate my spirit shal never dissever
Fro your servyse, for any peyne or we.
Sith ye be deed,—alias! that hit is so!—
Thus for your deth I may wel wepe and pleyne
With herte sore and fill of besy peyne.

The "A.B.C." is a hymn of prayer to Our Lady, each stanza beginning with each successive letter of the alphabet. It is an exercise in translation from a French original; the stanzas are shorter than in the French.

"The Compleynte of Mars" tells of the wooing of a mediaeval Mars and Venus, interrupted by Apollo "with torche in honde"; the original source of the story is the song of the Phæacian minstrel in the "Odyssey," but that is humorous, while Chaucer is sympathetic; Mars asks poets not to make game of his passion,

take hit noght a-game.

The Phæacian singer did "take it a-game".

"A Compleynte to his Lady" is of the conventional kind, and an exercise in metres.

"Anelida and Arcite" is also scholar's work, but the scholar has now learned Italian, during his Italian mission of 1372; has read and in places translates the "Teseide" of Boccaccio, which he often utilized. He had also Statius, a late Latin poet, and other models, or he dealt in his own inventions. As in the "Knight's Tale," Theseus returns from conquered Scythia, with his bride, Hippolyta, Queen of the Amazons, and her sister, Emily, the heroine of the "Knight's Tale". The unpopular tyrant, Creon, is ruling in Thebes, where Anelida loves Arcite, who is a true lover, in the "Knight's Tale," but here "double in love," a follower of Lamech, in Genesis, the first man who loved two ladies at once. His second love holds him tightly "up by the bridle," so Anelida despairs, expressing her woe in a kind of ode, strophe and anti-strophe, in stanzas of eight, and next of nine lines, with complicated rhymes, finally with rhymes in the middle as well as at the end of each line. The poem, more interesting than the previous experiments, and not without passion, is unfinished: ends abruptly.

"The Parlement of Fowls" appears to be a kind of Laureate's Ode on the marriage (January, 1382) of Richard II with Anne of Bohemia, who previously had two other wooers, a Prince of Bavaria, and the Margrave of Meissen. When the Birds hold their Parliament, the Formel Eagle represents Anne, Richard is the Royal Tercel Eagle, the two other tercels are the German wooers. Chaucer was always a most literary poet, and was still an adaptive poet. As he must begin with a dream, he versifies the contents of Cicero's "Dream of Scipio": he takes a little from Dante, a little from Claudian, the whole Pageant of Birds he borrows from Alain Delille's "Plaint of Nature," greatly improving on it, while, in the debate of the birds on St. Valentine's Day, as to which tercel shall win the formel tercel, he gives way to his own sense of humour. The verses are *vers de société*, designed not for our taste, but for that of the society of his time. Chaucer himself perceived the tediousness of the love-pleading of the tercels: like the Host in the "Canterbury Tales," when bored by Sir Thopas and the Monk's tragedies, the jury of birds cry to be released,

> The noise of foules for to ben delivered
> So loude rong, "have doon and let us wende!"

In giving their verdicts the Goose is remote from sentiment, saying to the unsuccessful wooer,

> But *she* wol love him, lat him love another!

The turtle-dove blushes, and gives her word for immortal hopeless love. The poem, in the seven line stanza, ends with a rondel, confessedly translated from the French, and the poet wakens from his dream and returns to his dear books, on the look-out for new material. He has shown his mastery of style, and his knowledge, but he has not yet "come to his kingdom".

Troilus and Criseyde.

Not to linger over other minor pieces, we may say that, in "Troilus and Criseyde," Chaucer does come to his kingdom, and proves himself a Master, granting the taste and conditions of his age, while, in many beautiful passages, he attains to what is good for universal taste, to what is universally human.

The subject is an episode in the mediaeval legend of the Siege of Troy, as it was embellished on the lines of the pseudo-Dares and the pseudo-Dictys, by Benoît de Sainte-Maure, then by Guido de Colonna, and then by Boccaccio in the "Filostrato". The last gives Chaucer his starting-point; out of 8239 lines, 2583 are reckoned to be translated from Boccaccio, while there are borrowings from Petrarch, and much moralizing is rendered out of the prose of Boëthius, whom King Alfred translated into Anglo-Saxon, and Chaucer into the prose of his own time. Chaucer uses his materials as he pleases, greatly expanding, transposing, and omitting. Almost all his own is the character of Pandarus, who, in Homer, is merely notable for having broken a solemn truce by wounding Menelaus with an arrow. Boccaccio made him a young cousin of Criseyde, who, in the mediaeval legend, stays shamefaced in Troy, while her father, Calchas, deserts to the Greeks. Troilus, scarcely mentioned by Homer, is the brother, and in battle almost the equal of Hector. Troilus, though he had scoffed at love, is smitten by the eyes of Criseyde, and is on the point of dying without avowing his passion, when Pandarus, whom Chaucer makes the uncle of Criseyde, acts vigorously as go-between, and saves the life of Troilus by bringing the pair together. Pandarus is a good-natured but the reverse of a scrupulously delicate friend and uncle. Nevertheless, a conscience he has, in his way, and lectures Troilus at length on the infamy of men who boast of their victories in love, and of men who play his own part from any lower motive than kindness and pity.

> For thee am I becomen,
> Betwixen game and ernest, swich a mene
> As maken wommen unto men to comen:
> Al sey I nought, thou wost wel what I mene.

Pandarus has a conscience, to this extent, and it is to be presumed that he did not go beyond the mediaeval idea of what a gentleman might do to help a friend in love. Yet "he will be mocking," and his conduct is as remote from our ideas of honour, as from those of the heroic Greeks and Trojans themselves. Shakespeare has debased the Pandarus of Chaucer in his treatment of the same character in "Troilus and Cressida".

Criseyde herself, granting the ideas of Chaucer's time about love, is an honourable and most winning lady, the soul of honour (she wears widow's

weeds for her father's shame), but she has not the faintest idea of marrying her lover.

In the beautiful, the magical story of "The Vigils of the Dead," in the mediaeval "Miracles of Our Lady," we meet a most devout and pious damsel, whose views are precisely those of Criseyde. No modern novelist could treat the struggle of Criseyde with her passion more psychologically and more delicately, and none so charmingly as Chaucer has done.

We all see Criseyde, so young, gay, and winning, with the eyes of Troilus; and Troilus, brave, gentle, courteous, and modest, with the eyes of Criseyde. She, learning his love from Pandarus, and deeply pitying him, sees him ride past from the battle, his helmet hewn, his shield shattered with sword strokes, the people welcoming him, and her love outruns her pity. It must be confessed that the manœuvres of Pandarus are told at very great length. The poet has all our sympathy when he cries:—

But flee we now prolixitee best is,
For love of God; and lat us faste go
Right to th' effect.

When he does come to the point it is in a scene where delicacy tempers passion.

Considered alle thinges as they stode,
No wonder is, sin she dide al for gode,

trapped by Pandarus, and yielding to love and pity. Assuredly Criseyde seemed so true a lover that, like Queen Guinevere, she should have "made a good end". But as she must pass to her father in the Greek camp, being exchanged for Antenor, the end came which all the world knows, and which she foreknew.

Allas, of me, unto the worldes ende,
Shal neither been y-writen nor y-songe
No good word, for thise bokes wol me shende.
O, rolled shal I been on many a tonge!

Destiny and Diomede prevailed, but Chaucer speaks of false Criseyde as tenderly and chivalrously as Homer speaks of Helen.

Ne me ne list this sely womman chyde
Ferther than the story wol devyse.
Hir name, alias! is publisshed so wyde,
That, for hir gilt it oughte y-now suffyse.

Had Chaucer left to us nothing but "Troilus and Criseyde," he would have given assurance of a poet so much greater than any English predecessor that the difference is one of kind, not of degree. Chaucer is our first poet of great and various genius.

Space being limited, we can only say that "The House of Fame" (1383) is much influenced by Dante, while, even in modelling himself on Dante, Chaucer gives play to his natural jollity and humour. Dante was never jolly. The poem in rhyming couplets of eight syllables shows Chaucer borne heavenwards by an eagle, like a middle-aged Ganymede, to Jove's House of Fame. He addresses the eagle with charming banter, and the bird tells him that he is to have a holiday, for all day he sits "at his reckonings" in the Custom House, and, when he returns home

also domb as any stoon
Thou sittest at another boke.

This was just before the spring of 1385, when Chaucer was allowed to have a deputy. This may have been granted at the request of the Queen, Anne of Bohemia; and, if she did not ask Chaucer to write his next work, the "Legend of Good Women," as counterbalancing the naughty Criseyde, he may have chosen the subject in gratitude. It concerns ladies who were true lovers; and this book Alcestis, who gave her life for her lord's, bids Chaucer present to the Queen. If he meant to celebrate nineteen of St. Cupid's Saints, he tired of his work, and tells only of ten, of whom Cleopatra and Medea are less than saintly. Boccaccio's book "On Famous Ladies," and Ovid, on Heroines, gave him hints and materials; he also uses Ovid's "Metamorphoses," the "Æneid," and other sources of information. He is extremely severe on male flirts.

Have at thee, Jasoun I now thyn horn is blowe!

but, far from being prolix, he merely gives the briefest summary possible of Medea's case, and leaves out almost the whole of the wonderful romance.

He bids Theseus "be red for shame," as the deserter of Ariadne, but here again he is very brief, and leaves Ovid to tell the tale.

As all the stories are of man's cruelty and all the complaint of the women (who usually die forsaken), is

> Oh, do not leave me!

the poet felt that the thing was like the tragedies of his monk in the "Canterbury Tales"—was becoming stereotyped, and he left off in the middle of a story. The poem is in "heroic" measure, and Chaucer's command of this practically new instrument is perhaps the main merit of the book.

The Canterbury Tales.

Chaucer's aim, in the "Canterbury Tales," in which most readers begin to study him, though a great part of the book belongs to his late maturity, was to be universal: to paint all his world, to appeal to every taste, from that of the lovers of the broadest and coarsest humour (as in the Miller's and the Reeve's Tales), to that of devout students of saintly legends (the Man of Law's, the Second Nun's, and the Prioress's Tales). In the Prologue to the "Canterbury Tales," and in the discourses of the Pilgrims, he is entirely English, the mirror of his own people. We are in a throng of Shakespearean variety, while their talk is dramatically appropriate; each speaks in character, though the "Wife of Bath's Tale," for example, is far more philosophic, being a reply in part to St. Jerome's praise of celibacy, than anything that we are to expect from Dame Quickly, or from Scott's Mrs. Saddletree.

The Prologue and the conversations of the pilgrims are the thoroughly English work of Chaucer, in the maturity of his genius. So are the humorous pieces, the Wife of Bath, the Reeve, and the Miller, and that striking contrast with all these, the Knight's Tale, a noble masterpiece of true chivalry, which was composed in another form, in stanzas, and was again refashioned in couplets of ten syllables, before the idea of the pilgrimage occurred to the poet.[1]

Several of the Tales had been first undertaken earlier, and were later fitted into the general scheme of Pilgrims to Canterbury telling their stories as

they ride. Chaucer supplies his own criticisms, often in the rough banter of the Host, who cannot endure the sing-song romance of "Sir Thopas" (a parody of the form of many romances), or the dismal "tragedies" of the lusty Monk.

The Prologue and conversations and some tales are thus the work of the very Chaucer, in accomplished maturity of power, but he is giving examples of many tastes and fashions older in literature than his own free, humorous, and ironical view of life. He professes, in his art, to be all things to all men, he must rehearse

> tales alle, be they bettre or werse,

and whosoever does not like the humour of the Reeve or the intoxicated Miller may "turn over the leaf and tell another tale".

The modern reader, for one good reason or another, may "turn over the leaf, and choose another tale," whether the Reeve, or the Monk, or the Parson, or Chaucer himself be narrating. Like all old poets he wrote for his own age, not for ours; but in him, as in all great poets, however old, much is universally human and is immortal.

The scansion, in the so-called "heroic couplet," practically Chaucer's own conquest and bequest to our literature, gives little trouble, especially if, as in the Globe edition, the final ès which are to be sounded, are marked by a dot over the letter. The spelling repels the very indolent, but no attempt hitherto made to modernize the spelling has been successful, though the task does not seem to pass the powers of man.

The device of setting stories in a kind of framework, so that the variety of each narrator, according to his kind, lends dramatic interest, is very old. Chaucer is especially happy in his idea of making thirty pilgrims, of all sorts and conditions, meet at the ancient Inn of the Tabard in Southwark and agree to journey together to the tomb of St. Thomas a Becket. This was a favourite shrine of pilgrims, the road led through a smiling landscape, the Saint had always been popular and a great worker of miracles; and the pilgrimage was dear to an England still merry. In less than a century and a half after Chaucer's death, Henry VIII seized the wealth of the Saint, the gold and jewels given by noble pilgrims, and destroyed this pleasant pilgrimage.

Chaucer's Prologue with his description of the Pilgrims, is the most kind, genial, and jocund of his works, a perfect picture of a mixed multitude of English folk of many classes, and with no awkwardness caused by a keen sense of distinction of class.

The Knight is a flower of chivalry; he has sought honour everywhere, in the dangerous crusade against the barbarians of Pruce (Prussia), against the Moors, against the Turks: he is a fighting man who speaks no evil and bears no malice. His tale is from the old Romance of Thebes and Athens, and has its root in ancient Athenian literature, though its flowers are derived from mediaeval fancy, and mainly from the Italian poem, the "Teseid," or poem of Theseus, by Boccaccio. It is written in the rhyming couplets of five feet apiece which are practically the great metrical gift of Chaucer to English poetry: he took to them late in life, about 1385-1386, and his tales in this measure were made later than his stories in stanzas.

The jolly Host of the Tabard, who directs the tale-telling of the Company, next asks, out of respect, the Monk to follow the Knight; but the rude Miller is drunk, and insists on being heard.

> For I wol speke or elles go my wey.

Thus the noble tale is followed by a "churl's tale" for the sake of contrast, and Chaucer warns his readers that a coarse story it is, and that whoever does not want to hear it must turn the pages over and pass on. The Miller begins decorously enough with a description of a pretty young musical scholar of Oxford, that could read the stars and predict the weather, and lodged with an old carpenter that had a pretty young wife, and had never read Cato who would have advised him to mate with an older woman. The Miller's description of the pretty young woman is more delicate than we expect from this noisy drunkard. A parish clerk, not more godly than the scholar, is next introduced; and a peculiarly broad piece of rural pleasantry finishes the story of the Miller.

The listeners laughed at "this nice case," all but the Reeve, who was a carpenter by trade, and did not like a carpenter to be mocked. He therefore tells a tale against a Miller, a proud and dishonest Miller, who suffers loss and infinite dishonour and has his head broken, at the hands of two young Cambridge men. This tale also may be judiciously skipped: the fourth is that of the Cook, and is only a fragment: manifestly it was to be matter of

rude, mirth, but Chaucer dropped it. The Host calls in The Man of Law, whose story is told in stanzas; The Man of Law was himself told it by merchants. It is an early piece of work by Chaucer, fitted into this place. He had plenty of short stories of many kinds, written by himself at various dates, and he placed them into the mouths of the pilgrims; not always quite appropriately. The Man of Law's tale of fair Constance, daughter of an Emperor of Rome, herself a pearl of beauty and goodness, persecuted by elderly ladies professing the Moslem or heathen religion, and driven from Syria to pagan Northumberland, is partly based on a widely diffused fairy-tale. It is pure and tender, and more fit for the ears of the Prioress than several of the coarse comic stories. In these days, as Chaucer would learn from the "Decameron" of Boccaccio, ladies listened to very strange narratives.

The Host next bids the Parish Priest to tell a story, and swears in a style which the good parson resents. The Host "smells a Lollard," or Puritan heretic, in a clergyman who objects to swearing, which suggests that the orthodox priests were very indulgent!

The sailor, or shipman, a rough brown man and "a good fellow," cries

> *heer* he shal nat preche,
> He shal no gospel glosen heer ne teche,

he is a heretic, a sower of tares among the wheat; and, to check heresy tells a story far from creditable to the morals of a monk. This is in the "heroic" verse, rhymed couplets of ten syllables each, like the coarse stories of the Reeve and the Miller. As this measure was adopted late by Chaucer, in place of the earlier stanzas, it appears that his taste did not grow more delicate with his advance in years.

The dainty Prioress, as becomes her, now tells, in stanzas, the legend of a miracle of Our Lady: how a little boy used to sing her praises through the Jewish quarter of a town; how the Jews slew him and cast him into a pit, and how he nevertheless continued to sing his hymn like "young Hugh of Lincoln, who cursed Jews," slain also in 1255, if ever the thing occurred: it was a common fable of the Middle Ages.

The poet himself is called in next, and recites "Sir Thopas"; a parody of the rhymed romances of chivalry. It bores the Host, "No more of this," he cries,

"you do nothing but waste our time," so the poet tells "a litel thing in prose," the Story of Melibeus. It is not so very "litel," and is freely translated from the French of Jean de Meung. There are about twelve thousand words in Melibeus, which is full of quotations from all sorts of learned books and moral lessons: the Host, however, thought it would have been very edifying to his ill-tempered wife, a fierce woman.

The Monk now "tells sad stories of the deaths of Kings," and of the miseries of celebrated persons from Lucifer, Adam, and Hercules to Nero, and Croesus, and Julius Cæsar. Chaucer borrowed from the Bible, Boccaccio, Boëthius, the "Romance of the Rose": in fact he seems to have begun the collection while he was young, taken it up again after his visit to Italy, and finally wearied of the long series of miseries; so he makes even the courteous Knight rebel, and cry, "Good sir, no more of this". He wants more cheerful matter. The Host is of the same mind, and calls one of the three priests that ride with the Prioress. Since the Monk is described as a jolly hunting clergyman, it is not clear why Chaucer put old work about mortal tragedies into his mouth. The Priest tells a form of the tale of the Cock, his Hens, and the Fox, which includes a ghost story, a good deal of learning and morality, and a great deal of humour and of brilliant description. The tale is in ten syllabled verse; and in Chaucer's late manner, as is the Physician's Tale, the Roman story of Virginia, (as in Macaulay's "Lays of Ancient Rome"). Chaucer in part translates the version of Jean de Meung in the "Romance of the Rose". The tale is told with sweet pitifulness and delicacy.

The Pardoner, with his wallet

> Bret-ful of pardoun come from Rome al hoot,

"pardons hot from Rome," and with a large collection of spurious relics of Saints, is an odious kind of sacred swindler, but his tale is pointed against avarice. It is derived from a very old story found in Asia as well as in Europe. The Pardoner begins by a satirical account of his profession and of his practices, his greed and lust, his spoiling of the poor, before he preaches his moral tale of the evils of greed.

> For, though myself be a ful vicious man,
> A moral tale yet I you telle can,

and a terrible tale of murder it is. The Host himself is sickened by the cynicism of the Pardoner, but the tolerant Knight makes peace between them: in the nature of things the Knight would have ridden forward out of his odious society. It has been said that the tales "display the literary and artistic side" of Chaucer's genius; and many of them were not made for their places in the Pilgrimage, while Chaucer's "observing and dramatic genius" appears in the prologues and places where the characters converse together. These passages are often, to us, the most curious and interesting, for they are dramatic and humorous pictures of actual life and manners. But the tolerance of the Pardoner by the Knight, is almost too great a stretch of gentleness.

The rich, business-like, proud, luxurious Wife of Bath who has had as many husbands as the Woman of Samaria, begins with a long Prologue about her own past life and her distaste for the mediaeval exaltation of virginity; she prefers the example of the much married King Solomon. She boasts herself to be a worshipper of Venus and Mars, love is not more her delight than domestic broils and domineering. Her prologue and tale are in Chaucer's best later style of verse: the tale is like that of courteous Sir Gawain, and his bride, the Loathly Lady, in a romance, and the Friar, or Frere, justly says that she deals too much "in school matter of great difficulty," and in learned authorities.

The Frere and the Summoner next tell tales gibing at each other's profession. They are of the coarser sort, and are relieved by the Clerk's tale in stanzas; it is a form of the famous legend of Patient Griselda, whose patience is like that of Enid in "The Idylls of the King". The Clerk says that he learned the story from Petrarch, the great Italian poet, in Padua. The story, like most of those which are serious, is given in stanzas: Boccaccio wrote it in Italian; Petrarch in Latin. The poet would not wish wives be as meek as Griselda; there is a happy mean between her invincible patience and the tyranny of the Wife of Bath.

The Merchant's Tale continues the debate on Marriage, started by the Wife of Bath, and carried into clearer air by the modest Clerk of Oxford. Chaucer had Latin sources for the discussions, and the humorous laxity of the story of January and May is based on an old popular jest-story of which Boccaccio's version, in the "Decameron," seems nearest to the original form —the Tree, as in Asiatic versions, is enchanted. A more pleasant variety of

Asiatic tale, that of the Flying Horse (as in the "Arabian Nights"), is "left half-told" by the Squire, the son of the Knight: as good a man as his father. Chaucer either never finished the story, or the conclusion was lost.

The story told by the Franklin is, after those of the Knight and the Prioress, perhaps the most poetical of all. It is a romance in which the problem of marriage and the supremacy of husband or wife is once more touched on and happily settled by the steadfast love of the knight and lady. They are separated for years, a new lover is rejected by the lady, and, to win her, makes a magician cause by "glamour" (something in the way of hypnotic suggestion) the apparent disappearance of the black rocks of Britanny. But loyalty is stronger than magic. This charming tale is based on a Breton original; but the handling is entirely Chaucer's, and is done in his best and gentlest manner.

The Second Nun's Tale is the legend of the marriage and wooing of St. Cecily; it was composed in stanzas, and is put into its place without the removal of lines which show that it was written separately before Chaucer thought of his framework. Among the latest additions are the Prologue and Tale of the Canon's Yeoman,—neither yeoman nor canon is among the original characters of the General Prologue. The story contains a satire of the golden dreams, self-deceptions, and impostures of the Alchemists, with their search for the Philosopher's Stone.

The Tale of the Manciple, or kitchen servant, is really a "Just so Story" explaining why the crow is black, and is taken from Ovid, who took it from an old Greek fable.

Finally, the honest country Parson has his chance. He announces that being a man of Southern England, he likes not *rum*, *ram*, *ruf* (alliterative verse), nor cares for rhyme, and he preaches in prose at very great length. His sermon is a free translation, with alterations of all sorts, from a French source, the same as the source of the "Ayenbite of Inwyt" (Remorse).

The immense variety in character of the Tales, covering all the tastes of the time, is now apparent. For the gay and the grave, the lively and severe, Chaucer has provided reading.

[1] This is manifest for (line 1201) he dismisses the story of Perithous and Theseus la Hades,

But of that story list me nat to *wryte.*

CHAPTER X.

"PIERS PLOWMAN." GOWER.

Contemporary with Chaucer, and in perfect contrast with Chaucer, whom he probably never met, was the author of the alliterative "rum, ram, ruff," poem "Piers Plowman". This author is generally supposed to have been named William Langley or Langland. By piecing together many detached pieces of evidence the conjecture is reached that William first saw the light at Cleobury in Shropshire or at Wychwood in Oxfordshire, about the year 1332, was well educated, was in minor orders, and a married man. But if everything that the author of "Piers Plowman" makes his dreamer say about himself is also true of the author, he must have been a strange and unhappy character.

His poem, following the convention of dreams and allegories, is the record of dreams into which he fell, first on the Malvern hills; later, wherever he chanced to be. The poem exists in three forms (A, B, C), and, from the allusions to contemporary events (such as the peace of Bretigny, with France (1360), and a great tempest of January, 1362), the A version may have been composed in 1362. The B version, much altered and enlarged, is dated, from its allusions to events, in 1377; and the C version, also enlarged, from its references to the unpopularity of Richard II, must be later than 1392.

If the poet drew his dreamer and narrator from study of his own character, he must have been, in some ways, not unlike Mr. Thomas Carlyle. Though he had a noble appreciation of the dignity and duty of manual labour,—the honest and pious ploughman was his favourite character,—he never did toil with his hands. In reply to the remonstrances of Reason, he says:—

> I am too weak to work with sickle or with scythe.

Over-education in youth has sapped his manhood: and, since his friends who paid for his schooling died, he has never joyed. He praised the country, but, as Dr. Johnson said, "hung loose upon the town," a man of a modern type.

"Ich live *in* Londone, and *on* Londone both," he writes. The instruments of his craft are not sickle and scythe, but the *paternoster*, the psalter, "and my seven psalms," that "I sing for men's souls". In return for such services he picks up a bare livelihood. Clerks like himself should "come of franklins and freemen," not of bondmen. The sons of serfs, he thinks, should do manual labour, and should not be admitted to Holy Orders. This was the view of the English House of Commons, under Richard II, and it may be that the poet is rather satirizing their exclusiveness, and the hand-to-mouth lazy life of poor clerks, than describing himself. The narrator, after the sermon preached at him by Reason, goes to Church in a penitent mood, and beats his breast, but does not change his course of life.

The poem (or, as some think, the series of poems by various hands) represents in the most vivid way, the unrest, discontent, and doubt which came over Western Europe towards the end of the fourteenth century. The cruel and endless wars, the brigands, the ravages of the Black Death (which caused demand for higher wages because so few were left to work) drove the poor into revolts like that of Wat Tyler. There were frightful cruelties and terrible reprisals. The wealth and licentiousness of the regular Orders of clergy caused them to be hated and despised. The people called Lollards advocated a kind of evangelical Protestantism, and something very like modern Socialism. All these things Chaucer passed by or treated lightly, but whoever wrote "Piers Plowman" threw into his picture of the age his vivid and fiery but lurid and confused genius. He paints himself as poor, discontented, powerless, and always angry.

The dreamer states that he went about London,—a tall lonely discontented man,—"loath to reverence lords and ladies," and never saluting the great, and the well clad, nor doing any courtesy, so that "folk deemed me a fool". He describes taverns full of bad company, as if he were familiar with them. He states the doubts that arise in clerkly minds. Why should the penitent thief have been allowed to go straight to Paradise? "Who was worse than David, or the Apostle Paul," when he breathed out threatenings against the earliest Christians? Beset by such questionings, and by the scepticism

which haunted the Ages of Faith, clerks may curse the hour when they learned more than their creed.

The narrator seems to know a good deal about law, and despises men who draw up charters ill, and in bad Latin; he speaks as if he may have eked out his livelihood as a scrivener. He says that he dresses like a "Loller" (however they may have dressed), but he is *not* a Loller, which may mean either an idle loiterer or a heretical Lollard, who was apt to be a kind of evangelical socialist, entertaining advanced ideas about property.

The poet himself, in the spirit of the contemporary House of Commons, denounces the foreigners who obtain benefices in England, and the Englishmen who buy them from Rome. He would not throw off all allegiance to the Pope, but the Pope ought to follow the example, not of St. Peter, a very human character, but of the divine Master of St. Peter. He hates the Friars as much as John Knox did, who called them "fiends, not freres". He denounces the lawless rapacity of "maintained," the liveried followers of great lords; in fact his poem is often an alliterative rendering of the complaints of the House of Commons preserved in the Rolls of Parliament: For Parliamentary institutions he has the highest respect and admiration, he is the warm advocate of peace with France, and opposes the idea of settling the Eastern Question by a Crusade. If he is the author of "Richard the Redeless," he gave good advice, in a severe tone, and too late, to Richard II, when that Prince set himself, like Charles II and James II, to govern England without a Parliament, and was near his fall. The dreamer, or the poet, was no friend of Revolution, but his works were quoted by John Ball, priest and agitator, who was hanged some time after Wat Tyler was done to death.

Chaucer was a poet who did not write on political, social, and ecclesiastical reform. Langley or Langland, wrote about little else: he is for reforming a world full of inequality and injustice. In his time the Revolution stirred in its sleep, as it were, like the great subterranean reptile of Australian mythology, and caused the crust of society to tremble, and the spires of the Church to rock. He professed that a reforming King is to come

> And thanne shal the Abbot of Abyndoun
> And all his issue for evere

Have a knokke of a Kynge, and
Incurable the wounde.

The prediction was fulfilled by Henry VIII, but the poor, in whose interests Langland wrote, were none the better but much the worse for "The Great Pillage" of the Tudor King.

We cannot, let it be repeated, feel certain that the dreamer's description of himself, as a moody, idle, discontented clerk, spoiled for work by much study, and unable to find a market for his science; striding angrily and enviously through the London streets where he has not a friend, is the poet's description of himself, a satire on himself; or whether it is a dramatic study of an imaginary character. We cannot be certain that he has lived much at or near Malvern; where the hills, overlooking the vast plain, form the natural scene for his Vision of the "sad pageant of men's miseries"; of poverty and toil, of wealth and injustice and oppression. Of the poet we really learn nothing, even his name,—whether Langley or Langland, or neither,—is matter of conjecture. We only know that his heart burned within him at the many evils which he was impotent to cure, and that he had a kind of apocalyptic faculty for visions of good and evil. As readers usually take the narrator and preacher in the poem to be a portrait of the poet himself, he appears as a character neither happy nor the cause of happiness in others. He is not so much a poet as a prophet in the Hebrew sense of the word; the world owes to him no such gratitude and love as it owes and pays to the kind, happy Geoffrey Chaucer.

The Visions of Langland are visionary; now the dream is luminous and distinct; now it merges, as dreams do, into shadowy shapes of things half-realized. In sleep the poet first sees a vast plain; on the eastern side is a tower, westward is the den of Death. In a field full of folk some laboured; others, gaily clad, took their ease; some were hermits in cells, others were merchants, and there were minstrels who hate work, "swink not, nor sweat," but make mirth. The poet, like the author of the "Cursor Mundi," detests minstrels. There were sham hermits with their women; pilgrims with leave to lie, from Rome; pardoners who took money from men for remission of their sins; parish priests who seek gold in London as the Black Death has impoverished their people. To them all Conscience preaches at great length, denouncing idolatrous priests in the manner of John Knox. Then follows a

version of the fable of "belling the cat," told with some vigour and political point.

Holy Church now appears as a stately lady, explaining that Truth dwells in the tower to the east; and *she* preaches at much length on the functions of Kings (which were not fulfilled in any godly sense by the aged Edward III), and on the nature of Conscience, and the duty of "having ruth on the poor". Now appears a magnificent lady, "Meed," that is Recompense. In the poet's opinion, some people get far more than their due recompense; others do not get half enough, like the poor labourers; and Meed, or Reward, on the whole, is won by bribery and corruption. Meed is to be married to Falsehood: Simony, Liar, Civil Law, and so forth, are of the wedding party, with the Count of Covetousness, the Earl of Envy, the Lord of Lechery, and the rest of them.

All this, we must remember, was written by the poet for his own age, which was insatiably fond of allegory devoid of the human merits of Bunyan's immortal dream.

How Theology forbids the banns between Falsehood and Meed; how Meed goes to town, and wins all hearts; how she is taken to Court, and offered as a bribe to Conscience, who refuses her hand; all this the poet narrates. He is very firm on the iniquity of writing the names of the donors on windows in churches: *now* the historian would be glad to know who the donors were.

The King, who has Meed's marriage to arrange, listens to Reason, and so ends the first Vision. How Reason, later, admonishes the narrator for this way of life, has already been described. The Deadly Sins make their confessions, and Repentance gives them good advice: as does Piers the Plowman, who describes to these rude pilgrims the nature of the road which they must tread; here there is a considerable resemblance to the "Pilgrim's Progress". Piers directs the industry of the pilgrims, aided by the Knight; and always and every day Piers preaches without stint. A realistic picture of the life of poor laborious women in cottages is drawn (C. Passus X. 1. 77): —

> Al-so hem-selve suffren muche hunger,
> And we in winter-tyme, with wakynge a nyghtes
> To ryse to the ruel, to rocke the cradel,
> Bothe to karde and to kembe, to clouten and to washe,

To rubbe and to rely, russhes to pilie,
That reuthe is to rede, othere in ryme shewe
The we of these women that woneth in cotes.

It is an old over-true tale, a tale not told by Chaucer. Pity for the poor, earnest, clear-sighted, not to be controlled, is the most admirable point in the nature of Langland. He returns to his complaint that men give gifts and gold to minstrels, while the poor suffer cold and hunger, and "lollers" (idle "loafers"), gain money in the abused name of Charity. Yet the poet is not so revolutionary as to attack the Game Laws! In irony or in earnest, he bids Lords to hunt every day in the week but Sunday, to hunt foxes, wolves, and other beasts. That is what Lords are fit for; it amuses them, and is of service to the farmer. Bishops are the cause of most of the mischief: "their dogs," the priests, "dare not bark". With Knox, two centuries later, the bishops themselves are the "dumb dogs".

The dream ends, another begins about Do-well, Do-better, Do-best. Do-well (good conduct) is better than Indulgences, as Luther preached later. The poet sets off on the quest of Do-well, who has a castle somewhere. The poet rather leans to heresy when he introduces the Emperor Trajan, boasting that, though a heathen, he was saved "without singing of Mass To Trajan he keeps returning. "Reason rules all beasts, but not men, and why not?" Reason declines to answer.

Finally, after giving a summary of Christian morals, the Plowman vanishes away: he returns later, but, whoever comes or goes, the sermons and the satire go on for ever with the same illustrations. The friars are drubbed from end to end, and when at length the narrator awakes, he finds things just as they were, while Conscience goes off to seek Piers Plowman.

Probably the most famous and singular part of the poem is the reappearance of Piers Plowman, or of One like him, riding on an ass, barefoot, without spurs or spear, but looking like a knight. Faith peers forth from a window, and cries, "Ah, son of David!" as heralds do when knights ride to tournaments. Jesus is to joust with Satan: then the crucifixion is described, and the terror of Satan, who calls his forces out, places his bronze guns, and orders calthrops to be thrown on the ground under the walls of his castle.[1] The idea of the guns was used by Milton, in a lapse of his genius, in "Paradise Lost".

The conclusion is that Righteousness and Peace kiss each other; the dreamer awakes, for the last time, and with Kytte his wife, and Kalote his daughter, creeps to the Cross, and gives thanks for the Resurrection.

It may be remarked that the style of "Piers Plowman" could be easily imitated; any man who chose could prolong a poem so lacking in organization and plan. Consequently, in compliance with the habit of contradicting all tradition and denying to authors the books with which they have from the first been credited, efforts are made to prove that much of "Piers Plowman" is the work of other hands; not of the author of the shortest and earliest version A. In this case critics discover "differences in diction, in metre... in power of visualizing objects and scenes presented, in topics of interest to the author and in views on social, theological, and various miscellaneous questions".[2]

The other, the usual theory, is that the author kept adding to and altering his poem through some thirty years. In that time new topics would interest him; his views on all questions would change with his moods; his alterations, meant for the better, might turn out for the worst (as in the case of Wordsworth and other poets); and his powers, of course, would not always be at the same level.

It is true that the first eight *passus*, or cantos, or books of version A are more distinct, better organized, more consecutive, more brilliant than the rest of the book; while *passus* IX-XII, are perhaps more allegorical and less orderly; more vague, more controversial, and one John But is said "to have made this end, because he meddles with verse-making". The author of B is supposed to be a new hand, working over and altering the A version of his predecessor, and often misunderstanding him, while C misunderstands B. It is quite certain that in some MSS. of the fifteenth century the whole poem is attributed to William Langland (or Langley?), and also that the whole poem at its longest, was composed between 1362 and 1392 and was very popular because it turned over and over, in every light, all the political, social, and theological problems that vexed the minds of men. Whether it is all by one hand or not' is a question of very little importance. Many men could have written various parts of it.

> Most can raise the flowers now,
> For all have got the seed.

The poem retains an historical value which would not be diminished if much of it were cut out. In style it led nowhere; the rather careless versification, the ancient unrhymed alliterative rhythm were doomed to disappear. The moral advice was wasted on Lancastrian England, which rushed into the madness of the fifteenth century; the burning of Lollards; the attempt to conquer France—as vain as unjust,—the burning of Joan of Arc; the twenty years of defeat and disgrace which followed and avenged that crime; the fury of the Wars of the Roses, the butcheries, the murders, and, accompanying all this, the dull prolix stuff that did duty for poetry and literature.

GOWER.

Chaucer's other prominent contemporary "the moral Gower," in Chaucer's own phrase, was a far more commonplace character than Langland. John Gower was entitled to write himself Esquire, and owned lands in Norfolk and Suffolk; he died in 1408, and his tomb, with his three great books under his head, exists in St. Saviour's church, in Southwark. Chaucer was a friend of Gower and, during one of his missions abroad, left Gower in charge of his affairs. At the close of "Troilus and Criseyde" he writes:—

> O moral Gower, this book I directe
> To thee, and to the philosophical Strode,
> To vouchen-sauf, ther nede is, to correcte.

Strode is unknown, and we need not examine conjectures about him. Gower was not ungrateful for Chaucer's compliment, and in the earlier version of his "Lover's Confession" ("Confessio Amantis") he repaid it, very prettily. Venus bids Gower's poems greet Chaucer well "as my disciple and my poet, who, in his youth filled the land with ditties and glad songs which he made for my sake". This passage was later omitted by Gower: who, it has been suggested, was annoyed by some words in the Prologue to the Man of Law's Tale (in Chaucer's "Canterbury Tales"). At the same time, Gower may have removed the compliment to Chaucer merely to make room for more matter. If not, literary people have quarrelled bitterly over smaller things than the criticism by the Man of Law.

With Gower's French and Latin poems we have little to do. His Fifty Ballades, in French, to his lady, are very pleasing examples of that old

formal verse, with its difficult rhymes; and but for the grammatical liberties which the Anglo-French writer took, would secure for Gower a high place among the French versifiers of his age.

In French he wrote "Le Mirour de l'Omme," "Man's Mirror," which has a curious history.[3]

The "Mirour," in French, and the "Speculum" in Latin, deal allegorically with virtues, vices, and the way of salvation; they contain many stories from all quarters, which are retold by Gower in English, in his immense "Lover's Confession".

In his Latin "Vox Clamantis" (1381) ("The Voice of one crying") and in his "Mirour de l'Omme," but especially in the former, Gower had given his testimony against the sins of the age, and had impartially rebuked all sorts and conditions of men. He described the peasant rising, under Wat Tyler and others, of 1381, exculpating King Richard, who was only a brave boy. But, as time went on, and dissatisfaction increased, Gower turned from Richard, and, very early, to the son of John of Gaunt, later Henry IV. Gower transferred his affections so early to Henry, that it would be unfair to call him a venal turncoat: he saw no hope for English liberty except in the Lancastrian cause.

Probably about 1390, and at the suggestion of Richard II himself, Gower abandoned unmitigated sermonizing in verse: renounced the ambition to reform the world by rhyme, and mingled, as he says, pleasure with morality in the endless "Lover's Confession," the work on which his reputation as an English poet rests. He professes his desire to make a work for England's sake, and, in early versions, declares that Richard II called him into his barge on the Thames, and set him to the task. It was to be "some new thing" readable by his Majesty. After a moral prologue Gower tells how he met Venus, in May of course, and how she gave him her chaplain, Genius, as a confessor. To Genius Gower makes his confessions as a lover, and Genius preaches to him, illustrating every homily with a tale. It is by the tales, and by some pretty passages descriptive of true love, that the poem survives. Most of the stories are borrowed from Roman literature. The Greek reader is surprised to find that the Sirens had fishes' tails, a fact unknown to Homer, or to Greek art; which usually represented them as birds with the heads of women. The Trojan horse is of bronze, whereas it was notoriously

of wood. The tale of Alboin and Rosamund, and the cup made of her father's skull, is told pleasantly, but the truly tragic situation is slurred over and lost; and the tale of Hercules and Deianira, and the fatal garment of Nessus the Centaur, is also far from worthy of the tragic Greet theme; of the pity and terror of the legend.

Perhaps Shakespeare admired Gower's "Pyramus and Thisbe," which the Athenian craftsmen dramatize in "A Midsummer Night's Dream". The "Jason and Medea" is one of the best tales; but Gower did not know the Greek version by Apollonius Rhodius, or the "Medea" of Euripides; and his own genius rises to no such picture of a maiden's love as Apollonius draws, to no such tragic passion as Euripides conceives, while he has little or none of the humour of Chaucer.

None the less here was a book of many thousand lines, full of the material of old romance, mediaeval or classical: here the verse ran easily, copiously, and sweetly, for Gower was a master of the rhymed octosyllabic couplets, through his knowledge of and practice in versification both French and English. Indeed his style, soon to be lost by English versifiers, is his main virtue.

At last he confesses to Venus that he knows not the true nature of Love. She gives him a black rosary of beads—like that which Chaucer holds in his portrait,—with the motto in gold, *por reposer*, "Take thy rest". He is to write of Love no more, no more to come to Venus's Court, so, in 1398, the foolish veteran did make love, and married Agnes Groundolf! He survived this unseasonable wooing for ten years, when Agnes came into his property.

The reputation of Gower, for long, was very high; people spoke of Chaucer and Gower as we speak of Browning and Tennyson, or of Shelley and Keats. But no longer with Chaucer is Gower "equalled in renown," and his most enduring monument is Shakespeare's introduction of him in "Pericles, Prince of Tyre".

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[1] Calthrops, used at Bannockburn, were iron sets of spikes; Joan of Arc was wounded by a calthrop at the siege of Orleans.

[2] Professor Manley of Chicago, in "Cambridge History of English Literature".

[3] It was lost, but, in 1895, when Mr. G. C. Macaulay was editing Gower's enormous English poem, "Confessio Amantis" ("The Lover's Confession") he

remarked to Mr. Jenkinson, Librarian of the Cambridge University Library, that if ever Gower's French "Speculum Meditantis" ("The Contemplative Man's Mirror") were found, it would probably be under the Latin name, "Speculum Hominis" ("Man's Mirror"). Now Mr. Jenkinson had just bought and presented to the Library, a French manuscript, "Mirour de l'Omme," "Man's Mirror". This was proved to be Gower's lost French poem. It had lain in some farm-house, in 1745, and had been scribbled on by a rustic hand, while a manuscript of the Ballades had been given, in 1656, by a very old man, Charles Gedde, of St. Andrews, to Lord Fairfax; at the time of the English conquest of Scotland by Cromwell.

CHAPTER XI.

THE SUCCESSORS OF CHAUCER.

After Chaucer and Gower, English poets wandered back into the wilderness. They are most valuable to students of the development of the language, they were popular in their own time and for more than a century later. Specialists find in them some literary merits, oases in the sandy desert, but it would be false to say that they are generally entertaining and attractive.

John Lydgate, the Monk of St. Edmundsbury, would have obliged us had he written prose Memoirs of his own life, for he came in contact with some very interesting persons, and knew London and Paris as well as his cloister. Born (1370) at Lydgate near Newmarket (where good drink was hardly to be come at, he tells us), he was, before the age of 15, received into the great Edmondsbury monastery school, where he was a reluctant pupil, and, later, a not very willing monk. He proceeded to Oxford, it is thought to Gloucester Hall, now Worcester College, and, by 1397, was a priest in full orders. He speaks of Chaucer as his Master; but probably he means his master in the spirit: probably he never sat at the feet of the great poet.

In 1423 Lydgate was made prior of Hatfield Broadoak. In 1426 he was in Paris, and, by order of the Earl of Warwick, the cruel jailer of Jeanne d'Arc, he translated a French poetical pedigree by Laurence Callot, a French clerk in English service. Laurence is notorious for having called the Bishop of Beauvais a traitor, when he accepted the abjuration of Jeanne d'Arc (May, 1431), and for being very busy in the tumult which then arose. Lydgate

returned to his cloister at Bury in 1434, and we last hear of him, in connexion with a pension which he held, in 1446.

The dates of his poems are not certainly known, as a rule. "The Flower of Curtesie," "The Black Knight," and "The Temple of Glass," may be between 1400 and 1403. The "Troy Book," made from Dares, Dictys, Benoît de Sainte-Maure, and, mainly Guido de Colonna, is of monstrous length, and is dated 1412-1420. This poem has some fine passages in which Lydgate, for example, when describing the penitence of Helen, seems to be translating the actual words of the Iliad. The "Story of Thebes" followed (1420), then came "The Falls of Princes," and a translation of Deguileville's "Pilgrimage of Human Life," made for the Earl of Salisbury. "The Legend of St. Edmund" was written for the devout Henry VI; the date of "Reason and Sensuality" is earlier (1406-1408).

About forty works are attributed to Lydgate, all, or almost all, being marked by "his curious flatness". His lines have, for the ordinary mind, the unpleasant peculiarity that you may read many of them several times before you discover, if you ever do, how he meant them to be scanned. It is not to be found out when he meant the final *e* to be sounded, and when he did not. His poems may have been badly copied, or badly printed, or both, but the bewildering result remains. When we add that Lydgate is usually a translator, and is always a copyist of all the old formulæ of spring and dreams, and that he is as prolix as an Indian epic, it must be plain that he cannot be said to hold a high place in living literature. "The Book of the Duchess," a thing of Chaucer's immaturity, is not one that a young poet of the next generation would sedulously ape, yet Lydgate imitated it in "The Black Knight".

The best-known piece of Lydgate is a short satiric poem, "London Lickpenny," describing the misadventures of a poor countryman who finds that in London he can get nothing, neither law, nor food, nor any other commodity—for nothing. His hood is stolen in the crowd.

OCCLEVE.

Occleve is not merely a less voluminous Lydgate. He is a character, or assumes to be a character not unlike the French poet, Francois Villon, but with little of Villon's genius. Occleve was born about 1368; about 1387 he

got a little post in the Office of the Privy Seal; in 1406, in a poem "La Male Règle," he petitions for payment of a pension: he has wasted his youth, his health is lost, and no wonder,

> But twenty wintir passed continuelly
> Excesse at borde hath leyd his knyf with me.

The great number of public-houses excite people to drink,

> So often that man can nat wel seyn nay.

He would have drunk harder if there had been more money in his pouch: had Occleve been a richer man there would be less of the rhymes of Occleve. He liked the society of gay girls, which is expensive,

> To suffre hem paie had been no courtesie.

He abstained from discourteous language,

> I was so ferd with any man to fighte.

The tapsters said that Occleve was "a real gentleman," "a verray gentil man". He was too lazy to walk to his office; this indolent civil servant, he took a boat, and the oarsmen knew and flattered him. He is rather impudent and impenitent, but he seems to ask for no more than was his due in the way of money. The picture is drawn from the life, whether dramatically studied, or only too truly told of Occleve.

Being what he calls himself, Occleve wrote over 5000 lines of good moral advice to "the mad Prince," the friend of Poins and Falstaff (1411-1412). He acts as his own "awful example". He asks for money, and his poem is a compilation from various musty sources; but he is always laxly autobiographical, a loose, genial, familiar knave. Conceivably he may have met the Prince in a tavern; it is a pity that Shakespeare did not think of bringing this shuffler, in Falstaff's company, to take purses at Gadshill. He bids the Prince to burn heretics, and, in the interests of peace with France, to marry Katharine, daughter of the mad Charles VI. Henry took both pieces of advice, but the marriage brought not peace, but the sword in a Maiden's hand.

Like Villon, Occleve wrote a poem (more than one), to the Blessed Virgin: he is always very orthodox. He had an interval of darkened mind, but recovered and went on versifying, a pathetic figure, for he was a married

man, and his wife must have endured things intolerable. Occleve was very human: as a poet his versification is as loose as that of Lydgate. He died about 1450.

Hawes.

Stephen Hawes was the last of the English followers of Chaucer who deserves notice. Between him and the genuine Middle Ages a great gulf exists. The art of printing is familiar to Hawes. Writing of Chaucer he says of the poet's many books

> He dyd compyle, whose goodly name
> *In printed bokes doth remayne in fame*,

where the jostling vowels of "name," "remayne" and "fame" prove Hawes to be a careless author. In his own time, he says, writers "spend their time in vainful vanity, making balades of fervent amity, as gestes and trifles without fruitfulness". Hawes alone "of my Master Lydgate will follow the trace".

Hawes is all for allegory and moral instruction in his long poem, misleadingly entitled "The Passetyme of Pleasure". All the old formulæ of the Romance of the Rose are retained, and the castles of Rhetoric, Logic, and the whole curriculum of Learning are not much more joyous than the den of Bunyan's Giant Despair. Even combats with seven-headed monsters fail to excite pity and terror, for Hawes has seen, in a work of art, his own future, and we know beforehand that Grand Amour married La Bel Pucell.

Hawes was born about 1475, was over-educated at Oxford, and was Groom of the Chamber to Henry VII. He made the words of a ballet for the Court in 1506 (ten shillings) and, for Henry VIII. (1521) a play, now lost, (£6 13s. 4 d.). He also wrote "The Example of Virtue," and several poems, some of which have not been found in print or manuscript. The "Passetyme of Pleasure" is of 1506. It is in rhyme royal, with more or less humorous interludes concerning the facetious Godfrey Gobelive, a dwarf who tells tales against women, in rhyming "heroic" couplets. "The Example of Virtue," another moral and allegorical poem, is in the same measures. Spenser may have known the works of Hawes, there are coincidences in the allegorical details of both which can scarcely be all accidental. Hawes, in a sense, would "have raised the Table Round again," if he could I He knew

Malory's great prose work, the "Morte d'Arthur," and would fain have restored ideal chivalry.

But chivalry died at the burning of Jeanne d'Arc, under the eyes of "the Father of Courtesy," the Earl of Warwick. The Flower of Chivalry was sacrificed like Odin, "herself to herself" (1431).

Hawes was a chaotic versifier: it is not easy to guess how he scanned many of his own lines. In the "Passetyme" the words of the hero's epitaph are probably a versified proverb,

> For though the day be never so longe,
> At last the belles ringeth to evensonge.

Long were the poems, and long the day of the followers of Chaucer. Now for its even song the bells were rung.

CHAPTER XII.

LATE MEDIAEVAL PROSE.

As far as literature is concerned the poetry of the period which we have been considering is infinitely more important than the prose. For most prosaic purposes, Englishmen still wrote in Latin: Richard Rolle, that eccentric hermit, and Wyclif, the premature Reformer, were even more prolific in Latin than in English. Prose was used in writing of science, as in Chaucer's treatise concerning the Astrolabe; for translation out of Latin, as in Chaucer's translation of Boëthius, and Trevisa's rendering of Higden's chronicles; in sermons, and by Wyclif and his followers for their tracts against the rich; against the Friars; against the endowments of the Church (constantly threatened in Parliament); and against the Catholic doctrine of the Eucharist; and for their translations from the Latin Bible.

WYCLIF.

John Wyclif (born about 1329) was a man of great influence in his day; and the Reformation, when many of his ideas revived, probably found the embers of the fire which he had tended still glowing. He is said to have been born at Hipswell, near Richmond in Yorkshire, and certainly was of the Diocese of York. He was Master of Balliol College, Oxford, in 1361. In 1372 Wyclif took the degree of Doctor in Theology: he had already written not a few Latin treatises on philosophical subjects. As a philosopher he was a believer in predestination (on which much might be said), but averse to the theory of the disintegration of matter; indeed his views on this subject controlled his theory of the Eucharist. His desire to reform the Church by reducing her endowments endeared him to a political party in the State; and when he was summoned before Convocation in 1377, he was supported by John of Gaunt, uncle of Richard II.

The affair ended in a brawl; and in a later examination his ideas were not pronounced heretical. The London mob as well as some persons of high rank were on his side, and when one Pope, Urban, proclaimed a crusade against the other Pope, Clement, Wyclif opposed it in manuscript pamphlets. He had, about 1378, started a kind of order of "poor priests" who spread his doctrines, and, in regard to the unlawfulness of owning private property, went beyond him.

The Bible, not the tradition of the Church, was the centre of Wyclif's inspiration: it would be a mistake to suppose that the Bible was then generally ignored, the literature of the time is full of quotations from Scripture. There was no authorized translation of the Latin Bible, but many separate books of Scripture were circulating in English. There is much controversy as to whether or not Wyclif translated, or caused to be translated, the entire Bible, as a chronicler declares that he did: certainly he made much of it known in English tracts and sermons.

In 1382 he was suspended from teaching at Oxford; he retired to his rectory at Lutterworth, continued to write, and died on Old Year's Day, 1384.

It is impossible, here, to enter into theological details, but Wyclif anticipated many of the great multitude of ideas which flooded Western Europe at the beginning of the Reformation. If we open his sermons at random, we find him preaching on Lazarus and Dives, "how richessis be perilouse, for lightli wole a riche man use hem unto moche lust," that is,

luxury. Words of Latin origin are nearly as common in his style as in that of Chaucer or Piers Plowman. In his Englishing of the Bible, Wyclif uses "And" at the beginning of many sentences, just as Mandeville does in his amusing and fabulous "Travels". The sermons have the double merit of being very short, and very plain, with no rhetorical flowers. The tracts can scarcely be called amiable: the word "stinking," for example, is not thought by Wyclif too strong to apply to "proud priests of Rome and Avignon".

All these brave and earnest men, the Wyclifite pamphleteers and "poor priests," and Piers Plowman, with their socialism and their doubts, their "New Theology," were rehearsing in mediaeval costume the drama of to-day; while Chaucer was arraying the heroes of the Fleece of Gold, of Troy, and of the Achæans, in the armour of the men who fought at Crécy and Poitiers. What remains as a gain to literature is the art of Chaucer.

Sweet reasonableness and urbane irony are not to be expected from men full of righteous indignation, and in great danger of being burned alive; for by this penalty did the Church and State suppress the preachers of doctrines which were apt to cause dangerous popular tumults. The Wyclifite Biblical translations look like a canvas later embroidered on by the authors of King James's authorized version, that immortal monument of English prose.

Chaucer's Prose Style.

It was not in the nature of these Reformers to follow the counsel of Chaucer's good Parson in the "Parson's Tale" (the spelling may here be modernized, as an example of the poet's prose).

"Certainly chiding may not come but out of a villain's heart, for after the abundance of the heart speaketh the mouth full often. And ye should understand that I Look ever when any man shall chastise another, that he beware of chiding and reproving, for truly, unless he be wary, he may full lightly kindle the fire of anger and of wrath which he should quench, and peradventure slayeth him whom he might chastise with benignity.... Lo, what saith saint Augustine, 'there is nothing so like the Devil's child as he that often chideth'. Now cometh the sin of them that sow and make discord among folk; which is a sin that Christ hateth utterly, and no wonder it is; for he died to make concord. And more sin do they to Christ, than did they that

him crucified; for God loveth better that friendship be among folk than he did his own body, which he gave for unity."

Chaucer's country-priest, not the chiding Wyclifite Sons of Thunder, is the true Christian. There is more of the spirit of the Master in the caressing words of Chaucer's address to "little Louis my son... pray God save the king that is Lord of this lande, and all that him faith beareth and obeyeth, each in his degree, the more, and the less," than in torrents of bitter chiding, and a hail of unpublishable vituperation.

The English of Chaucer's treatise of "The Astrolabe," despite its difficult astronomical matter, is pellucid, and there is a charm of rhythm in his prose translations of the verses in Boëthius.

Trevisa.

The English prose of John Trevisa, a Cornish priest, educated at Oxford, and a traveller on the continent (died 1412), was entirely given to translation from the Latin. He is said, by Caxton, to have translated the Bible: he certainly made an English version of the "Polychronicon" of Ranulf Higden, the monk of Chester, which begins with the Creation, and is rich in geographical and social information.

Trevisa occasionally inserts notes of his own. His versions of Higden, and of the mythical popular science and prodigious fables contained in the "De Proprietatibus Rerum" ("Concerning the Properties of Things") of Bartholomæus the Englishman, were very popular, as their amusing nature deserved, and the "Polychronicon" was printed by Caxton. Trevisa himself tells us that in his day English boys in grammar schools were ceasing to learn French, and there was a public for English books supposed to be educational.

Mandeville.

The most famous and by far the most interesting of these adapters of foreign books is the so-called Sir John Mandeville, with his "Voiage and Travaile". The author of this book was not an Englishman, at least he did not write in English, and did write in French, at Liège, about the end of the

fourteenth century. It is impossible and unnecessary to discuss here the fables about Mandeville. The author of the book declares that he himself is "Sir John to all Europe," is an Englishman born at St. Albans, that he passed the sea in 1322, that he travelled in Tartary, Persia, Armenia, Lybia, Chaldæa, the land of the Amazons, India, and so forth. In fact he resembles Widsith in the ancient Anglo-Saxon poem—he has been almost everywhere and knows almost everything. He especially writes for pilgrims to Jerusalem; he first wrote his book in Latin, then translated it into French, and finally into English. There are countries that he has not seen; and he says that he could not play a part in the deeds of arms which he beheld. Now he suffers from arthritis, "gowtes artetykes," and he amuses himself by writing his adventures in 1357.

Another version of Sir John's career is given by Jean d'Outremeuse, a writer of histories, who had the felicity of hearing from an old man with a beard in 1472, that *he* was the genuine Mandeville: but that the author was really Jean d'Outremeuse is not so certain. The author, whoever he was, stole from a manuscript of the time of the First Crusade, and from the book of Odoric, a Franciscan missionary, and the Itinerary of William of Boldensele, (1332-1336) from a History of the Mongols, from a forged letter of Prester John—from every source whence he could pick amusing stories. He fabled with a direct and honourable simplicity which is comparable to that of Defoe, and to the straightforward and moderate statements of Swift's Captain Lemuel Gulliver. With the spelling modernized it is thus that the good knight tells the story of the Pygmies who were known to Homer for their battles with the cranes.

"The folk be of little stature, but three span long, and they be right fair and gentle, after their quantity, both the men and the women. And they marry them when they be half a year of age, and get children. And they live not but six or seven years at the most. And he that liveth eight years, men hold him there right passing old.... And they have often war with the birds of the country that they take and eat. These little folks labour neither in lands nor in vineyards. But they have great men among them of our stature that till the land and labour amongst the vines for them. And of the men of our stature have they a great scorn and wonder as we would have among us of Giants if they were amongst us."

Mandeville speaks as calmly about the ants, known to Herodotus, which guard the hills of gold, and are as large as hounds; and of the devil's head in the valley perilous, through which the knight and his company travelled in great fear, "and therefore were we the more devout a great deal". Thence he reached an isle where men are from twenty-eight to thirty feet in stature, "and they eat more gladly men's flesh than any other flesh," being indeed the Læstrygonians who devoured the men of Odysseus, or the Mermedonians of the Anglo-Saxon poem of "St. Andreas," who meant to devour St. Matthew. Mandeville enjoyed and deserved great popularity, being a follower of Lucian's "True History," and a predecessor of Gulliver.

Pecock. "The Repressor."

A writer of English prose even more interesting, though much less popular and amusing than Mandeville, is Reginald Pecock (1395-1460), the deposed Bishop of Chichester, author of "The Repressor of overmuch blaming of the Clergy". The clergy blamed Pecock, and repressed him. This remarkable man, born shortly before the date of Chaucer's death, in North Wales, was a Fellow of Oriel College, Oxford (1417), was patronized by Humphrey, Duke of Gloucester, obtaining the Mastership of Lord Mayor Whittington's school in London (1431), became Bishop of St. Asaph (1444), and passed his life in attempts to convert the Lollards by persuasion, not by the stake. "The clergy shall be condemned at the last day," he writes, "if by clear wit they draw not men into consent of true faith otherwise than by fire, sword and hangment; although I will not deny these second means to be lawful, provided the former be first used." In the opinion of the Lollards, nothing in ecclesiastical matters was defensible that was not positively inculcated in the Bible as interpreted by the average Christian man, however unlettered. Pecock defended Episcopacy, and even defended non-preaching Bishops, on the score that they had to discharge more important duties. Even the much abused friars he stood up for, arguing that, whatever their offences, they and the world would be worse rather than better if there were no religious orders. His arguments in support of the begging Franciscans who, in counting up money, touched it with a stick, not with the hand, are certainly even more sophistical than ingenious.

He wrote many pamphlets still in manuscript; the "Repressor" is of 1455, and is a most remarkable book in all ways. Pecock became vastly unpopular, because he was too clever, and, in his dislike of religious persecution, as well as in the nature of his arguments, was in advance, not only of his own age, but of the age of the Reformation. He was thought to give far too high authority to reason, and to the natural faculties of man in the way of developing unrevealed morality and unrevealed religion. "No virtue or governance or truth into which the judgment of man's reason may sufficiently ascend or come to, to find, learn, and know it without revelation from God, is grounded on Holy Scripture."

This conclusion arrives at the end of a sentence of thirty lines, a fair example of Pecock's logical and legal style, by him first used in English. It is not possible, here, to discuss Pecock's ideas, which are concerned with questions that still divide the Church and the world, Anglicans, Catholics, Nonconformists, and Agnostics. The "Repressor" has been described as "the earliest piece of good philosophical disquisition of which our English prose literature can boast"; it may still be read with interest, especially by students of the Reformation. Pecock was opposed to the unjust and brutal war of conquest and of disaster waged by England in France.

In 1450 he became Bishop of Chichester, and shared the unpopularity of the Duke of Suffolk, who was blamed for the disasters in France. His "Book of Faith" (1456) practically abandoned the infallibility of the Church in 1457; he was as unpopular with the clergy as with the mob; twenty-four doctors reported unfavourably on his works: he was a defender of "drowsy reason" and of "unrevealed morality": he was found guilty of heresies which were no heresies, and, with no choice except that of being burned alive, he signed a confession and abjuration of sins which he had not committed: he was consigned to close confinement in the Abbey of Thorney, was deprived of his bishopric—and of writing materials—and died obscurely.

The source of his misfortunes was this: he was not only clever but he knew it, and wrote that whatsoever man did not agree with an argument of his "is duller than any man ought to be". As few agreed, most were dull, and they did not like to be told it.

CAPGRAVE.

John Capgrave (1393-1464), a Norfolk priest, and Augustinian canon, author of many scriptural commentaries and of a work on "Illustrious Henrys," wrote in English a "Chronicle of England," beginning with the Creation and ending in 1417. Capgrave reminds us that Adam "was made on a Friday, in the field of Damascus"; the date was unlucky. He is nearly as brief as the Anglo-Saxon "Chronicle," his account of Agincourt is no longer than the "Chronicle's" description of Hastings. Here is a sample of his style. "In the same yere III beggeres stole III childyr at Lenne, and of on thei put oute his eyne, the othir they broke his bak, and the thirde thei cut off his handis and his feet, that men schuld of pite give hem good. Long aftir the fadir of on of hem, wheech was a marchaund, cam to London, and the child knew him and cried loude 'This is my fadir.' The fadir took his child fro the beggeris and mad hem to be arrested. The childirn told alle the processe, and the beggeris were hangen, ful well worthy." Such is Capgrave's work, described by himself as "a short remembrance of old stories."

Lord Berners.

Later by two generations, John Bourchier, Lord Berners, was born about the time of Capgrave's death, and while Malory was writing his "Morte d'Arthur" (born 1467, died 1533). As Captain of Calais, the last spot of land held by England in France, Lord Berners had leisure enough, which he spent in translating Froissart, and the French romance of "Huon of Bordeaux" and Oberon the fairy king, "Arthur of Little Britain," and Guevara's Spanish "Dial for Princes," with the "Carcel de Amor" and the "Libro Aureo," books which more or less anticipate the antitheses of "Euphuism". In his translation of Froissart, Berners follows the style of the original, his language is much akin to that of Malory: in his prefaces he is more rhetorical and "aureate," and has a habit, like Sir Robert Hazlewood in "Guy Mannering," of treble-shotting his verbs. "Histories show, open, manifest, and declare to the reader by example of old antiquity, what we should inquire, desire, and follow, and also what we should eschew, avoid, and utterly fly." This mannerism is tedious, but the translation itself is in admirably simple and expressive English.

CHAPTER XIII.

MALORY.

Much the most important novelty in the literature of this period is the "Morte d'Arthur," finished by the author, Sir Thomas Malory or Maleor, in 1469, and published in 1485. Malory is believed to have been the Squire of Newbold Revell in Warwickshire, born about 1400 (?) and a retainer of that Richard Beauchamp, Earl of Warwick, who was called "the Father of Courtesy" by the Emperor Sigismund, and was the cruel jailer of Jeanne d'Arc at Rouen (1430-1431), where she was burned. Malory appears to have joined the Lancastrian party in the Wars of the Roses; he, or a man of his name, was left out of a general amnesty granted by Edward IV, in 1468; he may have fled to Bruges and there made the acquaintance of Caxton, and Caxton, in his Preface to the "Morte," says that the book is printed "after a copy unto me delivered which Sir Thomas Malory did take out of certain books of French, and reduced it into English". Malory died in England, and was buried in the Grey Friars, near Newgate, in 1471.

As we have seen already, the true first sources of the immense body of Arthurian romance are obscure: the fountain-head is certainly Celtic, but the affluents are mainly French—without France the legend would have been but a small thing. Malory constantly refers to "the French book" for his statements, to what book he does not say, but the learned industry of Dr. Sommer has detected that, for the youth of Arthur, Malory used French romances of Merlin the Seer; used French authorities for the tales of Sir Tristram and Lancelot, and also freely employed an English metrical romance, "Morte Arthur," attributed to the mysterious Scot, Huchown. There are other sources, and Malory treats his authorities with much freedom, omitting, adding, and introducing confusions. His great romance has a definite beginning; it has a middle in the fatal revival of Arthurian chivalry in the search for the Holy Grail; and thence turns towards its end with the falling of Lancelot to his old sinful love of Guinevere, wife of Arthur, the decadence, the rebellion of Mordred, the passing of Arthur, and the penitence of Lancelot and Guinevere.

Malory's book may be called a work of true genius, so simple yet so noble is the prose style; so fine, loyal and chivalrous the temper, while even the

confusions add to the element of mystery and to the expectation and curiosity of the reader. Malory purges away the stupid monkish fables about the birth of Merlin by a machination of a devil: he does not linger over the long dull fables of Arthur's wars against the Anglo-Saxon invaders; he gathers the flower of the chivalry of the fourteenth century, while true love is his theme, with no palliation of the guilt of sinful love. His Lancelot deserves the Douglas motto of "tender and true," though

> His honour rooted in dishonour stood,
> And faith unfaithful kept him falsely true.

Hence comes the inevitable tragedy, the greatest in romance.

"Herein," says Caxton, rising to the height of Malory's own style, men "shall find many joyous and pleasant histories, and noble and renowned acts of humanity, gentleness, and chivalry. For herein may be seen noble chivalry, courtesy, humanity, friendliness, hardiness, love, friendship, cowardice, murder, hate, goodness, and sin. Do after the good, and leave the evil, and it shall bring you to good fame and renommee."

Many recent critics of Tennyson's "Idylls of the King," which is mainly derived from Malory, appear to think that Malory's "Morte d'Arthur" is a violent, brutal, licentious book, and that Tennyson invented the noble courtesy, chivalry, humanity to suit the middle-class morality of 1860. This opinion is merely stupid. "The Morte," it has been well said, "assumes the recognition of a loftier standard of justice, purity and unselfishness than its own century knew.... The motive forces are the elemental passions of love and bravery, never greed, or lust, or cruelty,"—except of course in traitors like Meliagraunce and Mordred. The knights have the strongest sense of fair play: Sir Lancelot bears no spite against Sir Palamedes, a pagan knight, who, from ignorance of the rules, deals a stroke in a tournament which the rules forbade. Their sense of honour is crystal-clear, and, as in Tennyson's Idylls, this honour and loyalty make the tragedy; the struggle between Lancelot's love of Guinevere, and his friendship for and loyalty to King Arthur. His sin brings its own punishment, he cannot win the vision of the Grail, that Holy thing: "blessed are the pure in heart for they shall see God".

Arthur himself, after the wars of his youth, is but faintly drawn: it is not for the King to seek adventures, but to hear the suits of his people who come to him for help and justice. A mystery of Fate hangs over him: he is smitten by

the sins of his knights, and passes away, sorely wounded but alive, as strangely as Œdipus in the tragedy of Sophocles: perhaps, who knows, to come again. "In Avalon he groweth old," in the peaceful hidden land of apples and apple-blossom.

The scenes all pass in a world where colours are magically soft and bright. There is an old song of the fourteenth century which gives the kind of colour that abounds in Malory.

Lully, lulley, lully, lulley
The fawcon hath borne my mate away!
He bare him up, he bare him down,
He bare him into an orchard brown.
In that orchard there was a hall
That was hanged with purple and pall.
And in that hall there was a bed,
It was hung with gold so red.
And in that bed there lieth a knight,
His wounds bleeding day and night.
By that bedside kneeleth a may,
And she weepeth both night and day.

This is like a song made on some scene in the Quest for the Grail.

Malory's world is "an unsubstantial fairy place," yet there is no fairy non-morality. There is the loftiest ideal among the knights who follow the gleam and fragrance of the Holy Grail. That all do not attain to their ideal is but the failing of human nature, the ideal is among them, they aspire to reach "the spiritual City". For Guinevere, Malory has the chivalrous compassion of Homer for Helen; of Chaucer for Criseyde, but while Helen wins, with light penance, to her home by the Eurotas, and her translation to Elysium, the Avalon of Greece, it is through many years of penance that Guinevere comes to her rest. What Shelley said of the end of the Iliad may be said of the last chapters of the "Morte," they die away "in the high and solemn close of the whole bloody tale in tenderness and inexpiable sorrow".

The prose with all its simplicity has rhythm and charm. Thus, "Therefore all ye that be lovers call unto your remembrance the month of May, like as did Queen Guinevere, for whom I make here a little mention, that while she lived she was a true lover, and therefore had she a good end". The words

spoken by Sir Ector over the dead body of Lancelot are one of the noblest passages in English prose.

The very titles of the chapters call us into the realm of romance, like a blast blown on Arthur's horn. "How Sir Lancelot came into the Chapel Perilous, and gat there of a dead corpse a piece of cloth and a sword." "How the damsel and Beaumains came to the siege, and came to a sycamore tree, and there Beaumains blew an horn, and then the Knight of the Red Lands came to fight him." "How Sir Lancelot, half-sleeping and half-waking, saw a sick man borne in a litter, and how he was healed with the Sangreal." Who can read the titles, and not make haste to read the chapters? The beautiful close of Tennyson's "Morte d'Arthur" is merely done into verse from the fifth chapter of Malory's twenty-first book,—the casting of Excalibur into the mere, and the coming of the barge with the elfin ladies, "many fair ladies, and among them all was a Queen, and all they had black hoods, and all they wept and shrieked when they saw King Arthur".

But for Malory, the old Arthurian romances would be known only to a few of the learned. Malory "made them common coin," his romance was neglected only in the eighteenth century. It has been the inspiration of many poets, but none can "recapture the first fine careless rapture," to which Tennyson comes nearest in the best of his "Idylls of the King," and in "Sir Galahad," and "The Lady of Shalott".

Next to Chaucer's poems, Malory's romance is the greatest thing in English literature from "Beowulf" to Spenser. To boys, and to men who retain the boy, the "Morte" is an inestimable treasure, which has not to be sought for in the seldom-visited shelves that hold the publications of learned Societies, but is within the reach of all.[1]

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[1] In the Globe edition, edited by Sir Edward Strachey. Macmillan & Co.

CHAPTER XIV.

EARLY SCOTTISH LITERATURE.

For purposes of convenience the development of "Ynglis" literature north of the Tweed and Esk, may be treated in this place.

Originally the "Scots" or Scottish tongue was Gaelic, the language of the Irish Scots who, landing in Argyll about A.D. 500, finally gave a dynasty and its existing name, to "Scot" land. When the dynasty acquired the Anglicized Lothian and much of Cumberland, it adopted the English speech, consequently the writers of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries in Scotland used a form of northern English or "Ynglis," and knew not Gaelic. They called their speech "English" till the long wars with England led them to draw a distinction and patriotically style it "Scots" or "Scottis". Thus by 1562, Ninian Winzett upbraids John Knox for "knapping English" in his writings, and forgetting the "Scots" that he learned at his mother's knee. Gaelic was no longer reckoned "Scots," it was Ersch, Yrisch, or Erse. Even before the days of Edward I, the town seal of Stirling, on the Forth, describes the Gaelic-speaking men north of Forth as *Scoti bruti.* The Scottish writers did not know, and therefore despised Gaelic, from which they have scarcely borrowed anything. Latin and French they knew, and enriched their tongue by borrowing from these sources.

The one verse of Scottish poetry that may have survived from the end of the thirteenth century, the lines on the death of Alexander III, are charming, but, if they were written at the time, or shortly after, they must have been modernized, more or less, when Wyntoun, the rhyming chronicler, quoted them about 1420, twenty years after the death of Chaucer.

BARBOUR.

Setting aside the enigmatic Huchown already discussed, John Barbour, author of "The Brus," a history of King Robert Bruce in rhyming octosyllabic couplets, is the first poet of English speaking Scotland. He remains one of the most spirited and readable; the most like Sir Walter Scott, who used his book in poetry and in prose historical writing.

By 1357 Barbour was Archdeacon of Aberdeen: he was probably born at least ten years before Chaucer. In 1357 he went, with others, to study at Oxford, probably at the Scottish college, Balliol. He also visited France, for studious purposes; he held a position in the Exchequer, and, after finishing "The Brus" in 1376, received a pension from Bruce's grandson, Robert II:

other pensions he received: he died in 1396. He had written other works, lost or disputable, and a romantic genealogy of the Stuarts, who were really Fitz Alans, and of ancient Breton origin, not, as was fabled, of the old Scoto-Irish dynasty. "A Buik of Alexander" (the romance of Alexander the Great), is attributed to Barbour with much probability.

Barbour possesses, unlike most of the narrative poets of the Middle Ages, one supreme advantage. He is not telling, for the twentieth time, the Tale of Troy, of Alexander the Great, of King Arthur, or of any dim mythical hero. The events in the history of Scotland which his own father witnessed, make one of the best stories in the world. Bruce was far from a faultless hero, but his adventures are picturesque facts, not inventions: though sometimes Barbour tells the same story twice, with variations. His many defeats, his wanderings in the heather, with a little company or with a single attendant; his flight over sea; his crossings of perilous lochs in frail boats; his single combats; the desperate chivalrous valour of his brother Edward; his own sagacity as a strategist and tactician; his kindness of heart; his love of the romances; the sufferings of his loyal friends, men and women; all his days of almost desperate warfare; all his escapes when surrounded in the hills of Galloway and of Argyll, are matters of historical fact, and can often be traced in English documents of the time. His "crowning mercy" Bannockburn, is as historical as Marathon or Waterloo.

When we think of the wild scenes in which Bruce warred and wandered, Loch Trool, Loch Awe, the whole of the Lennox, the uplands of Don and Dee; when we remember the blending of English armed knights, and of the plaided clans in the ranks of his enemies; his own combination of the Islesmen with "the dark impenetrable wood" of the Lowland spears; the many-hued silks of the standards; the cowled friars who prayed while the warriors fought; the fair ladies who shared the hero's dangers, we see that Barbour has a theme fresh, brilliant, and unique for his poem. He has a true story which is more thrilling than any invented romance.

Barbour notoriously, perhaps in the interests of poetic perspective, rolls up three Bruces, the grandfather, the father, and the hero himself, into one personage. Yet his statements of the numbers of the English engaged are sometimes corroborated by the English muster rolls. Before he has written three hundred lines he strikes the sonorous keynote of his narrative in that praise of Freedom which is worthy of the poet who fought at Marathon.

"Ah! freedom is a noble thing!"

In what other mediaeval romance can these lines be equalled? What wearies us in Barbour is the common defect of mediaeval poets, the occasional display of learning, references to what Cato did, or Hannibal, or Scipio, and the like, but Barbour is not tedious when, after giving a minute portrait of the good Lord James of Douglas, he compares him to Hector, though, for valour,

> To Hector dare I none compare
> Of all that ever in world were.

The story never drags, adventure follows adventure, and there is none of the weary exaggeration of romance. Bruce does not slay his thousands, like Arthur. When he, a mounted man in armour, Ms the better of three plaided clansmen, MacNaughton, who is of the hostile party, cries

> Surely, in all my time,
> I never heard, in song or rhyme,
> Tell of a man that so smartly
> Displayed such great chivalry.

But Bruce is soon obliged to give his horse to one of the ladies, and go on foot, like Prince Charles, living on such venison as his arrows may procure. Barbour has to invent no fanciful dangers; he knows the racing tides and dangerous shoals of Argyll—

> The waves wide that breaking were,
> Weltered as hills, here and there.

Unlike Chaucer, Barbour has a scorn of astrology: no man ever (he says) made three correct prophecies, by knowledge of the stars! He is far from scrupulous, and does not blame Douglas when, like Achilles, he slays prisoners of war: apparently because he could not take them with him in his retreat, and secure their ransoms. Barbour has not, of course, the genius of Chaucer; but he has a touch of the genius of Scott, he has spirit, and a true sense of loyalty, chivalry, and patriotism; these, with his subject, place him beside Chaucer in so far as that he may still be read with unaffected enjoyment.

Wyntoun.

Between Barbour and the first true Scottish disciple of Chaucer, James I, comes the author of a Chronicle in rhyming octosyllabic couplets "The Orygynale Cronykil". This is Andrew Wyntoun, who was a canon of St. Andrews Cathedral, and prior of St. Serfs on a little island in Loch Leven, the loch of Queen Mary's captivity. Wyntoun appears to have been an old man when, in 1413, the first Scottish university was founded at St. Andrews, by a bull of the Anti-Pope, Pedro de la Luna. The place must, with its Augustinian canons, have been a seat of learning before 1413, but the new university was very poor, and a thing of small beginnings.

Wyntoun's book commences with Adam and Eve, and is at fifth hand and fabulous till the author approaches his own time.

Mythical as is his work when he approaches his own date he, with Fordun, the really industrious author of the prose "Scotichronicon" (died about 1384), is one of our few sources of information about Scottish affairs. Wyntoun is amusing, but does not pretend to high poetic merit.

The Kingis Quhair.

To people who only know King James I of Scotland in history, his poem, "The Kingis Quhair" (book) must be rather disappointing. Fortune was his foe, as he says in the poem, and the foe of his House.

Born in July, 1394, young James was made prisoner in March, 1405-1406, and, for about eighteen years was a captive in England, or was led with the army of Henry V against his natural ally, Charles VII, the Dauphin of Jeanne d'Arc. The ransom demanded from James when released, in 1423, was ruinous; of his hostages, noblemen, some died in England; he found his country full of anarchy and treason; the disorders he suppressed with illegal vigour; he seized earldoms to which he had no right, he made powerful enemies, and, in 1437, he was slain by Robert Graeme and a band of Highlanders, at the Black Friars' in Perth. In England he had married Joan Beaufort, daughter of the Earl of Somerset, who lived to avenge him on his murderers with unheard-of cruelties.

When a man of James's intellect, character, and experiences writes a poem on his own taking at sea by faithless foes, his own long captivity, and his

own love-story, we naturally expect something of poignant personal interest. But we expect what his time, his taste, and his rank forbade him to give. Never was poetical tradition so crushing to originality as the tradition of the "Roman de la Rose".

For centuries each mediaeval poet aimed at saying just what his forerunners had said, and in much the same style: Barbour, of course, is an exception; *he* does not open with a sleepless night; a book read in bed; a dream of a May morning; a walk to a pretty river, a palace near the river, and all the rest of it. Barbour writes "like a man of this world".

But King James follows the fashion of allegory. He cannot sleep; he reads Boëthius in bed, Boëthius "full of moralities". He lies thinking over his sorrows when (this is original), the bell for matins rings, and

> Ay me thought the bell
> Said to me, tell on, man, quhat the befell.

He did not think that the Voice was a real Voice, "impression of my thought causes this illusion," said he, and though he had "spent much ink and paper to little effect," he sat down, made a mark of the cross, and set to work at his tale, first comparing his life to a ship in perilous seas, and then briefly mentioning his capture when about three years past the age of innocence (which was seven, he was, when taken, four years past seven). Birds, beasts, and fishes, he says, are free, why does Fortune make me thrall? He looks out of his window into a green garden; the nightingales sing; he sees, and describes very prettily, a fair lady walking with her two maidens, and falls in love. In all probability this is a mere imitation of the first sight of Emily by Palamon and Arcite, in Chaucer's "Knight's Tale". James would meet Jeanne in society: he was not a close prisoner, we are told that he knew many English ladies, and the course of his true love ran smooth enough. But the description is charming, as is the address to the nightingale which follows.

After this long and excellent passage of true poetry, fashion compels the King to visit the Palace of Venus and see the lovers of old times, converse with Venus and with Pallas, and visit Fortune with her Wheel, and take his place on it; then he awakes not "seeing all his own mischance". A white turtle-dove brings him flowers, and a glad message in letters of gold; and he blesses birds and flowers and even his prison wall, and

the sanctis marciall
That me first causit hath this accident.

The poem ends with an invocation of the shades of his "masters dear," Gower and Chaucer.

The manuscript, of about 1488, ascribes the poem to King James, so does Major or Mair, a not too trustworthy historian. The language is northern English, mixed with Scots, with many borrowings from Chaucer. The story indicated is true of James and of no one else, but the usual attempt has been made to deprive him of the authorship—wholly without success. The measure is the "rhyme royal" of Chaucer's "Troilus and Criseyde". The scansion is remarkably correct, and the lines have a melody not common in the works of Chaucer's followers. There is a strong moral element in the reflection and discourses.

Henryson.

Not a King like James I, nor a courtier priest, like Dunbar, his junior, but a schoolmaster of the Benedictine Abbey-school at Dunfermline, Robert Henryson had, among Scottish poets of his day, the greatest share of the spirit of their master, Chaucer. He may be the Robert Henryson who, already a Bachelor of Arts, joined the University of Glasgow in 1462, but nothing is certainly known of him. He wrote his "Morall Fabillis of Esope"

by request and precept of a lord,
Of whom the name it needs not record,

to he apparently had a patron destitute of vanity, and not ambitious of publicity. Henryson regarded Æsop, the mythical Greek slave, as "a noble Clerk," and made his own use of the tales of talking beasts, birds, and fishes, which are told among savages in most wild countries, and reached him, some of them by way of India, filtered through Latin, French, and English authors.

The animals are perfectly human in character, and give to Henryson, as later to Prior and La Fontaine, the opportunity to show his own wit, humour, and tolerant gentle nature. The tales are told in the seven line stanza, rhyme royal, of Chaucer's "Troilus and Criseyde". Even to-day they may be read with unfeigned pleasure, for their humorous and human studies of character,

for their unostentatious pictures of nature, of the little nest of the field mouse, the moors, the stubble fields, the warm storeroom of the burgess's house, where the town mouse has her hole, and for the unaffected sympathy with our wild kindred of fur and feather. The chatter of the hens, the widows of Chanticleer, when the fox, who has claimed old family friendship with the cock, flatters his vanity and carries him away, is far more pleasing than Dunbar's satire on his revolting Widow and two married women. One hen, Pertok, makes bitter moan for the cock, the common husband of them all, but Sprutok declares her intention to sing, "Was never widow so gay"; she enumerates the faults of the dear deceased; Pertok comes into her way of thinking; and Toppok speaks of the faithlessness of their late Lord. Heaven has punished Chanticleer, who, after all, cheats the fox, and returns to his harem.

"The Two Mice" is especially humorous, and as sympathetic as Burns's poem "The Twa Dogs". The tale is so vivid that we feel the keenest anxiety when Gib, or Gilbert, "our Jolly Cat," pounces on the country mouse; the town mouse knows her hole, and has fled thither. The horror of the town mouse when she has rural dainties placed before her by the country mouse, her mincing airs of patronage, are delicately touched; in short, with the Fox's confession to the priestly Wolf, and the Trial of the Fox; and the strained law which the Wolf administers to the Lamb, the fables are animated and delightful poetry in their kind: the Morals, as when the hard lot of the poor husbandmen is described, are far from contemptible. Had Henryson left nothing else we must recognize in him a true son of Chaucer.

His "Testament of Cresseyde" begins from a bitter winter night, when alone and snug in his warm room, he mends the fire, takes a drink, lays down his Chaucer, and ends the tale of fair false Cresseyde, whom Chaucer pitied. Chaucer was not the man to have created, like Thackeray, that other Cresseyde, Beatrix Esmond in her matchless bloom of triumphant beauty, and later to have drawn her as the old Baroness Bernstein. What Chaucer held his hand from,—the mediaeval tale of the punishment of false Cresseyde,—Henryson, not without a passion of pity, undertook. The gods sent on Cresseyde's beauty the plague of leprosy, a terrible malady scarcely known by name to the Greeks, but as common in the Middle Ages as in ancient Israel.

Diomede deserts Cresseyde; she becomes the common "spoil of opportunity," and returns to her father Calchas, priest of Venus. But "into the Kirk" Cresseyde is ashamed to go. In a trance she comes into the presence of Saturn, a frozen god, and of the other old deities. Saturn then condemns her. The lady awakes and sees in her glass that she is a leper. She goes to the lazar-house, she dwells and begs with the lepers: Troilus rides past, and knows her not, but, in some faint way, memory of his love for Cresseyde wakes in him, and for his lost love's sake he gives to the leper lordly alms, "a purse of gold and many a gay jewel".

And nevertheless not are are uther knew.

But another leper recognized Troilus, and Cresseyde, smitten to the heart, made her moan and her Testament, leaving to Troilus the royal ring and red ruby that he had given her long ago. So she died, and Troilus raised a tomb of marble to

Cresseid of Troyis toun,
Sumtyme countit the flour of Womanheid.

In the poem of this adventure there are but 616 lines; and it contains the poignant essence of romance; all passion and pity. Nothing in the poetry of Scotland excels, perhaps nothing but here and there the cry of a ballad, or of Scott's "Proud Maisie," approaches in excellence this work of the schoolmaster of Dunfermline.

His "Robene and Makyne," or love-dialogue between a lad and lass, the girl first wooing and repulsed; then wooed and scornful, is in a charming measure, and may have imitated some ancient French *pastourelle.*

The "Orpheus and Eurydice," that sad and beautiful tale—told by Maoris in New Zealand, and by Iroquois in America—of the man who seeks his dead wife in Hades, has merit in Henryson's version. The passage of Orpheus to and through Hades, where his music consoles Tantalus and Theseus, and wins the grace of Persephone, is excellent; the tragic close is not successfully handled, and the long Moral is tedious. A number of moral poems do not transcend the common course of those things, and Henryson lives by his "Fables," his "Testament of Cresseid," and "Robene and Makyne".

These, with the sympathetic kindliness of his unrepining nature place him, if an individual opinion may be given, high above his more famous contemporary, Dunbar.

Dunbar.

William Dunbar, whom Scott declared to be the greatest poet of Scotland prior to Robert Burns, took the degree of Bachelor of Arts at St. Andrews in 1477. Much later, lads of seventeen or even of fourteen, graduated, so Dunbar may have been born (in East Lothian) so early as 1460. His language, with some southern English tincture, is that of the most Anglicized part of Scotland. The Earls of Dunbar were a great shifting power on the Border, and Dunbar's name, at least, was noble, he may have come of Cospatrick's line (Earls of March).

A favourite Scottish form of verse was the "Flyting" (scolding) or humorous raillery, and Dunbar's opponent, Walter Kennedy, represented a very old Celtic clan of Galloway and Ayrshire: Dunbar banters him on his "Irish" dress and accent. Dunbar was brought up to be a Churchman, and was a novice in the Order of St. Francis, "begging with a pardon in all Kirks". From 1479 to 1491, he was travelling abroad, preaching and begging in France, far from honestly, he says:—

"I wes ay reddy all men to begyle," like Chaucer's Pardoner, but perhaps Dunbar was merely copying Chaucer. He is thought to have been attached to the Scottish Embassy in Paris, and he may have read, in print, the works of the famous burglar poet, Francois Villon. His recognized Masters, however, were Chaucer, Gower, and Lydgate.

From 1500 to the great defeat of Flodden (1513) and the death of James IV, Dunbar was a priest and poet at the Court of that magnificent prince, in whose days Scotland was peaceful, comparatively rich, and addicted to letters and the arts. Her poets, a century after Chaucer, and eighty years after their Royal leader, James I, were all Chaucerians, but were confessedly more vigorous, tuneful, more original in genius, and much less prolix and pedantic than the English Chaucerians, Lydgate, Gower, and Hawes. But what Dunbar lacks in length, he more than makes up for in breadth. He made Court poems on the Royal marriage of "The Thistle and the Rose" (Margaret, the Rose, was really as prickly as the Thistle). He was

but thriftily rewarded, and emitted many rhymed petitions for money. Benefice he got none.

Probably, like Dean Swift, he was thought no credit to his cloth, even in days far from respectable. As Chaucer was styled "Old Grizzle," so the Scot speaks of himself as "this gray horss, Auld Dunbar". At about 48, and in sickness, he wrote his "Lament for the Makaris," the dead "makers" or poets, including Chaucer, Gower, and Lydgate, with the recurring burden, *Timor mortis conturbat me*, "Fear of Death disturbeth me". In 1511 he was with the Queen at her reception in Aberdeen, which he celebrated, as he had already made immortal the filth and stench of Edinburgh, a town famous for its dirt till after Dr. Johnson's time. His humorous poems, his satires on society and clergy, are coarser than the English poetic attacks. His Three Wanton Wives, "Two Married Women and the Widow," is inspired by Chaucer's "Wife of Bath's Tale," or rather by the prologue.

Historically, these poems are full of matter, with their pictures of a society not more pure than that to which Piers Plowman preached, but they have not the gentle and humane wit of Chaucer. Like all the poets following Chaucer, Dunbar shines in descriptions of gardens and woods in spring, though May, in Scotland, is not always what his fancy painted it, indeed these vernal glories are borrowed from the verse of sunny France—

> The sun rises fair in France,
> And fair sets he,
> But he has tint the bonny blink
> He has in my ain countrie,

writes the Jacobite exile, accustomed at home, only to a "blink" or gleam of the sun through clouds. After 1520, or thereabouts, Dunbar saw no more of the sun.

Dunbar, with his satires, "flytings," Court poems, allegories of the usual kind, rhymed petitions, poems of penitence and faith, and the rest, was versatile enough, and wrote in many forms of verse, even in the old unrhymed alliterative cadences ("The tua Mariit Wumen and the Wedo"). To his glory be it said that this, his longest piece, is only of 530 lines. He also used the heroic rhymed couplet, "Riding Rhyme," and the rhymed octosyllabic couplet, strophes of various arrangements, and even the tripping French triolet.

One allegorical poem, "The Golden Targe," full of classical mythology and the usual praise of May, contains the lines

> O reverend Chaucere, Rose of rethoris all,
> As in our tong are flour imperiall,

"rethoris," being masters of rhetoric.

Dunbar escapes from Venus and other gods, and from a crowd of allegorical people—including Danger, of course,—at the end of 278 lines. Apparently Scotland did not love the long-winded style. The "flyting" combines with rhyme copious alliteration.

For wealth of strange coarse terms of abuse Dunbar may compare with Urquhart, the translator of Rabelais. A poem to the young Queen is unspeakably nauseous. In short to be plain, it is not easy to see why Dunbar has been reckoned above James I and Henryson; while Barbour, with a chivalrous heart and a spirited story, is infinitely more agreeable and profitable than the Court-haunting priest of James IV. In Scotland, Dunbar at no time has been so popular as the poets already mentioned. He praises Chaucer, but the lesson of Chaucer he never fully learned.

Blind Harry.

Blind Harry, or "Henry the Minstrel," is a mysterious personage. Who was Harry? John Mair or Major (1469-1550) (?) is not an accurate historian; the Antiquary, in Scott's novel, calls him "a pillar of falsehood". Major says that, in his own infancy (say 1480) a man blind from his birth wrote "Schir William Wallace," and supported himself by chanting it to the nobles. The manuscript is of 1488. A few entries of small sums paid to "Blind Harry" occur in the Royal accounts, ending in 1492, and Harry was dead when (1508) Dunbar printed his Lament for poets dead and gone. Harry may have become blind, but can hardly have been blind from his birth. Though he calls himself "a borel man," an unlettered man, he had some education; he was not a ballad maker, but produced a romance of nearly 12,000 lines. He says that he had a Latin source, a narrative written by Wallace's chaplain, John Blair, of which nothing is known.

He is full of anachronisms, and tells long adventures of Wallace with Edward I and his Queen which never occurred. Tradition, already mythical,

is his chief source, his Wallace is but little more historical than Grettir in the Icelandic Saga, and like him has dealings with a ghost, that of a slain man, which appears with its head in its hand. Wallace, whose wife, it is said, was slain by the English, is a very bloodthirsty hero; his manslayings and burnings of houses are many. Harry has not too high an opinion of Bruce. His hero, Wallace, has always been, thanks mainly to Harry, the most popular of Scottish heroes. Harry tells his tale with abundant energy; he hates the English infinitely more than the chivalrous Barbour did, and he is perfectly free from the influence of the "Roman de la Rose". His verse is not wholly correct; eight consecutive lines have the following rhymes, —"been, keen, saw, mean, seen, raw, knaw, teir, faw," indeed some passages have a kind of stanza formation, in the Second Book (lines 260-360).

We must not look on Harry as an unlearned maker of Border ballads. He had read Wyntoun, and Chaucer (though he does not make Chaucer his model), and he borrows from the alliterative romance of "Arthur" ascribed to the mysterious Huchown. Moreover, it has been proved, and anybody can see it, that he stole adventures of Robert Bruce from Barbour's poem, and made Wallace, not Bruce, their hero. Harry takes some of Bruce's battles and transfers them to Wallace. "Harry nearly uproots Barbour." Whereas Bruce, on the eve of Bannockburn, cut down Sir Henry Bohun, as he charged, with a blow of his axe, Harry declares that Wallace dealt this very stroke on Bruce's spear and horse's neck. To Wallace he attributes the famous campaign in which Bruce drove Edward II within the walls of York (1322).[1]

Harry is, in short, a mystery, and his book, wholly worthless as history, is a colossal perversion of Barbour "The Bruce," with other matter from pure fancy or from unknown legend, while great parts are played by men of Harry's own time, English in-evading knights of 1483.

The Buke of the Howlat.

Sir Richard Holland, or de Holand, a cleric, and a partisan of the House of Douglas during its encounters with the Crown, and its fall under James II, wrote, to please his patroness, the Countess of Moray, and to flatter the Douglas, "The Buke of the Howlat," the Owl. The poem, in stanzas of

thirteen lines, rhyming and alliterative, begins with the usual dream and leads up to a kind of allegorical "Parliament of Fowls". The allegory is entangled, the poet's real desire is to glorify his patrons with their motto,

O Dowglas, O Dowglas,
Tendir and Trewe!

"Trewe" they had been, to Bruce and to Scotland, but they became the allies, against king and country, of Edward IV and Henry VIII, while "tender" the Douglases never were. The most interesting passage describes the voyage of the good Lord James towards the Holy Land, with the heart of Bruce. In Spain he meets the Saracens in battle, and throws among them the Heart, in its jewelled case—

Amang the hethin men the hert hardely he slang,
Said, "Wend on as thou was wont,
Throw the batell in front,
Ay formost in the front,
Thy foes amang."

There fell the Douglas, above the heart of his king, that was rescued by Logan and Lockhart, and brought back to Scotland; a noble feat of chivalry, nobly told. Here Holland "stirs the blood like the sound of a trumpet".

It may be said of these Scottish poets that while, in initiative and in models they owe almost all to England, their long and desperate war with that country gives them a martial fire and spirit to which the English poetry of the time furnishes no rival. Laurence Minot does not stir the blood!

Gawain Douglas.

Gawain Douglas was of the family of the Red Douglases, Earls of Angus, who rose on the ruin of the turbulent Black Douglases, of the House of Bruce's good Lord James, when they failed in their alliance with England against the Crown of Scotland. The Red Douglases also rose high, and had their own feud with the Crown and alliance with or servitude to Henry VIII and the Protestant cause. Gawain was a younger son of the Earl of Angus called Bell the Cat, who hanged the artistic favourites of James III. As an old man he was present at Flodden (1513) where James IV died so gallantly, and his grandson, now Earl of Angus, married Dunbar's "Rose," Margaret

Tudor, widow of James IV. Gawain himself, born about 1473 or 1474, was educated at St. Andrews University, took orders, and, being of a powerful House, received rapid clerical promotion.

His poems were written in the peaceful and prosperous years of James IV, between 1501 and 1513, the date of Flodden and of the completion of Gawain's translation of the "Æneid" of Virgil. His earlier works "The Palice of Honour" and "King Hart," are merely rhymed allegories after the manner of the unceasing "Roman de la Rose," and have no special interest. What is true about one of these belated last allegories is true of another: they are no longer to be read for mere literary pleasure. In his "Æneid," Douglas introduces original prologues to the books of the "Æneid," rather in the manner of Scott's poetical epistles between the cantos of "Marmion". He describes winter, spring, and summer in Scotland. He criticizes, not unfavourably, the theology of Virgil, whom the Middle Ages regarded, now as a magician (like Ovid among the Italian peasantry to this day), and now as an inspired prophet of the coming of Our Lord. He attacks Caxton for printing a translation of Virgil, not from the original Latin, but from a French version. His criticism of Caxton is full of detail, and severe. He himself is "bound to Virgil's text," and he does not treat it, as a rule, with the licence of Chapman when rendering Homer into English verse; but Gawain remarks, truly, that sometimes of one word he must make three, must occasionally expand in exposition, and add, in colouring.

> Sum tyme I follow the text als neir I may,
> Sum tyme I am constreinit are uther way.

His remarks on the task of the translator show considerable reflection. On comparing the poem with the Latin it seems more close in sense to the great untranslatable original than might have been expected in an uncritical age and country. It is the first attempt in our language at the rendering of a great ancient classic, and, as such, looks forward to the new times, and to the Renaissance which, in Scotland, was mainly confined to Biblical criticism.

After Flodden, Gawain was immersed in politics, and in a long and futile struggle to obtain, through English influence, the Archbishopric of St. Andrews. For this he fought a triangular duel (nor were the weapons of the flesh unused), with Hepburn, the Prior, and Forman, a clerical diplomatist, who was successful. Gawain obtained the petty Bishopric of Dunkeld, on

the Tay, and died when on a political mission to London (1522). Gawain is almost the only Scottish example of a nobleman and a Churchman, in his age, distinguished for devotion to literary scholarship. There are a number of Scots poems, of this date, such as "Christ's Kirk on the Green" and "Peebles at the Play" (the best of them), which show much command of lively metre and rude descriptive powers where rustic merriment and horseplay are to be painted. But their dialect is usually uncouth, and they are only appreciated by special students.

Sir David Lyndsay.

The most popular of the old Scottish poets was not so poetical as Henryson, but gave pleasure by his genial character, his extremely coarse humour, and his attacks on the Churchmen and on abuses in the State. This author, Sir David Lyndsay, was born, perhaps at his family place, the Mount, in Fife, about 1490. His name "Da. Lyndsay" (if it be his) appears in the register of St. Andrews University besides that of the man whom he hated so much, and attacked in verse after his murder, the great Cardinal Beaton. By 1511, Lyndsay was a page at Court, and acted in a play at Holyrood. In 1512, Lyndsay was Master of the Household, or chief attendant of the infant Prince, later James V. He was present when the apparition described in "Marmion" gave a warning, in church, to James IV, just before Flodden, and told Lyndsay of Pitscottie, the amusing chronicler, that he tried to arrest the figure "but he vanished away as if he had been a blink of the sun or a whiz of the whirlwind". Till 1522 his chief business was to teach and amuse the boy, James V;

> I bore thee in mine arm
> Full tenderly,

and, later, told him fairy tales such as the story of the Red Etin, or disguised himself as "the grisly ghost of Guy".

About 1528 Lyndsay wrote "The Dreame" (the usual allegorical dream), in 1529 he was made chief herald, "Lord Lyon King of Arms," and as such went on many foreign embassies. In 1539-1540 his great play, "The Satire of the Three Estates," was acted before the Court; it is the only early Scottish drama that survives. There are two Parts, and three interludes full of matter wonderfully coarse. The play is all in favour of reforms, and is

full of the satire of the Churchmen and pleadings for the poor which ensured its popularity. There are some seventy characters, most of them allegorical personages. The King delighted in the satire, and as Lyndsay attacked the vices of the clergy and the Pardoners, not the doctrines of the Church, he ran no risk of martyrdom. The verse is in many forms and different sorts of stanzas, in rhyming couplets of eight syllables, or of ten or more.

After James's death and the murder of Cardinal Beaton, Lyndsay wrote a poem, "The Tragedy of the Cardinal" in which his ghost accuses himself of many sins and crimes, and is sure that Boccaccio would write "my tragedie," if Boccaccio were still alive. Lyndsay died early in 1555. His most popular poem, probably, was a good-humoured romance, "Squire Meldrum," about the fighting adventures, at home and abroad, of a young Fife laird of the period. He wrote many other things, humorous or grave, admonitions to the King, and a reply to a "Flyting" or scolding, of the King against him, in verse; unluckily the Royal lampoon is lost. A Lament for James's first wife who died young; a very humorous set of verses on the King's dog; and a "Dialogue between Experience and a Courtier," with shorter pieces, grave or gay, make up Lyndsay's contribution to the literature of his country. They are full of historical hints, but, merely as poetry, are now seldom read, as Henryson may be read, for pleasure. The Reformation, breaking out in 1559, distracted men's minds from secular literature, to which, for more than a century, Scotland contributed nothing of real importance except the "History of the Reformation" by John Knox, the Reformer. This work is written in such English (not Scots) as Knox could command, for in origin it was meant to be read in England, and to justify the proceedings of the Reformers. It is partly derived from memory of the events and the memory is sometimes strangely inaccurate. Public documents are inserted at full length, in one case with some lack of candour, and actions are denied which, later, were acknowledged. The book, as history, needs to be cautiously studied, but as a picture of the men and women of the age, especially of Knox himself and Queen Mary, it is most vivacious, and may be read with interest and amusement. Knox's other works, theological, epistolary, and political, were written to meet the needs of the moment, and are of little value except to historians and students of the career and character of the author.

[1] See proofs by Mr. George Neilson, in Blind Harry's "Wallace," "Essays and Studies," by Members of the English Association, 1910.

CHAPTER XV.

POPULAR POETRY. BALLADS.

The fifteenth and sixteenth centuries in England and Scotland were rich in popular poetry and in ballads. We must define the meaning of "popular" and "ballad" poetry, as used in this chapter.

Much confusion and much controversy exist regarding this matter of ballads and popular poetry. To understand the subject it is necessary to be acquainted with the results of research in the *orally transmitted* verse of peoples in every stage of culture; for till elementary instruction in reading and writing become universal, the untaught rural classes retain, in their songs, the literary methods of the quite uncivilized races of Australia, North America, Africa, and so on.

Taking the, peoples lowest in civilization, we find that the Australian blacks and the American Red Indians have several kinds of songs, usually sung in dances, whether festive or religious or magical. They have magic chants, and even hymns, often unintelligible to those who sing them in the dance, either because the language is obsolete, or because the songs have been borrowed from tribes of alien speech. It is clear that in Europe, too, the ballad was originally a dancing song ("ballad" is from *ballare*, to dance), and where a story was told, that was given in recitative, while the dancers followed each line of narrative with a chorus or refrain, such as

There were three ladies lived in a bower,
Oh wow! bonnie.
And they went out to pu' a flower
On the bonnie banks o' Fordie.

The story told in the recitative, in surviving examples, was probably, at first, composed by one author, versifying a popular tale, of unknown antiquity, or narrating some recent event. Even now in the remoter isles of the Hebrides, various singers, each in turn, improvise and chant verses, and thus a kind of ballad is made collectively. But it is plain that for each of our oldest surviving narrative ballads there must have been one original author, whether his theme was an old story or a recent occurrence,—on the Borders usually a cattle raid, the escape of a prisoner, or a battle. There would be no *professional* poet, as Queen Mary's ally, Bishop Leslie of Ross tells us, in his "History of Scotland," "the Borderers themselves make their own ballads, about the deeds of their ancestors, or crafty raids or forays". Such unwritten songs would be altered by every singer, as time went by, so that these ballads as they stand are thoroughly popular and "masterless," many hands have combined to bring them into their present state.

The Robin Hood ballads, or songs about Robin Hood, are mentioned by Piers Plowman as popular among the peasants at the end of the fourteenth century. They would be sung in connexion with the very ancient festivities of May Day, held in England and Scotland, when money was collected, rather roughly, from spectators and passers-by. Now Wynkyn de Worde, the successor of Caxton as a printer, published a "Lytil Geste" of Robin Hood (about 1490). But we are not obliged to suppose that the songs known to Piers Plowman were borrowed from the

"long Geste" of Robin Hood; more probably the "Geste" was derived from the popular traditions and rhymes of the May Day show of Robin Hood. How far these ballads as they now exist have been organized and improved upon by a professional minstrel it is hard to say. In any case the older ballads are worthy of merry England.

The ballads of King Arthur are manifestly popularized and reduced to the simple ballad form from the long literary romances, and are probably the work of lowly professional minstrels.

The long ballad of "Flodden Field" is the work of a partisan of the Stanley family, it is far too long (over 500 lines), and too full of historical detail, for a ballad made by the Borderers themselves. "Scottish Field" (Flodden) is another piece of the same sort, in alliterative measure.

The class of ballad which was made as a narrative of current events, or a satire on contemporaries (of such ballad-satires Henry VIII complained to James V) was usually, in England, the work of a versifying journalist of the humblest sort, and was printed. John Knox tells us that ballads were made on Queen Mary's Four Maries (Mary Livingstone, Mary Fleming, Mary Beaton and Mary Seaton), and these, it is plain, were satirical. But the only survivor of these ballads, "Mary Hamilton," is romantic, and in all its many various forms transfers, to a non-existent Mary, the misfortunes of a French waiting-maid of the Queen, who, with her lover, an apothecary, was hanged for the murder of their child. In only one text is the lover an apothecary: the lady is sometimes not an apocryphal Hamilton, but a Campbell, daughter of the Duke of Argyll; or a daughter of the Duke of York, or even "Mary Mild" (or Mile) which is the name of our Lady in old carols. For the lover, the poet chooses Henry Darnley, husband of Queen Mary, or that old offender, "Sweet Willie," or any one; and this is a good example of the changes which popular ballads underwent in recitation. As they stand, the multitude has collaborated in them, reciters have altered the original in many ways.

Such ballads differ much from "Lady Bessy," with its 1080 lines, probably written by Humphrey Brereton in honour of the House of Stanley and of Lady Bessie's revenge on Richard III. Some verses are as spirited as those of "Kinmont Willie," a Border ballad to which Scott lent the vigour of the last and greatest of the Border makers, for probably the finest verses in the song are by Sir Walter himself: at all events he improved what old verses he found.

At Bosworth Field, when all is lost, Sir William Harrington says to Richard III:—

"There may no man their strokes abide,
The Stanleys' dints they be so strong,
Ye may come in another time;
Therefore methink ye tarry too long."

As lion-hearted as his namesake Richard I, Richard III replies:—

"Give me my battle-axe in my hand,
And set my crown on my head so high,
For by Him that made both sea and land,
King of England will I this day die.

"One foot of ground I will not flee
While the strength abides my breast within,"
As he said so did it be,
If he lost his life he died a king.

The early history of our purely romantic ballads, such as "Clerk Sanders," "The Douglas Tragedy," "The Dowie Dens o' Yarrow," "Young Beichan," "The Wife of Usher's Well," "Fair Annie," "Tamlane," and many more, is obscure. They have analogues in all European countries,

from Greece to Scandinavia, and in popular tales, the oldest things in literature. Their extraordinary charm, their touch of supernatural terror, their simplicity, their recurring formulæ of words, their brevity and pathos, make them things apart. The heart of humanity is their maker, though in each country where they exist local allusions and local colour have been given to them by the singers. When such ballads have been worked over by some hack of the early Press they are often worthless; the best have been collected from oral recitation, or old written copies.

There can be no universal theory of the origin of ballads; each ballad must be examined by itself before we can say whether it is a popularized shape of a literary romance, or a versified "Märchen" worked over by many hands in many ages, or a mere mythical news-letter, like "King James and Brown"; or the work, like "Otterburne," of a humbler poet than the minstrels of the Stanleys, but a better poet; or one whose work has been improved by the modifications of later singers; or whether the thing is a dance song, contributed to by each dancer in turn; or a brief and beautiful lament like "The Bonny Earl o' Murray". The best traditional ballads have the colour and fragrance of wild flowers.

Curious and very ancient traits of popular usages may be gathered from the songs of merrymaking, for example in the songs of Ivy, the badge of the women, and of Holly, the badge of the men. Girls and lads bring ivy and holly into halls and a fight ensues, the girls are thrust out into the cold.

"Nay, nay Ivy it may not be, I wis,
For Holly must have mastery, as the manner is."

The girls burned the "Holly boy" of the men, the men burned the "Ivy maid" of the girls. This ancient feud of the sexes, and of their patron birds, exists among the tribes of South-Eastern Australia, the men killing the bird of the women, the women the bird of the men, and an amorous kind of combat follows.

The old ballad of "Chevy Chace," a form of the older ballad on the battle of Otterburn (1388) was warmly praised by Sir Philip Sidney. Later Addison took delight in ballads: they began to be collected and printed in volumes towards the end of the seventeenth and early in the eighteenth century. In 1765 Bishop Percy printed many ballads and other early poems from a manuscript, the "Folio" which he found, tattered and mutilated, in the house of a friend. Percy, in his "Reliques," omitted, altered and modernized the contents of the Folio, but it was very popular. In 1803 and later Sir Walter Scott published "The Border Minstrelsy," containing many excellent old ballads, in places modified by himself, from manuscripts, recitations, and printed copies. It is in "The Minstrelsy" that we find the "classical" versions of the ballads; there are many other collections.

We have put into smaller type a short account of the probable origins and development of the ballad, because a study of these subjects is mainly based on folk-lore and on research into the unwritten poetry of backward races. The reader of poetry who is not concerned about an obscure and difficult subject, is best advised if he takes up Scott's "Border Minstrelsy" and reads it "for human pleasure". He will find endless variety of strong, simple, passionate poetry, seldom made difficult by obsolete words, for the ballads are, however old, far less Scots in language than the poems of Burns. Another good collection is the abridgement by Professor Kittredge, of the

late Professor Child's vast collection of ballads in five volumes, a work indispensable to the special student.

Though it is not a ballad, the most beautiful and loyal piece of masterless poetry of this age is "The Nut Brown Maid," already old when it was published in 1502. This is a defence of woman's faithfulness in love, the maid will follow her outlawed lover to the greenwood, ay, even if he have another lady there. Her lover replies:—

Lo yet, before, ye must do more,
    Yf ye wyll go with me:
As cut your here up by your ere,
    Your kyrtel by the kne;
With bowe in hande, for to withstande
    Your enemyes, yf nede be.

Scott's song, "Greta Banks," in "Rokeby," repeats the sentiment and metre of this beautiful poem, with its music and mastery of changing refrains and various measures. Some of the carols too, such as "I sing of a Maid," are the earliest notes in the bird-like music of the lyrists under Elizabeth and Charles I.

PROFESSIONAL POETRY.

Skelton. Barclay.

Meanwhile professional poetry of society and the Court was sinking to the lowest depth. The verse of the prolific priest and scholar, John Skelton (born 1460? died 1529?), leads nowhere, and though it is full of historical and personal interest, must not detain us. Skelton had honours of a sort, as Laureate, from Oxford, Cambridge, and Louvain. He translated parts of Cicero and other classics, and, in 1500, was highly praised by the famous Erasmus, who later brought the study of the New Testament in Greek to England, and was the wittiest of scholars in the Revival of Learning and of Greek literature. Skelton had Latin enough, of Greek not much, and about 1500 was tutor of the future Henry VIII. His profuse poetry is mainly in long but lively stretches of doggerel; very short rhyming verses, generally satirical, poured from him ceaselessly. He had a "flyting" or scolding match like that of Dunbar and Kennedy, with Sir Christopher Garnesche; he lamented at terrible length the death of "Philip Sparrow," slain by "our Cat Gib"—nothing can be less like Catullus's dirge for Lesbia's sparrow, but some graceful compliments to young ladies are intermixed with the doggerel. He owed the Rectory of Diss, Norfolk, probably to his patron, Wolsey, but for some unknown reason he later pursued Wolsey with libellous satires.

In "The Bowge of Court," when he relapses into stanzas and the outworn allegorical verbiage, he satirizes Court life. In "Colyn Clout," his hero is a tramp, as vehement in attack on all sorts and conditions of men as Piers Plowman. Wolsey was attacked as a despot in "Colyn Clout," and much more bitterly assailed in "Why come ye not to Court": after writing this piece Skelton fled

from his foes and creditors to sanctuary in Westminster. He wrote a long "Morality," "Magnificence," with the usual personified vices and virtues. In very bad taste he hurled doggerel at "King Jimmy," James IV, after his glorious death at Flodden, and, more deservedly, attacked the Scots who deserted the Duke of Albany and the French when the Duke wished to lead them across the Tweed.

A brief sample of Skelton when most Skeltonical is his reply to the alleged boast of the Scots that they won the battle of Flodden.

That is as true
As black is blue
And green is grey
Whatever they say
Jemmy is dead
And closed in lead,
That was their own king:
Fie on that winning!

Even in his own country, as he admits, the execrable taste of Skelton was reproved. He had a rude kind of vigour, but his verses make it manifest that a new strain of blood, as it were, was needed in English poetry: old forms, such as the allegorical form, were outworn quite, and verse resembling the poem of Aramis, in lines of one syllable, could not endure, while Skelton's "Crown of Laurel" mixes his own blusterous humour with the stale learning, and pompous allegory of the fifteenth century; and "The Tunning of Eleanor Rummyng" (an ale-wife), in doggerel, is as offensive as the Scottish song, "There was a haggis in Dunbar," and extends to 620 lines. Very truly quoth Skelton:—

I have written too mytche
Of this mad mummynge
Of Elynour Rummynge.

BARCLAY.

Alexander Barclay (died 1552) was probably not a Scot, though his name is spelt in the Scots not the English way (Berkeley). His high praises of James IV of Scotland, however, scarcely indicate an English author, and he was very early regarded as a Scot. He was a priest, a monk of Ely; he dwelt long at St. Mary Ottery in Devon, and was a copious translator. His "Ship of Fools" (1508-1509) is from the German "Narrenschiff" of Sebastian Brandt: his "Castle of Labour," from the French of Gringore was an earlier work. His "Eclogues," in part translated, are very unlike those of Virgil, and their contents are growls in the style of "Colyn Clout".

Barclay used French and Latin versions of the "Narrenschiff," as well as the original "Dutch". He altered and added to his original as he pleased, and he prolongs the cry against abuses raised by Piers Plowman. A writer who takes all follies and vices for his theme, from the frauds of friars, the wickedness of heretics, the oppressions of knights, to the peevishness of the patient who kicks over the table on which the physic bottles stand, can never want matter, and Barclay's matter is exceeding abundant.

But the clever contemporary woodcuts that illustrate his satire are better than his two thousand irregular stanzas in rhyme royal, and if Barclay quarrelled with Skelton the affair is like a feud between Bavius and Maevius. The two writers are characteristic of their rude and chaotic age, which, as regards all but popular poetry, was the dark hour before the dawn.

CHAPTER XVI.

RISE OF THE DRAMA.

In one shape or another, the drama, acting with or without written words, is always in existence, at least in the form of pantomime, even among the rudest peoples. The Church permitted a kind of half-ritual, half-dramatic representation of sacred scenes at a very early period: but we have no earlier relic of English written plays than the very brief "Harrowing of Hell" of the first half of the fourteenth century. There are a few speeches between our Lord and Satan, and our Lord and the released Hebrew patriarchs. A good idea of the plays of the fifteenth century may be obtained from the set called the "Townley Plays" because the manuscript belonged at one time to the old Jacobite family of Townley. It is thought to have been originally the property of the Abbey of Woodkirk or Widkirk near Wakefield, and one play, the second play representing the Shepherds at the birth of Christ, contains allusions to the country scenes near Woodkirk. The plays were acted on movable wooden stages, by the members of the various trade guilds, such as the Glovers, the *Barkers* (Tanners, "There is brass on the target of *barkened* bull's hide," says Scott in "Bonnie Dundee"), the Grocers, and so forth.

The plays of one town are sometimes the basis of the plays of another town, some of those of York follow those of Wakefield, and in places Wakefield borrows from York. The authors are unknown; if they were priests, these clerics had much more of broad humour than of reverence as we understand it. No doubt the plays informed the spectators on points of the scriptural story, but the religion was highly recreative. Nothing can have been more amusing to the crowd than the spectacle of their neighbours playing all manner of highly laughable pranks by way of illustrating the gross, grumbling, reckless, impudent Cain; or the rustic waggeries of the local

shepherds of Bethlehem. Even now the words of the plays make a man laugh aloud, in the comic parts, as he reads them. They are of the broadest farce, yet our mirth rises more from the character displayed than from mere practical buffoonery and clowning. The Tanners enacted the "Creation"; the Glovers, the "Death of Abel". Many Old Testament stories were played, the unaccomplished Sacrifice of Isaac, the story of Abraham, and so on, with the Birth, Crucifixion, and Ascension of our Lord, and the soliloquy and suicide of Judas, a fragment.

Whoever the authors may have been, they took pains to represent the most unearthly characters as very human, though the opening soliloquy of the Deity at the Creation is orthodox and majestic. The Cherubim then take up the tale, praising the Works, especially praising Lucifer, "He is so lovely and so bright!" Lucifer enters and, accepting the praise, proposes to be Lord of all and says that the Throne becomes him rarely, taking his seat on it! The bad Angels approve in the most colloquial style; the good dissent, and the bad, sent down below, express their lively regrets.

The slaying of Abel is introduced by Garcio, not a scriptural character, in an impudent speech; and then Cain enters, ploughing, cursing his horses, and wrangling with his boy, who offers to fight him. Abel enters, full of human kindness, but Cain insults him in the coarsest rustic manner, "Go to the Devil and say I bade". Abel insists that Cain should offer a burnt-sacrifice of a tenth of his corn, but Cain loves paying tithes no more than any other farmer. He grumbles in the true natural tone of the depressed agriculturist,

> When all men's com was fair in field,
> There was mine not worth a held.

The weather is such, says Cain, that the farmer owes no gratitude to providence, no tithes. He selects his worst sheaves, as pay tithe he must. The Deity intervenes, but Cain treats him with the most serene insolence, kills the remonstrating Abel with the jaw-bone of some animal, and, in short, is no more edifying than Mr. Punch, whose lawless and irreverent behaviour in the popular street drama is a survival of the humour of Cain.

The "Rejoicing of the Shepherds," the second play, is much more human and various: the shepherds are full of the complaints of their condition with which Piers Plowman has made us familiar, but the provisions at their picnic are rich and various, and the adventure of Mak, the sheep stealer, is

of the best comedy. Hospitably entertained by the shepherds, Mak steals a sheep, flays it, and takes it home to his wife. They put it in a cradle, and cover it with blankets, next Mak hies to the shepherds again, grumbling that his wife has a new baby. They suspect and follow him; he denies his theft, and will eat the child in the cradle, if the sheep can be found on his premises. It *is* found. This child, says a shepherd, has too long a snout. Mrs. Mak, with much presence of mind, admits the fact, but declares that her child is a fairy changeling: fairies stole the baby at midnight, and left this ugly substitute. The shepherds forgive Mak, for the joke's sake, after tossing him in a sheet.

The same story is told of Archy Armstrong, the border reiver and jester. When the shepherds go back to their flocks, the Angel sings *Gloria in excelsis*; and the shepherds criticize the music learnedly, "there was no crochet wrong," and imitate the air. The sacred part of the play, the Adoration, and offering of balls and toys to the new-born babe, is very brief. The play is a most humorous and lively representation of "our liberal shepherds," the sacred narrative merely affords a pretext for the gambol. England was merry England in the fifteenth century, in spite of defeats in France, murder and civil war at home, preachings and burnings of Lollards, and all the grievances of Piers Plowman, the cruelty of the great, and the greed and cunning of the Friars.

The play of "Lazarus," on the other hand, is not only solemn, closely following the words of the Gospel, but is as full as the Anglo-Saxon poem, "The Grave," of sepulchral horrors.

Of the costumes we may judge by that of St. Paul on the road to Damascus, in "The Digby Plays"—the Apostle is "dressed like an adventurous knight," and is mounted. In place of scene-shifting the audience shifted from one open-air stage in the street to another. There were dances between the scenes. Paul's servant has a scene of banter with an ostler. He maintains that he is a gentleman's servant, a superior person. Says the ostler: "I saw such another gentleman with you, a barrowful he bare of horse dung... and such other gear".

There are forty characters and a crowd in the play of "Mary Magdalene," and much skill in stage management must have been needed. In this play of more than two thousand lines allegorical characters abound, including the

Seven Deadly Sins; much of the Gospel story of the Magdalene is introduced, with lively scenes from the unconverted career of the Lady of the Castle of Magdala, and there is a long passage of sheer romance; we have a storm at sea; the abandonment of the King's wife and child on a rock; their discovery later, alive and well—in fact the story is akin to that in Shakespeare's "Pericles".

We see that the secular entertainment, the drama of romance, is ousting its religious occasion and pretext. In "Mary Magdalene," too, we observe that the "Miracle Play" on sacred subjects, is combined with the "Morality," the drama with allegorical characters (as in the "Romance of the Rose"), presented in flesh and blood, and therefore more entertaining than they are in the endless allegorical poems. The Morality of "Everyman" has been revived with much success in our own time. In all these plays the verse takes many rhyming forms, mainly lyric. The chief collections are the Townley, York, Chester, Digby, Coventry, and a Macro (named from an owner of the manuscript). In the Macro play, "Mankind," the actors make collections of money from the audience: they must have belonged to a professional strolling company, not to an honourable and disinterested trading guild. The piece is a gross burlesque of morality, full of blatant jests and dog-Latin rhymes.

There is a scientific Morality, an "Interlude," "The Four Elements," in which Nature, Humanity, Studious Desire, Sensual Appetite, Experience, and Ignorance play their parts. Much novel information about the dimensions of the earth and meteorology is given; Studious Desire is an apt pupil, but Sensual Appetite and the Taverner offer instruction more palatable to "the Man in the Street". They introduce

> little Nell
> A proper wench, she danceth well,
> And Jane with the black lace,
> We will have bouncing Bess also.

and Humanity slinks out of the lecture room, being more concerned

> to see a pretty girl,
> It is a world to see her whirl
> Dancing in a round,

than to observe the gyrations of the terrestrial globe.

In "Hickscorner," an interlude of the same kind, the hero has been in as many places as Widsith himself, including

> the land of Rumbelow
> Three mile out of hell.

Hickscorner and Free Will are worse roisterers than Humanity, and their rude waggeries make the mirth, though Free Will speaks of forswearing sack and living cleanly.

Heywood.

John Heywood is one of the few known authors of these things; he was of what is now Pembroke College, Dr. Johnson's College, in Oxford, and was an acquaintance of Sir Thomas More, who frankly admits that by nature he was "a giglot," a gay fellow, though, by grace, devout. Heywood was merry in mournful times, when Henry VIII began to make martyrs of Protestants, and of Catholics who were not, at any moment, of the same shade of belief as himself. The anecdotes say that Heywood saved his skin by his jests, that after Henry's death he amused Mary Tudor, who was not easily amused, and that he fled from persecution under Edward VI, and died abroad in the reign of Elizabeth.

His best-known piece is "The Four P's," a Pothecary, Pardoner, Palmer, and Pedlar. Why, asks the Pardoner, should the Palmer visit hundreds of remote shrines, while the Pardoner, at his very door, can sell him forgiveness of sins at the lowest figure? He can cleanse a thousand souls for as small a sum as the Palmer spends on one voyage. All four men are impudent rogues, and all, in the spirit of the Morality, are rapidly converted; the Pedlar becoming as pious as Piers Plowman. There is no action, and the great jest is that, in a lying competition, the Pedlar says that he has never seen "a woman out of patience". The diversion must have been derived mainly from the antics of the players on the stage.

Heywood's "Thersites" (the impudent orator in the "Iliad") was written about 1537, to make mirth for the birth feast of the Prince of Wales, afterwards Edward VI. Thersites asks Mulciber (Hephæstus) to make him a helmet (sallet) as he made the arms of Achilles. This enables Mulciber to

vent many puns on salad; they look like the very first puns ever devised, and occupy two pages. The pun seems to have been a novelty in Tudor England. Thersites is a rough-hewn predecessor of Shakespeare's Pistol. There is much mockery of sacred relics and some buffoonery by way of action. Telemachus brings a letter from Ulysses (such a thing, said J. J. Rousseau, very foolishly, would have been useful in the "Odyssey") and Miles, the Knight, ends all with a pious speech.

In early Tudor England the drama had sunk many fathoms below the level of the Miracle Plays, such as that of the Shepherds. The rise of the drama, under Elizabeth, is a kind of miracle, like the sculpture of Phidias appearing after the rude art of the artists who worked at Athens before the victories of Marathon and Salamis.

In "Jack Juggler," however, we find the influence of Roman comedy faintly dawning, for the play is Plautus's comedy of "Amphitryon," "without Amphitryon," the hero, and with the mischievous and much-beaten Jack Juggler as the source of the fun.

The infant drama had wandered out of Biblical and allegorical subjects into touch with actual ancient Roman comedy, and, with Bale's "King John," was preluding to Shakespeare's Chronicle Plays. In the dawn of the Reformation, disputants on both sides addressed the people in Interludes, just as to-day a person "with a purpose" puts it into a novel, in place of writing a sober and reasonable treatise which would not be read. Among the plays with a purpose none is more absurd than the "King John" of John Bale (1495-1563). Bale, whose best work is a kind of history of English literature in Latin, was a fiery hot gospeller; he had to leave the country under Mary Tudor. In "King John" that profane and licentious but astute prince appears as a kind of Protestant martyr. Attacked by Stephen Langton, he says that the Church hates him because he does not found abbeys, and is in favour of an open Bible. So he is poisoned by the wicked priests!

In the interests of History no less than of her Church, Queen Mary issued proclamations against plays with a Protestant purpose, while Elizabeth was equally severe against Catholic Interludes.

We must think of these Interludes, whether moral, religious, scientific, or amusing, being played from the reign of Henry VIII till the middle of the reign of Elizabeth. Till 1575 or 1576 there were no theatre-houses; stages

were erected in halls of palaces, castles, colleges, and in open spaces of towns. The King or Queen had Interlude players in their service, as they had musicians. Companies calling themselves "the Servants," and wearing the liveries of nobles and gentlemen, strolled about the country, protected by their more or less nominal masters, and supporting themselves by their skill in their profession. The "children," that is the boys, of various schools, especially of St. Paul's, acted under the managership of their teachers. The undergraduates of the Universities also acted, at first in Latin, before Queen Elizabeth, who did not conceal her distaste for what did not amuse her. The language of the plays was cast into all sorts of rhyming measures, and "the Vice" or lively buffoon of the Interludes was the germ of the Shakespearean Clown. There was abundance both of writers and players, but the plays had little merit as literature.

Ralph Roister Doister.

Among the unforgotten of these dwellers on the threshold of the Elizabethan drama is "Ralph Roister Doister," by Nicholas Udall (1505-1556) (of Corpus Christi College, Oxford, later headmaster of Eton, and next of Westminster; he died in the reign of Mary Tudor). The Vice, so to speak, or clever buffooning parasite, of the piece is Matthew Merrygreek, who in a long rhyming prologue describes his own way of life and his intention to befool the braggart Ralph Roister Doister. Ralph enters melancholy, he is in love: he has met the lady at supper, but forgets her name. She is rich (says Matthew), a widow, and betrothed to another man. Ralph is a fatuous ass, like Malvolio, and thinks all women in love with him. Merrygreek fools him to the top of his bent, and presents the lady with a forged love-letter from Ralph, who is drubbed by the maid-servants and generally disgraced, while the true love of the heroine returns from a voyage to be happy with her. There is plenty of noise, singing, and beating, and some intrigue in the case of the genuine wooer and his suspicious jealousy.

Gammer Gurton's Needle.

The equally renowned "Gammer Gurton's Needle," was acted sixteen years after "Ralph Roister Doister," at Christ's College, Cambridge. It is usually

attributed to John Still (born 1543) a member of Christ's, Master of Arts in 1565, and later Master of that College, Vice-Chancellor of the University, and finally Bishop of Bath and Wells (died 1608). As Vice-Chancellor, Still was a stickler for Latin plays at Cambridge, which were more educational but not so popular as dramas in English. The plot turns on the loss of a needle by old Gammer Gurton, the suspicion, raised by a wag, that another old woman has stolen it; the search for the needle; combats about the needle, and the final discovery of that implement in the seat of a man's breeches. A sturdy beggar, Diccon, is "the Vice," and sets Gammer Gurton and another gammer to a scolding match. Hodge, a servant, with his broad dialect, and insistent demand for the needle, that a large and unseemly hole which ventilates his breeches may instantly be patched, has perhaps the most comic part, and when somebody slaps Hodge and drives the needle (which had stuck in his breeches), into a safe part of his person, the joy of a Cambridge audience knew no limits. The play is thoroughly rustic, the language is of an amazing breadth, and no doubt the drama made abundant mirth among the Cantab wits. Members of the sister University, where poets have been rare in comparison with these glories of Cambridge, need not covet Still, unless he wrote the famous drinking song in the Second Act, "Back and Side go bare, go bare!"

The Bishop of Bath and Wells probably looked back with mingled feelings on the jolly, noisy achievement of his youth, which has made him immortal, for all have heard of "Gammer Gurton's Needle". It is written in rhyming lines of from fourteen to sixteen syllables.

"Gorboduc."

"The Gammer," though low, is lively; not so is "Gorboduc"; it is a tragedy of unspeakable dullness composed in blank verse which has no merit except that of regularity, the sense usually, though not always, ending at the close of each line. The author, Thomas Sackville, later Lord Buckhurst and Earl of Dorset, and High Treasurer under James VI and I, was born at Buckhurst, Sussex, in 1536. His grandmother was aunt of Anne Boleyn, so he was a second cousin of Queen Elizabeth. At the Inner Temple, as a young man, he met Thomas Norton, and the pair composed "Gorboduc," which was acted in the Inner Temple in 1561. The authors were inspired by no other Muse

than that of Seneca, the moral philosopher, Roman tragedian, and tutor of the Emperor Nero. The play tells how Gorboduc, a mythical King of Britain, abdicated, and, dividing his realm into two parts, gave the country north of the Humber to the younger, and the portion south of the Humber to the elder of his two sons, Ferrex and Porrex. Each had a kind of tutor, and each had a favourite. They were both discontented, the younger slew the elder son, and the mother of both avenges the elder on the younger of her children. The result was national ruin, in which "Fergus Duke of Albany" (apparently King of Scotland is meant) took an active part. There are very long speeches, no action; a messenger brings the news of the distressing occurrences, and a Chorus moralizes on them. Carried away by grief when his wife murders his surviving boy, Gorboduc pronounces the name of Eubulus with the penultimate syllable short, and expires with decency behind the scenes. Eubulus then utters a political forecast in more than a hundred lines, and the drama concludes.

"Gorboduc" was printed in 1565: translations of Seneca's plays were also being written: George Gascoigne translated a piece named "Jocasta" (the wife of Œdipus) from the Italian, and a prose comedy, "The Supposes" from Ariosto. This great Italian poet and his countrymen adapted to Italian manners the plots and characters which the ancient comic dramatists of Rome, Terence and Plautus, derived from late Greek comedy of everyday life. Thus an element of orderliness in comedy was introduced in England from adaptations of Italian adaptations of Roman copies of late Greek plays. Such stock characters as the austere father, the spendthrift son, the cunning servant, the boastful soldier, the nurse, soft of heart and loose of tongue, invaded the comedy of France, and, to a slighter degree, that of England.

Meanwhile Richard Edwards produced a curious Interlude of a classical nature, "Damon and Pythias," the characters being Greek, Sicilian and English—a dash of buffoonery is mixed with very lamentable matter. The Drama was formless, unable to attain definite shape, till some twenty-five years had passed when we reach the date of the immediate predecessors of Shakespeare, such as Marlowe, Greene, Lyly, Peele, and the other University young men about town. The influences of the old waggish or controversial Interludes, of the Senecan school of stiffness, and of

translations or imitations of Italian comedies, were seething in the cauldron of the age.

CHAPTER XVII.

WYATT AND SURREY. GASCOIGNE. SACKVILLE.

The names of Sir Thomas Wyatt (1503-1542) and of Henry Howard, Earl of Surrey (1517-1547), are for ever memorable in English poetry, not so much for what they actually achieved as for what they attempted. They abstained from allegory, still lingering in its unlovely dotage, and from doggerel. They wrote of themselves and their own loves, joys, and sorrows, but though their verse is concerned with their personal emotions, these are treated in a conventional way, borrowed from continental poetry. They turned to the Italian sonneteers, especially to Petrarch, and saw afar the dawning of the "Pléiade," the company of French reformers of poetic style and language, Ronsard, du Bellay, and the rest, or at least of Mellin de Saint-Gelais, their predecessor. But both Wyatt and Surrey died young, Wyatt by an unfortunate chance, Surrey as a victim of the jealous tyranny of Henry VIII. The two young poets thus live together in men's memories like the Bion and Moschus of Greece: theirs is "unfulfilled renown".

Wyatt, of a Yorkshire family, was son of Sir Henry Wyatt, of Allington in Kent, a man who had strange vicissitude of fortune in the reigns of Richard III and Henry VII. Thomas went very early to St. John's College, Cambridge, married at 17, was a glory of the Court of Henry VIII, went on diplomatic missions to Italy (Venice, Ferrara, Bologna, Florence, and Rome), studied Italian literature, was now in favour and now in prison, and made love, with more or less of earnestness, to Anne Boleyn, being fortunate in escaping from the doom of her admirers when Henry VIII took her life. Favoured by Henry's minister, Thomas Cromwell, but detested, and accused of diplomatic misdeeds by Bishop Bonner, Wyatt defended himself with a success then very rare, retired from Court and wrote satires and poems on the advantages of retirement; paraphrased the Seven Penitential

Psalms, and died of a fever caught from fatigue and travel, in October, 1542, lamented in verse by Surrey.

The reader of his sonnets, the earliest in English, is amazed to find that we have travelled through so many centuries of the life of English poetry, and only reached lame lines that can scarcely be scanned. Since Chaucer the art of verse had become very dim, perhaps in consequence of the transitional state of the language, the obsolescence of the sound of the final *e*, and the Anglicizing of the sounds of borrowed French words by throwing back the accent (as in honour for honour, virtue for virtue). Wyatt, when he began to write sonnets, put accents in strange places, and counted syllables on his fingers, content if he could reckon ten of them, in a line. To rhyme "aggrieved" to "wearied," is like the tramp's effort to make "workhouse" rhyme with "sorrow". The young student in a novel of Henri Murger's reads only the rhymes in sonnets. If we study in that way Wyatt's sonnet "The Lover Waxeth Wiser," we find that the last words in the first eight lines are

aggrieved
last
past
wearied
buried
fast
haste
stirred.

He usually tried to keep to the Petrarchian arrangement of rhymes in the first eight lines *a b b a a b b a*, but, contrary to Italian rule, his last two lines were always a rhyming couplet, as in Shakespeare's "Sonnets," in which the Petrarchian model is wholly disregarded. The sonnet thus ends with an emphatic clench, usually moral, while in the Italian sonnet the last six lines resemble the withdrawal of the wave of the first eight lines.

The sonnet, with its concision and its technical difficulties, afforded excellent practice to poets who endeavoured to bring delicacy and order into the chaos and coarseness of verse as written by Skelton and his contemporaries. But a good sonnet is among the rarest of good things, and the mere technical difficulties once overcome, men's minds may turn out sonnets of no value with the rapidity of machine work. The stock character

of this kind of poetry, the Lover, with his strange far-fetched conceit in his almost metaphysical refinements, is apt to become as tedious as the old figures of allegory; however, he was a novelty. Wyatt improved with practice in sonnet-making, though such rhymes as "mount*ains*" "fount*ains*," "pl*ains*," "rem*ains*," are a stumbling-block to the modern reader. But his "And wilt thou leave me thus?" and "Forget not yet the tried intent," with their brief refrains are immortal lyrics, heralding the music of the age of Elizabeth.

His epigrams are not the stinging wasps of verse commonly called epigrams, but are brief poems in the manner of the epigrams of the Greek Anthology. The satires on the Court, based on Italian poems, and including a form of the "Town and Country Mouse," are not in Skelton's violent way, but the work of a gentle man, and the poems in rhyme royal, seven line stanzas, with six syllables to the line, are charming novelties.

The Earl of Surrey.

The date of Surrey's birth is uncertain: it was four or five years after the battle of Flodden (1513), in which his grandfather—"an auld decrepit carle in a chariot—" was victorious over the fiery James IV. The title Earl of Surrey is a courtesy title, borne by the poet as son of the Duke of Norfolk. He was at least a dozen years younger than his friend Wyatt, and was a lively young courtier, who was made a Knight of the Garter in 1541. He married very early, in 1532, and his famous passion for fair Geraldine may have been merely poetical—the usual story about Geraldine and the magic mirror is derived from a novel of 1554. About 1542 he was imprisoned for a matter of a duel, a challenge at least, and in 1543 went about London at night breaking windows with a stone-bow. He wrote a poem in which he gravely maintains that he was merely punishing the wicked city for her sins. Again released from prison he saw some fighting in France, and, returning, patronized a poet named Churchyard, who later wept unmelodiously above his early tomb. Early in 1546 Surrey had the worse of a battle with the French near Boulogne, was superseded by the Earl of Hertford, and, in January, 1547, was accused of a sort of heraldic high treason (quartering the arms of Edward the Confessor, who, of course, had never heard of armorial bearings), and executed, shortly before the death of the tyrant, Henry VIII.

Surrey's versification, especially in the sonnet, is much superior to that of Wyatt, but he is less apt to keep to the rules of rhyme, in the first eight lines; indeed he writes in the form of Shakespeare's sonnets. His "Prisoned in Windsor" is a pleasant picture of a young gallant's life, who takes his eye off the ball at Tennis to watch the ladies in the *dedans*: hunts, tilts, and makes friends. The moral poems in lines of fourteen feet are of no great merit, but Surrey's translation of the Second Book of the Æneid is the first English example of blank verse, borrowed from Italian practice. The lines are stiff and hard; and the main merit is the novelty, the first birth of the measure that was to become, in forty years, "Marlowe's mighty line".

Tottel's Miscellany.

The poems of Wyatt and Surrey were not published till long after the deaths of the authors, when they appeared, with many other pieces, in "Tottel's Miscellany". Other writers represented there are Nicholas Grimald, with his jog-trot metre, the "poulter's" or poulterer's measure of from twelve to fourteen syllables to the dozen—so were eggs sold by a custom of the trade. Surrey's retainer, Thomas Churchyard, a man very busy with sword and pen, was also a writer in the "Miscellany"; and indeed was a literary hack-of-all-work. There came, after the brief gleam of sunshine that fell on Wyatt and Surrey, another generation of wooden versifiers and translators, with whose names, Tusser the bucolic, Phaer, Golding, Googe, and Whetstone, it is hardly necessary to fill the page and burden the memory. They may be studied by the curious, but they wrought no deliverance. To generations which possess superabundance of versifiers and no great poets, these barren years are a kind of consolation. For reasons not to be discovered there are such periods in the literary life of all nations, as in England between Pope and Cowper.

The versifiers in "Tottel's Miscellany" keep harping unmelodiously on the strings of Surrey and Wyatt, many of their pieces are complimentary addresses to ladies, or laments on the deaths of friends. Poor conceits are twisted and tormented; there is hardly any promise of advance; we scarcely hear any of the bird-like musical notes with which the later part of the reign of Elizabeth sang so wondrously.

Gascoigne.

George Gascoigne (1525 (?)-1577) was an interesting character. He was a Cambridge man, a member of the Society of Gray's Inn, a poet who, like Scott, composed his verses in the saddle: a Member of Parliament who was opposed as "a common rhymer... noted for manslaughter... a notorious Ruffian," and even a spy, certainly he owed debts, and was disinherited by his father. He wrote on woodmanship, but was apt to forget to shoot at the deer that came within range of his cross-bow. As a captain in the Low Countries he and his command were surprised and taken by the Spaniards: he came home, published his Posies (1575) and, he says, got not a penny by the venture: he then wrote "The Steel Glass," a kind of satire, the mirror of the age, in blank verse, and next wrote in common ballad measure the long and amazingly prosaic "Complaint of Philomene".

In 1572 Gascoigne published "A Hundred Sundry Flowers, bound up in one small Posy". The long title sets forth that some of the flowers were culled in the gardens of Euripides, Ovid, Petrarch, and Ariosto, others are from English orchards. The native flowers are the sweeter and more fair. While our poets were turning into stiff measures the sonnets of Italy, Gascoigne could write so naturally and melodiously his own English, as in his "Lullaby of a Lover".

> Sing lullaby, as women do,
> Wherewith they bring their babes to rest,
> And lullaby can I sing too,
> As womanly as can the best.

Beneath the stiff borrowed phrases and metres there was always this native and tuneful spirit of unsophisticated song.

In 1575 he was a maker of words for the Masques at Leicester's famous reception of Elizabeth at Kenilworth (see the novel of that name, where Scott calmly introduces Shakespeare as already a successful dramatist). He satirized drunkards: we have already seen that he translated a tragedy, "Jocasta," from the Italian; he wrote a love story in rhyme of a personal kind, and his brief "Instructions" is the earliest English work, in no way indebted to Aristotle, on the Art of Poetry. As he also translated, we have seen, a comedy from the Italian, and a prose tale, a kind of work later fashionable, Gascoigne may be regarded as an intrepid explorer in many

fields of literature. "He first beat the path to that perfection which our best poets have aspired to since his departure," says Nash (1589). "He brake the ice for our quainter poets that now write," says Tofte (1615). But the path as trodden by this pioneer continued to be rough. Gascoigne was an example of the versatility and literary ambition which many young gentlemen displayed in the age of Elizabeth; mingling poetry and study and serious thought with their gallant adventures in love, diplomacy, war, and travel.

His "Certayne Notes of Instruction concerning the making of Verse in English" is a very brief pamphlet. He quotes "my master, Chaucer" against alliterative "thunder in *Rym, Ram, Ruff*," but mentions no other poet. Be original, he says, if you sing of a lady do not applaud her "crystal eye" or "cherry lip," which Spenser did not disdain, for these things are trite and obvious. The great matter is "to avoid the uncomely customs of common writers," says this "common rhymer". Do not use "obscure and dark phrases in a pleasant sonnet". Do not wander out of your "Poulters measure" metre into lines of thirteen syllables. Give every word its natural emphasis: do not make *treasure* into trea*sure.* Chaucer is to be followed as a master of prosody. You should write:—

> "I understand your meaning by your eye,"

not,

> "Your meaning I *under*stand by your eye",

"The more monosyllables that you use, the truer Englishman you shall seem".

There follows advice on the caesura, and all this counsel shows that, in the early years of Elizabeth, versification was at a very low ebb.

In practice, Gascoigne did not always shine. There are few passages of interest in the stiff blank verse of his "Steel Glass" (the mirror that does not flatter). The best passage, and it is very good, describes the labourer,

> Behold him, priests, and though he stink of sweat,
> Disdain him not, for shall I tell you what?
> Such climb to heaven before the shaven crowns,

because the labourers

feed with fruits of their great pains
Both king and knight and priests in cloister pent.

It would be cruel to quote "Philomene," no stall-ballad creeps more tardily on a longer road than Gascoigne in his tale of her who sings, in a later poet's words,

Who hath remembered thee, who hath forgotten?
They have all forgotten, oh summer swallow,
But the world shall end when I forget.

SACKVILLE.

The poetry of Thomas Sackville (1536-1608) is not to be found in his dull tragedy, "Gorboduc," but in his contributions to a vast and once popular collection, "The Mirror for Magistrates". This work is intended to admonish men in power by rhymed histories of the falls of English peers and princes. This was the plan of Chaucer's Monk, in "The Monk's Tale," which that sound critic, the Host, could not long endure. The model was Boccaccio's work on "The Falls of Princes," Englished by Lydgate. The enterprise started by Baldwin and others in 1554-1559, suggests a dread lest English verse should return to Lydgate in the den of Giant Despair, and take up with sepulchral solemnity the tale of tragedies from the darkest days of the unfortunate ancient Britons. A mammoth compilation was gradually evolved, for doleful matter was not far to seek, but Sackville's two contributions, the "Induction," and the "Complaint of Buckingham"—the Buckingham executed under Richard III,—alone concern us.

In the "Induction" the poet describes the gloom of winter, and, in the mediaeval way, dwells long on the constellations. As he muses, he is met by a very deplorable female form—

With doleful shrieks that echoed in the sky.

She proclaims herself to be Sorrow, a goddess, and guides Sackville "to the grisly lake" of Avernus, over which no fowl may fly and live. A number of rueful figures of allegory are encountered, Dread, Revenge, Misery, Care, Old Age, and Sleep, and these are drawn with abundant vigour and variety. The stanza on Sleep gives the measure of the versification, which is rapid, concise, various, sustained, and in its music heralds the arrival of Spenser.

The body's rest, the quiet of the heart,
The travail's care, the still night's frere was he,
And of our life on earth the better part,
Reiver of sight, and yet in whom we see
Things oft that tide, and oft that never be,
Without respect, esteeming equally
King Croesus' pomp and Irus' poverty.

One stanza in the description of the home of the dead seems to have been suggested by famous lines in the Eleventh Book of the "Odyssey".

The "Induction" ends with the appearance of the spirit of Buckingham, who not only tells his own tragedy at great length, and in full historical detail, but introduces several other ancient tragedies, those of Cyrus, Cambyses, Brutus, Cassius, Besseus, Alexander the Great, Clitus, Phalaris, Pheræus, Camillus, and Hannibal. From these fallen princes we drop to

One John Milton, Sheriff of Shropshire then,

who arrested Buckingham, and to

A man of mine, called Humphrey Banastaire,

who betrayed his master. Banastaire is then cursed in eleven stanzas. "May Banastaire live to the age of eighty, and then be tried for theft. May his eldest son expire in a pig-sty; his second son be strangled in a puddle, and his daughter be smitten by leprosy."

It cannot be denied that this tragedy, including as it does the murder of the Princes in the Tower, is rather too rich in terrible components, and does not, especially when Banastaire is being dealt with, affect us in the same measure as Dante's pictures of the Inferno. On the whole it is the manner, not the matter, of Sackville that contains more than mere promise: his management of the stanza and of the music of the line is far in advance of anything that had come from an English pen since the death of Chaucer. As for the gloom and horror, these were congenial to a people which, since the burning of the Maid of France (1431), had seen an endless sequence of violence, murder, martyrdoms, and massacres of peers, Princes, Queens, Bishops, and humble folk.

CHAPTER XVIII.

PROSE OF THE RENAISSANCE.

A great, indeed an inestimable influence in literature at this juncture, was that of the long-forgotten Greek language, Greek poetry, and Greek philosophy. When Erasmus, who then had little Greek, arrived in England and visited Oxford (1499), he found there Grocyn, Linacre, and Colet, who had acquired Greek on the continent; and, with Sir Thomas More, were already competent classical scholars. But their Greek learning was mainly turned into the channel of theology, the study of the sources of Christian doctrine, the New Testament, the Greek Fathers; and they were attracted by the philosophy of Plato which appeared to "utter a Christian voice" much more clearly than do the writings of the idol of the Middle Ages, Aristotle.

Greek, however, does not visibly affect the poetic literature of England much, before the date of Spenser, about 1580. The violent times of Henry VIII and Mary Tudor were not favourable to severe study and exquisite appreciation of the Greek genius, a most desirable corrective of the prolixity of mediaevalism, and of the English passion for horrors in stage plays. To most people knowledge of the contents of the Greek classics came through translations, and these translations, as in the case of the historian Thucydides, were done from French versions, while Plato was read through Italian commentators, much influenced by Plato's disciples in early Christian times, the Neoplatonists, dreamers of beautiful dreams concerning things that cannot be uttered.

Study produced also a very wide acquaintance with Greek mythology—Shakespeare's humblest characters have heard of many a Grecian fable—yet the spirit, the exquisite balance, and the refinement of the Greek genius, hardly affected our authors. We may detect it in More's (1478-1535) "Utopia," where the adventurers carry with them to "Nowhere" a "pretty fardel," or parcel, of the cheap neat Greek books printed by Aldus. The fancied State of Utopia, with its comfortable communism and perfect freedom in religion, is derived from the "Republic" of Plato, and in religion is more liberal than, in his later work, "The Laws," he would have permitted it to be. But the "Utopia," written in Latin, was meant for the learned.

Though the "Utopia" was published in 1516, and became famous in Europe, it did not reach unlearned English readers till an English translation, by Ralph Robynson, appeared in 1551. They now had More's eloquent advocacy of communism before them as regulated in his imaginary state, with a Six Hours' Day, universal training of men and women for war, and habit of assassinating the leaders of hostile nations. There is tolerance of all religions which accept a deity and the immortality of the soul: atheists are disqualified for public offices.

In his English works on religious and social controversy, which are little read, More is not only a Catholic and a Conservative, but in discussion is given to abusive and violent language which would have horrified the courteous Plato, the urbane Aristotle, and that model of a devout and ardent student, and perfect gentleman, Pico della Mirandola, whose Life More gave in English. On both sides the controversialists of the Reformation delighted in violent personal abuse, in some Greek orators they found examples of that art. The first effect of Greek in England, by producing a new Biblical criticism and an attack on the foundations of the mediaeval Church, was to "bring not peace but a sword," the wars of religion.

ELYOT.

No man did more for the intelligence of Greek than Sir Thomas Elyot (1499 1546)1 author of "The Governour," a long treatise, on the education of a gentleman, and on the nature of forms of government. Elyot bubbles over with Greek, and translates such passages of Homer as he quotes into English verse, the alternate lines rhyming. He is of the Greek opinion that a gentleman should be taught, if he has a taste for art, to draw, paint, and execute works in sculpture, not as a base professional artist, but as an amateur.[1] Elyot would have a boy, at 7 years old, begin with Greek, learning it through Latin, which he picks up, with French, in conversation. Grammars of Greek are now almost innumerable. Grammar, he says with much truth, "if it be made too long and exquisite to the learner, in a manner mortifieth his courage. And by that time he cometh to the most sweet and pleasant reading of old authors, the spark of fervent desire of learning is soon quenched with the burden of grammar." Elyot would start his pupil as early as possible with what will interest a child, Æsop's Fables in Greek,

and then pass to Lucian, who is amusing as well as elegant. "But I fear me to be too long from noble Homer, from whom as from a fountain proceeded all eloquence and learning." Throughout, Elyot wishes first to interest the pupil; but where, he asks, is he to find qualified schoolmasters? They were as cruel as in the days of St. Augustine, and while Elyot's system of education, in sports as well as in books, is free and joyous, like that of Gargantua in Rabelais, little boys were suffering the horrors described by Agrippa d'Aubigné in his Memoirs. Elyot translated works of Isocrates, Plutarch, and others, wrote a medical work "The Castle of Health," was clerk of the Privy Council, and went on various diplomatic missions. Elyot was not a professional instructor of youth: he was, it seems, educated privately, and of neither university; what pleases us in him is his unstaled zest for learning, his fresh enthusiasm.

The best English of the age and the most durable is that of Thomas Cranmer (1489-1556) as we read it in the Liturgy of the Church of England, while much of the merit of King James's Authorized Version of the Bible rests on the foundation of Miles Coverdale's translation (1488-1568). How easy it is to translate the Bible into English which is not a marvel of diction and rhythm, we are too frequently reminded by the Revised Version.

Ascham.

Roger Ascham (1515-1568) was a Yorkshire man of the middle classes, who lived by his learning, and did not find that it paid him as well as he wished. Going early to St. John's College, Cambridge, he was a pupil of the famous Sir John Cheke, who introduced the English way of pronouncing Greek. It is certainly wrong—no people pronounce the vowels as we do; but if Cheke resisted the pronunciation of the modern Greeks, perhaps he is not much to be blamed. Ascham obtained a Fellowship and a Readership in Greek, the Fellowship he lost when he married: he did not long retain his tutorship to the Princess Elizabeth; as secretary to an ambassador in Germany he continued to teach Greek to his chief; and in his letters, Latin or English, we find him often in straits for money and begging for assistance. Camden, writing under James I, says that he lost money at dicing, and in his attack on gambling, in his "Toxophilus," a dialogue on Archery (1545), Ascham shows a rather unholy knowledge of all the tricks

on the dice-board. Probably he had paid for his education. He contemplated a work on the noble sport of cock fighting, on which, of course, there was betting, and perhaps Ascham was not in all respects so severe a Puritan as in his unworthy attacks on that noblest of romances, "The Morte d'Arthur". Sir Lancelot is a better gentleman than many who were to be met at a cock fight. Ascham had little sympathy with the Italian influences that were so potent in Elizabethan literature. Italy was certainly profligate and luxurious,

> An Englishman that is Italianate
> Doth quickly prove a devil incarnate,

was an English translation of an Italian proverb. Ascham, like his contemporaries, was nothing if not patriotic. The bow of yew and the grey goose shaft had won many a victory over Scots and French, as in "Toxophilus," Ascham reminds these peoples; therefore he desired that archery should be universally practised. But the harquebus, a musket lighter than the heavy hand gun of the fifteenth century, was already, in disciplined hands, more than a match for the bow.

"Toxophilus," to our age, appears pedantic. We have endless classical examples, and learn that the Trojans drew the bow-string only to the breast, not the ear (which is true), while they used iron arrow-heads as against the bronze arrow-heads of the Greeks, a fact not so certain. When he does come to practice, Ascham's teaching in archery is reckoned sound and good. His ideas are summed up in the prayer that the English

> Through Christ, King Henry, the Book, and the Bow
> May all manner of enemies quite overthrow.

In writing English, Ascham was all for plain English. Foreign words Anglicized make such a mixture "as if you put malmsey and sack, red wine and white, ale and beer, all in one pot". Yet he advocates in his "School Master," published after his death, a yet more unhallowed blend, the use of Greek measures in English verse. "Our English tongue in avoiding barbarous *rhyming* may as well receive right *quantity* of syllables as either Greek or Latin." (He means "quantity" as opposed to accent, as if one said car*pen*ter.) As an example he quotes Mr. Watson's rendering of the third line of the "Odyssey" into two English hexameters

All travellers do gladly report great praise of Ulysses,
For that he knew many men's manners and saw many cities.

Obviously if we are to say "men's man*ners*," making "man" in "manners" long, we must not make "vellers" in "travellers" short, as Mr. Watson does. We are reduced to

Gladly report great praise of Ulysses do the tra*vellers.*

This absurd manner of imitating Greek measures in English was upheld, twenty years later, by Gabriel Harvey, who, for a moment, nearly corrupted the practice of Spenser, the most naturally musical of poets. Ascham's own prose style is unaffected, not corrupted by eccentricities, but not harmonious. A new perfection, a false perfection, was to be sought later, through the antitheses, alliterations, and pedantic wit of Lyly's "Euphues!"

Lyly's Euphues.

The prose of Ascham was clear and was plain, disdaining decoration and far-fetched gorgeous phrases. But for the gorgeous and the exotic, the taste of the Elizabethan Age was pronounced, as we see in the strange over-gaudy costumes of the period, the various ruffs, the jewelled velvets and silks, worn by men and women. A like dressing for thoughts was demanded, and the supply was provided by John Lyly, whose plays are to be mentioned later. Lyly was born a Kentish man (1554?); Magdalen, in Oxford, was his college; his plays, acted by the boys of the Chapel Royal and St. Paul's, are of 1584-1594. But he made his mark earlier, as a prose writer, in his "Euphues, the Anatomy of Wit" (1579), and the sequel, "Euphues and his England" (1580). The style became a fashion, a fashion which affected even those who, like Sidney, were in would-be revolt against it. Lyly, like all writers of the periods just before and after him, was copious in classical allusions. He was not the first to hunt in all directions, especially in fictitious natural history, for similes, and needless decorations; but he hunted further and more assiduously: emphatically his style is that of the unresting Bird of Paradise. Every sentence is a thing bristling with points and antitheses and alliterations. The first part of the book was a kind of novel; two friends, at Naples, woo the same woman, quarrel, write long letters, and the question of education, in the wide sense in which the Renaissance understood education, is always prominent. There is endless

conversation and discussion of life, love, and learning, always in the same style of fantastic decoration and allusion: all continued when Euphues arrives in England, all conveying general information not verified by experiment. "I have read that the bull, being tied to a fig tree, loseth his strength; that a whole herd of deer stand at the gaze if they smell a sweet apple"; facts on which the cattle-breeder or the hunter would not, if well advised, rely. This was the kind of science against which Bacon uprose. But Lyly appealed, in his Dedication, and with success, "To the Ladies and Gentlewomen of England," who found in the book a kind of love-story, much philosophizing on that dear theme; and a pleasurable example of a new way of being witty and romantic. Lyly was the chief cause of the difficulty in telling a plain tale plainly which besets the minor writers of the age of Elizabeth.

Before approaching the chief prose writers of Elizabeth's time, we must turn aside to her greatest poet, and his friend, to Spenser and Sir Philip Sidney, and to the Drama.

Sidney.

Spenser did not more surely attain immortality by his verse than Sir Philip Sidney (1554-1586) by his life, writings, and character. He was one of those who, as Plato says, are born good, exemplars of natural charm and excellence. He is the ideal gentleman of the type which Spenser professed to educate by the examples of his virtuous knights, brave, pious, courteous, and just. The son of Sir Henry Sidney and nephew of Elizabeth's Leicester, Philip Sidney was born into the Court, but was not of it; his heart was set on other things than pleasure, splendour, flattery, and promotion. Educated at Shrewsbury School, he went to Christ Church at 14, being already the friend of the noble Fulke Greville, who, however, went from Shrewsbury to Cambridge. In 1572 he was attached to the English embassy in France, and, on the night of the Bartholomew massacre was sheltered in the house of his future father-in-law, Walsingham. Till 1575 he travelled, chiefly in Germany, and made the acquaintance of his constant correspondent and adviser, Languet, whom he celebrates as a shepherd of the Ister, and as his own religious Mentor. In Venice his portrait was painted by Veronese; at Vienna he perfected himself in horsemanship under Pugliano, whose

enthusiasm he describes so amusingly in his "Defence of Poesie". For a man so earnest as Sidney was, he had a fine sense of humour.

Returning to England in 1575, he, like Gascoigne, was with Elizabeth at the famous pastimes at Kenilworth, now best known through Scott's novel, "Kenilworth". Afterwards, at the house of the Earl of Essex, he met the Earl's daughter, Penelope, later Lady Rich, the Stella of his sonnets. Essex desired their marriage, but fate decided otherwise. In 1577 Sidney went, a young diplomatist, to the Emperor and the German Princes, and later, was obliged to attend the Court, while his mind was set on adventures beyond the Atlantic; on failing in that, he trifled with the idea of introducing Greek metres into English poetry. In 1579, he quarrelled with the Earl of Oxford in the tennis court. A duel was not permitted, but as Sidney also gave Elizabeth his opinion about her distasteful flirtation with the odious Duc d'Anjou, the worst of the bad Valois Princes, he retired to Wilton, the house of his sister, Lady Pembroke, and there wrote the pastoral romance, "Arcadia".

He was recalled to Court, sat in Parliament for Kent, and in 1583 parried a daughter of Walsingham. He was forbidden to join Drake's American expedition of 1585, in fact he was always thwarted in his desire for action and for such deeds of chivalry as the conditions of his age permitted—they leaned somewhat to piracy and filibustering. At length, as Governor of Flushing, while Leicester commanded the forces engaged against Spain in the Low Countries, he fell in a cavalry charge against a superior force at Zutphen. His leg was broken by a musket bullet from the Spanish trenches: it was now that he handed the cup of water that was at his lips to the soldier whose need was greater than his. He lingered for some weeks, and died on 17 October, 1586.

The beautiful character of Sidney cannot be more strongly attested than by the agony of grief exhibited, at his death, by the handsome and wicked Master of Gray. He was about to be sent on the Scottish embassy to plead for the life of Mary Stuart, while his desire was to be fighting under Sidney's banner. He expresses, in a touching letter, the sudden revulsion of his nature from his wonted treacheries; and, contrary to the falsehood of tradition, he did not betray, but, to his own loss, did his best to save the Queen whose cause he had previously deserted.

As a poet, Sidney, whose works were all published after his death, is best remembered for the sonnets of Astrophel to Stella, Lady Rich. There is a controversy as to whether these are mere exercises in gallant but "platonic" love-verse, or whether they reveal a true passion, as Charles Lamb maintained. The sonnet in which he says that he has found his fortune too late, and has lost what he had unwittingly won,

> O punisht eyes
> That I had been more foolish or more wise,

seems to set forth a truly tragic situation. Perhaps only poets can be the critics in such a case as this of Sidney.

The sonnets vary much in poetic value; some are written in Alexandrines, a metre not consonant with the traditions of the English Muse.

Sidney's "Defence of Poesie."

Readers who fail to find brilliant merit in English literary poetry between Chaucer and Spenser may not be ill-pleased to note that Sir Philip Sidney was strong on their side. Acquainted as he was with the poetry of Greece, Rome, Italy, and France, he could see nothing to admire in the efforts and experiments of such writers as Occleve, Lydgate, Hawes, Googe, Churchyard, and Turbervile. His "Defence of Poesie" (or, according to the title of the first edition (1595), his "Apologie for Poesie") was elicited by the unauthorized dedication to himself of Stephen Gosson's "School of Abuse". Gosson was a young Oxford man who had tried his hand as a playwright, and been disgusted, he says, by the disorders of the playhouses, where his comedy and morality may have been hooted. He therefore tried to make himself notorious, or he expressed his penitence, by assailing poets who deal in the silly conceits of Lyly's "Euphues".

"The scarab flies over many a sweet flower and lights in a cow-shard... it is the manner of swine to forsake the fair fields and wallow in the mire: and the whole practice of poets, either with fables to show their abuses, or with plain terms to unfold their mischief, discover their shame, discredit themselves, and disperse their poison through the world". Gosson chooses Virgil as one of his terrible examples, and whether he is a genuine or a hypocritical puritan, or a mere fribble in search of notoriety, he made a

mistake when he thought to find a patron or a butt in Sidney, who does not advertise Gosson's name in the "Defence of Poesie".

After a general defence of poetry furnished with precedents drawn from every quarter, even from the respect paid to their minstrels by the Irish, Sidney defines the final end of poetry as being "to lead and draw us to as high a perfection as our degenerate souls, made worse by their clay lodgings, can be capable of...." If poetry does not always attain this end, "it is not the fault of the art, but that by few men that art can be accomplished". He quotes Aristotle's "Poetics" to the effect that poetry is more philosophical and more serious than philosophy. Nothing in history is so noble but that "the poet may, if he list, make it his own, beautifying it both for further teaching, and more delighting, as it please him, having all, from Dante's heaven to his hell, under the authority of his pen". Here Sidney seems to differ from Scott, who regarded some examples of human fortunes, for example in the case of Mary Stuart, as beyond the range of the poetic art. But Sidney, foreseeing the objection, adds, "I speak of the art, not of the artificer". Sidney then discusses the various Kinds of poetry. As to the Comedy, "naughty play-makers and stage-keepers have made it justly odious,"—so far he sides with the Puritans of his time. In speaking of the lyric, he says: "I must confess mine own barbarousness; I never heard the old song of Percy and Douglas" ("Chevy Chase"), "that I found not my heart moved more than with a trumpet". Indeed the true spirit of poetry did dwell, disregarded by wits and courtiers, in the popular poetry and the ballads. But poetry, he knows not why, finds, in our time, a hard welcome in England: "I think the very earth laments it, and therefore decks our soil with fewer laurels than it was accustomed, for heretofore poets have in England also flourished". If poets are not esteemed it is because they do not deserve esteem, for we are "taking upon us to be poets in despite of Pallas," *invita Minerva.* Our would-be poets are destitute of genius—which was very true. "Chaucer undoubtedly did excellently in his 'Troilus and Cressida': of whom truly I know not whether to marvel more either that he, in that misty time, could see so clearly, or that we, in this clear age, go so stumblingly after him."

What ailed Sidney's age was lack of terseness and clearness. Most poets did not know what they would be at; they were confused by the tumult of religion, the loss of old ideals, the language in transition, the tyranny of the

misunderstood classics, the constant effort to imitate Greece, Rome, France, and Italy. They could not yet see life and literature steadily, and see them whole. Sidney found little that "had poetical sinews," except in Chaucer; parts of "The Mirror for Magistrates," the Earl of Surrey's lyrics, and Spenser's "'Shepherd's Calendar' hath much poetry in his 'Eclogues,' indeed worthy the reading, if. I be not deceived. That same framing of his style to an old rustic language I cannot allow..."

Sidney then banters the absurdities of the lawless stage, of the alliterative writers, of the seekers after unnatural history, like Lyly in his "Euphues," and of the love poets. "If I were a mistress never would they persuade me that they were in love, so coldly they apply fiery speeches," "swelling phrases" learned from books.

It was poetry, not the English poets of his age, that Sidney defended, and he might well marvel at our modern zeal which devotes time and scholarship to a chaos of tentative experiments by men who wished to be poets without possessing the poetic genius.

Sidney's best poems and his "Defence of Poesie" retain their freshness; but that book of his which was most popular suffers from the changes of time and taste. At most periods prose fiction is more welcome to human nature than poetry or criticism. Sidney's book "The Countess of Pembroke's Arcadia," is a novel, written by the author at Wilton, when, as we saw, he was neither in favour at Court nor permitted to risk himself in adventures on sea or land. The book was to Sidney what "The Faery Queen" was to Spenser, a wilderness of delights of his own creation, a retreat into a world of fantasy. He wrote it in sheets read, or sent as soon as finished, to his sister, the Countess of Pembroke; the book was meant for her, not for the world. Not long after his death, an unauthorized copy was published (1590), and unauthorized edition followed, and the general delight in the romance is attested by its constant reissues.

The author did not construct any regular plot, he allowed his fancy to wander among the shipwrecks and piratical adventures of the late Greek romances; and in an Arcadia which never existed, and a Laconia most unhistorical. But the high and chivalrous ideals of the author, in his rural prose idylls, as in his battles and combats; the truth and constancy of his lovers; the beauty of his descriptions, made this mixture of the Spanish

heroic romances that infatuated Don Quixote with the Arcadian pastorals, the delight of four generations. Milton blamed the captive Charles I for copying the beautiful and appropriate prayer of the captive Pamela, long after Shakespeare had interwoven with the story of King Lear, Sidney's tale of the blind King of Paphlagonia.

In its new mode "The Arcadia" was to four generations what Malory's "Morte Arthur" had been in its day. As late as 1660, we find Sir George Mackenzie imitating the "Arcadia" in his heroic and historic romance, "Aretina," where Argyll and Montrose play their parts. Indeed the "Arcadia" was a fruitful parent of the interminable heroic French romances which Major Bellenden laughs at in "Old Mortality," and from which Scott did not disdain to borrow a description in "Ivanhoe". It is indeed curious to compare Sidney's description of an Amazon (Book I, Chap, XII.) with an actual representation of a genuine Amazon by a Hittite artist, discovered on the stone work of a gate at Boghaz Keui. That lady-warrior wears a corslet of scale armour, while Sidney's has a doublet of sky-coloured satin, covered with plates of gold. Her feet are shod in crimson velvet buskins, while the massive legs of the real Amazon are naked. The contrast of fact and fancy are violent, of course, throughout the romance. The style is less conceited than that of "Euphues," and is always noble, but the long sentences and overabundance of parentheses are not in accordance with modern taste. The profusion of love-passages and of martial adventures, "with notable images of virtues, vices, or what else," and the poetic if uncurbed fancies, were what the world demanded from a novel, and what Sidney gave in the Arcadia, with many lyrics, and imitations of the amœbean verse of the shepherds of Theocritus.

SPENSER.

After two centuries of verse that was tuneless or tentative, the second great English poet came, Edmund Spenser (1552?-1599). We know from his "Prothalamion" that Spenser was born in London—

> my most kyndly Nurse,
> That to me gave this Lifes first native sourse,
> Though from another place I take my name,
> An house of auncient fame—

that is, the House of the Spencers of Althorp who are in the ancestry of the Duke of Marlborough's Churchills.

Spenser was certainly their kinsman, in what degree is unknown, but his own family must have been poor. He was educated at Merchant Taylors' School, was aided by the munificent Robert Nowell, and obtained a Sizarship (corresponding to the old Oxford servitorship), at Pembroke Hall, Cambridge (1569). Here he made two friends, Gabriel Harvey, a true friend, if a rather pedantic don (the Hobbinol of his "Shepherd's Calendar"), and E. Kirke, the E. K. who furnished the notes explanatory of old English words in that poem. Spenser also gained the good graces of Grindal, then Bishop of London, later Primate, a puritan, who fell into Elizabeth's disgrace, and is applauded as Algrind by Spenser in the "Shepherd's Calendar".

Spenser's youth was passed in an England disturbed by the claims of the captive Mary Stuart to the Crown; by the rebellion of her adherents in the North; by the papal excommunication of Elizabeth, and by the pretensions of the extreme puritan exiles who, driven abroad by the Marian persecution, had imbibed at Geneva the doctrines of Calvin. In their attacks on the English Bishops they out-wearied even the successors of Calvin in Geneva, who regarded them as men not to be satisfied by any concessions; "a sect of perilous consequence who would have no king but a presbytery," said Elizabeth. Here were all the elements which caused Elizabeth's cruel persecution of Catholics, the long struggle of the puritans under Elizabeth and James I, the wars under Charles I, and the strife with Spain and Catholic Ireland. In the words of James VI, it was "a world-wolter," and Spenser, as a poor young man, eager to make his fortune, had to swim as best he might in the cross-currents of this troublesome world. He never enjoyed the peaceful leisure of a Tennyson or a Wordsworth; he had to play an active part in strenuous and most unhappy affairs.

His nature, too, was divided. With all his love of pleasure and of beauty he leaned, though not virulently, towards the puritan party, and, as a good patriot, loathed and detested Rome.

It is probable that, when a freshman at the age of 17, he contributed to a Miscellany, Van der Noodt's "Theatre of Worldlings" (1569), translations in blank verse of certain sonnets of the French poet Joachim du Bellay, and of

Petrarch. These, re-cast into the form of sonnets, recur in a volume of Spenser's, of 1591.

After taking his Master's degree (1576) Spenser visited Lancashire, and if his words as Colin Clout in the "Shepherd's Calendar" be autobiographical, lost his heart to a lady whom he calls Rosalind, "the widow's daughter of the glen". According to Gabriel Harvey she "christened him her *Signior Pegaso*," though neither his poetry nor his wooing won her from her cruelty. Many years later he still writes of her with chivalrous affection, so, like Scott, he had his heart broken and cleverly pieced again.

By 1579 Spenser was in London, a literary retainer or *protégé* of Elizabeth's favourite, the Earl of Leicester; while he also enjoyed the friendship of Leicester's nephew, Sir Philip Sidney, the Flower of Chivalry, himself a poet, and the best beloved man of his time. Now (1579) Spenser published, and dedicated to Sidney, his "Shepherd's Calendar," a set of twelve eclogues or pastoral poems, one for each month. The pastoral had wandered far from the rural beauty of Theocritus, and, in the hands of Mantuan and Clement Marot, had become a vehicle for allegory, and even of Protestant argumentation. Spenser does not stray far into party and puritanic politics, but they are not unknown to his shepherds. In January, as Colin Clout, he bewails the coldness of Rosalind,

> She laughs the songs that Colin Clout doth make,

which is carrying cruelty very far. February is occupied with a rustic dispute between youth and age: the metre is one of the measures of the "Lay of the Last Minstrel":—

> Who will not suffer the stormy time,
> Where will he live tyll the lustry prime?
> (*Shepherd's Calendar*, Feb., 11. 15, 16.)
> They burn'd the chapel for very rage
> And cursed Lord Cranstoun's Goblin-page.
> (*Lay of the Last Minstrel*, C. II., Stanza, 33).

March, with the dialogue of Willie and Thomalin about the strange bird, Love, is adapted from the Greek of Bion in a most pleasant manner, and April contains a melodious song of fair Eliza, a Maiden Queen; which probably procured Spenser's presentation to Elizabeth. The great variety of

melodious verse of which Spenser was already a perfect master is, for us, perhaps the chief merit of his pastorals. Through life Spenser keeps up the shepherd's mask, and Raleigh, in his verse, is "The Shepherd of Ocean". The rival Protestant and Catholic clergy also appear as shepherds, good or bad, while in another eclogue the perfect poet, Cuddie, complains, like Theocritus, of public indifference, and is advised to sing of redoubted knights: and, indeed, Spenser had already conceived the idea of his knightly romantic poem "The Faery Queen," and was ambitious to excel his model, Ariosto. In this Harvey discouraged him; "Hobgoblin" must not "run away with the garland from Apollo".

Fortunately Spenser followed his own genius, and, though he dallied with the fashion for wedding Greek measures to English words, as in the English hexameters of Watson and Harvey, he dropped many projects at which he had glanced, and was constant to his "Faery Queen".

The manuscript of that great poem must have been the companion of Spenser in many strange wanderings,

> In savage soil far from Parnassus Mount,

as he says. He was attached, as we have seen, in 1578, to the household of Leicester, and may have gone on a mission of his to France. To be patronized by Leicester was to risk incurring the enmity of Burleigh. The long rivalry between Elizabeth's brilliant and wavering favourite—who once so nearly brought her into a plight almost as bad as that of Mary Stuart—and her sagacious counsellor, Sir William Cecil (Lord Burleigh)—who now and again saved his Queen "as by fire"—might have furnished Spenser with a high theme for a poetic allegory. But chance had made him Leicester's man, not Burleigh's man, so that he never won the fortune for which he sought. Who, indeed, would seek fortune in Ireland? Spenser did, accompanying Lord Grey of Wilton to an isle more than commonly distressful.

To the natural hatred between the Irish and their English invaders was now added the fury of religious rancour. Rebellion after rebellion was punished by horrible reprisals. Lord Grey is notorious for his massacre of six hundred disarmed Italian and Spanish filibusters at Smerwick (November, 1580), and the poet of the "Faery Queen" was present at this abominable deed. It was neither without precedent nor imitation. Seventy years later David

Leslie, urged on by a preacher, massacred the remnant of Montrose's Irish contingent at Dunaverty. Spenser himself in his most Interesting "View of the Present State of Ireland" says concerning the foreign prisoners, "there was no other way but to make that short way with them which was made". He defends Grey's ruthless policy; he had made Ireland "ready for reformation" when he was recalled, on the charge of being "a bloody man" who had left the country in ashes (1582). Grey was pursued by the clamour of a horrified people, that is, he was Spenser's Sir Arthegal, molested by the Blatant Beast, the public. The idea of the public is a Blatant Beast is borrowed from Plato.

It was in the service of Grey, and in a land laid waste, that Spenser, acting as Grey's secretary during the horrors of the war in Munster, wrote part of the "Faery Queen". He held public posts, was Clerk of Decrees, and Clerk of the Council of Munster, he received 3000 acres of land, and a ruinous castle of the Desmond family, Kilcolman, between Mallow and Limerick (1586).

Unhappy was his fortune, but, in absence from London, he had the advantage of being beyond the influences of the critical literary society of the capital with its reviews in form of pamphlets, its satires, jealousies, and quarrels. There is a record of a conversation of 1584 (published in 1606) in which Spenser described to his friends the aim and scope of the "Faery Queen". Each virtue was to be incarnate in a knight, whose adventures should teach it by example. In a letter to Raleigh, whom he met in Ireland, Spenser says that Prince Arthur (as in the first Canto) is to be a perfect exemplar of "the twelve private virtues". The Faery Queen herself is, first, Glory in general and next Gloriana, the royal and "most virtuous and beautiful" Queen Elizabeth, who also appears as Belphœbe. He is to begin in the middle, before telling how knights, ladies, dwarfs, and a palmer bearing an infant with bloody hands came seeking adventures to a festival of the Faery Queen. "Many other adventures are intermeddled."

The "Faery Queen" is not, and does not aim at being an epic. It is without beginning, middle, or end, for the last six books were not written, or the manuscript perished when Spenser was driven from Kilcolman.

The original scheme is that of the "Morte d'Arthur," moralized, and intermingled with allegory. The poem is an allegorical romance adapted to

the state of England, Ireland, and the Continent under Elizabeth, and to the war of the Reformation against the dragon of Rome and the Scarlet Woman of the Seven Hills, the seeming fair and inwardly filthy Duessa, who is occasionally meant for Mary Stuart. Such unity as the poem possesses is given by the conflict of Good, as Spenser understood it, against Evil, private and public, the vices, and the Church of Rome. The Red Cross Knight wears the armour which St. Paul describes, and in which Bunyan equipped Christian and Greatheart.

There are people, says Spenser, who prefer to have Virtue "sermoned at large, as they use". But while Spenser insists on being taken as a moral preacher in his way, his true ideal is Beauty, and it is the gleam of Beauty that he follows as he wanders with knights and ladies through enchanted forests, and "awtres dire". Like the knights in the "Morte d'Arthur" he "rides at adventure"; in every page a new adventure opens, and leads to others endlessly, through conflicts with Saracens,—*Sansfoy, Sansloy, Sansjoy*,—with the wily Magician, Archimage, and his glamour; with Despair, in a wonderful passage; with dragons and dragonettes, with Acrasia and all the charms of her abode of wanton bliss, which is depicted with great enthusiasm (Book II, Canto XII). This canto is remote indeed from the puritan taste, despite its moral ending

> Let Gryll be Gryll, and have his hoggish mind,
> But let us hence depart, whilst weather serves and wind.

The whole is derived, in the last resort, from the palace of Circe in the Tenth book of the "Odyssey," and it is curious to compare the severe and classic charm of the Greek with the boundless luxury of the Italian Renaissance in Spenser.

The "Faery Queen," indeed, despite the moral intention, which is perfectly sincere, is the very Lotusland of poetry. It is a garden of endless varieties of delight, endless but not prolix, for there is a perpetual change of scene and of characters and nothing is constant but the long and ever-varying music of the verse, Spenser's own measure, in which each stanza is a poem, while the strong stream of melody carries the half-dreaming reader down the enchanted river, and forth into the fairy seas.

The Spenserian measure with the Alexandrine that ends the stanza may not be the best vehicle for narrative. But Spenser's stream does flow from the

mountains of Lotusland, and the air of Lotusland occasionally lulls the vigilance of the poet as well as of the the reader. The stanza (Book VI, Canto X) which opens

> One day, as they all three together went
> To the greene wood to gather strawberries,
> There chaunst to them'a dangerous accident:
> A Tigre forth out of the wood did rise,

narrates an accident as unexpected as dangerous! We cannot but be reminded of the "Swiss Family Robinson," and when Spenser makes Sir Calidore kill the tiger and cut off its head with a shepherd's crook, he is plainly overcome by "drowsihead".[2]

It is true that Spenser soon lost hold of his main allegory, and allegorized the moving events and some of the personages of his time. The gods, in Euripides, make a false Helen of clouds and sunbeams and for her the Trojans and Achæans war and die. So, in Spenser's poem, the witch makes a false Florimel of snow, informed by "a wicked spright" with burning eyes for the destruction of mankind, and the false Florimel is another form of the white witch, Mary Stuart. The affairs of Ireland, France, "Belge," and Spain appear in knightly or magical disguise in the procession of dissolving views; a pageant of the rivers of Ireland and England anticipates Drayton's "Polyolbion": the romance becomes, like "Piers Plowman," a farrago of all that is in the poet's mind.

Of Spenser, Ben Jonson might have said, as of Shakespeare, *Sufflaminandus erat*, "he needed to have the drag put on". Like Pindar in youth, "he sowed from the sack, not from the hand". His archaic words and unsuccessful imitations of archaic words annoyed the critics of his time more than they vex us. If he "writ no language," "writ the language of no time," as Ben Jonson said, the "Iliad" and "Odyssey," too, are in the language of no time, represent no one dialect that ever was actually spoken. But Spenser was writing about no actual time: his own age is confused with the fairy age of chivalry, and the ages of the "Morte d'Arthur," and of Greek mythology. With Spenser we are "out of space, out of time," and of his adoration of Chaucer, his ancient words keep us in mind. That great and noble effort towards perfection, the spirit of chivalry, was his ideal; and in Sir Philip he saw the last of the gentle and perfect knights. To the flattery of

Elizabeth we must submit: she needed it all if to her subjects she was to, stand for England and their love of England.

Spenser's blemishes are of his age; no pure and perfect work of immaculate art could arise in a poetry which was only emerging from a kind of chaos, too much learning being the successor of too much ignorance, and a divine genius being left at large with no control from sane and temperate criticism.

Somewhat eclipsed by the new star of Elizabeth's fresh favourite, Essex, Raleigh visited his Irish lands in 1589, met Spenser, read the "Faery Queen" in manuscript, and brought "Colin Clout Home again". The poem of that name (1591) while full of sugared compliments to Elizabeth, is also touched with satire of her new courtiers. Sidney was dead, Leicester was dead, Burleigh "hated poetry and painting". The first part of the "Faery Queen" (1590) had made Spenser famous, but had won him no prize of Court favour save a small pension.

His "Mother Hubberd's Tale of the Ape and the Fox" may have been written earlier and now was published; in this the satire is much more keen; the poet finds even "the Comic Stage defaced and vulgarized, in his 'Tears of the Muses,' where "our pleasant Willy that is dead of late," cannot conceivably be Shakespeare—the silence of John Lyly may be intended.

When Spenser returned to Ireland a collection of his miscellaneous poems was published, containing, among other things, "Mother Hubberd's Tale," "The Tears of the Muses," "The Ruines of Rome" (sonnets from the French of Joachim du Bellay).

The "Ruines of Time," dedicated to "Sidney's sister, Pembroke's mother," Lady Pembroke, begins with a vision of the genius of the ruined Roman city, Verulam, and in a far-off way reminds us of the Anglo-Saxon poem on the Ruined City. There is a lament for the fall of ancient empires, and the sorrows of the House of Dudley.

Spenser's mood was that of melancholy and disappointment, presently cheered by his marriage with Elizabeth Boyle. From his love came his sonnets, and his matchless "Epithalamion," his "love-learned song". If the "Faery Queen," and all else that Spenser did were lost, the "Epithalamion" and the "Prothalamion" would win for him the crown of the chief of English poets before Shakespeare. The marriage occurred in June, 1594: then

troubles with the Irish whom he had supplanted, or some other cause, sent him to England, with the last three books of his romance. The affair of Duessa's treatment caused James VI to remonstrate through Bower, the English ambassador to Holyrood, and though the poet was not punished, his designs may not have been advanced. He now published his Hymns to Love and Beauty, Earthly and Heavenly, the latter under the influence of Plato, and his "Prothalamion" for the Ladies Elizabeth and Katherine Somerset. These splendid poems were his swan-song; Ireland called him, and in October, 1598, the natives whom he had despoiled drove him from Kilcolman, which they burned. Spenser died, a ruined man, in Westminster (16 January, 1599), Essex paid for his funeral, he lies in Westminster Abbey.

As Hephæstus, when he fashioned the arms of Achilles, melted bronze and gold and silver in his furnace, so Spenser combined the wealth of Greece and Italy, France, Rome, and England in the great crucible of his genius. In the "Epithalamium," for example, we find a translation of four lines from a sonnet of Ronsard, mingling with notes from Theocritus and the Song of Songs, with all the beautiful things of all the creeds. It would, perhaps, be unfair to call the style of Spenser, as it appears in the "Faery Queen," "Corinthian". Yet the metal in which he works is like that "Corinthian bronze" formed, at the conflagration of the city, from the molten gold and silver and copper of the sacred vessels and images of the gods. The spoils of all old poetry are mingled with his own. He has been called "the poets' poet"; his successors have taken from him his very tones. As has been said well, when Spenser writes—

> Scarcely had Phœbus in the glowing East
> Yet harnessëd his fiery-footed team,

that is Shakespeare, the Shakespeare of "Romeo and Juliet".

> And taking usury of time forepast
> Fit for such ladies and such lovely knights,

that is Shakespeare again, the Shakespeare of the Sonnets.

> Many an Angel's voice
> Singing before the eternal Majesty
> For their triune triplicities on high:

that is the younger voice of Milton.

> And ever and anon the rosy red
> Flasht thro' her face,

one might fancy the unmistakable note and accent of Tennyson.[3]

English poetry fell with the neglect of Spenser, who was buried and forgotten from the middle of the seventeenth century till Thomson revived his measures in the middle of the eighteenth, and English poetry came fully to her own again when the magic book of Spenser was opened by Keats.

[1] A well-known diplomatist of Queen Elizabeth, Harry Killigrew, is said to have been "a Holbein in oils".

[2] On this and on the more than mediaeval size of "The Faery Queen," see Mr. Mackail's "Springs of Helicon," pp. 132-28.

[3] Mackail, "Springs of Helicon," pp. 90, 91.

CHAPTER XIX.

THE ELIZABETHAN STAGE AND PLAYWRIGHTS.

The rejoicing age of Elizabeth was fond of "variety entertainments". The Court Masques, such as those of Lyly, and George Peele's "Arraignment of Paris," abounded in songs, music, and dancing, and were expensively furnished. The Universities had their own amateur authors and performers. The "children" of St. Paul's and other schools acted so naturally that, as we read in "Hamlet," they became serious rivals of the professional actors.[1] "An aery of children, little eyases, that cry out on the top of question, and are most tyrannically clapped for it, these are now the fashion". Polonius indicates the many sorts of plays, "tragedy, comedy, pastoral, pastoral-comical, historical-pastoral, tragical-historical, tragical-comical, historical-pastoral, scene individual, or poem unlimited. Seneca cannot be too heavy or Plautus too light." From authors of the heavy Senecan school came blank verse: "the light people" continued, when Shakespeare wrote "Love's Labour's Lost," to employ rhymes in many measures; till Peele, and above all Marlowe, introduced a more free and varied and accomplished blank verse. The general taste turned from many imitations of the ponderous Seneca to plays of more freedom, but even moralities and interludes of the old sort continued to be played in the age of the Shakespearean drama.

There were countless troops of players, vagabonds in the eyes of the law—those who held no licence from a noble (as "the Earl of Leicester's men," "the Admiral's men," and many others), "hardly scaped whipping". In "Ratsei's Ghoaste" a company of strollers, Bottoms and Snugs, stage-stricken, are licensed by a highwayman. They acted where they could, mere "barnstormers," mainly in the yards of inns, under the galleries.

The City was puritanic, or, at all events, was adverse to the nuisance caused by crowds of roisterers and hangers-on of the theatre, and by 1577 James Burbage built his theatre beyond the municipal bounds, in Shoreditch. The Curtain and the Fortune were in the same region. Southwark, south of the river, a noisy quarter, gave hospitality to the Rose, and, in 1599, to the Globe, built by Burbage's son, the famous Richard, Shakespeare's friend.

The Diary of Philip Henslowe, who financed players and authors, among his other enterprises, contains the jottings of this avaricious and uneducated patron. There were many small "private theatres," which had a scrambling existence.

The pit was unseated, and open to the rain and sun, the galleries above were less uncomfortable. The noble and wealthy sat in galleries round the pit, or on the stage, which was covered over or partly covered from the air. The arras, or tapestry hangings, concealed the prompter—and Polonius in "Hamlet". Scenes in bedrooms were at the back, and when such a scene closed, the hangings fell over it. There was no scene-shifting, as with us, pasteboard rocks and trees were easily moved about. A painted frame with a name over it in large letters, stood for town-gate, and for the town.[2]

There were no women actors, boys took women's parts till the Restoration.

Such clowns, dancers, singers, and practical jokers as Tarleton and Kemp, and such actors as held shares in their theatres, made good livelihoods. The authors, who sold them dramas for a sum down, and had no more profit from them in any way, were paid sums ranging from £6 to £20: according to modern rate of purchasing power from £50 to £160. The play then became the property of the speculator, like Henslowe, or manager, or company of authors, which had paid for it. Robert Greene, the celebrated literary man of whom we have to speak presently, was accused of selling a copy of a play to one company, and then, when that company went "on tour" through provincial towns, of selling another copy to another company. "He was very capable of having it happen to him." When any speculator or company had once bought a play, they could hand it over to any author with orders to alter it as he pleased. This was annoying to the first author or authors, for sometimes two men, sometimes three, sometimes five or six would combine to make a play. The consequence is that modern critics spend much time and ink in trying to discover which author wrote each part of a

comedy or tragedy, and how much of the original work of the first author, or authors, was kept in a play which, perhaps, Shakespeare himself took up and re-wrote.

We have no space for such discussions, which seldom lead to any certain conclusions, but we must remember that the actors much objected to the printing of any plays which they owned, for, once printed, it was not easy to prevent other companies from acting them. But publishers sent shorthand reporters to take down the words during the performance, and wild work they often made of it. These printed plays, small cheap square volumes or "quartoes," may be very correct or very incorrect copies of the author's words; some of Shakespeare's quartos are good texts, some are execrable.

The playwrights were usually young men who had been at one of the Universities, and had picked up all that they could learn of the newest French and Italian literature, ideas, and manners. They were very scornful of play writers who, like Kyd, Shakespeare, and even Ben Jonson, far more learned than any of them, had not been at Oxford or Cambridge. The pamphlets of the University men tell us much of the little we know about their rivals, often their betters, who had not studied at Oxford or Cambridge.

JOHN LYLY.

From the University wits whose plays preluded to Shakespeare, John Lyly (?1554-1606) of Magdalen, Oxford, stands a little apart. He wrote dramas to be acted before the maiden Queen by the boy singers of the Chapel Royal and of St. Paul's. Unlike some of his brethren, he remembered the reverence due to boys and virgins, and his pieces are remarkable for delicacy of tone, while the refined and romantic sentiment, the pure and hopeless passion of his "Endymion," for example, and the style of the prose in his dialogue, are all in the manner of his "Euphues". When he aimed at broad mirth, he was not broad enough or facetious enough to be amusing. His characters usually, as in "Endymion" and "The Woman in the Moon," are the gods, goddesses, heroes, and heroines of classical mythology, but their manners are those of the Court of Elizabeth, though more refined.

Allegory on events of the day is suspected of lurking in the plays: Cynthia, for example, has always some complimentary reference to Elizabeth.

"Mother Bombie" is not a successful essay in low comedy: "Campaspe," a love story of the Court of Alexander the Great (where Plato finds himself, somehow), is quite a pretty approach, as is "Galatea," towards the romantic comedy; but in Shakespeare's early "Love's Labour's Lost" we see that, at the first attempt, he far surpassed his predecessor. Puns, alliteration, and anecdotes of unnatural history are nearly as prevalent in the plays as in the "Euphues" of Lyly. Several of his songs are pretty; some of his scenes of love-making when the lady, though coy, is willing to be won, are graceful, and the prose of the dialogue, conceits apart, is lucid and in good taste. His blank verse in "The Woman in the Moon," is not specially characteristic.

PEELE.

George Peele would have a far better claim than Kyd to the title of "sporting" if there were even a little truth in the tract about him called "Merrie Conceited Jests of George Peele, Gentleman"; while to the title of "gentleman" he would have no moral pretensions. The jests are rough and far from honest practical jokes, but the author had some knowledge of Peele's position as a director of pageants and masques. There is no smoke without fire, and the contemporary stories of the "Bohemian" life of pranks and poverty led by young poor University wits connected with the stage, may be exaggerated but can scarcely be baseless. George Peele is thought to have been of Devonshire: he was born about 1558, was a member, in 1574, of Broadgates Hall, now Dr. Johnson's college of Pembroke in Oxford, took his Bachelor's degree about 1577, his Master's in 1579.

His "Tale of Troy," in rhymed heroic couplets (published 1589), he probably wrote at Oxford. It is a pocket epic, and summary of the Trojan war—based partly on the "Iliad," partly on the later Ionian legends, as of Palamedes, and the love of Achilles for Polyxena, daughter of Priam. By 1581 Peele was in London. In 1584 his "Arraignment of Paris" was published; it was acted in that year before Elizabeth by the "children" of the Chapel Royal. It is strange sport for ladies, and Mrs. Quickly might have said, "You do ill to teach the child such words". The piece in which Paris is arraigned for giving the apple to Venus, is a pastoral written in a variety of rhymed metres, with some speeches in creditable blank verse: there is a pretty song,

Fair, and fair, and twice as fair,
And fair as any may be.

At the close Diana presents the famous apple, with the assent of Venus, Juno, and Pallas, to Queen Elizabeth. Peele also arranged pageants for the Lord Mayor, and wrote (1593) a "Chronicle History of Edward I," a play based on an absurd ballad about the profligacy and fabulous cruelty of Eleanor, the worthy Queen of "Longshanks". Friar David ap Tuck provides a comic part, in prose. John Baliol, King of Scotland, brags and submits in blank verse: the best of the blank verse is assigned to the wicked Eleanor: the lines are not usually "stopped" in the stiff old style.

In 1593 Peele also wrote his "Honour of the Garter," a poetic vision of "lovely knights" of old days. The Prologue contains a lament for Marlowe,

the Muses' darling for thy verse,
Fit to write passions for the souls below.

"The Old Wives' Tale" is thought to have suggested a poem very unlike it, Milton's "Comus". The date of Peele's "David and Bathsheba," "a remain of the fashion of Scripture plays," is uncertain (published in 1599). This is the best of Peele's extant work, and the blank verse is not unworthy of Marlowe. David says of the dead Absalom—

touch no hair of him,
Not that fair hair with which the wanton winds
Delight to play, and love to make it curl,
Wherein the nightingales would build their nests,
And make sweet bowers in every golden tress,
To sing their lover every night to sleep.

With Peele and Marlowe we are coming close to the perfection of the verse of Shakespeare. Peele died in 1597(?); two years earlier he was poor and in sickness. Probably some of his plays are lost; the "Battle of Alcazar" is but doubtfully assigned to him. Peele cannot have taught Shakespeare much: though he greatly improved blank verse, he only proves that spectators were not intolerant of real poetry in plays.

Greene.

Robert Greene was a Norwich man (born about 1560), the son of parents of substance; at St. John's College, Cambridge, he graduated in 1578. Norwich was a puritan town, but the indulgence of Greene's mother, as he tells us, enabled him to make the Italian tour, probably between 1578 and 1580,

> An Englishman that is Italianate
> Doth quickly prove a devil incarnate,

said the proverb, and Greene, a man greatly given to fits of repentance, describes his dissipations much as St. Augustine describes his own. At all events he learned Italian and could borrow from novels in that language. He lived among "wags as loose as myself," both in Italy and London. Neither the effects of a rousing sermon nor an early marriage (1585, 1586) to a wife with whom he soon parted company could withdraw Greene from the bottle and his wild comrades. He was the conventional "gentleman of the press," living by a very rapid pen, "yarking up a pamphlet" with unprecedented speed, says Nash, and his wares, we learn, were well paid. He had also many noble patrons, at least he dedicated his "love pamphlets," romances in the manner of Lyly, to many ladies. They are pure in tone, and his favourite female character is a chaste and long-suffering Patient Grizel, like Enid in the Welsh "Mabinogion," and Enid in the "Idylls of the King". Between 1583 and 1589 he wrote at least eight of those love stories and pamphlets, including "Euphues, his Censure to Philautus," and, as five were dedicated to ladies of rank, they were probably of the sort which women enjoyed. Later he was either remorseful, or affected remorse, for his way of living, and turned his experience of the town to use, in tracts on "Cosenage" and "Cony-catching," exposures of the devices of courtesans, usurers, and other harpies.

His "Repentance," and his "Groatsworth of Wit" (1592), with the notorious allusion to "Shake-scene" were among his last efforts. The "Groatsworth of Wit" describes the jealousies between the playwrights and the actors, who, then as always, gained most of the popularity, and then gained most of the money yielded by the stage. It is almost impossible for unbiased readers to avoid detecting in Greene's "Johannes Factotum," "the only Shake-scene in the country," an allusion to Shakespeare. Whether he partook too freely of pickled herrings and Rhine wine, as gossip averred, or not, he fell into a fatal illness, and died in debt to his landlord and landlady, in September, 1592.

Harvey attacked and Nash defended his memory, but, even according to Nash he was a "ruffler". "Penning of plays," Greene says, was his "continual exercise," but at what date he began it is uncertain. He appears to have been stung by some comment in a play by two other authors on the unfashionable character of his own dramas, "for that I could not make my verses jet upon the stage in tragical buskins"; that is, apparently, he did not try to write the sonorous blank verse of Marlowe; or tried and failed to produce in Nash's words "the swelling bombast of a bragging blank verse".

If "Alphonsus, King of Arragon" be his first play, as it gives Tamburlaine on a small scale it may have been suggested by Marlowe's drama: however Alphonsus, after Napoleonic victories, marries his own true love, the daughter of the Sultan and Greene's play, like the tragedies preferred by Charles II, "ends happily". The blank verse is inferior to that of the Ninevite play in which Lodge took part, "A Looking Glass for London and England".

"Orlando Furioso" is a strange medley; there is prose, blank verse, and even a speech in Latin: the materials are drawn, of course, from Ariosto; the Paladins deal enormously in classical allusions.

In "Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay," the Prince of Wales, afterwards Edward I, falls in love with a gamekeeper's daughter, and describes her charms in blank verse, and in a very pretty pastoral manner. By the old trick of novels and of the stage he sends Lacie, a courtier, to woo for him (as in "Much Ado about Nothing," "Twelfth Night," and "Two Gentlemen of Verona"), and the usual consequences follow.

The Friars Bacon and Bungay are shown at their pranks, with a devil, and Lacie, "in country apparel," flirts with the keeper's daughter in talk of Apollo's courtship of Semele (mother of Dionysus by Zeus). The king beholds their courtship by dint of crystal-gazing; while they are also on the stage.

The plot becomes extremely complicated, and poor Margaret, the keeper's daughter, has to play the patient Grizel to Lacie. She is cruelly treated, but marries Lacie in the end, while Edward pairs off with Eleanor. The servant of Friar Bacon, Miles, and a devil provide some comic matter. The blank verse is now much more accomplished, and imitates the cadences of Marlowe.

The play of "James IV" is so absurdly unhistorical (it transfers the plot of an Italian novel by Cinthio to the Court of Holyrood), that it can hardly be read with patience, but Greene's sweet, patient, long-enduring heroine, Dorothea, appears again, in the part historically filled by a very different person, Margaret Tudor, whose passion for being alternately married (finally to "Lord Muffin") and divorced, was rebuked by her brother, Henry VIII, himself no model of constancy. Greene introduced and Shakespeare continued the practice of taking plots for romantic comedies, (such as "As You Like It") from Italian novels; and, like Shakespeare, he is the poet of good women, "the Homer of women," as his friend Nash said with hyperbole of compliment.

LODGE.

The Memoirs of Thomas Lodge, had he left them to us, would be of more interest than are his writings. He "had an oar in every paper-boat," says the Cambridge satirist in the play, "The Return from Parnassus," but he had oars in other boats that were not of paper. Born about 1558, he was the second son of Sir Thomas Lodge, an eminent grocer. He was educated at Trinity College, Oxford, being by one academic generation junior to Lyly. Going to the Inns of Court, London, he answered Gosson's attack on poetry, "The School of Abuse," in an abusive style very unlike that of Sir Philip Sidney's "Defence of Poesy". He and Barnaby Rich (the supposed author of a most vivacious translation of two books of Herodotus), were friends, and wrote commendatory verses, each for the other's work (1581).

If in his "Alarum against Usurers" (1584), Lodge is speaking from his personal experience, he already knew "the ignoble melancholy of pecuniary embarrassment," thanks to the expensive acquaintance of "Mrs. Minx," and long bills due to his tailor. He warns the young against the temptations of the town, at tedious length and with overabundance of classical allusions. In an unreadable romance (1584) (Lyly's "Euphues" being the model), "Forbonius and Prisceria," he inserts many not unreadable verses.

"Glaucus and Scilla" is a work of the same *genre* as Shakespeare's "Venus and Adonis," a classical tale told in stanzas of six lines.

> "Delayes in tragic tales provoke offences"

says Lodge, and his tale is too prolix, verbose, and full of "delayes". There are harmonious cadences, and pretty descriptions, but Lodge's poetic vein is best in his brief lyrics. He found time, on sea or land, to write "Rosalynde: Euphues' Golden Legacy". This contains the tale which Shakespeare made immortal by transfiguring it in "As You Like It". The vagrant and affected prolixity of this kind of story had a popularity that endured for a century, and surprises us as much as our popular novels will doubtless astonish future generations. Such as the style was, Lodge had mastered it, and redeemed it by the intercalated verses. "Rosalynde" had vogue, and Lodge, who had set forth on a freebooting expedition with young Thomas Cavendish, wrote probably the only novel, "A Margarite of America" (1596), ever composed in the frosty Straits of Magellan. His next novel was "Euphues's Shadow," the euphuism of the shadow is equal to that of the substance. His play, "A Looking Glass for London and England," written in collaboration with Greene, was acted in 1592. We are introduced to Rasni, King of Nineveh, with three Kings of Cilicia, Crete, and Paphlagonia, returning from the overthrow of Jeroboam, King of Jerusalem..

Greene and Lodge are magnificently disdainful of local colour. The Cilician King, in very sonorous blank verse, proclaims the Assyrian monarch to be more beautiful than Hyacinthus and Endymion, personages of Greek mythology. Oseas the prophet, brought in by an angel, listens to an angelic harangue of some thirty lines, and tersely replies: "The will of the Lord be done!" To him enter "Clown and a crew of Ruffians," and we have several pages of humours in prose; mainly the talk is of ale and horses. After a prolonged and chaotic performance, Nineveh repents under the preaching of Jonah, and these amiable moralists, Greene and Lodge, bid London go and do likewise. That the blank verse is not bad, and that the satire of Rasni's flatterers *may* be a hit at the adulators of Elizabeth, is the best that can be said for this Scriptural drama. After all it is not so tedious as Lodge's play from Roman history, "The Wounds of Civil War".

It is needless to speak of such mere hackwork as his books on William Longbeard and Robert the Devil, but his "Fig for Momus," satires in rhyming heroic couplets, accredit him, contrary to the boast of Joseph Hall, as the first English satirist.

Not popular in literature, Lodge (1600) turned physician, taking his M.D. degree at Avignon. Now he really flourished, and was in good practice, till

his death in 1625. His reputation rests on his lyrics; for the advance of the drama he did nothing.

NASH.

With no special gifts except reckless fluency, Thomas Nash, or Nashe, made his name one of the most frequently quoted in the history of Elizabethan literature. The son of "William Nash, minister" (not improbably a Puritan preacher) Nash was born at Lowestoft in Suffolk in November, 1567. The Christian names of his brothers and sisters, Nathaniel, Israel, Martha, Rebecca are of the Biblical sort favoured by "the Brethren".

Nash made no claim to the title "gentleman" then used in the heraldic sense. He was (1582) either a "sizar" (at Oxford "servitor") or Lady Margaret's Scholar of St. John's College, Cambridge, and was in residence for nearly seven years. By 1589 he was in London, a literary hack, employed, for example, to write an "Introduction" to Greene's "Menaphon". He addresses the students of both Universities in his irrepressibly rattling way, and it is hardly possible to doubt that in a long passage he rails at the unfortunate Kyd in his capacities as playwright and translator from the Italian. He rapidly reviewed contemporary literature and mocked at English hexameters, the darlings of Gabriel Harvey.

With him Nash later had a war of pamphlets, the best known is "Have with You to Saffron Walden," containing a full answer to the eldest son of the Halter-maker (1596). The pamphlets are only of interest for their personal hints: the feud arose from a slighting allusion by Greene to Harvey's parentage ("Quip for an Upstart Courtier"). Nash took up the cudgels (as his weapons of wit may be called) for Greene; Harvey pursued Greene's memory beyond the tomb, and Government at last put an end to the publication of the pamphlets.

Nash and Marlowe worked together at the play of "Dido," mainly based on the "Æneid" of Virgil, with an opening scene in un-Virgilian bad taste, and highly unedifying to the players, "the Children of her Majesty's Chapel The play is in blank verse, usually better than Nash's own in his "Summer's Last Will and Testament". Much of this is in Nash's hasty prose; a blank verse tirade in praise of dogs is amusing:—

To come to speech, they have it questionless,
Although we understand them not so well,
They bark as good old Saxon as may be.

In 1597, Nash was imprisoned for a play "The Isle of Dogs".

It is impossible to enumerate his tracts, of which his turbulent prose satire, "Pierce Penniless, His Supplication to the Devil," is the most spirited. His "Unfortunate Traveller, or The Life of Jack Wilton" (1594) is a crude anticipation of "Gil Blas," and the novel of unscrupulous wandering adventurers, and contains the feigned story of the loves of Surrey and his Geraldine, which was taken to be historical. Nash lived a scrambling life, a bookseller's hack, destitute of patrons, and died about 1601. For the advance of the drama, despite his play-writing, Nash did nothing.

Marlowe.

Christopher Marlowe is happily on the right side of the line which separates poets who may be read from poets who must be written about. He was born on 6 February, 1564, being the son of an eminent shoemaker at Canterbury. He was educated at the King's School of that city, where he held a little scholarship of a pound, quarterly, and went to Corpus Christi College, Cambridge, with one of the scholarships founded there for Canterbury boys by Archbishop Parker (1581). In 1584 he took his Bachelor's degree, being a contemporary of Nash and Greene, and three years later put on his Master's gown. His translations of Ovid's "Amores" may have been executed at Cambridge; he did not publish them. His first public work was the first part of the play of "Tamburlaine," acted in 1587 or 1588. The drama, in both parts, is destitute of construction; the hero, Tamburlaine, "the scourge of God," merely overruns a vast extent of country, subduing kings, massacring maidens, and glutting his unbounded rage for universal conquest. His only human weakness is his passion for "divine Zenocratê," his wife, and he might be called a martyr to "megalomania," trampling on divine names no less than on the backs of Emperors. The scene in which he enters in his chariot drawn by the Kings of Trebizond and Soria, bit in mouth, and cries:—

Holla, ye pampered jades of Asia!

was matter of constant jest and parody, a proof of the popularity of the drama.

In his youth, if we may interpret his nature by his early plays, Marlowe was "a desirer of things impossible," intoxicated with the thought of what man may achieve. "Nature," he makes Tamburlaine say,

> Doth teach us all to have aspiring minds:
> Our souls whose faculties can comprehend
> The wondrous architecture of the world,
> And measure every wandering planet's course,
> Still climbing after knowledge infinite,
> And always moving as the restless spheres,
> Wills us to wear ourselves and never rest,
> Until we reach the ripest fruit of all...

but after this scientific prelude, worthy of Bacon, Tamburlaine sinks to finding felicity in "an earthly crown".

The genius of Marlowe, which was great, but scarcely dramatic, places in the lips of his ferocious monster these astonishing lines on the aspiration of the poet towards the beautiful:—

> If all the pens that poets ever held
> Had fed the feeling of their masters' thoughts,
> And every sweetness that inspired their hearts,
> Their minds and muses on admired themes,
> If all the heavenly quintessence they still
> From their immortal flowers of poesy,
> Wherein, as in a mirror, we perceive
> The highest reaches of a human wit;
> If these had made one poem's period,
> And all combined in beauty's worthiness
> Yet should there hover in their restless heads
> One thought, one grace, one wonder at the least,
> Which into words no virtue can digest.

This is the vision of beauty which haunts and evades Marlowe, as the shadow of the mother of Odysseus in Hades fades away from his embrace. Sometimes it appears to him

like women or unmarried maids,
Shadowing more beauty in their airy brows
Than have the white breasts of the Queen of Love.

Again, in "Dr. Faustus," a new Tamburlaine who seeks the impossible in magic, not by arms, and sells his soul to the Adversary, the vision arises in the form of Helen of Troy, that ancient symbol of the World's Desire.

Was this the face that launched a thousand ships
And burnt the topless towers of Ilium...
Oh, thou art fairer than the evening air,
Clad in the beauty of a thousand stars.

In this absolute perfection of the magic of verse, we see the true conquest of Marlowe: as in the agonies of the last hour of Faustus,

Cut is the branch that might have grown full straight
And burned is Apollo's Laurel Bough.

The last act is full of pity and of terror.

The dagger-thrust that slew Marlowe in a Deptford tavern, at the end of May, 1593, robbed English poetry of a genius whose future performance cannot be measured, nor can the form which it might have taken be guessed. The comic prose scenes in "Faustus" are very stupid and may perhaps be by another hand, but nothing in Marlowe indicates the gift of humour.

In "The Jew of Malta" Barabas, on a scale less disproportionate than Tamburlaine, represents immeasurable desire of wealth, not of royalty. In the earlier scenes the speeches of Barabas, with the recurrence of romantic and sonorous names, in a way remind us of Milton. The Jew, ill-treated as he is, is not allowed to be sympathetic, and the monstrosity of his crimes reminds the modern reader of Aytoun's "Firmilian": with a touch of the story of the Hunchback in the "Arabian Nights". Though Barabas has a beloved daughter, rapidly converted to Christianity, though his ducats and his daughter are all that he loves, he lags very far behind Shylock. The play was well calculated for popularity, but, save Barabas, it contains no character of marked merit.

"Edward II" has been much praised in modern times, and even preferred to the "Richard II" of Shakespeare. Neither King was a good subject for

tragedy, though both endured the extremes of misfortune. But in Richard there were noble elements, debased by a long struggle with some of his uncles, and undermined by a period of absolute power. In Edward II we know nothing estimable, save a moment of princely valour when he was all but taken at Bannockburn. His doting devotion to Piers Gaveston, who is well sketched by Marlowe, his intolerable insults to his Queen, place him quite beyond sympathy, till his awful last hours and appalling end. The instantaneous change of the Queen from a loving, forgiving, and intolerably wronged woman to a monster of cruel hypocrisy cannot be called artistic; and though the play, compared with Marlowe's other dramas, is "regular," and opens the path to what we may call the legitimate drama, without the monstrosities of "The Jew of Malta," it does not contain such surprising excellencies as occur in "Tamburlaine" and "Faustus". The noblest passage, the speech of the fallen King to Leicester, could scarcely come from the Edward of the earlier acts. The "Massacre of Paris" (the Bartholomew massacre of 1572) is of no importance among Marlowe's works.

If we could agree with his too fond biographer that Marlowe wrote the passages of "Henry VI," in which Jeanne d'Arc is worthy of herself, and that Shakespeare contributed the scandalous scenes of her debasement, we might regard Marlowe as a wonder of clear-sighted appreciation. But nothing in their works confirms this conjecture. What share, if any, Marlowe had in "Henry VI" and "Titus Andronicus," and precisely what Shakespeare did for both of these dramas is unknown. Marlowe's beautiful lyric, "Come live with me and be my Love," is for ever fragrant, and his "Hero and Leander" (stiffly finished by Chapman, it is said at Marlowe's own dying request) is at least the equal of, and may even be preferred by many readers to, the first fruits of Shakespeare's invention, "Venus and Adonis".

Shakespeare's "dead shepherd" did not die unlamented by his brother poets: he had patrons in Raleigh and Sir Thomas Walsingham, and it is not necessary to criticize here certain horrible libels on his life and conversation.[3]

KYD.

The irony of chance, by a freak of Ben Jonson's, has attached to the most ill-fated of authors the name of "Sporting Kyd". Born about 1558 the son of a scrivener in the City, Kyd was educated at Merchant Taylors' School. He was not a member of either University. It is by a piece of luck, for his biographers, that he was satirized by Nash as one who stole from a French translation of Seneca's tragedies; and so produced a play, "Pompey the Great, his fair Cornelia's Tragedie," one who "will afford you whole Hamlets," and who took up the business of translating from the Italian. By pursuing these and other sarcastic hints of Nash's, Kyd has been identified as the author of the most truly popular of early Elizabethan plays "The Spanish Tragedy"; of what the Germans call the "Ur-Hamlet," the oldest English Hamlet play; and the translator of "The Householder's Philosophic," in prose; while he is thought guiltless of the first part of "Jeronimo," a prelude, meant to be humorous, to his "Spanish Tragedy". To that work, again, additions were made, and Ben Jonson was paid for making them, though they are thought not to resemble his manner, and he frequently girds in his own later dramas at the popular "Spanish Tragedy". It is a long tissue of horrors and revenges in blank verse, old Hieronymo slowly pursuing the slayers of his son, Horatio, and contains, like "Hamlet," a play within a play, in which the actors in a fencing scene slay each other in earnest, to glut Hieronymo's revenge. As in "Hamlet" there is a ghost, but ghosts were common in the dramas of Seneca and his English imitators. Hieronymo, when apprehended, bites his tongue out, and stabs himself and a Duke who happens to be convenient in his neighbourhood.

If Kyd were really the author of the first play of "Hamlet," based on a Danish story which English actors who played in Germany in 1587 may have brought home, the fact would be interesting. If we only possessed a copy of this first "Hamlet," we should know how much, if anything at all, Shakespeare retained from the original play. Kyd is credited with being the first to show the change and development of characters under the sway of the events of the drama, though this can scarcely be proved save by a long comparison of all the characters in the plays of other writers. Grotesque as are his horrors, when we compare those of "Titus Andronicus" and of successors of Shakespeare who ought to have known better, we wonder at his moderation.

Kyd's end was lamentable. He was arrested, and tortured, in May, 1593, on suspicion of having written a placard threatening a massacre of undesirable aliens in London, who interfered with home industries. In his papers was found part of a perfectly serious though heterodox discourse on a theological topic, apparently intended to be submitted to a Bishop. He cleared himself of the placard, and, in a letter to Puckering, the Lord Keeper, said that he had the theological piece from Marlowe, that it was among his papers by accident, and that Marlowe, then just dead, was an evil man, and no friend of his.

Kyd now lost the patronage of a peer, unnamed, and by December in the following year he was dead; his family renounced the administration of what possessions he may have left behind him. He has of late been the subject of minute English and German research, like every one who had, or may have had, the faintest connexion with Shakespeare. The indecision of Hieronymo (Act III. scene 12) in revenging himself on Balthasar for slaying Horatio, Hieronymo's son, and hanging him up in Hieronymo's summer-house, has other motives than the indecision of Hamlet. But this indecision, and the play within the play, and Kyd's supposed authorship of the "Ur-Hamlet," which lies behind the First Quarto of "Hamlet," make Kyd interesting to critical specialists.

These predecessors of Shakespeare need to be mentioned, though perhaps only Marlowe's dramas are now commonly read by lovers of poetry. Though these men wandered in the wilderness, so to speak, they pointed out the way to Shakespeare, and made the world familiar with rude forecasts of the forms of the romantic comedy, the historical play, and the tragedy. Several wrote blank verse well, occasionally; Marlowe brought blank verse, not precisely dramatic, but rather reflective, to the highest beauty. Almost all the early dramatists also graced their plays with charming songs.

All of these early dramatists had that sweet and birdlike English note of song, "woodnotes wild," which (to an English ear) is rare in all but the early poetry of France. We have observed this note in the lyrics of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. Time did not stifle the music, it is prolonged in the fashionable love-romances and in the early dramas. Thus even Nash, the least poetical of his associates, has his

Adieu, farewell earth's bliss
This world uncertain is,

which, with its refrain,

Lord, have mercy on us,

recalls Dunbar's lament

Timor Mortis conturbat me.
Dust hath closed Helen's eye,
Worms feed on Hector brave.

Where are the lovely knights and the ladies of old time?

Autumn hath all the summer's fruitful treasure,

written in a time of pestilence, is another lament of Nash's, and

Go not yet away, bright soul of the sad year.

Peele has

His golden locks hath time to silver turned,

and the beautiful song of Bethsabe at the bath,

Hot sun, cool fire, tempered with sweet air.

Greene has his

Ah, what is love, it is a pretty thing,
As sweet unto a shepherd as a king,

which is in the spirit of Burns's best songs of rural love; and his courtly love song with the French refrain,

N'oserez vous, mon bel ami!

and his Lullaby

Weep not my wanton, smile upon my knee,
When thou art old, there's grief enough for thee.

This has the charm of the folk-songs,

Old and plain,
And dallying with the innocence of love.

It may also be said that, at the opposite pole, Greene's snatches of English hexameters are the best of their kind then written.

If nothing else Of Lyly's existed his

> Cupid and my Campaspe played
> At cards for kisses—Cupid payed,

would keep his memory green.

Lodge has been blamed as a common plagiary because he translated so many of his lyrics, not always or often with due acknowledgment, from Des Portes and Ronsard. But in some cases he improved the land which he conquered, and his "Love in my bosom like a bee," "Down a down!" "Thus Phyllis sung," and "Pluck the fruit and taste the pleasures," are genuine additions to English song, and prelude to Shakespeare's, and the music of the coming generation.

All of the treasures of his predecessors are not equivalent or nearly equivalent to the small change of Shakespeare's genius. But the best things in his predecessors' work indicate that, in a favourite phrase of Aristotle, "Nature was wishing to make" a Shakespeare. Yet was the birth of his genius none the less a miracle. He did much more than combine all that was good in all the others. He added that which is universal and eternal.

SHAKESPEARE.

Concerning the life of William Shakspere (as he signed it), or Shakespeare (as his name was usually spelled), only a few essential facts are known from records of his own time, mainly documents concerning the legal affairs of himself, his family, and the theatrical company with which he was connected. Unlike many of the contemporary playwrights he was not a member of either University, and so college records about him are necessarily absent: and there is no contemporary roll of names of pupils at the school of his native place, Stratford-on-Avon.

Again, he was not a pamphleteer or journalist, like Nash, Greene, and others, and so he left no account of his friendships and enmities; no prose books about his opinions on art and literature, like Ben Jonson; he wrote no satirical plays, as Ben did, full of angry, contemptuous, and envious attacks

on his rivals, and on the actors. As he was no learned scholar, the Universities never dreamed of making him, like Ben Jonson, a Master of Arts. People who wrote criticisms of poetry in prose or verse always spoke highly of him: one, John Davies, remarks that, in the opinion of some, had he not been an actor, he would have been fit company for Kings. But anecdotes of him were not sought for till all who had known him had long been dead. His own dramas contain a few topical allusions, and his sonnets appear to be more or less autobiographical, though to what degree, as in the case of Sidney's sonnets, is matter of dispute. He took almost no part in any public services, and in these circumstances little is known of his life, despite the painful researches of many learned students, and the wildest modern conjectures.

Concerning even the paternal grandfather of the poet, presumed to have been Richard Shakespeare, a farmer at Snitterfield, within four miles of Stratford-on-Avon, we have little more than probable presumptions. Richard's son John, father of the poet, in 1551 set up in business at Stratford-on-Avon, then a town of some 1500 inhabitants. He was a dealer in agricultural commodities; Aubrey, the antiquary, a century later, heard that he was a butcher. But the trade of a butcher in a tiny town is not lucrative, yet by 1556 he could buy two tenements, one in Henley Street, next door to the so-called "Birthplace". He held a succession of municipal offices, and was one of two chamberlains of town accounts. In 1557 (?) he married Mary Arden, a daughter of a far away branch of a good family; she inherited fifty acres of land and a house at Wilmcote, and other property. After the birth of children who died young, came William, baptized on 26 April, 1564. His father, still prospering, was chief magistrate in 1568: that year came licensed play-actors to Stratford—"The Queen's," and "The Earl of Worcester's". But after 1572 the affairs of the father turned gradually to the worse; he mortgaged the property near Wilmcote in 1578; he fell into debt, and in 1586 ceased to be an alderman. His family had increased while his fortunes declined.

As there was a free Grammar School at Stratford, it is natural to suppose that William was educated there from his seventh or eighth to his thirteenth year. If so, he would learn Latin grammar, and read more or less in the popular classics, including, "old Mantuan"—not Virgil, but a writer of the Italian Renaissance. Supposing Shakespeare to have left school at thirteen,

he was at the age of Bacon when he went up to Cambridge. Books have been written about the learning or want of learning of Shakespeare. In all probability he could make out most of the meaning of a Roman writer of comedies, like Plautus, or of a philosopher like Seneca. But his use of English translations, whenever he could get them, does not look as if he read Latin with ease: he could ask a friend or pay a poor scholar to help him when he had no translations; and to Ben Jonson his Latin seemed "small," because Ben had so much scholarship, and was so proud of it. All general information Shakespeare acquired as easily as he drew breath. Of schoolmasters, judging from allusions in the plays, he entertained the same opinion as Sir Walter Scott. The classics are most in view in his early plays, in some of which he worked over an earlier manuscript by a more scholarly hand. Moreover classical allusions, mythological and historical, lay loose on the surface of all contemporary literature; and abounded in the conversation of the wits.[4] No man ever cared less for historical accuracy and correct "local colour" than Shakespeare: he piled up anachronisms, making Aristotle live before the Trojan war.

When not yet 19 years of age, at the close of 1582, Shakespeare married Anne Hathaway, who had the same dowry, in money (£6. 13s. 4d.) as his mother. She was seven or eight years older than he: their first child was born at the end of May, 1583, and the circumstances did not promise domestic happiness. Twins, Hamnet (who died young) and Judith, were born in 1585, and whether Shakespeare did, or did not get into trouble for poaching on the lands of Lucy of Charlecote (against whom his heraldic ridicule, in "Merry Wives," Act I, Scene I, indicates a grudge), it was time for him to seek his fortune. Perhaps he made ventures near home (Aubrey, who knew an old actor that had traditions, says he was a schoolmaster), but by 1587 he was probably "hanging loose on the town" in London. Here he had a fellow townsman, Field, who later printed his "Venus," and his "Lucrece". The story that Shakespeare held the horses of playgoers outside the doors of a theatre comes late into literary anecdote.

By 1594 (perhaps by 1592) Shakespeare was a member of the Company of Actors known successively as "Leicester's," "Derby's" (died 1592) "Hunsdon's" (Carey) and, at the accession of James VI and I (1603) "The King's". With him were the great Richard Burbage, John Heminge, Henry Condell, and Augustine Phillips. By this Company all his plays were first

acted. By 1592 they used the Rose Theatre, and others, and in 1599 the Globe. There is no proof that Shakespeare ever played in Scotland (he could not pronounce Dunsinane, and accentuated the final syllable) or abroad.

From the moment of his departure from Stratford nothing is certainly known of Shakespeare, till the dying Greene apparently alludes to him in "A groat's worth of wit, bought with a million of Repentance" (1592). Adjuring his comrades (Nash, Peele, and Marlowe?), to forswear sack and the stage, Greene seems to remind them of a hardship in their professional position: the rewriting of plays, once sold, by other hands. A new hand might alter it for the owners, the hand might be that of an actor, one of the "puppets," says Greene, "that speak from our mouths.... There is an upstart Crow, beautified with our feathers, that with his 'Tyger's heart wrapt in a Player's hide' supposes he is as well able to bombast out a blank verse as the best of you, and being an absolute 'Johannes factotum'" (jack-of-all-work) "is, in his own conceit, the only Shake-scene in a countrie.... It is a pity men of such rare wit should be subject to the pleasures of such rude groomes."

If, as has been suggested (there is no certainty), a piece called "Henry VI" (part I), played by Shakespeare's company in March, 1592, was an older drama "bombasted" by Shakespeare, and if his conduct was one cause of Greene's wrath, we can only regret that Shakespeare set his hand to a work that rejoiced English patriots. The author or authors represent Jeanne d'Arc in two totally different characters, now as a patriot, equally brave, self-sacrificing, and eloquent; now as a loose woman who denies her father, and asserts her pregnancy by one or other of several lovers. History is strangely treated, and the materials must have been taken from Anglo-Burgundian scandals, and from a curious French prose chronicle romance, obviously done into prose out of verse, the "Chronique de Lorraine". This appears to have been the source of the scenes in which Jeanne fights at Rouen, many years after her martyrdom in 1431.

Shakespeare may have "written in" the scenes where Jeanne acts and speaks like herself; the others (let us hope so!) may be by a baser hand. The second and third parts of "Henry VI," were later much altered, probably by Shakespeare; the scenes with Jack Cade are entirely in his manner.

As we have not the original manuscripts, we are often unable to distinguish, in Shakespeare's earlier works, between what is his own and what belongs

to a play by an earlier hand, or by a collaborator. The tendency of criticism is to attribute the best passages to Shakespeare and to guess at the authors of what is not so good.

The dates especially of the early plays are far from certain. But we can hardly be mistaken in thinking "Love's Labour's Lost" a very early example of the poet's play-writing. He has not mastered blank verse: the sense usually ends with the end of each line; much of the play is written in rhymed verse of various metres: prose is comparatively little used. Some of the personages, as Biron and Longueville, are of the contemporary Court of Henry of Navarre, a most unlikely person to contemplate seclusion from female society! The play, of which the plot seems to be Shakespeare's own, [5] is full of promise of good things to come. Biron will blossom into Benedick, Costard and Jaquenetta into Touchstone and Audrey; the ladies are predecessors of the poet's many ladies, as Beatrice and Rosalind, who are merry when in love. We have the stock figure of the pedant schoolmaster in Holofernes, of the fantastic talker in Armado, and the songs, "On a day, Alack the day," and "When daisies pied and violets blue," prelude to all the enchantments of Shakespeare's lyrics. The play was revised and worked over in 1598 (?).

"Titus Andronicus" (certainly extant in 1594) is the play which Burns and his brothers, in boyhood, declined to listen to; it is as full of horrors as an Assyrian bas-relief of the torturing of prisoners of war. Tortures were familiar, in practice, to the subjects of Elizabeth, and the horrors are not worse than those of ancient Athenian and other Greek legendary histories. But neither these things nor the over-abundance of pedantic classical allusions are in Shakespeare's mature taste. Much of the play has been guessed at as the work of "Sporting Kyd," and a fairly old tradition (published in 1678) says that Shakespeare only touched it up. Long ago Hallam remarked that criticism might come to be as dubious as to Shakespeare's precise share in the plays, as, after Wolf (1795) she has been uncertain about Homer's part in his epics. It is clear and certain that plays, when Shakespeare came to the town, were often altered and added to by others than the original authors. Though "Titus Andronicus" was, in 1598, assigned to Shakespeare by Francis Meres, and was included in the first collected edition, the Folio, in 1623, he may, perhaps, have been the last

and, as the most popular, the titular *bearbeiter*, or worker-over of the drama.

"Richard III" could scarcely be made to feed more full of horrors on the stage than that prince actually did, as reported by Holinshed, and the play, if inflated, is less so than Marlowe's "Tamburlaine". Marlowe's "Edward II," again, had its influence on "Richard II," a perilous play to be concerned with, from the scene of deposing the king, under the irritable Elizabeth. Acted by order of the Essex conspirators, in 1601, it brought Shakespeare's company under the momentary displeasure of the Queen.

The third Richard has all the elements of popularity. He is as hideous as the second Richard was effeminately beautiful, as resolute as his predecessor was weak. It is well that a dramatist should make himself plainly understood, but Shakespeare seems to play with his own art when the splendid rhetoric of Richard III reveals (he soliloquizes more than Hamlet) the cause why he is "determined to prove a villain"—his spite against the world for his own deformity,—and why he is determined to be a hypocrite,

> With odd old ends stolen forth of Holy Writ.

The scene of the wooing of the Lady Anne, and the dream of Clarence, are among the most familiar passages in English poetry, and the second is rich in the magic of Shakespeare's blank verse. The wavering character of Richard II, ever in extremes of confident arrogance and of sudden dread, like that of Agamemnon, would not have seemed to Aristotle fit for a hero of tragedy. But in memorable passages of poetry, single lines that, once read, can never be forgotten, the play is rich, and such lines are the mark and sign manual of Shakespeare's genius. "The real Shakespeare cannot help showing himself here and there; and then we are in the presence of something new—of a kind of English poetry that no one has hit upon before...."[6]

It is in "Romeo and Juliet," and the "Midsummer Night's Dream," both relatively early pieces, even more than in the chronicle plays, that this ever-present magic of genius, the unequalled command of beautiful fresh phrases, the hurrying rush of exquisite ideas, first shines out most conspicuously: the youth of passion in the Romeo, and the soul of romance, are accompanied by the gay wit of glorious Mercutio and the lax humours of the Nurse and the servants. Shakespeare was compelled to kill Mercutio

by Tybalt's sword, otherwise a character so congenial to him would have run away with the play, and turned the tragedy into comedy. Shakespeare, says Ben Jonson, "had an excellent phantasy" (fancy), "brave notions and gentle expressions, wherein he flowed with such facility that sometimes it was necessary he should be stopped." Mercutio could only be stopped by a sword thrust! The "Midsummer Night's Dream" is the enchanted consummation of the world-wide fairy belief, relieved against the rustic comedy of Bottom and Snug.

"The Two Gentlemen of Verona," like "Love's Labour's Lost," is a bud full of promise. Launce is as delightfully humorous as Silvia is gay and charming, and Julia is the first of the ladies in page's guise and deep in love; but "Romeo and Juliet," and "A Midsummer Night's Dream" are already nonpareils, full-blown roses that time cannot wither.

The "Comedy of Errors," based on Plautus, with the farcical errors of indistinguishable identities in the masters, reduplicated in the servants, would add by its broad farce to Shakespeare's popularity, though not to his fame. But in "The Merchant of Venice" the blending of moral tragedy in the sombre character of the outraged Jew, Shylock, combined with the delightful and tender romance of the lovers, proved the multifarious versatility of the poet, his power in the delineation of the most various moods and passions, and also the unequalled magic of his verse.

> On such a night
> Stood Dido with a willow in her hand
> Upon the wild sea-banks, and waft her love
> To come again to Carthage.

Here Virgil is equalled or surpassed in the province where Virgil was greatest; in the use of words that by some inexplicable art suggest more than they seem to say, filling the mind with vague and potent emotion, and a longing not to be appeased, as does the beauty of twilight and moonlight.

> Look how the floor of heaven
> Is thick inlaid with patines of bright gold;
> There's not the smallest orb which thou beholdest
> But in his motion like an angel sings,
> Still quiring to the young-eyed cherubims;
> Such harmony is in immortal souls;

But, whilst this muddy vesture of decay
Doth grossly close it in, we cannot hear it.

In this passage, whether he knew it or not—and *we* know not how he knew things,—Shakespeare soars to the heights of Plato's dreams, in the "Phædrus" and the "Symposium". Did he go beyond the appreciation of "the groundlings" in such passages? Did they find mirth in the passion of the Jew, and fail to fathom Shakespeare's deep sympathy with the oppressed? Probably he gave them more and other things than he seemed to give; to them Shylock's may have appeared as a comic part, but indeed we cannot judge that strange Elizabethan audience. Shakespeare knew what they wanted, horrors, ghosts, revenges, manslayings. He gave them these things in "Lear" and "Hamlet," but gave with them the deepest and subtlest thoughts, the most magical poetry, treasures of wit, and all this they could enjoy, as they could follow every point, pass, and parry in the wit-combats.

It seems probable that Shakespeare's fame as a poet rested, for a while, rather on his verses, "Venus and Adonis" (published 1593) and "Lucrece" (1594), than on all the treasures of his plays. The two poems, the only works of Shakespeare's which he himself saw through the press, are dedicated, in brief terms, to Henry Wriothesley, Earl of Southampton, then a lad of twenty, fond of pleasure, art, and letters. The dedications are not fulsome, when we consider the manner of addressing patrons in that age. The second address, of some ten lines, says "the love I dedicate to your lordship is without end.... What I have done is yours; what I have to do is yours; being part in all I have, devoted yours." It seems that Southampton had behaved with generosity to the poet, and it looks as if the poet's "love" were more than the trick-phrase of a person obliged.

The poems themselves, "Venus and Adonis" in a six line stanza, "Lucrece" in a seven line stanza, are remarkable for fluent mastery of verse and rhyme, for lusciousness of description of physical beauties, and for the compassionate passage on the poor hunted hare, and the vigorous description of a horse. Shakespeare manifestly loved a good horse, and probably felt compunctions about riding to harriers. But as to the poetry; it certainly is not superior to the luscious descriptions in Spenser; the verse is by no means superior to, nor, to some tastes, equal to Spenser's; and, if we lost Marlowe's "Hero and Leander," the misfortune would be as great as if we lost "Venus" and "Lucrece". The two compositions show us Shakespeare

exercising himself on a fashionable class of themes, and with an overflow of fashionable conceits; *sufflaminandus erat*, says Ben Jonson; "the drag needed to be put on". Had we nothing else of Shakespeare's, we could make no guess at his greatness.

Indeed his contemporaries could hardly do so, till his plays were pirated and printed, because all their innumerable merits could not be fully appreciated till the plays were meditatively and frequently perused. By 1598, Francis Meres, comparing English with ancient poets, names Shakespeare and others with Homer, Æschylus, Sophocles and Aristophanes, also Ausonius and Claudian. But he places Warner in the same good company (in "Palladis Tamia," or "Wit's Treasury," 1598).

The plays named by Meres are "Two Gentlemen of Verona," "Comedy of Errors," "Love's Labours Lost," "Love's Labour's Won" (?), "Midsummer Night's Dream," "Merchant of Venice," both "Richards," "Henry IV," "King John," "Titus Andronicus," and "Romeo and Juliet". "The soul of Ovid lives in mellifluous and honey-tongued Shakespeare, witness his 'Venus and Adonis,' his 'Lucrece,' his sugared sonnets, among his private friends." (Not published till 1609.)

Gullio, in the Cambridge comedy, "The Return from Parnassus" (about 1599-1602) is a farcical ignorant braggart who says "let this duncified world esteem of Spenser and Chaucer, I'll worship sweet Mr. Shakespeare," for his "Venus and Adonis". He also quotes "Romeo and Juliet," and the University wits manifestly despised Shakespeare, as no scholar and not a University man. They bade Ben Jonson go back to his brick-making; *he* was not a University man!

Meanwhile Shakespeare, with his share in the company and what he received for his written plays, and from patrons, was thriving, while his father struggled with debt and difficulties. None the less, probably aided pecuniarily and advised by Shakespeare, he applied to the College of Arms for a grant of armorial bearings (1596). A memorandum exists in which John Shakespeare is said to have "lands and tenements of good wealth and substance". The grant was not made till 1599, and the heralds appear to have been very good-natured in permitting these Shakespeares to write themselves gentlemen. The financial basis, however, was supplied when, in 1597, Shakespeare bought New Place, a large house in the town of

Stratford, and two gardens. Sir Sidney Lee reckons his income, allowing for the altered values of money, at £1040 in our currency.

In short, like Scott, Shakespeare lived to found a family of gentility, though Scott naturally inherited the gentility and heraldic quarterings, which Shakespeare did not. He prospered continually; he held, later, shares in the Globe theatre, and there is abundant proof that in money, acres, and goods he throve to an extent that denotes careful living. He appears as a strict exactor of debts: in nothing was he careless and indifferent except as regarded the immortal works, which, after his death, his 'stage friends, Heming and Condell, published as best they might (1623, the first folio).

Shakespeare seems, in fact, to have had even more than Scott's indifference to his literary fame, unless we suppose him to have been firmly persuaded that his works, once given to the stage, must secure their own immortality. Even so, he might have employed the leisure of his last years in preparing a correct text for the press.

Yet who knows that Shakespeare did *not* dream of doing what was unprecedented, of revising and collecting his plays for publication? Playwrights seldom printed their dramas, for reasons already given. But, in 1616, the year of Shakespeare's death, Ben Jonson published his "works" (he was laughed at for calling them "works") in a tall and stately folio. It may have been in Shakespeare's mind to do the same thing: but "to-morrow and to-morrow and to-morrow"! He may have contemplated the difficult task, he may even have made fair copies of some of his manuscripts of his many unprinted plays,—the papers which his friends, the actors, say had "scarce a blot". But his older manuscripts may have been tattered and worn, and altered for better or worse. To collect and revise all was a serious labour for a retired, perhaps a weary man. He was but 52 when he died; he may, we repeat, have dreamed of a task which he put off from day to day: there is no mystery in delays so natural when the custom of play writers was not to publish.

The Sonnets.

It is difficult or impossible to date Shakespeare's Sonnets. As we know from Meres, "sugared sonnets" of his were circulating in manuscript in 1598: the book of Sonnets was (piratically?) published in 1609 with a dark dedication

to "Mr. W. H.," by the pirate, or procurer of piracy, Thorpe, "To the only begetter of these sonnets Mr. W. H. all happiness and that eternity promised by our ever-living poet wisheth the well-wishing adventurer in setting forth T.T.". T.T. did not wish to be understood. The two most popular theories are that Mr. W. H. is William Herbert, in 1601 Earl of Pembroke; before his accession to the Earldom, he was known by "courtesy title" as Lord Herbert. To him then, about 1598-1601, the Sonnets to a man are addressed.

The second theory lays stress on Shakespeare's known devotion to the Earl of Southampton; certainly his patron, and assured of his love in the dedications of "Venus" and "Lucrece," in 1593, 1594. The Sonnets are therefore dated about 1594, whereas, by the Pembroke theory, they are dated about 1598-1601.

It is not possible, in this place, to criticize the two theories. The matter is of no importance in itself, but some partisans of the Pembroke theory represent Shakespeare as embittered almost to madness by the affair, constantly alluded to in the Sonnets, of a double betrayal by his mistress, the Dark Lady, and by his adored friend the Earl of Pembroke. Henceforth we are to suppose, he revealed his passions in his tragedies, and was a fevered creature, dreaming of "bloody vengeance".

There is not a shadow of proof for the hypothesis that the Dark Lady of the Sonnets was a Maid of Honour, Mary Fitton, whose portraits demonstrate that she was of a fair complexion, with grey eyes and brown hair. We have not the slightest reason to believe that, in 1597-1601, when he was building up an estate, Shakespeare was mad with love of Mary, and jealousy of her lovers who, after 1601, are unknown, till, in 1606, she committed a fault, in the country. Of the two Earls, Southampton, rather more probably than Pembroke, was, if either of them was, the beloved friend of the Sonnets.[7]

The Sonnets are not in the Italian or Petrarchian form of recurring rhymes, but are in three verses of four lines, with a rhyming couplet to conclude. In many respects they resemble the sonnets fashionable at the time, with praise of a patron whom the poet loves and who is the inspiration of the poet. The accustomed conceits of Petrarch and his French followers, des Portes, Ronsard, and many others, are transfigured by the poet's genius. It was usual to applaud the beauty of the patron, and to exaggerate the love of the poet.

This was matter of common form, but the sonnets of Shakespeare reflect the actual passion of love, or of friendship "passing the love of women," yet always respectful. People wrote thus to Elizabeth in her old age, but Shakespeare conveys an impression of sincerity, whether because he felt what he expresses, or whether his genius makes real and glowing that which was, with other writers, mere matter of compliment. He may be "unlocking his heart," in either case, for he must have known, for some one, the passion which, on the second theory, he dramatically employs to glorify his young inspirer. Yet again, he could imitate and express "all thoughts, all passions": his "sweetest nature" can scarcely have known the emotions of Shylock!

However we may try to distinguish between what is conventional and what is *felt* in the Sonnets, they apparently refer to real persons and real situations. Sonnets I-XVII urge marriage on the beautiful young patron and friend: his beauties and virtues must live in his children as well as in verse. Sonnets XXXIII-XXXVI hint at some measure of estrangement, some wrong done to the poet by the friend.

> No more be grieved at that which thou hast done.

Sonnets XL-XLIII suggest that the friend has drawn away the poet's mistress.

> I do forgive thy robbery, gentle thief,
> Although thou steal thee all my poverty.

Such are

> The pretty wrongs that liberty commits.

The suffering poet appears to bear no malice, it must be admitted. Thenceforward there are regrets for the absence of the friend, beautiful reflections, promises of immortality in verse, till (LXVII) the poet hears that the friend keeps bad company, and though (LXX) this may be an envious slander, the poet has his doubts. In LXVIII-XCIII the poet feels that the patron is preferring other minstrels, and one of these he applauds for

> the proud full sail of his great verse.

This singer is inspired by

> that affable familiar ghost
> Which nightly gulls him with intelligence.[8]

Here are personal allusions to some facts, or jests, which we cannot hope to discover: the rival poet has been guessed at as Barnabe Barnes ("Parthenope and Parthenophil," 1593), who certainly wrote a sonnet on the inspiration of Southampton's eyes. Others think that George Chapman, the translator of Homer, is the rival whom Shakespeare writes of admiringly. In XCV-XCVI the poet recurs to the stories which "spot the beauty of thy budding name". In CIV he has loved his friend for three years,

> Three April perfumes in three hot Junes burned.

Yet he goes on in the old strain of love and praise, though

> What's new to speak, what new to register?

In CX-CXI he perhaps laments his own profession as a player; perhaps he refers to changes in his affections. Taking the whole of this and the preceding sonnet together, the second seems the more natural interpretation. In Sonnet CXI, Fortune is blamed

> That did not better for my life provide
> Than public means which public manners breeds,
> Thence comes it that my name receives a brand.

The name of actor was, indeed, branded as no better than that of vagabond, while the play-writers constantly called the players "apes," and "mimics". Here Shakespeare does seem to speak of his profession:—

> I have gone here and there
> And made myself a motley to the view.

With CXXVII begin Sonnets addressed to a woman, a dark lady, but (CXXX) not very beautiful.

> My mistress' eyes are nothing like the sun.

This may be a mere criticism of the absurd hyperboles of admiration by contemporary sonneteers. In CXXXIII the poet seems to upbraid the lady for taking his friend from him, and through three sonnets this plaint is poured out with obscure puns on "will" and "Will," his name, and—some think—his friend's name. The poet is (CXLIV) placed between "two spirits that suggest me still", One good, is a man; one evil, a woman.

To win me soon to hell, my female evil
Tempteth my better angel from my side,
And would corrupt my saint to be a devil.

In addressing the woman, the poet is much more outspoken than when addressing the man on

The pretty wrongs that liberty commits.

The poet, like Catullus with Lesbia, loves against his reason and his knowledge of the woman's true nature (CXLVII),

Past cure am I, now reason is past care,
And frantic-mad with evermore unrest;
My thoughts and my discourse as madman's are,
At random from the truth vainly expressed;
For I have sworn thee fair, and thought thee bright,
Who art as black as hell, as dark as night.

If all this be in earnest, we have a tragedy of the heart, whether in 1594, or in 1598-1601, or in neither. Again and again, in his plays, Shakespeare mocks at sonnets and sonneteers; and though *his*, in parts, are personal, the depth of their significance, and the persistence of his emotions, must be left to the literary instinct of the reader. We cannot reconstruct Shakespeare's self out of his works, lyrical or dramatic. Had the sonnets been recognized as reflecting a scandalous episode in society, it could scarcely have followed that "no sequence of such poems was received more coldly". Those of Sidney, Daniel, Drayton, and Constable, were often reprinted. Shakespeare's had not even a second edition till 1640.[9]

It is unfortunate that literary history can scarcely pass by, leaving these strange guesses about a strange matter unnoticed. The sonnets in themselves are a book of golden verse, shining with gems of beautiful phrases,

The stretched metre of an antique song.

Shall I compare thee to a summer's day?
Thou art more lovely and more temperate.

The painful warrior famoused for fight,
After a thousand victories once foiled.

Full many a glorious morning have I seen
Flatter the mountain-tops with sovereign eye.

When in the chronicle of wasted time
I see descriptions of the fairest wights
And beauty making beautiful old rhyme
In praise of ladies dead and lovely knights.

Not mine own fears, nor the prophetic soul
Of the wide world dreaming on things to come.

This beautiful poem (CVII) most manifestly refers to Shakespeare's forebodings about "my true love," who was "supposed as forfeit to a confined doom" (Southampton, in 1601, was sentenced to captivity for life). But "The mortal moon hath her eclipse endured," that is Elizabeth, Cynthia, is dead, "Luna's extinct," as contemporary versifiers said. "In this most balmy time," Peace "proclaims olives of endless age," that is the accession of James VI and I put an end to fears of wars of a disputed succession. On 10 April, 1603, James released Southampton.[10] The Sonnets, like "the floor of heaven," are "thick inlaid with patines of bright gold,".never to be dimmed by mists of conjecture, or nonsense about Shakespeare as a sensual sycophantic snob, mad with jealousy and foiled desire.

Later Plays.

Returning to the plays, we find, between 1597 and 1601, Shakespeare in his second period, with "Henry IV," "The Merry Wives of Windsor," "Henry V," "Much Ado about Nothing," "As You Like It," "Twelfth Night," and "Julius Cæsar". Such was the astonishing harvest of five years. Probably "Henry IV" is the play which we would retain, could we keep but one, so delightful is Falstaff, the fat knight, the embodiment of the richest humour. He "has given us medicines to make us love him," and even the delightful characters of Hotspur, the Mercutio of the history, and of Lady Percy, take a far lower place. We would banish all, and keep honest Jack. Many cannot bear to see Falstaff have much the worse of the jest, as in "The Merry Wives of Windsor," said to have been composed in a fortnight, at the desire of Elizabeth, who wished to see that impossibility, Falstaff in love. The

characters of Shallow, Slender, Sir Hugh, even the transient Anne Page, and all the broad humours of life in an English country town, do not console us for the defeat of the hero.

It is in "Henry V" that Shakespeare not only emphasizes his love of England, nobly expressed by John of Gaunt in "Richard II," but makes it the mainspring of the drama. The yeomen soldiers in the play frankly tell the disguised king that they doubt the justice of his cause—and well they may, for no man ever had a worse, and Shakespeare must have known it,—but "our country, right or wrong," must be the motto of the playwright, and he puts into Henry's mouth the speeches that still stir the blood like the sound of a trumpet. Much has been written on Henry's hardness to Falstaff, whose heart he broke,—but Henry at least acts in accordance with his actual character, a brave, able, ruthless, and hard man, always convinced of his own righteousness. Pistol's braggart humour is as good as ever, and that learned man of the sword, Fluellen, is a forerunner of Scott's Dugald Dalgetty.

"Much Ado about Nothing," "As You Like It," and "Twelfth Night" (1599-1600) are the three central stars in the crown of Shakespeare's comic Muse. More humorous than "Henry IV" they cannot be, but in them is no admixture of history, and the women in the three are ladies, whereas in "Henry IV" Lady Percy is the chief contrast with Falstaff's Mrs. Quickly, and her crew. Shakespeare cannot, we may suppose, have lived in the intimate society of the ladies of Elizabeth's Court; he must have divined and created Beatrice ("a star danced, and under that was she born") and Hero, sweetly bearing the accusations of her intolerable lover, Claudio:—

> I have marked
> A thousand blushing apparitions
> To start into her face, a thousand shames
> In angel whiteness beat away these blushes,
> And in her eye there hath appeared a fire
> To burn the errors that these princes hold
> Against her maiden truth.

The mirth and high spirit of Beatrice, the humours of Benedick, endear the comedy to every reader, yet the end is "huddled up," like the ends of many of the plays; Claudio is lightly taken back into favour, with Shakespeare's

almost limitless tolerance. He can scarcely ever bring himself to punish one of his rogues, such as Lucio and Parolles, and is as clement to the less deserving Claudio.

The mirth of "Twelfth Night" might border on the farcical, if Sir Toby, Maria, Sir Andrew Aguecheek, and the rest of the light people, were not so delightfully human and living, like their butt, Malvolio; and did not Viola and Olivia lend their exquisite grace. Meanwhile, in "As You Like It," we fleet our time carelessly as they did in the golden world, under the greenwood tree, in the enchanted company of Rosalind, Touchstone, the greatest of Shakespeare's clowns, and the melancholy and humorous Jaques, the contemplator.

Returning to historical drama, and using North's translation of Plutarch as his material, fusing North's prose into blank verse, he now produced "Julius Cæsar," in which the chief personages are Brutus, Marcus Antonius, and the Roman populace. Brutus appears as the virtuous and irresolute man, slave to a pedantic conscience which pushes him on to the slaying of great Cæsar. All readers note Shakespeare's way of placing a man of nature more or less noble, but irresolute, in a crisis which demands decision. Hamlet, Brutus, and Macbeth are the great examples. It does not follow that Shakespeare himself was irresolute, and that, when he thought of a man who is obliged to take a constant part, he felt that, had he been that man, he would have wavered. He simply, chose to illustrate that tragedy of a soul. Where would be the interest in a play of Hamlet had the prince gone straight to his mark and slain the king "at sight"? There would have been no play! How could we endure a Brutus who, in his relations with Cæsar, mobbed and stabbed the greatest of mortals, in a forthright business manner, with no hesitations? If there were not enough of nobility in Macbeth to unman him, he would be a vulgar usurper. When he chose, Shakespeare could design men as true to their single aim as Richard III and Iago. Tragedy requires in the chief sufferer, as the Greeks saw, greatness with a fatal blemish; this idea runs through their poetry from Achilles to the Aias and Œdipus of Sophocles. The purpose of Brutus, a deed, to reverse his own words, "to make whole men sick," when in contemplation, would not let him eat, nor talk, nor sleep; but, once resolved, his heart is steeled, nor does the ghost of Cæsar fright him, as the spectres of his fancy appal Macbeth.

The other great character is the fickle Roman crowd, played on by the rhetoric of Antony. Shakespeare was not hostile to the people, but the mob he knew, and drew it relentlessly again and again.

"Hamlet" (1602) is believed to have been based on a lost drama of 1589, perhaps by Kyd; the original source is the "History of the Danes" by Saxo Grammaticus, and there was a French version by Belleforest. Of Shakespeare's play there are three versions, a hopelessly imperfect text in a pirated quarto of 1603; abetter, "enlarged to almost as much again" (1604); and the Folio edition of 1623. None of these is good, as a text; and the inconsistencies of the play may in part be due to an admixture of the old piece, and to tamperings with the manuscript.

Of "Hamlet" it is vain to speak briefly, and more than enough of speaking at large has been done by a myriad of commentators. The young prince, full of good qualities, is bound with knots which a real Dane of the Saga time would have cut with the short sword. But Hamlet has "the prophetic soul of the wide world, dreaming" of life, and death, and love, and contrary duties. Thus he, like Œdipus in the Greek tragedy, becomes as fatal to all around him as if he bore the Evil Eye; and while, like David at Ziklag, he is playing the madman, actual madness hangs over him like the sword of Damocles. Thus Shakespeare has left to the world a marvel of subtle and penetrative thought, of tenderness, of humour; to the critics a wrangle over psychological problems.

The same unparalleled powers, the same universality, the same gloomy vision of life, and, in "King Lear," another study of true and of feigned madness, inspire "Lear," "Macbeth," and "Othello," the last the most piteous of all. For in Othello it is not the error of a wavering hero, or the ambition of a man tempted, like Macbeth, by portents and prophecies, but the sheer inborn devilry of a creature in human form, Iago, that "breaks, and brings down death" on the most innocent of victims, Desdemona. "The pity of it" is too awful: the sense of *wyrd*, of masterful destiny, is too cruel.

Yet, if Shakespeare were to write tragedies, and to write them on the traditional materials which are the bases of these plays, it was inevitable that, as he wrote, he should have regarded life as he does, and human fortunes as the spoil of wayward and cruel fate. Æschylus could not make pretty melancholy pieces out of the materials of the "Agamemnon" and

"Eumenides". He, to be sure, tried to justify the ways of the gods to men, and Shakespeare makes no such effort. His characters, in the immortal words of Nicias to his doomed Athenian army, "have done what men may, and endure what men must". "The rest is silence."

Of Troilus and Cressida (1603), printed 1609, we can only say that Shakespeare when he wrote it "was for one hour less noble than himself". The piece makes mockery—save for Odysseus,—of the heroes of Homer, and of Cressida, whom Chaucer treats with such fine chivalry. Thersites is merely loathsome, Aias a fool, Achilles a treacherous procurer of the death of Hector. Shakespeare made an impossible blend of Homer (of whom he clearly knew a little),[11] of Ovid, and of the mediaeval forms of the Tale of Troy. The elements are wholly incompatible, and the mood of the poet, whether he wrote the play early or late, was unenviable.

"Unpleasantness" is also the not undeserved charge against "Measure for Measure"; but Cinthio's Italian tale, on which it is founded, was "a sordid record of lust and cruelty". Shakespeare, altering the plot, redeemed it by the figure of Isabella, and by the sad Mariana in her "moated grange".

It cannot be denied that when Shakespeare added "Timon of Athens," the tragedy of a misanthrope, to "Troilus," and then produced the extremely unpleasant scenes in "Pericles" (which is not in the Folio of 1623, the first edition of his collected plays) he was selecting topics that encourage the belief in his own bitterness of spirit, while in "Antony and Cleopatra" the magnificent study of "the serpent of old Nile," and of the ruin she wrought, he continues his vein of thought on the accidents that bring courage and greatness to the dust.

In "Coriolanus" he contrasts the fickleness of the mob with an heroic soul ruined by its relentless exaggeration of its own merits and overweening greatness; the tragedy of Napoleon is a modern instance. Dating the play in 1608-1609, critics derive the character of the mother of Coriolanus from Shakespeare's thoughts of his own mother, who died in 1608. Of her character, of course, we know absolutely nothing.

The "tranquillity" of "Cymbeline" so rich in poetry, and so recklessly constructed; of the "Winter's Tale," where the poetry is yet more divine, and the plot is as heaven pleases; and of "The Tempest" (1613), where much of

the "local colour" is derived from the adventures of English sea-men in the Bermudas (1609-1610), is explained by the resignation of increasing years.

We cannot reason thus with much confidence. Shakespeare could only have produced "The Tempest" in the plenitude of his genius, but he might have created it as it stands at any date after 1596, when he happened to take up the materials.

"Henry VIII" was being played in 1613 when the Globe Theatre was burned. That parts are by Shakespeare, parts by Fletcher, is a theory resting on the elusive internal evidence of style and quality.

From 1611 till his death in 1616, Shakespeare is thought to have lived mainly at home, at Stratford, where his daughters married men in their own situation of life. Shakespeare died on April 23, 1616. By 1623 his monument in Stratford Church had been erected.

Ben Jonson wrote, "I loved the man and do honour his memory, on this side idolatry, as much as any. He was indeed honest, and of an open and free nature."

Shakespeare, in accordance with Greek and Roman wisdom, had chosen the *fallentis semita vitæ*; in his private course he was studiously obscure. His all-embracing and unparalleled genius was exhibited only in his art, and in his profession by which he lived and prospered. He had carried blank verse from the point at which Marlowe left it to a never equalled pitch of various perfection; while his lyrics are worthy of "all the angels singing out of heaven". His creations of character are in number, variety, and excellence, unrivalled; he touched with the surest hand every chord in the human heart; he explored every height and depth, and despite the inevitable stains left by his age, and the haste necessitated by his profession, his work attains the high-water mark of human genius.

JONSON.

Ben Jonson (born 1572-73) is believed to have been descended from the Annandale border clan of the Johnstones. His father, after suffering troubles under Mary Tudor, became a Protestant preacher. Ben was a posthumous child, his mothers second husband was a bricklayer or builder. The boy was educated at Westminster school, under Camden, the antiquarian and

historian, to whom he more than once expressed his gratitude. His name as an undergraduate is not found in the records of either Oxford or Cambridge. Jonson did not long practise his stepfather's useful art: he served through a campaign in Flanders, and told Drummond of Hawthornden that he slew, in single combat, a champion of the enemy. He had more than a literary acquaintance with the fencing terms which his Captain Bobadil uses with so much gusto. Returning to England he fell among actors and playwrights, is mentioned as a tragedian by Meres ("Palladis Tamia") in 1598, was challenged by an actor, Gabriel Spencer, whom he slew in fair fight; was imprisoned; turned Catholic, not for long; and, on his release, married. By 1596 he had worked with very minor playwrights at forgotten plays, and had tinkered at "The Spanish Tragedy ". He now wrote "Every Man in His Humour," an early form of the play, which he revised; removing the scene from Florence to London, for its repetition in 1598, when Shakespeare's company were the players. In the Prologue he ridiculed, as Sidney had done, the reckless early dramas, in which the hero lives a long life on the stage, while "three rusty swords" furnish forth a stage army, and squibs and stage thunder delight the audience. He aims at good-humoured comedy of everyday life, laughs at "such errors as you'll all confess," and in Master Stephen draws a shadowy Shallow, a predecessor of Bob Acres, while that stock-figure, the poltroon bragging copper-Captain Bobadil, survives in loving memory as an excellent study in a familiar "character-part," the "Miles Gloriosus," of the Roman comedian.

The personages are citizens of the day, the anxious father; the downright squire; a "Town Gull," or dupe, Master Matthew, to match the country gull, the melancholy and gentlemanlike Master Stephen; while Kitely illustrates the humours of jealousy. The characters are types, each with his "humour," or ruling passion of foible, and the standing butt is Hieronymo in Kyd's "Spanish Tragedy". As the author parodies forgotten plays, and makes use of forgotten catch-words, it may justly be said that "much of his humour still remains in obscurity". In Shakespearean humour, with its sweet tolerance, enduring quality, and sympathy and gentle melancholy, Ben is totally deficient. His "humours" are idiosyncrasies or "fads" or "ruling passions" carried into ludicrous extremes.

The success of "Every Man in His Humour" prompted "Every Man out of His Humour," acted in 1599, by Shakespeare's company, and printed,

"Containing more than hath been publicly spoken or acted," in 1600. Jonson was as eager to print his plays as Shakespeare was indifferent. The comedy was much too long, and had been "cut" severely by the players. It has a kind of chorus of spectators and critics, and is an exhibition of "humours" (the word was then a piece of popular slang), or types. Sogliardo is an amusing *bourgeois gentilhomme*, who, like Shakespeare, "lacks" what he calls a "cullisen" (scutcheon) and will stick at no expense to purchase one. The romantic and euphuistic humours of Puntarvolo and his lady are excellent fooling; Macilente, the bitterly envious, suggests, in a more tragic style, his contemporary, Scott's Sir Mungo Malagrowther (in "The Fortunes of Nigel"); the coxcomb, Fastidious Brisk, is an agreeable rattle, especially in his account of his duel and his dresses, boots, hat, and jewellery; and the compliment by Macilente to the Queen is charmingly courtly, coming from that blustering mountain of a man, the author. But the play was not a success. For this, or for any other reason (perhaps because they cut down his plays into manageable size), Ben quarrelled with the actors, Shakespeare's company, and began to write satirical plays on the players, and on the poets who were more successful than himself, or who had theories that were not his about how plays should be written, about "art," in his favourite phrase. In different moods he spoke differently about Shakespeare's "art," now saying that he had none; now that without art and labour Shakespeare could not have produced his "true-filed" phrases.

"Cynthia's Revels" (1600) was acted by "the children of the Royal Chapel," and printed in 1601. (New scenes were added in the Folio edition of 1616). A lively prologue is acted by the boys, who quarrel for the privilege of speaking it. One of them mimics a coxcomb spectator, with three sorts of tobacco to smoke on the stage. Among the humours of the Court, Crites is taken to represent the author himself, "this Crites is sour". The exquisite song (*ex forti dulcedo*) "Queen and huntress, chaste and fair," outlives the humours, and the satire, which was personal, for the gentlemen of the press and stage, then, as now, liked personal controversy, "it is such easy writing".

The "Poetaster"(1601) runs amuck against actors. "They forget that they are in the statute" (against vagabonds) "the rascals; they are blazoned there... they and their pedigrees; they need no other heralds, I wis." This was an anachronism, at the Court of Augustus, the scene of the play, but

appropriate to Shakespeare's new scutcheon. The loves of Ovid and Julia, Virgil reading the "Æneid" to Augustus, are mixed with contemporary satire to which Dekker replied in "Satiro-Mastix, or the untrussing of the Humorous Poet" (acted by Shakespeare's company, 1602).

Marston (Crispinus) was also assailed, and war raged on the lower slopes of the Muses' hill. Since the beginnings of the theatre, play-writers have parodied and mocked each others' works, as Aristophanes caricatured Euripides, as ancient Pistol parodied Marlowe's "jades of Asia," and Molière made mirth of the tragedies played by the company of the Hôtel de Bourgogne. But Ben, though a huge, noisy, and truculent adversary, was placable, and he and Marston became friends. Much ingenuity has been spent in detecting hits at Shakespeare in Ben's plays and epigrams; very probably some of his cutting allusions are aimed at his successful rival, but it needs two to make a quarrel.

When James VI of Scotland came to the English throne, and lived no longer on the allowance of £3000 a year from Elizabeth, he spent very largely on elaborate masques, courtly entertainments, not unlike the ballets in which Louis XIV later danced his parts. The hosts of Greek mythology were let loose on the stage, all the sea-nymphs, daughters of Oceanus, for example, floating in a shell of mother-of-pearl, among Tritons better schooled in their parts than honest Mike Lambourn in "Kenilworth". The dresses scenery, and decorations, "the bodily parts, were of Master Inigo Jones his design and act" (see "The Masque of Blackness," 1605). The Queen and the Court ladies acted, or at least appeared as sea-nymphs, and Ben produced the words, which were deeply learned, and the exquisite songs. Unrefined as he was, he became intimate with hospitable and generous lords and ladies. Their gifts and his payment from the Royal coffers in pensions were of more profit to him than his plays, for which he said that he received only £200. It is hardly necessary to add that he had bitter quarrels with Inigo Jones.

Jonson's Roman tragedy, "Sejanus" (1603) on the fortunes and fall of that favourite of the Emperor Tiberius, is deeply learned. The author, in the printed version, gave references in footnotes, to his authorities, Tacitus, Juvenal, Suetonius, and many others, as if he had been writing a severe work of history. Nothing can be less like Shakespeare's Roman tragedies, with his free handling of North's translation of Plutarch, with his wild mobs,

and murder done openly. Ben was classical and accurate; his Romans speak a stately blank verse: his Tiberius, slow, formal, hypocritical, and deceitful above all things, is the Tiberius of Tacitus; his all-daring Sejanus is a less candid Richard III; and though Ben admitted that the ancient Chorus, with its chants, was impossible on the English stage, he was, in other respects, conscientiously classical. The whole heavy air of Rome, the terror, the duplicity, the political influence of women, their passion, the servility and the discontent, live in the somewhat ponderous blank verse, of which Ben first wrote the matter in prose, an uninspired method.

The "Catiline and His Conspiracy," acted 1611, "did not please the populace," nor the Court much, as Ben admits in a quotation from Horace: in these "jig-given times" he asked Pembroke's patronage for "a legitimate poem". In fact Jonson with all his amazing energy, vigour, and appreciation of character—that of Cicero is excellent—was too pedantic, and the orations of his Cicero were too long for the stage. The odes of the Chorus were not apt to increase the pleasure of the audience.

Ben's recognized comic masterpieces were "The Fox (Volpone)" first acted at the Universities, then at the Globe, 1605; "The Silent Woman" (1609), "The Alchemist" (1610), and "Bartholomew Fair" (1614). Both in "The Fox" and "The Alchemist," there is something that reminds us of Marlowe. The Fox, Volpone, a Venetian magnifico, a childless man, for years pretends to be dying, surrounded by his little court of obscene depravities, and aided by his parasite, Mosca, gulls men who, each in his degree, is an incarnation of cruel greed.

Volpone is a voluptuary in his devilish delight in human corruption. The aged Corbaccio he tempts to disinherit his son; the madly jealous Corbino he tempts to prostitute his wife, from the avaricious Volt ore and from all of them he wrings rich presents. It is a masque of the Deadly Sins, and behind them stands Murder, hesitating between poison, the dagger, and the smothering pillow, for all the fortune-hunters would slay their tormentor if they dared.

The scene with the English Lady Would-be, an affected literary lady, who tires Volpone to death with literary chatter, is more than the rest in the true spirit of comedy. Celia, the suffering wife of Corbino, and Bonario, the young son of the evil dotard, Corbaccio, alone represent the soul of good in

things evil. The plot is ingeniously entangled and untied, and justice can scarcely add to the torments which the characters owe to their own insatiate greed.

In "The Alchemist," three scoundrels, occupying by connivance of a servant an empty house, and captained by Subtle, an alchemist, play on the greed and lust of many "coneys". These each, in Jonson's way, represent a "humour". Sir Epicure Mammon, the City Knight, is all for unlimited lust, secured by the Elixir of Life and the Philosopher's Stone. He is as eager as Faustus for the unlimited, and as learned in his gloating discourses as Jonson himself, who, in Subtle, displays all his knowledge of the jargon of alchemy. Dol Common, the decoy, the Fairy Queen, has an extensive and peculiar knowledge of Billingsgate; Abel Drugger, the tobacconist, hopes to prosper in his trade by magical spells; the gamester, Pertinax Surly, strong in his own marked cards and loaded dice, has a salutary scepticism; and the two puritans, Ananias and Tribulation Wholesome, are ready for anything which will supply finance for their godly crew of Anarchists at Amsterdam. Ben well understood these extreme fanatics, "a sect of dangerous consequence that will have no king, but a presbytery," said Queen Elizabeth. They were soon to put an end to "merry England," and, when we look at the quality of much of the mirth in the later Jacobean plays, we are not enamoured of either party in the conflict. The play, with its constant bustle was and long remained popular. So did "Bartholomew Fair," a colossal exhibition of a London festival, with all the humours of the joyous populace, interrupted by Rabbi Busy, the fanatic, who has eaten more roast pig than any one, and rushes about denouncing all the other "Dagons" and "idols," like a bloated English Tartuffe, *le pauvre homme.* The stocks do not daunt him, his tongue remains as free as Mause Headrigg's. In an introduction to this enormous burlesque Jonson throws scoffs at "The Tempest" of Shakespeare.

"The Silent Woman" is truly a roaring farce on a singular subject, Morose, a gentleman as impatient of noise, and as certain that all silence except his own was golden, as the Sage of Chelsea. How he is saddled with a wife who, from being "mim as a mouse" becomes the most vociferous of Roaring Boys, and, indeed to the confusion of some boastful gallants, *is* a boy pranked up for the practical jokes whereby Morose's nephew extracts

Morose's money, may be read, with much other mirthful noisy matter, by the curious.

"The Devil is an Ass" (1616) is a satire on conjurers, crystal-gazers, projectors, or, as we say, "promoters" of bubble enterprises, and their gulls and "coneys".

A walking tour to Scotland (1618-1619), where Jonson was entertained by Drummond of Hawthornden, had for its fruit Drummond's brief notes of his conversation and literary opinions. He did not care much for Drummond's Petrarchian sonnets, "cross-rhymes"; and, as to Shakespeare (whom Drummond himself does not seem to have appreciated), merely said that "he wanted art," and that, in his geography, he was wrong when he gave Bohemia a sea-coast. Happily Ben left splendid tributes other-where (in verses attached to the first collected edition of Shakespeare's plays, "The Folio" (1623), and in prose), to Shakespeare's genius and character. Drummond's estimate of Ben as a braggart about himself, and a contemner of others, as jealous and vindictive, is only true in part. No man had more or more admiring friends; at taverns he reigned, among the great wits "Sealed of the Tribe of Ben," like an earlier Dryden.

His last plays "The New Inn," "The Magnetic Lady," and "The Tale of a Tub," were badly received: in an Ode he

> left the loathèd stage
> And the more loathsome age;

he lost his place of Masque-maker in 1632, but was still befriended by Charles I. He died on 6 August, 1637, before the troubles of the Covenant came to a head.

His great collection of books and his treatise on the "Poetics" of Aristotle and the "Art of Poetry" of Horace had already been destroyed by a fire. Many of his beautiful lyrics exhibit that grace, delicacy, and, in the best sense, *poetry* which are not conspicuous in his plays. "His throne is not with the Olympians but with the Titans," and Tennyson could not endure the gloom which he found in Jonson's comedies.

Scott, on the other hand, seems to have known them almost by heart, and constantly quotes them, and, indeed, the whole host of minor Elizabethan

playwrights. The learning of Jonson, in Greek no less than in Latin, is a marvel,

Which is a wonder how his Grace should glean it,

in his prodigious activity of production. His immortal lyrics attest the delicacy and grace which seldom inspire his plays, and, indeed, are most noted in the lover; "a scholar and a gentleman," of his incoherent play "The New Inn" (1629). Ben's drama is the work of a "made" writer, the fruit of reflection on what the stage ought to be, and of ponderous industry and diligent observation. We feel that the plays, despite their richness and vigour, their masculine energy, are somewhat prolix, rather pedantic, and they do not hold the stage, like those of Shakespeare, at whom Ben scratched so often, without moving the master to reply in kind.

JONSON'S PROSE.

It is not easy to sympathize with the sweet enthusiasts who place Ben Jonson's "Timber, or Discoveries made upon Men and Matter," above Bacon's Essays. These sayings, maxims, and very brief essays were mainly written when Ben was old, and not yet wise enough to be contented. He appears as a contemner of times present, when the poet is no longer taken at his own estimate, which, in Jonson's case, was rather high. Many of the "Discoveries" had, not infrequently or of recent date, been discovered before. Thus of Fortune, "That which happens to any man, may to every man. But it is in his reason what he accounts it, and will make it." This has been put more briefly and better: "Nothing is good or bad but thinking makes it so". Nothing can be more trite than this of waste of time, but the expression is admirable, "What a deal of cold business doth a man" (and do most women) "mis-spend the better part of life in! In scattering compliments, *tendering visits*, gathering and venting news, following feasts and plays, making a little winter-love in a dark corner." But Jonson was not profuse in venting compliments, and, with his enormous reading, can hardly have spent much time in paying calls. The sentences on the decay of taste are passed by elderly men of letters in all ages on "railing and tinkling rhymers, whose writings the vulgar more greedily read..." "Expectation of the vulgar is more drawn with newness than goodness," yet a poet is nothing if he has not something new in manner if not in matter.

Jonson says that his memory was once excellent, till he was past 40. Certainly it had ceased to be trustworthy: he attributes to Homer what Homer never said, and to Orpheus what Homer did say. Ben finds the new poems in his old age so bad that a man "never would light his tobacco with them". We all remember his sentences on Shakespeare: and "how there was ever more in him to be praised than to be pardoned". He had three ways of viewing Shakespeare: one when he had well drunk, and was magnificent, as Howell tells us, about himself and his Muse. Thus he said to Hawthornden that Shakespeare "wanted art," and did not know that Bohemia lacks a sea-coast. The second way is that of his "Discoveries". The third and excellent way is in his poem, in which he speaks of Shakespeare as the mind of the great world does,

> He was not for an age but for all time,

was greater than

> the comparison
> Of all that insolent Greece or haughty Rome,
> Sent forth, or since did from their ashes come.

To the oratory of Bacon he gives the same praise in the same noble measure. "I have and do reverence him for the greatness that was only proper to himself..." Against Machiavel's "a Prince should exercise his cruelty by his ministers and not by himself," Jonson nobly replies, "But I say he puts off man, and goes into a beast, that is cruel," though indeed beasts are not wittingly cruel, and the man that is cruel goes into a devil. Jonson is always manly: his thoughts are ponderous and just rather than remarkable for novelty; they do not cling, like Bacon's, to the memory of the race, nor shine in so many facets with such imperishable colours.

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[1] They also ran every chance of becoming desperately wicked dogs, according to Charles Kingsley in his essay, "Plays and Puritans".

[2] See an interesting discussion in Mr. Darrell Figgis's "Shakespeare" (1911), Chap. III.

[3] Marlowe was summoned before the Privy Council, and "entered his appearance" on 20 May, 1593. The Council had heard of a "school of Atheists," and Marlowe appears to have been named among them. There is no hint of atheism in the fragmentary paper which Kyd said that he had from Marlowe, who was at liberty in the end of May, but was killed at Deptford, and buried on 1

June. On Whitsun Eve, 2 June, a horrible libel against Marlowe was brought to the Privy Council. The circumstances are mysterious. *Cf.* Mr. Boas, "Works of Thomas Kyd," 1901, and Mr. Ingram, "Christopher Marlowe and His Associates," 1904.

[4] The curious, almost verbal coincidences, between passages in Shakespeare and passages in the Athenian tragedians are probably due to parity of genius, not to imitation. On the other side see Mr. Churton Collins's "Studies in Shakespeare," p. 72, *et sqq.*

[5] Shakespeare's other plays are based either on actual chronicles and histories; or on legends, as in "King Lear" and "Cymbeline"; or on tales, mainly Italian, founded as a rule on old traditional stories, and sometimes done by others into English novels. Earlier plays, of similar origin, are also employed. Such, too, were the usual sources of Molière, and almost all Greek tragedy rests on Achæan or Ionian myths, current in older epic poems.

[6] Saintsbury.

[7] Mr. Tyler, in his edition of the Sonnets (1890), Dr. Brandes, in his "William Shakespeare," and Mr. Harris, in "The Man Shakespeare," support the Pembroke theory. Sir Sidney Lee's "Life of William Shakespeare" contains the arguments in favour of Southampton.

[8] Ben Jonson was something of a visionary.

[9] Jusserand, "Literary History of the English People," Vol. III, p. 233.

[10] Lee, pp. 147-150.

[11] Shakespeare could read parts of Homer in Chapman's translation of Books I, II, VII, VIII, IX, X, XI, published in 1598. But certain touches indicate his acquaintance with Book XXII, 320, 321, 391-393. The drama begins with the situation in Book VII.

CHAPTER XX.

OTHER DRAMATISTS.

Beaumont and Fletcher.

John Fletcher was born at Rye in December, 1579; being the son of that Dean of Peterborough who troubled the last moments of Mary, Queen of Scots, and later was bishop, successively, of Bristol, Worcester, and London. Very early, aged about 12, the son entered Benet College, Cambridge, but before he was 17 the death of his father, in poverty, caused him to leave the University. We hear no more of him, on sound authority,

till he began to write plays with Francis Beaumont, born in 1584, the third son of Sir Francis Beaumont of Grace-Dieu, a judge. In 1597 Beaumont entered Pembroke College, Oxford, then known as Broadgates Hall; three years later he entered the Inner Temple. In 1605 Beaumont wrote some prefatory verses to Jonson's play "The Fox (Volpone)" as also did Fletcher. "Philaster" (1610?) is believed to have been the first play composed in their prolific partnership, but it was also attributed to Beaumont alone. Beaumont died in March, 1616, the death-year of Shakespeare; Fletcher in 1625.

One need not be a Charles Lamb to discover that "after all, Beaumont and Fletcher were but an inferior sort of Sidneys and Shakespeares". But perhaps only a reader who is himself a poet can discover, with Mr. Swinburne's certainty, in Beaumont "the gifts of tragic pathos and passion, of tender power and broad strong humour"; in Fletcher "a more fiery and fruitful force of invention, a more aerial ease and swiftness of action, a more various readiness and fullness of bright original speech".

Others cannot pretend to assign to each author, or to their various allies, their own contributions to each of the fifty-two dramas, which Mr. Swinburne suspected Coleridge of "never having really read". Whether Coleridge did or did not carefully peruse the fourteen stout volumes of Weber's edition, it is certain that very few people are more industrious. A French critic, M. Jusserand, affirms that a friendly hand could make a pleasing selection of scenes, displaying tragical vigour, eloquence, poetry, wit, and that the selection would give "the falsest idea of their work," for "the lugubrious and the ribald were their chief domain".

At all events other qualities than ribaldry will win their readers at present, and it is unnecessary to direct readers to a play in which a woman "makes the very satyrs blush at her sight." Coleridge thought it would be interesting to settle a question of statistics, "how many of these plays are founded on rapes, how many on incestuous passions, and how many on mere lunacies". Mr. Swinburne provided the statistics, *Plays* 52, *Rapes* 2, *Incestuous Passions* 0, *Lunacies* 2.

In the throng of plays by Beaumont and Fletcher (of which a folio edition was published in 1647; an uncertain amount of the writing was ascribed to Massinger), it must suffice to speak of but a few. The bald analysis of any of these Jacobean dramas cannot do justice to its merits. The plots of the

greatest dramas, those of the Athenian stage and of Shakespeare, rest, now on history, now on inventions of prehistoric antiquity, myths and legends. The story of Lear has elements as impossible, and as primitive, as the stories of Œdipus or of Thyestes. The events are monstrous—"people don't do these things,"—but they afford to the dramatist great situations, and they were already familiar in tradition.

The events in "The Maid's Tragedy," on the other hand, could not have occurred, and have no traditional source. There have been callous and profligate kings, but Charles II, who declared that "in my reign all tragedies must end happily," and for whom Waller later made "The Maid's Tragedy" end happily, did not seduce innocent girls, hand them over as brides to courtiers who were already betrothed to other ladies, and retain his victims as his mistresses.

The king in "The Maid's Tragedy" does these things, and is a moral monster. Amintor being in love with Aspatia, and she with him, the king forces him—for loyalty and passive obedience are his guiding stars—to reject Aspatia, and wed Evadne, whom nobody suspects of being the royal mistress. At Courts, however, these graces are not hid.

The bridal eve is not much enlivened by a masque of Neptune and *Æ*olus, and is saddened by the wails and prophecies of the forlorn Aspatia. Other bridesmaids talk ribaldry enough, but the bridegroom, whose heart is with Aspatia, feels

> A grief shoot suddenly through all my veins;
> Mine eyes rain: this is strange at such a time.

The bride receives him coldly. A man has wronged her, will he slay that man? She names the king: "To cover shame I took *thee*" she says. The situation,—with the horror-stricken loyalty of Amintor; his heart already a chaos of remorse, regret, and desire; the implacable resolution of Evadne; "the murderess-Magdalen, whose penitence is of one crimson colour with her sin—" is undeniably tragically great. Ribaldries as of Pandarus in "Troilus and Cressida" greet the happy pair in the morning. The secret reaches Melanthius, brother of Evadne and the king's bravest captain. Evadne binds the sleeping king in his bed, wakens him, taunts him, and stabs him for her husband, her brother, and herself. Aspatia disguises herself as her own avenging brother, challenges Amintor who has deserted her,

strikes him, kicks him; at last he draws, and she falls by the hand of the man she loves. Evadne enters, red-handed from regicide,

Am I not fair?
Looks not Evadne beauteous with these rites?

The seeming dead speaks,—

I am Aspatia yet—

and takes farewell. Amintor stabs himself, but not before Evadne has set him the example. Had Ophelia fallen by the sword of Hamlet the tragedy would not have been "deeper".

"Philaster," again, is a romantic comedy, that deserves its second title "Love lies a'bleeding". Philaster is kept out of his royalty by the king, who is wedding his daughter, Arethusa, beloved by Philaster, to Pharamond, prince of Spain, a random debauchee. His intrigue with the audacious wanton Megra, a Court lady, and the besetting of him by the armed burgesses, devoted to Philaster, yield the grim comic material. Philaster gives his page, Bellario (really the disguised Euphrasia, who loves him), to Arethusa. She is accused of an intrigue with the page, who is the soul of loyalty to her and to Philaster. He, in jealousy, rejects both his lady and his page: they meet in a forest: he dismisses Bellario, and bids Arethusa stab him, or he will stab her.

We are two
Earth cannot bear at once.

He does stab her, and is attacked by a country fellow, who wounds him; he then flies from some of the Court who are approaching. Finding Bellario asleep in a glade, Philaster wounds her; so that the pursuers, who

Have no mark to know me but my blood,

may suppose Bellario to be the assailant of Arethusa! "Oh, my heart, what a varlet's this, to offer manslaughter upon the harmless gentlewoman," we may cry, with the grocers wife in "The Knight of the Burning Pestle". We "could hurl things at him," at Philaster: whose jealousy does not palliate his cruelty and treachery.

Through many complications the plot winds its way; Bellario, who is about to be tortured, proves to be a woman; both she and Arethusa survive;

Philaster, of whom nobody thinks the worse, marries Arethusa; Pharamond is mobbed; all ends happily except for that most pathetic of patient Grizels, Bellario, who remains contented in the happiness of the others. The purity and sweetness of Arethusa, the loyalty of the loving Bellario, and her beautiful speeches, cannot enable this play to escape the blame of being unnatural and repulsive.

The naked analysis of the plays of this age, is, of course, no fair criterion of their merit. A bare exposure of the plot of "Cymbeline" would deter a man from reading it. The authors are protected by the magic of their poetry, which conveys them off in a golden cloud as Aphrodite saved Æneas. A bare analysis of "A King and No King" (1611), with the alternate valour and nobility, brag, and unintelligible clemencies and ferocities of Arbaces, King of Iberia, who has defeated and captured Tigranes, King of Armenia, would move the most austere to mirth. But there is a method in the apparent madness of Arbaces; and Bessus, the braggart poltroon, is an officer worthy to fight under the same standard as Parolles and Bobadil, while virtue and happiness are kept for Arbaces and Panthea, Tigranes and the faithful Spaconia, through the sudden revelation of Gobrias, the Lord Protector, that Arbaces is a warming-pan pretender, and neither son of Queen Arane (who unceasingly tries to have him stabbed or poisoned), nor the brother of Panthea.

The last tragedies are "The False One," and "Valentinian". Concerning "Thierry and Theodoret" it is not pleasant to speak out, and it is not honest to be silent. "Derived," we are told, "from the French chronicles of the reign of Clotaire the Second," the play is rancid with the humours of the lowest London haunts; marked by wild anachronisms—the Merovingian troops carry muskets,—and crammed with impossible crimes. For a contrast we have the eloquence of Thierry (poisoned by a handkerchief that robs him of sleep, after he has been drugged to deprive him of offspring), and the spotless virtues of his wife Ordella, whom Thierry has been on the point of sacrificing to the gods. The blank verse almost uniformly moves with a loose superfluous foot; as

> The most remarkable thing in which kings differ,
> From private men,

and so on, is a specimen. There is a pearl to be found on this dust-heap, the stainless Ordella, "the most perfect idea of the female heroic character," says Lamb; but she is found after we have passed through a malodorous labyrinth of "unnatural and violent situations".

Plays like this, or even like "The Spanish Comedy," which opens pleasantly and humorously, and in the cure and his sexton suggests the influence of Cervantes, but closes in a mist of evil passions, give some show of reason to the opinion of our French critic. "A friendly hand selecting with care" might give all of Beaumont and Fletcher's that can please readers not specially devoted to the study of the Drama. Even in the beautiful scenes of "The Faithful Shepherdess," in poetry worthy of Spenser's pastoral vein, the author, quite needlessly, introduces a shepherdess who resembles the Brunhault of "Thierry and Theodoret" as Brunhault may have been in girlhood.

"The Knight of the Burning Pestle," on the other hand, with the grocer-critic who insists on a play in which a grocer shall "do admirable things"; with the humours of the grocer's wife, and the Quixotic adventures of Ralph, the apprentice, is lively, and, says the Prologue, "has endeavoured, to be far from unseemly words to make your ears glow". Yet, in the jail delivery of the Barber, the authors go out of their way to find ugly ribaldries. Famous among the comedies are "The Scornful Lady," "The Humorous Lieutenant," "The Wild-goose Chase," and "The Little French Doctor". The lyrics and songs are especially beautiful, even in the Elizabethan wealth of song.

A peculiarity of Fletcher's blank verse is his fondness for redundant syllables at the close, and indeed anywhere in the line. This manner was gaining on Shakespeare in his latest plays, and, in authors after Fletcher, led to the decay, almost to the death, of blank verse. Yet Fletcher's lines, as before Marlowe and Shakespeare, were often "end-stopped": the sense closed with the close of each line; this is not the manner of Shakespeare, or of Beaumont. In his later days Fletcher went for his plots to Spanish tales and romances.

Chapman.

The date of the birth (near Hitchin) of George Chapman, conjecturally placed in 1559, is unknown. He was at Oxford in 1574. The exactness of his

scholarship must not be estimated by his translation of Homer; translations, whether in prose or verse, did not then aim at precision. In 1594 he published "The Shadow of Night," containing verses which have been used to support the theory that he was the poet concerning whose favour Shakespeare expresses uneasiness in his Sonnets. He wrote a conclusion to Marlowe's "Hero and Leander"; attempted the luscious (which did not suit his genius), in Ovid's "Banquet of Sense"; celebrated Henry, Prince of Wales, in "The Tears of Peace," is mentioned as a dramatist by Meres in 1598, and in that year published his version of "Seven Books of the 'Iliad'" (not the first seven), while he finished his "Iliad" in 1611, his "Odyssey," some years later.

Thanks mainly to the perfect sonnet of Keats, Chapman's Homer is the work by which his memory is kept green except among special students of the Elizabethan drama. To have made Homer "common coin" was a great benefit to the English public, that had known only the mediaeval romances based on Ionian (700 B.C.), Athenian, and Roman perversions of the poet. The "Iliad" he did into "fourteeners," a jigging old measure,—[1] "a splendid swinging metre," says Saintsbury, "better able than any other English metre to cope with the body as well as the rhythm of the English hexameter". Tastes differ! Here are four lines ("Iliad" XV, 596-600). The poet speaks of Zeus,

> For Hector's glory still he stood, and ever went about
> To make him cast the fleet such fire as never should go out;
> Heard Thetis' foul petition, and wished in any wise
> The splendour of the burning ships might satiate his eyes.

"The last line alone would suffice to exhibit Chapman's own splendour at his best," says a critic, and this may be the best of Chapman. But it does not express the meaning of Homer, who says nothing about the "foulness" of the prayer of Thetis, and whose Zeus does not desire to satiate his eyes with "the splendour of the burning ships," but to see *one* ship set on fire; as, on that signal, he intends to cause the instant rout of the Trojans. It will be observed that Chapman here compresses four Greek hexameters into four English "fourteeners"; and that the movement of his verse is as rapid as the nature of the "fourteener" permits. He is, however, rugged and obscure and overloads the simplicity of Homer with Elizabethan conceits of his own invention. The "Odyssey" he rendered into heroic couplets with a free

movement, and, had he been more sparing of his own conceits, the version would be more satisfactory. Unhappily no English measure represents the Homeric hexameter.

In 1604-5, Chapman with Marston was imprisoned for a very faint piece of satire on the Scots, in "Eastward Ho"; and Ben Jonson, who had been no partner to the passage, as a collaborator in tie play magnanimously insisted on sharing the punishment.

Chapman's comedy, "All Fools" opens with an imitation of a play of Terence (followed by Molière in "L'École des Pères"). We have the sensible and indulgent, and the severe and deceived father. But the plot becomes painfully involved, and jokes on cuckolds are no longer so delightful as they were for two centuries to English taste. His other comedies are not below the level of his contemporaries, excluding Shakespeare and Jonson.

Among Chapman's plays on contemporary French history, the two on Bussy d'Amboise vary much from "Byron's' (Biron's) Conspiracy," and "The Tragedy of Charles, Duke of Byron". "Bussy d'Ambois" has all the faults of fustian, obscurity, bloodshed, torture exercised on the stage, and great palpable ghosts. A friar is the go-between of *le brave Bussy* and Madame de Monsoreau, Chapman's "Tamyra, Countess of Mountsurry". He appears and disappears through a trap door, and when he dies "*Umbra* Friar" (the ghost of the holy man), "keeps on the business still". Mountsurry (Monsoreau) too, disguised as the friar, is very busy. A magician summons Behemoth, a monstrous fiend with whom Joan of Arc was accused of being too familiar. Tamyra is stabbed frequently on the stage, to make her write a letter inviting Bussy to a fatal tryst; and next, being tortured, she complies and writes in her own blood. Bussy is overpowered by numbers and slain. Charles Lamb admired a long description of a duel between six minions of Henry III, three on each side. The Nuntius (the messenger), a looker-on, tells how Bussy charged his foe exactly as, in his youth, the Nuntius had seen a unicorn charge an Armenian jeweller, and

> Nailed him with his rich antler to a tree.

In "The Revenge of Bussy" his ghost enters and dances with the ghosts of the Duc de Guise, the Cardinal, and Châtillon. The lookers-on are surprised, believing the Guises to be alive and well, when Aumale enters with the news that both have just teen assassinated! The "Revenge" contains some

very noble passages of reflection, in which Chapman always shines, and some reminiscences of Homer. The ghosts, though "affable familiar sprites," might be excused by the example of Seneca's tragedies. Dryden found in "Bussy d'Ambois" "a hideous mingle of false poetry and true nonsense," but not all of the poetry is false. There are, indeed, in Chapman's blank verse, passages of exquisite beauty and charm: praise which cannot be denied to passages in the works of all his contemporaries in dramatic writing.

John Marston.

John Marston was of an old Shropshire family: he is supposed to have been born in 1575 and educated at Coventry school. He was a member of Brasenose College, Oxford. His father intended him to be a barrister, but observes in his will that "man proposeth but God disposeth". He wrote satires first, and then plays, later took orders, in 1616 received the living of Christchurch in Hampshire, and died in London in 1634. His plays had been collected and published in 1633. Marston's earliest publications, under the assumed name of Kinsayder, 1598, were "The Metamorphosis of Pygmalion's Image, with Certain Satires," and, in the same year, "The Scourge of Villainy". As to "Pygmalion,"

> My wanton Muse lasciviously doth sing,

he says: the verses are in the stanza of "Venus and Adonis". With a cheerful anachronism, Pygmalion, having made his ivory statue of a woman, invokes the shade of Ovid—who lived much after his time. At his prayer the statue lives, and Marston ceases to sing lasciviously.

Of the Satires we may say in the words addressed by Mr. Toots to the Chicken, "the language is coarse and the meaning is obscure". The first attacks one Ruscus, for writing, like Mr. Toots, letters to himself. Parasites and boasting soldadoes are also satirized. A quarrel with Hall who styled himself "the first English satirist," arose; the authors of "The Return from Parnassus" (1601) spoke of Marston with coarse but effective contempt. In 1599 this "new poet" sold a play to Henslowe. His "Antonio and Mellida," "Sophonisba," "What You Will," and "The Malcontent" (a misanthrope, as in Molière and Wycherley), do not receive much praise even from the greatest enthusiasts for the old drama. In the dedication to "The

Malcontent" Marston made up his quarrel with Ben Jonson, whom he had assailed in "Satiromastix" in reply to Ben's "Poetaster" (1601), not before Ben, according to his own account, had beaten him. In 1605 Marston joined Chapman and Ben in composing "Eastward Ho". The remarks on the Scots, for which the authors were imprisoned, are merely such as Dr. Johnson used to make for the purpose of teasing Boswell. The play, on the whole, is a very good-humoured study of life in London—rather in Hogarth's manner, —with the honest goldsmith, his industrious and his idle apprentice; his ambitious daughter, who would marry a knight with a castle in the air; his quiet daughter, betrothed to the industrious apprentice; the usual number of jokes connected with "horns," and local colour that was useful to Scott in "The Fortunes of Nigel". Probably Marston did little in this favourite comedy; he wearied of play-writing, and was contemptuous of his own works, and careless of his own fame.

Dekker.

Thomas Dekker, as genial as Marston is crabbed, was a playwright and bookseller's hack, concerning whose life little is known except that he was one of Henslowe's "hands" in 1597; was redeemed by Henslowe from prison in the Poultry in 1598; and was still producing pamphlets in 1637. A Londoner by birth, he knew some Dutch, and as his Bryan in "The Honest Whore" proves, a little Gaelic. His most popular work in prose was "The Gull's Hornbook," which is full of the details of life in the taverns; the thieves; the *bona robas*, usurers, fops, gamblers, all the world which is best known to the modern reader in "The Fortunes of Nigel".

The social historian finds matter gloomy enough as a rule, in "The Wonderful Year" of the accession of James I; and "The Seven Deadly Sins of London" shows a helpless horror of the crowded poverty of the town. Mr. Swinburne found in one of Dekker's tracts a genius akin to Goldsmith's, Thackeray's, Sterne's, Molière's, Dickens's, and not unlike Shakespeare's; with Goldsmith he is often compared; he has given men medicines to make them love him.

Dekker collaborated with other playwrights, and his contributions are discerned by the bewildering light of internal evidence. Of his own pieces, "The Shoe Maker's Holiday" (1600) is a broadly cheerful comedy; the jolly

son of St. Hugh, Simon Eyre, becomes Lord Mayor, and, in the upper plot, the hero, Lacy, is very readily pardoned after deserting his regiment in France to woo another Mayor's daughter in the disguise of a shoemaker.

"The Honest Whore," in two parts, shows Bellafront as a Magdalen redeemed by a sudden love which does not find its earthly close; she marries a scamp to whom, in the Second Part, she plays the Patient Grizel, backed by her father disguised as an old serving-man. There is abundance of the inevitable ribaldry.

In a play devoted to "Patient Grissil," that ideal of the dramatists, occurs the lovely lyric "Art thou poor, Yet hast thou golden slumbers"; in "Old Fortunatus" (in the story of the Magical Purse) is "Fortune's kind, cry holiday": other pretty songs occur in "The Sun's Darling" (Ford and Dekker).

"Satiromastix," as we have seen, secures for Dekker the praise of audacity, for no craven would have attacked Ben Jonson. There are fine *tirades* of imaginative blank verse in "Fortunatus". Dekker admired a thoroughly good woman, whether converted or needing no conversion, as most of his fraternity and as Fielding did. But Fortune, if she sometimes "cried holiday" to Dekker, was never "kind". He is best remembered for his songs and for the words

> the best of men
> That e'er wore earth about him was a sufferer,
> A soft, meek, patient, humble, tranquil spirit;
> The first true gentleman that ever breathed.

When Lamb tells us that Dekker "had poetry enough for anything": when Mr. Swinburne declares that Dekker "was endowed in the highest degree with the gifts of graceful and melodious fancy, tender and cordial humour, vivid and pathetic realism, a spontaneous refinement, and an exquisite simplicity of expression," we wish to search for his privately reprinted works in prose, and the solitary edition of his plays.

But on the other hand we are told that his "Satiromastix" is not too severely called "a preposterous medley": that his "besetting vice" is "reckless and sluttish incoherence"; that one play can be best explained as the work of an intoxicated man in a debtor's prison; that "there are times when we are

tempted to denounce the Muse of Dekker as the most shiftless and shameless of slovens and of sluts." Dekker wrote several pamphlets, which, in a sort, resemble some minor work of Daniel de Foe.

MIDDLETON.

Though Ben Jonson said in his haste that Middleton was "a base fellow," he was of a gentle house. The date of his birth is unknown (1570?), as early as 1597 he was writing for the Press; by 1602 he was working at plays in which five or six other men collaborated. Probably they settled on a plot, or rather on two plots, upper and under, and each author wrote an act: a little ready money came in, but the dramas must have been "in the veniable part of things lost". Middleton frequently worked with Dekker, also with Rowley. They are usually thought to have mainly contributed the noisy and incoherent underplots, but Dekker's admirers credit *him* with the *dénouement* of "The Old Law" (Middleton, Massinger, Dekker).

Mr. Bullen finds this passage the drollest of things droll. There can be no doubt that it must have evoked hearty laughter on the stage.

Easily are Hoard and Lucre gulled in "A Trick to Catch the Old One," namely the uncle of the young profligate Witgood. Granting that these ancient chuffs were incredibly credulous, the play is a bustling comedy, with abundance of tricks and turns. The Mayor of Queenburgh in the play so styled was contemporary with Hengist and Horsa; is full of very serious matter, merrily set down. We must not approach in a spirit of historical pedantry a drama in which the Earls of Devonshire and Staffordshire, the sons of Constantine (namely Aurelius Ambrosius, Constantius, and Uther Pendragon), with Vortiger and Horsus, Hengist, the tanner Mayor of Quinborough, Aminada, and a number of button-makers and professional murderers, also two monks, play their parts. The incoherencies, the button-makers, the chaste Constantius, an unwilling monarch, his murder by the minions of Vortiger, their murder (in Macbeth's manner) by Vortiger, are the drollest of unconscious drolleries. This monstrous medley of dull disconnected humours, unspeakable villainies, and speeches in excellent blank verse, with the sufferings of the angelic Castiza, contains, as usual, a pearl of wronged and innocent womanhood.

Middleton is thought by some to walk more closely in Shakespeare's footsteps than even Webster, and his acknowledged masterpiece is "The Changeling," so called from the underplot (by Rowley), in which two sane men smuggle themselves as maniac and idiot into a private lunatic asylum. The cheerful interludes of lunacy set off the tragedy.

Beatrice Joanna, betrothed to Alonzo de Piracquo, loves Alsemero at first sight, and for Piracquo's murderer suborns de Flores, a man whom she loathes, and whose face seems charged with disaster. De Flores has a violent physical passion for Beatrice, endures her insults, haunts her, and accepts her murderous command. After slaying her betrothed, and cutting off his finger that wears the ring of betrothal, he has that scene with Beatrice in which he rejects all her offers, even her whole fortune, and, by threatening to divulge her crime, compels her to be his mistress. This scene is justly celebrated; it does indeed move terror, and pity for the pitiless. But the adventures of Beatrice's bridal night with Alsemero; the absurd affair of the glasses marked M and C; the burning by de Flores of the girl who here plays the part of Brangwain in the romance of Tristram and Iseult; all these things prove Middleton's inability to keep on the level of his own high conception.

After some powerful passages and the reappearance of the bleeding finger with the ring, de Flores murders Beatrice, and dies rejoicing in his success. Tragedy, as Shakespeare and Aristotle understood it, was not concerned with resolute ruffians and girls with violent passions, but with Cordelia and Hamlet, Othello and Desdemona, noble souls; with fate-driven and fallen Macbeth and Lady Macbeth; or Coriolanus ruined by the excess of his own qualities.

Middleton's comedy of "The Roaring Girl," a contemporary virago with pipe and sword, idealized as the champion of her sex; his prodigal old Sir Bounteous in "A Mad World," and his "Chaste Maid in Cheapside" were long popular; while the humours of the duel, and the sterling excellence of Captain Ager in "A Fair Quarrel," are contrasted with the horseplay of Middleton's constant partner, Rowley. In 1620, Middleton was appointed Chronologer to the City, and did the work for which he was paid. He continued to write for the stage, and his "Spanish Gipsy," an intermezzo of a very serious plot with the humours of gentlefolks playing gipsies; his "The Witch," with curious resemblances to the Witches in "Macbeth," and

the highly successful "topical" play, "A Game of Chess," with the intrigues in the affairs of the Spanish match for Charles, Prince of Wales, are among the most notable of his many dramas. The Spanish ambassador, in August, 1624, caused the political "Game of Chess" to be withdrawn, for "his Majesty," James I, "remembers well there was a commandment and restraint given against the representing of any modern Christian kings in those stage plays". James might well remember it! In 1604 Shakespeare's company had brought him on the stage, playing his part in the mysterious affair of 1600, the Gowrie Conspiracy. The play was stopped on the third night.

Middleton also wrote many City masques. He died on 4 July, 1627.

Heywood.

Thomas Heywood was born in Lincolnshire, was a Cambridge man, and by 1596-1598 was an actor and a writer for the stage and the Press. He says that it is no custom of his to print his plays, being faithful to the actors (who lost their rights in a play, when printed). He confesses to having "had a hand or at least a main finger" in two hundred and twenty plays.

The strong point in Heywood is his study of domestic manners in Englishmen at home, and as adventurers abroad, as in "The English Traveller," and "The Fair Maid of the West". Here Clem, the son of a baker who, "when corn grew to be at a high rate, never doughed after," frankly says of four sea captains, "I believe they be little better than pirates".

Heywood's most celebrated play, "A Woman Killed with Kindness," reads as much like a modern novel as a Jacobean drama. There is no ribaldry, no horrors, only a duel between two sets of men over a disputed hawking match. The hero, Frankford, shelters and entertains a broken gentleman who flees from the field, and the man, though thoroughly conscious of his own villainy, seduces Frankford's wife, who is beautiful and hitherto a pearl of virtue. She yields at a word: Frankford discovers and spares them, the lady makes a pathetic end, and, dying of remorse (of which her lover has his full share), she is "killed with kindness".

The pathos and the details of manners are entirely in the style of many modern novels, and the underplot, also serious, if improbable, has the

favourite stainless heroine, Susan; a girl of great nobility.

There is a most amusing list of the practising "Mediums" of the day, in "The Wise Woman of Hogsdon". They have their specialities, one "doth pretty well for a thing that is lost." Mother Sturton deals in prevision—"is for fore-speaking"; another "practised the book and key" (an automatism, the key is tied into the book, the fingers hold it up under the handle of the key, and the book turns in answer to questions). "All do well," says the witch, "according to their talent. For myself, let the world speak There are some good speeches and good blank verse in "The Iron Age," one of four dramas on the "Four Ages of Hesiod's Mythology". In "The Rape of Lucrece" is an extraordinary set of popular songs, some coarse enough, one in Dutch, and among them the beautiful lyric,

Pack, clouds, away, and welcome day,

which, more than his twenty-four surviving dramas, keeps Heywood's memory green and fragrant. He wrote miscellaneous pamphlets and books with enormous industry.

There is something sympathetic in his very carelessness,—what Lamb precisely meant when he called Heywood "a prose Shakespeare" is disputed. Possibly he meant that Heywood has sweetness of nature, humour, and knowledge of character, without much poetry.

WEBSTER.

Concerning the life and adventures of John Webster next to nothing is known. In 1602 the account books of Henslowe, the financier of the stage, mention two lost plays as being, the first by Dekker, Drayton, Middleton, Munday, and Webster; and the second by Webster, Chettle, T. Heywood, Wentworth Smith, and Dekker. Dramas by so many hands cannot be masterpieces. Webster was a great and busy collaborator; in the bustling "citizen comedies," "Northward Ho" and "Westward Ho" he worked with Dekker. He is best known by Lamb's extracts from his "White Devil" and "Duchess of Malfi".

"The White Devil" (printed in 1612) is a chronicle play of the career of Vittoria Corombona, but Webster has altered the facts as he pleased. The more tragic humours of the betrayed husband (our liberal fathers gave him a

shorter name) are exemplified in her lord Camillo, who, in the interests of her lover, the Duke of Brachiano, is murdered in a manner intended to disguise the crime: the device is about as subtle as the blowing up of Darnley with gunpowder. The Duchess, another patient Grizel, except so far as Vittoria is concerned, men slay by poisoning the portrait of her faithless husband, which she kisses, and thus imbibes the infection. Cornelia, the mother of Vittoria and of her leading murderer Flamineo, is a pathetic figure, and it is she who sings the beautiful lyric.

Call for the robin red breast and the wren.

Lamb says of Cornelia, "she speaks the dialect of despair; her tongue has a smatch of Tartarus and the souls in bale. To move a horror skilfully, to touch a soul to the quick, to lay upon fear as much as it can bear, to wean and weary a life till it is ready to drop, and then step in with mortal instruments to take its last forfeit, this only a Webster can do." But if this is *all* that a Webster can do, and if to do this he needs an accumulation of unnatural horrors—fratricide, the murderer of a brother contemplating the madness which his deed has wrought in his mother; if the slain brother has just been kicking his strumpet sister; then we may ask whether an art that flourishes in these odious and extravagant conditions produces "one of the imperishable and ineradicable landmarks of literature".

The serene and audacious impudence of Vittoria, when accused of her first husband's, Camillo's, murder; and the Ophelia-like laments and the song of Cornelia; with the all-but imperturbable wickedness of Flamineo, yield the extracts which Charles Lamb made current coin. Webster, in fact, returned, with abundant genius, but without discretion, to the class of Revenge-plays opened by Kyd in "The Spanish Tragedie".

The behaviour of the Duchess of Malfi, in the play of that name (printed 1623), introduced as she is by a noble panegyric, does not prepare us for her sudden wooing of her steward, Antonio. Her brothers, like the brothers of Keats's Isabella, determine to punish her: their instrument, Bosolo, is a character not wholly lost, who deliberately sells himself to guilt; and the scene in which eight madmen are let loose to dance round the Duchess—they do not shake her resolution,—is much admired. She is strangled, the children are strangled on all sides, the servant Cariola is strangled, though "she bites and scratches". The Fifth Act is a scene of the Kilkenny cats;

almost everybody, including Bosolo, is stabbed, and Ford, in commendatory verses, applauds Webster, as at least the equal of the Athenian tragedians.

Webster's genius was confessedly "subdued to that it worked in". In the preface to "The White Devil" he complains that the public will not endure a tragedy which observes the critical laws; "the sententious Chorus," and "the passionate and weighty Nuntius," the messenger who, in Greek tragedy, reports the horrors done off the stage. Deprived of the messenger, obliged to work his massacres on the scene, Webster was unsparing in horrors. His "Devil's Lawsuit" is a complicated web of squalid intrigue; the blank verse is utterly degenerate; and "Appius and Virginia" is not remarkable for originality in the representation of that famous Roman story.

Webster's idea of a ghost was rather unconventional; Brachiano's phantasm in "The White Devil" wore no common sheet, but "leather cassock and breeches, and boots; with a cowl, in his hand a pot of lily flowers, with a skull in't". Dekker advises his Gull at the play to laugh aloud in the crisis of the tragedy, and probably there were some hardy or hysterical spectators who thus received the too, too solid spirit of Brachiano. The Tragedy of Revenge inspired Cyril Tourneur's "Revenger's Tragedy," and horror has her home in this play and his "Atheist's Tragedy". What in them deserves reading may be found in Lamb's extracts.

Massinger.

Philip Massinger (born 1583) was the son of a gentleman patronized by the noble house of Pembroke. The poet was educated at St. Alban Hall, Oxford, but left without taking a degree (1606). He had fallen into debt, and commenced play-writing in 1614; his earliest known piece, in which Dekker took part, "The Virgin Martyr," was acted in 1622. The period represented is that of the persecution under Diocletian, and the piece is old-fashioned enough; introducing the angelic companion of St. Dorothea, and the devil who attends the persecutor, Theophilus, a very late convert. Torture is introduced on the stage, and Theophilus slays his daughters, whom he had tortured out of Christianity back into the Olympian faith, and whom Dorothea reconverts by arguments with which they must already have long been familiar. There is a tendency to credit Dekker both with the

most gracious passages of verse in the piece and with the stupid but energetic ribaldries of Hircius and Spungius.

"The Unnatural Combat" (duel between a son and a father who rivals Cenci in Shelley's tragedy), "The Duke of Milan," with a most unnatural plot, "The Roman Actor," "The Fatal Dowry," are among Massinger's tragedies; some twelve of his plays were burned in manuscript by Betty Baker, or Barnes, the cook of Warburton, the herald. If they contained such scenes as that of "the ghost of young Malefort," slain by his father, "naked from the waist, full of wounds, leading in the Shadow of a lady, her face leprous," our regret for them may not be overwhelming. We have plays enough in which a man is poisoned by the venomed paint on a canvas or on a dead lady's face; plays enough in which victims (as in "The Roman Actor") are cruelly tortured on the stage.

That Massinger has noble passages and great *tirades* is undeniable, and he is one of the four or five successors of Shakespeare who are said by their admirers to follow most closely in his footsteps. The play which keeps Massinger's memory green in common recollection is his "A New Way to pay Old Debts". The great part is that of Sir Giles Overreach, a financial ruffian, suggested probably by a real character equally nefarious, Sir Giles Mompesson. A victim of Overreach's in his own nephew, Wellborn, and the play shows how Wellborn, with the aid of a rich and virtuous widow, Lady Allworth, cozens Overreach into advancing money; how his creature, Marrall, chouses him; and how his daughter, Margaret, marries young Allworth, and not the peer for whom the usurer designed her. Described as "both lion and fox," Overreach, always ready to fight, is more successful in the furious than in the furtive part of his nature. He bullies man and defies God in seeking satisfaction of his two chief desires, to ruin and humiliate his social superiors and to plunder the widow and the orphan or any other victim whose loss may be his gain.

But like the Mammon-worshippers in "A Trick to Catch the Old One," Overreach himself is credulous enough, an easy victim of the conspirators against his pride and pocket. Massinger's indelicacy "has not always the apology of wit," indeed he is not remarkable for humour, any more than most of his contemporaries, who sought and doubtless got a laugh by stereotyped and witless ribaldries.

The character part of Greedy, a parasite of Overreach's, remarkable for his appetite,—a shield of brawn and a barrel of Colchester oysters "were to him a dish of tea" before breakfast,—must have been diverting on the stage; and when Marrall turns against his master, we are reminded of similar surprises by Mr. Micawber and Newman Noggs, though *they* were not accomplices in the iniquities which they exposed.

Massinger's plays are often interwoven with the work of other hands, and deal, in a more or less veiled way, with the political situations of his time. He lived in poverty, as his petitions to the Herbert family prove; and he died in 1640. He was dissatisfied with his fortunes and with public indifference; poverty had forced him into poetry, and hunger had made him hasty in his work; the too common calamity of poor authors.

FORD.

John Ford was a native of Ilsington in Devonshire, baptized on 17 April, 1586. He was of good family, entered the Inns of Court, and is said to have practised in his profession. A contemporary rhymer speaks of him "deep in a dump," "with folded arms and melancholy hat". He worked at plays with Dekker, and in "The Witch of Edmonton" (1622?).

Four of his comedies were burned or otherwise put out of being by Betty Barnes, or Baker, the celebrated cook of Warburton, Somerset herald, who made away with at least fifty manuscripts of old plays: his earliest known comedy (1613) was among Betty's victims. His earliest independent surviving piece, "The Lover's Melancholy," was played in 1628. The more serious part has a rather improbable plot turning on the disguise of a girl as a man, but there are many beautiful romantic passages in the loves of Palador, Prince of Cyprus, and Eroclea. A masque of Bedlamites within the play indicates the strange contemporary taste for the terrors and humours of maniacs.

In 1633 the famous plays "'Tis Pity She's a Whore," and "The Broken Heart," were printed. The former has a plot of incestuous loves, ending in a pretty general massacre. Given the inspiration of the unnatural, Ford could do great things. In the Prologue to "The Broken Heart" (the scene is Sparta, of all unlikely places) Ford reprobates the staple of low contemporary comedy, "jests fit for a brothel court's applause," "apish laughter," "lame

jeers at place or persons"; perhaps Ford was not unaffected by Prynne's famous attack on the stage, "Histriomastix" (1632).

"The Broken Heart" is free from the customary ribaldries; it is a tragedy of fate, the characters are noble. Ithocles is noble, despite the original wrong which he has committed in separating Orgilus and Penthea, and wedding Penthea to "the grey dissimulation" of the jealous Bassanes. Orgilus, who murders Ithocles, is noble in his death, the death of Seneca without the bath. Penthea is noble, and the wanderings of her mind at the end of her slow suicide, are beautiful in their sad fantasy; finally the dancing of Calantha, while one after another come messengers with the tidings that break her heart, is noble, and probably her endurance is the reason for the placing of the scene in Sparta. As in Greek tragedy, all are doomed by Fate; the Oracle of Delphi has spoken truth, with the wonted obscurity which only Time can unriddle. It is true that the interest shifts, in the last scenes, from Penthea to Calantha, whom we have scarcely looked on previously. But Ford aimed high, and came near to hitting his mark. He ought never to have, attempted his crazy low comedy scenes.

Ford's "Perkin Warbeck" is by far the most readable historical play of the old stage, after Marlowe's "Edward II," and Shakespeare's Chronicle plays. Perkin's character is resolute and princely, as is that of his Gordon bride, "The White Rose". "If he lost his life he died a king" in royal bearing. As King Henry says

> The custom, sure, of being called a king
> Has fastened in his thought that he is such.

Ford, in his Tragedies, is not to be reckoned among Mr. Swinburne's "splendid slovens". His blank verse never degenerates into skimble-skamble slackness, but, compared with most of his contemporaries, he does not shine as a lyric poet. He retired to the country after the overthrow of the stage and the beginning of the civil war.

SHIRLEY.

James Shirley, of an honourable family, was born in London, in 1596. He entered the Merchant Taylors' School, and, in 1612, went to St. John's, Oxford, where Laud was then master. Laud, who believed in "the beauty of

holiness," is said to have prevented Shirley, as a blemished man, with a large mole on his face, from taking holy orders. He migrated to Cambridge, to St. Catherine's Hall, published a poem in 1616, did take orders, received a living; left it on becoming a Catholic, turned schoolmaster at St. Albans, and then went to town as a playwright.

His "Love's Tricks" was licensed in 1624-1625,—"a silly play," writes Mr. Pepys in 1667. Shirley was prolific; his "Witty Fair One" (acted 1628) is thought one of his best comedies. These dramas have a touch of the modern; we hear of "balls," a new name then for dancing parties. In "The Lady of Pleasure" (1635) Lady Bornwell's contempt for the country life and for country gentlemen, and her determination to spend her husband's fortune on the gaieties of the Court, are amusing, and we expect her to be a Lady Teazle. But, despite her husband's stratagem of beating her at her own game, and the humours of the nephew whom she has brought from Oxford, the piece can hardly be read with enthusiastic delight. It is deemed Shirley's masterpiece in comedy, and preludes to the comic drama of the Restoration and the Revolution of 1688. Dryden expresses extreme contempt for both Hey wood and Shirley; it is to be feared that his own plays are now no more popular than theirs.

After residing at Dublin under the great Earl of Strafford, and producing plays at the Viceregal Court, and after insulting in an ironic dedication of "The Bird in a Cage," the Puritan Prynne, who had been most cruelly punished for allusions in his work against the stage ("Histriomastix"), Shirley returned to London. His "The Cardinal" is imitated from Webster's "Duchess of Malfi," and with "The Traitor" is reckoned (though Shirley preferred "The Cardinal"), "the best of his flock" in tragedy. Pepys (1662) writes "there is no great matter in it," but Pepys's dramatic criticisms are no great matter. In 1642 came the shutting up of the theatres, and Shirley, after seeing the wars under his patron, the Duke of Newcastle, returned to his old profession as a schoolmaster.

He wrote a preface (1647) to some hitherto unprinted plays of Beaumont and Fletcher, commending their stage as a school of moral discipline, "In this silence of the stage thou hast a liberty to read these inimitable plays". In 1659 Shirley published his "Contention of Ajax and Ulysses," containing the noble lines which embalm his memory:—

The glories of our blood and state.
Are shadows, not substantial things.

His

Bid me no more good night, because
'Tis dark, must I away?

is also a pretty piece, like his "Song" (attributed wrongly to Carew).

Shirley's works were often acted at the beginning of the Restoration, but he refused to write more dramas. The shock of the great fire of 1666 is said to have caused the deaths, on the same day, of himself and of his wife. The blank verse of Shirley is seldom distinguished. His numerous works suffer somewhat because they come at the end of a long period in which talent like his, with defects of taste often greater than his, have satiated and wearied all but the special student and enthusiastic devotee of the drama. The minor stars in the galaxy of playwrights almost defy enumeration.

Space does not permit estimates of the last dramatists of "the first temple," Randolph, Suckling—whose dramatic verse is as chaotically bad as several of his lyrics are exquisite; Davenant, who tried to keep alive a semblance of the drama at the end of Cromwell's protectorate; Brome, Cartwright, Mayne, and others. The blank verse in which the elder poets had so often excelled was left to the care of Milton; the blank verse of the stage became formless, and, during the Restoration, rhymed heroic couplets usurped its place.

[1] As I write, an accidental "fourteener" meets the eyes in the heading of a magazine article—"Discovery of the Missing Link by Georgiana Knight". This metre does not seem the best in which to render Homer.

CHAPTER XXI.

ELIZABETHAN AND JACOBEAN PROSE WRITERS.

In sketching the history of the English drama from its beginnings to the close of Ben Jonson's career, we have passed through a long tract of years, rich in other than poetic literature. We must now return to the writers in prose who came after Ascham and Sidney, and lived through the last period of Elizabeth, and in the reigns of James I, Charles I, and the Commonwealth.

The prose writers may be considered in four sets. First we have the purely literary authors, the critics and novelists such as Lyly, Sidney, Greene, Nash, and others, of whose style, with its "brave conceits," euphuism, and metaphors we have already, spoken. Next (2) we have the controversial pamphleteers, who wrangled mainly about religion and Church government, defending or attacking the Established Church with its usages; or Puritanism with its love of Presbyterian discipline, and hatred of the cross in baptism, the surplice, and other "rags of Rome". While Government supported the cause of the Established Church and severely handled recalcitrant ministers of the Puritan party, some Puritan writers went so far as to threaten war against the cause of the detested Bishops. On both sides temper rose to fever-heat, and the controversy was conducted in a prose style which was full of abuse and satire. Meanwhile (3) Hooker wrote on the same disputed themes in a style lofty, logical, and harmonious; and in his "History of the World," Sir Walter Raleigh often played on language with the effect of "a solemn music". Lastly (4) Bacon in his essays touched on familiar themes in a style of brief sentences, witty, or poetic, or philosophical, which was all his own; which came home, as he says, "to men's business and bosoms"; and, of all the manners which we have described, that of Bacon remains by far the most easily and most commonly appreciated.

Meanwhile the common fault of men who wrote in prose was the inability to tell a plain tale; to say succinctly, distinctly, and unmistakably what they meant. Perhaps they did not always wish to be understood, but even when Elizabethan and Jacobean writers were anxious to be lucid, their fanciful tropes and long sentences often detain or defy the modern reader.

This defect arose partly from imitation of the structure of stately Latin sentences in Roman literature. But in Latin the nature of the grammar does not permit the meaning to be lost. When books were comparatively rare, and leisure was plentiful, readers did not grudge the time passed over tall and massive folios and long stately involved periods. Now and again, in the age of Elizabeth as in the Restoration, the lighter authors took refuge in a style lax, colloquial, and charged with current slang. A century must pass before we arrive at the unadorned plain manner of Dean Swift.

It was not that the Elizabethans lacked the power to write tersely, simply, and clearly. So luxuriant a poet as Spenser was the master of a perfectly clear and unadorned prose style, deeply interesting in his work on the condition of Ireland. The letters of such diplomatists as Randolph, Queen Elizabeth's envoy to the Court of Mary, Queen of Scots, are as clear and amusing, or, once or twice, as pathetic, to-day, as when they were written. But the prose of literature was entangled and encumbered by the search of ornament, of *esprit* at all costs, and by copious antitheses and, among the lighter writers, by "clenches" and even by slang.

HOOKER.

"It is not to be doubted but that Richard Hooker was born at Heavytree" (near Exeter), says Izaak Walton, about 1553. But sceptics have averred that he was born in Southgate Street, in Exeter. His parents were not rich, and, aided by Bishop Jewel, he entered Corpus Christi College, Oxford, in 1567, as a Bible Clerk. In 1577 he obtained a Fellowship; in 1579 was Reader in Hebrew, a tongue with which few Oxford men were, or are, familiarly acquainted. About four years later he took holy orders, had a severe cold, and married a wife recommended by the lady who had nursed him in his illness. "The good man," says Walton, "had no cause to rejoice in the wife of his youth," for "the contentions of a wife" (at least of Mrs. Hooker), "are a continual dropping." He took a living in Buckinghamshire, and

experienced "the corroding cares that attend a married priest". Among these was reading Horace while he watched his sheep, and rocking his child's cradle.

A friend, Edwin Sandys, finding him in these distressful circumstances, obtained for him the Mastership of the Temple (1585) during the "Martin Marprelate" controversy, in which the boisterous Nash bore a part. A lecturer, Travers, opposed Hooker's theological positions, for Hooker, it seems, had maintained that all Catholics are not necessarily damned to all eternity. In 1591 Hooker obtained the living of Boscombe in Wilts, and in 1595 moved to that of Bishopsbourne near Canterbury, where he died in 1600.

The first four books of his "Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity" appeared in 1594, the fifth in 1597, the rest was posthumously published. The book was admired by James VI, who read it in Scotland, and by the Pope and Cardinal Allen. Hooker was a good, devout, simple man, a most laborious parish minister, and so short-sighted that Walton accounts for his choice of a wife (if he could be said to choose her), by this defect of vision.

The great work of Hooker, "The Ecclesiastical Polity," is an argument against the Puritans who, from matters like the surplice to matters like the Liturgy, desired in all things to imitate the "discipline" of Geneva and of Presbyterian Scotland. In the Martin Marprelate controversy, as in all old controversy, the style, as we shall see, had been extremely scurrilous on both sides. Hooker, on the other hand, writes like a gentleman, a scholar, and a Christian. As the dispute was really between men of two opposed temperaments and characters, arguments, however learned, moderate, and logical, could not make converts. The Reformation had brought not peace but a sword. Religious differences, mingled with political differences, soon broke into civil war under Charles I.

Hooker begins by stating that the opponents of the Church of England, "right well affected and most religiously inclined minds," must, he supposed, "have had some marvellous reasonable inducements" for desiring to upset the existing ecclesiastical settlement. He therefore studied the subject diligently, and could find "no law of God or reason of man" against the attitude of the defenders of the settlement, and no proof that the

Presbyterian "discipline," "by error and misconceit named 'the ordinance of Jesus Christ,'" was so in very deed.

After a pathetic request for a fair hearing "of the words of one who desireth even to embrace together with you the self-same truth, if it be the truth," he gave a history of the discipline as introduced by Calvin at Geneva. Calvin, he said, by "sifting the very utmost sentence and syllable" of the New Testament found that certain passages seemed to him to enjoin that congregations should have elders with power of excommunication (with fearful civil consequences) but Calvin had "never proved that Scripture doth necessarily enforce these things"; or enforce any other thing in which the Puritans differed from the Church established. Manifestly an opponent would blow away this argument with any isolated scriptural text, whatever its original application, which as he thought backed his opinion.

Hooker analysed Puritan demagogic methods, spiritual pretensions, and habit of leading women captive. "But, be they women or be they men, if once they have tasted of that cup, let any man of contrary opinion open his mouth to persuade them, they close up their ears, his reasons they weigh not at all, all is answered with the words of John, 'We are of God, he that knoweth God heareth us.'"

All this was, in fact, the case; it was superfluous to write a long book, with quotations about the Angels from the pre-Christian Greek Orphic poems, for the purpose of converting people who closed their ears. When Hooker, wrote, some Puritan writers had already threatened civil war; their martyrs, in fact, lay in Newgate, and their blood was up. What they desired was not to be tolerated, but to dominate the consciences of others. One text both parties could use, "*Compel them to come in.*"

The style of Hooker is somewhat rich in Latinized components. He is remote from euphuistic conceits; and does not rise into eloquence except when his subject elevates his mind and style. A celebrated example is his defence of Church music.

"Touching musical harmony whether by instrument or by voice, it being but of high and low in sounds a due proportionable disposition, such notwithstanding is the force thereof, and so pleasing effects it hath in that very part of man which is most divine, that some have been thereby induced to think that the soul itself by nature is or hath in it harmony. A thing which

delighteth all ages and beseemeth all states; a thing as seasonable in grief as in joy; as decent being added unto actions of greatest weight and solemnity, as being used when men most sequester themselves from action. The reason hereof is an admirable facility which music hath to express and represent to the mind, more inwardly than any other sensible mean, the very standing, rising, and falling, the very steps and inflections every way, the turns and varieties of all passions whereunto the mind is subject; yea, so to imitate them, that whether it resemble unto us the same state wherein our minds already are, or a clean contrary, we are not more contentedly by the one confirmed, than changed and led away by the other. In harmony the very image and character even of virtue and vice is perceived, the mind delighted with their resemblances, and brought by having them often iterated into a love of the things themselves." Magnificent as is the harmony of these sentences, and severe as is the logical thought which they express, the modern reader finds that he cannot get at the sense of them by merely running his eye over them. The sentences must be carefully construed, and such writing cannot possibly be popular; as, in some degree, some writings of Bacon still remain.

The posthumously published books of Hooker were supposed to have been tampered with by the Editors. Hooker did not publish his sermons, of which several were put forth after his death. Even his Puritan adversaries could not with decency have complained that they are too short. In one sermon he speaks freely of the Pope as "The Man of Sin".

"Martin Marprelate."

We cannot here do more than mention the masters of the fierce controversial prose; indeed their names, often, can only be guessed. They fought like wild cats, with the yells of these animals when enraged, in the wordy war of "Martin Marprelate," or "Bishop's bane". Archbishop Whitgift (1586) obtained a decree from the Star Chamber for the suppression of pamphlets that attacked the usages of the Established Church. Till 1593 the battle of books lasted; and then Parliament silenced the Puritans—for a while. The authors, taking the name of "Martin Marprelate," entered the fray, on the Puritan side, with the weapon of satire, banter, and Billingsgate, in autumn, 1588. Martin, whoever he or they may have been, employed a

secret press, owned by one Waldegrave, that was set up now in one place, now in another. The history of the secret presses, of Waldegrave and of his successors, is curious. The learned Udall, John Penry ("the Father of Welsh Dissent") and other combatants, were imprisoned; Penry was hanged.

There remain seven tracts by Marprelate, in a style of variegated abuse, banter, and "gag": Bishop Cooper found that his name yielded gross palpable quips and puns to the Puritan wags who wrote for "the man in the street". Martin was no Pascal, his weapons were not the small sword but the jester's bladder on a stick, and the bully's bludgeon. The Anti-Martinists answered with the same weapons, as Nash and Lyly were responsible for certain pamphlets; Greene took a hand in the fray, and it faded out in a literary and personal squabble with Gabriel Harvey.

The Martin Marprelate tracts were revolutionary, and afford a singular instance in which the wit exhibited itself on the Puritan side.

Serious treatment of serious themes, on the other hand, is nobly vindicated in the great work of Richard Hooker.

Bacon.

A style quite unlike that of Hooker is Bacon's. Francis Bacon, later Lord Verulam and Viscount St. Albans, was born in 1561, a younger son of Sir Nicholas Bacon (long time Keeper of the Seals under Elizabeth), and of his wife Elizabeth Cooke, daughter of Sir Anthony Cooke, and sister of the wife of the famous Cecil, Lord Burleigh. Bacon did not profit much by the high place of his uncle William, and his cousin Robert Cecil. They retarded from jealousy the worldly advancement, to secure which, and to aid the progress of Science, were Bacon's leading desires. After leaving Trinity College, Cambridge, and studying law at Gray's Inn, Bacon followed to Paris Sir Amyas Paulet, later the jailer of Queen Mary Stuart at Fotheringay. He was called to the Bar in 1582, and in 1584 entered Parliament, on the Court side. Ben Jonson has left lofty praise of his eloquent sagacity in debate. His memoirs of advice to Elizabeth were more admired than followed in practice. He was in favour of moderation towards both Catholics and Puritans. He attached himself to the fortunes of the Queen's brilliant wayward favourite, Essex, but his wisdom was not what Essex was fitted by nature to follow: he swayed the woman in Elizabeth by his beauty

and daring grace: his military ambitions were distasteful to the pacific and parsimonious Queen. The mad enterprise of Essex, on Scottish models, to seize the Royal person, was no true English political move; it led to his trial, and Bacon was the leading speaker in his benefactor's prosecution. "It is the wisdom of rats," says Bacon, "that will leave a house some time before it fall" ("Essays," "Of Wisdom for a Man's Self").

He has never been forgiven for an action which could scarcely appear other than judicious, and praiseworthy, and even necessary, to himself. Like Cecil he made advances to James VI of Scotland, when it was clear that Elizabeth could not, as James feared, "last as long as sun and moon". On James, Bacon bestowed all his wisdom, and spoke for the project of Union between England and Scotland, a project not realized till after the lapse of a century.

Partly through the influence of King James's favourite, Buckingham, Bacon received promotion; he became Attorney-General; in 1617, Keeper of the Seals, like his father; in 1618, Chancellor, and Baron Verulam; in 1621 Viscount St. Albans. In the same year he was accused of taking gifts from suitors (then a not uncommon practice), pled guilty, with qualifications, and was disgraced. His last years were spent in literary pursuits at his place, Gorhambury, near St. Albans; he caught cold in an experiment in freezing poultry and died in March, 1626.

The industry of his biographer, Mr. Spedding, has not wholly redeemed the character of Bacon, whose personality does not endear him to mankind, and was not on a level with his genius. That genius was literary in a very high degree, and was influenced by a desire to benefit humanity through scientific knowledge of the laws of Nature and of human nature. To this task he brought an enthusiasm which reminds us of a man so different from himself as Shelley. In Bacon's belief, man might be and ought to be the master of things; and a reasoned account of all things in nature was the inventory of human possessions. To make this inventory, and to discover a new method of "interrogating nature," putting her to the question and wrenching from her all her precious secrets, was the main object of his scientific meditations.

His first important book, however, the "Essaies" (1597), was literary, and no doubt was suggested by the Essays of Montaigne, which were also familiar to Shakespeare. In its original form the book contained but ten brief studies,

but Bacon kept improving them and adding to their number. There are thirty-four in the edition of 1612, fifty-eight in that of 1625. It is dedicated to Buckingham, who is informed that he has "planted things that are like to last," an unlucky prediction. "Of all my other works," adds Bacon, "my essays have been most current; for that, as it seems, they come home to men's business and bosoms". The phrase is a proverb,—indeed the essays, as the man said of "Hamlet," are "made up of quotations" of phrases that are now household words.

The genius of Bacon, in the essay, and even in his scientific works, "The Advancement of Learning" (1605), and the Latin "Novum Organum" (1620), was not desultory, like Montaigne's, but aphoristic. He coined Maxims or Aphorisms, brief sayings, weighty with wisdom, brilliant with points of wit and fancy, which sometimes remind us of La Rochefoucauld. It is interesting to compare the first drafts of the Essays in 1597 with the finished work in 1625, where they are considerably enlarged, and altered in details. "Of Faction" is increased fourfold, and strengthened by examples from Roman history. Like all the men of his time, Bacon is rich in classical references and anecdotes which, with him, are not tedious and pedantic. When he quotes Homer it is in *Latin* hexameters, he cites a Roman altered adaptation, "a prophecy, as it seems, of the Roman Empire," which, of course, Homer never predicted; but the Latin form serves Bacon's theory of "prophecies that have been of certain memorys and from hidden causes". This wise man notes that "the King of Spain's surname, they say, is Norway," in order that a folk-prophecy may be fulfilled by the defeat of the Armada. However on the whole he regards fulfilled prophecies, not scriptural, as accidental coincidences. "Men mark when they hit, and never mark when they miss, as they do generally also of dreams."

There is something pathetic in Bacon's wise futilities and generalities on the most pressing political question of his time, "Unity in religion". Concerning the means of procuring Unity, "Men must beware, that in the procuring or muniting of religious unity they do not dissolve and deface the laws of charity and of human society." Being men, they necessarily defaced both—Laud later had the ears of Puritans cut off, Puritans cut off the head of Laud, "and so as to consider men as Christians, we forget that they are men".

Bacon is not a little "Jesuitical". Secrecy is often necessary, "no man can be secret, except he give himself a little scope of dissimulation; which is, as it

were, but the skirts or train of secrecy". Simulation is "more culpable and less politic; except it be in rare and great matters"—rather encouraging to Charles I, for we are bidden to have "dissimulation in seasonable use". Love is rather profitable to the Stage than to human existence, "in life it doth much mischief, sometimes like a syren, sometimes like a fury". "No great and worthy person" (except Mark Antony and Appius Claudius, famed for his adoration of Virginia) "hath been transported to the mad degree of love". "It is impossible to love and be wise." Bacon certainly varied much from Plato and all the poets "in this of love".

Bacon knew very well that atheism was apt to follow in the steps of his adored physical science, and consoled himself by assuming that "a little philosophy inclines man's mind to atheism, but depth in philosophy bringeth men's minds about to religion". He deemed that without belief there could be no sense of honour, for atheists have died for their opinion, whereas, if they believe that there is no God, "why should they trouble themselves?" "Against atheists the very savages take part with the very subtlest philosophers," which is perfectly true. To the dog "man is instead of a God, or *melior natura.*" "As atheism is in all respects hateful, so in this, that it depriveth human nature of the means to exalt itself above human frailty," yet martyr atheists have despised human frailty. "For martyrdoms, I reckon them among miracles; because they seem to exceed the force of human nature."

Concerning the extreme Reformers, Bacon says "there is a superstition in avoiding superstition, when men think to do best if they go furthest from the superstition formerly received," as in the Scottish Presbyterian burial of the Christian dead with no religious service, one of Knox's innovations. In his Essay on "Wisdom for a Man's Self," Bacon speaks, wittingly or unwittingly, of his own mischance: "Whereas they have all their times sacrificed to themselves, they become in the end themselves sacrifices to the inconstancy of fortune". A word of Bacon's is always apt. "Let no nation expect to be great that is not awake upon any just cause of arming." Of colonization, "it is a shameful and unblessed thing to take the scum of the people and wicked condemned men, to be the people with whom you plant". "If you plant where savages are... use them justly and graciously." Always the counsel is excellent, always the adviser is unheard! Bacon even advises on the stage management of Masques. On Gardening he writes at

much length and with manifest pleasure. His advice to keep caged birds in "little turrets with a belly"—is not that of a poetical imagination. He did not like the *Ars Topiaria*, "images cut out in juniper" or box. His garden contained "a heath of a natural wildness," with many artificial additions.

Bacon's *Promus of Elegancies* is a commonplace book, full of germs of essays, *pensées.* The essays themselves are strings of connected aphorisms, without much consecutiveness of style or skilled transitions. "Aphorisms," says Bacon himself, "except they should be ridiculous, cannot be made but of the pith and heart of Sciences." His Aphorisms certainly were more popular, as he knew, than his connected work of 1605, "The Advancement of Learning, Divine and Humane".

In the Dedication of this work to James I, Bacon admires his Majesty's genius, "a light of nature I have observed in your Majesty," who certainly was a clever man, and interested in literature. The book is a plea for the organization of knowledge: Bacon styles it "a small globe of the intellectual world". He surveys all knowledge, and maps it out, with a view to organized study. He meets religious objections in his usual way. It is argued that ignorance is a fine thing, making "a more devout dependence on God as the first cause". Bacon replies in the words of Job, "will you lie for God, as one man will do for another to gratify him?" Will you "offer the author of Truth the unclean sacrifice of a lie"? Bacon attacks the schoolmen as darkening counsel by words and spinning cobwebs out of assumed first principles, instead of collecting facts, and questioning nature by experiments. Practically, experimental philosophy, and the endowment of special research, are the burdens of his argument. He divides knowledge into History (the original sense of the word being *inquiry*), Human, Natural, and Divine. Anxious that nothing should escape him, he even classifies Ciphers, then much used in the secret correspondence of statesmen and conspirators. He had invented a cipher when a young diplomatist in Paris, and, in the later Latin translation of this book, the "De Augmentis," he is copious on the subject. The secrets of each writing were usually discovered by the simple process of torturing the conspirators who used them.

"Poesy," he says, "was ever thought to have some anticipation of divineness, because it doth raise and erect the mind, by submitting the shows of things to the desires of the mind; whereas reason doth buckle and bow the mind unto the nature of things." He conceived that there was a

mystic meaning, a record of lost wisdom, in the myths of the Greeks (which are mainly decorated survivals of savage guesses at the causes of things). He asks for more biographies, in an age very careless of biography. He speaks of the "inductive" method, as opposed to the scholastic reasoning from invented assumptions; and his mind was always busy with a perfect system, "Instauratio Magna," of the interpretation of nature, and the encyclopædic organization of knowledge. This work he never completed; the "Novum Organum" (1620), written in Latin, is the most important fragment. He "had a vision of his own," but what his great and perfect method really was, in practical operation, he probably did not know himself. Fallacies he could detect and classify in brilliant fashion, the "Eidola" or shadowy Dwellers on the Threshold of Truth, bewildering men who would enter that sanctuary. His work in this kind, especially the "Novum Organum," is immensely stimulating: he saw in vision the Promised Land of Science into which he did not enter, and he would have been much disenchanted by the results, as regards human happiness, of the discoveries which he, not vainly, summoned men to make. He did not urge haste in practical application—the commercializing of science. He insisted on the collection of "contradictory instances," a method always, in accordance with human eagerness, too much neglected.[1]

Bacon's mind, in fact, was encyclopædic, and shared the faults common to encyclopædias. The contemporary specialist, like Gilbert with his remarkable experiments in magnetism, is spoken of but slightingly by Bacon; nor has he much praise for other students who, in his time, were practising what he was preaching.

Bacon's prose, beyond the region of essays and of science, may best be studied in his "Reign of Henry VII," the fruit of a few months' labour, after his banishment to the country, in 1621. He had no access to manuscripts of the period, except in copies made for him in the great collection of Sir Robert Cotton, now in the British Museum. The printed books concerning the reign, those of Polydore Virgil, Holinshed (translating Polydore), Stowe, and Speed, led Bacon into some mistakes about facts. But the book is lucid and sagacious; the character of the king is clearly depicted, without favour or deliberate fault-finding. The study of Perkin Warbeck is full of subtle interest. "Himself with long and continued counterfeiting and with often telling a lie was turned, by habit, almost into the thing he seemed to be, and

from a liar to a believer." Ford makes Henry VII express the same opinion in his tragedy of "Perkin Warbeck". Bacon treats the strange career of Perkin in terms of the Stage, speaks of the prompter with his prompt-book, and, in the last Act, says, "therefore now, like the end of a play, a great number came upon the stage at once". The nature of the statecraft of Henry VII, not very apprehensive or forecasting of future events, afar off, "but an entertainer of Fortune by the day," is admirably analysed. "I have not flattered the king," says Bacon in his dedication to Charles, Prince of Wales, "but took him to life as well as I could, sitting so far off, and having no better light." Henry's attempt to secure the canonization of Henry VI is amusingly described. Cardinals were set to examine that poor prince's career, "but it died under the reference. The general opinion was that Pope Julius was too dear, and that the king would not come to his rates." But Bacon holds that the Pope did not wish to cheapen saintliness, and chose to "keep a distance between innocents and Saints". The virtues of Henry VI had not the necessary quality of being heroic.

"The New Atlantis," unfinished in 1624, was published with the "Sylva Sylvarum," after Bacon's death, in 1627. Here our author appears as the framer of a philosophical romance, not unlike More's "Utopia," but concerned, as far as it goes, with the organization of experiment and of knowledge, as practised by the people of Bensalem, somewhere in the southern seas. Bacon makes no long story of how he and his company arrived at Bensalem, an unheard of land, where civilization has survived since the time of Plato's mythical lost Atlantis. Bacon was inclined to suspect that there must have been "in the dark backward and abysm of time," a race more advanced in knowledge than the Greeks or the men of his own age. The Bensalemites are survivors of that race, people very stately, peaceable (though well provided with improved artillery), and Christian. The tale of their miraculous conversion, through St. Bartholomew, "about twenty years after the ascension of our Saviour"; and of their acquisition of the Old Testament and the New (including parts of it *not yet written*) about 53 A.D., is the most romantic part of the romance. The Bensalemites, who are rich in everything, make trading voyages, not for lucre, but "for *Light*," knowledge. They have every kind of museum, library, and scientific apparatus which the mind of Bacon could desire, regardless of expense, nor do they seem to have shrunk from vivisection in their search for the secrets of nature. "We have some degrees of flying in the air,"

they have Christian temples: they are extremely moral, kind, and industrious, in fact are a sort of scientific Phæacians; "far apart they dwell, in the midst of the wash of the waves, and with them are no men conversant," for they help, but do not welcome mariners.

Bacon's Latin tracts are numerous: he believed that Latin was a permanent, English a less stable speech, but of course, since his day, knowledge of Latin has more and more decreased, owing to the progress of education and the march of science. The prophetic enthusiasm of his insistence on experimental philosophy, the brilliance of his illustrations, and the sagacity of his aphoristic observations, are the bases of his literary fame. He was not so well fitted to be an experimental philosopher himself, as to be the cause of experimental philosophy in others.

RALEIGH.

Sir Walter Raleigh (born 1552, at Hayes Barton, Budleigh, Devonshire), educated at Oxford, a soldier with the Huguenots in France, familiar with the wits in 1576 (when he wrote commendatory verses for Gascoigne's "Steel Glass"), a courtier who enjoyed the sunshine and suffered from the frosts of Elizabeth's favour, when supplanted by Essex went to Ireland, as we saw, became the friend of Spenser, and was styled by him "The Shepherd of the Ocean".

In life and in literature a fiery and indefatigable adventurer, his productions, from sonnets and the long, and for the most part lost poem, "Cynthia" (on Elizabeth) to tracts on practical points; accounts of voyages and of South America, and the gigantic" History of the World," give proof of extraordinary energy and fertility. His description of the glorious fight of "The Revenge," and the death of Sir Richard Grenville (published in 1596) can never be forgotten. In 1596 appeared, too, his account of his first exploration (1595) of Guiana, with a description of "the great and golden City of Manoa,"—a mirage.

On the death of Elizabeth, James I, on grounds of not unnatural if baseless suspicion, imprisoned Raleigh in the Tower, where he was well treated enough, and, with what amount of aid from collaborators is uncertain (Ben Jonson said that he had much) but, in any case with portentous industry, Raleigh compiled his "History of the World," from the creation to 130 B.C. The book (1614-1615) had a very great popularity: even the Puritans read it with admiration. There was then no such world-history in English, and though, as history, it is now obsolete of course; it is admired for its vigour, for the character it displays, and the personal observations suggested by the author's wide experience of men; and above all for occasional passages of lofty eloquence, and the organ-tones of a magnificent style, as in the famous address to Death. The capacities of style in original work had never so been exemplified in English, though such examples are but occasional.

Raleigh's very title in "The Prerogative of Parliaments" was offensive to the king, who doted on the prerogative of princes, and the book was not printed till after Raleigh's execution, following his return from his second expedition to Guiana. He also wrote tracts on War in general, on "The Navy and Sea Service," on "Trade and Commerce," on "A War with Spain" (the last thing that James desired), on "The Arts of Empire" (published by Milton, 1658, as "The Cabinet Council")

and doubtless much is lost of the 3452 sheets of Raleigh's writing which John Hampden was having transcribed before the Great Rebellion.

More than Bacon, Raleigh tuned the language of "lofty, insolent, and passionate English prose": these terms were applied by Puttenham ("Art of English Poesie") to Raleigh's "dittie and amorous ode". "Insolent," of course, means here "out of the common".

Overbury.

Sir Thomas Overbury was born in Warwickshire in 1581: was the son of a Gloucestershire squire, was a gentleman commoner of Queen's College, Oxford, 1595-1598, entered the Middle Temple, and passed some years abroad. On his return he became, in Scotland, the friend of Robert Carr (or Ker), son of Ker of Fernihirst, one of Queen Mary's Border partisans. Carr, who was handsome, became King James's minion, and, in 1613, was created Earl of Somerset. His friend Overbury obtained a place at Court; and was first the friend, then the foe of Ben Jonson. An ally of Somerset, Overbury dissuaded him from his fatal marriage with Frances Howard, who, after a child-marriage (1606) with the boy Earl of Essex, detested him, loved Somerset, and, backed by James's influence, in spite of the Archbishop of Canterbury, Abbott, obtained a decree of nullity against her husband. The poet Donne, as Somerset's adviser, and the poet Campion, as a physician connected with a courtier more or less concerned in the affair, were entangled in this odious and mysterious matter. Overbury, on the other hand, was opposed to the unholy marriage of Somerset, and is thought to have written his popular poem "The Wife," to show him that Lady Essex was not what a wife should be. She plotted in various ways to get rid of Overbury. The offer of a diplomatic post in Paris he refused, with insolence it seems; he was sent to the Tower, and there, through the instigation of Lady Essex, was poisoned, with circumstances of bungling cruelty: for, as we know in the Spanish case of Escovedo, the science of poisoning was then quite in its infancy. Overbury died on 15 September, 1613. His death provoked many elegies and gave popularity to his poem "The Wife" (1614), which is of very slight merit, and to his "Characters," brief mordant sketches of types of men, in prose by Overbury and his friends. They appear to have been suggested rather by the Characters of the Greek Theophrastus, than by Montaigne or Bacon. Some pieces are ideal, "The Good Wife," and the charming "Fair and Happy Milkmaid," worthy of Izaak Walton. "She is never alone for she is still accompanied with old songs, honest thoughts, and prayers, but short ones.... Thus lives she, and all her care is she may die in the spring-time, to have store of flowers stuck upon her winding-sheet." Most of the other characters are drawn in a mocking style. Of "A Mere Scholar" we learn that "the antiquity of his University is his creed; and the excellency of his College, though but for a match of football, an article of his faith". "The Mere Fellow of a House," or don, with his airs of a man of the world, provokes the handsome courtier, and ex-undergraduate of Queen's. This on the scholar is good, "University jests are his universal discourse and his news the demeanour of the Proctors". Overbury jests at "The Melancholy Man". Melancholy, as Ben Jonson's Master Stephen had proved, was the fashion; a curious proof of this is the "Niobe" of Stafford (1611), a wonderful piece of railing at "the damnable times," of which a copy bears the arms of Charles I when Prince of Wales. "Straggling thoughts," says Overbury, "are the Melancholy Man's content, they make him dream waking; there's his pleasure!"

Translators.

Translation was a great, if not to the toilers a profitable industry between the reigns of Edward VI and James I. The wealth of classical, French, Spanish, and Italian learning, thought, and poetry was rapidly and strenuously conveyed into English, sometimes rough and ready, and rich in

flowers of slang, sometimes replete with elegance and vigour. The translators certainly produced most idiomatic English; the ancients, in their versions, were not, as in reality, concise and classically self-restrained. There was, as a rule, no thought of minute accuracy. In fact, if some learned men were good Greek scholars, they did not write translations; the earlier translators in England used French and Italian versions of the Greek originals. Thus, Thomas Nicolls did Thucydides, the greatest of Greek historians, out of a French translation of an Italian version of the difficult original (1550). Nevertheless if you turn to the tragic pages on the utter ruin of the Athenian expedition to Sicily, the tale is still moving and rich in melancholy. Whoever B. R. was (Barnaby Rich?) the translator of the first two books of Herodotus (including his account of "the beastly devices" (as B. R. says) of the Egyptians), you cannot complain, as Macaulay did of another version, that Herodotus is "as flat as champagne in tumblers". B. R. uses slang, as "the Greeks were in the wrong box". Sir Thomas North, whose translation of Plutarch (1579) Shakespeare uses in his Roman plays, merely rendered the French version by Amyot. Whereas Plutarch's Greek lives of great men are, though in manner quiet, not frigid, North "picturesqued it everywhere". In fact these translators made Greeks and Romans speak as if they had come back to life and were writing in lusty Elizabethan England. Unluckily their volumes are not often to be picked up at bookstalls, and as magnificently printed in "Tudor Translations" they are expensive.

It is strange that the great Athenian dramatists, Æschylus, Sophocles, Euripides, and the comic Aristophanes, were left untranslated; probably because no contemporary foreign versions were easily procurable. What our ancestors knew of ancient tragedy was mainly through the rhetorical Roman imitations by Seneca. Of Plato scarce anything was translated. By 1600 Philemon Holland (born 1552), who actually went to the ancient originals for his texts, published his translation of Livy. As early as 1547 John Wylkinson Englished the Ethics of Aristotle,—out of an Italian version. Philemon was rapid, racy, indefatigable. He translated Plutarch's "Morals" in a year, using but one quill. It was through Florio's English version that Shakespeare read Montaigne's Essays. It is hardly necessary to name Richard Stanyhurst's "Four Books of Virgil's 'Æneid'" (1582) written in hideous English hexameters; and Thomas Phaer's Virgil, in "fourteeners" like Chapman's Homer, is even more helpless as a reproduction of "the stateliest measure

Ever moulded by the lips of man,"

than Conington's modern version in the metres of "The Lay of the Last Minstrel". It was clearly through Arthur Golding's translation of Ovid's "Metamorphoses" (1567, Four Books in 1565) that Shakespeare knew Ovid best. Golding also did Cæsar's "De Bello Gallico" (1565), and Sir Henry Savile, Provost of Eton, undertook Tacitus.

Among books from foreign modern authors, William Painter's "Palace of Pleasure" (1566-1567) with tales from Boccaccio, Queen Margaret of Navarre, Bandello, and Straparola (as well as from classical sources) was a treasure-house of plots and situations for the playwrights. In the tragedies and comedies of the age, Italian characters are predominant. The Spanish novel of the roads and inns and adventures, "Lazarillo de Tormes," was done out of Spanish in 1576, and set the example of this kind of fiction to Nash. Ariosto and Tasso were translated, the former by Sir John Harington (1591), the latter by Edward Fairfax (in 1600), and Richard Carew, but Dante was neglected. Of Chapman's "Homer," elsewhere spoken of, seven books appeared in 1598, and Shakespeare either glanced at it for his "Troilus and Cressida," or used, in places, a French or Latin version of Homer. It is impossible to enumerate all the translators, most of them are very readable, more so, in fact, than our most exact literal renderings of Greek and Latin originals into prose.

The Authorized Version of the Bible.

The noblest and most enduring monument of Elizabethan prose is, of course, the Authorized Version of the Bible. The nature of the texts to be translated suppressed all tendency to wilful conceits; a substratum of simple English from the time of Wyclif's versions in Chaucer's day, and from Tyndale's learned rendering, was retained; the lofty poetry of the ancient prophets was echoed in English as stately, balanced, and harmonious; and if it be said that the English does not represent "the speech" of any one age in the life of England, we may reply that the original texts also are the work of a thousand years in different languages.

Pulpit Eloquence.

It has often been remarked that sermons, in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, "discharged one part of the function of the modern newspaper" (though this is more true of Scotland than of England), and that sermons, where published, were a favourite form of reading. That is proved by their abundance in country house libraries, where old sermons usually occupy much valuable wall-space, as they cannot be sold, and present an imposing array of calf-backed volumes. Our space does not permit us to do more than name the famous preachers of the Elizabethan age, such as Lancelot Andrewes (1555-1626), Bishop of Winchester under James I; James Ussher, Archbishop of Armagh (1581-1656), a man of varied learning who arranged the chronology of the Bible; Bishop Joseph Hall (1574-1656) and Donne whose prose has many of the merits and defects of his age.

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[1] To take a very simple instance, a critic, observing that Hector, in the "Iliad," slays some men who lived on the road from Thessaly to Boeotia, infers that Hector's exploits are a record of the wars of a tribe advancing in that direction. But he entirely overlooks the "contradictory instances," those in which Hector spears men from other remote parts of Greece.

CHAPTER XXII.

LATE ELIZABETHAN AND JACOBEAN POETS.

It may have occurred to the reader that the words which Ben Jonson quoted about Shakespeare, *Sufflaminandus erat*—he flowed so freely that he needed stopping—indicate the great fault of Elizabethan and Jacobean Literature. The authors did not know where to stop. The age was luxuriantly

rich in genius; and was over-wealthy in new ideas, gained from Greece, Rome, France, Spain, and Italy; from the clash of religions, the discoveries in the new world, and the re-discoveries of the treasures of the old world. What the English poets did not re-discover was the Greek lucidity, brevity, condensation, and orderliness. Even in plays of Shakespeare these graces are lacking: even Shakespeare's construction is not his strong point. The intellectual wealth of the poets tempted them to prolixity; the abundance of their ideas provoked them to that fashion of "conceits," of comparisons between the things most remote in heaven, earth, and the world of fancy. There was a taste which reappears now and then in literature, from early Icelandic poetry to Browning and George Meredith, for wilful abruptness, harshness, and obscurity. But industrious prolixity is not the fault of Donne, whom we now approach: his error lay in harshness, obscurity, and a measureless indulgence in conceit. Through these the light which is in him is darkened. Meanwhile rank over-abundance, the inability to stop, renders Daniel and Drayton and Phineas Fletcher burdensome, while Giles Fletcher crowds with conceits and points of wit a poem on the most sacred theme. These poets are not now commonly read, except in selections of their best things, and such selections give no idea of their pervading faults. When we extend our knowledge of the authors, and mark the formless character of the age in poetry, the sudden appearance of Milton indicates as great a miracle of genius as the existence of Chaucer, Spenser, and Shakespeare in the throng of their contemporaries.

John Donne was born in London, in 1573. His father was an eminent ironmonger, of a Catholic family; his mother's kin, the Heywoods, had suffered much from Protestant persecution. One of them was the writer of Interludes which amused the melancholy of Mary Tudor. John entered Hart Hall, Oxford, later Magdalen Hall, in 1584, he also studied at Cambridge, and entered Lincoln's Inn in 1592. A portrait of him in 1591 shows a young man holding the hilt of a very large rapier, and wearing a large earring shaped as a cross. He has a look of audacity, perhaps of sensuality, with a tinge of melancholy. He seems at this time to have studied the controversy between Catholics and Protestants, and in his "Epistle" (rhymed heroic couplets) we perceive that he was of no fervent piety, but rather a doubter. His satires appear to have been written about 1593. They are obscure, and the versification is bad, apparently of set purpose. Often the reader is puzzled to guess how a line is meant to be scanned, the natural rules of

accent are set at defiance, as Ben Jonson remarked. Probably Donne aimed at imitating Persius, the obscure young Roman satirist. The satires can scarcely be read except by curious students tracing the evolution of Donne's thought and style.

In 1596 he sailed with Essex to the victory over Spain at Cadiz. Before starting he wrote one of his poetical "Elegies" to a lady with whom he had an intrigue. In 1597 he went on "the Islands Voyage" with Essex, to capture plate ships. He experienced a tempest, was driven back to Falmouth, wrote "The Storm," and later, in the Tropics "The Calm". The men are roasted by the sun and bathe, then

> from the sea into the ship we turn,
> Like parboiled wretches, on the coals to burn.

The poems are rude in versification and exaggeration, but most vivid are their pictures of Nature and the sea. Returning in the autumn of 1597, Donne is supposed to have travelled in Italy and Spain, if it be not more probable that he visited these countries in 1592-1596. If Ben Jonson rightly said that Donne wrote "all his best pieces of verse" before he was 25, they must have been finished by 1598. They were not printed till 1633, but circulated in manuscript.

Probably most of the pieces in his "Elegies" and "Songs and Sonnets" were composed in his tempestuous youth. The amorous conceits in "The Flea" are equally rich in ingenious fancies and in bad taste. "Woman's Constancy" and many other poems have the same moral burden as

> 'T was last night I swore to thee
> That fond impossibility,—

to be constant. The sun is chidden for too early rising—

> Go tell Court-huntsmen that the King will ride,—

but leave lovers undisturbed. In "The Indifferent" he brags that he can love all sorts and conditions of women, like Lord Byron and other amorists. He finds in himself "something like a heart," but rather rumpled. Of a later period, when he met his future wife, may be a charming song,

> Just such disparity
> As is 'twixt air and angel's purity'

'Twixt women's love and men's will ever be.

But the Elegies address ladies of whose nature purity is no part, and it may be admitted that the confessions do not win admiration for Donne's taste and temper, not to mention his morals, when he wrote them. "The Curse" on a woman, or a man who loves his mistress, far outdoes the Epodes of Horace in cold ferocity. "The Bait" contains remarks on the cruelty of angling which must have vexed Izaak Walton to the heart. "Love's Deity," opening with the charmed lines

> I long to talk with some old lover's ghost,
> Who died before the God of Love was born,

thence descends into crabbed and difficult conceits. Two songs, "The Funeral" and "The Relic," are on a bracelet of his mistress's hair: whoever exhumes the poet's body will find

> A bracelet of bright hair about the bone.

These verses of Donne's disturbed and adventurous youth, poems ingenious, conceited, passionate, mystical, or cynical, have not the music as of birds' songs which rings in the lyrists of that age: nor have the Epithalamia the charm of Spenser's. Donne in youth was not at ease with himself: he speculates too curiously. He may try to play the sensualist, but there is a dark backward in his genius; there are chords not in tune with mirth and pleasure. He is as unique as Browning, as little like other poets. If his Elegies contain, as has been supposed, the story of a love affair, it was of a nature to make him uneasy.

In 1597 Donne became secretary of the Lord Keeper, Sir Thomas Egerton, and met his niece, Anne More, daughter of Sir George More, Lieutenant of the Tower. He married her secretly at the end of 1601, and therefore was imprisoned in the Fleet jail, in February, 1602, thanks to the lady's angry father, who soon after forgave the young lovers.

By 1601 he had begun "The Progress of the Soul," or "Metempsychosis," the adventures of a soul "placed in most shapes,"[1] for example, in that fabulous and mortuary weed, a mandrake, in the roe of a fish, in a sparrow, and so forth, all to little purpose. He was unemployed, eager for employment, given to writing long letters, and laments for deaths in verse, and he assisted in a controversy with the Catholics.

Now come such more or less theological works as "Pseudo-Martyr," "Ignatius His Conclave," and "Biathanatos": the first (1610) is addressed to the King, who finally induced Donne to take holy orders. "Divine" poems he also wrote, but he was not anxious to be a professional divine. Donne's conceits were daring to the border of profanity. A visit to Paris with his patron, Sir Robert Drury, while Mrs. Donne was about to become a mother, was marked by a telepathic experience—Donne saw his wife, then in England, with a dead baby in her arms. Walton says that the day of the vision was that of the child's birth and death, but the dates do not bear out the statement. Walton's remark that Drury sent an express messenger to England, to inquire about Mrs. Donne, is certainly untrue.

In honour of a daughter of Drury who died young, Donne had written two extraordinary poems: "The First Anniversary" of the decease was published in 1611, "The Second Anniversary" was written in 1612. There seemed reason to fear that Donne would celebrate Miss Drury, whom he had never seen, once a year, while his life endured. The poem as a whole is "An Anatomy, of the World, wherein, by occasion of the death of Mistress Elizabeth Drury, the frailty and decay of this whole world is represented". Donne indulges in an exaggeration of hyperbole equalled only by the ancient Irish bards who sang the feats of Cuchulainn. For example, when Elizabeth joined the Saints

> This world in that great earthquake languished,
> For in a common bath of tears it bled,

an allusion to Seneca bleeding to death in a bath full of hot water. This manner of hyperbole flourished after Donne's time, infecting Crashaw and others,

> For there's a kind of world remaining still,

as Donne admits. Poetry on the deplorable brevity of life and the instability of things may be excellent, and that instability is the theme of Donne, but Mistress Drury is harped upon too much, and Donne was taking this paragon on trust:—

> she whose rich eyes and breast
> Gilt the West Indies and perfumed the East.

It is impossible to understand how a poet, now of the mature age of thirty-nine, could write in this fashion if he had any humour.

"The Second Anniversary" dwelt on the incommodities of the soul in this life, and her exaltation in the next. Donne says that the world still has a semblance of life, as when the eyes and tongue of a decapitated man twinkle and roll, while

He grasps his hands and he pulls up his feet.
So struggles this dead world,

without Elizabeth, whom Donne never saw! There are good lines such as

Her pure and eloquent blood
Spoke in her cheeks,

and the satiric remarks on

A spongy slack divine,

who

Drinks and sucks in th' instructions of great men.

In return for these poems Drury housed and took care of Donne and his large family. The poet now became the adviser of the Earl of Somerset in the hideous suit of nullity, and, when things went against Somerset, who had done nothing for him, Donne proposed to publish his poems in "a few copies". "I apprehend some incongruities in the resolution," and indeed, as Donne at this moment intended to take holy orders, which he did in January, 1615, he was wise in breaking his resolution. He now obtained some clerical appointments, but in August, 1617, lost his wife. There is little doubt that his grief changed him from a worldly man into a man of heartfelt piety, the man whom Izaak Walton knew and adored.

His "Holy Sonnets," written at this time, have some noble almost Miltonic passages, mingled with lines that cannot be made to scan, and with hyperbolical conceits. Thus, though

Thou my thirst hast fed,
A holy thirsty dropsy melts me yet.

He requests the American explorers to lend him "new seas," so that he may drown his world in tears of penitence. He makes "yet" rhyme to "spi*rit.*".

The excuse made for such things is that Donne thought Elizabethan poetry too dulcet.

He is a poet by flashes, which are very brilliant with strange coloured fires. He is not really so obscure as he is reckoned: he *can* be understood, though Ben Jonson, who "esteemed him the first poet in the world in some things," added that "Donne from not being understood would perish".

Donne died on March 31, 1631. His poetry, styled by Dr. Johnson "metaphysical," exercised an influence not wholly favourable on his successors; happily it did not affect Lovelace and Herrick.

Minor Lyrists.

In the Elizabethan age it might almost be said that every man was his own poet. The name of poet became a term of contempt, as we learn from Ben Jonson and other sources. Of the best lyrists we have spoken in treating of the dramatists, of Sidney, Raleigh, and the chief sonneteers. Another sonneteer is Thomas Watson, an Oxford man, and allied to Spenser's circle (15571592). His "Hecatompathia" (1582) and "Tears of Fancy" (posthumously published) are sonnets, either informal or formal in structure; the "Hecatompathia" mainly consists of translations from modern languages. Watson had learning and some skill, but not much natural music in his soul.

Henry Constable, a Yorkshire man and a Catholic, may have been born about 1562 or earlier, judging by his degree taken at Cambridge in 1580. He passed much of his life abroad, and, on his return, part of it an the Tower, in the last years of Elizabeth. His sonnets ("Diana," 1592-1594) are pleasing, more tunable than many sonnets of his own and the succeeding age. Others have been exhumed from manuscript; some are devotional.

Willoughby's "Avisa" (the sonnet sequences usually bore girls' names) would be forgotten but for the magic initials "W. S." and allusions to W.'s love affairs. He may have been William Shakespeare; or he may have been Walter Smith, or William Smith, author of another such book as "Avisa," "Chloris" (1596). With him may pair off Lynch, with "Diella," and Griffin with "Fidessa," love-sonneteers.

Richard Barnfield (1574-1627), an Oxford man, was fertile in 1594-1598, publishing "The Affectionate Shepherd" (1594), "Cynthia" (1595), "The Encomion of Lady Pecunia" (1598). The Shepherd is much too affectionate for Christian and Northern tastes, in the style of Virgil's second Eclogue,

> that horrid one
> Beginning with *formosum pastor Corydon*,

as Byron describes it. In "Cynthia" he enthusiastically admires Spenser. If he wrote the sonnet "If Music and sweet Poetry agree," which appears in poems published with "Lady Pecunia," and the charming "As it fell upon a day" (often ascribed to Shakespeare), in the miscellany "England's Helicon," Barnfield was among the true lyrists of his time. "Lady Pecunia" is a satire on what wealth can do, and "The Complaint of Poetry for the death of Liberality," a satire on what it does not usually care to do. He made experiments in English hexameters: after the age of 24 he ceased to write or ceased to publish.

Thomas Campion (died in 1620) was, fortunately, a more persevering poet. Though his name was hardly known to modern readers till of recent years, because his lyrics were mainly published with music of his own composition, he was one of the most exquisite and delightful singers in the whole of English literature. Born in London, he went in 1581 to Peterhouse, Cambridge, left in 1585, and entered Gray's Inn in 1586. Five of his poems appear in a Miscellany of 1591: his Latin poems are of 1595. In 1601 appeared his first "Booke of Ayres," the music by himself and his friend Philip Rosseter. In 1602 he put forth "Observations on the Art of English Poesie," written, strange as it appears, in favour of verses in quantitative metres, without rhyme. He had taken the degree of Doctor of Medicine: he also wrote (1613) three Masques, one was for the wedding of the Princess Elizabeth, "the Queen of Hearts," another was for the shameful nuptials of the Earl of Somerset and Frances Howard, stained as they were with vice, vulgarity, and murder. Campion's later "Bookes of Ayres" are of 1612 and 1617. He died in March, 1619-1620.

Some of Campion's lyrics may have been suggested by and adapted to his own music, in other cases he composed the music for his own words. He employs a great number of metres, all tunable: with him music and sweet poesy agree. To think of these songs, as Thackeray said of some of Scott's

novels, is to wish to run to the bookshelves, take them down and read them. Nothing can be more charming than the verses on "The Fairy Queen, Proserpina," and "Give Beauty all her right,"

> Silly boy,'tis full moon yet,
> Thy night as day shines clearly,
>
> Now let her change I and spare not!
> Since she proves strange, I care not!
>
> Kind are her answers,
> But her performance keeps no day,
> Breaks time, as dancers
> From their own music when they stray.

Drayton.

Michael Drayton (born at Hartshill in Warwickshire, 1563, died 1631) is a poet of nearly the same character and calibre as Daniel (of whom later), with the same beginnings as a sonneteer, the same prolixity in versifying history, and the same steady laborious cast of mind. From the age of 10, as he tells us, he was bent on being a Poet, and like greater poets, Burns, for example, he was usually inspired by some model, which, unlike Burns, he did not transfigure and excel. His earliest work, "The Harmony of the Church" (1591), contains rhymed paraphrases of Biblical songs and prayers. Drayton, like Milton, addresses the Heavenly Muse, singing "not of toys on Mount Ida, but of triumphs on Mount Sion". Thus from Exodus XV., the triumph over Egypt,

> The Lord Jehovah is a Man of War,
> Pharaoh, his chariots, and his mighty host,
> Were by his hand in the wild waters lost,
> His captains drownèd in Red Sea so far.

In 1593 appears his "Shepherd's Garland". Spenser had made shepherds fashionable; and eclogues were the mode. In one, "Beta," Queen Elizabeth was praised; in another, Sir Philip Sidney was lamented. The work, with improvements, was republished in 1606. The ballad of Dowsabel was a pleasant and fortunate addition. Anne Goodere, later Lady Rainsford, a

daughter of Drayton's patron, Sir Henry Goodere, is the person named Idea, in the sonnets collected under that title. If the one famous and immortal sonnet,

Since there's no help, come, let us kiss and part,

be really by Drayton, he here showed mastery; and the addresses to Idea may not be mainly fanciful. Another sonnet on rivers, Drayton's favourite theme in the "Polyolbion," identifies Idea's home—so far she was certainly a real person. But there are critics who deny to him,

> Since there's no help, come, let us kiss and part.

It has even been attributed to Shakespeare, because of its excellence.

Following Daniel's "Complaint of Rosamond," Drayton versified the stories of Piers Gaveston, Matilda, daughter of Lord Robert Fitzwater, Robert Duke of Normandy, and "The Great Cromwell" (Thomas). Like Daniel, he gave little sack to a monstrous deal of bread, in a close following of prose chronicles. "Mortimeriados" (1596) is another legend, in rhyme royal, of the wars of the barons against the second and third Edwards, later recast as "The Barons' Wars," in an eight-lined stanza. "The English Heroical Epistles" were a following of the Letters of Ovid's heroines; there are twelve lovers and ladies, each writes a letter and receives a reply. Rosamond, Jane Shore, and Geraldine are, naturally, among the ladies. Drayton employs the rhymed decasyllabic couplet, and adds learned notes, comparing, for example, the Maze of Rosamond to the Cnossian Labyrinth of the Minotaur in Crete. The verses are curiously modern in some places.

The poet now did work for Henslowe and the stage. Like Daniel he wrote a panegyric of the new King, James VI and I, in 1603: it brought him no advancement, and in the next year he made "The Owle" the mouthpiece of a satire, opening with the outworn dream-formula which had so long haunted verse.

In 1606 he attempted odes: the best known is on "The Virginian Voyage": Virginia is a paradise, doubtless the laurel is indigenous, and Drayton foresees a Virginian poet (possibly Edgar Poe, in a way a Virginian). By the famous patriotic "Ballad of Agincourt," Drayton holds his most secure title to popularity.

He had long been working at his "Polyolbion," in which the rivers of England, and the great events which occurred in their valleys, are celebrated. The first thirteen books were published in 1612-1613. Drayton's best Muse is the patriotic. He was not encouraged by the reception of the book (reprinted with twelve new songs in 1622), and unhappily he stopped at the Cumberland Eden, and did not, like Richard Franck in prose, celebrate the Scottish rivers from the Debatable Land to the Naver. Drayton's ambling Alexandrine couplets are, at least, interesting to the angler, for he has a minute knowledge of even such burns as the "roaring Yarty" (mark the *Yar*, as in Cretan and Greek Jardanus, Yarrow, and the Australian Yarra-Yarra) and the troutful Mimram, which he calls the Mimer. Had Drayton spoken more particularly of the streams, and been less copious in endeavours "the battle in to bring," battles Celtic, or of the many civil wars, his poem would have more attractions. History, copious and minute, is a stumbling-block to poetry in Drayton, and as to history, the public, he says, "take a great pride to be ignorant thereof": "the idle humorous world must hear of nothing that savours of antiquity".

Perhaps the idle world was more kind to the playful poem "Nimphidia" (1627) where Titania, to the wrath of Oberon, wooes a new Bottom, Pigwiggen. The tripping measure is that of Chaucer's "Sir Thopas": the Fairy Queen's equipage is thus described,

> Her chariot of a snail's fine shell,
> Which for the colours did excell,
> The fair Queen Mab becoming well,
> So lively was the limning:
> The seat the soft wool of the bee,
> The cover, gallantly to see,
> The wing of a py'd butterflee,
> I trow, was ample trimming.

The venerable and undefeated singer returned to pastoral, "The Quest of Cynthia," and (1630) gave "The Muses' Elizium," full of pretty innocent ditties, while "Noah's Flood" is naturally in a more solemn strain, as are "Moses, His Birth and Miracles," and "David and Goliath". These prolix paraphrases do not greatly improve on the heroic prose of Genesis and Samuel.

Drayton died in 1631, and was buried in Westminster Abbey, but not in the Poets' Corner.

Daniel.

Samuel Daniel is one more of the poets whose names linger on in histories of literature because they were contemporaries of Shakespeare and Spenser and may more or less have "taken Eliza and our James". A privately printed edition of 150 copies of Daniel's works (edited by Dr. Grosart) keeps his laurels green in such abundance as his intrinsic literary merits deserve. He seems to have been born near Taunton about 1562-63: his father is described as a music-master; he was at Oxford for three years or thereabouts. He published a translation of a tract by Paulus Jovius, "of rare inventions both military and amorous called Imprese," in 1585. He was patronized by "Sidney's sister, Pembroke's mother," and resided at Wilton, where she received much literary society and he may have enjoyed excellent trout-fishing in the Nadder and the Wily. In 1591 he "commenced poet" with twenty-seven of the stereotyped love sonnets (not in the regular Petrarchian form) which appeared unsigned in Nashe's edition of "Astrophel". In 1592-1594, three editions, emended, were published; the collection is entitled "Delia".

> So sounds my Muse according as she strikes
> On my heart-strings attuned unto her fame.

Probably Delia did not strike her Samuel's heart-strings with much skill and vigour.

> What though my Muse no honour got thereby,
> Each bird sings to herself, and so will I.

With "Delia" appeared a long and very tedious "Complaint of Rosamond" (who sleeps in Godstow near Oxford). The piece is in stanzas of seven lines, and is as woeful as "The Mirror for Magistrates". The abbey built by "the credulous devout and apt-believing ignorant" was already ruined by the Great Pillage, and the melancholy place by the grey waters is Rosamond's only monument. Her ghost left Daniel "to prosecute the tenor of my woes": there is abundance of moral but very little of music in Rosamond's "Complaint".

Daniel visited Italy about 1592, and in 1594 published "Cleopatra," a tragedy in imitation of Seneca, with a chorus.

The chorus commences thus

> Now every mouth can tell
> What close was muttered:
> *How that she did not well,*
> *To take the course she did!*

The prologue and the chorus are the first act. Naturally in Senecan drama Cleopatra does not commit suicide on the stage. A messenger narrates the moving incident in two hundred and fifty rhyming verses.

In 1595 appeared the first four books of Daniel's "Civil Wars"; a fifth book came out in 1599. In 1600 the poet became tutor to Lady Ann Clifford, but he longed to return to his Muse, and did so in 1602. His "Civil Wars" were now a Seven Years' War, and he achieved Book VI. In 1603 he addressed a panegyric to James VI and I, the new King: he obtained a Court post in connexion with the Queen's Masques, and held his place and salary till 1618; wrote a History of England, and died at Beckington, Somerset, in 1619. He had written Masques, and a "Defence of Rhyme" against the friends of unrhymed verse in classical metres. His "Civil Wars" are a chronicle in rhyme—he spares neither himself nor the infrequent reader. Daniel opens by stating that had England devoted herself solely to fighting abroad, she might have annexed Europe to the Alps, the Rhine, and the Pyrenees. But this is an error: in 1429 the tide of English conquest recoiled from the standard of the Maid, and even before the civil wars at home England had failed to hold the Loire.

The poem traces civil war from Richard II onwards to Edward IV, and, as Aristotle rightly said, an Epic poem cannot be written in that way. Daniel was an excellent man; a most industrious author, and we may say of him in the words of his own Epistle to Lord Henry Howard,

> Vertue, though luckless, yet shall 'scape contempt,
> And though it hath not hap, it shall have fame.

Daniel had little of the exuberant fantasy of his time; he is "well-languaged Daniel," and easily intelligible. But even his most frequently quoted sonnet,

> Care-charmer Sleep, son of the sable Night,

is far from being one of the best of poetic Hymns to Sleep, and his best gnomic poem,

> He that of such a height hath built his mind,

is far too long.

DAVIES.

Sir John Davies, of Tisbury in Wilts, was born about 1569, we may suppose, if he went to Queen's, Oxford, in 1585. As a young Templar he is said to have been a brawler, and to have been expelled from the society for his vivacities in 1598. In 1599 Davies published his "Nosce Teipsum" ("Know Thyself"), on the nature and properties of the Soul and on its Immortality. The psychology may be old fashioned, but the versification is not. Only the best poets of the age could write the four-lined decasyllabic verses, with alternate rhymes, with the fluency and harmony of Davies. He has an answer to all objections,

> But still this crew with questions me pursues,
> "If souls deceased," say they, "still living be,
> Why do they not return, to bring us news
> Of that strange world where they such wonders see?"

"Why do not the Esquimaux visit us and tell us about the North Pole?" Davies replies, not quite convincingly. Henry More or Glanvill would have answered that souls *do* return, and made the question one of evidence.

Davies's "The Orchestra," on dancing, is extremely graceful, melodious and ingenious; the stanzas describing Queen Elizabeth dancing "high and disposedly" are unfortunately lost. Even his acrostics on "Elizabetha Regina" are charming, and wonderfully varied in ornament and compliment —as *vers de société* none of that age are more admirable.

Davies returned to the Temple, rose in his profession, sat in the House of Commons, was admired by James VI for his poetry, was knighted, and in 1606 became Attorney-General in Ireland. In 1612 he published a valuable book on the Irish Question, which should be read with that of Spenser.

He died after his return to England, Parliament, and the defence of the cause of an Irish Parliament for Ireland, in 1626.

Giles and Phineas Fletcher.

Drayton and Daniel were not influenced by their great forerunner Spenser, as were the two clerical brothers and poets, Phineas (born 1582?) and Giles Fletcher (born 1588). They were the sons of Giles Fletcher, author of "Lida," one of the many collections of sonnets published in 1593. He was a scholar, a man of business, and a diplomatist. "Christ's Victory and Triumph" (1610), the chief poem of the younger Giles is in stanzas one line shorter than the Spenserian; it begins by observing that

> the Infinite far greater grew
> By growing less,

so that "'twere greatest were it none at all," as in the case of the other poet whose wound was "so great because it was so small".

Thus does an unhappy point of wit, a "conceit," disturb the reader at the opening of a poem on the same solemn theme as Milton's "Paradise Regained". The poet admits us to the Councils of Eternity, and thus sets forth the topic of his sacred song; the stanza is a fair example of his manner: —

> Ye sacred writings, in whose antique leaves
> The memories of Heav'n entreasur'd lie,
> Say what might be the cause that Mercy heaves
> The dust of Sin above th' industrious sky,
> And lets it not to dust and ashes fly?
> Could Justice be of sin so overwooed,
> Or so great ill be cause of so great good,
> That, bloody man to save, man's Saviour shed his blood

The phrase

> that Mercy *heaves*
> The *dust* of Sin above th' in*dust*rious sky,

is typical of late Elizabethan mannerism. "Heaves" is used to rhyme to "leaves"; "the dust of sin" is apparently the redeemed soul, why the sky is "industrious," except as a kind of pun on the preceding "dust," is not apparent; we are to wonder why the dust of sin is not allowed "to fly to dust and ashes,"—in short a solemn and sacred poem can hardly be written in a style more unhappily out of keeping. When the fate of fallen man is

trembling in the balance, Mercy "smooths the wrinkles of the Fathers brow," and Justice, observing this with displeasure (it is like a Homeric quarrel of Athene and Aphrodite!), throws herself between Mercy and the Father, like "a vapour from a moory slough," and begins a virulent invective against

That wretch, beast, caitiff, Monster-Man,

who, in Egypt, is disgracing himself by animal worship, while in Greece,

Neptune spews out the lady Aphrodite.

Your songs exceed your matter—

says Giles to other poets,—

this of mine
The matter which it sings, shall make divine.

Alas! the poem, though it has fine occasional passages, some music, and much energy, is written in a style of conceits, and of ingenious antitheses, which are wholly out of accord with "the matter". We cannot but see that the poet, in regard to taste, is wholly lost, is too much a child of his time, so rich in everything but perception of form and limit, so fantastically over-adorned in verse as in vesture.

Giles wrote of Phineas as

the Kentish lad, that lately taught
His oaten reed the trumpet's silver sound.

Phineas did this in his vast allegorical poem, "The Purple Island" (1633) (the human body). His stanzas are of seven lines, the first four rhyming alternately, the last three have all the same rhyme. Both poets imitate Spenser with a difference in stanza, and a notable difference in genius; both have musical passages, and both anticipate Milton in their choice of sacred subjects. Quarles saluted Phineas as "The Spenser of this age". Phineas is the more musical, but also by far the more lengthy of these Kentish swains. His "Piscatory Eclogues" follow Spenser's pastorals. They are of a moral tendency and would not have interested Izaak Walton. The fisher (in salt water there are no anglers), is born "To sweat, to freeze, to watch, to fast, to toil". Phineas attacks the indolent clergy, as Milton did.

They are

> a crew of idle grooms,
> Idle and bold that never saw the seas.

It is probable that Milton, as a Cambridge man, and a man with views like those of Phineas, was well acquainted with the poems of both the Fletchers, which are in fact the sunken stepping-stone from Spenser to Milton.

The puritanism of Phineas's long poem, "The Locusts or Apollyonists" (1627) preludes to the civil war. The poet will tell

> Of priests, O no! Mass-priests, priests cannibal,

and

> Thou purple whore, mounted on scarlet beast,

namely the Church of Rome. Satan says,

> Meantime I burn, I broil, I burst with spite,

as the puritans in fact, between fear of popery and hatred of Laud and his measures, were actually broiling and bursting. Satan, however, is vexed by the triumphs of Protestantism in England. His fiends form Jesuits out of matter, "foul hearts, sear'd consciences, feet swift to blood,"—and all this when Jesuit missionaries were dying under unspeakable tortures at the hands of the Iroquois. While Catholics were being hanged in England, and dreaded a massacre in Scotland, Phineas ends loyally,

> Thrice happy who that Whore shall doubly pay,
> This, royal Charles, this be thy happy meed,—

unhappy Charles who found in the Catholics his most loyal subjects! It is easy but erroneous to confuse the "Piscatory Dialogues" of Phineas with his drama, "Sicelides, a Piscatory," acted at King's College, Cambridge (published, 1631). The dialogue is partly in rhymed heroic couplets of much fluency and partly in prose; the play is of a happier date (1614) than "The Apollyonists," and is written "in a merry pin". Phineas wrote many other things, including a pretty bashful Epithalamium.

CORBET.

Richard Corbet (1582-1635) born at Ewell in Surrey, and educated at Westminster and Christ Church, Oxford, was a merry clergyman, who laughed at but did not abuse Puritans; was liked at Court, and successively held the Sees of Oxford and Norwich. In Aubrey's gossip there are well-known tales about the Bishop's gaieties, and his rhymes on a tour to Paris and on another in the North were reckoned choicely facetious. His best poem has lost nothing in the course of time,

> Farewell rewards and Fairies,
> Good house-wives now may say,
> For now foul sluts in dairies
> Do fare as well as they.

There is also a pretty piece to his son Vincent, on attaining his third birthday. Corbet's humorous pieces have much more vigour than refinement: his verses were not intended for publication, and did not appear till ten years after his death.

Sir John Beaumont.

Sir John Beaumont was the elder brother of Francis Beaumont, the celebrated partner of Fletcher in the drama. He was born (1582) at Grace Dieu in Leicestershire, was of Broadgates Hall (now Pembroke College) in Oxford (1596), lived chiefly at his country place, was created a baronet in 1626, and died in 1628. A sacred poem of his, "The Crown of Thorns," in eight books, is lost: his "Bosworth Field" with other pieces was brought out by his eldest son, in 1629, and dedicated to Charles I. Ben Jonson, in prefatory verses, wrote

> This book will live, it hath a genius
> Above his reader,

Few readers are below the level of the poem, which Ben calls

The bound and frontier of our poesy.

"Bosworth Field" is written in rhyming decasyllabic couplets, which come near to the measure as later used for heroic and satiric poetry, though the lines sometimes carry on the sense in the style disused by Pope. The story of the death of Richard III, disdaining to fly, is spirited, though it cannot

rival the old ballad on the same subject. In translations from the "Satires of Horace," Beaumont comes nearer to the model of Dryden and Pope. "An Ode of the Blessed Trinity" is perhaps the most pleasing of the sacred poems. Beaumont could have taught much to the Royal Prentice in verse, James I, whom he salutes as his master,

> Your judicious rules have been my guide.

He translated the "Tenth Satire of Juvenal," and wrote many verses to friends, and elegies.

William Browne, born about 1590-91, of a Devonshire family, went to Exeter College, Oxford, and to the Inns of Court. In 1613 he published the first part of his "Britannia's Pastorals," with commendatory verses, including some, more cautious than usual, by Ben Jonson. The pastorals have the usual defects of the obsolete kind of composition and of Browne's own age of conceits. They are extremely prolix, very artificial, rich in classical allusions, and occasionally in puns. The rhymed decasyllabic couplets carry on the sense, as was usual before Waller and Pope.

"The Shepherd's Pipe" is a collection of eclogues and dialogues between long-winded shepherds, in a variety of metres. The popular tale of the father's bequests, the ring, cloth, and brooch of magical qualities, is told in stanzas of seven lines. The swains occasionally conduct themselves very like "our liberal shepherds"; at other times their songs of nature and the birds are pretty and pleasing. A pastoral elegy for Mr. Thomas Elwood is an elegy and pastoral, in these respects alone it resembles "Lycidas". In "The Inner Temple Masque," taken from the Odyssey about Ulysses and Circe, the Sirens' song and Circe's charm are pretty, but not on the highest level of the contemporary lyrics.

About 1624 Browne is said to have been the tutor at Oxford of the Hon. Robert Dormer, afterwards Earl of Caernarvon, who fell, on the Royalist side, at Newbury in 1643: the date of Browne's own death is unknown.

His poems seem never to have been popular. In the vast realm of Spenser can be found all the merits of Browne on a far higher level; and Browne's defects, for he even drops into the allegoric style which dominated the latter Middle Ages and seemed immortal, are exceedingly abundant in all the pastoral verse between Spenser and Milton.

George Wither (1588-1667) was one of the poets who "wrote too much and lived too long". Only his song, "Shall I wasting in despair," can be said to live, despite his pleasant fluency and love of country contentments in "Philarete" (1622), "Fidelia," and "The Shepherd's Hunting" (1615). He was among the favourites of Charles Lamb, who discovered the neglected poet, the laughing-stock of the wits of the Restoration. He is also highly praised by Swinburne in a most interesting essay, "Charles Lamb and George Wither". Wither is sometimes good, always copious.

[1] Was Donne copying a poem by Empedocles?

CHAPTER XXIII.

LATE JACOBEAN AND CAROLINE PROSE.

BURTON.

Robert Burton, author of "The Anatomy of Melancholy," would have been despised by Overbury both as "a mere Fellow of a House" and as "a melancholy man," while to Milton he must have seemed one of those spiritual pastors whose "hungry sheep look up and are not fed," with sufficiency of sermons. Burton (born 1577) was of a landholding family, in Leicestershire, was educated at the grammar schools of Nuneaton and Sutton Coldfield, went to Brasenose, Oxford, in 1593, and got a "studentship" (the House's name for a fellowship) at Christ Church. He never married, though he professes himself not ignorant of love, and he held one living in Leicestershire, and another in Oxford. He lived to do the work that he was born to do, "The Anatomy of Melancholy," first published in 1621, with great success and with a following of later and amplified editions. He escaped the Civil War, which hit no class of men harder than the clergy, by dying in 1640.

Melancholy, we have seen, was then a literary and social fashion. Burton analysed it, reduced it to a vast number of classes or categories, explored all its causes, physical, pathological, amorous, magical (witchcraft), and

"immediately from God"; all its cures, lawful and unlawful—incantation, prayer, diet, exercise; all its moral alleviations; all medical prescriptions—blood-letting, purging, herbs; everything. He made an encyclopædia of melancholy. The reader had but to ask, "What kind of melancholy is mine, amorous, worldly, witch-sent, or religious?" look up the right chapter, and forget his gloom in the huge collection of anecdotes and curious, vast, classic, medical and pleasantly useless learning. "The Anatomy" was what Thackeray called "a bedside book," but for the inconvenience of the edition in folio. The modern reader escapes trouble by using Mr. Shilleto's edition in three handy volumes. To the modern reader trouble is otherwise caused by the abundance of Latin, and by endless names of authors whom all the world has, for the most part not unjustly, forgotten.

Under "Exercise Rectified" will be found matter for Izaak Walton, matter on angling, from which pastime, says Nic. Heinselius, in his Silesiographia, the Silesians are so eccentric as to suck great pleasure. James Dubravius, an author dear to Walton, once met a Moravian nobleman in waders, "booted up to the groins," but this unworthy Earl was not angling, he was netting; or, as he described his pitiful pastime, "hunting carps". In England, says Burton, many gentlemen wade "up to the armholes," but not after salmon, not in Frank's "glittering and resolute streams of Tweed" with salmon rod in hand. They are "hunting carps," a fish that loves the mud, a kind of ground-game. Burton admires "false flies," he does not appear to have used them much. But he is always wise, so much so that he steals the contemplative man's consolation (when his creel is empty) *without acknowledgment*, from the charming passage in the "treatise pertaining to fish," printed by Wynkyn de Worde in 1496. This treatise influences all angling books, Leonard Mascal's, Walton's, and the rest.

Burton cannot have been a melancholy man; he was too laborious in omnivorous reading, and in writing was so copious and so pleasantly successful. His face, if his portrait at Brasenose be authentic (the ruff seems of an earlier date), is that of a pleasant old humorist. He is charitably disposed towards suicides; we know so little! He leaves them to the measureless mercy of Him who, understanding all, can pardon all. He is a very serious consoler of persons under religious despair; perhaps Cowper studied him unavailingly, Bunyan probably did not try his cures. It is vain, he says, to reason with the insane, the hallucinated, "who hear and see,

many times, devils, bugbears, and Mormeluches, noisome smells, etc.". He has prescribed for these curses when they arise from normal "internal causes". Sapphires, chrysolites, carbuncles may be worn by the afflicted: "Pennyroyal, Rue, Mint, Angelica, Piony" may be exhibited. There is no harm in trying St. John's wort. The physician of the Emperor Augustus relied on betony. Where spirits haunt, fumigations are useful.

A stout Protestant, Burton has no belief in exorcisms, though Presbyterians used them in the eighteenth century. The clerical father of the poet James Thomson tried exorcism on a ghost, but failed, and was slain by a ball of fire, says legend.

> Ye wretched, Hope!
> Ye that are happy, Beware!

ends Burton.

Burton's style is admirable, if we do not weary of very long sentences, weighted with a dozen references to his queer authorities. But the art of skipping can meet the occasion, and Burton can write as tersely as any man when he pleases. If Burton left his rural parish to a curate, he preached well and wisely to the largest of congregations. If he really were, at heart, a melancholy moping man, he found happiness in the long task of his life; the book which teaches the lesson of the Vanity of Melancholy.

Herbert of Cherbury.

Born in 1583, the brother of George Herbert, the poet, Lord Herbert of Cherbury is best remembered for his curious and amusing autobiography (edited and published by Horace Walpole in 1764). Wealthy, beautiful, and, by his own account a desperate swordsman, Herbert was deaf in childhood, spoke late, and then asked his nurse how he had come into this world; for an answer to this problem "I could not imagine," and no wonder. He pursued his reflections on the theme of birth and death in Latin verse' and in prose. His soul, he averred, had developed faculties "almost useless for this life," hope, faith, love, and joy. They must therefore be destined to higher employment upon subjects not transitory, "the perfect, eternal, and infinite". But he was not orthodox, his "De Veritate," and "Religio Laici," both in Latin, are deemed heretical.

He was privately educated till he went to University College, Oxford, where he preferred Greek to Latin composition. While he was a very young undergraduate his father died, and he was married. He was all accomplished; astrology and medicine, many languages and music were mastered by him, with fencing, of course: he dilates on the fencer's need of good feet and eyes, on the "lunge," and on equestrian duels. Having provided himself with a family, Herbert went abroad, distinguished himself at the siege of Juliers under the Prince of Orange, snubbed de Balagny, a great French duellist, behaved like a paladin, and writes of himself like a Bobadil. His triumphs with the sex are equally celebrated, and a husband who deemed himself to be, but was not "injured," lurked, to murder Herbert, in Scotland Yard, not now a favourite ambush for criminals. In the fight that followed of one man against five, Herbert, with a broken sword, fought in a manner to be described only by himself or Alexandre Dumas. If he fought like *le brave Bussy*, he was also favoured by a miracle like Colonel Gardiner, a miracle sanctioning the publication of his book, "De Veritate" (1624).

In 1629 he became a peer of England: in later politics he deserted the cause of Charles I: finding himself at 60 (1643) extremely debilitated, and quite disinclined to draw his sword. He died in 1648: his "History of Henry VIII," much praised by Horace Walpole, was published in the following year. His verses, in which he uses the metre of "In Memoriam," were never so popular as his brother George's, but his autobiography is highly diverting in its exhibition of character.

Browne.

Thomas Browne, best known as Sir Thomas Browne, came of a Cheshire family. He was born in London on 19 October, 1605. Early left fatherless, "he was, according to the common fate of orphans," says Dr. Johnson, "defrauded by one of his guardians," who seems to have lacked opportunity to strip the orphan absolutely bare. Browne was educated at Winchester, went on to Broadgates Hall, Oxford, graduated (1629), travelled in Ireland, took a doctor's degree at Leyden; is said to have practised medicine at Halifax, and about 1637 settled at Norwich for the fifty remaining years of his life.

His earliest and probably his most popular book, the "Religio Medici," appears to have been written about 1635-1637. Several transcripts existed; in 1642 one of them, imperfect enough, was printed without Browne's knowledge and consent, and was criticized by Sir Kenelm Digby and others. Browne therefore issued an authorized edition, and the work was extremely successful both in England and on the Continent.

Naturally this confessor of his private ideas about religion was attacked on all sides, as an atheist, a papist, a deist, by the scribblers of the hostile sects. Browne, in fact, was a Christian who did not, as at that time was especially common, regard hatred of all who differed with him about a surplice or a sermon as a holier thing than the virtue of charity.

In his preface he says that almost every man suffers by the Press, and that he "has lived to behold the highest perversion of that excellent invention," the King defamed, the honour of Parliament impaired, a flood of printed falsehoods submerging everything, and carrying erroneous copies of Browne's private papers into the market. Browne opens his work by declaring that, in spite of his profession (and of the proverb, "one doctor out of three is an atheist"), he is a Christian, and a tolerant Christian. "Holy water and crucifix (dangerous to the common people) deceive not my judgment, nor abuse my devotion at all. ...I should violate my own arm rather than a church; nor willingly deface the name of saint or martyr. At the sight of a cross or crucifix I can dispense with my hat, but scarce with the thought or memory of my Saviour."

At Norwich in the Cathedral the Puritans publicly destroyed and burned all works of art (including the organ), which they were pleased to regard as monuments of idolatry: a bitter sight for Browne. "I have no genius to dispute in religion," says he. As for "sturdy doubts and boisterous objections, wherewith the unhappiness of our knowledge too nearly acquainteth us, more of these no man hath known than myself; which I confess I conquered, not in a martial posture, but on my knees". In that world of frenzied pamphleteers, "hating each other for the love of God," the charm and fragrance of Browne's style, the "*peace! peace!*" which, like Falkland, he "ingeminates," his refined humour, and smiling pitying sympathy, and curiosity about all things knowable, made his book delightful; and delightful to readers tolerant of exquisiteness in manner the "Religio Medici" can never cease to be.

We are astonished, to-day, as much by the things which Browne knows, or believes, as by those which he does not know and does not believe. "I do now know that there are witches" has a surprise in it, but what does he precisely mean by "witches"? "I think at first a great part of philosophy" (science) "was witchcraft." Here he agrees with modern writers who regard magic as an early and uninstructed sort of science. He believes in guardian angels, but his "metaphysics of them are very shallow," and, in modern terms, what he believes in is "the subconscious self". As for hell, "the heart of a man is the place the devils dwell in... Lucifer keeps his court in my breast. Legion is revived in me."

In short this good physician is a mystic: "we must therefore say that there is something in us that is not in the jurisdiction of Morpheus... we are somewhat more than ourselves in our sleep; and the slumbering of the body seems to be but the wakening of the soul!" a very old belief of the Greeks.

In "Pseudodoxia Epidemica," "Vulgar Errors" (1646), Browne's manner somewhat resembles that of Burton, but his medley of strange stories, scientific, pseudo-scientific, or plainly superstitious, is even more entertaining and much more carefully and artfully written than "The Anatomy of Melancholy". He consciously aims at harmony and balance of style, and at selecting the right word (*le mot propre*), while he ranges over all ancient knowledge and modern fable. "Many and false conceptions there are of mandrakes," and Browne thinks but little of them, and less of the false etymologies from which his age had not delivered itself. He is engaged, like the scholar in Lytton's novel "The Caxtons," on a "History of Human Error," and with his humour, sympathy, learning, and irony, he makes a most entertaining book.

His "Urn Burial" with "The Garden of Cyrus" (1658) begins with antiquarianism, and ends with the famous passages on the vanity of desiring "to subsist in lasting monuments". "But Man is a noble animal, splendid in ashes, and pompous in the grave, solemnising nativities and deaths with equal lustre, nor omitting ceremonies of bravery in the infamy" (infimy?) "of his nature." "The Garden of Cyrus" concerning the mystic virtues of the quincunx (like *cinq* in dice) is more fantastic and Pythagorean. The motto for the posthumously published "Christian Morals" might be selected from one line in its counsels,

Yet hold thou unto old Morality.

It wears better than the new article!

To know Browne's works is no small part of a liberal education. He lived in quiet and opulence, "his whole house and garden being a paradise and cabinet of rarities," says Evelyn; he was much occupied in correspondence with the learned and with his eldest son, and with local history, till his death on 19 October, 1682.

Charles II had dubbed him knight at Norwich in 1671. Charles, in Dr. Johnson's phrase, had skill to discover excellence, and virtue to reward it, with such honorary distinctions, at least, as cost him nothing.

MILTON.

The greater part of Milton's prose works is so deeply concerned with politics, mainly religious or concerned with Church government, that it cannot easily be criticized without controversial interruptions, here out of place. His earliest important piece (1641) treats of the Reformation in England. It had never come up to Strafford's standard, *Thorough*, never shaken off "the rags of Rome"—that is Milton's theme. Nor, in Scotland, had reformation really been more successful, for the preachers claimed at least all the powers of the priests over the liberties of the subject.

Milton at once attacks that which, to Laud, was part of "the beauty of Holiness," Jewish and Catholic survivals of "fantastic dresses, palls and mitres, gold and gewgaws fetched from Aaron's old wardrobe". "The piebald frippery and ostentation of ceremonies" the Church styled "decency"; Henry VIII "stuck where he did". Under Edward VI, if his sister Mary were not to be persecuted most righteously, who were the slaves that interfered to secure for her liberty of conscience? Who but Bishops! Bishops were therefore "followers of this world," they always were and always will be. You reply that they, Cranmer and Latimer, were also martyrs? Well, says Milton, "What then?" A man may "give his body to the burning and yet not have charity". The Bishops had not charity, clearly, or they would have aided in depriving the Princess of freedom of conscience.

Elizabeth, aided by Bishops, persecuted Puritans, but then Puritans *have* a right to freedom of conscience, for themselves, and a right to prevent other people from exercising the same privilege. If there are to be Bishops they must be of popular election, but when preachers with powers in some respects greater were elected by the people in Scotland, Milton did not approve of them either.

His next important tract, The Apology for Smectymnuus (five preachers, Marshal, Calamy, Young, Newcomen and Spurstow, who had attacked Episcopacy), is of 1642. Bishop Hall, who, in youth, had boasted that he was the first English satirist, had replied to the Five in his Defence of the Remonstrance; Milton had answered; Hall in his turn published "A Modest Confutation," and Milton's Apology for Smectymnuus ensued. The adversary had made scurrilous remarks, had attacked Milton's manners and morals, quite causelessly, in the controversial fashion of the age. Milton replied that his adversary was a "rude scavenger," and then gave that account of his own way of life in youth which lends its value to this passage in the discussion. He had never haunted "bordelloes," houses of ill-fame; he calls the women who keep them "prelatesses". A Bishop, to Milton, is a male of the same species. As for the theatre he had seen his fellow-students act at college, "prostituting the shame of that ministry, which either they had, or were nigh having, to the eyes of courtiers and court ladies...." He had always, he declares, been a remarkably pure young man; hence his life-long love of romances of chivalry, where every knight is bound by oath to defend, with his life if need be, the chastity of ladies. "The first and chiefest office of love begins and ends in the soul," he says nobly.

We need not dwell on his "Doctrine and Discipline of Divorce," written, it seems, a few weeks after his hapless marriage in 1643. If all men were Miltons and all women worthy of them, his doctrine of freedom of divorce would not have thorny consequences.

His "Tenure of Kings and Magistrates" was published in February, 1649; Charles I had been slain on 30 January of that year. It is desirable, in a history of Literature, to "keep King Charles's head out of the Memorial".

In the "Areopagitica" (1644) Milton, defending freedom of printing against these friends of liberty, the then dominant Presbyterians, in many passages

gives us the prose of a great poet. Here is a passage which must have irritated the Puritans who were not so after the manner of Milton.

"If we think to regulate printing, thereby to rectify manners, we must rectify our recreations and pastimes, all that is delightful to man. No music must be heard, no song be set or sung, but what is grave and Doric. There must be licensing dancers, that no gesture, motion, or deportment be taught our youth but what by their allowance shall be thought honest: for such Plato was provided of. It will ask more than the work of twenty licensers to examine all the lutes, and violins, and the guitars in every house; they must not be suffered to prattle as they do, but must be licensed what they may say. And who shall silence all the airs and madrigals, that whisper softness in chambers? The windows also, and the balconies must be thought on; there are shrewd books, with dangerous frontispieces, set to sale; who shall prohibit them? shall twenty licensers? The villages also must have their visitors to inquire what lectures the bagpipe and the rebeck reads, even to the ballatry, and the gamut of every municipal fiddler, for these are the countryman's Arcadias and his Monte Mayors." The famous sentence "I cannot praise a fugitive and cloistered virtue" is familiar to all memories, but such things are not common in his prose: the search for the limbs of slain and mutilated Truth compared to the search for the fragments of "the good Osiris" by Isis, might not have been written had Milton remembered the details of that savage fable, common to ancient Egypt and the Australian Arunta. His cause has triumphed, as triumph it must, in a world where no all-wise and infallible Licenser of Books can be found.

"The defence of the people of England" in answer to Salmasius's "Defence of the King," had not, perhaps, the right client. It was not the People of England who slew the King. Milton tells his own story of that unhappy reign (in "Eikonoklastes," his reply to "Eikon Basilike," attributed to Charles, really, as is believed, by Gauden) it may be read with more profit in the history of Mr. S. R. Gardiner. Milton declares the charge against the Scots of "selling their king" to be "a foul infamy and dishonour". The Scots, every soul of them who had a touch of chivalry, took up the sword to cleanse the blot, died on the field, or on the scaffold, or were sold as slaves, or were starved to death in Durham Cathedral. There are, in short there could not but be, noble and harmonious and stirring passages in Milton's prose; but poetry was his native language, and his themes were such as to

place sobriety of view, and delicate discrimination of good and evil almost beyond his power. For, as Argyll said, of himself, he was "a distraught man in distraught times". Otherwise Milton, the proudest of men, would not have answered railing with railing.

JEREMY TAYLOR.

Among the pulpit orators of the seventeenth century, none has left a name more fragrant than Jeremy Taylor. His devotional works, such as "Holy Living," and still more "Holy Dying," are still in the hands of the devout. But it is not easy to suppose that many readers who are not profound students of style in prose often read the many volumes of sermons, works of casuistry, and works of controversy which Jeremy has left. He is not of our world or way of thinking; he dwells, for example, on "special" and easily distinguishable "providences". Now when a tempest flooded a river, so that Montrose's men could not cross and despoil the lands of a contemporary of Jeremy's, Brodie of Brodie, that devout Covenanter confided to his journal the occurrence of this "special providence". But when the river fell, and Montrose crossed and drove the kye, Brodie remarks in his journal that we ought not to interpret the Divine Will, for we may be mistaken. Jeremy insists on his own interpretations. "From Adam to the Flood, by the patriarchs were eleven generations; but by Cain's line there were but eight, so that Cain's posterity were longer lived: *because* God, intending to bring the flood upon the world, took delight to rescue his elect from the dangers of the present impurity and the future deluge." In the same way Abraham lived five years less than his son Isaac, and Jeremy knows why. "The Jewish doctors" inform him that the idea was to prevent Abraham from seeing "the iniquity of his grandchild, Esau". Later, speaking of other times and lands, Jeremy says that "such fancies do seldom serve either the ends of truth or charity,"—for which he has the highest Authority in the Gospel.

We are no longer apt to reason as Taylor does about the Patriarchs, or on hundreds of other points, and this cannot but diminish our pleasure in reading his books. But he pleases us, exactly as Burton does in "The Anatomy of Melancholy," by illustrations drawn from his amazing knowledge of books. Thus, immediately after the passage last cited, he says "Pierre Cauchon died under the barber's hand: there wanted not some who

said it was a judgement upon him for condemning to the fire the famous Pucelle of France, who prophesied the expulsion of the English out of the kingdom. They that thought this believed her to be a prophetess" (as she certainly was), "but others that thought her a witch, were willing to find out another conjecture for the sudden death of the gentleman." "The sudden death of the gentleman" is a courteous phrase to apply to Cauchon; and very unexpected in "The History of the Life and Death of the Holy Jesus". But whence did Jeremy get his story of Cauchon? From the Latin hexameters of Valerandus, a book so entirely out of the common way that perhaps not three persons in the England of to-day have read it.

So our author runs on, telling of "that famous person and of excellent learning, Giacchettus of Geneva," whose morals were not Genevan, while his death was, in an extreme degree, remarkable. Jeremy more than once insists that many thousand men were slain, in one night, in the Assyrian camp, for committing the offence of that famous person, Giacchettus. Nobody has ever found out his authority for his statement; he may have learned it "from the Jewish doctors". In any case, however entertaining and instructive his divine works may be, he often raises a smile which he never dreamed of provoking. Other times, other tastes!

Jeremy Taylor was born under James VI and I, was the son of a barber in Cambridge, and was baptized on 15 August, 1613. Unless he was christened two years after his birth, it is not plain how he could have been in his fifteenth year when (August, 1626) he was admitted to Caius College as a sizar (at Oxford, "servitor"); Jeremy's eloquence attracted the notice of Archbishop Laud, who had him made a Fellow of All Souls, Oxford (1636). At Oxford, a Cavalier University, Jeremy studied casuistry, the topic of his large book "Ductor Dubitantium," a Guide to the Doubting. In 1638, Jeremy obtained the cure of souls at Uppingham, and in the same year preached, in the University pulpit, a Guy Fawkes Day sermon. In 1639 he married. In 1640, Laud was impeached of treason; in 1642, as chaplain, Jeremy served under the standard of King Charles. Parliament abolished Bishops; Jeremy defended Episcopacy ("Of the Sacred Order of Episcopacy"). In February, 1645, he was captured in a Royalist defeat, but was protected by Lord Carbery, and became his private chaplain at Golden Grove in Carmarthenshire, where he was safe from the persecution of the friends of freedom of conscience that called themselves "the godly". At Golden

Grove, though far from what had been his library, he wrote "An Apology for Liturgy" (abolished by Parliament in 1645). In 1647 appeared his "Liberty of Prophesying," a plea for toleration. Such pleas always came from the religious party which was being persecuted, though, even when persecuted, the Covenanters always denounced "the vomit of toleration," their aim being, in power or out of power, to force all mankind to be presbyterian covenanters. The frenzy of armed religious fanatics made Taylor, like Falkland, as described by Clarendon, "ingeminate peace! peace!" But he himself was to be in prisons often, under the persecution of the Commonwealth, and when he unhappily became, under the Restoration, Bishop of Dromore in a covenanting part of Ireland, he replaced the Presbyterian ministers by Anglican clergymen.

Taylor's plea for toleration was an offence to all parties. These years of the King's disasters and death must have been bitterness to Taylor.

He now composed his work "The Great Exemplar," a Life of Christ, filled with persuasions to godliness, with reflections far fetched but charmingly phrased, and he did not disdain legends destitute of scriptural authority. "In the country of Thebais, whither they first arrived, the child Jesus being by design or providence carried into a temple, all the statues of the Idol gods fell down, like Dagon at the presence of the Ark, and suffered their timely and just dissolution and dishonour." The book makes no attempt at criticism, and is of an immense length: in those days "a great book" was not deemed "a great evil".

He also wrote his manual of devotion, "Holy Living" (1650), followed in 1651 by the more charming "Holy Dying". Sermons for each week in the year, sermons preached at Golden Grove, appeared in 1653. In 1655, "Unum Necessarium," a treatise on repentance, was thought less than orthodox, and gave displeasure to the retired bishop to whom it was, without his permission, dedicated. Jeremy had his doubts as to whether Man, after the Fall, was so abjectly and utterly corrupt a creature as other divines held him to be. From 1655 onwards he suffered much, losing his refuge at Golden Grove, reduced to extreme poverty, and now and again imprisoned. In 1657 he lost two young sons. He wrote a work on Friendship for a very friendly lady, Katherine Philips, a poetess, called "The Matchless Orinda"; in this he quoted the ancients freely. Later, unfortunately, he was employed in Ireland as chaplain to Lord Conway at Portmore, and was

much disturbed by the Presbyterian preachers. Then came the Restoration (29 May, 1660), and by 6 August, Taylor was sent to the Irish bishopric of Down and Connor, and Dromore, where he was so troubled by the Presbyterians that he asked the Duke of Ormonde to let him withdraw to "a parsonage in Munster"; or to reorganize Trinity College, Dublin. But, after ejecting a number of the Presbyterian ministers, he died in September, 1667, worn out, it may be, by the civil and religious ferocities of his time.

Taylor's writings are by no means all of them very copiously decorated with ornaments of style, and musical with organ tones of language. Even when highly decorated, and when the music of his periods is prolonged, his sentences are lucid. "So have I seen" (thus he introduces his similes), "a rose newly springing from the clefts of its hood, at first it was fair as the morning, and full with the dew of heaven, as a lamb's fleece; but when a ruder breath had forced open its virgin modesty, and dismantled its too youthful and unripe retirements, it began to put on darkness, and to decline to softness and the symptoms of a sickly age; it bowed the head and broke its stalk; and at night, having lost some of its leaves and all its beauty, it fell into the portion of weeds and outworn faces." It is not Herrick's and Ronsard's lesson of the roses; with Taylor it is a persuasion to piety, nor is any preacher more sweetly persuasive. But Jeremy, though he wrote a work to persuade the Irish Catholics of the errors of Rome, did not alter their doctrines, and, as to them that are "the godly party," "the good people of God," he speaks his mind thus: "They may disturb kingdoms, and break the peace of a well-ordered Church, and rise up against their fathers, and be cruel to their brethren, and stir up the people to sedition; and all this with a cold stomach and a hot liver, with a hard heart and a tender conscience, with humble carriage and a proud spirit."

Preaching to "the little but excellent University of Dublin," Taylor laid before them every way by which men, since the Reformation, had sought religious peace and had failed to find it. The last way was toleration, "a way of peace rather than of truth". "If we cannot have both, for heaven's sake give us peace," was the view of some good men, but, as each sect thought that it possessed truth, each, as it had the opportunity, tried to make peace by forcing the others into conformity. The godly "are not content that you *permit* them; for they will not permit you, but rule over your faith, and say that their way is not only true, but necessary". Taylor gave his own counsel

thus, "the way to judge of religion is by doing our duty; and theology is rather a Divine life than a Divine knowledge.... Let your adversaries have no evil thing to say of you, and then you will best silence them...." Leighton tried this method in Scotland, Taylor in Ireland, but who can number "all the horrid things they said" about these prelates in both countries!

Other Anglican divines can scarcely be treated within our space, of these Robert South (born at Hackney, 1634, and educated at Westminster and Christ Church) lived till 1716. He was in controversies often, and a rather tart critic of both Fuller and Jeremy Taylor; he had much force and not a little wit. Chillingworth, Hales, and others, are to us little more than shadows of great names, with Isaac Barrow, equally great in Greek and mathematics, and a preacher whom Charles II could hear with pleasure. Richard Baxter (1615-1691), whose conscience after the Restoration caused him to throw in his lot with the Nonconformists, by his "Saints' Everlasting Rest" (1650) won and deserved popularity; he shared with Glanvill and Henry More the love of a good ghost story, and has left on record an excellent death-wraith. Ralph Cudworth (1617-1688) and Henry More (1614-1687), in verse and prose a mystic and a Platonist or Neo-platonist, are still dear to a fit though limited audience.

Thomas Fuller.

Thomas Fuller, born (1608) like Dryden, later, at the village of Aldwinkle, is a writer of the same group as Jeremy Taylor and Sir Thomas Browne: that is, his manner is quaint and his matter is full of learning from all quarters. Though a Royalist and in orders, during the Civil War, he was not an extremist; and his humour and love of a jest qualified him for the post of a chaplain in a Cavalier army.

No great harm befell him when the Royal cause was ruined, but he died (1661) too soon after the Restoration to be rewarded or disappointed. His "Holy and Profane States" (1642) is a set of sketches of historic characters; most readable, especially in the first edition, with the curious engravings. Despite the vivacity of Fuller's most popular work, he is but little read, in face of the hearty commendations of Charles Lamb, a critic who imparted his own merits to all his favourites. Fuller never could resist a joke, a humorous parallel or allusion; and in works on serious subjects, "The

Worthies of England," and "Church History," his severe contemporaries detected more than "a little judicious levity". Fuller loved antiquarian details and historical study, but history to history as Amurath to Amurath succeeds, and Fuller is read, when he is read, for his quaintnesses and for the humour that runs away with him.

Hobbes.

It is impossible, within our space, to give an adequate account of the life and works of Thomas Hobbes. Born in April, 1588, when his mother's fear of the Spanish Armada is said to have hastened his appearance in this world, Hobbes lived into the reign of terror of the Titus Oates's Plot, in 1679. He was born at Malmesbury, the son of an unlettered clergyman, and, about 1603, went to Magdalen Hall, Oxford, where he liked neither the puritanism of the seniors, nor the roistering ways of the juniors. He took no interest in logic and philosophy as then taught in Oxford, and is said to have never seen an Euclid till he was middle-aged. It might have been better for him had he never seen Euclid at all. Taking his degree in 1608, Hobbes became tutor in the family of the Earls of Devonshire (Cavendish), and, with a few interruptions, was their obliged friend till he died at Hardwick Hall, built by the famous "Bess of Hardwick," the she-jailer of Mary Queen of Scots.

Hobbes travelled with his pupil, making the acquaintance of foreign men of science. In England, in 1629, a man of 40, Hobbes published his first book, a translation of the great Athenian historian, Thucydides. The English is excellent, but the translation is extremely free, and of no use to the reader who desires a "crib," or literal version. The ideas of Thucydides about the qualities of a democracy, as in Athens, were congenial to Hobbes, while the task of rendering into idiomatic English a writer so condensed as Thucydides, combined with study of the other classics, and practice in Latin prose composition, made up for the indolence of his youth. In 1631 he became tutor to the new young Earl of Devonshire, and gave him an admirable education, including law, astronomy, logic, rhetoric and the "opinions of a good Christian".

In 1634 he went to Paris, Florence, and Rome with his pupil, returning to England in 1637. He now, at 55, began to reckon himself as a philosopher

in a kind of metaphysics, and physics about which he did not know much. An unfortunate accident had led him to read "Euclid," Book I, proposition 47. "Begad," said Hobbes, "this is impossible!" He pursued his studies, found out that it was possible, and became convinced that it is also possible to square the circle. Easy as it seems, this feat has never been accomplished with pedantic accuracy, and Hobbes, from about 60 to 80, was engaged in controversy on the subject.

Oxford mathematicians, annoyed by his attacks on the University, replied with scientific precision, and such banter as mathematicians enjoy when they would be merry among themselves. In this long war, Hobbes was mercilessly handled, partly by way of discrediting his ideas in politics and religion. He had laid out for himself a system of the Universe, "Of the Body," "Of the Man," "Of the Citizen". In the political storm and stress of the Great Rebellion he wrote, in Latin, his book of "The Citizen," "De Cive," much of which he had already done, with other such work, in English.

These papers had been circulated; Hobbes thought himself in danger—it was "time for him to go," and in 1640 he fled to Paris. He hated Puritans without loving Bishops. In 1642 he published "De Cive"; he then turned to philosophy, and next worked at his great work on the relations of rulers and ruled, and on religion, called "Leviathan". In 1646-1647 he tutored Charles, Prince of Wales, in Jersey, and Charles always liked him as a witty companion.

In 1647, believing himself to be on the point of death, he behaved in an orthodox manner. To the witness, Dr. Cosin, later Bishop of Durham, he always referred when his orthodoxy was doubted. When Charles I had been slain, in 1649, Hobbes, who in 1650 had published his "Human Nature," the briefest Statement of his general view of mankind, thought of returning home, for now a Government, that of Cromwell, was firmly seated, and Hobbes's main political principle was "settled government".

By 1651 he had "Leviathan" fairly written out as a present for Charles II in Paris. But the King's advisers thought it a most unholy book (not that Charles himself cared, or had a bad opinion of Hobbes); he was rebuffed; he was afraid of being murdered for his religion (which, says De Quincey, "is a

high joke; Tom Hobbes afraid of suffering for his religion!") and he fled back to England.

Hobbes, by 1655, had published his "De Corpore," and with that and "Leviathan," his most popular work, his philosophy of the Universe was before the public. He gives his natural history of religion, as (saving Christianity), the result of curiosity about First Causes, belief in ghosts (of which he is said to have been afraid), of superstitions about luck, and of priestly imposture designed to keep men in order. In politics he believes in an imaginary state of Nature, or anarchy, from which men, who are naturally equals, sought shelter in a contract, never to be broken, with a sovereign power, in fact with the State, though Hobbes prefers a single despot. The sovereign is supreme in religion as well as in secular matters, and Hobbes hates nothing more than the so-called "Kingdom of Christ" of the Presbyterian preachers, which really, he says, means their own domination. Hobbes's general doctrine, with its reservations and subterfuges, cannot be discussed here: it made enemies for him in every camp, religious and political, and now his unlucky mathematics were fallen upon, while he had an endless controversy with Bishop Bramhall on the Freedom of the Will.

At the Restoration Charles II renewed his friendly intercourse with his old tutor, granting, him a pension, when Hobbes could get it paid. In 1666 he was threatened with a persecution for heresy, and went to church, but did not wait for the sermon.

His "Behemoth," a history of the Civil War, was suppressed by the King, and was posthumously published. He translated the "Iliad" and the "Odyssey" into very poor verse; he wrote his autobiography in Latin verse, and was still writing in 1679 when he died on 4 December.

The style of Hobbes is lucid and succinct, without added ornaments. He had a clear idea of what he wanted to say, though inconsistencies appear as his mood varied, or as his argument led him into difficult places. His ideas provoked many replies which pervade English literature for long after his death; but such exercises in psychology and metaphysics belong rather to the history of philosophy than of literature. The doctrine of Hobbes is not optimistic. "When all the world is overcharged with inhabitants, then the last remedy of all is War, which provideth for every man, by victory or

death." The idea is that expressed in a Greek poem "the Cypria," of about 750 B.C. Hobbes thought himself an authority on Epic poetry, among other things, and especially commended, in Davenant's "Gondibert," the really pleasing passage which describes the birth of love in the heart of Bertha. Hobbes expanded his ideas about the Epic in his translation of Homer. We do not know what he thought of "Paradise Lost".

Izaak Walton.

Born near Stafford in 1593, Izaak Walton went to London, lived in Fleet Street, two doors west of Chancery Lane, and was in business as an ironmonger. Donne the poet was then vicar of the neighbouring church of St. Dunstan's; Walton and he became friends: Walton was also intimate with Hales of Eton, Sir Henry Wotton, Bishop King, and Ben Jonson. In 1640 Walton's brief life of Donne, already quoted, was published. In 1651 Walton had the dangerous task of carrying secretly to a Royalist in London the smaller George jewel of Charles II, after the King's crushing defeat at Worcester, on 3 September. A Royalist and a sound Churchman (his wives were of the families of Cranmer and Ken), Walton's natural cheerfulness, his sincere religion, and his habit of angling "with N. and R. Roe," were needed to keep him from melancholy in the evil days of 1642-1660. But he, for a writer of his age, is strangely free from the melancholy then in fashion, and his "Compleat Angler," first published in 1653, might have been composed in days of idyllic peace. This famous work is too well known to need description or praise. The natural history is as fantastic as that of Euphues, the instructions on angling come from a mere fisher with bait, but the beauty of the style, the sweetness of the thought, keep the book fresh as with lavender and rosemary. To later editions Charles Cotton and Colonel Venables added practical instruction on fly fishing, up stream, in clear water like Cotton's own Dove in Derbyshire. The brief biographies by Walton of Donne, Wotton, Herbert, Hooker, and Sanderson are little masterpieces in their manner.

Walton lived in old age at Farnham with Bishop Morley and then at Winchester where he doubtless fished with worm in the pellucid streams of the Itchen. Walton's connexion with a pastoral poem "Thealma and Clearchus," is of doubtful nature. Was he author, or did he edit the work of

Chalkhill? He died at the age of 90, and is buried in Winchester Cathedral. Byron is almost the only critic who has thrown a stone at the kind memory of Izaak Walton, to which Wordsworth devoted a sonnet.

John Bunyan.

The two writers of this period whose works now come most closely home "to men's bosoms and business" are John Bunyan and Izaak Walton. Copies of the little plain volumes clad in sheepskin which they published at a shilling or eighteen-pence, fetch spurns like £1000, more or less, when they come into the market. The masterpieces of both are constantly being republished, and though perhaps few people have a fairly good knowledge of the contents of "The Pilgrim's Progress," or "The Compleat Angler," yet most people have had these works in their hands.

The popularity of Bunyan, the non-resisting ever-preaching Dissenter; and of Walton, the angling Churchman, rests to a great extent on their characters. Differing as they did about the right of Bishops to exist, and about Justification by Faith, could the two men have met, and kept off these topics, they would "have had good talk". Each had abundant humour, each was a keen observer of Nature and of human nature, each was a lover of peace, each had a modest little fount of poetry within him. Of each it may be said, as of Scott, "he is such a friendly writer," and each is plain and intelligible, Bunyan had no artifices of style, though Walton sometimes, by study, is able to rival the harmonies of Sip Thomas Browne.

Bunyan, who came of a very old landed family which had steadily lost all its lands to the last acre, was born in a cottage at Elstow, near Bedford, in 1628. He was taught reading and writing; and pursued his father's trade—that recommended by Mr. Dick for David Copperfield,—he was a brasier, or tinker, but not a wandering tinker. In early youth he was a leader in sports and games; you would have said "he wasna the stuff they made Whigs o'". Far from that, a native genius for expression first declared itself in his being "the ungodliest fellow for swearing"—which was not recognized as a literary exercise. He was under arms, like other lads of his age, but we have no reason to suppose that he was ever under fire, and his militia (Parliamentary, probably) was soon disbanded.

In his "Grace Abounding for the Chief of Sinners" (1666) he writes his religious autobiography; a work composed in prison, to which he was consigned because he would not cease to be instant in preaching. "The Philistines understand me not," he says in his Preface. He writes for lowly devotees, "Have you forgot the Close, the Milk House, the Stable, the Barn, and the like where God did visit your souls,"—with "terrors of conscience and fears of Death and Hell?" Even in his joyous youth, Bunyan had dreamed of "devils and wicked spirits," which probably did not trouble Shakespeare or Walton. At 9 years old he suffered from the nightmares that haunted R. L. Stevenson. His book is the most vivid description possible of the life of an imaginative lad, standing between gross pleasures and terrors of hell. A Voice and an Appearance came to him while playing at a kind of rudimentary cricket: he went on playing, but fell into religious hypochondria. The vividness of his imagination conjured up such scenery as he uses in his great Allegory: he beheld comforting words "that seemed to be writ in *great* letters," and so at last found consolation in faith.

Thus, and in his conflicts against the magistrates, he acted and suffered, in his youth, all the adventures of his own Christian and Faithful, in "The Pilgrim's Progress" (published in 1678). He left an unfading picture of some elements in English society: seventy years later he might have been a Fielding. "He was a born novelist," it has been said: but the novels of his day were the interminable romances of the French type of Scudéry. His "Grace Abounding" is as brilliant in its way as the "Confessions of Saint Augustine". His secular characters in "The Pilgrim's Progress" are as good, by way of sketches, as are the finished portraits in "Tom Jones".

In 1680 he published "The Life and Death of Mr. Badman"; in which Mr. Wiseman gives convincing reasons for his opinion "that Mr. Badman has gone to Hell". Mr. Badman, in life's gay morn, like St. Augustine, had "great pleasure in robbing orchards and gardens". "The beginning of the Lord's Day was, to Mr. Badman, as if he was going to prison." As for his eloquence he was "a *Damme* Blade". In literature his taste was all for "beastly Romances". In church he either slept or flirted, like Mr. Pepys. In the long run, Mr. Badman departed from his prodigal life, "quietly, peaceably, and like a lamb". It cannot be said of Mr. Badman that he had no redeeming vices; he was ill-tempered and envious; he occasionally went on the High Toby lay, and his masterpiece was a fraudulent bankruptcy. Mr.

Badman is amusing, but his history, interwoven with many strong and simple anecdotes of other ruffians, cannot be compared in merit with "The Pilgrim's Progress," where the characters are so many and various; the imagination so vivid, many passages so rich in poetic qualities, and the language so simple. It is a great prose epic, a great novel of the road; and beside it "The Holy War" is tame and indistinct.

Bunyan wrote many works, now forgotten, on religious themes, and in controversial style his weapon was the cudgel. In his later days he was the most popular of Dissenting preachers. He died just before "King James was walked out of his kingdom," in 1688. If critics sneered at Bunyan throughout the nineteenth century, Dr. Johnson, at least, heartily appreciated the genius of the Non-conformist brasier.

With Bunyan-the student of the religious ferment of England in his age may well read the "Journal" of the founder of the Society of Friends, Quakers, George Fox (1624-1691). Like Bunyan, Fox was an untrained thinker and author; like Bunyan he was persecuted: he had not the genius, but he had the art of Bunyan in drawing "with his eye on the object".

Clarendon.

Edward Hyde, later Earl of Clarendon (1609-1674) of a Cheshire family, was educated at Magdalen Hall, in Oxford, and proceeded to the Middle Temple. He inherited his family's property, was distinguished for his legal knowledge, sat in Parliament when the strife between the King and the Parliament began, and took part in preparing the indictment against the great Strafford. None the less, when a general attack was made on the order of Bishops, he came over to the King's party, in 1641; and in 1646 accompanied the young Prince of Wales in his flights and wanderings, in March, to the Scilly Isles (where he began his History), and presently to Jersey. He remained with Charles II after the death of Charles I, and, if he and Montrose had been heard, the young King would never have disgraced himself by signing the Covenant; and consequently his Cause would never have been defeated at Dunbar, nor his very life imperilled after Worcester fight.

Clarendon, seven years after the Restoration, was banished by the influence of faction, as Thucydides was exiled at an early period of the war which he

chronicles. It is not conceivable that histories written in such circumstances should be free from partisanship and bias: in fact no historians are exempt from prejudice.

Clarendon's history was, in the making, somewhat of a patchwork. What he wrote far away from books and papers, in 1646-1648, depends much on his memory: the book improves when he obtains contemporary narratives and letters. In exile, in 1668-1670 he wrote a Life of himself, which he later interwove with his "History of the Rebellion". Clarendon's heirs did not permit the publication of his History till 1704, from regard to the feelings of the descendants of the King's opponents. The book, in one respect, resembles the History of the Peloponnesian War by Thucydides. Much of it was written during the actual course of the events by one who bore a great part in them.

Whether in favour or in exile, Clarendon was too loyal to say all that he knew and thought about Charles I and Charles II. But when we look at his pages "touching the Scottish Canons," which preceded the despotic introduction of the Liturgy, the cause of "the Bishops' wars" (1639), we perceive, the fairness of Clarendon. He makes it perfectly clear that these Canons could only be accepted by a people inclined tamely to endure the worst excesses of tyranny. But, on Scottish affairs, Clarendon is not always trustworthy; for example he dislocates the dates as to the General Assembly of 1638, permitted (though he does not say so) by the King, and the subscribing of the Covenant, which he places *after* the Assembly. Mr. Gardiner, a fair historian, speaks of Clarendon's "usual habit of blundering". In his remarks on the Catholics, too, under Charles I, Clarendon can scarcely be acquitted of unfairness; considering how bitterly, in Scotland at least, they were persecuted under Charles I, and how loyally they stood by him.

However, a historical examination of Clarendon's great work is not here in place. The occasional defect of his style is the enormous bulk of some of his sentences. Two occupy two large pages and each contains some 400 words. Here are structureless agglutinations of parentheses: with the promising word "lastly" left stranded far from the conclusion. But such examples are not very common, and Clarendon describes action and intrigue with lucidity, and especially excels in his set pieces, delineations of characters, for example of Cromwell[1] and Argyll. His "characters" may not be exact,

of course, but his knowledge of secret motives was extensive, and such knowledge, if not always accurate, is ever entertaining. All histories, as sources of knowledge, are sure to be superseded by the discoverer of new information. But the History of Clarendon can never cease to be of the highest interest, moral, political, and personal. He possessed, in his own words, "the genius, spirit, and soul of an historian," combined with knowledge of great affairs, important personages, and intrigues of Court.

Among writers of prose of the age it would be ungrateful not to mention an author so familiar and readable as the gossiping James Howell (1594-1666) of the "Epistolæ Ho-Elianæ," a favourite bedside book of Thackeray. Howell was imprisoned by the Puritans, and wrote essays in form of letters which are full of curious anecdotes and reminiscences of travel.

Much later comes the prince of gossips, Mr. Samuel Pepys (1633-1703), whose Diary in shorthand, written for his personal diversion, can never cease to divert, and, in a way, as a picture of a strange age and a strange character, to instruct. Each new dip into Mr. Pepys's manuscript, by each bolder editor, makes us like him less from the extended candour of his unparalleled confessions, which is a pity.

John Evelyn (1620-1706) depicts the same period as Pepys, as it was seen by a gentleman of stainless honour, unblemished virtue, and great curiosity in the arts, and in the nascent science. His Diary is much more entertaining than his memoir of the Lady in the "Comus" of the merry Monarch's Court, the lovely and religious Mistress Margaret Godolphin (*née* Blague), to whom Evelyn was virtuously devoted.

Roger North (1653-1733), is admirably readable, and very modern in the tone of his satire of the godly Whigs, in the "Examen,"—when he drops into slang it is with the careless grace of Thackeray. His "Lives of the Norths," himself and his brothers, is most interesting.

[1] To him he attributes a coarse pun which might seem more familiar in the mouth of James I.

CHAPTER XXIV.

CAROLINE POETS.

It is difficult, or even impossible, to mark out the Caroline from the Jacobean poets, who, again, overlap with the Elizabethan poets. The chief schools of the Caroline poets were (1) the writers occupied mainly with holy things, such as Crashaw, Herbert, and Vaughan. Next (2) come the crowd of "gentlemen who wrote with ease," now and then triumphantly well, but often loosely and carelessly, such are Lovelace, Carew, Suckling, and minor names. Herrick stands by himself as a consummate lyrist, but his mood is often, though he was a parish priest, that of the gay cavalier. Marvell had many facets, and Milton, of course, is apart, a world of poetry in himself.

Crashaw.

Richard Crashaw, the son of a controversial Protestant preacher, was born in London, early in the second ten years of the seventeenth century. He went to the Charterhouse School and to Peterhouse in Cambridge, where he took his Master's degree in 1638. His earlier verses were Latin exercises. He was expelled from his Fellowship at Cambridge because he would, not take the Solemn League and Covenant, in 1644: that odd document was forced on men under "the new liberty". He had written a hymn to St. Theresa while still a Protestant; when he retired to France he became a Catholic. In 1646 the poet Cowley, his friend, found him in great poverty, and induced the almost equally poor exiled Queen of England to use her influence in his favour. He obtained a canonry at Loretto, where he died in 1649. His poems, sacred and secular, "Steps to the Temple," were published in 1646; another edition, with an interesting preface concerning his saintly life at Cambridge, is of 1648-1649.

Pope, at the age of 22, criticized Crashaw with much superiority; "he writ like a gentleman" (that is, like an amateur), not "to establish a reputation". What Pope did in his anxiety to establish a reputation was not done "like a gentleman". "Nothing regular or just can be expected from him," "no man can be a poet who writes for diversion only". Crashaw's pious outpourings were scarcely "writ for diversion," but things "just and regular" are not his chief care. A fiery vehemence, an overloaded ornament are his quality and his defect. For example in "The Weeper" (St. Mary Magdalen) he writes:—

> Not in the Evening's eyes
> When they red with weeping are
> For the Sun that dies,
> Sits Sorrow with a face so fair,
> Nowhere but here did ever meet
> Sweetness so sad, sadness so sweet.

Here he has his style in hand. But when he calls the Magdalen's tears

> Ye simpering sons of those fair eyes

he has certainly found the most inappropriate epithet.

Many of his sacred poems are a kind of brief religious epigrams in four lines. His "Hymn of the Nativity" is a "*fade*" thing, compared with Milton's. In longer poems he uses rhymed decasyllabic couplets with some skill: "On a Prayer Book Sent to Mrs. M." is a good ode in the irregular verse and conceited manner of the time, but to speak of what Carew does speak of as Mrs. M.'s "heavenly armful" is to remind us of a letter of Robert Burns on a purely secular subject. Save for the Hymn to St. Theresa, with "That not Impossible She," "The Flaming Heart," and some pretty translations, Crashaw, like all the Cavalier poets except Carew, is usually on a low poetic level. But in the pieces mentioned, and above all towards the close of "The Flaming Heart,"

> Singing still he soars and soaring ever singeth.

HERBERT.

George Herbert, author of "The Temple," was born on 13 April, 1593; was of noble descent, and a younger brother of Lord Herbert of Cherbury. From

his fifth to his twelfth year George probably lived at Oxford with his mother. He then went to Westminster School; thence to Trinity College, Cambridge (1609), where he obtained a Fellowship (1616) and early in 1619 was chosen Public Orator. In this capacity he wrote the letters of the University to kings, princes, and the great in general who visited it. He became a friend of Bacon and of Bishop Andrewes, Ludovick, Duke of Lennox, and James, Marquis of Hamilton. As a schoolboy he had written Latin epigrams against the Hildebrand of Scottish Presbyterianism, the learned and truculent Andrew Melville, for whose tyranny in Scotland James VI and I took an unconstitutional revenge when safe on the throne of England. In a war of Latin verse Andrew was very capable of holding his own.

Herbert, while at Cambridge, was a somewhat assiduous courtier of "gentle King Jamie," though we do not know that he gratified the monarch by adopting the Scottish and continental pronunciation of Latin and Greek. The death of James probably disappointed any hopes he may have had of State employment.

In 1627 he resigned his oratorship, and according to Izaak Walton retired to a country place in Kent where he meditated on the choice of a secular or saintly life. He preferred the saintly, took holy orders, lost his beloved mother in 1627, married Jane Danvers in 1629, and was presented to the living of Bemerton, between Wilton and Salisbury, in the next year. He died in 1633, and Walton must be consulted for "an almost incredible story of the great sanctity of the short remainder of his holy life". On the Sunday before his death he rose, took a musical instrument, and "sang to it such hymns as the angels and he and Mr. Ferrar" (of Little Gidding) "now sing in heaven".

His poems, "The Temple," were published in 1633, and their great popularity is a proof that piety had not wholly deserted the Anglican Church for the Sects. "The Temple" opens with "The Porch," a series of moral and religious counsels, in verses of six stanzas. The poem "Affliction" is autobiographical: at first, in his career, "There was no month but May". Then came maladies and the deaths of friends

> Whereas my birth and spirit rather took
> The way that takes the Town,
> Thou didst betray me to a lingering book

And wrap me in a gown...
Ah, my dear God, though I am quite forgot,
Let me not love thee, if I love thee not.

Sacred poetry is of all kinds the most difficult. Herbert's is full of conceits, though he has not the extravagances that mar the work of Donne and Crashaw. Verses in the shape of altars and of wings are examples of extreme decadence, but these are rare. Herbert's simplest poem is his best, the famous

Sweet day, so cool, so calm, so bright,
The bridal of the earth and sky,
The dew shall weep thy fall to-night,
For thou must die.

"The Pearl" is also of great beauty and autobiographic interest. He knows the ways of Learning, Honour, and Pleasure, and he has chosen the better way. The British Church is commended as the Midway between "Her on the hills" (the Seven Hills) and Her that

in the valley is so shy
Of dressing, that her hair doth lie
About her ears;
While she avoids her neighbour's pride,
She wholly goes on th' other side,
And nothing wears;

better than wearing "rags of Aaron's old wardrobe" said Milton. "The Quip" hath a certain holy gaiety, as of a ballad. Herbert was not a great poet, he never storms the cloudcapt towers, and "flaming walls of the world," like Crashaw. But he has been dear to many holy and humble men of heart.

Vaughan.

Henry Vaughan and his twin brother Thomas were born in 1622, at Newton St. Bridget, on the Usk, in South Wales, hence he chose to style himself "Silurist" from the name of the ancient tribe of that region. There is some confusion between him and his brother Thomas, who certainly went (1638) to Jesus College, Oxford, while Henry's name is not on the books. Henry is said to have studied law in London. In the Civil War he may have taken up

arms, at least he saw, if he did not fight in the battle of Rowton Heath (24 Sept., 1645) and he commemorates in a poem the courage of a friend, Mr. R. W., who fell on the Cavalier side. In some humorous verses about a huge cloak borrowed from another friend he speaks of wearing it during the Royalist retreat from the Dee, and about the Puritan soldiery that seized him. In a Latin poem, "Ad Posteros," he says that he merely lamented the war; in any case he won no laurels and probably shed no blood. "The Bard does not fight," says a Gaelic proverb. He studied medicine, and lived retired at Brecknock. His first verses (1641) congratulate Charles I on his return from Scotland. In 1646 appeared his "Poems," including a rather tame translation of the Tenth Satire of Juvenal on "The Vanity of Human Wishes," with some pretty love lyrics to Amoret. Unlike Suckling and Carew, these volatile hearts,

> I not for an hour did love,
> Or for a day desire,
> But with my soul had from above
> This endless holy fire.

He "courted the mind," not the body.

His volume, "Olor Iscanus" (the swan of Usk) appeared in 1651, opening with a eulogy of his beautiful native river, in smooth rhymed octosyllabic verse, mixed with decasyllabic couplets. There are also epistles to friends, one deplores the antiquated dullness of Brecknock, another celebrates the matchless Orinda, Mrs. Phillips, and there are translations from Latin verse.

Vaughan lives, not by these poems, nor by "Thalia Rediviva," but by his "Silex Scintillans," the sparkling flint, sacred poems of 1650-1655. He professedly follows George Herbert, being "the least of his many pious converts". Direct imitations of Herbert are not infrequent in these hymns, which, like Herbert, sigh for the far-away days when angels sat at Abraham's board,

> O, how familiar then was heaven!

There is a party who prefer Herbert to Vaughan, another that prefer Vaughan to Herbert. The Silurist perhaps strikes the higher and the deeper note, when he does strike it, for all the Cavalier poets, sacred or secular, blossomed but rarely into perfect and memorable song: they would excel in an opening

verse, in a phrase, but their full inspiration was occasional. A line like the second in "Vanity of Spirit" is rare:—

> Quite spent with thoughts, I left my cell and lay
> Where a shrill spring tuned to the early day.

"The Retreat":—

> Happy those early days, when I
> Shone in my angel infancy

is perfect, and has a forenote of Wordsworth's "Intimations of Immortality".

Like Wordsworth, Vaughan finds the divine near him everywhere:—

> There's not a wind can stir,
> Or beam pass by,
> But straight I think, though far
> Thy hand is nigh.

"Silence and Stealth of Days" is excellent, but never quite recaptures the charm of the opening phrase. "The Burial of an Infant" has the purity of a snowdrop: and "They are all gone into the World of Light" haunts the memory; while "The Timber" is a set of variants on a brief melancholy note of Homer. There are lovely lines, not unlike Herrick's, on "St. Mary Magdalen," and her locks,

> Which with skill'd negligence are shed
> About thy curious, wild, young head.

Vaughan lived to see another Revolution, and died in 1695.

Herrick.

Robert Herrick, son of a prosperous goldsmith of a Leicestershire family, was born in London, in 1591, and for twelve years was an "Elizabethan," though his poems are "Caroline". In 1607 Herrick was apprenticed to his uncle; in 1613 entered as a Fellow Commoner at St. John's, Cambridge, he migrated to Trinity Hall, and took his Master's degree in 1620. He had friends and patrons at Court, was one of the sons of Ben Jonson, and lived on his wits and on his patrons, in a poetical, musical, pleasant idleness. He took holy orders, not in the spirit of George Herbert, and in 1629 received

the living of Dean Prior, in Devonshire. He did not desert, and probably did not neglect, his parish, from which he was thrust by the Puritans in 1647; in the next year his "Noble Numbers," and "Hesperides" was printed in "a rich disorder"—the lines are on various levels in this most desirable volume. The frontispiece shows a fleshly, muscular rather Roman-looking poet to whose lips the bees bring honey. At the Restoration, Herrick was restored to Dean Prior, where he died in October, 1674.

"Dull Devonshire" he calls the county, in his verses; he did not live long to resent its rural torpor. His delightful poems are all full of the country life, they smell April and May. His book is like a large laughing meadow in early June, all diapered with flowers, and sweet with the songs of birds, some a mere note or two of merry music, some as prolonged and varied, though never so passionate, as the complaint of the nightingale.

> I sing of brooks, of blossoms, birds and bowers,
> Of April, May, of June and July flowers;
> I sing of Maypoles, hock-carts, wassails, wakes,
> Of bridegrooms, brides, and of their bridal cakes.

Everything is sweet, spontaneous, glad and musical. Some pieces are far from straitlaced of course, but, even setting these apart, "The Hesperides" hold the greatest and richest bouquet of English songs. Favourites are "Delight in Disorder," "Gather Ye Rose buds while Ye May," "Corinna's Going a Maying,"

> To Anthea (Bid me to live and I will live
> Thy Protestant to be.)
>
> To Meadows (Ye have been fresh and green,
> Ye have been filled with flowers.)
>
> To Daffodils (Fair daffodils, we weep to see.)
>
> To Blossoms (Fair pledges of a fruitful tree,
> Why do ye fall so fast?)

and so on; every reader culls and chooses for himself, and cannot go wrong. Herrick speaks in his "Noble Numbers" of

my unbaptized rhymes
Writ in my wild unhallowed times,

but his "Noble Numbers," or poems on sacred themes, show an almost unregenerate happiness.

The Child of his "Ode on the Birth of our Saviour" is, first of all, a human child to Herrick, and he was in love with children as with roses. His "Litany to the Holy Spirit" is extremely human in its foresight of death,

When the artless doctor sees
No one hope but of his fees.

His "Grace for a Child" is a miniature of the pathos of a child's devotion.

Of Herrick's epigrams, as of Ben Jonson's, there is no good to be said: we can only marvel how the poets stooped to imitate the worst faults of Martial, their Latin model.

Carew.

Thomas Carew was one of the famous Carews or Careys of the West: his family was settled in Gloucestershire. He was probably born about 1598: Clarendon says that he died about the age of 50; and his death was in 1638 or 1639. His life "was spent with less severity or exactness than it ought to have been," but he made a good end. He seems to have been at Corpus, Oxford, where he took no degree; he was Sewer (a Court office of value), to Charles I, and was among those of "the tribe of Ben Jonson". His poems were published (1640-1642) after his decease.

Suckling, in his Sessions of the Poets declares that Carew's poems, were "seldom brought forth but with trouble and pain," in fact he *did* take trouble, and it is a pity that most of his contemporaries took none. His "Persuasions to Love" is a most musical version of that old lesson of the brief-lived rose which is taught by the Greek lyrists of the Anthology and by Ronsard and Herrick so sweetly, and so often. "Give me more love or more disdain," "When thou, poor excommunicate," "He that loves a rosy cheek," the poems "In Absence," "Mark how the bashful morn in vain," the "Elegy on Maria Wentworth," "Ask me no more where Jove bestows," and many other pieces by the lover of Celia, are admirable in versification, and

in their own philosophy, which is not remarkable for "severity and exactness". Carew never approaches the elevation of Lovelace at his best, but he perhaps never falls to the pitch of Lovelace when uninspired. There are graceful turns and songs in his Masque "Coelum Britannicum" (1634). Carew's verse is a moment in the development from careless speed towards the less varied and more "correct" style that passed from Waller to Dry den and onwards.

LOVELACE.

Richard Lovelace is when at his best the greatest of the Cavalier poets, and is personally one of the most sympathetic of men. The eldest son of Sir William Lovelace of "Woolidge" (Woolwich), he was born in 1618, educated at Charterhouse School, and at Gloucester Hall, in Oxford. He is styled "Adonis" in some pleasant verses by a friend, and, like that more glorious cavalier, Wogan, as described by Clarendon, was "accounted the most amiable and beautiful person that eye ever beheld," according to the Oxford antiquary, Wood. Under Goring, to whom he wrote a ringing song of camp revelry, he served in the inglorious expedition of Charles I to Scotland, in 1639; and wrote a lost play, "The Soldier". For presenting a Royalist petition from the county of Kent to Parliament (April, 1642) he was imprisoned for some weeks, and then let out on bail of £40,000 (?) not to leave the Parliamentary lines.

He and his brothers were devoted to each other, as appears from poems which passed between them. He provided Francis and William, slain at Carmarthen, with money and men for the Royal service, and Dudley with the expenses of a military education. In 1646 he raised a regiment for the French service, was wounded at Dunkirk, and was reported dead. His Lucasta, Lucy Sacheverell, then married another man, and, in 1648, Richard returned to England, and, with Dudley, was taken and imprisoned.

In 1649 be published his "Lucasta," with engravings after Lely (who signs himself "P. Lilly"), it is a strangely ill-printed little volume. After the death of Charles I, Lovelace was reduced to great poverty, and died "in Gunpowder Alley, near Shoe Lane," in 1658. His friend, Charles Cotton, the pupil and friend of Walton, is said to have helped to support him. A second

part of "Lucasta," containing little of merit, was published by Dudley Lovelace in 1659.

Like so many of the poets of his day, Lovelace was inspired but seldom, and, when uninspired fell into sterile conceits and below mediocrity. His unrivalled poems of true love, "To Lucasta, Going beyond Seas," "To Althæa, from Prison," "To Lucasta, Going to the Wars" (strangely attributed by Scott to Montrose), are beyond praise or rivalry. "Honour is my Life," wrote Montrose in his Bible; love and honour inspire Lovelace with faultless and immortal verse. "To Amarantha, that she would dishevel her hair,"

> But shake your head and scatter day,

is also a charming song; and Suckling could not exceed the cheerful impudence of

> Why shouldst thou swear I am forsworn,
> Since thine I vowed to be,
> Lady, it is already Morn,
> And 'twas last night I swore to thee
> That fond impossibility.

We can but wish for Lovelace that he had ridden with Wogan from Dover to the North, and died with the last of the loyal on the hills.

SUCKLING.

Sir John Suckling, the son of a wealthy man, who held various offices at Court, was born at Whitton in 1609 (?). Not much is known of his education, but in town he was one of the tribe of Ben Jonson, wits and courtiers, such as Davenant, Carew, and Endymion Porter. His "Session of the Poets" is inelegant banter of his friends. His plays "Aglaura," "The Goblins," "Brennoralt," are very decadent in style, and a man must have a strong passion for the drama who can read them "for human pleasure".

In Charles's expedition against the Scottish Covenanters, in 1639, each army occupied itself in observation, Charles at Berwick, Leslie at Duns Law. The commanders on both sides were dispirited, and if a troop of horse, equipped by Suckling at great expense, ran away, it was probably from

Kelso, where a small Royalist command was driven in. We know nothing with certainty, but derisive ballads were made against the poet's courage, though there never was a braver man than Colonel Gardiner, whose dragoons on every occasion used their spurs, in 1745. Suckling died in Paris in 1642; various tales are told of the cause of his decease.

Suckling is the typical jolly, audacious, amorous, now constant, now amusingly volatile Cavalier poet. His verses are well made but seldom so well as Carew's; and though he is not always on pleasure bent he never approaches the heights of Lovelace. The first edition of his poems, "Fragmenta Aurea," is of 1646, and the frontispiece exactly meets our natural theory of Suckling's personal aspect. He looks very pleasant in his armour. Among his successes in verse are

> 'Tis now since I sate down before
> That foolish fort, a heart

> and "A Ballad of a Wedding" (the most charming thing of its kind in English poetry):

> Out upon it, I have loved
> Three whole days together,
> When, dearest, I but think of thee,

and

> Why so pale and wan, fond lover?

It was with very slight trouble that the gay Suckling stormed the gates of poetic immortality.

Habington.

William Habington (1605-1654) was of a Catholic family; his father (of Hindlip in Worcestershire), had suffered on the occasions of Babington's and of the Gunpowder plots. The poet was educated abroad (St. Omer's and Paris). He married Lucy, daughter of Lord Powys; his Muse was the domestic, and he ceaselessly celebrated his wife under the name of "Castara". His play, "The Queen of Arragon," had some success. Many of the lyrics to Castara are quite pretty, whether they be prenuptial or written

in wedlock, whether Castara is "sick," or "in a trance," or beginning to recover, or weeping, or setting forth on a journey. In lines to the celebrated first and only Marquess of Argyll, Habington applauds those feats of military daring which History does not recognize in the vanquished of Inverlochy and Kilsyth. A Catholic who thought the cause of the Covenant "just," must have had a very open mind. Wood says, in fact, that Habington "did run with the times, and was not unknown to Oliver Cromwell". Habington's relations with Argyll are rather puzzling. In addition to his many poems on his wife, Habington composed eight elegies on the death of George Talbot, Esquire.

Cartwright.

William Cartwright (1611-1643) must have been a most amiable man, agreeable University wit, and "florid and seraphical preacher". He passed much of his life at Oxford, being a student of Christ Church; he was an active military organizer when King Charles and the Court were at Oxford, he was Junior Proctor, lectured on the Metaphysics, was lamented by the King and University on his death, and was admired in his life by Dr. Fell.

His poems are mainly birthday odes, and complimentary addresses to ladies. In the person of Lady Carlisle he celebrated,

> Masses of ivory blushing here and there,

and he wrote disdainfully of what is called "Platonic" Love. He also wrote a song called "The Ordinary".

Davenant.

Sir William Davenant (1606-1668) was more interesting as a man, and in his relations with greater men of letters, than as a poet. His vast "epic" "Gondibert," concerned with the heroic age of Lombardy, and written in quatrains of alternately rhyming decasyllabic lines, is a monument of misplaced ambition. Davenant's father was landlord of the Crown Inn, at Oxford, and Davenant did not discourage the legend that Shakespeare was his mother's admirer. At a very early age, Davenant wrote the briefest of elegiac odes on Shakespeare's death. His best lyric is

The lark now leaves his watery nest,
And climbing, shakes his dewy wings,
He takes this window for the east,
And to implore your light, he sings:
"Awake, awake, the Morn will never rise
Till she can dress her beauty at your eyes".

Davenant was of Lincoln College, Oxford; was one of the London wits, and is bantered by Suckling in "The Session of the Poets" for a sad misfortune. To Lombardy, Davenant turned, in 1629, for the topic of his tragedy of Albovine, a theme with which poets have rarely been successful. In 1638 Davenant was made Poet Laureate; he managed a theatre; in 1641 was accused of being engaged in a Cavalier enterprise, escaped to France, returned, was knighted (1643) for his services at the siege of Gloucester; failed, in 1646, to make Charles accept the terms of the Covenanters, and, after various loyal adventures, was placed in the Tower (1650). Milton is said to have pleaded for him, and he, later, for Milton. On the Restoration he was rewarded by the patent of a theatre, where he produced plays by no means Shakespearean.

He forms a link between the Shakespeare of his childish years, Milton, and the young Dryden. Waller and Cowley wrote the only recommendatory verses for his "Gondibert," which is dedicated, with Davenant's ideas on the Art of Poetry, to Thomas Hobbes. Davenant modestly compared himself to Homer. He trusts that his verses in "Gondibert" will be "sung at village feasts," "like the works of Homer ere they were joined together and made a volume by the Athenian king". A stranger combination of vanity with erroneous pedantry has seldom been printed.

COWLEY.

The name of Abraham Cowley is likely to live as long as histories of English literature are written, and yet some students who are not passionately fond of Lydgate would much liefer read Lydgate than Cowley. To Charles Lamb, on the other hand, Cowley's was "one of the sweetest names, which carry a perfume in the mention". He was born in London in 1618, and Dr. Johnson suspected that his father was not only a Puritan but a grocer.

A copy of "The Faery Queen" which lay on the window-seat of his mother's chamber is said to have wakened Cowley's ambition. He "lisped in numbers," and published his verses at Westminster School, whence he went on to Cambridge. There he is said to have written much of his Biblical epic, the "Davideis". The poem is in the heroic couplet, thus

> Rais'd with the news he from high heaven receives,
> Straight to his diligent God just thanks he gives
> To divine Nob directs he then his flight,
> A small town, great in fame, by Levi's right.

The poem breaks off at the passage where Jonathan, after fighting all day, tastes some honey of the wild bees.

To compare with Milton's Satan the Satan of Cowley,

> Thrice did he knock his iron teeth, thrice howl
> And into frowns his wrathful forehead roll

is to perceive that the Cavalier was no match for the Puritan poet in sacred epic.

Cowley had done much secretary's work for Charles I during the war, he was employed by the Queen in Paris, and returned in 1656 to England, where he was arrested, but presently released. He returned to France just as the star of Molière was rising, came home at the Restoration, was dissatisfied with such reward as his loyalty obtained, and left town for a very pleasant house at Chertsey, where he died in 1667. His set of amatory verses, "The Mistress," holds a high place in collections. He revelled in what Dr. Johnson called "metaphysical" conceits. Odes he wrote in great numbers, in imitation of Pindar; one of them is addressed to the Royal Society and hails the new birth of divine Science.

Pindaric Odes became a fashion that lasted long, and, in its day, produced little of merit till Dryden came. Not much of Cowley in verse is now read for pleasure except the lively and graceful "Chronicle" of the names of his mistresses. If we could suppose that without Cowley the great Odes in the language would not have been written, Cowley might be regarded as an important influence. But when we turn to his "Praise of Pindar,"

> Pindar is imitable by none;
> The Phœnix Pindar is a vast species alone,

Cowley does not seem very inspiring! But Dr. Johnson held that Cowley "was the first who imparted to English numbers the enthusiasm of the greater ode, and the gaiety of the less," while "he left such specimens of excellence" in versification "as enabled succeeding poets to improve it".

Denham.

The poems of Sir John Denham (1615-1669) might, had they perished, have been reckoned in "the veniable part of things lost". He was of the Royalist party, and his occasional political rhymes are humourless libels. In 1642 he published "The Sophy," and surprised the wits, for he had been best known as a dicer and gambler. In 1642 his "Cooper's Hill," an early example of local poetry, appeared, and in this was little of what Dr. Johnson called "the old manner of continuing the sense ungracefully from verse to verse," which disfigured his translation of the Second Book of the "Æneid". For restricting the sense to the couplet, Denham was reckoned with Waller among the reformers of English poetry.

Four lines of "Cooper's Hill," admired by Dryden, are all that men remember; he wrote not ungracefully on Cowley, and he succeeded in getting £10,000 for the Royal cause from the Scottish traders in Poland. He is no longer, as by Dr. Johnson, deservedly considered as one of the fathers of our English poetry, "who improved our taste and advanced our language".

Sherburne, Stanley, Browne, Cotton.

It is customary to mention among English poets of the seventeenth century Sir Edward Sherburne, Thomas Stanley his kinsman, Alexander Browne, and Charles Cotton, whose birth and death dates range from 1618 to 1702—Sherburne's life occupied the whole space. All but Cotton, the latest born (1630), were of the Royalist party. Sherburne dealt most in translations and sacred verses; Browne in ditties of love, wine, and politics, with epistles and elegies; Stanley was a scholar—his amorous verses often approach excellence; Cotton celebrated Chloris with little inspiration, wrote angling songs, and was the friend of Izaak Walton, a fact that preserves his name in lavender. He wrote the part on fly-fishing (in which Walton was no expert)

for a late edition of "The Compleat Angler," and (1681) celebrated in verse "The Wonders of the Peak," as he had sung the praises of his well-loved river, the Dove. His "Scarronides or Virgil Travestie," in the manner of Scarron gave offence to reverent admirers of the "Æneid".

WALLER.

Edmund Waller, certainly the greatest wit of his time (for it would be sacrilege to speak of Milton as "a wit"), was born at Coleshill in Bucks, on 3 March, 1606. He was early left a rich orphan, was educated at Eton, and King's, Cambridge, entered Parliament at 18, and was familiar with the Court of James I. His first-known poem, on "The Escape of the Prince at Saint Andero," is in the same correct and elegant heroic verse as that of his later measures: Waller had at 18 command of the instrument to which Dryden fell heir. Possibly the poem, with some of his other loyal pieces of almost the same period, may have been improved by Waller in later days, but his ear was already as excellent as that of Davies in his "Nosce te Ipsum" or of Fairfax in his translation of Tasso. Waller had no taste for the venture-some irregular lines of his contemporaries, and seldom, like so many of them, drew amorous conceits from the depths of the fanciful science of the age.

Adulation of people in power from Charles I and his Queen to Charles II and his Queen, or to Cromwell in "The Panegyric," was the common theme of Waller. As he is always tuneful and always vivacious he may be read with interest, whether he congratulates Prince Charles on his escape from shipwreck, or the King on his fortitude when he heard of the murder of Buckingham, or Cromwell on his victories, or Mary of Modena on a tea-party or Monmouth on the defeat of the Covenanters at Bothwell Bridge. His love verses to Sacharissa (Lady Dorothea Sidney) or to Amoret (Lady Sophia Murray?) are seldom tedious, and his "On a Girdle," and "Go, lovely Rose," and "Tell me, lovely loving pair" are among the imperishable flowers of the English anthology.

While he lived, and he lived to be 81, Waller always wrote well, nor was he less distinguished as an orator in Parliament, and a delightful companion. In the Short and Long Parliaments he appeared as a moderate member of the Parliamentary party, and opposed the abolition of Episcopacy. Revolution,

not reform, was the winning card; and Waller slid into what was called Waller's Plot. He organized what may be called a scheme of constitutional resistance to the King's enemies, but with this coexisted, as usually happens, a more strenuous and violent conspiracy under Sir Nicholas Crispe.

The affair was detected on 31 May, 1643, Waller and his brother-in-law, Tompkyns, were arrested: Waller lost head and heart, confessed all that he knew, and more that he conjectured; lost honour, and kept his life at the ransom of a heavy fine, and exile (at Rouen). He made his peace with Cromwell, who had nothing to fear and something to gain from him, the famous panegyric of 1654. When Charles returned, Waller's congratulations were deemed by the King less good than his compliments to Cromwell. "Poets, Sir," answered Waller, "succeed better in fiction than in truth." The treacherous politician was forgiven on every side, the witty poet was welcome in Parliament and everywhere.

Waller's first wife was rich, his second was fertile. When at last his doctor pronounced his sentence of death, he quoted some lines of Virgil, and went home to die. John Evelyn had been "his worthy Friend": to no man were men more charitable than to Waller.

His "Battle of the Summer Islands" is mildly mock-heroic: the compliments which he lavished on other poets, as to Evelyn on his translation of Lucretius, outlive their works which he praised. Dryden esteemed him generously, and all the more because he was judiciously applauded by Sir George Mackenzie, the "bluidy Mackenzie" of the Covenanters.

With his songs Waller has one foot in the paradise of Lovelace and Suckling and Carew; as represented by his heroic couplets he almost enters the Augustan age. Waller well understood the transitoriness of poetic popularity, shifting with every change of manners, language and taste

> Poets that lasting marble seek
> Must carve in Latin or in Greek;
> We write in sand, our language grows,
> And, like the tide, our work o'er flows.
> Chaucer his sense can only boast
> The glory of his numbers lost.

Happily the glory of Chaucer's "numbers" has been recovered; nor is that of Waller's lost: his "sense" sometimes can only be appreciated by aid of some knowledge of history.

MARVELL.

In a sense and as regards the better part of his poetry, Andrew Marvell may be reckoned among Cavalier poets. He had not, in full measure, the occasional but unique inspiration of Lovelace, but he is comparatively free from wanton conceits, and never falls into the abyss. He has, in addition to the charm of the Cavaliers at their best, a certain delicacy and reserve, and a sense of natural beauty and a rural felicity in which they do not abound. He has none of the stains of the tavern.

Marvell was born on 31 March, 1621, at Winestead, near Hull, being son of the parson of Winestead. He went to Trinity College, Cambridge, at an early age, did not wait to take his Master's degree, and in 1641-1646, travelled widely on the Continent. In 1649 he wrote commendatory verses to Lovelace's "Lucasta," and in these he speaks as a sympathetic Cavalier, though, like other quiet people who loved a settled government, he later addressed Cromwell as "an angel," which may have made Noll smile grimly. In 1650 Marvell became tutor to the daughter of Lord Fairfax, the Parliamentary General, but no regicide. At Appleton House, near Bilborow Hill, Marvell wrote his most charming poems of country life and innocent loves. He compared the hill to the delicately pencilled curve of an eyebrow, and assures "mountains more unjust," such at the Alps, that they "The Earth deform, and Heaven fright". For more than a century any peaked mountain or rocky eminence was reckoned "horrid".

Marvell made at this time the acquaintance of Milton, who recommended him as acquainted with foreign languages and classical literature for the post of Assistant Secretary: which he obtained in 1657. In the circle of Government, Marvell learned to appreciate and was induced to applaud Cromwell on his return from his visit of conquest and massacre to Ireland. This poem contains the familiar and beautiful lines appreciative of the behaviour of Charles I on the scaffold. In 1659-1660 Marvell entered Parliament as Member for Hull: in 1663-1665 he went abroad on various

embassies, and, after playing the part of a fierce satirist of the sinners of the Restoration, he died on 18 August, 1678.

His prose satires "The Rehearsal Transprosed" and others (1672-1678) were inspired by that terror of a restoration of Catholicism, which flamed up in the cowardly ferocities of Titus Oates's "Popish Plot". Though a Catholic in sympathy, Charles II knew well that if he announced his change of religion he would be "sent off on his travels" again; and to travel he was not inclined. The satires of Marvell in verse "we still read," says Swift, who speaks of the author's "genius". It had none of the majesty of Dryden's nor of Pope's polish, and Marvell is best known for what is best in his poetry: "The Nymph complaining for her Fawn"; "The Garden," which has much of the merit of Milton's "L'Allegro" and "Il Penseroso"; "The Mower to the Glowworms," "Bermudas," "To His Coy Mistress," with its charming humour; and "The Definition of Love," which scarcely maintains the level of its first noble stanza. Such poems on divine subjects as "The Coronet" are reminiscent of Herbert, but less conceited, retaining Marvell's grace of flowers and gardens.

MILTON.

John Milton, son of a "money-scrivener," was born in Bread Street, London, on 9 December, 1608. His father, though a Puritan, was in sympathy with literature, and his wealth permitted his son to devote himself, as long as he pleased, to studies of many kinds, and to train himself sedulously for the great poetic task which he deemed himself "born to do". Milton was thus one of the first of our strictly professional non-dramatic poets,—like Shelley, Tennyson, Browning, and Wordsworth[1]—who were able to devote themselves deliberately to the cultivation of their genius. Milton never wrote for his livelihood, and, except when he gave himself up to political and theological controversy, he was always preparing himself for the great poem which he was determined to make. He entered at St. Paul's School in 1620, and thence went to Christ's College, Cambridge, where his beauty and refined morals won for him the name of the Lady of Christ's. He put on his Master's gown in 1632, and then for six years resided at his father's place, Horton, in Buckinghamshire, the county of John Hampden.

A man's best poems are usually written before he is 30. Milton was 21 when (1629) he produced the ode "On the Morning of Christ's Nativity". In this splendid and immortal piece he invokes, as always, "the heavenly Muse," and, in addition to the beautiful measure of the Hymn, in harmony rivalling Spenser's, he already strikes his own sonorous note, as in "The trumpet spoke not to the armed throng," a glorious combination and harmony of sounds. Here advance

> The helmed cherubim
> And sworded seraphim,

who are, in "Paradise Lost," to make the floor of heaven

> Ring to the roar of an angel onset.

The stanzas on the flight of the ancient classic deities, even the genius of "haunted spring and dale," and the nymphs, are of a high and melancholy imagination. But Milton "found the subject to be above the years he had when he wrote it," and "was nothing satisfied with what he had done". After deliberately selecting and weighing many themes, for example that of Arthur, he returned when old, blind, and fallen on what he deemed "evil days," to the topic of wars in heaven, and man's Fall and Redemption.

"L'Allegro" and "Il Penseroso" are impeccable early poems. Milton is not yet so Puritan as to denounce Merry England, "the jocund rebecks," the dancing youths and maids, the tales of fairy Mab and the Brownie, and the stage: if Jonson and sweetest Shakespeare be the playwrights. Milton was deeply learned in the classics, but there is none of the pedantry of his age in his allusions to Prince Memnon, or "that starr'd Aethiop Queen," though now many readers must turn to notes for information about them. Octosyllabic lines had never before been written with such variety of grave and gay as by Milton, who in verse is a supreme master and "inventor of harmonies". Spenser had not his variety: in Milton's poems, as in his lines "On a Solemn Music"

> The bright Seraphim, in burning row
> Their loud uplifted angel-trumpets blow.

Yet Milton's party in the State set its face like a flint against the "solemn music" of the churches as against the "joyous rebecks" of the lads and lasses.

In 1634 Milton produced a masque, the one great and enduring masque of the many that were played in the halls of princes and peers. "Comus" was presented at Ludlow Castle, the house of Lord Bridgewater, President of Wales, and the actors were his family. The Muse is heavenly, the theme is divine Chastity; there is no such awful contrast to the purity of the Lady as that which Fletcher, in "The Faithful Shepherdess," presents in the person of the deplorable Cloe. As in the plays of Euripides, an explanatory prologue is spoken by a Spirit, who later appears as the shepherd Thyrsis. We learn that Comus (Revelry) the son of Dionysus the Wine God and Circe the enchantress of the "Odyssey," has settled in "this ominous wood" in Britain; tempts travellers with the crystal cup of his sorceries, and changes them into beast-headed adventurers. Then Comus enters with his torch-bearing company, swine, bulls, goats, bears, and in beautiful lines, recommends his unholy ethics.

> Come, let us our rites begin,
> 'Tis only daylight that makes sin.

But something warns him that a chaste being draws near; he dismisses his troop; the Lady enters, she has lost her way in the dark wood, her brothers have strayed apart, she hopes to meet merry peasants who will guide her; she calls them by a song, and Comus appears, summoned by the notes

> How sweetly did they float upon the wings
> Of silence, through the empty-vaulted night
> At every fall smoothing the raven down
> Of darkness, till it smiled.

Thinking Comus an honest shepherd, the Lady follows him: her brothers enter in search of her, the Spirit warns them of her danger, and gives them such virtuous herbs as Hermes gives to Odysseus in Circe's isle. Armed with these they scatter the satyrs of Comus, but only Sabrina, nymph of the Severn, called and replying in lyrics of ineffable beauty can release the Lady from the enchanted chair of Comus. The majesty, delicacy, and beauty of the ideas are matched by the exquisite music of the blank verse and lyric passages, for at the age of 26 and in his poetic prime of youth, Milton was already a master of every technical resource of poetry; of everything, except humour and the power of creating human characters. He might compose poetry more august and sustained than "Comus," but he never could be a

better poet man he was in 1634. Sanity, order, form, absence of vain conceit and ingenious antithesis were as natural to Milton as they were unknown to Donne and the Fletchers.

Milton's next great poem, "Lycidas," was composed shortly before he left Horton, early in 1638, on a visit to Italy. The occasion, which other Cambridge poets celebrated, was the death of a friend, Edward King, drowned in crossing the Irish Channel. We do not know from external evidence that Milton was more attached to King, personally, than Shelley was to Keats. "Lycidas" is not a cry from an almost broken heart, as are parts of the "In Memoriam" of Tennyson. It has been said that admiration of "Lycidas" is a test of a man's capacity for appreciating poetry,—a hard saying for Dr. Johnson. That Milton had a true affection for King the classic allusions and the pastoral guise of his ode may cause some to doubt. But there is deep natural feeling in the plangent words,

> But oh! the heavy change now thou art gone,
> Now thou art gone and never must return!

The story disguised as a friendship between Theocritean shepherds is really that of a college friendship between two boyish poets, and no later friendships can be so tender, close, dear; the lost voice ever echoing in the memory. The verse is a solemn music: the mingling of the figures of classical mythology with St. Peter, and with Camus, "reverend sire," vexed Dr. Johnson, but he would have been equally vexed by the only Oxford pendant to this Cambridge lament, the "Thyrsis" of Matthew Arnold.

Indeed what really annoyed the good Doctor was the certainly regrettable introduction of an attack on his beloved Church of England, and the ominous mention of "that two-handed engine at the door," which did not strike once, but often, nor only at the neck of an Archbishop, but slew Strafford, Hamilton, and the King.

"The dread voice" comes across the shepherd's dirge; the Sicilian Muse, the Muse of Theocritus, is bidden to return, but to Milton she will not come again. We think of him, at this time, as "young but intolerably severe," like Apollo in Matthew Arnold's "Empedocles on Etna". Like Wordsworth and Shelley he was devoid of humour,—and thus fails—as Shelley did not fail, thanks to his geniality, and kindness and charms—to win universal sympathy. Think of Shakespeare,—who does not love the man, and who

does dare to love Milton! He was not vain with the childlike vanity of some poets, but he was as proud as his own Satan. He not only had genius next to the highest, but he knew it, tended it, cared for it, and could scarcely find a task that was great enough for his powers. We respect his self-knowledge, applaud his resolution, and are much happier with Shakespeare and Scott, who never gave a thought to their genius.

On returning from Italy to his country, the country of "the Bishops' Wars," Milton, in Aldersgate Street, devoted himself to the education of his nephews, to sonnets, and then to prose works, as already mentioned, all written in the cause of sacred Liberty. He, like the old Scots Earl, did not love "the new liberty" as offered by the Presbyterian, whose name was "old priest writ large". His marriage, in 1643, to a lady of a loyal family, Mary Powell, was unhappy: she went back, in a short time, to her own people In 1645 she returned, had three daughters, and died in 1652. His private unhappiness made Milton plead vainly for freedom of divorce, a remedy which has its own unsatisfactory aspect. In 1652 Milton lost his eyesight, like his

> Blind Thamyris and blind Maeonides,
> And Teiresias and Phineus, prophets old.

His sonnets are his only poems of this period; when he argued for divorce, and for liberty of printing, defended the slaying of his King, wrangled with political opponents in English and Latin, and was Latin Secretary to the Commonwealth. An accomplished sonneteer in Italian, Milton in English observed, usually, the strict Petrarchian rules; and had the wisdom and self-restraint to write not too many sonnets, most of them choicely good. Even that in which he commemorates the noble Aboyne, and the son of Col of the left hand, and Gilespie Grumach is a good sonnet. He mourned for the late Massacre in Piedmont, but not for those of Drogheda and Dundee. His nobility of soul never declares itself more gloriously than in the sonnets on his blindness, of these eyes.

> Overplied,
> In Liberty's defence, my glorious task.

But there was no liberty left for Anglicans, Catholics, or Presbyterians in Scotland, who were turned out of their court of General Assembly.

After rejecting many topics which had occurred to him as possible subjects for his life-long purpose to write a great Epic, Milton returned to the inspiration of the Heavenly Muse, and settled (1655-1667) on "Paradise Lost". He did wisely, for a human epic like the others, the "Iliad," the "Odyssey," and all the Greek, Roman, Italian, and French imitations of these, demands a pell-mell of human characters, noble, treacherous, and humorous. In creating human characters Milton had little skill, and, in "Paradise Lost" there are but two, Adam and Eve. In Genesis they are extremely human, but Milton had to make them at first perfect, and place them in a situation where no other human beings ever were. For the rest, he had the magnificent Satan, fallen through a pride and independence of character with which the poet was in sympathy; while Belial and Abdiel are also, each in his own way, heroic. The heavenly angels are less clearly marked and discriminated.

In Athens, Milton would have rivalled Æschylus; with Euripides he does not pair. He has the greatest of stages, the universe, chaos, heaven and hell. His theme is the mystery of human fortunes; man, what he might be, what he is. He uses a non-Biblical poetic legend, the war in heaven, which had been treated, we saw, by an Anglo-Saxon poet, and has a parallel in the mythology of the Kaitish, a savage tribe of Central Australia. There too the great self-created Atnatu of the highest heaven hurls his disobedient children down to earth. It was inevitable that Satan, not Adam, should become the Hero, as Mephistopheles, not Faust, is the hero of Goethe's play —is the interesting character. Milton in his Puritan way describes himself as "Not sedulous by nature to indite wars," hitherto "alone heroic deemed," while modest domestic patience and heroic martyrdom are unsung, or as in the case of Jeanne d'Arc, have proved too lofty a theme for any poet. But Milton being a poet is subject to inevitable poetic limitations. The patience which Eve displayed in everyday domestic life, after her expulsion from Paradise, would not be a theme for the epic; and Milton "never stoops his wing" when he sings of the Raising of the Banner of Satan, and "the banner cry of Hell".

In the true spirit of epics, his poem ends with no clash of arms, no blare of trumpets, but with "a dying fall";

> They, hand in hand, with wandering steps and slow,
> Through Eden took their solitary way;

in such manner, too, ceases the "Iliad,"

Thus held they funeral for knightly Hector.

Milton's blank verse is the stateliest, most variously tuneful, and most relieved by varieties of pause, most sonorous with the mysterious music of ancient names. All in this is perfect. The verse-paragraphs—the opening paragraph is of thirty lines—could only be arrayed by Milton. We do not often meet what seems to us a bathos, as when Satan, fallen from heaven, "views the dismal situation". After viewing the dismal situation Satan is himself again:—

All is not lost; the unconquerable will,
And study of revenge, immortal hate,
And courage never to submit or yield,
And what is else not to be overcome,
That glory never shall His wrath or might
Extort from me.

Milton is not pedantic, but as Homer has his catalogue of ships and heroes, Milton outdoes him with *his* catalogue of fallen angels, gods of the nations, Moloch, Chemosh, Ashtoreth, Dagon, Osiris, Isis, Horns, "the Ionian gods of Javan's issue," and they

who with Saturn old
Fled over Adria to the Hesperian fields,
And o'er the Celtic roam'd the utmost isles.

Milton's knowledge was equal to every demand, and his were

the unconquerable will
And courage never to submit or yield.

But, magnificent as he is, Milton has always his eye on that Achæan "father of the rest," and he copies Homer's bridal-bed of Zeus and Hera

under foot the violet,
Crocus and hyacinth with rich inlay
Broidered the ground.

"And beneath them the divine earth sent forth fresh new grass, and dewy lotus, crocus, and hyacinth." But Milton gives twenty lines where Homer gives four.

In comparing the two greatest of epic poets—the first, Homer, with the last, Milton,—we observe that each sums up in himself the whole thought and experience, and the poetic expression of a world that lies behind him. Each "takes his own where he finds it," "makes all men's wit his own," as Ben Jonson said, in an invidious sense, of Shakespeare. Homer has his debts to old nameless poets; Milton displays his debts to Homer, and to Greek, Roman, and Celtic poets and historians, to Anglo-Saxons, Dutch, Italians, to all song and all learning, and all that he takes he transfigures, and rounds into a harmonious whole, the immortal Epic.

"Paradise Lost" was published in 1667, four years after Milton's third marriage. It is not apparent that he was in any danger from the Government of the Restoration. Charles II avowed to Clarendon, in a scribbled note now in the Bodleian, his constitutional dislike of hanging men. The book did not sell badly for a Puritan poem produced while the revel of the company of Comus was maddest, and, when Milton died, Dryden, the literary dictator, gave due praise to the greatest of literary epics, the loftiest, the most splendidly adorned; and poets of the eighteenth century adored the style which became ridiculous, or dull, in their imitations.

In "Paradise Regained," a sequel which Mr. Ellwood, a Quaker, reports himself to have suggested to Milton, the great qualities of the poet are unimpaired. His verse is that which he alone could wield. His sonorous catalogues, the music of names, the eagle glance over all the kingdoms of earth and the glory of them, the triumph of the pure spirit over carnal joys; nay the haunting memories of old romance,

> Of fairy damsels, met in forest wide,
> By knights of Logres, or of Lyones,
> Lancelot, or Pelleas, or Pellenore,

these are all present, all are captivating.

It is natural to wish that, while young, Milton had followed his dominant motive into Arthur's fairy land, and told the story of Galahad and the Holy Grail: the purity that wins the Beatific Vision.

His "Samson Agonistes," in the severest style of Greek tragedy, sets forth his own strength foiled by blindness, mocked by the dull triumphs of the wanton crowd, and triumphant in death. The occasional unrhymed verse of

the chorus, not in decasyllabic lines, stands for Milton's curious antipathy for rhyme, in which, when he chose, he excelled. The subtleties and sophistries of Delilah express his idea of one type of womanhood, the other type shines in the steadfast love of the repentant Eve. The poem, with all the strength, has less of the charm of Milton than his other great works.

Milton died in 1674; a poet who in one sense might be styled "self-taught," for while he was so deeply read, his verse was no echo, nor ever can be re-echoed. It is foolish but natural to appraise the relative greatness of great poets, but, Shakespeare apart, it is to the lonely Milton that the world has always awarded the crown of England's greatest.

Samuel Butler.

If we could take the "God-gifted organ-voice of England," Milton, as representing the anti-Royalist parties in the Civil War, and Samuel Butler, with his "Hudibras," as the representative of those who stood for Church and King, we could not hesitate in our choice between the two factions. But Milton's was a soul that dwells apart, making its own special music, while Butler produced a unique epic-satire on the furies and follies of the once triumphant Presbyterians, Independents, and a multitude of wild contending sects. Of Samuel Butler's life but little is known. Born at Strensham in Worcestershire in 1612, he was educated at the school of Worcester, but could not afford to proceed to either university. He was clerk to a justice of the peace, was later in the service of the Countess of Kent, where he had leisure for study, at Wrest in Bedfordshire, during the war, and in the same shire resided with Sir Samuel Luke, an active Presbyterian, who, however, was opposed to the Regicide. Butler thus saw plenty of the people whom, in 1663, he satirized in the first part of "Hudibras". That Presbyterian Don Quixote, with his Independent Squire, Ralph, is the wildest caricature of a type, not of an individual, and the adventures of the pair are merely burlesque. The discussions and descriptions are a tempest of ridicule falling on the fallen Cause in showers of jigging and strangely rhymed octosyllabics, often so piquant that many of them are still commonly quoted though the historic allusions are forgotten. The associations of ideas in the author's mind bring out a learning as multifarious as that of Burton or of Browne; the book was adored at Court, not least by the King, and was

pirated; all three parts were put forth by Walton's publisher, Richard Marriot, though they may have been little to the taste of the pacific author of "The Compleat Angler".

Butler seems to have been no roysterer, but a retired, bookish, sardonic humorist, who "asked for nothing and got nothing". The Court wits who sought his acquaintance did not find in him what they expected. He certainly received no notable rewards: and later poets found in him the type of neglected merit. He died in London in 1680.

After a war of Religion in which all the countless factions felt certain of their own infallibility, Butler, a disillusioned wit, saw nothing in the strife but what the saintly Leighton called "a scuffle of drunken men in the dark". The Parliamentarians

> Call fire and sword and desolation
> A godly thorough Reformation,
> Which always must be carried on,
> And still be doing, never done,
> As if Religion were intended
> For nothing else but to be mended...
> They with more care keep holy-day
> The wrong, than others the right way,

for Christmas was kept as a fast, and Good Friday as a feast. The whole poem has rather less of a constructed plot than "Tristram Shandy"; and the strange rhymes—as of *flambeau* to "damn'd blow"—tickled the merry Cavaliers more than they amuse later generations. What is "topical" in "Hudibras" is, of course, transitory, but much of permanent and brilliant wit remains and is current in quotations: for example,

> Compound for sins they are inclined to
> By damning those they have no mind to:
> Still so perverse and opposite
> As if they worshipped God for spite.

Butler wrote other things, the best is a dialogue in which Puss and Cat mimic the conversations of the lovers in the "heroic" tragedies of the Restoration.

[1] All five wrote dramas, but none was a professional playwright.

CHAPTER XXV.

RESTORATION THEATRE.

In England, when the King came to his own again (29 May, 1660) and the reign of the Saints was ended, it was certain that the Theatre also would come to her own. The stage had been bad enough, in verse, taste, and manners, before the doors were closed in 1642. When the dramatic Muse returned, she brought with her, like the man in the parable, seven other devils worse than herself. The morals and tastes of the town and Court were what, after so many years of Puritan sway, they might be expected to be. They are most livelily delineated in the "Diary" of Mr. Pepys; and the drama of the Restoration was their child, and worthy of them. At first the stage was occupied by the older plays of Fletcher, Jonson, and Shirley; no new names of note appear till Dryden's "Wild Gallant" failed in 1663, and Sir George Etherege's "Love in a Tub" prospered in 1664.

No age will be content with old plays, the mould and fashion of the time must be exhibited. Pictures of the brutal mirth and the horseplay of triumphant licence, of the flirtations and intrigues of lackeys and lords and ladies, all genteel and witty *à la mode* of the Court and town as we know them from Pepys and Grammont, were presented.

Everything must be "new". As we hear of "the new morality," "the new theology," and so on, so, in "The Rehearsal" (1671), a burlesque by the Duke of Buckingham and other hands, on the plays of the last ten years, the word "new" is constantly reiterated. "You must know this is the new way of writing, and these hard things please forty times better than the old plain way of writing."

The butt of "The Rehearsal," Bayes, a mixture of Davenant with the mannerisms of Dryden, keeps bragging that this or that absurdity is "new". "New," certainly, and not worthy to wax old, was the extravagant "heroic" tragedy, copying the flights of the French school of bombastic romances, and written in rhyming couplets. The authors of "The Rehearsal" stitch

together scraps and parodies of the new plays, in that which is being rehearsed, with plenty of farcical "business" under Mr. Bayes, who gives amusing snatches of his "Ars Poetica," while there are gibes at the new style of prologues and epilogues, which Dryden wrote so copiously. But "The Rehearsal" is less witty than Sheridan's "The Critic". As for the "new" rhyming "heroic" plays, Dryden ascribes their origin to Davenant. Forbidden to act the old sort of plays under the Reign of the Saints, he introduced examples of moral virtue, "writ in verse" (in rhyme), "and performed in recitative music". He combined the Italian opera with characters in the manner of Corneille. At the Restoration, he turned his "Siege of Rhodes" into "a just drama," but without "design and variety of characters". Dryden took the manner up, and, inspired by Ariosto, made love and valour the theme of the new heroic tragedy on a superhuman scale, and with supernatural incidents, ghosts for example. Then came rant and extravagance expressed in rhymed couplets, and even triplets, till Dryden returned to blank verse, and Lee and Otway and others followed him. But the drama remained as heroic and absurd as when Dryden wrote that masterpiece "The Conquest of Granada". In this he has a ghost, the ghost of the mother of the heroic Almanzor. Scott supposes that she was brought in to prove the courage of her son, even in face of an apparition. Really, the courtesy of Almanzor is more to be admired; the stage direction shows that he bowed to the spectre!

Many critics of the age regarded the heroic tragedy with no more respect than we are apt to do now. Dryden replied with arguments which are not quite to the point. The heroic tragedy is a perfectly legitimate form of art; the Greek tragedies deal with divine heroes and gods, and Æschylus in "The Persians" does not disdain the ghost of Darius, and in "The Eumenides" introduces the Furies. Dryden pleaded for a similar licence in the heroic play, but all depends on the manner of the doing. His ghosts are not majestic, like that of Darius; they are absurd. For boldness of language he also claimed a privilege; persons engaged in superhuman struggles may talk above the pitch of ordinary men. But they must not, like the heroes of the Caroline tragedies, soar or slip into bombast; they must rise on the wings of poetry, not on bladders full of gas. "Are all the flights of heroic poetry to be concluded bombast, unnatural, and mere madness because they," the critics, "are not affected by their excellences?" asks Dryden, in his "Apology for Heroic Poetry and Poetic Licence". "No, not all," the critics might have

answered, "but many of *your* flights of heroic poetry are bombast"; and they might, indeed they did, produce examples. For instance, in his "The State of Innocence," in which, accepting Milton's permission given in blank verse,

> Ay, you may tag my verses if you will,

he rhymed "Paradise Lost" into an opera, Dryden wrote thus:—

> Seraph and cherub, careless of their charge,
> And wanton, in full ease, who live at large,
> Unguarded leave the passes of the sky,
> And all dissolved in hallelujahs lie.

The spectacle of wanton seraphs lying dissolved in hallelujahs naturally provoked laughter, but Glorious John did not see the absurdity of the situation. He took his image from Virgil, he says, where the Greeks enter Troy which "lay buried in sleep and wine". But Trojans were not seraphs, and sleep and wine are not dissolving hallelujahs. In the same way Virgil, following Homer, describes the Cyclops as a monster of mountainous height, as in fact he was. Goliath was only about ten feet high. But Dryden applauds Cowley for writing of Goliath—

> The valley, now, this monster seemed to fill,
> And we, methought, looked up to him from our hill.

"The passage is horrible bombast," says Scott. Not living in an early heroic age, in which exaggeration is natural and pardonable, but in the age of scepticism and the Royal Society, Dryden exceeded the ancient licence, and, as when a hero takes off his hat to his mother's ghost, mingled modern manners with more than heroic audacities. Criticism should look for beauties, not faults, said Dryden, but the critics could reply that the whole scheme of the heroic drama was faulty. The result is extravagance and rant, indeed rant was then the fault of the actors on the French stage. Molière had to warn his company that a King, conversing with his Minister, "does not necessarily speak like a dæmoniac".

Turning to comedy, we find it but little instructed, in refinement, creation of character, and wit, by the example of Molière.

Etherege's three plays "Love in a Tub" (1664), "She Would if She Could" (1667), and "The Man of Mode, or Sir Fopling Flutter" (1676), are the work of a courtier and amateur concerning whose life and death little is known.

The merriment of "Love in a Tub" is a picture of contemporary manners; compared with its prose, the rhyming ten-syllabled couplets of the graver and sentimental characters are almost a relief.

The author (1635-1691?), in the Prologue, admits that "wit" (dramatic genius in this case), "has now declined"; avers that "the older and graver sort" would decry new plays in the manner of Fletcher and Ben Jonson; and bids the audience "Only think upon the modern way of writing". In an Epilogue to "Sir Fopling Flutter," Dryden characterizes the hero admirably: —

> True fops help Nature work, and go to school,
> To file and finish God Almighty's fool.

If these' pieces have wit, they "have not wit enough to keep them sweet".

Thomas Shadwell (1642-1692) was made immortal when he became the butt of Dryden's satire. His plays are useful to students of contemporary manners, and he was the Laureate of William and Mary in succession to "Glorious John".

Sir Charles Sedley and Mrs. Aphra Behn have left nothing imperishable but a few songs, the swan songs of the dying Muse of lyric.

All these playwrights had before their eyes the inimitable and immortal comedies with which Molière was endowing the literature of France. But, even when they tried to follow this model, their imitations were barbarous: for compared with the literary taste and manners of the Court of Louis XIV, those of the reign of Charles II were brutal.

The least unsuccessful of those who directed themselves by the light of Molière was William Wycherley (1640?-1716?). Here we sketch his career and that of his successors, reserving for a separate section the great name of Dryden. Wycherley was of an old family in Shropshire, had a handsome person, was brought up, in boyhood, at Paris, in the literary circle of Madame de Montausier, later resided at Oxford, and, if we could believe what Pope says that Wycherley reported of himself, wrote his first play, "Love in a Wood," before he came to London, to the Middle Temple. This would make Wycherley prior to Etherege, but either his own or Pope's memory is supposed to have been incorrect. The play was not acted till 1672: it was not much in advance of Etherege in merit.

Of "The Gentleman Dancing Master" (1673), "The Country Wife" (1673), and "The Plain Dealer" (1674) the last is by far the best. In the Prologue, the line

> And with faint praises one another damn,

was remembered, unconsciously, by Pope, in his "Damn with faint praise" (in the character of "Atticus," Addison).

"The Plain Dealer" is a comedy of humours, like Jon son's, the chief humorist being the benevolent railing Manly, taken from the Alceste of Molière's "Le Misanthrope". Manly "of an honest, surly, nice humour," is a gallant British sea captain, who holds all the world in contempt but his friend and his love, who, of course, betray him. He is beloved by Fidelia, who, for his sake, has abandoned her large fortune, and taken service as a seaman with Captain Manly. Many scenes of conversation, in imitation of Molière, are vigorous; one perhaps was in Sheridan's mind when he wrote "The School for Scandal". Wycherley defends his "Country Wife" from the assaults of a false prude, who, at least, shows us that, even under Charles II, "The Country Wife" was thought superfluously indecent. The Widow Blackacre, a female Peter Peebles, a litigious she-lawyer, with her oaf of a son, is "in very gracious fooling". The intrigue, and the part assigned to Fidelia, are odious enough, and impossible enough, but the nobility of Fidelia is demonstrated by allowing her, occasionally, to talk in blank verse. When we remember Wycherley's French education, we may suppose that he dealt so much in matter which a French audience would not have endured, because he knew the taste of the theatre-going part of his countrymen.

Wycherley is said to have suffered much from a jealous wife of noble birth, who caused him a world of legal troubles by the bequest of her money. He married again at 75, and shortly afterwards died. The most interesting thing in his later years was his acquaintance with Pope, then a lad, and the characteristic use which Pope made of his opportunity.

CONGREVE.

> Heaven, that but once was prodigal before,
> To Shakespeare gave as much, she could not give him more

than she conferred on Congreve. So wrote Dryden: and probably half believed what he wrote. Dryden was a literary dictator; literary opinion followed his lead; and there was a period when the town recognized the equal of Shakespeare in the sprightly author of comedies no longer ravishing.

William Congreve was born (1670) near Leeds: his family was of Staffordshire. His father settling in Ireland, Congreve was educated at the grammar school of Kilkenny, and at Trinity College, Dublin. He was a very handsome man, with an air of greatness; he easily conquered both the courtly and the literary world when he came to London; he won the admiration and affection of the generous Dryden, who applauded and opened the doors of the theatre to his first comedy, "The Old Bachelor". The play is not better than a fair specimen of Wycherley's manner, but "The Double Dealer" (1693) is much more readable and interesting. The complicated passions of Lady Touchwood have a kind of greatness, the more complicated plots of Maskwell nearly lead to a sanguinary conclusion; Maskwell being as near an approach to the regular villain of comedy as the conditions of comedy permitted. Lady Froth is rather more learned than Mrs. Malaprop, and as vicious under her zeal for astronomy and "mathemacular proof" as the unkindness of man will allow her to be. The haughty refusal of Lord Froth to laugh, even when he is amused, is amusing; Brisk and Careless are agreeable rattles, Sir Paul Plyant is almost to an incredible degree "an uxorious, foolish, fond old knight," and the heroine, Cynthia, is a good girl. The constant bustle, and the involutions of a plot full of surprises ought to have made the play more popular on the stage than it was at first. Leigh Hunt, who edited "The Comedies of the Restoration" (or rather of the date from the Restoration to Queen Anne), candidly says, "speaking for ourselves, we can never attend sufficiently to the plots of Congreve. They soon puzzle us and we cease to think of them."

The student who would enjoy Congreve must first peruse each play very carefully, and make out a summary of the plot, with diagrams illustrating the secret staircases, back doors, screens, and other places of ambush: he must also master the details of the various marriages which are arranged for the various heiresses, amiable bankrupts, and old gentlemen. When the reader has thus given his full attention to the details he may re-read the plays with more ease and pleasure.

In "Love for Love" (1695) Sir Sampson Legend has some of the diverting traits of Sir Anthony Absolute; there are unlooked-for glimpses of romance in the assumed madness of his impoverished son Valentine (the sympathetic rake of comedy—the Charles Surface of an earlier day). The sailor son, Ben Legend, is the stock simple sailor, with some gross sense under the breezy manners of the untutored mariner. Foresight, with his rich collection of superstitions, is a "character part" of interest to the folklorist; one scene between two moral sisters who simultaneously detect each other's sins is diverting: the wit of Jeremy the valet, however, does not come within sight of the wit of Molière's Mascarille; and Miss Prue is a tomboy not remarkable for innocence.

The pearl of "The Way of the World" (1700) is the high-hearted Millamant, who, when she at last rewards one of the thousands that sigh for her, makes a very spirited private marriage contract with her adorer. Her song,

> If there's delight in love,'tis when I see
> That heart, which others bleed for, bleed for me,

is famous among the lyrics of Congreve. We do not often care for Congreve's characters, nor do they try to win our affection, but Millamant conquers all hearts.

Congreve's tragedy in blank verse "The Mourning Bride," holds much the same place in his plays as "Don Garcie de Navarre" does in those of Molière.

After a long, fashionable, and applauded life, Congreve died in 1729, deeply lamented by the Duchess of Marlborough (daughter of the great Duke), and by the once beautiful and delightful actress, Mrs. Bracegirdle. He held rich sinecures under Government, as did other wits while the Tories were in office.

VANBRUGH.

> He writes your comedies, draws schemes, and models,
> And builds Dukes' houses upon very odd hills

is a contemporary couplet which sums up a few of the accomplishments of Sir John Vanbrugh. His family seem to have been Protestants driven from

Ghent in the wars of Alva. He was born in 1666[1] "in a French bastile" he said. He was educated in France; entered the English army; produced his first play, "The Relapse," in 1696, and was the architect of Castle Howard, the Earl of Carlisle's house, in 1701. Carlisle procured for him the herald's post of Clarencieux; as a Whig he was sent to carry the Order of the Garter to the Elector of Hanover (later George I); he built the palace of Blenheim, and, like all who met her, was insulted by Sarah Duchess of Marlborough. He seems to have been friendly with the wits of both parties, being as jovial as versatile. He died on 26 March, 1726.

"The Relapse, or Virtue in Danger," is a kind of continuation of Colley Cibber's "Love's Last Shift"; as Fielding's "Joseph Andrews" continues and burlesques Richardson's "Pamela". From the Preface we learn that, as the second title leads us to think probable, "The Relapse" was accused of obscenity and blasphemy. The Prologue, spoken by Miss Cross on the first night, would, in our delicate age, clear all the women out of the stalls and boxes. The piece opens with a long dialogue in blank verse, between Loveless, a newly married rake, rejoicing in

> the happy cause of my content,

and Amanda, his bride, that Sappy cause. They are going to town, and Amanda is afraid that Loveless's Virtue will Relapse. An amusing character is Lord Foppington, a knight newly made a peer; "While I was but a knight I was a very nauseous fellow," he confesses. He holds an absurd levee with his tailor, wigmaker, and hosier, and snubs his brother, Tom Fashion, who is penniless. Through an old nauseous match-maker, Coupler, Tom learns that the peer is contracted to a rustic heiress, whom he has never seen, Miss Hoyden, daughter to Sir Tunbelly Clumsey. Tom decides to go down, personate his brother, and marry the wealthy Miss Hoyden. Yet he has a qualm of conscience and will give Foppington another chance.

Arrived in town, Loveless and Amanda drop blank verse for prose. Amanda confesses her distaste for the obscenities of, the stage. Loveless admits that he has admired a lady at the play; Amanda flutters with jealousy; her cousin, Berinthia, enters; she is the woman admired by Loveless. Enter Lord Foppington bent on the conquest of Amanda. He dislikes the quiet of a country life: "For 'tis impossible to be quiet without thinking; now thinking is to me the greatest fatigue in the world". His lordship is a lover of books,

of their bindings, "The inside, I must confess, I am not altogether so fond of". For this he gives his exquisite reasons, and describes the glories of his everyday occupations. From 10 p.m. to 2 a.m. he drinks. "Thus, ladies, you see my life is a perpetual round of delights." This peer is worth a wilderness of Sir Fopling Flutters. On Sundays, "a vile day I must confess," Foppington imitates the course of Mr. Badman. He ends by making a declaration to Amanda, who replies with a box on the ear. Loveless and Foppington fight, Foppington falls, exclaiming "Ah,—quite through the body. Stap my vitals!"

Like Shakespeare, Vanbrugh "has brave notions," and like him, as Ben Jonson said, "he needs to be stopped" before swords are drawn in ladies' company. His Lordship, of course, is no more killed than was the Master of Ballantrae when the sword hilt "dirled on his breast-bone".

Berinthia and Amanda now discuss not "the practical part of unlawful love," "*that* is abominable"; "but for the speculative; that, we must all confess, is entertaining". Amanda admits an interest in a speculative inquirer, her husband's friend, Mr. Worthy, and, most unnaturally, for she is very jealous, invites Berinthia, a merry widow, to be her guest.

Lord Foppington, happily recovered, airs his original philosophy of life for his brother's edification. "Look you, Tam, of all things that belong to a woman I have an aversion to her heart. For when once a woman has given you her heart, you can never get rid of the rest of her body." This philosopher declines to give Tom a penny, and Tom returns to the raid upon Miss Hoyden and her fortune.

Loveless is now found—ah! woful change—not only talking in blank verse —indicative of a serious passion—with Berinthia, but kissing her: the discovery is made by Worthy, her old lover. "O God!" exclaims Berinthia. Worthy now knows that Berinthia adores Loveless, and Berinthia—that Worthy adores Amanda. They contrive a plot against Amanda very worthy of their ingenuous principles.

We next find Tom at Sir Tunbelly Clumsey's door, which is garrisoned like the Tower, and all to seclude that Danaë, Miss Hoyden. Both Tom and Miss Hoyden are eager to be married with no more delay than Tom Jones and Sophia, but Sir Tunbelly is more set on ceremonies than Squire Western.

The proceedings of Berinthia now justify the censures of the moralist, and "turning the other page," as Chaucer recommends, we find Tom and Miss Hoyden privately married by Chaplain Bull, when Foppington arrives with two coaches and twenty foot-men, the military skill of Sir Tunbelly, convinced that the newcomer is an impostor, enables him to rout Lord Foppington's guard and arrest his person. Presently a Sir John Friendly arrives; he knows and recognizes the genuine Foppington, who has admirably preserved the calm dignity of his philosophy. The blushless Hoyden now avows to her Nurse and the Chaplain her resolve to prevent trouble by at once wedding the real Lord Foppington.

Meanwhile, by aid of virtue and blank verse, Amanda converts the passion of Mr. Worthy into profound admiration and esteem. The natural denouement follows: Miss Hoyden is recognized as Mrs. Tom Fashion, and Lord Foppington, who would have gone to the guillotine as gallantly as any gentleman, congratulates his brother: "Dear Tam, you have married a woman beautiful in her person, charming in her airs, prudent in her conduct, constant in her inclinations, and of a nice morality. Split my windpipe!"

Vanbrugh's quality, his absence of sentiment, his large and lively handling of old comic types, may be guessed at from this brief analysis of his first play. He was thought to have surpassed it in "The Provoked Wife" (1697) and "The Confederacy" (1705). He also adapted pieces by Molière, and a French writer nearly forgotten, Boursault.

George Farquhar.

George Farquhar, born 1678, at Londonderry, was the son of a clergyman, and was a University wit of Trinity College, Dublin. He early became an actor, and early left the stage; it is said because he had done accidentally what Mr. Lenville proposed to do of set purpose to Nicholas Nickleby, severely wounded a fellow-player in a stage duel. He then obtained a commission in the army, and wrote plays, "A Trip to the Jubilee," "Sir Harry Wildair," "The Way to Win Him," "The Recruiting Officer," "The Beaux' Stratagem" (1707), and others; the characters, such as Scrub, Sergeant Kite, Archer, Lady Bountiful, Captain Plume, and others, were great favourites with Sir Walter Scott, and by him are often quoted. Farquhar died young, at about the age of 30. George Farquhar with his

gaiety, his gallantry, his happy military swagger, his heroes who are not lost to honour, his plots, so comprehensible, and sources of so many merry adventures, wins more sympathy and affection,—dying in the arms of Victory as he did, during the triumph of his last and best play,—than any of the other comic writers of the Restoration.

Otway.

Otway, like most dramatists of his day, cannot be fairly judged by his printed works. They want the splendid costumes and *decor*, the setting of the stage, and the pathos and brilliance of the beautiful actresses, for Otway was most successful in such tender and distraught heroines as Belvidera and Monimia. Born in 1652, Thomas Otway, the son of the rector of Woolbeding, in Sussex, entered Christ Church, Oxford, in 1669, but soon left it, on the death of his father, for London. Here he hung about the Duke of York's Theatre, where he failed as an actor. In 1675 he produced a play, "Alcibiades," though, as he says in a preface to his "Don Carlos," "I might as well have called it 'Nebuchadnezzar,'" for Alcibiades acted in a way not consistent with his character. The caprice of the witty, miserable Earl of Rochester won the good will, if nothing more substantial, of the Duke of York for the poet, who dedicates to him the heroic play of "Don Carlos" (1676). In this, according to Otway, Dryden declared that "I know not a line I would not be author of," so the play must have been, and in fact was, a success. It is written in rhyming couplets, and even triplets; the rhymes are often surprisingly bad. The history of the death of Don Carlos, who was mad, is obscure, and Otway treats it with extreme poetic licence. Philip of Spain is here a tender, though avenging, father and husband, who repents and rants monstrously, though rant is not the common fault of Otway. There is tenderness and pathos enough to account for the popularity of the play; moreover Otway was known to be hopelessly in love with Mrs. Barry, the beautiful actress; Rochester who presently satirised Otway, being his rival. After a luckless campaign with Monmouth in Flanders, Otway, following Dryden's example, abandoned rhyme for blank verse in "The Orphan" (1680), based on a stock situation in a novel of the seventeenth century. The intrigue, though the crucial situation is not acceptable now on the stage, is ingeniously contrived to bring out the characters of the rival brothers, and Monimia, a very pathetic character, must have drawn many tears. There is

the usual number of deaths in the last act. The blank verse has no great distinction, and abounds in redundant feet. Otway, in fact, did not take by literary perfections, but "The Orphan" has no lines so far below the tragic level as the words of the Queen in "Don Carlos".

> How hard it is his passion to confine,
> I'm sure 'tis so if I may judge by mine!

The phrase of Monimia when she learns the depth of her misery, "Oh, when shall I be mad indeed!" is of other metal.

In 1682, Otway produced his "Venice Preserved," certainly his best play, which long held the stage, and was acted now and then up to the middle of the nineteenth century. The conspirators in the play may be said to rant, but moderation of language does not mark the eloquence of violent revolutionaries with the most bitter personal wrongs to avenge. Belvidera may be "stagey," but she has genuine tenderness and pathos; there is dramatic development of character in Jaffier; "the moving incident" is abundant; the absence of poetry was not marked or missed. The scenes with Antonio, a caricature of the Shaftesbury of Titus Oates's plot, with his "I'll prove there's a plot with a vengeance, a bloody, horrid, execrable, damnable, and audacious plot," must have delighted audiences who had just escaped from Oates's reign of lies and terror. The bloody ghosts who appear in the conclusion are an unhappy reversion to the devices of Chapman. Otway wrote other things, the comedy of "The Soldier's Fortune," for example, which, even then, was "so filthy, no modest woman ought to be seen at it," as, Otway tells us, a woman of "a nice morality" declared. Certainly Otway had no real comic genius. Before he wrote "Venice Preserved" Otway was destitute, till relieved by the Duchess of Portsmouth, to whom the play is dedicated. On the death of Charles II the Duchess ceased, it appears, to succour the poet, who died in deep distress, in April, 1685; as to the manner of his death, stories vary. Probably he was not a careful liver; profits from plays were slight; and patrons were niggardly. Otway is undeniably more coherent, more capable in construction than the majority of the tragedians from Chapman to Ford; but he did not inherit that remarkable, if occasional, gift of greatness in style which was their common portion.

Nat Lee.

The reader of the plays in which Nat Lee (1653-1692) employs blank verse, finds it much more satisfactory in its cadences and in movement than the blank verse of Otway. There is something of the old ring in

> For I am doz'd so weary with complaining.
> That I could stand and listen to the winds,

or

> For straight when the sick priest had breathed his last,
> The sacred oil which for a hundred years
> Supplied the sun behind the golden veil,
> Went out and all the mystic lights were quenched.

Undeniably there was poetry in Lee, but to the pathos, concentration, and construction of Otway he does not attain. He was born in Hertfordshire, and educated in Westminster, and Trinity, Cambridge. He was at intervals insane, and while reading the speeches of his characters we sometimes seem to "stand and listen to the winds" of a wild night of autumn.

There is a kind of furious magnificence in the tempestuous tirades of Pharnaces with which the play of "Mithradates" opens, and throughout the terrors of that piece "The old winds cease not blowing and all the night thunders". The same vigour displays itself in his first tragedy (1675), written partly in "new" rhymed heroic couplets. The ghost of Caligula would

> Burn palaces; like Thunder I would rove,
> Tear the tall woods, and rend each sacred grove.

Lee is, by the way, far too prodigal of his ghosts. His age, at all events the theatre-going part of his contemporaries, was apt to jest at ghosts, following Webster and Wagstaffe, and unconvinced by Henry More, Glanvill in "Sadducismus Triumphatus," and the other founders of "Psychical Research".

In 1677, Lee, with "The Rival Queens," made a success which long held the stage, and the names of Statira and Roxana, rivals for the love of Alexander the Great, live in memory. Dryden wrote the prologue of the piece, protesting that he was not "logrolling," and comparing the poet to "Titian

and Angelo". Lee loved a ghost, and that of Philip of Macedon "shakes his truncheon at 'em," at the conspirators against Alexander, whom two queens adore with furious passion. Statira's first words demand

> a knife, a draught of poison, flames!

but, instantly relenting, for she has heard that Alexander loves Roxana, she praises the faithless conqueror:—

> Not the Spring's mouth, nor breath of jesamin,
> Nor violets' infant sweets, nor opening buds,
> Are half so sweet as Alexander's breast.

Though "well-matched for a pair of quiet ones," Statira, of the two, is of milder mood.

The staging of the play must have been arduous, a battle of crows and ravens fills the air, an eagle and dragon meet and fight; the eagle and birds drop dead, the dragon flies away, and "soldiers walk off, shaking their heads," and no wonder! especially as the ghost of Philip is still walking, and a "monstrous child" is weeping blood into a silver bowl and throwing the gore over the percipients. When the jealous Roxana reaches Babylon, she is as passionate as Statira, and cries to the spectators,

> Away, be gone, and give a whirlwind room!

The two queens meet with gentle words, but when their blood is up their language is on the level of the situation. Roxana is the readier with her knife; the dying Statira forgives her; Alexander dies in a delirium, with a lucid interval at the close.

Dryden and Lee worked together in "The Duke of Guise" (assassinated by order of Henri III) and in "Œdipus". The last is worth reading as an example of the taste of the time. The foundation is the "Œdipus Tyrannus" of Sophocles, from which passages are translated in blank verse. In the preface we learn that Corneille's "Œdipe" "is inferior to the original". The "Œdipus" of Lee and Dryden goes very far beyond,—and in that sense surpasses—the masterpiece of the Athenian. "All that one could gain out of Corneille was that an episode must lie, but not his way." For "custom has obtained that there must be an underplot of second persons," as, alas I there is, while the over-elaboration of the loves of Œdipus and Jocasta, "very curious and disgusting," would have seemed to Sophocles the work of Læstrygonians or

some such uncouth barbarians. Jocasta murders all her children—she hangs the girls and stabs the boys, which proves that the taste of Englishmen was infinitely more brutal than that of the prehistoric framers of the original legend. Œdipus, after putting out his eyes as in the Greek, commits suicide —by jumping out of an upper floor window! The love affair of Eurydice, and the charge against her of being the murderess of Laius, are supremely absurd, while the ghost of Laius drives about in a chariot with those of three of his retainers. Even this nonsense is capped by a song about fiends who use red-hot tongs, and boiling cauldrons, and torture "with molten lead in it".

Lee and Dryden seem to have stimulated each the other's ambition to outdo the worst excesses of the most frantic Elizabethan playwrights. They knew, of course, that Œdipus, in the Attic myth, did not kill himself, like a distraught housemaid, by jumping out of a window; they knew that he lived, and that the children of Jocasta lived and furnished the materials for two noble dramas of Sophocles. But they thought that the blood could not be spread too thick.[2]

Dryden.

Though Dryden was a dramatist of the Restoration, he was so much else, was a link so strong in the golden chain of our poetry and prose, that he must be considered apart from smaller wits.

John Dryden was born in 1631, at Aldwinkle, Northamptonshire. His name is common in Teviotdale: his family was landed, and had a baronetcy: in Scotland it is not a landed name. From Westminster school Dryden went to Trinity, Cambridge, where he was known to Mr. Samuel Pepys. He entered in 1650, at 19, an age later than was usual. For some reason he did not like his University.

> Thebes did his green unknowing youth engage,
> He chooses Athens in his riper age,

that is Oxford, the home of lost causes, like his own. In 1663 married Lady Elizabeth Howard; wrote plays for a livelihood (his rents were small); in 1670 became Poet Laureate and Historiographer Royal: acted, we may say, in both capacities in his great satires of the troubles following on the Popish

Plot and other poems down to the birth of the Prince of Wales (10 June, 1688), and, after the Revolution, supported himself by play-writing, translating Virgil, by his "Fables," and other works, till his death on 1 May, 1700.

Setting aside Milton, who dwelt apart, Dryden was by far the greatest man of letters of the Restoration and the reign of our Dutch deliverer. Under Dryden, and to a great extent through his versatile and manly genius, English literature matured and clarified itself. Though not averse to far-fetched "conceits" in his early poems, Dryden shook them off; he made the heroic couplet the instrument for Pope and his successors, he gave it a nobility, a richness and depth of music which it had not possessed: it was stronger, more varied, more poetical, in his hands than in those of Pope. Prose, touched by him, became much more lucid and rapid than it had been in the long involved periods of Clarendon, if not so purely simple as the prose of Swift.

It was, in a sense, the misfortune of Dryden that he was the poet of an age immersed in its own complicated and exciting, and now, to all but careful historical students, not easily understood affairs. We have no adequate and intelligent history of the Restoration. Dry den's verses, for the most part, are "topical," deal with events of the day: there is little time for meditation on what is universal; he is an urban poet, too: nature and landscape are rarely handled by him. If our ideal of poetry is derived from study of Wordsworth, Shelley, Keats, Tennyson, and other recent moderns, we do not and cannot find in Dryden what they have taught us to desire and expect. His themes are of his time and of the men and the political passions of his time. His plays, many of them rhymed, are but little read; nobody strongly recommends his comedies, which are more coarse than comic; he did not, himself, think that comedy set his genius.

His lyrics, though spirited, have not the sweet spontaneity of the true English lyric from "Love has come with Lent to town" to those of the best nineteenth century makers. To read his best satires with entire enjoyment we need to be well acquainted with the obscure intrigues of an age of plots, royal, political, and religious. Yet, through all his poetic work, from his early "Heroic Stanzas" on the death of Cromwell, down to "Alexander's Feast," we see the note and hear the voice of a great poet; a voice new, noble, sonorous, and his own. There is, in almost all that Dryden did, in his

criticism in prose not less than in his verse, a kind of conquering supremacy, an ease, an impetus, and a consciousness of his own greatness which is not arrogance, but lends facility and a triumphant speed to his verse; while his criticism is that of zest, of delight in excellence wherever he finds it; from Homer to Virgil, from Virgil to the then little understood Chaucer, to Spenser, Shakespeare, and Milton.

His "Heroic Stanzas" (published in 1659) in quatrains, may or may not have been inspired by appreciation of Cromwell; Dryden's kinsfolk were Presbyterian and Parliamentarian; but his heart and natural inclinations as a man and a poet, were more engaged (1660) in his "Astræa Redux," and verses to Charles II on his coronation. Dryden, like Waller, was (to our taste) more successful in praising the great usurper than the Merry Monarch. The first stanza in the poem on Cromwell strikes a ringing and a novel note, but the reader also requires a footnote on Roman imperial funereal ritual before he can understand what is meant. To say of Cromwell,

> To our crown he did fresh jewels bring,

while, in fact, he sold the jewels, was to invite satire; to talk of

> Stanching the blood by breathing of the vein,

was thought an odd way of alluding to regicide: though Dryden may perhaps have spoken of the wars in general.

> Her safety rescued Ireland to him owes

is a strange compliment to the man of the Drogheda massacre. Dryden, at this time, wrote as a Protestant; much later he was reconciled to the ancient Church.

His "Astræa Redux," and poem on the Coronation of Charles II show his early mastery of the heroic couplet. Scott thought that in these poems the Muse awoke, like the Sleeping Beauty of the fairy tale "in the same antiquated and absurd vestments in which she had fallen asleep twenty years before". This means that the so-called "metaphysical" style of far-fetched conceits and comparisons (which Sir Walter heartily hated) still prevailed. There are, indeed, traces of the habits attributed by fable to elephants, and remote classical allusions, and abrupt changes of metaphor from anatomy to bait-fishing (of which Dryden was fond) and it is rather absurd to make a ship of war "groan beneath the weight" of a lad like the

Duke of Gloucester! But the verse is excellent, and the spirit high and joyous, as became the great occasion. As much may be said of the lines addressed to Clarendon.

In the "Annus Mirabilis" (1667), concerning the naval war with Holland and the Great Fire of 1666, Dryden reverted to the quatrains made fashionable by Davenant's "Gondibert". Mr. Pepys, of the Admiralty, thought this "a very good poem," it came home to his bosom and business, and, as a poem of war, is much superior to Addison's "Campaign". There are still conceits, as when Dutch mariners killed on board a ship laden with spices and Oriental porcelain "by shattered porcelain fall," or "by aromatic splinters die". To appreciate the poem the reader needs a good chart and an intimate knowledge of naval history, but the vigour of the verses on the fire carries them on like the conflagration itself. The "Prayer of Charles II" is royal, and worthy of David, to whom Dryden had already compared him in "Astræa Redux," as later in "Absalom and Achitophel". Indeed Charles in certain points of conduct resembled the Psalmist.

For some fifteen years Dryden was now to be occupied with play-writing, and his tragedies and comedies, as his latest editor says, supply the historian with "the most troublesome and perhaps the most thankless... part of his task". But Dryden does not live by the merits of his dramas. When we have said that Scott, with all his zeal for old plays, did not like Dryden's, it is clear that people less omnivorous in literature and less devoted to the drama, will leave them alone.

Of Dryden's first comedy, "The Wild Gallant," 1663, Mr. Pepys said it was "so poor a thing as I ever saw in my life". It was condemned, but was amended and repeated. The judgment of Mr. Pepys was well deserved. The play is in prose.

"The Rival Ladies" (published 1664) was reckoned "innocent and most pretty witty" by Pepys: it is partly in poor blank verse, partly in rhymed couplets: in the preface Dryden says that Waller "first showed us to conclude the sense, most commonly in distiches, which, in the verse before him, runs on for so many lines together, that the reader is out of breath to overtake it". The plot is reckless of probability, but, on the whole, the thing is not coarse as well as shocking to the credulity of the reader.

In "The Indian Queen" (1664) Dryden added some scenes to a "heroic" play by Sir Robert Howard, and is credited with the part of Montezuma. The "heroic" play resembled the immense extravagant romances of the day ("Gondibert" is a versified romance of this kind); written by Mdlle. de Scudéry and her imitators. Intricate prolonged extravagance was then characteristic; and Sir George Mackenzie ("Bluidy Mackenzie"), who wrote such a romance about the civil war, reckoned these heroic tales the final and perfect type of the novel.

"The Indian Emperor," in rhyme (1665), was a contribution by Dryden to this class of drama. Cortez and Pizarro go conquering together, which is odd, "in a pleasant Indian country," within two leagues of Mexico. The High Priest's morning sacrifice has disposed of 500 human victims—love scenes with ladies of such Mexican names as Almeria and Cydaria follow; Cortez and Pizarro approach in arms, Cydaria and Cortez fall in love, in a song, and after much heroic passion, all ends happily for the lovers. The merits of the versification and the rhetoric are great; Montezuma is racked on the stage; and holds a dialogue about religion, in fine distiches, with his equally tormented High Priest. The priest expires, but Cortez releases Montezuma, and throws the blame on Pizarro.

"The Conquest of Granada" (1670) was a yet more triumphant play of the heroic variety; "The Rehearsal," a satirical piece, partly by the Duke of Buckingham, partly by collaborators, derided "Bayes" (as we have seen); and as Dryden received the Laureate's bays in 1670, he is, at least, in part, the object of the mockery. He took it very unconcernedly, and went on writing heroic plays, but in 1677-1678, in "All for Love," abandoned rhyme for blank verse. "The Spanish Friar" (1681) was a "topical" play, full of the Protestantism of Oates's Popish Plot.

The sequels of the Whig and Protestant lunacy of the Popish Plot, and the political turmoil and Whig conspiracies in the interests of Monmouth, and against the succession of the Duke of York (James II.), found Dryden on the side of the King, and gave occasion for his greatest works, the political satires, "Absalom and Achitophel" (Monmouth and Shaftesbury) and "The Medal" (1681-1682), while more amusing if less monumental, is "Mac-Flecknoe," the attack on the Whig playwright and versifier, Shadwell. "The Hind and Panther" (the Roman and Anglican Churches) is not very appropriate in its allegory, but magnificent in many passages of verse.

Dryden came into the religion of the Duke of York, apparently from conviction, and so threw in his lot with a doomed cause. After the Revolution of 1688, no longer Laureate, he simply worked hard at literature for his livelihood. He translated Virgil with much spirit, into rhymed ten syllabled couplets; and wrote that Ode to the Pious Memory of Mrs. Anne Killigrew which contains his repentance for the prostitution of the Muse throughout the revel of the Restoration.

> O gracious God I how far have we
> Profaned thy heavenly grace of poesy!
> Made prostitute and profligate the Muse,
> Debased to each obscene and impious use,
> Whose harmony was first ordained above
> For tongues of angels and for hymns of love.

Dryden's old age, as the dictator to the wits at Will's Coffee House, was tranquil and happy: he had sown his literary wild oats, his life was one of peaceful and honoured industry, without failure of mental force. He died in May, 1700, and was buried near Chaucer in Westminster Abbey, with strangely maimed rites, according to Farquhar, the author of "The Beaux' Stratagem," who was present.

Dryden's prose, chiefly critical, was addressed to that part of the literary world, the Court and the Town, and the Templars, which was mainly interested in the theatre. He could thus write with freedom, alertness, and gaiety, to appreciative readers concerned with the problems of the drama. It had almost expired by a kind of natural decay, moral and literary, before the theatres were closed by the Puritans. Now writers of plays looked back on the glories of the "former temple," to Jonson, Fletcher, and Shakespeare, and also looked abroad to the French stage then flourishing under Corneille and Molière. Which was the better way? Was the rhyme of French tragedy, and of many French comedies, to be imitated? It was imitated, and in his rhymed tragedies Dryden acquired his mastery of the couplet. What was to be said for and against the English practice of an upper and an under plot? What were the famous "unities" of time, place, and action? Should deaths be merely reported or presented on the stage? Dryden observes that the audiences used to laugh at dying scenes in tragedies: "it is the most comic part of the whole play".

Having such topics to discuss, Dryden adopted the prose style so justly appreciated, though it was the reverse of his own manner, by Dr. Johnson. Dryden's prefaces to his plays "have not the formality of a settled style, in which the first half of the sentence betrays the other. The clauses are never balanced, nor the periods modelled: every word seems to drop by chance, though it falls into its proper place. Nothing is cold or languid; the whole is airy, animated, and vigorous; what is little is gay; what is great is splendid."

The most famous essays are those of "Dramatic Poesy," and "The Preface to the Fables," adaptations or "translations" of Chaucer and Boccaccio. The former essay is, in form, a dialogue, held in a boat on the Thames, while the thunder of the guns, in a great naval battle against the Dutch (3 June, 1665) dies away from the English shores, with promise of an English victory. The speakers are Lord Buckhurst, Sir Robert Howard, Dryden's brother-in-law, the poet himself, and Sir Charles Sedley, the gayest of the four, though his knowledge of Aristotle's "Poetics" is far from adequate. The speeches are rather long; there is no rapid interchange of opinions. In Dryden's lips are placed the words, "Shakespeare was the man who of all modern, and perhaps ancient poets, had the largest and most comprehensive soul". Yet "he is many times flat, insipid; his comic wit degenerating into clinches, his serious swelling into bombast". Dryden, here, and in "The Preface to the Fables," was much more keen to praise Shakespeare than to blame him: in the second place the zest with which he applauds Shakespeare and Chaucer (whose scansion, unluckily, he did not understand), is worthy of himself and of them. He translated Virgil, but, when he did some Homeric passages into English, we see how entirely the Greek, to his taste, overcomes the Mantuan poet. "I have found, by trial, Homer a more pleasing task than Virgil... the Grecian is more according to my genius than the Latin poet."

Dryden himself, at the meeting of the ways of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, belonged by genius more to the past than the immediate future. His criticisms are like the conversation of a great artist, speaking of his art, and also (Dr. Johnson thought him too copious on this subject) of himself. But here Johnson resembles Dryden when he rebukes Andromache, at her last leave-taking with Hector, for speaking of her utter bereavement of father and brothers by the spear of Achilles. "The devil was in Hector," says Dryden, "if he knew not all this matter, as well as she who

told it him, for she had been his bed-fellow for many years together"—an error in fact, and an example of Dryden's occasional frivolity.

The work of Thomas Southerne has for long been neglected, though Garrick, by making excisions and modifications, restored part of it to the stage. Southerne was born before the Restoration (1660), and lived to see the last effort of the Stuart cause crushed in 1746. Born in Dublin, he went to Oxford, neglected the law, gave his first play in 1682, paid court to the Duke of York, got a commission in the Duke of Berwick's regiment, and wrote, in 1687, a play, not acted till 1721, in which he satirized Mary, the daughter of James II. Dryden doubled, in Southerne's case, the price of a prologue, raising it from £5 to £10, but Southerne raised the gains of authors, getting £700 for a single piece, while Dryden never received more than £100. Southerne's new comedies were popular after the Revolution of 1688. The plot of his "Innocent Adultery" (dear to Lydia Languish) was taken from a novel, by Mrs. Aphra Behn—the play, in 1758, was revived by Garrick;—from Mrs. Behn also Southerne dramatized "Oroonoko, or the Loyal Slave". This piece, with the licentious comic scenes removed, was revived in 1759, and a new age saw how Southerne

> "Touch'd their fathers' hearts with gen'rous woe,
> And taught their mothers' youthful eyes to flow,"

though

> "With ribald mirth he stained his sacred page".

In 1725, the poetic fire of Southerne died out in "Money the Mistress". The author was liked by everybody, even by Pope, known to all as "honest Tom," and addressed by the Earl of Orrery in a letter as "My Dear Old Man". Southerne did not affect the development of the stage, and the better part of his "Oroonoko" is due to Mrs. Behn: people who laughed at the sub-plot were easily amused.

Of Nicholas Rowe (1674-1718) space suffices only for the statement that he was made Poet Laureate under George I., edited Shakespeare, and wrote "Jane Shore," "in imitation of Shakespeare's style". Here is a sample of the imitation:—

> "If poor, weak woman swerve from Virtue's rule,
> If strongly charmed she leave the thorny way,
> And in the softer paths of pleasure stray,
> Ruin ensues, reproach and endless shame,
> And one false step entirely damns her fame."

The blank verse too is remote from the Shakespearean.

The stage (like the world after the death of Donne's Miss Drury) continued to exist after the death of Steele. Young and Johnson, Thomson and John Home wrote tragedies, and acting comedies abounded, but we do not find comedies that live and give pleasure in the reading till we come to Goldsmith and Sheridan.

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[1] In 1664 in the Parish of St. Nicholas Aeons (*see* "Diet, of Nat. Biog." referring to the list of Baptisms in that Church).

[2] In the Achæan myth, first mentioned in the "Iliad," we read that "Œdipus fell," the Greek word is that used for falling in battle.

CHAPTER XXVI.

AUGUSTAN POETRY.

Alexander Pope.

Alexander Pope, the son of Catholic parents in the trading class, was born in the year of Revolution, 1688. His education was private, priests were his tutors, but he acquired Latin, and was from childhood a great reader of poetry, and an imitator of what he read. He was not born deformed, but overstudy, perhaps, or unnoted accident, made him the stunted and crooked thing that he became, while his health, and the hideous personal insults which his enemies used as freely as Hazlitt did in later times, exasperated his temper.

His parents withdrew to Windsor Forest, a centre of Catholic families like the Blounts and Englefields. Pope was early introduced to the coffee-house wits by the most chivalrous and accomplished of men, Charles Wogan, who, in 1719, rescued from prison in Austria, and brought to her affianced prince in Italy, Clementina Sobieska, mother of Prince Charles.

Pope corresponds very early, on literary subjects, with the veteran Wycherley (of whom Pope's account is, as always, quite untrustworthy) and with "knowing Walsh". He taught himself verse by translating the Latin poet Statius, and at 21 published, in 1709, his "Pastorals," "written at the age of 16," according to Pope.

It is not possible here to examine all Pope's statements about his works, all his really ingenious ways of fishing for fame, of mystifying; and, with none of the coarseness of our contemporary literary advertisement, of acting as his own interviewer and his own advertiser. He had no need to practise these arts, but his methods are amusing as exposed by his learned and hostile editor, Elwin. Pope's great delight was in literary quarrels, and he managed to pick some very pretty quarrels out of remarks on his pastorals

and those of Philips which appeared in "The Guardian". Pope preluded his pastorals by an essay on pastoral poetry in general; a *genre* of which it may be said that Theocritus (using literary models, such as Stesichorus, and also familiar with the songs of Sicilian peasants) introduced it in immortal poems; Virgil imitated Theocritus: and Pope thinks that Virgil "refines upon his original, and in all points when judgment is principally concerned, he is much superior to his master". It would have been pleasant to set down Pope to the construing of a few passages from Theocritus. Pope kept pretty close to his originals: and follows his own advice "the numbers should be the smoothest, the most easy and flowing imaginable". The brevity of the pastorals, their smoothness, and their avoidance of the "burning questions" of the day, so commonly intruded into Elizabethan pastorals, permit Pope's to be read with ease and even with pleasure.

In the "Essay on Criticism" (1711) we find Pope with an ambition to reform the world of literature. It is not easy to find out exactly what he would be at, for he uses such terms as "Nature," "wit," "judgment," in various ways. Nature seems permanent enough, but human views of "Nature" differ perpetually, and when Pope says, "First follow Nature," what does he mean by "Nature"? Why are "wit" and "judgment" "at strife"? The poet refers them to Nature as interpreted by Greek art for a verdict; and of Greek art he knew very little. Read Homer and Virgil, especially Virgil, he says. The poem, though it teaches us little about criticism, is full of lines so witty and so pointed that they are now proverbial.

In 1713 he published "Windsor Forest," admired by Swift, his life-long friend; with Addison he was on apparently good terms, but he was already suspicious. He attacked Dennis, who had assailed Addison's "Cato," and he did so in a style which Addison, through Steele, repudiated. Addison's praise of Philips's pastorals, with their Fairies, to Pope appeared dispraise of his own; and in an article in "The Guardian" he made fun of Philips with ingenious irony of commendation.

Pope's great work, his version of the "Iliad," appearing in portions (1715-1720), met a kind of challenge in Tickell's version of the First Book. Addison spoke well of Tickell's specimen; did he write it, or inspire it, or set it up as a rival to Pope's? Pope, much later, told his own story of his wrongs and of his noble and dignified treatment of Addison. His most loyal biographer cannot accept the tale: at all events Pope wrote, and much later

published, his famous verses on Addison (Atticus). (Published, 1722, after Addison's death.) The two men ceased to be friends, but Addison never hit back. Pope had also suspected him for doubts as to the wisdom of adding to the first shape of "The Rape of the Lock" (1712) the machinery of Sylphs and Gnomes in the second form (1714). The addition was deservedly successful, but Addison might well hesitate to recommend a change in that tiny mock-epic of a quarrel about the stealing of a lock of hair. It is perfection in its way, in its wit, sauciness, and gaiety.

The "Iliad," a terrible task for Pope, executed through long years of advice from all quarters, of doubt, and of weariness, was a triumph, celebrated in charming verses by Gay's "Welcome to Mr. Pope on His Return from Greece". In that strange age the noble, the great, the beautiful swelled Pope's triumph; literature was fashionable. Pope's "Iliad" can never be superseded as a masterpiece of English literature. He was no scholar, but he had many friends to help him, and his plan was to give the spirit of the Epic, as he conceived it, in a form which his age could appreciate. It is almost as if he had taken Homer's theme and written the poem himself. The minor characteristics of the antique manner are gone; but his age would have thought them barbarous and fatiguing. Wherever there is rhetoric, as in the speeches of the heroes, Pope is magnificent; where there are pictures of external nature he is conventional. But he is never slow. His conventions were those of his age, and are extinct, but time cannot abate the splendour of his spirit.

In doing the "Odyssey," of which the first part appeared in 1725, he was aided by Fenton and Broome, who, under his supervision, wrote exactly like himself. With them, too, there were quarrels; they were not paid in what they reckoned a satisfactory style. Pope received about £10,000 in all for Homer, a large sum in those days, and not likely to be equalled by the gains of any later translator of Homer. He dabbled in the shares of the South Sea Bubble, and appears to have been rather a winner than a loser.

He had accumulated quarrels to his heart's content, hence "The Dunciad" of 1728-1729: a satire on minor men of letters, in which he shows wit and ill-nature enough, with a vein of true poetry in the conclusion; but the dirt and the personalities are now rather amazing than agreeable; while the necessary notes below drive the text into the garrets of the page. Not even Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, who had laughed at Pope's attempts to make

love to her, escaped a flick of the whip of scandal in "The Dunciad". Perhaps Pope had not been gently treated, but nobody admires his revenges. The business of publication was managed with all the intricate wiles and subterfuges in which he took such strange delight. One of his butts, Cibber, retorted in kind, and was successful in giving pain: Theobald, a useful editor of Shakespeare, Pope assailed, because Theobald had not spared the errors in his own edition (1728).

His later works, Epistles to Burlington and Arbuthnot, "The Essay on Man," the "Imitations of Horace," are full of the wit and polished verse that were natural to Pope, and were fostered by his friendships with St. John (Bolingbroke), Swift, Gay, and Arbuthnot; friendships that never failed, and eternally testify to the better part in Pope, despite his tempers of malice and his feline arts. His enthusiasm for Atterbury, exhibited in letters written before the bishop's too well-merited exile, is the most romantic point in his career. Late in life he was kind to Johnson and Thomson; he had been a good son; his character greatly irritated his most learned editor, Mr. Elwin; but nobody suffered so much from his faults of jealousy and suspiciousness as Pope himself. He died on 30 May, 1744.

Ever since the romantic movement of the early nineteenth century, people have asked "Was Pope a poet?" He was, in the highest degree, the kind of poet that his age and the English society of his age desired and deserved; a town poet—where rural nature is concerned, conventional and unobservant; where Man is concerned a poet of Man, literary, political, and fashionable. In the great fight over Pope's claim to be a poet, of 1819, when Bowles was the assailant, Byron was the champion of Pope: Byron himself being a satirist and a poet of mankind, urban, political, and fashionable, as well as piratical. Horace was busied with the same field of human nature (not with the desperate pirate and remorseful Giaour) but nobody has asked "Was Horace a poet?"

Pope wrote in reaction against the conceited poetry of the seventeenth century; he did well, though the manner was already dead, but he never came within sight or hearing of the inspired songs of Lovelace and Carew. The world of Pope was in many ways a limited and evanescent and artificial world; but in his verse it lives eternally, and that is enough for his fame, and testimony sufficient to his genius. He brought his instrument, the decasyllabic couplet, to the perfection required for his purpose, each

couplet existing in and for itself. But in reading him we feel that "paper-sparing Pope" wrote down his best passages, detached, on the backs of letters; they are separate inspirations, and are fitted into the whole like fragments of a mosaic: for example the lines on Atticus are fitted into "The Epistle to Arbuthnot". His rhymes, as "fault" to "thought," are not the things on which he bestowed most pains.

Concerning other poets—Chaucer, Spenser, Shakespeare—we feel that, in any age of literature, in any period of taste, under any conventions, they must have been great. Pope, on the other hand, cannot easily be thought of as having the capacity for greatness, except in the literary conditions of the early eighteenth century. But in that period he was supreme.

Prior.

From the galaxy of wits who dined with Harley and St. John and were addressed in that splendid society by their Christian names, Jonathan or Mat, Matthew Prior stands somewhat apart. His duties as a diplomatist carried him abroad; he owed his diplomatic posts to his wit, not to his birth, which Queen Anne spoke of as unpleasantly obscure. He was born on 14 July, 1664, at Wimborne or Winburn, in Dorsetshire; Westminster was his school, and St. John's, Cambridge, his college. Here he took his degree, in 1686, and obtained a fellowship in 1688. He attracted the notice of the Whigs by parodying Dryden's "Hind and Panther," in "The Town and Country Mouse," aided in the jest by Charles Montagu. Dryden is very improbably said to have wept; the Whigs, at all events, laughed, and in 1691 made Prior secretary to the Embassy in Holland. He held the same post at Versailles later; at this time he was a sincere eulogist of our Dutch deliverer, William III, whom he celebrated in "The Carmen Seculare" (1700), indeed constantly, like Horace, he "praising his tyrant sung". Reviewing history, he places William before a number of Roman heroes, and, remembering that William's wife is a Stuart, bids the god Janus

> Finding some of Stuart's race
> Unhappy, pass their annals by.

But, as thou dwell'st upon that heavenly name

To grief for ever sacred, as to fame,
O! read it to thyself: in silence weep!

Is the name Charles or Mary? At this time there was a fashionable cult of Mary Stuart. This long ode, granting the mythology, has considerable merit, though, says Dr. Johnson, "Who can be supposed to have laboured through it?" Not the Doctor, as he candidly confesses.

Under Queen Anne, Prior was tempted over to the Tory party, and his doings, as a negotiator with France, were thought, and perhaps not unjustly, to smack of Jacobitism. He was in Paris when Beatrix Esmond's Duke of Hamilton was about to go thither on a mission, and there seems little doubt (from a record by Lockhart of Carnwath, the leader of the Scottish Cavaliers) that Hamilton was to bring over to England, in disguise, the exiled son of James II, "the Pretender," as Colonel Esmond does in Thackeray's novel. But Hamilton fell in a duel with Mohun, and that chance was lost.

As *acknowledged* ambassador, Prior was at the French Court from August, 1712, to August, 1714, when the death of Queen Anne scattered the Tories. Early in 1715 he was locked up on suspicion of treason, and was not released till three years later.

The hope of the Whigs was to decapitate Harley, who lay in the Tower; but Harley could have involved Marlborough, possessing a fatal letter of his, and finally Prior and Harley were released. He had now no resources except his college fellowship, but his friends by securing a large subscription for his poems, and by the generosity of the family of Harley, placed him beyond want. He died on September 18, 1721.

Prior does not live by his "Alma, or the Progress of the Mind," a long poem in rhymed eight syllable couplets, in the manner of Butler's "Hudibras". This work is a kind of comic history of Psychology, and ends with Barry Lyndon's rhyme to Aristotle, "Here, Jonathan, your master's bottle!" Prior's "Solomon," on the vanity of knowledge, pleasure, and power, in heroic rhymed verse, is best remembered for two lines to Abra, and might, so easily does the author take his theme, be called the vanity of melancholy, though it closes in serious admonitions to "the weary King Ecclesiast".

Prior's tales in the manner of Fontaine's "Contes," are lively, like these; and like these, may have seemed coarse to such a moralist as Sir Richard Steele.

Prior, in fact, lives by his merry, tender, light, and bright social verses, in tripping measures, for example, "Thus Kitty, beautiful and young" (for Gay's patroness, the Duchess of Queensberry), "To a Child of Quality," "The Merchant, to Secure His Treasure," "Dear Chloe, how blubber'd is that pretty face," and many other things; the best reminding us more of the charming trifles in the Greek Anthology than of Horace.

GAY.

The spoiled improvident child in the group of wits was John Gay, to whom Pope and Swift were attached by the most tender affection. Gay was an author who never aimed high, but who almost always hit his mark and pleased the Town. But his success was so much the consequence of choosing the happy moments, his poems are so completely poems of his age, that he is now praised at a venture rather than read. He was born at Barnstaple, in Devonshire (1685); though of an old family he "was without prospect of hereditary riches," and was "placed apprentice with a silk-mercer" in London.

Perhaps some fair customer discovered that he had a soul above silk; the Duchess of Monmouth, the heiress of the Scotts of Buccleuch, made him her secretary (1712). Becoming acquainted with Pope, Gay dedicated to him (1713) his "Rural Sports" in the usual heroic rhymed couplets. Gay's descriptions of nature, and his praises, are more genuine than, in that age of the Town, such things usually were. He writes of angling "with his eye on the object," in Wordsworth's phrase. His remarks on fishing with the worm, a theme unworthy of the Muse, are judicious. As to fly fishing, Gay is among those who advocate a search for the insect in the waters and an exact imitation. He would have us fish "fine and far off," with "a single hair" next the hook, and perhaps he is the first to recommend the use of the "dry" or floating fly: "Upon the curling *surface* let it glide," not sunk. The catching of a salmon is not ill described, but as Gay retains his "single hair," he must always have been broken if he did happen to hook a fish. For his own part, he never uses either worm or the natural fly: never tries for coarse fish—pike, perch, and so forth,—and this justifies the affection of his friends.

In "The Shepherd's Week" (1714) his Idylls describe real peasants with their folklore superstitions, but Virgil, or Theocritus, is still imitated. The pastoral is an extinct species of literature, but Gay's were more natural and popular than Pope's. Dedicated to St. John, in verses celebrating the recovery of Queen Anne, who presently died, the poems were ungrateful to the Hanoverian Court, and Gay lost the secretaryship to an ambassador.

Gay's "Welcome from Greece, to Mr. Pope on his having finished his translation of the 'Iliad,'" has already been mentioned as one of the most charming relics of that golden age of letters, wit, and friendship.

Friendship did not aid wit, when Pope and Arbuthnot took hands in, and ruined, Gay's "Three Hours after Marriage," a comedy which was not comic (1717). In 1720 his collected poems brought Gay £1000: but a gift of stock in the South Sea Bubble was profitless, as Gay would not sell out in time. In 1727 he was offered by George II a Court place so small and ludicrous that it was declined.

Gay next made an immense but not a lucrative success with "The Beggar's Opera," which had an unexampled run of seven weeks. A sequel was not licensed by the censor; Gay was recouped by a subscription, and fell out of Court favour. The Duchess of Queensberry (Prior's Kitty), carried him to her place in the country, and here he was petted till his death, which seems to have been caused by indolence and the pleasures of the table.

His "Trivia; or the Art of Walking the Streets of London," is a vivacious picture of the crowds, dirt, and bustle: his "Fables," though original and witty, are, like pastorals, an obsolete form of literary entertainment. He wrote his own epitaph,

> Life is a jest, and all things show it,
> I thought so once, but now I know it.

He took a different view of this important theme in "Thoughts on Eternity".

Ambrose Philips.

But for his friendship with Addison and the collision of his "Pastorals," with those of Pope, producing Pope's famous ironical review, Ambrose Philips (1675-1749) would scarcely be remembered. The modern art of "booming"

was illustrated in Philips's case. A whole 'Spectator' was devoted to a puff of his adaptation ("The Distressed Mother") of the "Andromache" of Racine: and another told how it affected Sir Roger de Coverley. As has occasionally happened more recently, though advertised by Addison, and by his own threat to birch Pope, "Philips became ridiculous, without his own fault, by the absurd admiration of his friends," and his Christian name, Ambrose, became the ludicrous nickname, Namby-pamby. But for Philips there was not lacking a patron, Boulter, Primate of Ireland, and in Ireland places were found for the exile. Philips translated several Odes of Pindar, and though he had not the pinion of the Theban eagle, the sentiments of Pindar are plainly visible in his versions.

TICKELL.

Among the minor stars in the golden galaxy of Queen Anne's reign scrutiny detects Thomas Tickell. (Born in Cumberland in 1686, educated at Queen's, Oxford.) He is best remembered in connexion with Pope's story that to damage his translation of the "Iliad," Addison translated the First Book and published it, averring that Tickell was the author. That Addison was guilty of a villainous action is, says Macaulay, highly improbable, that Tickell was capable of a villainy is highly improbable, that the twain were united in a base conspiracy is improbable "out of all whooping". But that Pope's mind, resentful, brooding, and inventive, came to believe in the conspiracy, is, unfortunately, only too natural. We know the figments of all sorts which the imagination of Shelley imposed on him: they were, at least, more romantic than the figments of Pope. In both cases there is a resemblance to the fancy of persecutions which haunts the insane.

Tickell had the honour and happiness to be a friend of Addison, and wrote verses commendatory of his opera, "Rosamond," and of his tragedy, "Cato". His translation of the First Book of the "Iliad" is really good, when we consider the poetic conventions of the age, and the inevitable use of the rhyming heroic couplets. He who would estimate the difficulties of Pope's and Tickell's task, should endeavour, himself, to do a few of the lines of Homer into the classical metre of Queen Anne's day. When Tickell makes Agamemnon, speaking of Chryseis, say

Not Clytæmnestra boasts a nobler race,
A sweeter temper, or a lovelier face,

he is comically remote from what Agamemnon does say in Homer, and the sweetness of Clytæmnestra's temper was never famous. Tickell's "Thou fierce-looked talker with a coward soul" is much less spirited and literal than Pope's "Thou dog in forehead and in heart a deer" ("Drunkard, with eyes of dog and heart of deer," is the literal version). Tickell, more bound by the taste of his age than Pope, shirks the dog and deer. None the less Tickell's version is spirited and lucid; the course of events can be easily followed: the reader is enabled to understand the tragic situation from which the whole epic evolves itself. If Pope had not written, if Tickell had finished his version as well as he began it, he would have satisfied public taste, and won considerable fame.

Tickell, following Addison, was a Whig, "most Whiggish of Whigs," Swift said. This makes his line on "An Original Picture of King Charles I, Taken at the Time of His Trial," all the more curious. The portrait, of which several replicas exist, was mezzotinted from the All Souls' copy in Tickell's day, about 1714. (Bower was the painter.)

How meagre, pale, neglected, worn with care,
What steady sadness and august despair!

says Tickell. The look is one of melancholy scorn rather than of despair. Tickell falls foul of the artist:

Thy steady hands thy savage heart betray,
Near thy bad work the stunn'd spectators faint,
Nor see unmoved what thou unmoved could'st paint.

Bower, in fact, produced the most sympathetic portrait of the King. Tickell proceeds to curse Cromwell, bless the Restoration, and salute Queen Anne as a Stuart.

Not much Whiggery here! But when the Hanoverian dynasty and the Whigs came in, Tickell was strong on the winning side. His "Epistle from a Lady in England to a Gentleman at Avignon," from a Jacobite lady to a gentleman at James's Court, is very prettily written, and the following lines are true.

Then mourn not, hapless prince, thy kingdoms lost;
A crown, though late, thy sacred brows may boast;

Heaven seems, through *us*, thy empire to decree,
Those who win hearts have given their hearts to thee,

On his side "James reckons half the fair".

Say, will he come again?
Nay, Lady, never.
Say, will he never reign?
Ay, Lady, ever,

sings a modern poet, whose heart is true to George? However, Tickell's lady reflects that the Hanoverian sway is good for trade, and in the end prefers London to Avignon.

In 1717 Addison made Tickell his under-secretary—Tickell had always been his "understudy". In 1740 Tickell died, in the enjoyment of one of these lucrative places which rewarded the loyalty of literary Whigs.

With Tickell, the name of Thomas Parnell (1679-1718) goes naturally. He was a minor light among the wits; was befriended by Swift, and is remembered for "The Hermit," "The Night-Piece on Death," and one or two other effusions.

CHAPTER XXVII.

AUGUSTAN PROSE.

STEELE.

Steele and Addison are the Twins among the stars of the age of Queen Anne. Swift impresses us as a greater genius than either Steele or Addison, but he is not loved, and he is not read as they are. Their lives, till two or three years before Addison's death, were united. They were schoolfellows at Charterhouse, fellow-undergraduates at Oxford, each was apt to take a hand in the other's play when the stage attracted them; they wrote together in the two famous journals, "The Tatler" and "The Spectator," which Steele created; some essays therein are a patchwork of pieces from both hands.

They were both anxious to cleanse the stage; to bring decent morals and manners into fashion In the original manuscript of Steele's comedy, "The Conscious Lovers" (1722), are rough notes for a preface, written after Addison's death, "The fourth act was the business of the play. The case of duelling I have fought nor shall I ever fight again... Addison told me I had a faculty of drawing tears... Be that as it will, I shall endeavour to do what I can to promote noble things...."

Both men were moralists, but while Addison was the more moral, Steele was infinitely the more greatly given to moralizing. His heart was in the right place. He honoured women and pure affection, and temperance, and the wedded state. But his many brief notes to his second wife "Prue" (Miss Scurlock), written from all manner of places and at all sorts of hours, prove that poor Prue had often to dine alone. Business detained her Richard; he came home with the milk, and had a terrible headache next day. With the posts which he held under Government, with what he gained by his pen (and he was the owner of his own paper, and his own paymaster), with Mrs. Steele's fortune, they had resources enough, but Richard at intervals sends Prue a guinea or two; Richard is constantly in hiding from the bailiffs; is never out of debt; sometimes there is no coal, candle, or meat in the house. Steele was the most affectionate of men and the most generous. He boasted that the world owed Addison's essays to him, because he had made Addison overcome his laziness, and he told the world how greatly Addison was his superior. He wishes that they might write together some work to be called "The Monument," the memorial of their friendship. He took the side of poor discharged soldiers, whipped from parish to parish for their poverty. He adored children; his tears were as ready and heroic as the tears of Homer's warriors. But when he yielded to the temptations of the bottle and of extravagance, his wife and children had to suffer just as much as if Richard, in place of being a Christian Hero, had been no better than the wicked. Like Balzac he was a man of debts and of projects; he even wasted money on alchemy, and had a scheme for getting wealth in connexion with a lottery, a scheme which even then was found to be illegal. Mr. Swinburne called Steele "a sentimental debauchee," and indeed he shone more in preaching than in practice. Addison calls him "poor Dick," he is "poor Dick" to all the world now, if he were Sir Richard "to all Europe". But, when lip preached, he meant what he said, and his pleasant sermons, or rather pleas for

goodness, kindness, faith, did "promote noble things," and he left the world more decent and more human than he found it.

Steele was born in Dublin in 1672; his family were not Celtic Irish folk; his father was in what is reckoned the less noble branch of the legal profession. When Sir Richard assumed heraldic bearings he calmly annexed those of another family of Steele, as' the elder Osborne, in "Vanity Fair," was supplied by his coachbuilder with the arms of the House of Leeds. Like the cousin of Mr. Isaac Bickerstaff, in "The Tatler" (No. 14), he was guilty of "treason against the Kings at Arms". Of his childhood we know only what he tells in that pathetic passage about his father's funeral: "I had a battledore in my hand and fell a-beating the coffin, and calling papa, for, I know not how, I had some idea that he was locked up there.... My mother was a very beautiful woman, of a noble spirit, and there was a dignity in her grief amidst all the wildness of her transport, which methought struck me with an instinct of sorrow that, before I was sensible what it was to grieve, seized my very soul and has made pity the weakness of my heart ever since" ("Tatler," No. 181). "Hence it is that in me good nature is no merit, but having been so frequently overwhelmed with her tears before I knew the cause of any affliction... I imbibed consideration, remorse, and an unmanly gentleness of mind, which has since ensnared me into ten thousand calamities...." So a "Night of Memories and Sighs" is consecrated by Richard to his beloved dead, "when my servant knocked at the door with a letter, attended by a hamper of wine, of the same sort with that which is to be put on sale at Garraway's coffee house. Upon the receipt of it I sent for three friends.... We drank two bottles a man," and, as Mr. Arthur Pendennis says, found that there "was not a headache in a hogshead".

The fluid, in fact, as we know from the advertisement in this number of "The Tatler," was "extraordinary French claret". Dick conscientiously tested its merits, and gave it a puff in addition to the advertisement which was paid for. Thus he "promoted everything noble," including the vintage of Bordeaux, and, as Thackeray saw, there is no more characteristic essay of Steele's than this meditation on death and grief and loyal memory: *à léal souvenir!*

Steele lost his mother also in his childhood. He had an uncle, Henry Gascoigne, who, like Swift's uncle, provided for his education, but more generously. Attached to "Erin's high Ormonde," Gascoigne obtained for

Steele a nomination to Charterhouse (1684) (Thackeray's school), where Steele met Addison, and their friendship began. In 1689 Steele went up to Christ Church, Addison being at Magdalen; in 1691 Steele gained a "postmastership" (a scholarship) at Merton, a college to which he was warmly attached, presenting its ancient library with the volumes of "The Tatler". He left just before his Schools (that is his examination for a degree). In 1694 he entered the Duke of Ormonde's Guards as a trooper, apparently gentlemen did this as a way of approaching a commission. Steele got his as a reward for a poem on the death of Queen Mary—the piece was dedicated to Lord Cutts, Colonel of the Coldstreams. He befriended Steele, who, stationed at the Tower, made the acquaintance of Congreve and the wits, and defeated Captain Kelly in a duel. Probably the contrast between the delicacy of Steele's sentiments, and his vein of sincere piety, on one hand, with his addiction to mundane pleasures, on the other, made him as notable in his regiment as Aramis, Abbé d'Herblay, among the Musketeers of Louis XIV.

Steele, when once he took a pen in his hand, wrote much against duelling, exposing the ludicrousness of the institution. His remarks had no effect; what killed the duel in England was the use of the pistol: unromantic, fatal, and fortuitous. His duel may have made men more wary of bantering Steele, but his "Christian Hero," a work of military devotion (1701) lowered his character in the regiment. To restore it he wrote his comedy "The Funeral" (1701); to show that blasphemy and intrigue were no necessary components of a play: for he was wholly of the party of Jeremy Collier. The idea of the plot, the revival of Lord Brampton while his coffin is waiting for him, and his watching of the manœuvres of his hateful widow, while his fair ward, Lady Sharlot, escapes in the coffin from her enemies (a common situation in ancient ballads) is too grotesque. But the scenes with the hired mutes, with the poor broken soldiers, with Lady Brampton and her maid, are very amusing. Steele's exposure of the low tricks of lawyers, his appeal for cheap and accessible justice for all, are much in, Dickens's manner, and the loves of Lord Hardy and Lady Sharlot are as pure as bonny Kilmeny, while Lady Sharlot, in her encounter with Lady Brampton, gives proof of high spirit, and Lady Harriet is a flirt as harmless as lively.

Like the other wits, Steele was presented with lucrative posts, such as the editorship of the colourless official "Gazette". In the same year, 1707, he

married his second wife, Miss Scurlock, the adored Prue, a woman of some property. He had a house at Hampton Wick, horses, gardeners, footmen, everything handsome about him. In 1709 he founded "The Tatler," a folio sheet of printed matter, appearing thrice a week and containing news, political and social, correspondence, and the charming essays which soon became most important. Steele wrote 188 of these papers, Addison, forty-two, in thirty-six both men took a hand. Swift wrote very seldom. The essays, with those which he wrote in "The Spectator," and in other papers, are the foundation of the fame of Steele. They vary much in theme and style. To digest the "Iliad" into a journal, and reckon up the days of the events, cannot have much amused the public. There is plenty of dramatic criticism. Steele openly avows that he is a member of the Society for the Reformation of Manners; blames the plays of Wycherley and the rest, and calls in the name of Virtue for frequent representations of Shakespeare. "The apt use of the theatre is the most agreeable and easy way of making a polite and moral gentry, which would end in making the rest of the people regular in their behaviour," a pleasing opinion which is not quite justified by experience.

Dick was a constant patron of the best plays, but regular his behaviour was not. Various, excellent, and amiable as are Steele's essays, neither in style nor in thought do they wear quite so well as Addison's. Yet it is scarcely just to draw a distinction which may rest only on individual taste.

"The Tatler's" last appearance was on 2 January, 1711. Steele ended with a paper in which he generously attributes to his friend the essays which he deemed of most value. On 1 March the first number of "The Spectator" appeared—it ceased to exist on 6 December, 1712. Steele's new journal, "The Guardian," lasted for six months in 1713; he was elected as member for Stockbridge, and then came a quarrel of Whig and Tory with Swift, who wrote in "The Examiner". The arrival of George I from Hanover procured various lucrative posts, a patent for a theatre, and a knighthood for Steele: he edited "The Englishman," and attacked Swift's fallen friends, Harley and St. John; and in 1716 he got an income of £1000 a year as one of the commissioners of the estates forfeited by the Scottish Jacobites who were out for their King in the rising of 1715. This was not a pleasant appointment to a man of feeling. Of the coolness between Steele and Addison we speak elsewhere.

In 1722 Steele's "Conscious Lovers," with another attack on duelling was acted with success, and dedicated to the "gracious and amiable sovereign," George I. Cibber the actor added scenes rather more gay than the rest, for so moral is this drama that Fielding's Parson Adams, in "Joseph Andrews," said "it contains some things almost solemn enough for a sermon". His connexion with the theatre brought Steele into more than one lawsuit; his failing health, and the assiduities of his creditors caused him to prefer to reside in Wales; he died in Carmarthen on I September, 1729. Like Goldsmith, Charles Lamb, Walton, and Scott, he has made all his readers his friends, and if his plays are not acted much, the Lydia Languish of Sheridan, and the Tony Lumpkin of Goldsmith, are reflections from his Biddy and Humphrey in "The Tender Husband," a not successful comedy of 1705.

Addison.

There were few forms of literature, from the sacred hymn to the libretto of an opera, in which Addison did not adventure himself with success more than respectable. It is, however, as an essayist that he survives, and is read and admired. Born on 1 May, 1672, he was the eldest son of the Rev. Lancelot Addison, who, after acting as chaplain to the garrisons of Dunkirk and, later, of Tangier, obtained the small living of Milston, married the sister of a bishop, and in 1683 received the Deanery of Lichfield. He was something of a Jacobite, and as an author had pleasing traits of humour and irony. His son Joseph passed through two local schools, and thence to Charterhouse (Thackeray's school) whence first to Queen's, then to Magdalen, Oxford, where he held a demyship (scholarship), and was later a Fellow.

"Addison's Walk" is in the little wood round which two branches of the Cherwell meander with a mazy motion. Addison was soon admired for the excellence of his Latin verses: he made Dryden's acquaintance, and complimented him in verse; he began a translation of Ovid for Tonson, in the usual ten-syllable rhyming couplets.

Some of the stories of the Metamorphoses remain, with notes of literary criticism, including a compliment to William III. "The smoothness of our English verse," he casually remarks, "is too much lost by the repetition of

proper names," which, in fact, are sonorous ornaments of the verse of Milton, Scott, Tennyson, and others. But Addison, bent on "smoothness" had not yet come to appreciate Milton; still less, in his early "Account of the English Poets," Spenser, who

> Can charm an understanding age no more.

The young champion of smoothness and common sense unblushingly rhymed "success" to "verse".

Reluctant to take Orders, without which his Fellowship must lapse, Addison, through Congreve, was introduced to Charles Montagu (later Halifax) who, with Somers, wished to enlist Addison for his powers as a writer. They obtained for him a travelling pension of £300 yearly, and in December, 1699, left Marseilles for Italy.

His published remarks on Italy, written in a simple and easy style, are of interest mainly because they are so unlike modern ecstasies about the country. What most pleased Addison was to compare the scenes and towns which he saw, with the descriptions of them which, in Latin authors, he had read. To the natural beauties of the land, and to the works of Christian art, he is almost blind; Paul Veronese leaves him cold; at Verona he says nothing of the tomb of Romeo and Juliet, which, perhaps, was not yet shown. At Venice he is most concerned about the military strength of the place; "Tintoret is in greater esteem than in other parts of Italy," and that is enough about Tintoret! The Venetian comedies "are more lewd than in other countries". Addison paid a good deal of attention to ancient coins; and Pope wrote commendatory verses for his "Dialogues on Medals," and hoped that, on medals, Addison and Craggs will be represented: Craggs's effigy is to have an inscription in six heroic lines. Though the Dialogues be antiquated as archæology the description of collectors of coins is amusing: one of the speakers hastens to add that the science "must appear ridiculous to those who have not taken the pains to examine it". Addison, in a kind humorous way, strove to convince his age that ignorance is not the best judge of the historical, social, and artistic value of numismatics.

Returning to England in 1703 Addison was poor, and had no prospect of employment. The Whigs, however, wanted to make the most of Marlborough's victory at Blenheim. Strange as it seems to us, poetry had influence, a poet was needed, Halifax recommended Addison; the

Chancellor of the Exchequer found him "up three pairs of stairs," and "The Campaign" was written. The scene is familiar to readers of "Esmond". Thackeray, devoted to Addison as he was, asks "how many fourth form boys at Mr. Addison's school of Charterhouse could write as well as that now?" as well as Addison writes in several passages of "The Campaign". Probably no fourth form boys would write

> With floods of gore that from the vanquished fell,
> The marshes stagnate, and the rivers swell.

However the simile of the Angel has been reckoned fine, and the poem "fulfilled the purpose for which it was written. It strengthened the position of the Whig Ministry" (what a task for the Muse!) and obtained patent places for the poet. As Under-secretary of State, Addison had leisure to write the libretto of "Rosamond," an opera, in which Queen Eleanor does not poison Rosamond, but gives her, like Juliet, a sleeping draught. The King says

> O quickly relate
> This riddle of fate!
> My impatience forgive
> Does Rosamond live?

Eleanor explains the situation:—

> Soon the waking nymph shall rise
> And, *in a convent placed*, admire
> The cloistered walls and virgin choir:
> With them in songs and hymns divine
> The beauteous penitent shall join.

Finally the King and Queen sing

> Who to forbidden joys would rove
> That know the sweets of virtuous love?

Who indeed?

The rise of Blenheim Palace is prophesied, and Marlborough is flattered ingeniously by the Muse of Whiggery. The "understanding age" was not charmed: it was not absolutely destitute of humour. Nor was Addison. The intentionally funny parts of the opera, though not so comic as the serious

passages, are not unworthy of Sir W. S. Gilbert. Sir Trusty, finding Rosamond's corpse, as he supposes, says

> The King this doleful news shall read
> In lines of my inditing;
> Great Sir
>
> Your Rosamond is dead,
> As I'm at present writing.

Addison's unacknowledged comedy, "The Drummer," based on the famous rapping spirit at Tedworth (1662), was a failure, and died on its third night (1715).

Of his lucky tragedy, "Cato," he seems to have written four acts in Italy. As early as April, 1711, Addison confided his ideas on Tragedy to the Town ("Spectator," No. 39). They show us how far the wits of "the understanding age" of Anne, had moved from the taste of the Restoration stage. Addison is "very much offended when I see a play in rhyme; which is as absurd in English, as a tragedy of hexameters would have been in Greek or Latin". But blank verse is "in such due medium between rhyme and prose that it seems wonderfully adapted to tragedy," as the Elizabethan tragedians had not failed to discover. The thoughts of English tragic writers, especially of Shakespeare, "are often obscured by the sounding phrases, hard metaphors, and forced expressions in which they are clothed". These expressions, however, have been admired by many. The English tragedian is apt to make his hero successful in the fifth act: Addison does not approve of a modernization of "Lear," in which, as in the chronicles which told the story, King Lear and Cordelia triumph in the end. Aristotle says, Addison reports, that the populace preferred tragedies which ended ill (but Addison himself has made the tale of Fair Rosamond end happily). He makes no universal rule, only protests that a tragedy should not be *compelled* to conclude with comfort. There is "nothing which delights and terrifies our English theatre so much as a ghost, especially when he appears in a bloody shirt. A spectre has very often saved a play." Addison applauds the handling of the ghost in "Hamlet": ghosts, in fact, need delicate handling. For the moving of pity, our principal machine is the handkerchief; and the introduction of an orphan or two, but not of half a dozen fatherless children. "That dreadful butchering of one another," with the use of racks, thumbscrews, and other

instruments of torture, gives occasion to French critics to think us a people who delight in blood.

In practice, Addison produced a tragedy which political accidents made highly successful at the moment, and which has enriched the stock of quotations. But Dr. Johnson described it as rather a poem in dialogue than a drama, rather a succession of just sentiments in elegant language than a representation of natural affections.... The events are expected without solicitude, and are remembered without joy or sorrow. The "love interest," Pope says, was a popular after-thought, and Pope told Addison that the play was better fitted to be read than to be acted. Thanks to the habit of mingling literature with politics, the play (13 April, 1713) was "expected" with "solicitude" by Whigs and Tories. "All the foolish industry possible has been used to make it thought a party play," says Pope. The leaders of each party clapped loudly at each remark that might be twisted into a political allusion, while Addison, with Dr. Berkeley and two or three friends, in a side-box "had a table and two or three flasks of Burgundy and champagne, with which the author (though a very sober man) thought necessary to support his spirits". A run of thirty-five nights, a great marvel then, also sustained the spirits of Addison.

Addison does not hold his high and enviable place in our literature by virtue of his plays, poems, and work on Medals, but of his brief Essays in "The Tatler" and "The Spectator". We have already seen how Steele and he worked, in the most pleasant, kindly, and humorous tone, for the improvement of morals and manners in the Court and Town.

The aim of Addison was "to temper wit with morality and to enliven morality with wit," and he succeeded so well that, to this day, if one opens a volume of "The Spectator" for any reason, one cannot lay it down. The spectacle of that world comes before us in all its aspects—toy shops, theatres, streets, coffee-houses, masquerades: there are allegories, sportive or serious, reflections at the opera, or among the monuments of the dead at Westminster Abbey; there are letters, real or "done in the office," asking for advice on points of etiquette; there are musical strains of solemn prose, or passages of exquisite banter; there are creations of character, Sir Roger de Coverley, Will Wimble, and the rest. There are criticisms, as of Milton, which led taste back from the fantasies of the Restoration to that great poet who lived lonely, fallen on evil days and evil tongues. Even the folk-poetry

of the past, "songs and fables that are come from father to son, and are most in vogue among the common people of the countries through which I passed," give Addison "a particular delight," he says, in his paper on Chevy Chase, "the favourite ballad of the common people of England". In our time, a critic would fall back on the history of the ballad, showing how "Chevy Chase" is a later version of "Otterbourne," a poem common, with patriotic variations, to England and Scotland. For Addison "Chevy Chase" is an heroic poem: as such he treats it, and shows how touches of Nature make it akin to Homer and Virgil.

Here we are far away from the Restoration, and the age of conceits; we are on the way to the romantic movement, to Scott and "The Lay of the Last Minstrel". In quite another style take Addison's musings on a "lady's library," mixed with "a thousand odd figures in China ware," Japanese lacquer, and old silver. Leonora has "all the Classic Authors—in wood," dummies! "A set of Elzevirs," small classic volumes of the famous Dutch press, "by the same hand"—the cabinetmaker's. There are several of the huge wandering heroic French romances, and "Locke of Human Understanding, with a paper of patches in it": "Clelia, which opened of itself in the place that describes two lovers in a bower." Most of the books were bought, not "for her own use," but "because the lady had heard them praised, or because she had seen the authors of them".

Addison, it must be confessed, did not take the learning of the sex very seriously. Now the learning of many of them is serious indeed; but, we ask, are either men or women more seriously inclined, on the whole, to study than they were in Queen Anne's day? Addison, says Thackeray, "walks about the world watching women's pretty humours—fashions, follies, flirtations, rivalries, and noting them with the most charming humour". It was not he, but Steele, who found in a lady's society "a liberal education". But it was Addison whom Lady Mary Wortley Montagu proclaimed to be "the best companion in the world".

There is still no better companion: we can still hear him "sweetly talk and sweetly smile" in his Essays. He knows so much, and he is never tedious in giving information. Like Coleridge in talk with Keats, he deals in ghost stories: and this child of an age of reason does not scout them. He makes the judicious remark that Lucretius, the Roman materialist, does not believe that the soul can exist apart from the body, yet "makes no doubt of the

reality of apparitions, and that men often appeared after their death... he was so pressed with the matter of fact, which he could not have the confidence to deny...." He explains by "one of the most absurd unphilosophical notions that was ever started"—in a different way of statement this theory of Lucretius has lately been revived.

What a variety of themes Addison illustrates and adorns! His writings are like better conversation than was ever held save in the Fortunate Islands by the happy Dead.

The humour and the drawing of character in the papers on Sir Roger de Coverley, have a delicacy, a minuteness, a happy humour, which we scarcely meet again in our literature till they reappear, a century later, in the novels of Miss Austen. It must be admitted that Addison's manner of writing *sent son vieux temps*, is not "up to date," but this only lends an agreeable quaintness. Nobody, to-day, in writing of the scene in the "Odyssey" where the hero beholds, in the next world, "the far-renowned brides of ancient song," would speak of them as "a circle of beauties," "the finest women". Nor, when the hero says "each of them gave me an account of her birth and family," would a critic now say "this is a gentle satire upon female vanity"! To give such an account is the universal practice in Homer, when strangers meet, whether men or women.

"The Spectator" was dropped after running for about two years, not before Addison had praised in his paper Pope's "Essay on Criticism". Steele introduced Pope to Addison; perhaps they never were very attached friends, for a man of Addison's sense could not but be watchful of himself in the company of the vain and irritable little satirist. Pope's jealousy and suspicions produced a coldness, and, after Addison was dead, Pope emitted his venom in the poisonous character of "Atticus":—

> Blest with each talent and each art to please,
> And born to live, converse, and write with ease;

yet,

> Bears, like the Turk, no brother near the throne,"

and so forth. Nothing that inspired skill and spite can do is better than this satire; had Addison been alive when it was given to the world he could not

have hit a return blow, for cruelty was not in his nature, and Pope was so sensitive that any retort on him was cruel.

In 1715 Addison conducted for six months another paper, "The Freeholder," in the Whig interest; was made one of the Commissioners for Trade and the Colonies, and married the Dowager-Countess of Warwick. He died in 1719, "three years after that splendid but dismal union," says Thackeray. A dowager-countess is not usually splendid, and we really have no reason to think that the union was "dismal". Addison's position as Secretary of State was sufficiently good, not to speak of his fame, popularity, and genius. In 1719 Addison was matched against Steele in a newspaper controversy: Steele probably was not welcome to Lady Warwick at Holland House, but the two men, says Steele, "still preserved the most passionate concern for their mutual welfare. When they met they were as unreserved as boys...."

Addison with Steele, founded a school of essayists of merit, who never came near the supremacy of their masters: Addison not only delighted his world, but left it better than he found it; not by preaching violent sermons, not by "lashing the vices of the age," but by sensibly lowering the tyranny of the fashion which insisted on the duty of being vicious.

SWIFT.

Concerning the genius, character, and career of Jonathan Swift there are interesting varieties of opinion, but nobody denies that the genius was great or that the career was sad, strange, even mysterious. In an old-fashioned comedy of Humours, Swift would have been cast for the part of Wycherley's Captain Manly in "The Plain Dealer"; the man of tender heart who hates an age and a society that do not come up to his ideals. Swift had, indeed, depths of affection, and a noble capacity for friendship, but, unlike Captain Manly, he would never have made Fidelia, or any other woman, happy. He lived in this world the life of a flogging schoolmaster. He expresses a hope, at about the age of 26, that, in his poems,

> Each line shall stab, shall blast, like daggers and like fire.

He hopes, at the same hopeful period, that

> My hate, whose lash just heaven has long decreed,
> Shall on a day make Sin and Folly bleed.

He lashed away, but Sin and Folly remained "more than usual calm," they did not hear, they did not heed him; and the presentable part of his most comprehensive and ferocious satire of humanity, the one book published by him which is still generally known, "Gulliver's Travels," has been an innocent source of amusement to many generations of children.

At about the age of 37, Swift, in a private letter, wrote thus of his own case, "I envy very much your prudence and temper, and love of peace and settlement: the reverse of which has been the great uneasiness of my life, and is like to continue so". He recognizes one source of his sorrows. As to "prudence," Swift had even too much of it, if "prudence" were the motive which made him put off marriage with the woman ("Stella," Esther Johnson) whom he loved, and who loved him. But for "peace and settlement," he had no partiality; and his temper was no better than he deemed it.

The curses of Swift were, first, his just consciousness of powers far superior to those of the great politicians who adulated, and used, and failed to reward him. With their wine, and their amours, and their bitter, petty jealousies, they let the great opportunity go by, and, lo! Harley is in the Tower; and Bolingbroke, a fugitive, drinks, and loves, and intrigues in France, vituperating the Prince whose cause he has helped to ruin; while Swift eats out his own heart in that Ireland which he hated.

Another curse was that he had attached himself as a priest to the Church of England; while the author of "The Tale of a Tub," however loyal he might be in practice, certainly cannot have been "a trusty and undoubting Church of England man". Of all the creeds, of all the Churches and Sects, in his heart he thought like the Jupiter of his poem,

> *You*, who in various Sects were shamm'd,
> And come to hear each other damn'd.

This bleak lucidity of soul, this consciousness of being able "to see forward with a fatal clearness," this knowledge of the greatness of his own genius,—thwarted by poverty, driven wild by servitude, lacerated by the torments of a mysterious disease, crushed by terrible forebodings of the appointed end; these things drove Swift to cut himself among the tombs, and to curse in the wilderness.

Though born in Dublin (30 Nov. 1667) Swift was no Irishman: his father belonged to an old Yorkshire, his mother to an old Leicestershire family. But on his father's death, his mother being left ill-provided, Swift's was the position of a poor relation. His training at Kilkenny school and Trinity College, Dublin, was paid for by his uncle, Godwin Swift, who was either poor or penurious. Men like Swift seldom yield much attention to their tutors; and Swift, though he did well in Greek and Latin, failed in physics and took no pains with his Latin essay. He was, however, allowed to pass. In 1688 he went to England, to his mother at Leicester, and in the following year entered the household of Sir William Temple, a politician and diplomatist, retired from active life, busy with literature and gardening, but in friendly relations with William III and with men of affairs.

Sir William Temple (1628-1699) was himself a writer admired for his style, especially in his Essay on Poetry. His periods, though long, are graceful and well balanced, but seldom have such brief melancholy cadences as this reflection "when all is done, human life is, at the greatest and the best, but like a froward child, that must be played with and humoured a little to keep it quiet till it falls asleep, and then the care is over".

Swift's position, at first, was between those of a secretary and an upper servant; he left Temple's house for Ireland, in 1690; returned in 1691: next year obtained a degree at Oxford; and in 1694, in Ireland, took Orders, and received a small benefice, Kilroot, near Belfast, where the people were Presbyterians, and he had no congregation worth mentioning. He entangled himself with a Miss Waring (Varina) and wrote "Pindaric" poems. Dryden, a remote cousin of his, told him that he would never be a poet, and no other reason has been discovered for Swift's flouts and jeers at Dryden's reputation. The anecdote may be untrue, and, as a Catholic, Dryden would be disapproved of by Swift.

In 1696 Swift was reconciled with Temple, and during the next two years was treated with more favour, met politicians, met the King; educated Stella, an inmate of Temple's house, then a girl of 15; read much in Temple's library, and was about to attach himself to the double-dyed traitor, Sunderland, when Sunderland was dismissed from office. Swift went back to Ireland, held a living at Laracor, lived much with Lord Berkeley at the Castle, Dublin; wrote lively verses of the lighter sort, wrote a political pamphlet which was successful, and showed leanings towards the Whig

party. In London (1704) his "Tale of a Tub" was published anonymously: it had been composed in 1696-1697.

In "An Apology" (1709) Swift, still, as always, anonymous, writes "the book seems calculated to live as long as our language and our taste admit no great alterations". In taste great alterations have been admitted. Though excellent judges still applaud this whimsical allegory, few readers who approach it with high expectations are likely to escape disappointment. The allegory of Peter (Rome) Martin (Anglicans and Lutherans) and Jack (Presbyterians and all other Protestant sects), is utterly incoherent. At present no self-respecting person would write of the religions of Islam and Buddha in such terms and such temper as Swift wrote about the Churches and sects of Christianity. Whatever we may think of Transubstantiation and Vestments, we do not make uproarious fun of them.

Already Swift indulges his half-insane delight in malodorous references; the wit of the dirty schoolboy scrawling on the walls. Few things in the work are more witty than this on Dryden: "he has often said to me in confidence, that the world would never have suspected him to be so great a poet, if he had not assured them so frequently in his prefaces, that it was impossible they could ever doubt or forget it".

Thackeray remarks, "I think the world was right, and the Bishops who advised Queen Anne not to appoint the author of 'The Tale of the Tub' to a Bishopric, gave perfectly good advice". James IV did not give Dunbar a benefice: the line must be drawn somewhere. Swift, in his "Apology," denied that he had attacked religion: be it so, he had written on matters ecclesiastical with amazingly bad taste. His "Argument against Abolishing Christianity" (1708) is not the sort of argument that we expect from a bishop-postulant, but its irony seems as charming and dexterous now as it did two centuries ago. In "The Tale of a Tub," on the other hand, we seldom find a passage that wins a smile, except in "those fine curses" which Peter spoke, and in some of the gambols of Jack. The apologue, in feet, is heavy-handed; the author does not clearly know where he is making for; the perfect clearness of his later style is absent. (These observations, entirely candid, are at odds with the usual applause of "The Tale of a Tub".)

With "The Tale of a Tub" was published, in the same volume, "The Battle of the Books," written about 1697; this was a now belated contribution to

the controversy as to the relative merits of the Ancients and the Moderns, begun in France by Charles Perrault, the author of our most familiar fairy tales. As it happened, Temple, in an essay, had taken up the cause of the Ancients, and had chosen, as proofs of superiority of the oldest books, the Fables ascribed to Æsop, and the Letters attributed to Phalaris, the half-mythical tyrant of Agrigentum. The matter of the fables is prehistoric, but the crooked slave, Æsop, did not contribute their *form*; and the Letters of Phalaris were a literary exercise composed long after the tyrant's date. Wotton, with some help from the greatest scholar of his day, Richard Bentley, King's Librarian, and (1700) Master of Trinity, Cambridge, replied to Temple, and Charles Boyle, of Christ Church, Oxford, introduced a personal squabble with Bentley. The Christ Church wits, including the formidable Atterbury, sided with Boyle,—there was a war between elegant scholars, on Boyle's side; and the nascent science of the Royal Society allied with perfect scholarship and Bentley, on the other. Boyle did not insist that the Letters of Phalaris were genuine; Bentley displayed his sagacious learning in his proof that they were not. Temple was discreetly silent, but Swift espoused the cause of the wits in "The Battle of the Books". The Books in the King's Library, Ancient and Modern, meet in a parody of a fight in Homer. The goddess, Dulness, befriends the Moderns, as Aphrodite, in Homer, protects Paris and Æneas. The mock-Homeric manner was not then outworn, and it amused; while Swift heaped personal scorn on Bentley, and, of course, on Dryden, who is ridiculed for being old. Bentley, crooked-legged and hump-backed, is armed with a flail, and "a vessel full of ordure". Boyle transfixes Bentley and Wotton as a cook spits a brace of woodcocks—and that is the humour of it.

Infinitely more amusing were Swift's predictions of the death of a prophetic almanac-maker, Partridge (1708), and the sequel of that jest. Swift styled himself Isaac Bickerstaff, and lent the name to Steele, for use in his new paper "The Tatler". He lived in close friendship with Addison, Steele, Congreve, and Prior; and began his love affair with Miss Vanhomrigh, the unfortunate Vanessa, rival of Stella. Like Lord Foppington, Swift probably coveted nothing less than her heart, which she gave, and his difficulty was "to get rid of the rest of her body".

After a visit to Ireland, Swift returned to find the Tories in power, "a new world" (September, 1710). He met Harley (Lord Oxford), took service

under him, and for three years was the Achitophel of the Tories, writing for them lampoons and political pamphlets which "were cried up to the skies". For half a year (1710-1711) Swift's papers appeared in "The Examiner". Swift dined with Harley and St. John—they called him, "Jonathan"; he snubbed their attempts to treat him as a mere gentleman of the Press; and in the delightful pages of his familiar "Journal to Stella," he paints the age, and himself, triumphant, adulated, powerful, but "seeing all his own mischance"; "I believe they will leave me Jonathan as they found me".

Among the pamphlets of this period are "The Hue and Cry after Dismal" (Lord Nottingham,'ancestor of Horace Walpole's "black funereal Finches"), and the more important "Conduct of the Allies". By 1713 Swift hoped "that the present age and posterity would learn who were the real enemies of the country". The old question of Tory Short and Whig Codlin! But he had cruelly offended the Duchess of Somerset by "The Windsor Prophecy"; and the Queen could not endure the author of "The Tale of a Tub". He asked for his reward, and with much trouble obtained the Deanery of St. Patrick's, Dublin (June, 1713). He went to Ireland, but he could not get rid of Vanessa. Her letters pursued him; other letters called him to town—Harley and St. John were at odds, and he was needed. He engaged in a paper war with Steele, now an enemy; he wrote "The Public Spirit of the Whigs"; he offended the Scottish members, and the Duke of Argyll, the hero of Malplaquet, an ill man to meddle with. He was consoled by the friendship of Pope, Gay, and Arbuthnot, a good man and a great humorist. They founded the Martinus Scriblerus Club, for the writing of facetious papers: but politics went ill, Harley and St. John quarrelled in the Queen's presence: her death was near; Harley was overthrown by St. John; St. John had no courage, and, on the death of Anne, was checked by Argyll and his regiment. Bishop Atterbury would have proclaimed the King, King James over the Water; the laymen dared not back him; the Elector of Hanover occupied the throne; and of Swift's great friends St. John fled to France, and Harley was imprisoned in the Tower; while Swift, hooted by the pressmen whom he had bullied, made for Ireland. The Jacobite Cause was lost, and we cannot here ask, would Swift (as St. John says in "Esmond") have accepted the Primacy of England from *la bonne cause*, the young Catholic King?

My life is now a burden grown
To others, ere it be my own,

Swift wrote. He corresponded (1716) with Atterbury, and Atterbury was at the head of the Jacobite party in England. In 1719 Swift dedicated to a Swedish diplomatist, Count Gyllenborg, a History of England. "My intention was to inscribe it to the King, your late Master, for whose great virtues I had ever the highest admiration, as I shall continue to bear to his memory." This King, Charles XII, in 1716 meant to land in Britain with an army in support of the Jacobites, and Gyllenborg, his ambassador, managed the plot in England. Charles had invited Swift, at an earlier date, to Sweden: now Swift dwells "in a most obscure disagreeable country" (Ireland), "and among a most profligate and abandoned people".

All this does not look like zeal for the Protestant succession.

The years 1719-1723 saw the completion of Swift's ambiguous poem, "Cadenus and Vanessa," and the arrival of Vanessa in Swift's neighbourhood. "In vain he protested, he vowed, he soothed and bullied; the news of the Dean's marriage to Stella at last reached her; and it killed her,—Vanessa died of that passion" (Thackeray). The marriage is still matter of controversy.

In 1724 Swift, who hated the English Government if he did not love Ireland, wrote the famous "Drapier's Letters" against a job in copper currency, and gained high popularity.

In 1726 he gave to the world the most famous of his books, "Gulliver's Travels," in which his gift of narrative, his amazing power of being truthful in the minutest details of the most extravagant imaginations, his misanthropy, his irony, and his delight in unsavoury things, are all carried to the highest perfection. In 1729 came the "Modest Proposal" for eating Irish children; in 1738 his "Polite Conversation" and "Directions to Servants," with the same merit of humour, and the same inveterate fault.

In visits to London (1726, 1727) Swift had enjoyed the society of his old friends and comrades in letters; and hoped there, perhaps, to find a Fountain of Youth. He felt himself slipping into the vice of hoarding; and rusting in a second-rate society. Bolingbroke had been allowed to return from exile; the banished King had found him worthless as a statesman: he had said his

worst against the banished King; nobody wanted Bolingbroke and nobody was afraid of him. He played the philosopher, and Swift did not believe in his affectation of philosophy. Arbuthnot, Swift loved, Pope he had always admired; and he tried to protect Gay from his own reckless improvidence. He ridiculed, in "Gulliver," the proofs brought against Atterbury as a Jacobite agent: if Swift was not convinced by the evidence he must have shut his eyes very hard.

In January, 1728, Stella died: Swift tried to fill the gap in his life by activity in Irish politics. His disease, apparently some malady of the ear which gradually affected the brain, became more unendurable, but he had still to write some of his most powerful satires in verse. Then his memory began to fail, and he drifted slowly into the half-unconscious dotage of his last five years, dying on 19 October, 1745, unconscious, probably, of the meteoric adventure of Prince Charles.

The failure of his party, of his political ambition, and measureless hopes of greatness, gave Swift the retirement and the leisure to produce his greatest works. If fortune had "bantered us" as Bolingbroke said, he turned and bantered Fate and mankind. In the long array of his volumes, so seldom opened, are many brief flights, in verse and prose, which are full of entertainment, of wild fancy, orderly and gravely presented; and there is the "Journal to Stella," with its infinite tenderness of affection; and the Letters, the confidences of the wits from romantic Charles Wogan, who rescued from prison the bride of a King, and died as Governor of the appropriate province of La Mancha, to those of Pope and Arbuthnot and Gay. The works of Swift are a library in themselves.

De Foe.

"One man in his time plays many parts," and no man played more parts than Daniel Foe or De Foe. The son of a butcher in St. Giles's, born in 1661, he received at a Nonconformist school an education that was a sufficient basis for literary undertakings, but not tending to such "classical" flights as led young University men to profitable sinecures under Government. He is said to have been out under Monmouth in 1685. He betook himself to commerce of various kinds, thus acquiring little or no money (in 1692 he "broke," like Mr. Badman), but a competent knowledge of the currents of trade, and the

courses of financial speculation, exhibited in his "Essay on Projects," projects, educational and social as well as financial (1698). In 1701 his "True Born Englishman," showing in the interest of William III that the English are a mixed race, was successful.

In 1702 his famous "Shortest Way with the Dissenters" was discovered to be, not a candid plea for the Church of England, but an irritating parody of High Church pretensions, nearly as serious as Swift's apology for cannibalism. De Foe was pilloried, but not pelted, and imprisoned for his waggery; was released, probably through the agency of Harley, Lord Oxford, the wavering and enigmatic "Dragon" of Swift's correspondence; and while editing and indeed writing a weekly "Review," the precursor in its social columns of Steele's "Tatler," De Foe served Harley in divers subterranean ways. In Scotland, in the autumn of 1706, he acted as Harley's spy and newsagent: his letters to Harley contain an admirable picture of the struggles for and against the Union of Scotland and England, and of De Foe's own versatile, acute and daring character. He made himself "all things to all men," could talk to each citizen as a member of his own trade, explained all the economic conditions of the country, understood, and did not revere, the Kirk, and the preachers; and, by securing the services of that lively and humorous rogue and sham-fanatic, Ker of Kersland, broke up an unholy alliance between the extreme "Cameronians" and the Jacobite gentry and clansmen of Perthshire and Angus. They had intended to break up the Parliament; but the wild Whigs did not keep tryst.

It is plain that Harley treated De Foe very ill, and that, like most spies, he was underpaid. Still he was working for a cause which he had at heart; as he was later, when, to all appearance, playing the part of journalist in the Tory or even Jacobite interest under Government.

The needy De Foe was a man of dark corners, an absolute "Johannes Factotum". Swift called him "a grave, sententious, dogmatical rogue". He professed that he received assistance from "The Divine Spirit".

No man who wrote so much and so variously has written so well. His favourite topic, if we may judge by the frequency with which he handled it, was "psychical research". Like Glanvill, Henry More, and other writers in the sceptical age of the Restoration, he collected, and told in his own inimitable manner, many current anecdotes of wraiths, death-warnings,

second sight, and phantasms of the dead. The most prominent merit of De Foe, in fiction, is his power of convincing the reader by the minute and sober realism of his details. Some of his novels, in autobiographic form, have caused disputes as to whether they be romances, or actual memoirs.

"A True Relation of the Apparition of One Mrs. Veal, on September 8, 1705" (published in 1706) has been described as "the first instance of De Foe's wonderful lies like truth". "This relation is matter of fact," said De Foe in the Preface. Sir Walter Scott, a ghost-hunter himself, explained the "fact" by saying that De Foe invented and wrote the story as a puff of Drelincourt "On Death," which the appearance of Mrs. Veal, on the day after her death recommended to her friend (who believed her to be alive), Mrs. Bargrave.

But Mr. George Aitken has proved "that the piece was, as De Foe said, 'a true relation of matter of fact,'" that is, De Foe merely wrote the story as told by Mrs. Bargrave—"the percipient"—the person who saw and conversed with the dead Mrs. Veal about her gown—"a scoured silk, newly made up". Mr. Aitken found a manuscript note of 21 May, 1714, by some one who had interviewed Mrs. Bargrave, and for whom Mrs. Bargrave made three or four minute additions. As for Mrs. Veal herself, she died on 7 September, appeared on 8 September to Mrs. Bargrave, and we have the record of her burial on 10 September, in the register of St. Mary's, Dover.

In another case, "The Botethan Ghost," told in an appendix to De Foe's "Duncan Campbell," the tale was really written, as De Foe says, not by himself, but by one of the people who saw the spectre, the Rev. Mr. Ruddle of Launceston in Cornwall, in June, 1665; the narrative was written on 4 September of the same year.

Thus De Foe's extraordinary gift of making things fictitious seem true has caused him to be charged with inventing stories which he merely retold, or printed from the manuscript of another.

De Foe was 60 years of age, and had suffered from apoplexy, when he wrote the masterpiece which made him immortal, "Robinson Crusoe" (1719). New editions appeared in May, June, and August; a sequel followed which few read; still more scarce are readers of De Foe's "Serious Reflections and Vision of the Angelic World" (1720). The "metapsychical" world was always very near De Foe, practical and shrewd man as he was.

"Crusoe" is based on Captain Rogers's narrative of the adventures of Alexander Selkirk, a mariner of Largo, in Fife, marooned (1704) on the Island of Juan Fernandez. An allegory of De Foe's own life has been suspected, the idea is unimportant.

It is superfluous to dilate on the sterling merits of "Robinson Crusoe". Before he published it a critic had recognized "the little art he is truly master of, of forging a story, and imposing it on the world for truth". The style is as simple as Swift's, and more "homely". The tale of love was not De Foe's trade, any more than "the moving accident" was Wordsworth's. "Moll Flanders," and "Roxana" are no doubt meant to have a moral influence; but their readers are looking for something else: like the readers of the edifying Monsieur Zola.

De Foe was one of the fathers of journalism, and almost "the only begetter" of the story of adventure, the desert island romance, and, in "Memoirs of a Cavalier," and "A Journal of the Plague Year," of the historical autobiographical novel. "It was about the beginning of September, 1664, that I, among the rest of my neighbours, heard, in ordinary discourse, that the plague was returned again in Holland...." That keynote reverberates in scores of the historical romances of 1885-1900.

The modern novelist, of course, avoids De Foe's strict statistical method. De Foe's story reads precisely like a historical document, and the modern reader dislikes nothing more than that sort of reading. De Foe's hero saw a number of people looking at "a ghost walking on a grave stone". Less fortunate Mr. Pepys "went forth, to see (God forgive my presumption!) whether I could see any dead corpse going to the grave, but, as God would have it, did not".

By a truly realistic touch De Foe's contemplative saddler closes his journal with "a coarse but sincere stanza of my own,"

> A dreadful plague in London was
> In the year sixty-five,
> Which swept an hundred thousand souls
> Away; yet I alive!

The modern reader finds that De Foe's fictions are too like facts, and, often, in the moral and religious reflections, too like tracts, for his taste. On the

other hand, to a contemplative mind, "Robinson Crusoe," carefully read, and compared with its descendants in fiction, is a source of delight. De Foe, at the age of 60, must have been, while he wrote it, as happy as his innumerable readers. For example, we compare Robinson's felling of a cedar tree "five feet ten inches diameter at the lower part..." and his construction of a vessel "fit to carry twenty-six men," a vessel quite unlaunchable, with the practicable coracle, the most "home-made" of things in "Treasure Island". We compare the trial trips of the two crafts (Robinson's *second* boat); we see that R. L. Stevenson has produced the less impossible narrative of the twain, and that both rejoice the heart.

The mass, and the variety, of what must be called the "pot-boilers" of De Foe are unequalled. In better conditions of authorship he would have been a rich man, but he died poor, in distress, and under a cloud, in 1731.

A history of literature is not necessarily a history of philosophical, metaphysical, and theological speculation. In such speculation the age was rich that saw the volcanic eruption of sects and heresies during the religious frenzy of the Civil War, and also beheld the reaction from all "enthusiasm" to the passion for common sense and for science as "organized common sense" which came in with the Restoration. Hobbes's works did not encourage religious "enthusiasm," or mysticism, or belief in the ineffable spiritual experiences of devout men, from John Bunyan with his visions, to Ralph Cudworth (1617-1688), an Anglican divine, with his Neoplatonic hints at Union with the Absolute ("True Intellectual System of the Universe," "Eternal and Immutable Morality"). The learned and the unlearned wrote books on either side, sceptical or in favour of belief.

The Royal Society impartially included Joseph Glanvill (16361680) with his "Vanity of Dogmatising," and his "Sadducismus Triumphatus," the pioneer of Psychical Research, with its tales of *Poltergeists*, wraiths, and levitations, some of them fairly well authenticated. The Royal Society also gave a place to the far more famous philosopher of liberal common sense philosophy, John Locke (1632-1704). Locke's first eighteen years were passed under the shadow of the Great Rebellion, and at Christ Church, Oxford, under a Head who was an Independent divine. He did not like the new freedom, in which he found the old slavery, but after the Restoration he found liberty for discussion, in which "enthusiasm" was not permitted to enter. His attitude towards mental philosophy was not unlike that of Bacon.

He disliked Aristotelianism as then held at Oxford, thinking that words usurped the place of facts, and in his "Essay on the Human Understanding" he employed that plain style which the Royal Society enjoined. The work was written at intervals during seventeen years, disturbed when as a friend of Shaftesbury, Dryden's Achitophel, the turbulent patron of Titus Oates, he was sent into exile. The burden of the essay, which appeared in 1690, is opposition to the theory of "innate ideas"—the terms need defining—and insistence that we derive our ideas from the presentations of our senses. "Average common sense was always kept in his view," and "he wrote for the most part in the language of the market-place". He wanted man to think as a human being very limited in his faculties, "to distinguish between what is, and what is not comprehensible by us," and his treatise had the most potent and enduring effects on continental as well as on English Philosophy. He was a friend of his junior, Berkeley, whose philosophic fancy took a wider and more audacious range. His "Treatise on Government" and "Thoughts on Education" followed rapidly. He obtained a place as Commissioner of Trade and Plantations (Colonies), and advised England to anticipate Scotland in founding an emporium at Darien, in Spanish territory, as the Scots were to discover.

We have not space for much more than the names of other prose writers of this great age. John Arbuthnot (1667-1735), a Scot in London, was an admirable humorist, a great physician, and the friend of all the wits; himself a good-humoured Swift in prose satire. Bishop Atterbury (1662-1732) excited an enthusiastic devotion in Pope, who proposed to accompany this clerical conspirator into exile, after his great Jacobite plot was crushed in 1723. Atterbury was an accomplished general writer, while the great scholar and Master of Trinity, Richard Bentley (1662-1742), gave to his classical criticism of the forged "Epistles of Phalaris" the merit of vigorous literature. His conjectural various readings in Milton's text are now and then comical, and seem a parody of classical criticism. The Viscount Bolingbroke, Henry St. John (1678-1751), was a wit among politicians, the patron, friend, and inspiration of the wits; he had his fame as an eloquent rhetorician in his life, and as a daring thinker, but he really wrote best when he wrote simply and humorously, as in his satire of his Jacobite allies, "The Epistle to Windham" (1716). His "Ideal of a Patriot King" also preserves his literary reputation (1738). Anthony Ashley Cooper, Earl of Shaftesbury (1671-1713), was an elegant philosopher, a thinker of taste; while George Berkeley, Bishop of

Cloyne (born at Kilkenny 1685, died 1753), was an idealistic philosopher and man of science ("The Theory of Vision") whose style, in grace and irony, is akin to the manners of Plato and of Pascal. The best and most delightful of his works is the dialogue "Alciphron, or the Minute Philosopher," directed against the Sceptics, and deistical writers. Berkeley's character was not less admirable than his works.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

GEORGIAN POETRY.

I.

EDWARD YOUNG.

"Is it to the credit or discredit of Young, as a poet, that of his 'Night Thoughts' the French are particularly fond?" So asks Croft, the sardonic author of a notice on Young in Dr. Johnson's "Lives of the Poets". The preference is certainly not to the credit of the French! Born in Hampshire in 1683, the son of a clergyman, Young lived till 1765: writing much verse, and more prodigal of praises to "the Great" than any other poet of any age.

Young's father, in 1703, appears to have been poor, for the son, to save expense, was hospitably entertained in the lodges of the Warden of New College and the President of Corpus. A Fellowship was found for him at All Souls', and as he was chosen to make and speak the Latin oration at the founding of the fine Codrington Library, it may be supposed that, at All Souls', he was held to be more than *mediocriter doctus* (the qualifications for a Fellow were said to be "well born, well dressed, moderately learned").

Young's earlier poems, and his dedications always, seem bids for patronage and preferment. In his "Last Day" (1710),

> An archangel eminently bright
> From off his silver staff of wondrous height

Unfurls the Christian flag, which waving flies
And shuts and opens more than half the skies.

Angels are asked, on the annihilation of the universe, to say where Britannia is now?

All, all is lost, no monument, no sign,
Where once so proudly blazed the great machine.

In the Dedication, which Young later suppressed, nothing was left but Queen Anne, whom the poet distinctly saw floating upwards, and leaving the fixed stars behind her. The clever but eccentric and unfortunate Jacobite Duke of Wharton was a patron of Young, and the defender of Atterbury. The Duke died, under arms for the exiled James III, or Chevalier de St. George, at Lerida; he was then composing a tragedy on Mary, Queen of Scots. Young suppressed, in later years, the dedication to Wharton of his successful tragedy, "The Revenge" (1721).

In 1725-1726 Young published his Satires, "The Universal Passion". They read like a poor imitation of Pope's satires, but in point of time they precede the "Dunciad".

Why slumbers Pope, who leads the tuneful train,
Nor hears that Virtue, which he loves, complain?

Pope was not slumbering, he was counting every groan of Virtue, to whom he was so devoted, and was about to lash Vice with the best of them. The Universal Passion which Young flogs, is the Love of Fame. Every one is the fool of Fame except this earl or that, at whom Young dedicates his strings of epigrams which remind us of Pope, with a difference. Sloane and Ashmole are derided for their Museums. Young even dedicated a satire to Sir Robert Walpole; *he* must smile, "or the Nine inspire in vain". He also adulated the Duke of Newcastle in 1745, when

a pope-bred princeling crawled ashore,

meaning,

The Prince who did in Moidart land
With seven men at his right hand,
And all to conquer kingdoms three.
Oh, he's the lad to wanton me!

as a poet of the opposite party exclaimed. The inglorious Duke is

> Holles! immortal in far more than fame!

In 1727 Young became a clergyman, at the ripe age of 44. His "Night Thoughts" in blank verse, are of 1741-1742, in Nine Nights

> My song the midnight raven has outwinged,

and the midnight owl was outshrieked.

> From short (as usual) and disturbed repose
> I wake, how happy they who wake no more!
> Yet that were vain, if dreams infest the grave.

We remember

> In that sleep of death what dreams may come!

A few lines are in the common stock of quotations such as,

> An undevout astronomer is mad.

There are good passages, here and there, but long sermons in a kind of blank verse which "does not overstimulate" are not immortal. "Young has the trick of joining the turgid with the familiar... but with all his faults he was a man of genius and a poet." He was not, as people, misled by the existence of one William Young, foolishly supposed, the original of Fielding's Parson Adams in "Joseph Andrews", But Young may be the original of Robert Montgomery, who added to the piety of Young the ebullitions of an unprecedented genius for nonsense.

JAMES THOMSON.

Romance secured a firm footing in English literature, after the artificialities of the eighteenth century had sunk into dotage, through the genius of a Borderer, Sir Walter Scott. But another Borderer, long before, had seen glimmerings and had heard strains of the fairy world and the fairy songs. This was James Thomson, son of the parish minister of Ednam in Roxburghshire. The father was presently translated to Southdean, in the Cheviots, and on the old line of Scottish marches: by that way they rode, as Froissart shows, to Otterbourne fight. Thomson's father died while trying to

lay a ghost in a house near Southdean, when the son was at the University of Edinburgh. The haunted house was demolished. Thomson studied divinity, but abandoned the prospective pulpit for poetry, and went to London to seek his fortune in 1725. He lost his letters of introduction, and he needed a pair of shoes; his only resource was the manuscript of his "Winter," in "The Seasons". A dedication brought to Thomson twenty guineas: the piece was praised by Aaron Hill and Malloch (or Mallet, Malloch is a Macgregor name); the poem was liked; "Spring" and "Summer" followed, and Thomson dallied over "Autumn" till 1730.

In 1730 he Had been successful with the moral tragedy of "Sophonisba": though in opposition to the Court party, Thomson had obtained several noble patrons, and they did their best for his drama. A long poem on Liberty was not a triumph: but the Prince of Wales gave the author a pension of £100 yearly. His tragedy of "Tancred and Sigismunda" was popular (1745), and a patent place brought to the poet £300 a year, which he did not long enjoy, dying on 27 August, 1748. Thomson was notoriously indolent, and his last, perhaps his best, work is "The Castle of Indolence" in the Spenserian stanza.

"The Seasons" are in blank verse, a welcome change from the eternal rhyming couplets, and prove that Thomson, unlike his contemporaries, wrote "with his eye on the object". He had been bred in "the wide places of the shepherds," among the lonely Border moors and hills; he had not always been a man of towns. In the sunless winter day

> scarce
> The bittern knows his time, with bill ingulpht
> To shake the sounding marsh; or from the shore
> The plovers when to scatter o'er the heath,
> And sing their wild notes to the listening waste.

This was a new voice. Being a Borderer, Thomson was an angler, and describes fly-fishing well, though not better than Gay.

In that old theme of the Middle Ages "the symphony of spring," the songs of birds, he shows knowledge of their ways, and if he makes the hen nightingale the singer, so does Homer, following the myth. In "Summer," Thomson describes, with wonderful tact, sultry climes in which he never breathed, and adds the little idyll of Musidora.

"Autumn" includes a picture of fox-hunting, a sport which James probably did not indulge in, and celebrates the Argyll of Malplaquet and Duncan Forbes of Culloden, and the water of Tweed,

> Whose pastoral banks first heard my Doric reed.

Despite his power of rendering nature, the artificiality of his age is still strong with Thomson, and it cannot be said that "The Seasons" are very attractive to modern readers.

"The Castle of Indolence," by virtue of the poet's return to the measure of an author in his day despised, Spenser, yields a welcome change from the eternal rhymed couplets.

> A pleasant land of drowsyhead it was.

like the land of the Lotus-eaters in Tennyson. The stanza beginning

> And when a shepherd of the Hebrid isles,
> Set far amid the melancholy main

is the voice of reviving poetry, and is immortal. Nobody has the slightest sympathy with

> The Knight of arts and industry,
> And his achievements fair;
> That by his castle's overthrow
> Secur'd and crowned were.

The castle is a very good castle, it is good to be there, where no cocks disturb the dawn, no dogs murder sleep, "no babes, no wives, no hammers" make a din,

> But soft-embodied Fays through airy portals stream.

William Collins.

"The grandeur of wildness and the novelty of extravagance, were always desired by Collins, but not always attained," says Dr. Johnson. After half a century of tame poets, we are happy to meet with one who did not cultivate the trim parterre, and who sometimes did attain to being "exquisitely wild".

Collins was born at Chichester on Christmas Day, 1721, was educated at Winchester, and at Oxford was a "demy," or scholar of Magdalen, like Addison. About 1744 he came to London with many literary projects in his mind, and very little money in his pockets. Johnson met him, while "immured by a bailiff". Collins cleared his debt with money advanced by a confiding bookseller on the credit of a contemplated translation of Aristotle's "Poetics," with a commentary. A legacy of £2000 from an uncle, Colonel Martin, was "a sum which Collins could scarcely think exhaustible, and which he did not live to exhaust". His mind weakened: he died in 1759: sane, but incapable of composition. His Odes (1746-1747) are the firm base of his renown: the little volume is extremely scarce; Collins is said to have burned, in disappointment, the greater part of the edition.

Of his "Persian Eclogues" (1742) Collins said that they were his "Irish Eclogues," being inadequately Oriental in local colour. The brief "Ode" (1746) "How Sleep the Brave" (of Fontenoy and Culloden) in ten lines has the magic of an elder day, and of all time. The "Ode to Evening," where the poet sees

> hamlets brown and dim discovered spires
> And hears their simple bell, and marks o'er all
> Thy dewy fingers draw
> The gradual dusky veil,

has escaped from the manner of the eighteenth century, and preludes to Keats.

There are fine free passages in "The Ode to the Passions," and the "Dirge in Cymbeline" is not unworthy of its place. The "Ode on the Popular Superstitions of the Highlands," was long lost, and did not receive the poet's final touches. He obtained his knowledge of the Second Sight from John Home, author of "Douglas," who was a Hanoverian volunteer in the Forty-five, and inspired in Collins an unfulfilled desire to visit Tay and Teviotdale

and Yarrow. The conventions of his age sometimes disfigure Collins's poems, but his face was set towards the City of Romance. Tastes still vary as to the relative merit of Collins and Gray: Matthew Arnold being the advocate of Gray; Swinburne of Collins. There is no way of settling such disputes; each writer, at his best, was truly a poet; neither, at his best, is staled or dimmed by time; both were almost portentous exceptions, when really inspired, to the conventional rules of their age in England.

Thomas Gray.

Nature occasionally brings into the world pairs of men destined to be distinguished in literature, and, without their own consent, to be pitted against each other as rivals. We have Scott and Byron, Dickens and Thackeray, Tennyson and Browning, and Collins and Gray. Gray was the elder, born in 1716 (Collins was born in 1721). If Collins's father was a hatter, Gray's mother was a bonnet-maker, if milliners make bonnets. Collins went to Oxford, after being at Winchester; Gray, before going to Peterhouse, Cambridge, was at Eton. Both poets wrote little: the health of Collins broke down; Gray, from his boyhood, was of a gentle morbid melancholy, and had humour enough to laugh at himself. Collins was neglected; Gray died, later, at the age of 54, beyond competition or dispute the foremost of English poets at the moment. Both men had their faces set to the North as the home of old poetry and poetic beliefs. Collins wrote his Ode on Highland Superstitions; Gray was delighted (at first) by Macpherson's "Ossian," he translated ancient Norse poems, visited Scotland, and appreciated the Highlands, and the lakes that Wordsworth was to make famous. Both men were scholars: Collins meant to translate Aristotle's "Poetics"; Gray meant to write a history of English Poetry. Both broke away from the tyranny of the rhymed heroic couplet; both especially cultivated the Ode.

There is no doubt as to which of the two is and always has been the more popular. Eton has made Gray her own. The great General Wolfe, before falling in the arms of Victory at Quebec, recited the "Elegy in a Country Churchyard" to one of his officers, saying, "I would prefer being the author of that poem to the glory of beating the French to-morrow".

It is not easy to criticize Gray, because so many of his lines are household words, and have been familiar to us from childhood. It may perhaps be said that Gray never attains to the magical effect of Collins's "How Sleep the Brave," and of the "Ode to Evening". But there are cadences in "The Elegy," and sentiments noble, pure, pious, and modest in his poems which lend to them an unspeakable charm, while the ideas are such as come home to men's bosoms. It is true that his habit of personifying abstract ideas is an unfortunate survival of the weary allegorical company of the "Romance of the Rose," and no more than Collins does he escape from the mannerisms of his age. But like Collins, and indeed like his friend Horace Walpole, he was passing towards the kingdom of Romance.

At Eton he acquired Walpole's friendship; and if, after leaving Cambridge, he and Walpole quarrelled in Italy, Walpole confessed that he was to blame, made the first steps to reconciliation, and cherished, admired, and at last regretted Gray with all the ardour of a heart devoted and constant in friendship.

For the rest, Gray's life was passed quietly, and in a melancholy way, at Cambridge, which he reckoned a bear garden, and a home of Indolence; and, with his mother and aunt at Stoke Pogis, where he wrote the Elegy. His poems distilled very slowly from his genius: the Eton Ode appeared, and was unnoticed, in 1747. In the same year were written, to Horace Walpole, the rather hard-hearted lines on Walpole's handsome cat,

'Twas on a lofty vase's side.

The Eton Ode was *composed*, with a beautiful sonnet commemorating a private sorrow, in 1742:—

In vain to me the smiling mornings shine.

Earlier in the same year the "Ode to Spring," marked "to be sent to Fav,"—to West, his friend commemorated in the sonnet,—had been written, "not knowing he was then dead". Again, in October, 1742, another death prompted "The Elegy," which lay unfinished for about eight years. Grief had shaken Gray out of causeless melancholy, and 1742 was his great poetic year. In 1750 he wrote the light and bright "Long Story," on an unexpected visit from some poet-hunting ladies. In 1753, Walpole had Gray's "Six Poems" published, in twenty-one pages, with illustrations by Bentley. In

1754 he began the "Pindaric Odes," of which "The Progress of Poesy" is the noblest, and displays most of

the pride and ample pinion
That the Theban eagle bear
Sailing with supreme dominion
Thro' the azure deep of air.

To compose "The Bard" (the Welsh Bard) took two years and a half, and neither the style nor the ideas of the Odes were thought pleasing, or comprehensible, by the public and Dr. Johnson. In his demure way the little poet was a rebel, and Dr. Johnson knew it. Gray never practised the adulation of "the great" that was customary; he asked for no places, he refused the Laureateship. Late in life a sinecure Professorship at Cambridge was given to him. The professor never lectured: not to lecture was the convention, and against this happy convention Gray did not rebel. He studied, made notes, learned Norse, translated, visited haunted Glamis, with the chamber where Malcolm II was murdered, visited the Lakes, wrote the most delightful letters, and died at 54 in 1771, the year of the birth of Sir Walter Scott, the year of Burns's twelfth birthday.

Gray had genius—not a great, but a new genius, and had many accomplishments. His satires were surprisingly sharp and fierce. He had the light French touch of the day in verses of society. There is something of the noble pensiveness and mysteriously appealing music of Virgil in his best poems: if he be "a second-rate poet" (an unkind way of saying that he is not a Shakespeare or Homer), he shares with first-rate poets the power of moving all readers; he is not the poet of a set of refined amateurs. He who moved and soothed the heart of James Wolfe in the crisis of his fortunes, and who has charmed every generation of the English race since Wolfe and Montcalm gloriously fell, has done more than enough for fame.

The Wartons.

Gray's taste for ancient Scandinavian poetry, itself a symptom of the tendency to study all poetry, however old, exotic, and unconscious of the rules of the eighteenth century, was not a new thing. We are apt to think of Swift's patron, Sir William Temple, as an example of mere gentlemanly and conventional ideas, though happy in the gift of a pure and sometimes

exquisite style in prose. But Temple in his essay "Of Heroic Virtue" shows that he was capable of taking sincere pleasure in old Norse poetry, though he knew it only through the Latin translations "by Olaus Wormius in his 'Literatura Runica' (who has very much deserved from the commonwealth of learning, and is very well worth reading by any that love poetry); and to consider the several stamps of that coin, according to several ages and climates". Temple speaks of "The Death Song" of Ragnar Lodbrog as a "sonnet" and applauds "An Ode of Scallogrim" (Skalagrim); but his remarks, "I am deceived if in this sonnet and ode there be not a vein truly poetical, and in its kind Pindaric, taking it with the allowance of the different climates, fashions, opinions, and languages of such different countries," though well meant, show a curious idea of the nature of the sonnet.

Here we have, before the end of the seventeenth century, the essence of historical comparative criticism of literature; and admiration for a kind of poetry as remote as possible from the standards of the eighteenth century. Temple handed on the torch to the elder Thomas Warton, Professor of Poetry at Oxford in his day, who himself translated from the Latin, as "a Runic ode," two stanzas of the Death Song of Regnar Lodbrog.[1]

One of Warton's sons, Thomas (born 1728), was Professor of Poetry, at Oxford (1757-1767), and, from 1774 onwards (he died in 1790), published a History of English Poetry, which may be unsystematic, but is both interesting and erudite. Warton had to read the earlier and later mediaeval poets, French and English, in the manuscripts, and he quoted profusely from sources then scarcely known. "Partly through the store of new matter that is provided for 'the reading public,' partly through the zest and enthusiasm of its students—the spirit of adventure which is the same in Warton as in Scott"—his book "did more than any theory to correct the narrow culture, the starved elegance, of the preceding age". The elder brother of Thomas, Joseph Warton, born 1722, was a schoolfellow of Collins, and published "Odes" in the same year as he (1746). In his preface he boldly said that "the fashion of moralizing in verse has been carried too far," and "he looks upon invention and imagination to be the chief faculties of a poet". He preached what Collins practised; he wrote good criticism in Dr. Johnson's paper, "The Adventurer"; in his essay on Pope he tried "to impress on the reader that a clear head and acute understanding are not

sufficient alone to make a Poet," "that it is a creative and glowing imagination... and that alone, that can stamp a writer with this exalted and very uncommon character...." These were to be the watchwords of the Romantic movement, into which Warton, dying in 1800, did not live to enter.

John Dyer.

Of John Dyer we know from his most famous poem, "Grongar Hill," that, on a certain occasion, he

> Sate upon a flowery bed
> With my hand beneath my head.

If he had lain upon a flowery bed the posture would have been more poetical. In blank verse, deserting Grongar Hill, he found

> Lo, the resistless theme, imperial Rome.

His "Ruins of Rome" are less impressive than Spenser's sonnets translated from Du Bellay. His "Fleece," an instructive epic of the wool trade, though praised by the illustrious Akenside, proved no golden fleece to its publisher. The prose summaries are pleasing. "Disputes between France and England on the coast of Coromandel, censured".

Dyer, at his best, is less successful than Thomson. He was born in 1700, son of an eminent solicitor of Carmarthen, was educated at Westminster, attempted the painter's art, visited Italy, took holy orders, published "The Fleece," in 1757, and died in 1758.

Briefer notes must suffice for the Rev. Mr. Blair of Athelstaneford (1699-1746) who wrote "The Grave," later recommended to amateurs by Blake's illustrations; and Matthew Green, who wrote "The Spleen" (1696-1737), a somewhat lively subsatirical effort.

William Shenstone.

Shenstone was one of the many poets who owe their reputation to their luck in being contemporaries of their biographer, Dr. Johnson. No Johnson could keep records of all the versifiers of the nineteenth century who have

occasionally written good things. William Shenstone was born in November, 1714, at the Leasowes, in Halesowen. His life was much devoted to landscape gardening; and his harmless taste made him a noted character in his day. "He learned to read of an old dame," and pleasantly described her, or some other old dame, in "The School Mistress," an agreeable idyll in the Spenserian measure.

In 1732 Shenstone went to Johnson's college, his "nest of singing birds," Pembroke, in Oxford. He took no degree, he rhymed, printed his rhymes, and "The School Mistress" appeared in 1742. Thenceforth he landscape-gardened, being so little of an angler that he was indignant, says Johnson, when asked if there were any trout in his purely ornamental water. His expenses in gardening brought the haunting forms of bailiffs into his groves, but Johnson informs us gravely that "his life was unstained by any crime". He died in February, 1763. Several of his innocent poems, such as

> I have found out a gift for my fair,
> I have found where the wood pigeons breed,

are still familiar to many memories: they are from the "Pastoral Ballad". He perceived the demerits of the rhyming heroic couplet (as it was then written), as "apt to render the expression either scanty or constrained," and preferred the verse of four lines with alternate rhymes. Thus, on the death of Pope

> Now sadly lorn, from Twit'nam's widow'd bow'r
> The drooping muses take their casual way,
> And where they stop a flood of tears they pour,
> And where they weep, no more the fields are gay.

Of such matter are Shenstone's Elegies composed: his ballad on Jemmy Dawson, a martyr of the Jacobite cause, was celebrated and popular; poor Jemmy's lady-love died of grief and horror at his execution.

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[1] Posthumously published in 1748. See Mr. W. P. Ker's "Warton Lecture on English Poetry," "Proceedings of the British Academy," Vol. IV.

CHAPTER XXIX.

GEORGIAN POETRY.

II.

THOMAS CHATTERTON.

The name of Thomas Chatterton, the youngest and most short-lived of English poets, is curiously connected with that of Horace Walpole. Born, at Bristol, on 20 November, 1752, under the shadow of the beautiful old church of St. Mary Redcliffe, Chatterton from infancy became, as it were, possessed by the charm of the edifice and of the Middle Ages. Members of Chatterton's family had for more than a century been associated with the church as sextons; probably they had never given a thought to its beauty and historical associations, but these haunted their descendant, and the story of his childhood reads like a fantasy by Nathaniel Hawthorne. Among the clergy and people of Bristol the spirit of the eighteenth century, indeed the natural, usual contempt for things old, beautiful, and not understood, was complacently active. The chests which contained the archives of the church had been broken into by the Vestry, and quantities of old parchment documents, some of them illuminated, had been thrown about. Chatterton's father (died 1752), a schoolmaster, had taken as much of the stuff as he chose, and manuscripts in the house of the boy's mother were used for domestic purposes. The little boy, till the age of 6, had been curiously lethargic (and far from truthful); the sight of the illuminated parchments awakened his intellect; he stored all that he could find in a den of his own, and became a voracious reader. In 1760 he was sent to Colston's Hospital, a school resembling Christ's Hospital in London. He was soon, at the age of 10, a versifier, his Muse was first the sacred, then the satiric; but already, by the age of 11, he had made for himself, as some children do, a society of "invisible playmates," notably "T. Rowlie, a secular priest," of the age of Henry VI and Edward IV, and already he was writing, in a kind of old English made up out of glossaries, poems which he passed off as Rowlie's, found by himself in the derelict archives of the church.

In short, Chatterton might have seemed to be a victim of "split personality," and to be now Rowlie, and a number of other secondary selves, now the actual Chatterton, apprentice to an attorney. His conduct was almost as

abnormal as his genius was precocious, and his passion for fame or notoriety was not quite sane. But, in fact, he knew very well what he was about, and, in December, 1768, attempted to dispose of "Rowley's ancient poems," including "The Tragedy of Aella," to Dodsley, the publisher. The success of Percy's ballads from the Old Folio (1765) may have suggested his scheme to the boy, but Dodsley was not tempted. Horace Walpole had published the first edition of "The Castle of Otranto" at the end of 1764. He used the conventional device (already familiar to the Greek romancers in the third century A.D.) of pretending to have found the tale in an ancient manuscript. Chatterton had proclaimed his discoveries in manuscripts in the summer of 1764, when he was 12 years old; in Horace Walpole he recognized, in 1769, a kindred spirit, and offered to show Walpole not only poems by Rowlie, but a history of English painters by the same learned divine. Walpole replied very courteously and gratefully, but "I have not the happiness of understanding the Saxon language". In a reply Chatterton explained his circumstances; his youth and position; and Gray had assured Walpole that the manuscripts sent were forgeries. Walpole therefore advised Chatterton to adhere to his profession, adding that experts were not convinced of the genuineness of the papers. He took no notice of several letters from Chatterton, and, after receiving a curt and angry note (24 July, 1769), sent back the manuscripts without further comment, and thought no more of the matter till he heard from Goldsmith, at a dinner of the Royal Academy, that Chatterton had committed suicide in London. After an attempt to support himself by hackwork, political and other, the poor boy, whose pride could not stoop to soliciting charity, had poisoned himself on the night of 24 August, 1770. Six weeks earlier he had been buying and sending presents of porcelain, fans, and snuff, to his mother and sister; twelve days before his death he had written that he intended to go abroad as a surgeon's mate.

Even when he wrote in ordinary English, Chatterton showed rare precocity. When he wrote in "Rowleian," in an invented dialect as remote from real English of any day as the language of the planet Mars, evolved by Mlle. Hélène Smith, is remote from French, Chatterton often produced lyrics of great charm as in "The Tragedy of Aella," and he invented a curious form of the Spenserian stanza. His touches in descriptions of Nature are sometimes charming. But he never quite escapes, as is natural, from the conventions of the eighteenth century; and his best inspiration is derived from Percy's

"Reliques". What he might have been and might have done, in happier circumstances, it is impossible to conjecture. Genius he had, with more than the wonted abnormality of genius.

William Cowper.

The overlapping of styles in poetry and of tastes in poetry is pleasantly illustrated in the case of Cowper. He was born in 1731, Scott was born in 1771, and in Miss Austen's "Sense and Sensibility" we find the sensible Marianne Dashwood hesitating between the rival charms of Cowper and Scott; Byron, it appears, had not yet reached her fair hands. Cowper is a bridge between Thomson and Wordsworth. He was averse to the Popeian couplet; in his translation of Homer he preferred a blank verse which, at best, is not rapid. In writing of Nature he "had his eye on the object". His exit from the triumphant common sense of the eighteenth century was by way of spiritual religion, the Evangelical Revival promoted by Wesley, Whitefield, and their followers. They made appeal to the souls, not to the passions, of the populace; and Cowper's own sympathy with their bodies, with their poverty, like his love of retirement, and of newspapers, makes him akin to Wordsworth.

Born of the powerful Whig family of Cowper, the poet was the son of the rector of Great Berkhampstead; his mother, whom he lost when he was 6 years of age, yet ever remembered daily with intense affection, was of the name and lineage of Donne. He was cruelly bullied in childhood at a preparatory school. The innate savagery of boys of fifteen sometimes wreaks itself on a single small child, and we might think that his sufferings had their share in depressing the spirits of Cowper, did he not tell us that, at his public school, Westminster, he was eminent in cricket, which Horace Walpole and Gray despised at Eton. His master, "Vinny" Bourne, a Latin poet, was dear to him; he made many clever and lively friends, and, despite his attack on public schools in "Tirocinium" (1784), he seems to have been reasonably happy at Westminster, though he learned no more in one way than to write "lady's Greek without the accents

"Tirocinium" is a vigorous satire in Pope's metre. But Cowper, despite the vices and brutalities of school life, confesses his affection for the old place. The clergy at large come under Cowper's birch,

The parson knows enough who knows a Duke!
Behold your Bishop I well he plays his part,
Christian in name and infidel in heart.

In denouncing emulation for prizes, Cowper hit a blot that seems to have vanished, for anything like ungenerous emulation of this kind appears to be a lost vice. No boy studies

Less for improvement than to tickle spite.

Macaulay's victims, Warren Hastings and Elijah Impey, were at school with Cowper. He went to no University, but was articled to a solicitor; and idly "giggled and made giggle" with his cousins, Theodora and Harriet. He was in love with Theodora, but was disappointed, Harriet (Lady Hesketh) was one of his best friends. At the age of 32 (1763) hypochondria or hysteria shattered' his life; in a private asylum he was suddenly converted, and recovered, and religion was henceforth, now his joy and happiness, now, when the black cloud came over him, the cause of his despair. At Huntingdon, and later, at the uninviting village of Olney, he lived retired, the friend of Mrs. Unwin ("My Mary") and of a clerical ex-slave-trader, the Rev. John Newton. With Newton, Cowper wrote hymns, the ladies encouraged him to occupy himself with moral poems, "Table Talk," "Truth," "The Progress of Error," "Retirement," "Charity," "Hope," all in the metre of Pope; and all more or less satirical. Kings, in "Table Talk," are the first to suffer: one of the speakers in the dialogue is rather revolutionary. Indeed the mild tea-drinking Cowper, with his denunciations of "the great," the clergy, and the unthinking squires, preludes to the French Revolution, which he took very calmly. After politics comes talk of poetry: and the well-known lines on Pope occur; he

Made poetry a mere mechanic art,
And every warbler has his tune by heart.

Of poets in his own age Cowper prefers the reckless satirist, Churchill; of Gray and Collins nothing is said. In "The Progress of Error" the much-enduring Nimrod is attacked, in company with the well-graced popular preacher; and novelists are assailed as "flesh-flies of the land," while men who study art in Italy come home worse dunces than they went, and finally the deist and atheist are publicly birched.

It is not for his satires that Cowper is remembered: they were suggested to him, in the interests of religion and morals, by Mrs. Unwin, while Lady Austen, a lively person of quality, appointed to Cowper "The Task," or rather gave him the subject of "The Sofa," out of which grew "The Task". The poet ambles, in an essay in blank verse, as much at his ease and as fond of digressions as Montaigne, from the days when man squatted on the ground, to his invention of a three-legged stool, the addition of a fourth leg, cushions, arm-chairs, the settee, finally the sofa. The sofa pleases the gouty; never may the poet have gout; he has done nothing to deserve it; in boyhood he

> Has fed on scarlet and strong haws,
> The bramble, black as jet, and sloes austere.

This introduces a rural digression.

> Here Ouse, slow winding through a level plain
> Of spacious meads with cattle sprinkled o'er,
> Conducts the eye along his sinuous course,
> Delighted.

We think of

> a river winding slow
> By cattle, on an endless plain;
> The ragged rims of thunder brooding low
> With shadow streaks of rain.

How different are the methods of the two painters in words! The poet, finding geologists in the course of his wanderings, pities them, truth disclaiming them. Like Wordsworth he praises "retirement," welcomes the newspaper, and welcomes tea. In the charming lines, "The Retired Cat," temporarily shut up in a drawer lined "with linen of the softest kind," he seems to smile at his own cosy retirement; the teacups, the happy listening ladies. He is full of human kindness, of love for children, cats, and his own tame hares; he sets out to gather flowers, he says, and comes home laden with moral fruits, and religious reflections, and with his sketch book full of landscapes like Gainsborough's, and studies of cattle like Morland's. "The Task" won for the poet countless friends who never saw his face; and, though we have become attuned to blank verse of many beautiful

modulations which he never dreamed of (though now and then they were attained by Thomson), "The Task" may still be read with sympathy and pleasure.

Many of Cowper's shorter poems, grave or gay, are in all memories: "The Wreck of the Royal George," as spirited and sad as a ballad; the ringing notes of "Boadicea"; the idyllic sweetness of

> The poplars are felled, farewell to the shade
> And the whispering sound of the cool colonnade;

the lines, "Addressed to a Young Lady," brief and beautiful as the most tender epigrams of "The Greek Anthology," from which Cowper's translating hand gathered a little garland. Of these "The Swallow," "Attic Maid with Honey Fed," are worthy of the original, as is "The Grass-hopper". Cowper shone in occasional verses on trifling matters such as "The Dog and the Water-lily"; and pretty kindly compliments, such as "Gratitude" (to his cousin, Lady Hesketh), and things tender and touched with the sense of tears in mortal things, as in the "Epitaph on a Hare," and the "To Mary" (of 1793). His "John Gilpin" is an unusual frolic.

The translations, in blank verse, of the "Iliad" and "Odyssey" could not displace those of Pope, who, in Cowper's opinion, had done all that could be done in rhyme. Blank verse, especially that of Cowper, cannot convey, as Pope does, the sense of the speed of the great epic; nor was Cowper's scholarship exempt from curious errors. He was overworked; Mrs. Unwin fell into the condition described in "To Mary," his terrible melancholy returned, but his last original verses, "The Cast-away" (1798), are penned by no "maniac's hand," nor can a poet have written them without pleasure in his own genius. Cowper died in 1800.

His letters are reckoned among the best in our language, and their delightful wit and gaiety fortunately assure us that there was much happiness in a life so blameless.

Literature in Scotland (1550-1790).

Before approaching the great northern contemporary of Cowper, Robert Burns, it is necessary to cast a backward glance at his predecessors in Scottish letters. We left them in the reign of James V, when Sir David

Lyndsay was the reigning poet of the Court and of the people. It is not easy to fit some remarks on Scottish literature after Sir David Lyndsay into a chronological sequence parallel with the development of literature in England. The Scottish writers under James VI and I produced no effect on their English contemporaries: the King's "Reulis and Cautelis" in poetical criticism, and his "Basilikon Doron," a treatise on king-craft, with his "Counterblast to Tobacco," and his "Demonology" are the work of a clever general writer, but now only interest the curious. Alexander Scott and Alexander Montgomery continued to practise in Scots, the style of Dunbar, though Scott shone most in love lyrics, often musical, while Montgomery survives in an allegory of the old sort, "The Cherry and the Slae"; and an old-fashioned "flyting". Sir Robert Ayton (1570-1638) lived in London with the wits of the time, and, like the Earl of Stirling (died in 1640) and William Drummond of Hawthornden, deserted for English the Scots vernacular. The most distinguished of these poets William Drummond of Hawthornden (1585-1649) entertained Ben Jonson at his beautiful house, and has left brief notes of Ben's rather crabbed criticisms of his great contemporaries. In the previous year, when James, "with a salmonlike instinct" (1617) revisited his native country, Drummond celebrated the event in "Forth Feasting," a panegyric in fairly regular rhymed heroic couplets. Some of his sonnets have charm and are not forgotten; but the times darkened, and Drummond (who showed common sense and public spirit when Charles I unjustly persecuted Lord Balmerino (1633), advising the King to read George Buchanan's book on the Royal power in Scotland), was unlikely to find an audience for his learned verse during the subsequent troubles. His "Cypress Grove," a meditation in prose on death, is poetic in phrasing and cadences, while the periods are not over-long and over burdened. But the brief years in which Scottish wits might have learned many lessons from the great contemporary literature of England soon went by; and Scottish writers for nearly a century were confined to wranglings over theology and sermons, and to bitter tracts and pamphlets, valuable to the historical but not to the literary student.

The great Marquis of Montrose is credited with one charming Cavalier lyric, "My dear and only love, I pray," and with verses sincere but rugged and full of conceits on his own death and his King's, but he "tuned his elegies to trumpet sounds". The favourite measure of Burns was kept alive by Sempill of Beltrees, in his vernacular elegy over a piper,

On bagpipes now no body blaws
Sen Habbie's dead.

The translation of Rabelais (1653) by the learned, militant, and eccentric Sir Thomas Urquhart of Cromarty (1611?-1660) is an imperishable monument of the author's amazing wealth of strange vocabularies, and vigour of appropriate style. The task of making Rabelais talk in English seemed little fit for a Scottish Cavalier who fought at Worcester, but Urquhart, aided by Rabelais, won a kind of immortality by his success. His translation is final and decisive; in which it stands alone. Of the preachers and controversialists, bitter or humorous, there is no space to speak, but the saintly character and gentle eloquence of Archbishop Leighton (1611-1684) live in his Commentary on the First Epistle of St. Peter and his other expository writings. The historical works of Gilbert Burnet (1643-1715), Bishop of Salisbury, are English, except in their occasional Scotticisms, as much of his life was spent in England. He had seen much of the inner wheels and springs of politics, was fond of talking of himself and of his part in great affairs, and, like Leighton, represents the Scottish divine, politician, and author, who has been Anglicized out of the Presbyterian precision and acerbity, and is as English as he can make himself.

His very conceit, and his almost incredible want of tact, make this "Scotch dog," as Swift loves to call him, a most entertaining gossip. His "History of My Own Times" was judiciously kept from publication till after his death. Burnet cannot be relied on as a safe authority either in what he insinuates most basely, against William III, or states, without an atom of corroboration, against James II. In the latter case, however, Macaulay has accepted and given circulation to Burnet's narrative.

By far the greatest man of letters of the Restoration, north of Tweed, is "that noble wit of Scotland," in Dryden's phrase, Sir George Mackenzie of Rosehaugh (1636?-1691). Beginning with a "heroic romance," "Aretina," influenced by Sidney's "Arcadia" (1660), and the French school of heroic romances, and with verses, in which he did not shine, Mackenzie, in the "Religio Stoici" (1663) shows that he, like R. L. Stevenson, has been "the sedulous ape" of Sir Thomas Browne. He has many admirably harmonious sentences, a very lively wit, and a becomingly pensive air of disenchantment. "The scuffle of drunken men in the dark," the bloodshed

and bitterness of the wars of the Covenant, have saddened him, and left him an enthusiast for Montrose,

At once his country's glory and her shame.

But political and professional ambitions carried Mackenzie away from pure literature into dark and tortuous paths. His work on the Criminal Law of Scotland has considerable literary as well as great legal merit; his observations on the persecution of witches are of great interest; and the worst of his "Memoirs of the Affairs of Scotland" is the fragmentary condition of the manuscript. Mackenzie was the cause of the foundation of the Advocates' Library in Edinburgh: after the Revolution of 1688 he retired to Oxford, where he was hospitably welcomed.

The Rev. Robert Wodrow (1679-1734) a country clergyman, would gladly have taken all knowledge for his province; his was a most inquiring mind, and perhaps no man so assiduous in his parochial duties ever left behind him so huge a mass of unpublished manuscript. His great work is "The History of the Sufferings of the Church of Scotland from the Restoration to the Revolution". He was, of course, a partisan, but an honest partisan; he consulted all accessible documents, and often printed them at full length; he occasionally makes errors in the direction of his bias, but never makes them consciously. He neglects not one of the humblest of the sufferers, and, as he did not belong to the extreme left of the Covenanting party, he was savagely criticized by its members. He is a most serviceable writer, and his "Analecta, or Materials for a History of Remarkable Providences" (published long after his death), is a delightful collection of ghost-stories, and tales of witches. The evidence for the ghosts is extremely frail. Wodrow was in frequent correspondence with an American divine, as simple, learned, and credulous as himself, the Rev. Cotton Mather. Wodrow, after 1714, saw the beginnings of "Latitudinarianism," or "Moderatism," in the Kirk: young ministers began to study the "Characteristics" of that polite philosopher, the third Earl of Shaftesbury (1671-1713); to doubt whether virtuous heathens and Catholics must inevitably be excluded from salvation; to wander from the Calvinism of John Knox; to aim at rhetorical airs and graces; and to regard the chief end of religion as the promotion of virtue. These Moderates despised "enthusiasm," and while the fiercer Presbyterian leaders separated themselves from the Kirk, the abler Moderates attempted, sometimes with much success, to distinguish

themselves in secular studies, and took part in secular amusements, being patrons of the stage.

To understand the new Georgian revival of polite letters among the clergy and laity of Scotland, we should study the writings and life of Professor Francis Hutcheson of Glasgow University (1694-1746) a follower of Shaftesbury, and a writer on æsthetics and on moral philosophy. But for a true, lively, and Humorous picture of ministers who loved society, the stage, and the company of the wits, in London and in Edinburgh, we should read the autobiography, posthumously published, of the Rev. Dr. Alexander Carlyle, minister of Inveresk (1722-1805). In youth he had revelled and drunk deep with the wicked Lord Lovat, and that stern Presbyterian, dear to Wodrow, Lord Grange, well remembered for his energy in packing off his termagant wife to seclusion on the Isle of St. Kilda. Carlyle had seen the rout of Sir John Cope at Prestonpans; he had amazed Garrick, at his villa on the Thames, by the accuracy of his driving at golf; he had championed his brother minister, John Home, when Home offended the Kirk by writing the once famous play of "Douglas"; and he lived to be the acquaintance of Sir Walter Scott. Carlyle, called "Jupiter Carlyle" from his noble presence, knew every one worth knowing in Scotland; and if we think him a kind of good-humoured pagan, he is nevertheless reported to have been an excellent parish minister. "For human pleasure" in the reading, the memoirs of this most unspiritual of divines are the best thing that the literary revival in Scotland has bequeathed to us. Very few Scottish writers had paid attention to the graces of composition, except in the period of the tenure by James I of the English Crown, and in the cases of Sir George Mackenzie and Archbishop Leighton during the Restoration. But the papers of Addison and Steele, "The Tatler" and "The Spectator," went everywhere, were eagerly read in Scotland, and provoked imitation in the matter of style. Literary clubs met in Edinburgh taverns: and men corresponded with Berkeley on philosophical subjects, as Mackenzie had corresponded on literature with John Evelyn. In addition to the literary clubs a centre of interest in poetry and prose was the shop of Allan Ramsay (1686-1758) who passed from the trade of a wigmaker to that of a bookseller. In 1724 he published "The Evergreen," a collection of old Scots verses from the manuscript made by George Bannatyne (1545-1608) during a visitation of the plague (1568).[1] Ramsay's "Tea-table Miscellany" (1724-1727) was a medley of old Scots and new songs and lyrics: the new made by Ramsay and his disciples to be

sung to the old Scots tunes. The old verses were the basis of the new, which are a mixture of the simple ancient matter with that of the eighteenth century. Hamilton of Gilbertfield, who, by modernizing Blind Harry's "Wallace," produced a book very inspiring to Burns, was a contemporary of Ramsay: they wrote to each other "epistles" in verse, in the manner continued by Burns. Ramsay's "Gentle Shepherd" (1725) contains matter more true to Scottish shepherd life than is common in pastoral poetry: and Ramsay's elegies, in Burns's favourite metre, on such personages as Maggy Johnstoun, an ale-wife, were models for Fergusson and Burns. Allan was no friend of the more rigid Presbyterian party, and once, at least, in the pretty song of "The Blackbird," he showed the colours of the Jacobite. Another poet, Hamilton of Bangour (1704-1754) was actually out with Prince Charles in 1745; his slim volume of 1744, "Poems on Several Occasions," contains little that dwells in the memory except the beautiful and melancholy song of Yarrow,

Busk ye, busk ye, my bonny, bonny Bride.

In this little renaissance, whose poets always had their eyes on the romantic past, Lady Wardlaw (1677-1727) produced what was taken for an old ballad, "Hardyknute," the first, Scott said, that he ever learned, the last that he would ever forget. But it needed "a poetic child" to find so much merit in "Hardyknute". Ladies like Lady Grizel Baillie (1665-1746) with "Were na my heart licht I wad dee," and Miss Jean Elliot of Minto, with "The Flowers of the Forest," a lament for Flodden, were surpassed in the number, and equalled in the merit of their songs by Lady Nairne (an Oliphant of Gask, and a hereditary Jacobite) (1766-1845). She was the best of the known and named poets of the Cause which has had so many singers; and her strains were continued by the last of these lady minstrels and musicians, Lady John Scott, a Spottiswoode (1810-1900). The new day was dawning in Scotland, thus early in the eighteenth century, and the birds were singing prelusive to Burns, Scott, and Hogg. Indeed, Lady Nairne's "Will ye no come back again?" and "The Auld House," and "Wi' a Hundred Pipers and a,'" and "The Land o' the Leal," are far better remembered than the poems of Robert Fergusson (1750-1774) who died so young, the harmless, hapless Villon of St. Andrews and Edinburgh, and, in certain poems, the model of Burns.

These poets were not more determined to be Scots (though Ramsay and Fergusson also wrote in English) than the wits who attempted prose were

set on speaking English with the English accent, and on avoiding Scotticisms. The Select Society (1754) was a debating society whose members were taught to speak English by an Irishman, the father of the famous author of "The School for Scandal". The results were matter of admiration. They produced an "Edinburgh Review" which survived into two numbers: it had intended to appear every six months, but expired, though Edinburgh was full of *literati*, including the Rev. Hugh Blair, a once celebrated preacher, and Hume's friend, the Rev. John Home (1722-1808) whose tragedy, "Douglas," "gave the clergy cause for speculation". Hume declared that Home possessed "the true theatric genius of Shakespeare and Otway, refined from the unhappy barbarism of the one, and licentiousness of the other". Posterity has not confirmed Hume's verdict, but Home is the one "mellow glory" of the Scottish stage.

The Rev. Adam Ferguson (1723-1816), as chaplain of the Black Watch, went in at Fontenoy with the claymore. "Remember your commission, Sir," shouted his colonel. "D— my commission, Sir!" shouted the chaplain. His "History of Margaret, otherwise called Sister Peg" (1760), is a humorous and valuable sketch of the antipathy between England and Scotland in 1760-1770. These men, and many others,—Lord Kames, Lord Monboddo, Lord Hailes, a serviceable critical historian, Beattie, the poet of "The Minstrel," and the satirist of the dead Churchill,—kept alive the interest in all forms of literature. The great men of the time, to be treated in a later chapter, alas! fall under the censure of Charles Lamb, that their "books are no books," but Charles's sympathy with Scotland was confessedly imperfect.

Out of this medley of new and old, of the vernacular Scots with the affected English of Edinburgh, out of the ancient ballads and old frolicsome rural ditties, arose the style of Burns.

Robert Burns.

The place of Burns in poetry may be called unique. His genius was the incarnation, as it were, of his country people's through many centuries, generations, from the one musical stanza on the death of Alexander III (1285) to the simplest song that the milkmaids crooned at their work. In literary poetry, as we have seen, the part played by Scotland had been partly

derivative. The greatest poets, those of the fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries, were professed followers of Chaucer: Drummond of Hawthornden was a lyrist and sonneteer under Italian and Elizabethan influences. Of Barbour and Blind Harry, Burns had little but the burning patriotism: his real predecessors were the many named or nameless popular song-makers, and makers of lays of rural merriment; and the music of the Scottish tunes to which their words were wedded. Of the popular ballads, romantic or historical, he professed no high esteem: no "white plumes were dancing in his eye," chivalry was not his subject: his matter was rural life and Nature; and he had the true Scottish love of the rivers and burns of his country. In the furnace of his genius all the ancient poetic material, all the folk-song (but not "the fairy way of writing") was recast and refashioned in forms singularly varied, vivid, and real: while, to pursue the metaphor, the furnace was fanned by all the winds of his age—now of democracy; now of loyalty to "a man undone," and a dying dynasty; now of patriotic resistance to "haughty Gaul," and her threats of invasion.

In the fire of his nature and of his passions Burns resembled Byron, but his humour was kindlier, his ear more tuneful, and his gift of creating character was infinitely more varied. He had the eye of Molière or of Fielding for a hypocrite; and combined the delusion that the Covenanters were the friends of freedom, with a scornful contempt of the discipline and doctrines of the successors of the Covenanters. In affairs of the heart he exhibits the usual pastoral morality, that of the shepherds and goatherds of Theocritus, with little of the Sicilian grace and charm.

The life of Burns is so familiarly known that the briefest survey must suffice. Born on 25 January, 1759, in a clay bigging in the parish of Alloway, in Ayrshire, he was the son of a small labouring farmer of the class whence so many of the martyrs and stout fighting men of the Covenant sprang. His father, a "grave liver" and devout, like them, managed to obtain for Burns, and out of every book which came in his way Burns picked-up for himself, a fair literary education. He owed much, especially many opportunities of reading, to a young tutor, Mr. Murdoch. He never was such a bookish man as Hogg, neglected as Hogg's education was in youth, but he acquired a knowledge of French, and studied Molière. The hardships of a poor farmer, in a cold soil, under a heartless "factor," the severest struggles for existence were known to Burns, but he also had his

fill of dancing and "daffing," and the consequent "Kirk discipline". On this aspect of his life and adventures what is best to say has been said by Keats, in a letter written from Burns's country.

Entanglements of love affairs, and despair of success in life, caused Burns to contemplate emigration to the West Indies, but first he published at Kilmarnock (July, 1786), a collection of his songs and verses which instantly made him famous. Invited to Edinburgh, he passed a winter there in learned, noble, and festive society, carrying the celebrated Duchess of Gordon "off her feet," as she said, but winning far more admirers and boon companions than serviceable friends.

The Earl of Glencairn, whom Burns immortalized in sincere and glowing verse, died young; the age of Harley and Bolingbroke, of pensions and places for poets, was long dead. Burns met Scott, then a boy of 15; Scott later said that he was unworthy to tie Burns's shoes, but had the men been of equal age, better work would have been found for Burns than the perilous and bitterly uncongenial task of the exciseman (1789).

Not successful as a farmer at Ellisland (his capital was no more than the scanty profits of his poems), Burns settled in the pretty little town of Dumfries. Here his wit and genius made him the guest of the town and country, of lairds and tourists, and tradesmen. A constitution naturally robust, though injured by early privation, broke down; he had not the energy to continue in the vein of "Tam o' Shanter"; but poured out his songs, original, or re-creations of old popular ditties, till his death on 21 July, 1796.

Burns was singular as a poet, in one point: he needed, as it were, to have a key-note struck for him, and he prolonged and glorified the note which had inspired him. Far from concealing the fact, he acknowledged, with perfect candour and generosity, his debt to Robert Fergusson. This poet, born in Edinburgh (1750), and educated at the University of St. Andrews, died, after an interval of madness, in 1774. He, like Burns, had been too welcome a guest of more seasoned convivialists for the sake of his wit. His verses in English are commonplace, but his lyrics, in Burns's favourite measure, on the rude pleasures of Edinburgh tavern life, his "Leith Races," "The Farmer's Ingle," "Ode to the Gowdspink," and other pieces, gave Burns the needed key-note for "The Cottar's Saturday Night," "The Holy Fair" (the

sacramental meeting in the open air, a relic of Covenanting days), and, perhaps, for the poems on "The Mouse," and "The Mountain Daisy". Burns has so entirely eclipsed Fergusson that he is scarcely remembered, even in Scotland.

"Poor Mailie's Elegy" had a much older predecessor; and, generally, Burns's songs start from an old tune, to which, through the ages, new verses had been set in new generations. There was a Jacobite "Auld Lang Syne," there was a Jacobite "For a' that," there was a very improper "Green grows the Rashes, o'" and so on, endlessly. But Burns, in many cases, transfigured his original. That he shone more in Scots than in English is admitted—but the best verses in his "Jolly Beggars" are in English, and there is only one word spelled in the Scots fashion in

> Had we never lov'd sae kindly,
> Had we never lov'd sae blindly,
> Never met or never parted—
> We had ne'er been broken hearted.

The same song contains the conventional lines—

> Deep in heart-wrung tears I'll pledge thee,
> Warring sighs and groans I'll wage thee.

The vigour and variety, the humour, the pity, the scorn, and the sentiment of Burns were all entirely new when he wrote, and his variety enabled him to please the most widely different tastes. Critics who were horrified by "The Jolly Beggars," and "The Holy Fair," and the reckless song to Anna found consolation in "The Cottar's Saturday Night," and the lament for "Highland Mary"

> Thou ling'ring star with lessening ray,

in English. Poems in the manner of these two last are sometimes spoken of as "sentimental," but the sentiment was as real a mood, while it lasted, as the scorn, or the revelry.

Of Burns it may be said that, beloved as he has been, not always for his best qualities, by the uncritical, he has been no less admired by the greatest poets of the age that followed his own, Keats, Scott, and Wordsworth. No poet ever was more truly national; none had more of the genius of the popular past, and the aspirations of the popular future; none was more essentially

and spontaneously lyrical; none was more at home with Mature, with human society (with the life of the animal world, too, as in "The Twa Dogs"), and, in the humorous tale, none has excelled "Tam o'Shanter". No poet wears better in the changes of circumstance and taste. His letters, though of capital biographical interest, are sometimes of a comic complexion; "the style of the Bird of Paradise" prevails, now and then, in his English prose. But his English verse, as Scott found to be the way with his countrymen when they had, in passionate moments, "gotten to their English," is sometimes the natural vehicle of high reflection or of sincere grief.

CHARLES CHURCHILL.

Satire is the least worthy kind of poetry; for it is almost never sincere. The writer is always in a fatiguing state of virtuous indignation about matters for which he really cares very little, except when his virulence is brewed out of personal spite. Satire, in fact, is only tolerable when combined with the smiling humour of Horace, the occasional majesty of Juvenal, the grace, wit, and finish of Pope, or the airy contempt and sonorous lines of Dryden. Charles Churchill had little of the qualities of these poets, yet was, no doubt, the most popular writer of satire in the rhymed heroic couplet between Pope and Byron. He was born in 1731, the son of the Rector at Rainham; was at Westminster School a contemporary of Cowper and Warren Hastings; did not study at either University, though he was admitted to Trinity, Cambridge; married at 18, and married unwisely; took orders, and returned to lay costume and pursuits, and in 1761, looking about for a theme of satire that promised notoriety, had the happy thought of attacking the actors and actresses of the day in "The Rosciad". "The profession" is sensitive; the actors were not silent about their wrongs; there was plenty of hubbub, and the satire was remunerative. Any man who stoops to taunt actors, and even actresses, by personal attacks in rhyme, can make himself notorious. Perhaps the best-known rhymes of Churchill are

> On my life
> That Davies hath a very pretty wife.

There were replies and hostile reviews, and Churchill, in "The Apology," assailed Garrick as "the vain tyrant" with

His puny green-room wits and venal bards.

Garrick is said not to have dared to contemn things contemptible, and to have propitiated Churchill. As ally of Jack Wilkes, he "took the Wilkes and Liberty" to assail Scotland in "The Prophecy of Famine".

Waft me, some Muse, to Tweed's inspiring stream
. . . . . .
Where, slowly winding the dull waters creep
And seem themselves to own the power of sleep.

In fact, "the glittering and resolute streams of Tweed," as the old Cromwellian angler, Richard Franck, styles them, are only dull and sleepy in the "dubs" where England provides their flat southern bank.

In 1763 Churchill assailed Hogarth in an epistle, and Hogarth replied in kind with a truly English caricature. He wrote several other satires and a Hudibrastic skit, in Four Books, on Dr. Johnson's incursion into psychical research, in the matter of the famous Cock Lane Ghost. Churchill died at Boulogne, in November, 1764, and is buried at Dover. In private life he displayed some kindly and honourable qualities, and Byron, before leaving England for ever, in 1816, consecrated a poem to his grave. To the discredit of Scotland, Dr. Beattie lampooned Churchill—after he was dead!

George Crabbe.

Born more than twenty years after Cowper, but making his first noticeable entry into literature at the same time as he, Crabbe belongs in curious ways to different schools and different ages. In verse he follows the tradition of Pope and Goldsmith; writing, in his best-known works, in the rhymed ten syllables, and much influenced by Goldsmith's "Deserted Village," and by reaction against the smiling conventional "pastorals", But perhaps Crabbe's genius, stern and almost grim, was unfortunate in finding no other vendible vehicle of his thought than verse, for his natural bent was to the modern "realistic" novel on the squalor, sufferings and sins of the neglected rural poor. He had a genius like that of several modern novelists, for painting all that in nature or human nature is dark, lowering, and sullen; he is unsparingly devoted to actual study from the life; and yet he has a peculiar humour of his own. His later works were "Tales," short stories in the

measure of Pope, but destitute of brilliance, and extremely prolix, so that, though these narratives in verse were apparently more popular than the contemporary novels of Miss Austen, the rapid rise and universal popularity of the prose novel began to deprive Crabbe of readers even in his own later years. Crabbe, who had been praised by Dr. Johnson, lived to enjoy the generous applause of Scott, Byron, Miss Austen, and, what was more rare, the approval of Wordsworth. But as, in the beginning of his career, he censured the Newspaper as the supplanter of poetry, so, before his death in 1832, he found that the world preferred novels in prose to short tales of modern life in verse. He profited by the brief period of the bloom of poetry, but his biographer, Canon Ainger, observes that "Crabbe is practically unknown to the readers of the present day". The gaiety and grace which in Cowper alternate with gloom, and make many of his poems so generally familiar, were not elements in the genius of Crabbe.

He was born at Aldeburgh, on the coast of Suffolk, on Christmas Eve, 1754, the son of a man who had been a schoolmaster, but later obtained a small post in the Customs. In Crabbe's day Aldeburgh was not, as now, a watering-place, but through the inroads of the sea, was become a squalid smuggling village with a desolate background of poor and ill-cultivated land: as described in "The Village". Crabbe was from childhood a great devourer of books, and at the second of his two country schools acquired Latin enough for his later purposes. He was apprenticed to a surgeon, fell early in love, at 18 won a prize for a magazine poem, "Hope," made songs to his mistress's eyebrow, printed (1775) a moral poem ("Inebriety"), at Ipswich practised medicine in a humble way, and in April, 1780, went to London with his surgical instruments and three pounds in his pocket. He wrote poems which were declined by publishers; though there was an opening for a poet—

> When Verse her wintry prospect weeps,
> When Pope is gone, and mighty Milton sleeps,
> When Gray in lofty lines has ceased to soar,
> And gentle Goldsmith charms the Town no more.

(Lines of 1780.) But the opening was occupied by Cowper, and Crabbe was as destitute as Chatterton, when a letter written by him to Burke excited the sympathy of that generous heart in 1781. Burke offered encouragement and hospitality, Thurlow gave money; Crabbe was introduced to Fox, Reynolds

and Dr. Johnson, took orders, was made curate of his native village, liked it not, and became chaplain of the Duke of Rutland at Belvoir. Later he held a variety of livings, and, for a poet so satirical about clerical neglect of the poor, was, inconsistently, a pluralist and an absentee, till his Bishop made him mend his ways.

His first poem of any note, "The Library" (1781-2) has no great merit: we see that the novel, to Crabbe's mind, was represented by the old heroic romance,

> bloody deeds
> Black suits of armour, masks, and foaming steeds.

In "The Village" (1783) Crabbe showed his true self in realistic descriptions of wretchedness. He first tells the Pastoral Muse that her day is over:—

> I paint the cot,
> As Truth will paint it, and as bards will not.

There follows a perfect masterpiece of landscape in his manner, "the thin harvest with its withered ears" beyond the "burning sands"; the blighted rye, the thistles, poppies, blue bugloss, slimy mallow, the tares, the charlock. The peasants are "a wild amphibious race" of smugglers and fishers; the farm-labourers

> hoard up aches and agues for their age,

and

> mend the broken hedge with icy thorn.

In the poorhouse, amidst unspeakable filth, the dying are neglected by the doctor and the sporting curate, and the dead are buried without rites. There is not a gleam of hope or sunshine, except in the accidental mention of "the flying ball, the bat, the wicket". The poet ends with applause of the heroic death in action of Lord Robert Manners, and with consolatory remarks to the Duke of Rutland.

The poem was successful and was admired by Scott, then a lad of 18: a few lines had been contributed by Dr. Johnson.

Deserting the topics in which he was strongest, Crabbe (1785) published "The Newspaper"; the papers are

A daily swarm that banish every Muse,
For these unread the noblest volumes lie,
For these unsoiled in sheets the Muses die....

For daily bread the dirty trade they ply,
Coin their fresh tales and live upon the lie.

"The puffing poet" is also censured.

Crabbe continued to write, but not till 1807 did he publish "The Parish Register," which returns to the theme of "The Village". He was now doing duty at his parish, Muston, and, not unnaturally, found that, in various forms, the people had become Nonconformists. He now took a much more cheerful view of "the cot," and found its book-shelf well occupied by the Bible, Bunyan, and old English fairy tales; while the garden was rich in salads, carnations, hyacinths, and tulips. But Crabbe turns with more zest

To this infected row we term our street,

he enumerates the smells, and describes the horrible results of overcrowded dwellings; and catalogues the disguises, the weapons, and the implements of the poacher. There follows the sad story of "The Miller's Daughter"; and another girl who thus addresses her clerical rebuker,

Alas! your Reverence, wanton thoughts, I grant,
Were once my motive, now the thoughts of want.

This is a fair example of Crabbe's favourite punning antitheses, like

loose in his gaiters, looser in his gait.

In "The Parish Register" Crabbe reduces the story of a life to the brevity of an anecdote, and in the dearth of novels his book was very popular. A better book of a similar scope and aim, in prose, Galt's "Annals of the Parish," was being written, but, taking time by the forelock, Crabbe, in 1810, produced "The Borough," descriptions of a large country town, including tales in verse of more considerable length. But, in 1804-1805, he had written a poem which is strange in his work, "Sir Eustace Grey," a tale told by a madman, a record of the dreams of madness, closely resembling De Quincey's account of the visions begotten by opium, and, in essence, not unlike Coleridge's "Pains of Sleep". The metre is that of the French *ballade*, and of the oldest Scottish ditty on the death of Alexander III. Thus

They hung me on a bough so small,
    The rook could build her nest no higher,
They fixed me on the trembling ball
    That crowns the steeple's quivering spire;

They set me where the seas retire,
    But drown with their returning tide;
And made me flee the mountain's fire
    When rolling from its burning side.

This adventure into romance has imaginative merits, and a speed of movement elsewhere unexampled in the work of Crabbe. The hymn with which poor Sir Eustace consoles himself might have been written by Cowper when first converted and "from cells of madness unconfined":—

Pilgrim, burdened with thy sin,
Come the way to Zion's gate;
There, till Mercy let thee in,
Knock and weep, and watch and wait.
Knock! He knows the sinner's cry:
Weep! He loves the mourner's tears:
Watch! for saving grace is nigh:
Wait! till heavenly light appears.

Crabbe thought it necessary to apologize for the "enthusiasm" of the hymn, and to point out that Sir Eustace, had he been sane, would not have been converted by "a methodistic call". "The World of Dreams," in the same stanza, might take its place in "Sir Eustace Grey," so similar are the processions of terrible fantastic visions. These things are very strange among the vigorous but heavy-footed marches of Crabbe's habitual style.

To return to "The Borough," Crabbe paints its very aspect with his Dutch precision; and, incidentally, strikes at his rivals, the enthusiasts of various sects, who were much more popular preachers than himself.

Their, earth is crazy and their heaven is base,

he says of the followers of Swedenborg. As for the Jews,

They will not study and they dare not fight,

he exclaims; making an exception for Mendoza and other famed Semitic bruisers. The poem is of some value to the social historian, and the tales of the country coquette, and the horrible and haunted Peter Grimes, have a gloomy vigour, and somewhat resemble, in poetry, the moral pictures of Hogarth.

Crabbe's later works were collections of tales in verse, and with all their merits their versification condemns them to general neglect. His "Lady Barbara, or the Ghost" is not so successful in rendering the well-known story of "The Beresford Ghost" as is Scott's early ballad "The Eve of St John". To read with attention novels of everyday life narrated in the metre of Pope, without the skill of Pope, requires a vigorous effort.

In his Tales (as when a sturdy orthodox farmer expels the demon of scepticism from his son by a sound trouncing) Crabbe is often somewhat remote from our sympathetic modern tolerance of honest doubt. His method of narration is obsolete. In "The Patron," the patronized youth of humble birth, who has loved the Squire's daughter, is neglected,

> And in the bed of death the youth reposed.

The nymph of his adoration is thus corrected by her mother:—

> "Emma," the lady cried, "my words attend,
> Your syren-smiles have killed your humble friend;
> The hopes you raised can now delude no more,
> Nor charms, that once inspired, can now restore."

People did not speak in that style in Miss Austen's day; or in any other day.

Crabbe died in the same year as Sir Walter Scott, who, like Byron, Wordsworth, and Tennyson, appreciated that in him which was rare, excellent, and original.

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[1] The Bannatyne Club, for the printing and preservation of old manuscripts, a kind of Scottish Roxburghe Club, was founded by Sir Walter Scott in memory of the old lover of poetry.

CHAPTER XXX.

GEORGIAN PROSE.

I.

The Great Novelists.

The novel, since the days of the mediaeval romances, and the Elizabethan prose stories from Sidney's "Arcadia" to the tales of Greene and Nash, was never quite unrepresented in England, for example, there were translations and imitations of the huge French "Heroic" romances; Bunyan's stories are religious and moral novels, and under the Restoration Mrs. Aphra Behn (1640-1689) wrote short novels of love which do not quite deserve the bad reputation conferred on them by an anecdote told by Sir Walter Scott. Eliza Haywood (1693-1756) was prolific in prose tales, and is the author of a little romance of Prince Charles's adventures in 1749-1750, disguised as "A Letter of H— G—," Henry Goring, the Prince's equerry. But in literary circles, the novel was held in as high disdain as it was later, before Scott produced "Waverley" (1814).

The novel of modern life, manners, and sentiment first came to its own as the universal joy of reading mankind in Richardson's "Pamela"; advertised as it was, in modern fashion from the pulpits of all denominations.

Samuel Richardson, the son of a Yorkshire joiner, was born in 1689, and after being educated at the Charterhouse was apprenticed to a London printer. As a boy he made small sums by writing love-letters for maid-servants and others who were unable to write for themselves; and when, as a middle-aged man, he turned to writing novels, he cast them in the form of letters. "Pamela," which he began to publish in 1740, is the story of a girl who is a waiting-maid to a lady and is persecuted by her mistress's son; in the end he marries her and becomes a model husband. It may annoy us from the very strange and unnatural way in which all the characters behave. Pamela strikes us less as a being of equal innocence and virtue, mistress of her own passion for "the dear obliger," Mr. B. (only the initial is given), than as a young woman who knows her game and plays her cards most adroitly. Her snobbishness was, no doubt, in the manner of her class in her day, but we approve of Pamela no more than Fielding did, when he overwhelmed it with the sturdy laughter of his parody, "Joseph Andrews,"

brother of Pamela, and as virtuous as that paragon, yet no milksop. But "Pamela" was admired beyond "this side idolatry".

"Clarissa" (1748) is another novel of Virtue in danger and distress, but Clarissa is a lady of good family and fortune, and of a pure and heroic spirit. Decoyed from her home and friends by the wiles of the professional seducer, Lovelace, a rake so brilliant and witty and reckless as to win the hearts, if not of Clarissa, of all Richardson's lady readers, Clarissa is exposed to the last extreme of misery, steadily refuses to marry the scoundrel who has wronged her, and dies slowly among the sobs of the congregation.

"Sir Charles Grandison," whose name has become a proverb in the English language, appeared in 1753, and is one of the longest books that ever was printed. It is very badly constructed too, and contains lengthy episodes which have nothing to do with the story, and only puzzle and confuse the reader. Properly speaking it is not so much a novel as a series of incidents, all tending to the glorification of the hero, who is made up of long words, fine sentiments and whalebone. The women of the tale are less exasperating than the men, though they can hardly be considered attractive. The reason of this may be found in the fact that Richardson neither sought nor was sought by men, while he was in the habit of reading his manuscripts to a group of enthusiastic young ladies (among whom was the future Mrs. Chapone) in his garden at Fulham. Unluckily his audience, who might have been of service to him in pointing out that well-bred people had other manners than those of the characters of Richardson, were too deeply engulfed in admiration to be capable of criticism; or possibly they may not have been aware, as Lady Mary Wortley Montagu was, that Richardson did not know the society which he described. The letters themselves, besides showing a frankness and lack of reticence which it may confidently be said few real letters could ever parallel, are of a length which even on a desert island no one could write. The genuine letters in his correspondence, between him and the unknown but worshipping Lady Bradshaigh, and their romantic and elaborate arrangements to discover each other in Hyde Park, are far more amusing reading. Richardson has been accused, and justly, of a portentous lack of humour, but if his reader has any of his own, he will not read the novels in vain.

These censures are the candid criticism of the modern reader who finds that he cannot think himself back into the circle of Richardson, who finds its Virtue and its Sentiment hardly intelligible, though he is entirely at home with the society of all degrees that Fielding describes, or that lives in Boswell's "Life of Johnson," and in the "Letters" of Horace Walpole and Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, expressing themselves like people of this world. But though Richardson lived in a kind of moral and sentimental hothouse, where one can scarcely breathe; though he had a more than feminine liking for accumulated minutenesses of details and a more than mediaeval prolixity; yet his full-length pictures of his personages, stippled like a miniature in a ring, delighted not only English but continental, especially French readers. It was an age when people took little exercise, were little in the open air, and passed endless hours in conversation on the ethics and philosophy of love and sentiment. The Memoirs of Madame d'Épinay are partly a romance in the manner of Richardson, and to read them is to understand the society which found in him its ideal novelist. "The man would hang himself who tried to read 'Clarissa' for its story," said Dr. Johnson, a friend of the author, partly because the author was the friend of Virtue. We, if we please, may detest and disbelieve in Lovelace, who was, none the less, the conqueror of the hearts of the ladies of the time, that implored Richardson to convert a hero so brilliant, witty and amiable. But for Richardson it had been enough to convert Mr. B., and he was artist enough to refuse to gratify tastes which, in the manner of Charles II., demanded that all tragedies should end happily. Scott, with the resurrection of Athelstane; Dickens, with the conversion of Estella, were more good-naturedly and erroneously amenable to the requests of friends.

There was a blush between Charles Lamb and the girl who sat down beside him to read "Pamela," and, in fact, Richardson's way of educating girls in virtue may seem apt to have effects which he did not contemplate. Other times, other manners.

Henry Fielding.

To say anything at once new and true about Henry Fielding passes the power of man. His defects and his qualities; the good in him and in his work, and the not so good, are so conspicuous that his contemporaries, and

later generations down to our own, have passed on them the same remarks. There are the admirers of Fielding, who justly see in him one of the three very greatest of English novelists of contemporary life and manners as exhibited in the portions of society which he knew and illustrated. But he did not take all contemporary society for his province. Born at Sharpham Park, in Somerset, in 1707, he had far greater advantages of birth than other men of the pen. The House of Fielding is ancient and noble, though, unlike Gibbon in his monumental compliment to Fielding, Mr. Horace Round cannot accept its connexion with the House of Hapsburg.

The Fieldings had two Earldoms, of Desmond (in Ireland) and of Denbigh; Fielding's father was of a cadet branch of the family: Lady Mary Wortley Montagu was a kind of cousin of the novelist. He was educated at Eton and in the law-loving University of Leyden; but when he "came upon the town," in 1728, he did not associate himself with the circle of Pope and Bolingbroke and the wits and the great ladies; he does not draw his characters from that splendid society, though Lady Bellaston, in "Tom Jones," is a member thereof.

Fielding had to live by his brains, by writing comedies, and by journalism. He showed his genius for parody of the heroic tiresome tragedy that was "such an unconscionable time adying," in "Tom Thumb the Great"; and his dangerous turn for political satire in "The Historical Register" (1737). But the Licensing Act, making the Lord Chamberlain, or his subaltern, Licencer of Plays, excluded Fielding from that course; he was called to the Bar (1740), where he did not practise much. He was married in 1735 to the original, it is said, of the exquisite Sophia of "Tom Jones"; he wrote in the Press; in 1745 he took the Hanoverian side, in "The True Patriot," and "The Jacobite's Journal," in mockery so named; and during all this period he saw a great deal of the world, especially the world of the stage and of light literature.

But of all this he makes little display in his novels. He falls back on the humours of the country: on the country parson, Adams; the Tory Squire, Squire Western; a neighbour, in character of Sir Tunbelly Clumsey, and so good an Englishman that he rejoices when he hears that "twenty thousand honest Frenchmen are landed in Kent" to back the Rightful King, and the landed interest, against Hanoverians, financiers, and Whigs in general. His excellent Allworthy is no townsman; Mr. Thomas Jones, a Foundling, is

country born and country bred; most of the adventures of Joseph Andrews take place in the country; in "Amelia" we are in town, and in taverns and prisons often, but by no means "in society".

"Jonathan Wild" is a tale of town villains and rogues; and Fielding's minor characters, from postilions to philosophers, like Philosopher Square, landlords, landladies, serving-men, lawyers, parsons, unfortunate ladies, people on the road, are of ordinary humanity, with a considerable sprinkling of hypocrites. He had heard the chimes at midnight and much later; he had hunted; he had lived the tavern life, the life of debts and expedients, but he "had kept the bird in his bosom," the sterling excellence of his heart; pity for the poor and oppressed; honour, good humour, tolerance, and manly indignation.

To Fielding, Richardson's "Pamela," the text of many a sermon, the snow-pure prudent Pamela, with Virtue rewarded by the hand of the enterprising Mr. B., was even as a red rag to a bull. He did not weep over Pamela's tears, these "pearly fugitives". He no more believed in Mr. B.'s return to virtue than in that of Vanbrugh's Loveless. Respectability was so far from being his favourite virtue, that, like many very inferior writers, he inclined to identify it, unjustly, with hypocrisy.

Consequently he began "Joseph Andrews" as a parody or burlesque of "Pamela". That paragon had a brother, appropriately named Joseph; and the virtue of Joseph is assailed like that of his sister, but in vain. Joseph is invincibly respectable, yet no hypocrite, but a very manly young fellow with an honest love in his own rank. The story soon ceased to be a parody; that grotesque, learned, excellent and extremely muscular Christian, Parson Adams, came into the tale with the egregious Mrs. Slipslop; and the thing became a "picaresque" novel, a tale of the road and of chance meetings: with the lesson that kind hearts are more than coronets, and a postilion, later guilty of robbing a hen roost, is a better Christian than a whole coach-load of Pharisees. Indeed St. Augustine, once at least, robbed an orchard, yet became a shining light, having been misled (as regards the apples and pears) by his sense of humour.

"Joseph Andrews," though its language is occasionally coarse, as regards its meaning is not obscure, and it is certainly one of the most amusing works in our language: though it is not written for small boys and little girls. We

meet Pamela and Mr. B. (cruelly styled Mr. Booby), again at the close, and they behave ill in church, when Joseph is married.

Richardson was very much hurt, of course, and spoke very ill of Fielding; if he forgave Fielding, he "forgave him as a Christian," like Rowena in Ivanhoe, "'which means,' said Wamba, 'that she does not forgive him at all'".

There is an endless discussion about Fielding's morality. Natural goodness of heart is everything with him. Of his Tom Jones the epitaph might be that devised by Joe Gargery in "Great Expectations" for his reprobate of a father,

> Whatsume'er the failings on his part,
> Remember reader he were that good in his hart.

Thomas was "that good at his heart" and lectures young Nightingale very nobly on the infamy of corrupting virtue. But where there is no virtue to corrupt in others, Thomas pays no attention to his own. Perhaps he could have resisted temptation, in Nightingale's circumstances, but he is wisely kept out of it by the author. He does what is thought the very basest thing that a man can do; Colonel Newcome never forgave him; if we are to pardon Tom it must be, as Dumas urges in the case of Porthos, because, "other times, other manners".

This affair is the dangerous step in "Tom Jones" (1749), that epic of the eighteenth century. Fielding thought of it as an epic in prose; he is fond of burlesquing Homer and of quoting Aristotle. The plot has been praised by Coleridge and justly, as on a level with that of the "Œdipus Tyrannus" of Sophocles. The construction of plots has not been the strong point of most great novelists, but Fielding set this good example, not immaculate of course, but admirable.

The real merit of the book lies in its pell-mell of characters, all delineated with exquisite humour, wit, and observation, from the mysterious mother of the hero, and the adorable Sophia, to the adroit hypocrite, Blifil; the uproarious stupid fox-hunter, the Jacobite who drinks healths, Squire Western; the philanthropic yet really good Allworthy; the delightful pedantic Partridge, with his tags of Latin quotations; the rural ruffian, Black George; the harmless vanity of Miss Western (the aunt), the sternly

Protestant and Anglican, but not immaculately virtuous Philosopher Square, and all the attendant crowd.

The moral introductory reflections may, of course, be skipped, yet not by wise readers, for they are full of Fielding's humour, and display his confidence in the immortality of his book.

Fielding was Thackeray's master and model; in his too frequent reflections he follows Fielding too closely. If all men were equally fortunate, they would all read "Tom Jones" in the six small volumes of the First Edition: but in any edition the book is delightful. Charlotte Brontë thought it corrupting to such young fellows as her brother, the unhappy Branwell, but Branwells will go their own way, with or without the aid of the too fortunate Foundling.

Fielding was a sturdy Hanoverian, but he was mortal and an author. He must have been pleased had he known that the hero of 1745 (the year in which the tale is cast), that Prince Charles then lurking in a Parisian convent, purchased "Tom Jones," both in French and English.

Earlier than "Tom Jones" is "Jonathan Wild the Great," the romance of a thief-taker and sharer of spoils with thieves, who was gibbeted in 1725. It is customary to speak of this book, a satire of the "greatness" of men like Julius Cæsar, as a masterpiece of irony, and as a success in the field where Thackeray, on the same estimate, failed with "Barry Lyndon". If irony is to be openly and noisily unveiled in every page, then "Jonathan Wild" may be a masterpiece of irony. The reader may be left, if he can read "Jonathan Wild," to compare it with "Barry Lyndon" for himself, and to draw his own conclusions as to the relative merits of these books. The deliciously absurd adventures of Mrs. Heartfree, like those of the heroines of late Greek romances, are, at all events, intentionally or unintentionally funny. Sir Walter Scott disliked this masterpiece, and after reading it, and the commendations which eminent modern critics bestow upon it, the writer cannot honestly dissent from the disrelish of Sir Walter. He is said not to have understood Fielding's meaning which Fielding constantly proclaims and avows, namely that greatness of intellect and ambition without goodness of heart is a mischievous monstrosity. Mr. Carlyle, in some moods of hero-worship, might have differed, but we can give a general assent without wading through "Jonathan Wild".

Fielding's own heart was as good as Steele's. He adored his beautiful wife as Steele adored Prue. But, while "the greatest blessing is a faithful and beloved wife," says our author in "Amelia," "it rather tends to aggravate the misfortune of distressed circumstances from the consideration of the share which she is to bear in them". But the circumstances were distressed because Fielding, like Amelia's Captain Booth, was "a good fellow," and, like Johnson's friend, Savage, was at no time of his life the first to leave any company,—over the punch bowl. And Amelia was listening for every footstep, and dreading every accident of the streets, and money was a minus quantity, and a scrag of mutton was a rare festival, because Captain Booth had every generosity except that of a little self-denial.

By 1749 Mr. Fielding, as his friendly biographer says, "was a martyr to gout". "He had not stolen it," and we have heard of another sufferer, "a martyr to delirium tremens". By this time his wife was dead; later he married her maid, an excellent woman, Mary Daniel, probably of an old and ruined Jacobite family of Daniel. At the end of 1748 Fielding had been made a stipendiary magistrate for Westminster. Unlike his Jonathan Thrasher, Esq., J.P., who was infamously corrupt, and as ignorant of the law as the country justice before whom Frank Osbaldistone appears in "Rob Roy," Fielding brought to his work his honesty, courage, and sympathy with the poor.

The first chapters of his "Amelia" (1751) contain pictures of the contemporary corruption of justice, and the laxity of the prisons. Thence came the misfortunes of Captain Booth, a true lover, but also a young man in the prime of life. From this error of the Captain's, who met a Circe in prison, and from the greatness of his wife's character, the beautiful Amelia, the plot of the novel adroitly develops itself. She was "too good to be true". On the other hand the high spirit and temper of Miss Matthews make her a kind of shady Brynhild; and only coincidences in which Captain Booth recognized the hand of Providence prevent the most tragical catastrophe. "Men worship women on their knees; when they get up they go away," says Fielding's great successor. They never get up and go away when they worship Amelia.

The book, in addition to her and Miss Matthews, presents the delightfully amusing characters of Colonel Bath, "old honour and dignity," who fights Booth in Hyde Park from motives of the purest friendship; Colonel James,

with a philosophy of love rather like Lord Foppington's; Sergeant Atkinson, a kind of later Great Heart; Mrs. Ellison, a lady "not of the nicest delicacy"; Murphy, a Jonathan Wild as attorney; and a score of other characters worthy of their creator. With "Joseph Andrews" and "Tom Jones," "Amelia" is an immortal glory of English fiction.

Fielding's experiences led him into plans for suppressing lawlessness, and for important social reforms. In 1753 he took the side of Elizabeth Canning in that unsolved mystery of a girl who, if not a good girl, "has been too hard for me," says Fielding. His own behaviour, in the case of Miss Virtue's examination, is rather startling to the modern student; and whether he ended as a partisan of the Gipsy or of Elizabeth Canning is uncertain (1753-1754). Elizabeth made a good marriage, in America, whither she was banished, and lived and died respected.

In his pamphlet on Elizabeth's affair, which excited and divided London for more than a year, Fielding speaks of his illness and overtaxed strength. He spent what was left of it in his public duties; was advised to voyage to Portugal, and his "Journal of a Voyage to Lisbon," written with a dying hand, is the record of his sufferings and reflections. He sailed in the "Queen of Portugal" (Captain Veal), had intervals of enjoyment, and sketched, with his usual humour, the events and incidents of the expedition. He died at Lisbon on 8 October, 1754.

Tobias Smollett.

The name of Smollett is coupled as familiarly with that of Fielding as the name of Thackeray with that of Dickens. Smollett and Fielding were contemporaries: both came of ancient families: each had a profession;—Smollett was a physician while Fielding was a barrister,—but each lived mainly by journalism, literature and fiction. If opinions as to their relative merits were divided in their day, posterity has awarded the crown to Fielding. The reason is obvious: Fielding is full of good humour; in him there is no rancour; he admires good women almost to adoration, and paints them as only the very greatest poets have done. Again, his tales are well constructed, especially "Tom Jones". On the other hand Smollett allows his story to wander in the roads and haunt the inns, and encounter grotesque adventures; he has bitter grudges against all and sundry, especially against

his patrons and his kinsfolk. His heroines are regarded by his heroes rather as luxuries than as ladies; his heroes, to be plain, are not merely libertines, but often behave like selfish ruffians; and his relish for odious images and thoughts is hardly surpassed by that of Swift. These faults in temper and taste have made Smollett unpopular, despite his wide knowledge of life; his irresistible power of compelling laughter, his swaggering vein. But, if he drew Roderick Random and Peregrine Pickle from himself, he gave them bad qualities far in excess of his own, and did not endow them with many of his own better attributes. Smollett would never have used the loyal Strap as Roderick Random often does; and was incapable of what may be styled the dastardly plot in which Peregrine was fain to have imitated Richardson's Lovelace.

Smollett was born in 1721, a younger son of a younger son of the ancient house of Smollett of Bonhill, on the Leven near Loch Lomond. An ancestor of his, he says, blew up a galleon of the Spanish Armada in Tobermory Bay. He did indeed, by an act of suborned treachery. Like Burns, Tobias celebrated in verse his native stream; like Burns in boyhood he devoured the truculent romance of "Wallace" by Blind Harry. He was poor, and believed himself to be badly treated by his kinsfolk; after studying at Glasgow University he was apprenticed to a surgeon. In 1739 he went to London to push his fortunes, carrying with him a foolish tragedy on the murder of James I, which was the apple of his eye. No manager would accept it, wherefore Smollett raged against Garrick and Lord Lyttelton: he puts the story of his woes into "Roderick Random," where Mr. Melopoyn, unhappy poet, is the sufferer. He got what Chatterton and Goldsmith failed to obtain, the post of surgeon's mate in a ship of war; lived through the distresses of the siege of Carthagena (1741), and obtained that knowledge of naval squalor and brutality, and of the good qualities of sea-men, which he used in "Roderick Random" and in the characters of Bowling and Trunnion. Leaving the navy, he married in Jamaica, came to town, practised as a physician, and certainly lived in most fashionable quarters. He speaks of Bob Sawyer's method of advertisement by being hastily called out of church as an old trick; perhaps Dickens, a reader of Smollett from his childhood, borrowed here from "Count Fathom". His patriotism was stirred by the fatal disaster of Culloden, and he boldly published his "Tears of Scotland" (1746).

In 1748 he published "Roderick Random," the history of a meritorious orphan who lives on his servant, cheats his tailor, is a gambler, and enriches himself in the slave trade; but all is to be forgiven to Roderick's ebullient vigour and occasional sentimentalism. There are countless changes of scene and varieties of character, from the ocean to the Marshalsea Prison, to adventures in French service, from Strap and Bowling to the literary Miss Snapper and the unfortunate Miss Williams. Lady Mary Wortley Montagu supposed her cousin, Fielding, to be the author, which showed little discrimination, though her ladyship's letters are among the wittiest and most brilliantly amusing of her century. Smollett had a bitter feud with Fielding; we do not know, or care, for what cause. The briskness of the book, and the novelty of the nautical horrors, made Smollett's reputation.

Going to Paris in 1750, Smollett found some of the characters who appear in the crowd of "Peregrine Pickle" (1751), of which the first edition aroused censures on passages later pruned by the author. It is a work of amazingly careless vigour and humour: the irrepressible Peregrine is even a less desirable hero than Roderick; and an infamous Jacobite spy was not ill-advised in choosing Pickle for his pseudonym. Emilia is more than too good for the rascal to whom she descends in marriage, after escaping plots of his which might have disgusted Pamela's Mr. B. But Cadwallader Crabtree, Hatchway and Pipes, and Commander Hawser Trunnion are immortal characters; it is cruel to call Trunnion caricatured; he is a comic masterpiece.

The "Ferdinand, Count Fathom" (1753), the adventurous son of a suttler and murderess, is not a much worse man than Peregrine, but, in place of Trunnion and Pipes, we are entertained with a queer attempt at romance in the loves of Rinaldo and Monimia, who meets her lover as he weeps over her empty tomb. "Sir Lancelot Greaves," a modern Don Quixote, armour and all, was preferred by Scott to "Jonathan Wild," and, despite the patent absurdity of the armed knight, is really a much more agreeable story. In 1763 Smollett visited Italy, and his grumbling hypochondriacal narrative of his tour was ridiculed by that more sentimental traveller, Sterne. His "Adventures of an Atom" (1769) is a scurrilous political satire. On the other hand his "Humphry Clinker" (1771), a narrative, in letters, of a journey by English travellers in Scotland, is both more good-humoured and more amusing than any of his other stories—Matthew Bramble is a favourable

study of his later self; Lieutenant Lismahago is a kind of Dugald Dalgetty, born more than a century later than the laird of Drumthwacket, and the spelling and innocent good-hearted absurdity of Winifred Jenkins endear her to every reader, as a contrast to Tabitha Bramble, a bad kind of old maid. Here we meet Ferdinand, Count Fathom, as a sincerely converted character!

Smollett is not only remarkable for variety, humour, vigour, as a social observer: he strongly influenced both Fanny Burney and Dickens. His History of England has been justly described by Sir Pitt Crawley as less interesting but less dangerous than that by Hume. Smollett, revisiting Italy, died at Monte Nero, near Leghorn, in the early autumn of 1771.

CHAPTER XXXI.

GEORGIAN PROSE.

II.

SAMUEL JOHNSON.

We could scarcely understand how Dr. Johnson gained his immense influence and acknowledged chiefship in literature if we had only his works of various kinds before us. But he had a friend and biographer, James Boswell, Esq. (younger of Auchinleck in Ayrshire), and "Bozzy," by showing Johnson as he was and talked, explains his supremacy. In an age when classical learning counted for something, Johnson was, especially in Roman literature, vastly learned. In a time when people who could tear themselves from cards, took little exercise, but sat and talked, over wine or over tea, or as they slowly sauntered, Johnson was probably the best and certainly the best reported of the talkers. While politicians like Burke, and painters like Sir Joshua Reynolds, and musicians like Burney (Fanny Burney's father), were men of letters, critics, talkers, a scholar and author who could talk like Johnson was certain of his reward, was sure to be at the front. Though he confessed himself not specially partial to clean linen;

though he did not eat in a neat and cleanly fashion; though he had the strange tricks which we know so well; though if his pistol missed fire in argument he knocked you down with the butt; though he had curious prejudices, was at heart a Jacobite, and could be extremely rude, yet the excellence of his heart, his large sagacity, his immense knowledge and readiness, his humour, all of him that is immortally delightful to read about in Boswell's Life, won his forgiveness and his welcome from the most refined of men and women. He thought himself a lady's man, he said, and a man of the world, and he was thoroughly a man's man, with heart, and tongue, and hands, if that were necessary.

As a playwriter, he had not great success, and his friend Goldsmith's comedies keep the stage, unlike Johnson's tragedy. Johnson's tale "Rasselas, Prince of Abyssinia," has wisdom and humour enough, "wit enough to keep it sweet," but it never did nor ever can share the popularity of Goldsmith's "Vicar of Wakefield".

Johnson's essays, in "The Rambler" and "The Idler," may still be but are seldom read: they are far less alive than the essays of Addison and Steele, and are weighed down by the ponderous harmonies of the Latinised style.

Of his books, "The Lives of the Poets," written in his old age, are, to some, we may hope to many, readers, entrancing. Here we find the Johnson of conversation. He is not, indeed, a scientific biographer, a searcher among old letters and old records. But his memory was rich in anecdotes of the half century before his own; his style contains many a humorous comment, and his criticism is often acute, and always honest, and unaffectedly tinged, especially when he writes of the republican and puritan Milton, or of the dainty, yet, in poetry, revolutionary Gray, with all the literary and political prejudices that gave salt to his conversation. There may have been more enlightened critics, but none was ever more entertaining.

If his literary biographies are not of the most exact, they are occasionally minute enough. "Pope's weakness was so great, that he constantly wore stays, as I have been assured by a waterman (of Twickenham) who, in lifting him into his boat, had often felt them." Again, "Pope once slumbered at his own table while the Prince of Wales was talking of poetry". In his "Life of Swift" Johnson is by no means friendly, and publishes an anecdote which was indignantly denied. His life of his friend, Richard Savage, a most

detestable person, is an example of Johnson's loyalty and tolerance. Supposing that Savage was the son of the Countess of Macclesfield, and was persecuted by her with incredible cruelty, yet his conduct in most ways was detestable, though Johnson, who candidly narrates the facts, good-humouredly condones them. The conversation of Savage must, apparently, have won the heart of "the great Lexicographer". Even the Dictionary of the Doctor contains several of his good sayings, and perhaps the learning and persevering industry which Johnson displayed as a "drudge" increased his reputation, and won for him friends and admirers, as much as his more literary works.

The outlines of his life are too well known to need more than a brief summary. His family was matter of interest to the Highlanders when he visited them, was he a MacIan of Glencoe or a Johnston of the Border? He was born at Lichfield (18 September, 1709), his father was a bookseller. His Oxford career, at Pembroke College, was embittered by poverty, but he retained a great affection for his college and University, which delighted to honour him. He kept a school without much profit, and, coming to London with Garrick in 1737, lived the life of Grub Street, doing translations, writing for Cave's "Gentleman's Magazine," compiling parliamentary debates in which he "took care not to let the Whig dogs have the best of it". Of his doings in 1745 Boswell could learn nothing, and there was a fancy that he was inclined to take part in what he called "a gallant enterprise," that of Prince Charles.

His "London," an imitation of Juvenal, was well thought of by Pope, and Scott took more pleasure in no modern poem than in Johnson's manly, resolute, and mournful "Vanity of Human Wishes," also based on Juvenal's satire (1749). The "Rambler" and "Idler," were his next works (with the Dictionary), and in 1759 he rapidly wrote "Rasselas," to pay the expenses of his mother's funeral. In 1762 he accepted, from a King who "gloried in the name of Briton," a pension of £300 yearly. He lived much, after this date, at the house of Mrs. Thrale and her husband, "my Master" as she called him, the rich brewer. Here he was happy in the society of many wits, of the beautiful Sophy Streatfield, "with nose and notions à la Grecque," and of Fanny Burney, blessed in the success of "Evelina". Mrs. Thrale and Miss Burney have left many reminiscences of him which complete the account by his young Scottish adorer and butt, Boswell.

Johnson founded the Club, and such was his influence that the Club did not blackball Bozzy. With him Johnson made his difficult journey to the Western Islands of Scotland; so happily described both by Boswell and himself; stayed at Dunvegan Castle, was entertained by Flora Macdonald, met a learned minister in Skye who was a sceptic about Homer, inquired into the Second Sight; stayed at Inveraray Castle with the Duke of Argyll; and at St. Andrews was told that at Oxford they had nothing like the St. Andrews University Library. On hearing this Dr. Johnson, for once, made no reply.

His "Lives of the Poets" was written in 1779-1781, when he was 70 years of age and more. His cruel last illness was nobly borne; he died on 13 December, 1784, one of the best, greatest, wisest, and most humorous of Englishmen.

His "Lives," and the Life of him are among the works which time cannot stale; read ten times over they please the more, and more excellencies are discovered. No man of times past is known so well, and none was so well worth knowing. His critical tastes and rules are not ours, and perhaps even in his own day were falling out of fashion; but they are none the less historically valuable.

Oliver Goldsmith.

Dr. Johnson carried all his set with him into renown, and though Oliver Goldsmith was a writer of versatile and charming genius, but for his friendship with Johnson he would have been much less successful in life, and less well loved and remembered after his death.

Like several great writers born in Ireland, Goldsmith was of an English family, but they had been so long settled in Ireland that they had become "more Irish than the Irish". Goldsmith's father had the care of Protestant souls at Pallasmore, County Longford, where (10 November, 1728) the poet was born. The father obtained a cure worth more than the "forty pounds a year" at Lissoy in West Meath, and Lissoy contributes some features to the Auburn of the "Deserted Village," an ideal village, in an ideal state of desertion. His father, according to Goldsmith's poetry and prose, was a most excellent man; more capable of teaching his family how to spend large fortunes in benevolence than how to earn a maintenance,

More skilled to raise the wretched than to rise.

He was the generous host of "all the vagrant train," of "the long-remembered beggar," an Irish Edie Ochiltree, of "the ruined spendthrift," who "claimed kindred," and came to "scorn," and of "the broken soldier".

Careless their merits or their faults to scan
His pity gave ere charity began.

This pity was Goldsmith's own characteristic. When an exceedingly poor scholar at Trinity College, Dublin, his feats of charity matched those of St. Francis or St. Martin of Tours. He is said to have given away his blanket, and slept in the ticking of his bed.

A love of fine clothes was no less part of his nature than love of his neighbours, while he liked "the cards," and the bowl and tavern talk. He took his bachelor's degree in February, 1749: idled away a year or two at home, learned to play the flute, failed to take holy orders, and, as a medical student, went to Edinburgh University (1752-1754) lived on the benevolence of an uncle, Contarine, and, on his way to Leyden, was taken in the company of five or six Scottish gentlemen in French service, who had been recruiting for King Louis in the Highlands. Alan Breck may have been in this adventure. Throughout 1755-1756, Goldsmith roamed about the Continent, supporting himself by his flute, and entertained by the hospitality of the Universities.

"Sir," said Johnson, "he disputed his way through Europe," as the Admirable Crichton had done, a hundred and seventy years earlier. At Padua, it is thought, if anywhere, he obtained his Doctor's degree: his adventures later gave him materials for essays, for the wandering scholar in "The Vicar of Wakefield," and for his poem, "The Traveller". "He was making himself all the time."

Returning to England in 1756, he lived as an usher in a small school; as a corrector for the press; as a kind of indentured reviewer and general hack to Griffiths the publisher; failed to pass as a naval surgeon; wrote with Smollett's literary gang, conducted a weekly booklet or magazine, "The Bee," for a few numbers (1759); and published "An Enquiry into the Present State of Polite Learning in Europe". He was much more successful

(1760) with letters in "The Public Ledger," in the assumed character of a Chinese visitor to London.

In the former work Goldsmith complains that young genius effervesces at college and is unrewarded, while dull plodders fatten. "The link" between "the great" and the literary "now seems entirely broken". "An author" is a thing only to be laughed at. "His person, not his jest, becomes the mirth of the company." Indeed Goldsmith's person was quaint, his attire, when in funds, was that of the bird of paradise; while his wit flowed from his pen, not from his tongue; his repartee was not ready; eager he was but apparently absent-minded in company. As for the publisher, "it is his interest to allow as little as possible for writing, and of the author to write as much as possible". Writers for the stage suffer from the competition of the dead. Like two or three men of genius of our day, Goldsmith asks "who will deliver us from Shakespeare?" from "these pieces of forced humour, far-fetched conceit, and unnatural hyperbole *which have been ascribed to Shakespeare.*" Here is scepticism! Managers make new authors wait some years before giving their plays a chance: a malady most incident to managers; and Garrick believed that *he* was attacked.

The not unnatural acrimony of a neglected man appears in some of the Chinese Letters (published in book form as "The Citizen of the World"), notably in the visit to Westminster Abbey. Goldsmith had a spite against the patronage, given to the art of painting, and made his Chinaman share it. The same critic looks on Sterne's "Tristram Shandy" as a lewd compound of pertness, vanity, and obscene buffoonery.

The Chinaman also attacked the brutality of the criminal law (that of his own country being so mild), and generally inveighed against the state of society. The Letters are an unflattering picture of the times. By 1761 Johnson had made the acquaintance of Goldsmith, and henceforth Goldsmith had not to complain of neglect from wits and authors. In 1764 he published his moral and contemplative poem "The Traveller"; with his "Deserted Village" it is perhaps the last good thing of the old school of poems in rhymed heroic couplets. The dedicatory preface to the author's brother, the Rev. Henry Goldsmith, tells us that, as society becomes refined, painting and music "offer the feeble mind a less laborious entertainment" than poetry, which they supplant, while "what criticisms have we not heard of late in favour of blank verse, and Pindaric Odes, anapests (*sic*) and

iambics, alliterative care and happy negligence! Every absurdity has now a champion to defend it!"

Goldsmith, in social matters rather a Socialist, is, in poetry, opposing the slowly dawning freedom, and upholding the school of Pope. But there is, in both of his longer poems, a kind of softness in the versification, and of sincerity in the sentiments and descriptions of Nature, which we miss in Pope, while each piece, as the man said of "Hamlet," "is made up of quotations," of lines which live in many memories like household words. The pictures of the parish clergyman, of the schoolmaster, of the harmless old rustic ale-house, in the "Deserted Village," may be called imperishable; and Goldsmith cries "back to the land" and denounces "landlordism," and forced migration to North America,

> Where crouching tigers wait their hapless prey.

Goldsmith, in fact, never revisited "the decent church," "the hawthorn bush," the harmless pot-house, and other scenes of his infancy: in his poem he blends an ideal Irish with an ideal English village, and ascribes the result to a tyrannical, landlord with admirable pathetic success.

Of his other poems "The Haunch of Venison," imitated from Horace, and the witty and kind raillery of "Retaliation," in which his pen supplies the wit that often failed his tongue in the wit-combats of "the Club," are both in "anapests" and are the most important. The "Lament for Madame Blaise" is a lively adaptation from the French, and the "Elegy on the Death of a Mad Dog" is a most vivacious piece. As a ballad "Edwin and Angelina," though popular, is too unballad-like.

The works on which Goldsmith's fame depends are not his essays, histories, or view of "Animated Nature," genially unscientific, but his "Vicar of Wakefield" (written earlier, but sold by Johnson for while Goldsmith was in a sponging house in 1764), and his two plays "The Good Natured Man," and "She Stoops to Conquer" (1768, 1773).

"The Vicar of Wakefield" drew the highest possible praise from Goethe, and the most furious of attacks from the critical pen of Mark Twain. Nobody says that it shines in construction, but its humour and sweetness, the goodness, the simplicity, the true wisdom, and the learned foibles of the Vicar, with the humours of his wife, daughters, and wandering scholar son,

an usher, a dweller in Grub Street, make "The Vicar of Wakefield" a book to be read once a year. "Finding that the best things had not been said on the wrong side, I resolved to write a book that should be wholly new... the learned world said nothing to my paradoxes, nothing at all, sir." In the son's narrative Goldsmith has his usual flout at art and amateurs of art, and Pietro Perugino.

The plays are too well known for comment, with Croaker and Lofty, the Bailiffs, Tony Lumpkin, Mrs. Hardcastle, the revellers at the Three Pigeons, and young Marlow, they are at least as familiar on the amateur as on the professional boards. They brought to Goldsmith fame, some money and more credit, but he was still a drudge, still working for booksellers, and deep in debt, when his death on 4 April, 1774, made Reynolds for once lay down his brush, saddened the Club, and filled the stairs of his chambers in Brick Court with poor weeping women to whom he had been kind,—their only friend. "Nullum fere scribendi genus non tetigit, nullum quod tetigit non ornavit," wrote Johnson in his epitaph, adding a new phrase to Latin proverbial philosophy.[1]

Edmund Burke.

"It seems probable," says Burke's biographer, Lord Morley, "that Burke will be more frequently and more seriously referred to within the next twenty years" (from 1899) "than he has been within the whole of the last eighty." Yet we do not find many references to Burke, who, living, speaking, and writing through some thirty years of discontents and revolutions (the American and the French) and bringing to problems like our own a masculine judgment, and a lucid and energetic style, might seem worthy of general study.

In a sketch of the history of literature space for the works of Burke, saturated with politics as they are, and only to be understood in the light of ample historical knowledge, cannot be provided. The speeches of most successful orators are brilliant, and persuasive for the hour, with crowds who wish to be persuaded. The speeches of Burke are sometimes, when his pity and indignation are stirred (as by the fate of Marie Antoinette, or the alleged infamies of Warren Hastings), rich in floral components, in impassioned rhetoric. But, as a rule, his best orations required to be read if

they were to be appreciated; they are too full of thought and knowledge and too logically built to be generally effective at the moment.

Whatever our political opinions may be, we cannot but find Burke's "Speech on Moving His Resolutions for Conciliation with the Colonies" (22 March, 1775) a very great and noble literary work. For its purpose it was futile; fierce peoples are not to be guided by all the eloquence and all the wisdom of the wise. "We are called upon, as it were by a superior warning Voice, again to attend to America; to attend to the whole of it together; and to review the subject with an unusual degree of care and calmness. Surely it is an awful subject; or there is none so on this side of the grave."

It was an awful subject; but it was also a party question. Knowledge, care, and calmness were, therefore, put out of action. On an infamous proposal to "reduce the high aristocratic spirit of Virginia and the southern colonies" by proclaiming the freedom of the black slaves and raising a servile war, Burke said: "Slaves as these unfortunate black people are, and dull as all men are from slavery, must they not a little suspect the offer of freedom from that very nation which has sold them to their present masters? from that nation, one of whose causes of quarrel with those masters is their refusal to deal any more in that inhuman traffic?"—the Slave Trade. The idea of sending, in the same ship, samples of fresh "black ivory" and a proclamation of freedom for all blacks, not unreasonably seemed absurd, to Burke.

This speech, so moving to the reader, is said to have driven members out of the House; the gestures of the orator being clumsy, his tones harsh, and his delivery hasty. Johnson said that his wit was "blunt"; Goldsmith, on the other hand, that he "cut blocks with a razor". He "to party gave up what was meant for mankind," but, save through party, mankind is not to be helped by the politicians.

To glance at the main facts of Burke's life, he appears to have been, as far as his name shows, of Norman but long Hibernicised stock on his father's side; of native Irish blood on that of his mother, a Miss Nagle, a Catholic. He was born in Dublin, apparently on 12 January, 1729. His father was a solicitor. After two years at a small school kept by a learned Quaker, Burke went to Trinity College, Dublin, where he showed eager intellectual appetites, without paying much heed to the academic round of studies. In 1750 he went to London, to the Middle Temple, and studied law, but did not

practise. In 1755 his father cut off his allowance, in 1756 he married. He cannot have made money by his "Vindication of Natural Society" (1756), written in the rhetorical manner of Bolingbroke. The book is an ironical reply to Bolingbroke's argument for "natural" against "revealed" religion. Transfer the view to society: our religion may have its anomalies, yet our society has far more and worse. Do you propose, therefore, to return to "natural society"? "Natural" society was then supposed by the wise and learned to be a happy go-as-you-please innocent communism. In fact, if savage society be "natural" society it is emmeshed in the strangest and most artificial, cruel, and filthy set of laws and customs: the marriage laws, when carried (as they sometimes are) to their logical conclusion, make marriage impossible! All this was not understood, but Burke, while arguing against a sudden and violent break-up of society, did perceive and state brilliantly, the glaring injustices of our society, as Goldsmith did in "The Deserted Village".

Burke's "Philosophical Inquiry into the Origin of Our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful" (1756) is a study in the science of "Æsthetics," a science which, if it has reached no very conspicuous results, is now pursued with instruments and by a method not extant in Burke's day. He only sought for "the *Origin* of our ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful". He went into the psychology of pain and pleasure, and found Beauty to be "some quality in bodies acting mechanically upon the human mind by the intervention of the senses". But what is the quality and why does it automatically produce the effect? The qualities which automatically excite in the mind the apperception of the beautiful are comparatively small, smooth, varied without angularity, delicate, and in colour clear and bright, but not strong or glaring. But a mountain, or fire, is beautiful yet—does not present the six qualities. Consequently we must not call a huge rough mountain beautiful but sublime.

Burke does not pretend to know "the ultimate cause" of the emotions produced in the mind, and he censures the daring of Sir Isaac Newton in accounting for things by Ether. But Ether seems to prosper in modern scientific thought.

We cannot follow Burke into metaphysics, but the ordinary reader may test, by experience, his description of a lover in the presence of the beloved. "As far as I could observe," says Burke, "the head reclines something on one

side; the eyelids are more closed than usual, and the eyes roll gently with an inclination to the Object; the mouth is a little opened, and the breath drawn slowly, with now and then a low sigh; the whole body is composed, and the hands fall idly by the side." Thus it seems probable "that beauty acts by relaxing the solids of the whole system". On the other hand, the Sublime ought to string up the solids, and we do hear of sublime objects which "petrify" the percipient. Burke sought, at all events, for the answer to his problem in the nature of man, in psychology.

The nature of Burke's financial resources, beyond what he made by writing in the new "Annual Register" (1759,—a hundred a year from Dodsley the publisher) is as mysterious as the address of his fellow-countryman, The Mulligan, in Thackeray's book. In 1759 the so-called "Single Speech Hamilton" employed him; in 1761 he went to Ireland with Hamilton, who was secretary to Lord Halifax. Hamilton treated him badly, and in 1765 he became secretary to the Marquis of Rockingham, entered Parliament as member for Wendover, a pocket borough, made his mark at once; wrote "Observations on the Present State of the Nation" (1769), and the admirable "Thoughts on the Present Discontents," a book always in season. How Burke, in 1768, contrived to buy Beaconsfield in Bucks (£22,000) and to live at a rate of £2500 a year, the rental being £500, is a mystery deeper than that of "The Man in the Iron Mask". Apparently there was a suffering Marquis in the background: at least Burke owed large sums to Lord Rockingham, who forgave the debt. No discreditable source of Burke's fairy gold can be conjectured or conceived, as Goldsmith said he was

> Too nice for a statesman, too proud for a wit,

"too nice" meaning "too scrupulous".

Burke did not hold office, save for one year (1782-1783). Though a Whig and a "Pro-American," Burke never liked, never approved of the French Revolution. Early in 1790, he spoke in Parliament, breaking away from those enthusiasts for Liberty in her wildest mood, Fox and Sheridan.

His "Reflections on the French Revolution" (1790) had a large sale and wide influence. People will judge Burke's influence, conduct and eloquence, at this time, in accordance with their politics and prejudices; his "Letters on a Regicide Peace," and other work of his last years cannot be discussed without partisanship. He died on 9 July, 1797. "The age of

chivalry is gone," is one of Burke's best-remembered phrases. When was there an age of chivalry? If no swords leaped from their sheaths for Marie Antoinette, in 1793, not one was drawn for Jeanne d'Arc in 1431, not one for Mary Stuart in 1587.

The Revival of the Ballad.

Throughout the eighteenth century, despite the dominance of Pope and his followers, and the poetry of the Town; despite the sturdy resistance of Johnson; despite Goldsmith's complaints against Odes and "anapests" and "blank verse" and "happy negligence," there were streams of tendency making for literary freedom. Addison had lovingly praised both the blank verse of Milton, and the purely popular art of the ancient ballads. Men were beginning to look back with personal interest at antiquity; not only at Spenser, Chaucer, and Shakespeare, but at all the art and poetry of times past. As early as 1706-1711 Watson's "Choice Collection" of old Scottish poems was published: and Allan Ramsay gave old things mixed with new in his "Evergreen," and "Tea Table Miscellany" between 1724 and 1727; others appeared in d'Urfey's "Pills to Purge Melancholy" (1719), others in "Old Ballads" (1723).

We have seen the antiquarianism of Gray, in his translations from the Norse, and his interest in Macpherson's so-called "Ossian" (1760-1763). Though there was no written Highland epic in existence, there were, and are, "Ossianic ballads" in Gaelic, late popular survivals of Irish poetry. Working in his own way on these, and on prose legends, apparently, Macpherson led men's fancies back to the racing "sounds" of the north; back to the Highland beliefs that had already fascinated Collins; and emancipated poetry from the chatter of the coffee-house and the tavern. The charlatanism of Macpherson disgusted Johnson; any one could write Ossianisms, he said, who abandoned his mind to it, but Macpherson, at least, pleased thousands, including so enthusiastic a student of Homer as Napoleon Bonaparte, and stimulated Gaelic researches.

In 1765 the publication of an old and famous manuscript folio by Bishop Percy ("The Reliques") not only gave a new and popular source of pleasure in ballads and old relics, but caused a noisy controversy, which, again, led to close research. Percy "restored," altered, added to, and omitted from his

materials as taste and fancy prompted; arousing the wrath of the crabbed antiquary, Joseph Ritson, who denied that the manuscript folio existed. Had Percy published it as it stood (which Furnivall and Hales at last succeeded in doing) the book would have been unread except by a few antiquaries. Arranged by Percy, the ballads became truly popular. They were followed, from 1774, by Thomas Warton's "History of English Poetry," the work of an Oxford Professor of Poetry (1757-1767) who, in a lazy University, was a serious student.

Nothing is more ruinous to literature than ignorance, excitedly absorbed in the momentary present. In the manner briefly described, men's minds became awake to the merits of the English literature of many remote ages, and even to the interest of chivalry and chivalrous romance, to the beauty of all art that had been discredited as "Gothic" and "barbarous".

Horace Walpole.

A man who, if in an amateur and dandified way, assisted the advance in literature, was the son of the famous and far from literary Whig Minister of George I. and George II., Sir Robert Walpole. Born at the end of September, 1717, Horace Walpole went to Eton in 1727, where he won the friendship of Gray and prided himself on avoiding cricket and fights with bargees. For Conway (Marshal Conway) and George Selwyn, famous later as an eccentric wit, he had a life-long affection. From Eton, Walpole went to King's College, Cambridge, where he studied French, Italian, and painting, being congenitally incapable of the mathematics, like Tennyson and Macaulay. His letters were already witty and amusing. He began his tour with Gray in 1739, and, at Rome, was "far gone in medals, lamps, idols, prints, etc. ... I would buy the Coliseum if I could". Though he wrote fleeringly of his own tastes, he was, in fact, far in advance of his age in appreciation of the best old art, whether of classical Greece and Rome or of the early Italians. To collect, to study society, to write his famous correspondence with Horace Mann and many others—an informal social, political, and literary history of his time,—was the business of Walpole's long life. He gave himself dandified airs; he knew that he was not in the strict sense a scholar, but he had an eagerly inquiring mind, and we owe more to him than to Mr. Pepys. He practically began neo-Gothic

architecture—with all its faults he meant well,—by the building of his Villa, Strawberry Hill, and "in a concatenation accordingly" wrote the earliest pseudo-historic novel of supernatural terror, "The Castle of Otranto" (1764). Like stories of R. L. Stevenson, and Coleridge's "Kubla Khan," the tale is based on a dream. The author found himself in a Gothic castle, and "on the uppermost bannister of a great staircase I saw a gigantic hand in armour". The rest, with its odd horrors and comic interludes of the servants, Walpole wrote without plan: making his characters natural, not "heroic," his events as much "supernatural" as he could.

From this fantasy came the novels of Mrs. Radcliffe (whose habit of explaining the supernatural away Walpole derided), and, from Mrs. Radcliffe, in part, came the impulse of Scott, and the moody heroes of Byron. From the mustard seed of "Otranto" grew "a tree with birds in all its boughs".

Walpole's play "The Mysterious Mother," was even morbidly romantic in conception (1768). His "Historic Doubts" on Richard III. show a new spirit of historic scepticism, and a desire to trace accepted historical ideas to their ultimate sources of evidence. Such minute inquiry was not common, when Hume and Smollett were our historians. Walpole, who had succeeded to the Earldom of Orford, died on 2 March, 1797.

His "Anecdotes of Painting" and "Royal and Noble Authors" are all they aimed at being; his Letters, in extent, observation, inner knowledge of society, and wit, have no rivals in English, but his real position in literature and taste is that of a pioneer. The true, the essential Horace was very unlike Macaulay's splenetic portrait of him, and did not deserve Thackeray's nickname "Horace Waddlepoodle".

Under his many affectations he was a true friend and a good patriot, a delightful wit and an agency in the advance of literature and taste. Between him and Dr. Johnson, of course, there was a gulf that neither man dreamed of trying to cross.

Laurence Sterne.

Laurence Sterne can scarcely be ranged in any species of writers. He was not a novelist, though his most humorous and exquisitely finished

characters, Mr. Shandy, Uncle Toby, Corporal Trim, Obadiah, Dr. Slop, Yorick, and Mrs. Shandy appear in what professed to be a kind of novel, "The Life and Opinions of Tristram Shandy," Gent (1760-1767). These characters are really studies like those of Addison, but they appeared in a long succession of volumes which obtained their great vogue first of all, perhaps, by wild eccentricity—with blank pages, asterisks, erasions, and even pages of marbled paper; next, now by an undercurrent, now by an overflow, of indecent or indecorous story or suggestion; thirdly, by the fact that these were the recreations of a country parson. These allurements, were the first and transient causes of Sterne's popularity, these and a quantity of odd anecdotes, often borrowed wholesale from Burton's then forgotten "Anatomy of Melancholy," as the lewd anecdotes were taken from French collections of the sixteenth century. But while these baits, this "merriment of a parson," allured the town, every reader of taste had the noblest excuse for reading the book. It contained the grave and logical humours and exquisite intellectual caprices of Shandy the father; the patient, kind, dull tolerance of Mrs. Shandy (whose unexpected associations of ideas resemble those of Mrs. Nickleby), the gallantry, simplicity, and noble goodness of Uncle Toby (a person not wholly unlike a Colonel Newcome of the eighteenth century), the similar qualities of his more chivalrous Sancho, Corporal Trim; the wiles of the Widow Wadman; and, what is pleasing to reflective minds, the Curse of Ernulphus, bestowed "on him, Obadiah". "Our men swore terribly in Flanders," said Uncle Toby, but the ancient formulæ of Catholic curses went far beyond our men. For the sentimental there was the death of Lefevre, which, in school reading books, but ineffectually appealed for tears to men now old.

Thus much of "Tristram Shandy" is as good as good can be, and might be collected, with explanatory passages, and exhibited without harm or offence to any reader. But, so presented, it would lose the attraction on which Sterne deliberately counted; the intermixture of insinuation and buffoonery with character and sentiment. Great parts of "Tristram Shandy," once, it seems, essential to its success, are now detrimental to its general diffusion: all the more because the high and low tumbling is that of a clergyman.

The author (born 1713) was English by family and descent, grandson of a Cavalier English clergyman of the Great Rebellion, and Archbishop of the Restoration. We meet his father, Roger Sterne, an ensign in a regiment of

foot, in Thackeray's "Esmond," where, in his wild way, he makes a very sensible remark, when the exiled King, fighting for France, rides up to the English lines. For several years, Laurence Sterne followed the drums of his father's regiment, till, at 10 years old, a kinsman sent him to school at Halifax (1723), and the life of a camp where men swore terribly inspires his pictures of soldiers, but was not the most chaste school for a little boy.

In 1733, rather old, he went to Jesus College, Cambridge, and made the friendship of John Hall (Stevenson) of Skelton Castle. A humorist, a reckless liver, he had a great and unholy influence on Sterne, who took orders and two small livings in Yorkshire, and (1741) married a lady of some property, after a sentimental wooing. Sentiment did not last; Sterne, an accomplished philanderer, became "passing weary of her love," and the pair were only kept together by Sterne's affection for his daughter, Lydia.

Not till 1760 did the first volume of "Tristram Shandy" appear: born of a casual spite against Dr. Slop (Dr. Burton, a Jacobite physician of York), "Tristram" instantly made Sterne a "lion" in London, a friend of the great, and a diner-out. In winter he wrote more "Shandy," and published sermons on the strength of his success; in the summer he worked at home, till a consumptive tendency sent him to the least desirable parts of Southern France (by way of Paris where he met everybody), and, later, to Italy. He died in London, alone (1768) save for the lodging-house keeper, and a footman, a Macdonald of the Keppoch branch, whose father followed Prince Charlie, and whose own childish adventures, in 1745, as he has described them, were a subject made for the hand of the expiring humorist.

He had kept on publishing, with varying success, new volumes of "Tristram Shandy" almost to the end, when he had the happy thought of beginning his "Sentimental Journey," with its bewildering mixture of the old favourite matter with pretty vignettes of southern scenes and manners, pictures with the prettiness and other qualities of the French painter, Greuze. Here we have both the admired hungry donkey, fed by Sterne with macaroons, and the sentimentalized dead donkey, which provoked the scepticism of Mr. Samuel Weller. Sterne sketched the French as Hogarth did, but with infinitely more sensibility and sympathy, he is a classic in France, no less than in England. Sterne's letters and "Journal to Eliza," a very characteristic piece, are collected in Mr. Lewis Melville's "Life and Letters of Sterne". His biographer (Mr. H. D. Traill, 1882) says that Sterne "undergoes, I suspect,

even more than an English classic's ordinary share of reverential neglect". If this be so, Sterne himself, with his acrobatic clowning, is to blame, but the loss lies on the readers of mature age who neglect this contemplator of human life, this creator of characters, this painter of manners irrevocably past.[2]

David Hume.

David Hume, a younger son of the laird of Ninewells in Berwickshire, was born in April, 1711. He attended lectures in the University of Edinburgh at a very early age, and, when about 17, devoted himself entirely to solitary study, classical, poetical, and philosophic. The ruling passion of his life was the desire of literary fame, of which, with all his success, he never obtained more than he wanted. Various attempts in other professions ended in his return to his studies; he was only 25 when he wrote his "Treatise of Human Nature," he published it in 1739; was disappointed by its reception; affected to disavow it, but reproduced, in more finished literary form, many of its doctrines in his later essays. The earlier essays, of 1741-1742, were successful: the Philosophical Essays (1748), were attacked by orthodox divines, whom the "Essay on Miracles" (of which the central idea occurred to Hume while arguing with a Jesuit in France) was not apt to conciliate. Some essays he left for posthumous publication; he was in evil odour on account of his opinions, and obtained no better post in Scotland than the keepership of the Advocates' Library. But in Scotland his geniality, good humour, and practical wisdom, made him dear even to those who thought his opinions dangerous. By great frugality he made himself independent of the great, while his "History of England" begun in 1754, though, like most honest histories it at first offended all parties, proved not unprofitable and greatly increased his reputation. In 1765, he was made Secretary of Legation in Paris; later he obtained the post of Under-Secretary for Home Affairs; and finally returned to Edinburgh "in opulence," as he said, with £1000 a year. He had many friends among the preachers of "the Moderate party," and died in 1776, contented, and not without some parade, Dr. Johnson thought, of his philosophic fearlessness. In Paris he was highly popular; but, though England had done much for him, he used to express great dislike of the English. He laboured, none the less, to purge his style of Scotticisms, of which he drew up a list—"allenarly" and "alongst" are to be

avoided; and he determined to write "a pretty girl enough" in place of "a pretty enough girl". Hume's philosophical ideas belong to the history, not of literature, but of philosophy. His position, in a continuation of Locke, was sceptical, and had immense influence in causing a reaction and a closer criticism, first in Germany, then in England. Professor Huxley, Hume's biographer, has exposed many of the fallacies in his "Essay on Miracles," and others are glaring. Of "The Natural History of Religion" he wrote unembarrassed by much knowledge of the subject, for early men, as far as we know, often reasoned otherwise than Hume thought that they would necessarily reason. Philosophy and history are always in a state of flux, through the influence of criticism, of new discoveries, and of historical documents, with which Hume had little acquaintance. But a study of modern metaphysics must still begin with the works of Hume, though no one can go to his History for full and accurate information. Unable, or reluctant, to speak his mind quite freely, he adopted the ironical method, without the sometimes elephantine frivolity of Gibbon. Like his fellow-countryman, Dr. Robertson, he was no enthusiastic worshipper of the heroes of the Reformation; and, though nothing less than a Jacobite, he was Tory enough to be tolerant of the Stuart Kings, or rather to study them in the light of the conditions under which they lived. It is in the same light that Hume and his philosophy must be regarded. His letters are among his most interesting works, and his attack on Macpherson's "Ossian," with his defence of the "Epigoniad," the Theban epic of his friend Professor Wilkie, in themselves give a correct and rather amusing view of his tastes and limitations.

Robertson.

William Robertson (1721-1793) the son of a parish minister in Midlothian, was also a minister of the Church of Scotland, and the leader of the moderate party, as against the enthusiastic spiritual descendants of the Covenanters. The moderates aimed at taste, learning, and the acquisition of a style free from Scottish idioms. This style Robertson displayed (1759) in his history of Scotland. A topic could scarcely be more unpopular than his, the publisher said, but his book had a very wide success south of the Border, and his later works on the reign of Charles V. and on American history were not less popular. His manner is calm, reflective, and studiously

destitute of enthusiasm. Both he and Hume viewed the religious history of their country with a critical tranquillity very unlike the spirit introduced by Carlyle. His defect lay, not in the art of clear and definite presentation, but in limited knowledge of original documents.

Edward Gibbon.

"The old reproach, that no British altars had been erected to the Muse of History, was recently disproved," says Gibbon, "by the first performances of Robertson and Hume, the histories of Scotland and the Stuarts.... The perfect composition, the nervous language, the well-turned periods of Dr. Robertson, inflamed me to the ambitious hope that I might one day tread in his footsteps: the calm philosophy, the careless inimitable beauties of his friend and rival" (Hume) "often forced me to close the volume with a mixed sensation of delight and despair." After ten years' work by Gibbon at his "Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire" "a letter from Mr. Hume" (1776) "overpaid the labour, but I have never presumed to accept a place in the triumvirate of British historians."

The fondness of Caledonian patriotism cannot accept the compliment paid to Robertson and Hume by the modesty of the author of "The Decline and Fall". The works of the two Scottish historians, though still very readable, and distinguished in style, are superseded by histories much more learned and based on documents not accessible to the Scots. But the monumental edifice of Gibbon is "a possession for ever".

Born at Putney, early in May, 1737, Edward Gibbon came of an ancient though not historically distinguished family, whose wealth was impaired by the connexion of his grandfather with the South Sea Bubble, and by his father's lack of economy. Gibbon's health, in boyhood, was bad, and his education irregular: he was a sufferer in an age when "the schoolboy may have been whipped for misapprehending a passage" (in Phædrus) "which Bentley could not restore, and which Burman could not explain". Thus he writes in his Autobiography: in this work he affects to compose with artless effort, but the rounded periods of his great book come unbidden to his pen, or rather, he devoted elaborate care to the six drafts of his memoirs.

In two years passed at Westminster School, Gibbon did not master Greek and Latin. His next three years were passed in wide desultory reading, in

translation of the classics, and in modern history, which from boyhood was his passion. Going to Magdalen College, Oxford, before he was 15, "with a stock of erudition that might have puzzled a doctor, and a degree of ignorance of which a schoolboy would have been ashamed," he was disgusted by the indolent ignorance of the Fellows of his college, "decent easy men," at whose table as a gentleman commoner he dined. In close grammatical study under his tutor he found neither profit nor pleasure; he lived in or out of Oxford as he pleased; read Catholic books, professed himself a Catholic—"the offence," says Blackstone, "amounts to High Treason". It amounted to petty treason; Gibbon's father removed him from Magdalen to the tuition of Mallet, a free-thinker, and thence he was carried to Lausanne and the house of a Calvinist minister, who in two years brought him within the Presbyterian fold. After such a series of theological adventures it is not strange that Gibbon's aversion to Christianity declares itself wherever he has a chance of sneering at that religion. He returned to England in 1758, after sighing as a lover and obeying as a son, when his father commanded him to resign his passion for Mademoiselle Curchod, later Madame Necker, the mother of Madame de Staël. At Lausanne he had studied very widely and with elaborate organization of his work: in England he still read, "never handled a gun, seldom mounted a horse," but devoted himself to his duties as an officer in the Hampshire militia. Here he acquired some practical knowledge of military affairs which was valuable to him in his remarks on the discipline of the Roman Army: he meditated several historical topics; returned to the Continent, and at Rome (15 October, 1764) conceived, as he has told us in imperishable words, the idea of writing "The Decline and Fall," "as I sat musing amidst the ruins of the Capitol, while the bare-footed friars were singing Vespers in the temple of Jupiter". The distractions of society, and of politics, for he had a seat in Parliament, and belonged to White's, Boodle's, Brooks's and The Club of Dr. Johnson, did not draw Gibbon from his great ambition. He had studied style till, in conversation, "his polish was occasionally finical... he moved to flutes and hautboys". George Colman the Younger has left a portrait of Gibbon in verse, which is corroborated, as far as his manner in conversation went, by a letter of his own (1764).

His person looked as funnily obese
As if a Pagod, growing large as Man,
Had rashly waddled off its chimney-piece,

To visit a Chinese upon a fan.
Such his exterior, curious 'twas to scan!
And oft he rapped his snuff-box, cocked his snout,
And ere his polished periods he began,
Bent forwards, stretching his forefinger out,
And talked in phrase as round as he was round about.

Roundness, meditated balance, are the characteristics of Gibbon's style. "Before he wrote a note or a letter he arranged completely in his mind what he wished to express." He says: "It has always been my practice to cast a long paragraph in a single mould, to try it in my ear, to deposit it in my memory, but to suspend the action of my pen till I had given the last polish to my work". As one consequence, "my first rough manuscript, without any intermediate copy, has been sent to the press". Gibbon's History, in the vast whole, as well as in each sentence, was thus premeditated, under his ruling philosophic idea of what such a history should be. He had completely assimilated his mass of materials, and each topic was reduced to its proper dimensions, without encumbering details, while all marched to the flutes and hautboys of his rounded music. We may think it occasionally monotonous, and marvel that so many periods should conclude with a clause introduced by the preposition "of". But this is a trifling criticism, he had chosen his vehicle; and, though we should not imitate his style, yet a style it is, admirably adapted to its purpose. His reading was enormous in every branch of learning, including the science of coins; he constantly refers "to the medals as well as the historians". It may be curious to note that while he devotes four pages to the criticism of the iron cage of Bajazet (1402) he neglects to mention that such cages or *huches* were commonly used for the safeguarding of important prisoners of war by the contemporary chivalry of France and England.

It is, of course, impossible, it would not be easy for the most learned of historians, to criticize in a few words a historical work of such vast survey, and concerned with so many and such various topics, with the affairs of so many races and religions, throughout so many centuries. The faults which have been chiefly criticized are Gibbon's total inability to be generous towards Christianity; and the bad taste of some of his notes; which appear to be the refreshments of a natural fatigue. In his day, he says, "History was the most popular species of composition," and he "is at a loss how to

describe the success of the work, without betraying the vanity of the writer". He ended his task, and he has described his emotions when all was done, on 27 June, 1787, at Lausanne, the place of his boyish exile and of his solitary affair of the heart. He died in 1794, having been mainly busy with the drafts of his Autobiography. These drafts, with his most interesting letters, have been published by the piety of the Earl of Sheffield, the grandson of his devoted friend, John Holroyd, first Lord Sheffield. In his early letters Gibbon is no purist, "I tipped the boy with a crown," he says, an early use of a familiar modern term.

Richard Brinsley Sheridan.

Richard Brinsley Sheridan (1751-1816), like Burke and Goldsmith, was an Irishman by birth; his family provided Prince Charles, in Sir Thomas Sheridan, with a most inefficient tutor, and an unfortunate comrade in war. Sheridan's own family was Protestant, his grandfather was a friend of Dean Swift in Ireland, and a humorist. His son, though in Dr. Johnson's set, was regarded by the great lexicographer as a prodigy of natural dullness, highly cultivated and improved by art. Educated at Harrow, young Richard never gave any cause for the complaint that he was dull. At twenty-one he eloped from Bath with the beautiful Miss Linley, a charming singer, the Saint Cecilia of Reynolds's painting. In 1775, Sheridan produced "The Rivals" at Covent Garden; one of the few plays of the eighteenth century which still live on the stage, and perhaps can never cease to amuse, thanks to Mrs. Malaprop's exquisitely well-chosen derangement of epithets, and the unexpected variety of her parts of speech. Malapropisms may be styled a mechanical form of humour, but Mrs. Malaprop's own are happily expressive of her character. To know Lydia Languish is to love her; and Sir Lucius O'Trigger scarcely caricatures the ideas of his duelling fellow-countrymen; whilst Bob Acres is the most sympathetic of all the comic poltroons of the stage, though too sanguine in his belief that "damns have had their day". Sir Anthony Absolute is a delightful variation on the stock character of the Angry Father; and these diverting figures make the sentimental parts of the serious lovers, Falkland and Julia, rather ungrateful. "The School for Scandal" may be called conventional in the contrast of hypocrisy and reckless goodness of heart in Joseph and Charles Surface; but convention is permitted to the stage, while Sir Peter and Lady Teazle, with

the happy high spirits of the whole farcical comedy, and the varieties in the candour of the scandal-mongers, make the play at least the rival of "The Rivals," as it is far more provocative of mirth than the wit of Congreve. "The Critic," again, in its delicious nonsense and satire of authors, actors, and critics—Sir Fretful Plagiary is as diverting as realistic—infinitely surpasses its old model, "The Rehearsal". We laugh aloud as we read, and are convulsed as we look on when the piece is acted. Who forgets the nod of Lord Burleigh in the drama of the Armada, and the exquisite reason for which the characters cannot behold the galleons of Spain, and the romantic demeanour of the two Tilburinas, and the Governor who remains fixed, while the Father is moved? Of Sheridan's other plays "St. Patrick's Day" is not seen on the stage, while "The Duenna" does not "attain unto the first Three".

As manager and owner of Drury Lane Theatre, Sheridan proved himself to be not more skilled in finance than Balzac; in debt always, he somehow kept afloat. You would have said that "he was not the stuff they make Whigs of"; any more than Charles Fox. In Parliament, however (1780), he attached himself to that statesman's party; attacked Warren Hastings, and amused the Prince of Wales (George IV.) who certainly appreciated literary genius, from Sheridan and Scott to Miss Austen.

Lady Mary Wortley Montagu.

Born a Pierrepont, daughter of the Earl of Kingston (1689-1762) and wife of Edward Wortley Montagu, Lady Mary, a toast at eight, lived through the great age of Anne and Pope, her absurd admirer before he was her shameless satirist. She was equally celebrated for her beauty, her wit, and her introduction of inoculation against small-pox, from Constantinople, where her husband was English ambassador (1716). Her light verses are sparkling and malicious; her fame rests on her letters, from the East, from England among the wits, to her sister (who married the Jacobite Earl of Mar, and lived in France), and, in later life, to Lady Bute, from Avignon, with its Jacobite colony, and from Italy, where she read and remarked on the great novelists of the day. Even Walpole's letters are scarcely more entertaining, and more brilliant records of society in the eighteenth century do not exist. Lady Mary was not sentimental, and laughed at Pope's

lightning-stricken lovers; or rather at the artificiality of Pope's sentiment concerning them.

JUNIUS.

Stat Nominis Umbra. Because we do not know who wrote the letters of political invective signed "Junius," and published by Woodfall in "The Public Advertiser" (1768-1773), much has been written about the mystery of the author's identity. From Sir Philip Francis (who seems to be the favourite, like Matthioli for the Man in the Iron Maskship) to the wicked Lord Lyttelton and Edward Gibbon, there have been about a score of candidates. Matthioli was certainly not the Man in the Iron Mask, and perhaps Sir Philip Francis was not Junius, who gives himself—very cleverly if he were Sir Philip,—the air of being some great one. The letters, except to the professed historian, are repulsive. The worst quality of satire, spite masquerading as virtuous indignation, is their chief characteristic, their style is that of antithetical rhetoric, highly inflated; their subject is party politics and personal invective.

[1] There was scarce a literary form which he did not touch, none which he touched did he fail to adorn.

[2] The writer observes that Sterne is unmentioned in Mr. Pancoast's "Introduction to English Literature," Third Edition, Enlarged, New York, 1907. "Alas, poor Yorick!"

CHAPTER XXXII.

THE ROMANTIC MOVEMENT.

COLERIDGE.

The so-called Romantic Movement in the English Literature of the early nineteenth century, was, first, the result of a tendency to expansion in every conceivable direction. There was delight in the freedom of the open air and of Nature: in the late seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, most men who were not fox hunters were devoted to "the stuffy business of living in houses," and passed the greater part of the day in coffee houses and taverns, drinking wine, tea, chocolate, and ceaselessly conversing. The fat Georgian faces of Hume and Gibbon, the early corpulence and early gout are indications of the life led, when they could afford it, by men of letters. "The Return to Nature," in poetry implied a reaction against these habits.

Politically, there was, in connexion with the French Revolution, expansion in the direction of Universal Brotherhood. "Be my Brother or I will cut your throat" (*Sois mon frère, ou je te tue*) was the motto of extreme philanthropists.

> It's comin' yet for a' that
> That man to man the world o'er
> Shall brithers be for a' that,

wrote Burns while the guillotine was in the making, and the thunder was approaching of the Revolutionary and Napoleonic wars.

These emotions of hope for the near future entered, no less than the love and study of Nature, into the Romantic literature, and the minds of the poets

also expanded in theological and mystical speculation, half German, half in the style of Greek Platonic philosophy.

The sentiment of human unity also turned to the past; history was revivified; mediaeval art was appreciated; chivalry was an ideal—and a very excellent ideal, were human nature capable—of carrying it into practice. Verse was emancipated, all that Goldsmith protested against,—sonnets, blank verse, happy negligence, "anapests"—flourished, and the characteristics of the new age were variously illustrated by men all born within some five years of each other, in the north or the south, William Wordsworth (1770), Walter Scott (1771), Samuel Taylor Coleridge (1772), Robert Southey (1774), and Charles Lamb (1775), to whom we may add Walter Landor (1775).

Of these the most inspiring influence was probably that of the man who produced the least in bulk of great literature, Coleridge. He was, as it were, the Socrates of the time, the talker. Coleridge was born at the vicarage of Ottery St. Mary, in the Devonshire which Herrick and Keats so much disliked, on 21 October, 1772. His father, the Rev. John Coleridge, was vicar and master of the Grammar School, and for goodness, learning, and ignorance of the world was compared by his son to Fielding's Parson Adams. Coleridge describes himself as a dreamy child, useless at games, "timorous, and a tell-tale," "despising most boys of my own age". "You can't think how ignorant these boys are!" said Scott, when asked, as a child, why he was not playing with his little neighbours. Like R. L. Stevenson, Coleridge suffered from night fears and visions of fever, born of "The Arabian Nights". He "had seen too many ghosts to believe in them". After the death of his father, who appreciated him, Coleridge went to Christ's Hospital in London (1782), and Lamb has described his life, and his early home-sickness at that painfully Spartan academy. Though he revived

> by internal light,
> The trees, the meadows, and his native stream,

while a schoolboy Coleridge's spirits were high; he made friends enough, Charles Lamb being the first; read widely; dipped, like other curious boys, into the dreams of the post-Christian Neoplatonists,—Iamblichus, the great authority on spiritualism, and Plotinus, so good in parts—and adored, at 17, the Twenty Sonnets of the Rev. Mr. Bowles (1762-1850), afterwards the

opponent of Byron in the question "Was Pope a poet?" Bowles, at all events, handed the torch of non-Popeian poetry to Coleridge, who won scholarships and exhibitions that maintained him at Jesus College, Cambridge (1791). Here he met Wordsworth of St. John's, already a printed poet, at a meeting of an Essay Society. But Coleridge had not written his essay!

He now fled from Cambridge "to be a dragoon," which did not suit his genius. He returned to Cambridge: visited Oxford in 1794, met Southey of Balliol, and with him made a plan to migrate with kindred souls to the States, and found a pantisocratic society, wherein all should be brothers and equals. Coleridge was as fit to be a farming colonist as Mr. Micawber, and, being just off with one love, he presently engaged himself to another, Miss Sara Fricker, a sister of Southey's bride. Coleridge at this time wrote a good deal of verse and described his own hand as "graspless"; his genius as "sloth-jaundiced all," while, elsewhere, he spoke of his "fat vacuity of face," an eighteenth century face, with full lax lips, redeemed by dark intelligent eyes. Coleridge was

> Like some bold seer in a trance
> Seeing all his own mischance.

He left Cambridge without a degree, married on the prospects of his poetry; started a weekly serial, "The Watchman," and (1796) published "Poems". Some of them were written at school; many of them are full of Gray's allegorical figures, one, "Religious Musings" in blank verse, is on the Nativity and the evils of Society, others are imitative of Bowles, an "Ode to a Young Jackass," is reminiscent of Sterne's donkey. Perhaps some stanzas named "Lewti, or the Circassian Love-chaunt" alone suggest the essential qualities of Coleridge.

In 1796-1797, Coleridge took a cottage at Stowey: "The Light shall stream to a far distance from the taper in my cottage window". He was busy with an unfinished poem on Jeanne d'Arc, in blank verse (fragments appear in "The Destiny of Nations"). He represented her as seeing her Saints first when of the age of 20, to which she never attained: her eyebrows were "wildly haired". The Voices, in Coleridge, spoke to Jeanne about the Pacific Ocean, the Protoplast, Leviathan, and kindred matters, not much in her way.

Jeanne has suffered as much at the hands of poets as from her French judges. Lamb induced Coleridge to abandon these absurdities.

In midsummer, 1797, Coleridge met Wordsworth and his "exquisite sister," Dorothy, who paid a visit to Stowey, and settled near him. A play, "Osorio," was not accepted for the stage: the two poets formed various projects of collaboration, one resulted in "The Ancient Mariner" (March, 1798) the quintessence of romance. In 1798 Coleridge met and carried captive Hazlitt, who later broke his bonds with a glee and fury unworthy of him. By this time, according to Hazlitt, Coleridge had made experiments in opium, of which the bondage was never broken.

In 1798 the famous volume, "Lyrical Ballads," by Coleridge and Wordsworth, challenged the world with Wordsworth's "Idiot Boy" and "Tintern Abbey," examples of the opposite poles of his genius; with "The Ancient Mariner," among other things. In 1798-1799 Coleridge was studying in Germany, absorbing philosophies: in 1800 he removed with his family to Greta Hall near Keswick, or to Windermere, while the Wordsworths were at Grasmere; hence the name of the Lake Poets.

Coleridge was now working at the second part of the never-to-be-finished "Christabel," begun at Stowey. Sir John Stoddart read or repeated some stanzas of "Christabel" to Scott, who followed the metres of Coleridge in "The Lay of the Last Minstrel" (1805). Coleridge (who did not publish "Christabel," and the extraordinary fragment composed in sleep "Kubla Khan," with "The Pains of Sleep," till 1816) was not unjustifiably annoyed by the anticipation, of his metre, which was not new, but was first used by Coleridge in romantic poetry. Scott seems to have been quite unconscious of sin.

Despite the large number of Coleridge's poems, it is generally confessed that only "The Ancient Mariner," "Christabel," "Kubla Khan," "Love,"

> All thoughts, all passions, all delights,

"Youth and Age" (1822-1832), "Time, Real and Imaginary," with "Dejection" (an ode, 1802), and parts of "France" (an ode, 1798) represent that in the poet which was absolutely his, and his alone. The vision, supernaturally clear, the music, the glow, the strange beauty, are present in these poems, things inimitable and unequalled. Coleridge was always a

"teacher" and had been a Unitarian preacher: his early poems are constantly didactic, but, in his poems which live, there is no "lesson" (unless we regard "The Ancient Mariner" as a tract for the prevention of cruelty to animals). The great poems appear to have been given to him in flashes of vision, as "Kubla Khan" certainly was given in sleep, and broken by the arrival of "a person from Porlock" on business. It is fairly apparent that "Christabel" had its germ in a brief vision of the meeting of the innocent heroine with a being beautiful and horrible,

> I guess,'twas *frightful* there to see
> A lady so richly clad as she—
> Beautiful exceedingly.

We may even conjecture at the close of the vision, a thing so grotesque as well as terrible, that the poem could never find a conclusion.

It is not clear that Coleridge's poems had much effect on those of younger contemporaries. Without Coleridge, Shelley would have written as he did write; if anything by Keats is influenced by Coleridge it is "La Belle Dame sans Merci". To Scott, Coleridge gave only the idea of the metre of "Christabel". In close intimacy Coleridge and Wordsworth stimulated each other. In other respects Coleridge's critical and philosophical ideas welled from him in lectures, orally delivered; his Shakespearean criticism was of the highest merit in spiritual appreciation. In "The Friend," an unsuccessful and unexhilarating periodical; in his "Biographia Literaria" (1817-1818) which is not so biographical or so literary as it is reflective, and critical of Hartley's philosophy and Wordsworth's poems, he is too discursive to be easily read; and the systematic works on philosophy about which he dreamed and talked were never produced.

His life, after his visit to Italy and Malta in 1804-1806, was desultory; his friendship with the Wordsworths was interrupted; Lamb, always true to him, could describe him as "a damaged Archangel"; Hazlitt, furious with Coleridge's later conservatism, insulted his "Christabel" in the "Edinburgh Review": and declared that the praises given to it by Scott and Byron were inspired by desire of praise from Coleridge. From 1816 to his death in 1834 Coleridge lived quietly and more happily with Mr. Gillman at Hampstead, much visited by people who hoped to be instructed as well as charmed by his conversation, or rather by his monologues.

In 1820 Keats met him and walked two miles with him. "He broached a thousand things—nightingales, poetry—on poetical sensation—metaphysics, different genera and species of dreams—a dream accompanied by a sense of touch, a dream related—first and second consciousness—the difference explained between will and volition—so say metaphysicians from a want of smoking" (that is detecting) "the second consciousness—monsters—the Kraken—mermaids, Southey believed in them—Southey's belief too much diluted—a ghost story!"

"The second consciousness" may be the "subconsciousness" or "subliminal self" of modern psychologists. "He is a kind good soul," says the sardonic Carlyle, "full of religion and affection, and poetry and animal magnetism." Scott met "this extraordinary man" at dinner. Coleridge (after dinner) lectured on the Samothracian Mysteries as the origin of all fairy tales; and on the "Iliad" as a miscellany contributed to by many authors during a century. "Zounds, I never was so bethumped with words."

Walter Scott.

Sir Walter Scott, descended from the Harden branch of the great clan that had kept the Marches through centuries of English wars, was born in Edinburgh on 15 August, 1771. Neither from his father (the father of Allan Fairford, in "Redgauntlet") nor from his mother, of another Border clan, the Rutherfords, can he be supposed to have drawn his genius, though Mrs. Scott appreciated literature. In early childhood a mysterious malady inflicted on him a life-long lameness, in contrast with his great physical strength, and his preference for the profession of arms. His early childhood was passed in the heart of the Borders, at Smailholme tower, overlooking Tweed, Teviot, and the scenes of a hundred battles. The old ballads were his earliest reading, and tales of Prince Charles's war, told by veterans of the Forty-five, his great delight. At school he flashed from end to end of the form, rising by his general information, and falling by his indifference to grammar. He was an omnivorous reader, forgetting nothing, a teller of tales, a roamer on foot through the country-side, and he left the High School of Edinburgh, quite Greekless, for the University,—where he learned no Greek. But of Latin, including mediaeval Latin, he had enough for his purposes (his quotations show indifference to quantity and metre); and

French, Italian, and German he acquired for the purpose of reading their poetry and romances. His native appreciation of verse astonished people in his childhood; love of the past was his dominant passion; and in nature the historical memories of places were even more to him than natural beauty.

After the customary training in his father's office, he was called to the Scottish Bar, enjoying little practice, but making friends in every rank, and enduring a disappointment in love, by which his heart, though fairly mended by his marriage in 1797, to a Miss Charpentier, was broken but not embittered.

His earliest published verses were translations from German ballads, including the famous "Lenore" of Bürger, and he published a translation of the "Götz von Berlichingen" of Goethe. These essays attracted little attention: more was paid to such imitations of the old ballads as "Glenfinlas," and "Cadzow," and "The Eve of St. John," abounding in poetic spirit, though not archaic in diction.

He obtained a long-deferred reversion of a place as Clerk in the Parliament House, and the Sheriffship of Selkirkshire (the Forest of Ettrick) where in summer he resided, first at Ashestiel on Tweed, the centre of the beauties and legends of the Border. In yearly raids into almost roadless Liddesdale, he learned to know the Dandie Dinmonts, and collected the traditions, and the ballads of "The Border Minstrelsy," of which the first edition, with copious historical and antiquarian notes, was published in 1802.

The famous False Alarm of invasion of 1803, described in "The Antiquary," sent him on a ride of a hundred miles, to Dalkeith, the house of his chief, the Duke of Buccleuch, and the trysting-place of the Borderers. A command of the Duchess suggested a ballad on a tradition of a goblin page; parts of Coleridge's unpublished "Christabel," which he had heard recited, gave the model of the irregular octosyllabic verse, and in 1805 the result, "The Lay of the Last Minstrel," made Scott by far the most popular of poets. "The Lay" was the most spontaneous, and in many ways the best, of his romances in verse. "Marmion" (1808) more studied, more tragical, and fortunate in the magnificent canto on the battle of Flodden: and "The Lady of the Lake" (1810), with its blending of Highland and Lowland characters and scenes in the reign of James V. (about 1535) only confirmed his popularity and success. "Rokeby" (1812) was, despite its excellent songs,

and a highly Byronic outlaw preceding Byron, less favourably received; and "The Lord of the Isles" (1815), on the adventures of Bruce, a subject long meditated, was not saved by its battle of Bannockburn, a fight only inferior to the Flodden of "Marmion". Byron, with his modern romance and his living celebrity, had defeated the historical Muse; and Scott did not put forth his strength in "Harold the Dauntless" and "The Bridal of Triermain".

He was the best judge of his own poetry, written "for young people of spirit," he said, though he did not allow his own young people to read it; a deprivation which they took very unconcernedly. It is not to Scott's poetry, except in some of his lyrics, that we look for deep reflection on human destinies, or for delicate subtlety of phrase,

> All the charm of all the Muses
> Often flowering in a lonely word.

His reflections he kept to himself; he told his story in his galloping "light horseman" style of verse; he made the dead past live again; he repeopled with their dreams the roofless towers of the Borders, the Highland caves and bothies, the deserted palaces and castles, whose last native king was then dying, a priest, in Rome. His verses, read aloud to Wellington's men in Spain, inspirited them in the charge, as they awoke among all men what had long been slumbering, the love of poetry. Scott, like Yama, the first of men who died, "opened a pathway unto many": inclined men to give an ear to verse. He set Byron the model for his popular versified tales of Oriental adventure; and he was unceasing in recommending the poetry, so unlike his own, of Wordsworth, and in applauding Byron with unfeigned generosity; while his devotion to the old English drama displays itself in quotations in his prose, and in imitations, improvised chapter-headings, in his novels. From his first translations of ballads, to the snatches sung by Madge Wildfire, the song of "Proud Maisie," and the ringing lyric of "Bonnie Dundee," he first awoke and then kept vigilant the spirit of ancient popular minstrelsy.

In short his poetry was such as came to a man of his genius, during his "grand gallops among the hills, while he was thinking of 'Marmion'". His laxities in form are, indeed, less glaring than those of Byron, but, from the first, were conspicuous to himself and to his critics. His appeal to names of hill and loch and sea-strait, rivers and burns and towers and glens, makes

half of his charm in the ears of those to whom the places are dear and familiar. *He* was "the latest minstrel," the Homer, the creative and unifying successor of many nameless men who left great verse unto a little clan. Above all he was a narrator, at story-teller, a creator of characters, a Humorist, and his essential genius, his dramatic gift, his knowledge of the past and the present, found its true vehicle in the prose of his novels.

Scott's career falls naturally into two parts: first from the "Minstrelsy" (1802) to "The Lord of the Isles" (1815), and next from "Waverley" (1814) to the authors death in 1832. But in the earlier years were sown the seeds of disaster; Scott had, before 1813, been entangled in financial troubles, owing to his association with the printing and publishing affairs of his old friends, James and John Ballantyne. Despite his common sense, Scott was sanguine and unpractical as a publisher; his enterprises were dominated by preferences, personal or antiquarian; his hospitality and his tastes were expensive, and his associates were not the men to control and direct him; or even to keep the commercial books of the concern. In fact shipwreck, once at least, seemed inevitable, before Scott struck a vein of fairy gold in prose romance.

Before speaking of Scott as a novelist it should be said that he was the most copious, various, and readable of the critics and general writers of his time. His great edition of Dryden, now reinforced by the notes of Mr. Saintsbury, still holds its ground, in despite of the contempt of Leigh Hunt; and his "Life of Swift" is still the most valuable, for the judgment of so sane and generous a mind on the mystery of Swift's character and career. Scott's many essays, collected from periodicals, mainly from "The Quarterly Review," which he practically founded, are treasures of information and anecdote. His criticism for example in the "Lives of the Novelists" errs most in the direction of generosity. His "Tales of a Grandfather," written for his little grandson, John Lockhart, who died in childhood, combines delightful versions of historic legends of early times with the most impartial treatment of such difficult and disputable periods as the Reformation and the age of the Covenant. Scott had strong sentimental leanings towards Mary Stuart, the Cavaliers, and the Jacobites, but, in writing history for the young, he deliberately corrected his bias. A life of Mary Stuart he refused to write, because his reason was at variance with his feelings. His "Napoleon" was a piece of task-work, executed with cruel rapidity, and, of course, he

had not access to many sources of information now open. Of course, too, like any man who had lived through the Napoleonic wars, he was a partisan, in his case of his country's party. But he did not carry political partisanship into literature; he had no part (despite ignorant assertions) in the attacks on "the Cockney School"; he tried to tempt Charles Lamb to visit him at Abbotsford; and he seized an opportunity of applauding Mrs. Shelley's "Frankenstein" because he believed it to be by Shelley.

William Wordsworth.

The contrast between the friends, Coleridge and Wordsworth, was that which poets observe between the South and the North. The child of the soft enervating air of Devonshire, Coleridge, according to his own early diagnosis already quoted, had every other gift, mental and moral, but lacked energy and resolution, his hand was "graspless". Wordsworth, on the contrary (born at Cockermouth, 7 April, 1770) was a child of the North and of the Border, and a grandchild of Dorothy, born Crackanthorp, a member of a family which, in the old Border laws, is named among the Watchers of the Fords, against the Scottish raiders. To a genius as great if not as diversified as Coleridge's, Wordsworth united an iron will to be a poet and, as he said, "a teacher,". With the keenest love of universal nature from the mountains and the storms to "the meanest flower that blows," he combined that sense of unity with Nature, and with "something still more deeply interfused," which Coleridge speaks of in a poem (1795) composed before he and Wordsworth became intimate. Says Coleridge

> O the one life within us and abroad,
> Which meets all motion and becomes its soul,
> A light in sound, a soundlike power in light,
> Rhythm in all thought, and joyance everywhere.

Coleridge adds that when he lies at midday on the side of a hill, his fancies traverse his brain

> As wild and various as the random gales
> That swell and flutter on this subject lute,

namely an Æolian harp placed in the open window.

Wordsworth, to the same emotions as of a conscious Æolian harp vibrating to the universe, added an invincible resolve to extract the moral out of every vibration, and to register it in verse. In this task he knew no slackness, he was daily observing, daily composing, consequently the mass of his poetry is very great, and very unequally inspired, since "it needs heaven-sent moments for this skill" of the poet, while Wordsworth was busy at all moments.

After a boyhood happily passed, when he was out of school, in angling, skating, boating, and setting springes for woodcock, Wordsworth went to St. John's College, Cambridge, in 1787, taking his bachelor's degree in 1791. He was an orphan; his father, a solicitor, had been far from prosperous, and it was perhaps to the generosity of his uncle that he owed the advantage of being allowed to "mew his mighty youth" in what the world calls idleness. He had the same intense consciousness of and reverence for his own genius as Milton and Tennyson possessed: he would be a poet and nothing but a poet, for the position of Stamp Distributor which he later enjoyed was a sinecure. Concerning all his poetic childhood and boyhood, and residence in France (from the end of 1791 to the opening of 1793),

> Bliss was it in that dawn to be alive.
> But to be young was very heaven,

down to his "wantoning in wild poesy" with Coleridge (1797), he has told his tale in "The Prelude" (1799-1805).

This extremely long poem in blank verse was regarded by Wordsworth as "subsidiary to the preparation" for "the construction of a literary work that should live". After thus "investigating the origin and progress of his own powers as far as he was acquainted with them," Wordsworth intended to produce "a philosophical Poem... having for its principal subject the sensations and opinions of a poet living in retirement". This poem, also in blank verse, was to be called "The Recluse"; whereof only a few hundred lines exist, but "The Excursion" was designed for the second part. "The Recluse," Wordsworth says, was to be a kind of Gothic Cathedral: "The Prelude" is the "antechapel"; and the lyrics, sonnets, and other poems not so large as the antechapel "may be likened to the little cells, oratories, and sepulchral recesses, ordinarily included in these edifices". These oratories

are the most favourite portions of Wordsworth's cathedral; and all his poems, long or short, except the tragedy "The Borderers," "have for their principal subject the sensations and opinions of a poet living in retirement," but listening with a keen ear to hints and murmurs of the world.

From enthusiasm for the French Revolution, Wordsworth, like Burns, "when haughty Gaul invasion threats," turned gradually to patriotism, as the French armies of emancipation conquered Switzerland, invaded Spain, and menaced England. Now, like Glenbucket at the battle of Sheriffmuir (1715) he prayed "for one hour of Dundee!" This unprincipled change of sides caused Wordsworth's poems to be insulted by Hazlitt, and in "The Edinburgh Review". He was constant, indeed, to his sympathy with poverty and toil, detested the factory system, and loved his mountains and lakes not only for the beauty of the clouds, mists, and gleams of sunlight, but because

> Labour here preserves
> His rosy face, a servant only here
> Of the fireside or of the open field,
> A Freeman therefore sound and unimpaired
> —("The Recluse").

But Wordsworth had not a noble scorn of "militarism"; he sang of Nelson, and "The Happy Warrior," as well as of "The Lesser Celandine," and was attached to the Anglican Establishment; these things were not forgiven to the poetic renegade by Whig critics, or to Coleridge, or to Southey, while Scott, it was admitted, had never turned his coat.

Wordsworth was singularly fortunate in the ideal affection of his sister Dorothy,—whose eye for natural beauty was as keen as his own,—and in his wife, to whom he attributed two lines in "The Daffodils"—

> They flash upon that inward eye
> Which is the bliss of solitude.

Of his friendship with Coleridge, and of their volume "Lyrical Ballads," we have spoken. They contain examples of his theory, first given in the preface of the second edition of "Lyrical Ballads," that "the poet ought to imitate and, as far as is possible, adopt the very language of men... I have taken as much pains to avoid what is usually called poetical diction as others ordinarily take to produce it". But Wordsworth could not, of course, keep up

to his own standard. Asked "What has become of the wild swans?" no mortal could reply

> The Dalesmen may have aimed the deadly tube
> —("The Recluse").

Thus, in "Lyrical Ballads," in "The Idiot Boy," Wordsworth wrote (and "I never wrote anything with so much glee"):—

> And he must post without delay
> Across the bridge and through the dale,
> And by the church, and o'er the down,
> To bring a Doctor from the town,
> Or she will die, old Susan Gale.

Dr. Johnson had anticipated this theory of non-poetic diction in poetry:—

> As with my hat upon my head,
> I walk'd along the Strand,
> I there did meet another man
> With his hat in his hand.

Wordsworth stood courageously—all the more stiffly because he was laughed at—by his theory. In practice he made the poor woman of "The Affliction of Margaret" talk of "the incommunicable sleep" of the dead, here the not ordinary word has a meaning not ordinary.

"The Lyrical Ballads" contained poetry so remote from "The Idiot Boy" as the lines on Tintern Abbey; with

> A sense sublime
> Of something far more deeply interfused,
> Whose dwelling is the light of setting suns,
> And the round ocean and the living air,
> And the blue sky, and in the mind of man,
> A motion and a spirit, that impels
> All thinking things, all objects of all thought,
> And rolls through all things.

Mens agitat molem: it is the philosophy of Virgil. The consciousness of this unity with nature and of both with that which is divine had been with Wordsworth from his childhood, as he records in "The Prelude" and

elsewhere, and this aspect of his thought even affected Byron, in the last part of "Childe Harold".

Wordsworth's life was uneventful. He made tours, very fruitful in poetry, to Scotland (1813, 1814, 1831, 1833); they are dated by "Yarrow Unvisited," "Yarrow Visited," "Yarrow Revisited". The tour of 1831 gave occasion to the noble and tender sonnet "A Trouble not of Clouds, or Weeping Rain," on the departure of the dying Scott for Italy. With this (1831) in our memories we cannot say that save for the ode "Composed on an Evening of Extraordinary Splendour and Beauty," "all Wordsworth's good work was done in the decade between 1798 and 1808". His poems of the year 1807 are, no doubt, the least lacking in uniform success. Among them is the ode "On intimations of Immortality". But "The White Doe of Rylstone," published in 1815, and proclaimed by "The Edinburgh Review" to be the very worst poem that ever appeared in quarto, was written in 1807: written in such stress of the spirit that the poet was not punctual to the dinner bell, as he informs us. The poem was an excursion into Scott's metres, and one of Scott's historic periods, but its intention was purely spiritual, and very unpopular.

The "Laodamia" (1814), the meeting of the heroine with the spirit of her lord, the first man slain at Troy, has been highly praised by an excellent judge (Mr. F. W. Myers). But when the Appearance says "thy transports moderate!" we are in touch with the poetic diction of the eighteenth century and far from the inspiration of the Greek "thrice I sprang toward the shadow of my mother dead; thrice she flitted from my hands as a shadow or even as a dream". It is, in fact, true that after 1808, with forty-two years of life and poetry before him, Wordsworth often failed.

> Hail, Orient conqueror of gloomy night

is an address to the sun which any follower of Pope might have written ("Ode for the Morning of the General Thanksgiving 1816").

Many of Wordsworth's most inspired passages are to be found in the long, lofty, and rather bleak antechapel and nave of "The Prelude" and "The Excursion". But lovers of poetry are most apt to kneel in his chapels and oratories; and to read, with unceasing delight and gratitude "In the Sweet Shire of Cardigan," "I Heard a Thousand Blended Notes," "There was a Boy, Ye Knew Him Well, Ye Cliffs"; "She Dwelt among the Untrodden

Ways," "Lucy Gray," "Beggars," "Sweet Highland Girl," "To the Cuckoo," "The Ode to Duty," "The Happy Warrior," and the multitude of sonnets of the highest and most varied excellence, in which his genius, like the *follet* of Molière, rides his pen and his power comes to its own.

Science or stupidity may some day try to compile the statistics of "inspiration" in poetry. Inspiration cannot easily be defined, but may be described as represented, in a poet's work, by the passages in which, according to the common consent of readers, he reaches a level immeasurably higher than that of versified matter in general, and of his own efforts in particular.

In any such calculation the proportion of Wordsworth's inspired verse—of verse of the very highest and most singular merit—is far above the proportion in Coleridge. Few readers who may amuse themselves by trying to "place" modern English poets after Milton will give Wordsworth anything lower than the second, while very many will give him the foremost rank. But the amount of his uninspired verse—of verse immeasurably below his best—is enormous, and this, with some other circumstances, accounts for the opposition, the refusal to accept him or take him seriously, which he had to encounter in his long life (7 April, 1770-23 April, 1850).

Another obstacle, to be plain, was the infinite number of occasions in which the little, pronoun "I" occurs in his poetry. Great, beneficent, and unique as was the genius of William Wordsworth when he conceived "The Prelude" as only the beginning of what he wanted to say about himself, and about the universe as mirrored in his own intelligence, it became only too manifest that he was, in an unexampled degree, destitute of humour. Amusing anecdotes are told, by Lockhart, of conversations between Wordsworth and Scott in which Wordsworth's poetry was the sole theme, by no means to Sir Walter's discontent. On no contemporary but Burns and Coleridge did he bestow his approval: it may be doubted if he had spent half an hour with Byron's, Shelley's, and Keats's verse. To be sure this self-absorption is a malady most incident to poets!

In later life (1820-1837) Wordsworth visited the Continent, even reaching Italy. In 1839 he received a noble welcome and an honorary degree from Oxford; in 1843, on Southey's death, he accepted the Laureateship, which,

before Southey's appointment, Scott had refused; and on 23 April, 1850, he passed away, leaving to Tennyson the laurels. He wished to teach us wisdom; he did something better, he gave us happiness.

Robert Southey.

The name of Robert Southey (born at Bristol, 12 August, 1774) was always connected with the names of the Lake School of poets, Coleridge and Wordsworth, though his theory and practice in poetry were quite distinct from those of the authors of "Lyrical Ballads". Southey was educated at Westminster, where his troubles began in his editorship of a little paper, "The Flagellant," which was opposed to flogging. On entering Balliol College, Oxford (1792), he declared himself a rebel, wearing his hair long, as becomes men of genius, while women of genius commonly wear their hair short. He also despised his Dons, and, nearly twenty years later, on meeting Shelley, then aged 19, he found in Shelley the counterpart of his undergraduate self. Shelley, however, did not, when at Oxford, contemplate taking Holy Orders. Southey soon abandoned the idea, and, meeting Coleridge at Oxford in June, 1794, devised with him the scheme of a "pantisocratic" community in America.

With Coleridge, Southey wrote "The Fall of Robespierre," and, by himself, an epic in blank verse on Jeanne d'Arc. Of this boyish effort—ambitious, and, in history, ill-informed—he had a high opinion, writing, in 1800, "my Joan of Arc has revived the epic mania... but it is not every one who can shoot with the bow of Ulysses, and the gentlemen who think they can bend the bow because I made the string twang will find themselves disappointed". Southey was always twanging the string of epic poetry. Even at school he had contemplated a series of epics, to be written at the fate of one a year; on the mythological legends of the world. In 1795 he married Miss Edith Fricker, a sister of the wife of Coleridge, and visited Portugal, acquiring, then and on a later visit, an unusual knowledge of the languages and literatures of the Peninsula.

After an attempt to study law, he went to live at Westbury, near Bristol, began "Madoc," an epic in blank verse on a legendary Welsh prince who discovered America, and fought the Aztecs, and he also began "Kehama," an epic on Hindoo mythology, and "Thalaba, the Destroyer," an epic based

on the mythology of Islam; while "Madoc" deals largely with the sanguinary religion of Anahuac.

In "Madoc," which was not completed till after Southey settled at Keswick, near Wordsworth, but not too near, he had chosen for a theme perhaps the most romantic adventure in human history. He assigns to his fabulous Welsh prince the part actually taken by Cortes, the Cymri defeated the Aztecs as did the Spaniards.

Southey's blank verse is somewhat Miltonic, though he was no such "inventor of harmonies" as Milton, while in descriptions of adventure among unknown peoples, and fighting with Aztec weapons, he reminds the reader of some of the romances of Mr. Rider Haggard. Books XIV.-XV. ("The Stone of Sacrifice" and "The Battle") cannot but delight any boy who reads them, they are full of spirit and abundantly picturesque; while the notes are as rich as Scott's in the charm of strange lore, and delightful passages from forgotten books. Thus from the Jesuit missionary, Lafitau (for Southey fully appreciated the virtues of Jesuit missionaries), he culls a Red Indian legend, one of the world-wide variants of the tale of Orpheus and Eurydice. Sir Walter Scott, in 1807, wrote to Southey "I have read 'Madoc' three times since my first cursory perusal, and each time with an increasing admiration. But a poem whose merits are of that high tone does not immediately take with the public at large."

In fact "Thalaba," written in a strange unrhymed measure, devised by Dr. Sayres, deals with topics of no earthly interest, the feud of Thalaba and the demons of Domdaniel. Southey himself said that "Thalaba" was like highly seasoned turtle soup, while Wordsworth's poems were like asparagus and artichokes, wholesome, and edible with the aid of melted butter. But the world did not care for "Thalaba," nor for the monstrosities of Hindoo mythology in the eccentric measures of "Kehama". Landor, whose "Gebir" Southey heartily admired, offered to pay for the printing of as many epics as Southey chose to write; he cast a longing eye on Zoroaster; but Southey had a wife and family, "a sacrifice was made," "Kehama" was his last epic, unless we reckon "Roderick" as an epic poem. Southey was not destitute of poetic genius; passages in his epics, and among his lyrics, "My Days among the Dead are Past," and "The Holly Tree," attest his gift, but the Epic has seldom indeed been written with success, and never anywhere in such measures as those of "Kehama" and "Thalaba".

It was necessary for Southey to turn his hand to prose, and he supported his family and bought his books by reviewing and political writing, first in "The Annual Register," then in "The Quarterly Review," though it was against the grain that he wrote in a political serial. He was a friend of his country as against Bonaparte; he was a friend of order, while he was clear-sighted about the oppression and abuses which sheltered themselves under the shield of order; and he was a religious man. Like Scott he was anxious that the "Quarterly" reviewers "should keep their swords clean as well as sharp," but the political blades of both the "Quarterly" and the "Edinburgh" were dirty and poisoned, and were wont to slash about in literary criticism. Southey was the common butt of abuse from Liberal reviewers, and was supposed by Shelley and Byron to have attacked them in criticisms to which he was a perfect stranger: though of "the new morality" of both poets he expressed his opinion privately, and publicly struck back at Byron for his brilliant assault on Southey's English hexameters concerning the admission of George III. to heaven. Southey must have been deserted by the sense of humour when he wrote that astonishing piece of verse in the capacity of Poet Laureate. This little piece of preferment Southey obtained in 1813. Sir Walter, to whom it was offered, despite the "rapacity" of which Macaulay accused him, had declined the laurels, and, believing that the post was much better paid than it is, had suggested the appointment of Southey. The little salary, under a hundred pounds, enabled Southey to provide for his family by insuring his life. In answering Scott's letter—"I am not such an ass as not to know that you are my better in poetry"; Southey said "there has been no race; we have both got to the top of the hill by different paths".

There is something very winning in Southey's noble simplicity of nature. Neither he nor Scott had won to the top of Parnassus hill, and Scott was well aware of it. But Southey to the last, in spite of public neglect, believed in his own success as a supreme poet; yet abandoned his epics for the homely task of winning a poor competence for his family by reviewing, and by doing job-work for the publishers. As his prose was of the first quality he was able to earn £300 by his masterpiece, the immortal "Life of Nelson". As an article for the "Quarterly" it brought a hundred, another hundred when enlarged, a third when published in "The Family Library". His "Life of John Wesley" was only second to his "Nelson" in merit. His "History of Brazil" could not expect a due reward; his general writings, though full of pleasant erudition and fanciful humour, were not popular; towards the end of his life

the revenues which he derived from a score of books amounted only to £26. He mentions the fact without bitterness, without complaint. His long and noble life of industry ended in 1843; for some time he had sat in the library which he had made without the power to read his books.

SHELLEY.

Percy Bysshe Shelley (born 4 August, 1792, at Field Place, Horsham, the seat of his father, Sir Timothy Shelley, Bart.) seems to have incarnated the spirit of the Revolution. He had no brothers to check his tastes and impulses; he ruled his sisters, was lonely at a private school, but at Eton, where he already defied tyrants,—boys and masters,—he seems to have become popular, despite his eccentricities. Like many other boys he made chemical smells and explosions in place of mastering his Greek grammar. He read Godwin, in whom he invested his great natural powers of belief to the neglect of more orthodox securities, and he combined Godwinism with the romantic mechanism of Mrs. Radcliffe's novels in two schoolboy romances, "Zastrozzi," the more amusing of the pair, and "St. Irvyne". He is said to have received some money for "Zastrozzi"; if he did the case was unparalleled in his later experience. When at University College, Oxford, he published "Poems by Victor and Cazire" (his sister Elizabeth) and a little incoherent volume, "Posthumous Fragments of Margaret Nicholson," a maniac who aimed at murdering George III.

He had no intimate friend except his future biographer, Thomas Hogg, a sceptic, but a Tory; and his studies were desultory, self-directed, and much concerned with efforts to retain or ruin some remnants of belief. His little thesis on "The Necessity of Atheism," and his distribution of the paper, were perhaps as much inspired by his humourless love of practical jokes and aversion to the authorities as by conviction. His expulsion, which Hogg insisted on sharing, was the rash reply of dons who were tired of being baited; and Shelley, now a martyr, rejoiced in proclaiming the ideas for which he and Hogg had suffered.

On ill terms with his father, he married Miss Harriet Westbrook, a very young girl, more from a sense of duty and honour than from love; and in various rural places he lived, wrote, read Godwin, corresponded with him, preached his ideas in Ireland, and idealized and quarrelled with various

friends of both sexes, till he met Mary Godwin, the very young daughter of the philosopher.

Shelley had grown passing weary of his wife, who now declined to live with him as a sister while Mary took her natural place; he retired with Mary and her stepsister, Jane Clairmont, calling herself Claire, to Switzerland, and returned to England—because the stove in his room smoked badly.

Reconciled to Hogg (whom he had accused, truly or falsely, of trying to put his own ideas of free love into practice with Mrs. Shelley), he wrote "Queen Mab" (1813), (in which his natural genius shines unmistakably,) and "Alastor" (1816), the story of a lonely spirit fleeing from itself through scenes of grandeur and desolation; homeless, like Shelley, and like him unsatisfied. His own wanderings were restless rather than remote; to Geneva, where Claire Clairmont carried out his ideas with the aid of the reluctant Byron; back to Great Marlow; and thence, after marrying Mary Godwin, on the suicide of his injured wife, to various parts of Italy, Claire being still his camp-follower.

He had become the friend and benefactor of Leigh Hunt; Godwin's demands for money followed him like harpies; he was deprived of his children by his first marriage; his long romance in Spenserian stanzas, "Laon and Cythna," though expurgated and rechristened "The Revolt of Islam" (1818), attracted little but unfriendly attention, despite its many and extraordinary beauties and radiant visions of storm and rainbow, clouds and winds and fire. With unwonted humour Shelley said that you might as well ask for a leg of mutton in a gin shop as apply to him for studies in human nature. Madness, said Medwin, a man who was much in his company, hung over Shelley like the sword of Damocles.

In his earlier years he was like an Æolian harp on which all the winds of the spirit played, making strange music and strange discords. He was even too fluent, Keats told him; as Jonson said of Shakespeare, *sufflaminandus erat.* Ideas of beauty springing up in his mind, he followed them, followed the cloud, the shower, the meteor, the evanescent loveliness, was borne up by the "wild west wind, the breath of autumn's being," leaving his narrative of human fortunes. He was a born visionary and mystic, beholding things unapparent; believing in experiences that never were actual. Yet withal, when control was needed, he could control himself wonderfully, as was

especially notable in his difficult and dangerous relations with the wild Claire Clairmont and Byron.

In his poetic art, this growing power of control is especially manifest in his drama, "The Cenci" (1819), and his swan-song, the matchless "Adonais" (1821), the lament for Keats. But "The Cenci," a drama on a theme which was made to the hand of Ford or Webster,—the story of a soul more devilish in limitless cruelty and desire of evil than the soul of Volpone; of a maiden martyr more cruelly entreated than Jeanne d'Arc,—was not possible on the modern stage.

The polemics of "Prometheus Unbound" against the world as it is, and in favour of suffering and oppressed humanity, lost themselves, the contradictions vanished unreconciled in the music of the immortal lyrics. The escape from a world in which "as God made it ye canna hae everything as ye wad like it," to reach an undisturbed haven of love and loneliness, "to live for climate and the affections" inspires "The Witch of Atlas" (1820) and "Epipsychidion" (1821). Shelley's soul was always seeking its predestined and ideal mate, with whom "the wilderness were paradise enow," and then these ideal friends or mistresses, in a moment, became horrors to him,—and Mary remained; Mary and "a song in the ears of men yet to be born".

In his many immortal lyrics the poetry of Shelley is most accessible to all; in them he is not baffled and foiled by the world as it is. What his powers might have become, for they were maturing rapidly, cannot be guessed. By a death in strange harmony with his genius, portended by omens, and predicted in his own words, he "was borne darkly fearfully afar," being drowned in a brief sudden tempest in the Gulf of Spezzia (19 July, 1822). The fire received what the water returned to earth, and his ashes sleep beside those of Keats in "a place so beautiful that it makes one in love with death".

Byron.

George Gordon Byron (born 1788) who succeeded in boyhood to the title of Lord Byron, was the son of a wild father, John Byron, and of a mother as much wilder as the blood of the Gordons of Gight, in Aberdeenshire, could make her. Of all "the gay Gordons" her family carried to the most extreme point the least estimable and more ferocious qualities of their glorious

fighting clan. It is impossible to judge by a common measure the child of John Byron and Catherine Gordon. Byron was a man of all-conquering personal beauty, and great strength, marred by a painful and disfiguring blemish of lameness; and possessed by rather than possessing an intellectual fire that burned lawlessly where it listed.

At Harrow, Byron was, as always, inordinately conscious of his title; he was passionately affectionate, sullen, capricious, and, despite his lameness, played for the school against Eton.[1] When at Harrow, Byron, who from the age of 8 was often in love, lost his heart to a girl older than himself, Miss Mary Chaworth, who married Mr. Musters in 1805. On this affection, among others, he never ceased to brood and write verses: now protesting that he had been "jilted," and now denying the charge.

At Cambridge, Byron was most noted for insubordination, and contempt of the dons. His earliest volume of verse, "Hours of Idleness" (1807-1808, first privately printed in various forms), which showed, some promise, in places, was attacked in the "Edinburgh Review"; the trifle was noticed because the author had a title, and Jeffrey, in the words of Thackeray's bargee, "liked wopping a lord". This lord countered heavily, in "English Bards and Scotch Reviewers" (1809).

For a satirist of 21 this is a fine exhibition of hard hitting in every direction. On looking through a number of his works later, Byron pronounced his satire to be the best of them. Byron's feud extended to the whole of his mother's country, and he did not spare Scott, who merely remarked to a friend that the satirist was "a young whelp". Sir Walter was not the man to be dragged into a quarrel of words, and, in his own phrase, would rather meet an opponent "where the muircock was Bailie".

Between 1809 and 1811 Byron voyaged about the borders of the Grecian sea, doing and suffering what adventures and misfortunes nobody precisely knows. In 1812 appeared the two first cantos of his "Childe Harold," in Spenserian verse, and Byron, in his own phrase, "awoke one day to find himself famous". Here was a poetical satirical picture of Spain and the Levant, here was living romance with a living young lord for the hero; a peer of a reckless and defiant character; as beautiful as a fallen angel. This was more thrilling than lays of the moss-troopers and Scottish kingly adventurers of the remote past, and Scott frankly owned that he "was bet"

by the brilliant young rival with whom he was, henceforth, on the best of terms. Sir Walter produced but one more romance in rhyme, while Byron was the most enthusiastic admirer of Sir Walter's novels. Indeed it is to Scott's descriptions, with their serene tolerance, sympathy, and charity, that we must look for the best portrait of Byron, at his best. Of Byron at his worst we have enough in some of his own letters, in a very few of Shelley's, and in the "revelations" published in an evil hour by Leigh Hunt.

While a "lion," as the term was then used, in society, a conqueror of hearts, a dandy, and a student of the noble art of self-defence under "Gentleman Jackson," Byron wrote and published his Oriental tales in imitation of Scott's measures. The history of these poems (1813-1816) is certainly a veiled revelation of Byron's life during these strange years. In 1818, two years after their separation, his wife wrote to another lady that "egotism is the vital principle of his imagination, which it is difficult for him to kindle on any subject with which his own character and interests are not identified"; but that he veiled "his poetical disclosures" by "introducing fictitious incidents, and changes of scene and time".

"The Giaour" (1813) grew, in successive editions (5 June-27 November), from 800 to more than 1300 lines, and the additions contained, like "The Bride of Abydos", cryptic references to Byron's own loves and attendant remorses during that period. To these affairs many dark references occur in his Letters and Journal, from August, 1813, to March, or later, in 1814. Byron always rushed into print at the earliest moment, in the new editions of "The Giaour," "The Bride of Abydos" (written in a week of passion, November, 1814), "The Corsair," "Lara" (1814), and the separate lyrics published with each of these. It is not very difficult, but it is neither pleasant nor profitable, to disentangle history from fiction in these "poetical disclosures". The "Siege of Corinth," and "Parisina" were written in Byron's year of married life. The famous passage in "The Giaour"—

> He who hath bent him o'er the dead.

is compared, by Byron's latest Editor, with a passage in Mrs. Radcliffe's "Mysteries of Udolpho," and Mrs. Radcliffe appears to have been a common source of Byron's inspiration. Between "He who hath bent" and the poet's return to "He" and to the structure of the sentence, twenty lines interfere; so hurried is the composition. The magnificent rhetoric of "Clime

of the unforgotten brave," the waking chant of Greek freedom, was an addition to the second edition.

None of these poems of 1813-1816 can perhaps now be read with the enthusiasm which greeted their first appearance. Of "The Corsair" 10,000 copies were sold on the first day of publication. The extreme rapidity of the composition, "the fatal facility of the octosyllabic verse," as Byron says, adding that Scott alone "had triumphed over it," and something theatrical in the Giaours and Turks, Zuleikas and Leilas, no longer command intense interest. Byron himself saw the objections to the facile measures in narrative poetry; in blank verse he feared to find "a rough and barren rock," and in "The Corsair" he tried "the good old and now neglected heroic couplet". He always maintained that the age of the heroic couplet was the great age of English poetry, that Pope was its chief, and that the new "romantic" movement was a blunder. He was conscious that his strength lay in satire but his passionate nature, and the fashion set by Scott, combined to lead him into romantic narrative verse.

Early in 1815 Byron married Miss Milbanke, an heiress, at least in expectations, though his motive was not mercenary. He was instantly pursued by creditors; his temper and behaviour became insufferable; and, as soon as possible after the birth of a daughter, his wife returned to her own people, and early in 1816 left him for ever. Her whole conduct, and the conduct of all concerned, is difficult to explain on any theory, and Byron, under a heavy cloud, left England for Switzerland and the society, for a few months, of Shelley, Mary Godwin, and Claire Clairmont. The party were pursued by curiosity, and scandalous rumour was as active on the Continent as at home.

The play of "Manfred," in which the mysterious hero, in his moods of romantic remorse about nobody knows what, courts peril among Alpine peaks, tempests, and glaciers, was supposed to represent the passions and the pursuits of the noble poet.

Goethe was much interested in "Manfred"; his own "Faust," partly translated to Byron by Shelley or Monk Lewis, was certainly one of the elements in the making of the poem.

Byron fed the public curiosity about himself and his wife and sister by various pieces of verse, including the admired "Dream," in which he

displayed his moods repentant, or angry, but always annoying to the persons at whom he wrote. The third canto of "Childe Harold," written in Switzerland, was full of personal "disclosures," and contained the familiar stanzas on the Duchess of Richmond's ball on the eve of Quatre Bras. There are curious—traces of Wordsworthian influence, received through Shelley, in this canto. Byron proceeded to Venice, where he lived an unwholesome life for several years; finishing "Childe Harold" after a trip to Rome: in this part he introduced descriptions of many works of ancient art, and expressed his contempt for its critics. His ecstasies over the Venus de Medici were in accordance with the taste of a period that knew not the Greek art of the age of Pheidias, till the "Elgin marbles," reft (to Byron's natural and laudable indignation), from the Parthenon, had been studied. The Dying Gladiator was the motive of one of the most admired passages of the fourth canto of "Childe Harold".

The spirited "Mazeppa"; the lively "Beppo" (the verse fashioned on an Italian model), the dramas of "Marino Faliero," "The Two Foscari," "Cain" (dedicated to Scott), "Heaven and Earth" (much admired by Goethe), and the beginnings of "Don Juan," with, later, the continuation of "Don Juan," and "The Island" and several minor things, proved the astonishing energy of Byron, while living at Venice, Ravenna, Genoa, and elsewhere. "The Vision of Judgment," an attack on Southey through his poem on the death of George III., and "Don Juan," show the high-water mark of his powers as a satirist. Always ready at freedom's call, Byron went to inspire and direct the Greek war of national independence, and, after struggling to reconcile the feuds and jealousies of the patriots, died of fever, malaria, and the results of the climate, at Missolonghi, on 19 April, 1824.

The question as to whether Byron was a great poet, or merely a man of extraordinary mental energy, wit and rhetorical force, expressing himself in verse, must be decided by the taste of the reader. No discoverable rule seems to guide the verdicts of critics. The resonance of Byron's name, due in great part to his title, his beauty, his mystery, his love affairs, to "the pageant of his bleeding heart," and to his fiery attacks on convention, still echoes on the Continent. Byron's reputation abroad (especially among those who have not read much of him, and of Shakespeare have read little or nothing), is perhaps the highest that is accorded of any English poet. At home, if he "bet" Scott, it was rather in popularity than in performance.

While Wordsworth, Keats, Shelley, and Coleridge were neglected (though Wordsworth from the first had a small but constantly growing flock of devotees), Byron, by "Don Juan," and by the romance of his death, recovered a vogue that had been waning, till a new generation arose; and the contemporaries of Tennyson's undergraduate time declared, like Thackeray, that Byron "was never sincere".

It is impossible to conjecture what the reaction to the poetry of Byron will be in each reader's case. He was revolutionary; Matthew Arnold was not; but it is the placid Arnold who hails Byron as "the greatest force" in the English literature of the nineteenth century; and it is the revolutionary Swinburne whose copious vocabulary is over-tasked in the effort to find epithets of disdain and disgust. The intellectual energy of Byron is like a meteoric force of Nature, that is undeniable, whether we admire his poetry, or think it but rhetoric carried to an unexampled pitch in verse. It is for future generations and not for the ordinary critic to pronounce a verdict on so much humour, wit, and capricious genius. There is at this hour no complete and critical life of the poet: many letters and other documents remain unpublished. But if ever a biography, critical and complete, is produced, the discredit thrown on English hypocrisy because of English treatment of the poet will probably be seen to be based on ignorance and sentiment. Byron was, undeniably, dowered with "the scorn of scorn": it was his humour to mock at what was best in his own impulses and in the nature of man; and it is probable that his excellences were sincere while his mockery was an affectation; the result of inherited qualities, and of the *amari aliquid* always mixed with the cup whereof he had to drink. He was, unquestionably, in so far sincere, that his poetry was the reflection of his character, which never overcame the noble tolerance of Scott, though, at last, it repelled and disgusted the not intolerant Shelley. His poetry has now to meet the rivalry of contemporaries little heeded in his day,—Shelley, Keats, and Wordsworth,—and of such successors as Tennyson; as careful as Byron was disdainful of form; so that new generations are not apt to begin with enthusiasm for the author of "Childe Harold".

KEATS.

John Keats, born in London (1795), was the son of a livery-stable keeper. His education was not neglected, though he had no Greek, and in boyhood he could appreciate the magic of Virgil (which does not usually charm boys), and made some progress with a translation. In physique he was powerful, and no mean boxer, despite the inherent weakness of his constitution. He became acquainted with Hazlitt, and Leigh Hunt, who introduced him to some of the old English poets; Spenser he found out for himself, like Cowley, and revelled in "The Faery Queen," like a young horse turned loose in a pasture. Another friend of Keats was the witty John Hamilton Reynolds, whose parody of Wordsworth's "Peter Bell" was published before the original. Shelley and Keats were acquainted but were never intimate, Shelley advising Keats not to publish "his first blights," and Keats admonishing Shelley to write less rapidly and copiously and to "load every rift with ore". In no long time Keats discovered in Leigh Hunt certain unendearing qualities which never appear to have been noticed by Shelley; for of Hunt, which is strange, Shelley's good opinion never altered.

Keats, at first, by imitation, or through inexperience, rivalled the peay-greeny verdurousness of Hunt's urban rusticities,—which was unfortunate; and, as an intimate of Hunt, he was included by the noisy and brutal literary Tories of the Press in their assaults on the literary Radicals of "The Cockney School".

To appreciate Keats, and to understand the manly and resolute character which was falsely supposed to be effeminate, it is necessary to read his delightful correspondence. His first small volume of verse (1817) contains but occasional promise of his greatness; one suffices, the sonnet on first reading Chapman's Homer.

In "Endymion" (1818) he attempted a long narrative, holding that readers might like to wander here and there on Mount Latmos with him, even if they did not pursue the tale from cover to cover. Shelley declared that Keats seemed to have tried to make himself unreadable, and, indeed, if we read for the story's sake alone, we are more unfortunate than if we take up "Clarissa Harlowe" with the same purpose. On the other hand the frequent passages of beauty proclaim the author a poet, who has not yet arrived at his later perfection.

Keats was violently attacked as a Cockney and as an apothecary's boy, in "Blackwood's Magazine," and in "The Quarterly Review". These libels are as base as the assault on Coleridge in the "Edinburgh Review," though not nearly so abominable as what Byron wrote about Keats in private letters now published. The Scots who attacked Keats might have repented had they read his enthusiastically sympathetic appreciations of Burns, in the letters written during his tour north of the Border.

It was not criticism but the consumption which killed his brother Tom, increased in feverishness by a love affair, that slew John Keats, in Rome (13 February, 1821), a year after the publication of his third volume, "Lamia," which in brief compass contained verse that placed him in the first rank of the poets of England. His character had rapidly advanced in noble seriousness, high ambition, and sympathy with mankind. His best sonnets, as "On Reading Chapman's Homer," are on a level with the greatest by Milton and by Wordsworth. His "Odes to the Nightingale," to "Autumn," "On a Grecian Urn," and others have the classic beauty of Greek art of the Periclean age, with all the magic of romance, the mysterious charm of words that evoke visions of ineffable beauty. Romance herself inspires "La Belle Dame Sans Merci". Keats had divined and made his own all that is best in the Greek which he could not read, and in the early mediaeval French lyrics which in his day were unpublished.

In "The Pot of Basil" he exalts beyond itself the genius of Boccaccio, of a time when the classical revival was dawning in Italy, and in "Lamia" tells a story that had fascinated Burton in his "Anatomy of Melancholy". The fragment of "Hyperion," again, recalls Greek art as no other modern has succeeded in reviving its majestic simplicity, while the measure of "In a drear-nighted December" preludes to the music of Swinburne's "Garden of Proserpine".

In all that is best of Keats we look, as in his own poem, through

> magic casements opening on the foam
> Of perilous seas in faery lands forlorn.

English non-dramatic poetry contains no greater example of pure inexplicable inspiration than the genius of Keats: while his character, some ebullitions of poetic youth, and of torturing ill-health apart, excites the strongest affection and admiration.

Walter Savage Landor.

Contemporary with all of these great poets, and with Tennyson and Browning, and the youth of William Morris, the two Rossettis and Swinburne, was Walter Savage Landor (1775-1864), who thus, like Nestor, reigned through three generations. He was coeval with, but was not influenced by "the romantic movement," but followed his own path. He was a very copious writer both in prose and verse; he did not aim at and did not win popularity.

Landor is said to have prophesied that he would "dine late," but in good company,—that recognition when it came to him, would come from the best judges. The essay on Landor, by Swinburne, places his plays, such as "Count Julian," and his poem in blank verse ("Gebir") on "topless towers," of panegyric. To smaller, other eyes, those of the ordinary reader, "Gebir" (1798) seems well described as "concentrated and majestic," just as Mr. Wopsle's Hamlet was "concrete and massive". But "Gebir" is not, as a narrative, interesting or plausible; its blank verse is rather frigid, as a rule, and the poem is best remembered for the two lines on the shell held to the ear.

> And it remembers its august abode,
> And murmurs as the Ocean murmurs there.

The blank verse is somewhat in the manner of Milton, with far less life and variety. The wrestling match between Gebir's brother, the piping shepherd, and the lovely lady unknown who lands from a boat and challenges the swain, indicated Landor's colossal lack of humour, which, to be sure, is no small part of a noble and haughty poetic nature. If the play, "Count Julian" be academic, if it have found even fewer admirers than "Gebir," Mr. Swinburne as an admirer was himself a host. The huge body of short verses, in which every reader will find many delightful things, is crowned by "Rose Aylmer," which would be a pearl of great price even in the treasure-house of the Greek Anthology. His lyric verse is always graceful, and occasionally moving.

Landor left Trinity College, Oxford, under the wrath of his dons. He had only fired a fowling piece out of his windows, at the shuttered windows of a room occupied by a noisy wine-party, and no harm was done. Many persons may remember similar excesses at Oxford which caused no expulsions, but

Landor (the Boythorn of "Bleak House") was extremely explosive, and his dons, like Shelley's, took the first fair opportunity to send him down for a term. He "came to Oxford and his friends no more". In England his life was more or less turbulent and perturbed: most of his literary work was done in Italy, and the greater part of his abundant prose is written in the form of imaginary conversations. In one ("Southey and Landor") he says, "from my earliest days I have avoided society as much as I could decorously, for I received more pleasure in the cultivation and improvement of my own thoughts than in walking up and down among the thoughts of others". If Landor had remembered Lord Foppington's similar explanation of his own avoidance of books, and preference for "the sprouts of his own wit," Landor might have been less frank! In this conversation Landor and Southey compare Milton and Homer, and it is to be hoped that Southey had no sympathy with the purblind criticisms which are put into his lips. Landor ends "a rib of Shakespeare would have made a Milton; the same portion of Milton, all poets born ever since". It is certainly in his "Conversations," and in the long series of imaginary letters entitled "Pericles and Aspasia," that the late diners with Landor are most likely to find desirable things—lofty thoughts, impassioned language, and deep meditation. The conversations, naturally, differ in merit; that between Bothwell and Mary Stuart, after her abduction, is not in anything likely to have been their manner, and has no tragic touch (though no scene could be richer in the elements of tragedy), while in the talk of Jeanne d'Arc and Agnes Sorel two persons were brought together who were not likely to meet, especially at the moment when "many of our wisest and most authoritative churchmen," says Agnes, "believe you in their conscience to act under the instigation of Satan". When Agnes addresses the Maid as "sweet enthusiast," we are far away from the style of 1430! In the dialogues of even remote historic personages, more than half the mind of Landor is with his own day and its problems and politics; while he was perhaps the last Englishman who lived with the Roman genius so much that a good deal of his prose and verse is written in Latin. He even wrote a version of "Gebir" in the language of Virgil. He was the friend of, or was admired by, many of the best minds of his long stay on earth, Southey, De Quincey, Browning, and Swinburne. In two sentences Sir Sidney Colvin has put forward the character of much of Landor's work: "He drones. It is a classical, and from the point of view of style an exemplary form of droning, but it is droning still."

[1] By a strange coincidence the printed score of the match (the manuscript was burned in a fire at Lord's) docks Byron of half his runs, and apparently confers them on Mr. Shakespeare! Byron was a change-bowler.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

LATER GEORGIAN NOVELISTS.

With the death of Sterne it might have been said that the English novel expired for the time, though of course, as Donne admitted in the case of the decease of Miss Drury, "a kind of world" lingered in existence. Indeed, plenty of novels were published and read. But they are forgotten. Experience proves that nobody need waste his time over the tales of Clara Reeve, such as "The Old English Baron"; and only infinite leisure and curiosity need try to disengage the qualities from the defects of Brooke's "Fool of Quality," while Beckford's "Vathek" is certainly worth notice as the ingenious and in places impressive feat of a millionaire. It is curious that the most poignant detail of the Hall of Eblis, the phantasms of lost souls, wandering each with his hand pressed to his heart, occurs in the mythology of an Australian tribe, the Euahlayi. Research might discover a wilderness of forgotten novels, probably quite as good, given the conditions of the ages, as the myriads of "masterpieces," which our newspaper critics daily receive with stereotyped formulæ of applause.

Frances Burney.

When a novelist did appear, a girl gifted with a delight in observing traits of character, and recording them from her early teens in a diary; when Fanny Burney came, she received such a welcome as warms the heart after all these years. Frances Burney (1752-1840) was born while the Elibank Plot for kidnapping the Royal family in the interests of the King over the water was maturing, and she outlived by eight years the author of "Waverley, or 'Tis Sixty Years Since".

The daughter of Dr. Burney, a teacher and historian of music, and a friend of the great wits, Johnson, Burke, Reynolds, Garrick, and the rest, Miss Burney, from childhood, was observing mankind and womankind; was reading "The Vicar of Wakefield," and Sterne, the novels of the Abbé Provost and of Marivaux, and apparently of Smollett no less than of the moral Richardson. She was writing, too, in secret; but at the command of her stepmother, probably when she herself was about 16 or 17, she burned all her works, including a novel on which her first published romance, "Evelina" (1778), was based, or rather out of which it was developed. We cannot estimate the merits of those "first blights," as Keats says, but "the little character-monger," as Johnson called her, continued to make her sketches of character in her Journal and in letters to her kind old mentor, "Daddy Crisp," a man much older than her father, who had retired from society and the sorrows of the playwright to a hospitable country house near Epsom. As the favourite and assistant of her musical and historical father, the retiring observant girl lived till, at about the age of 24, she returned to her first love, and, under great difficulties, wrote, and copied in a feigned hand, her "Evelina". With secrecy enough for a Jacobite conspiracy the book was conveyed to a bookseller, accepted, and published in 1778. Among her burned works was "The History of Caroline Evelyn," a young woman of moving adventures, whose mother was a vulgar barmaid, married, for the second time, in France, to a Monsieur Duval. As Caroline died of a broken heart, leaving a legitimate daughter, Evelina, Miss Burney told the story of that daughter's fortunes, situated as she was between her well-born English father's kin and her barmaid Frenchified mother, with her grotesque associates. The scheme had great possibilities, of which the author took full advantage; her chief successes being the members of the City family, the Branghtons, their smart low-bred friend, Mr. Smith, and the naval Captain Mirvan, whose language is discreetly veiled, while his bullying of Madame Duval and other persons is rather more than Smollettian. Evelina, through all the dangers which then beset the fair at Vauxhall and other resorts of the gay, reaches the haven where she and Lord Orville would be, and all ends happily, as in a novel all ought to end. There is an extraordinary wealth of characters, Burke thought them too abundant. The novel set literary society on fire with delight and admiration, Dr. Johnson leading the chorus of praise, and Miss Burney was his darling, and was welcomed by Mrs. Thrale, Reynolds, Burke, Garrick, Mrs. Montagu;

even Horace Walpole, though he kept his head, applauded. The triumphs of Fanny are recorded in her Diary and Letters, a contribution to history even more delightful than her "Evelina". All the good fortunes that Miss Austen missed, or shunned, fell to Miss Burney, who well deserved them. Her later novel, "Cecilia" (1782) is not really inferior to "Evelina," but it is not "the first sprightly runnings". After her years as a tiring woman of Queen Charlotte (whereof the record in her Diary is at least on a level with her novels), her "Camilla" appeared, was subscribed for by all the world and Miss Austen, and was censured by John Thorpe in "Northanger Abbey". This immortal crown is hardly deserved by "Camilla". The story of Miss Burney's marriage to that amiable *émigré*, the Comte d'Arblay, is told in Macaulay's famous essay, which, again, is toned down and corrected by Mr. Austin Dobson ("Fanny Burney" in "English Men of Letters"). But the novels themselves, and the Diary, remain monuments, and not dull but delightful monuments, of social and personal history. We need not dwell on that lucrative failure, "The Wanderer" (1814). Miss Burney had opened the way, which was later to be trodden by the lighter feet of a far greater genius, whom some men have named with Shakespeare—Jane Austen.

Mrs. Radcliffe.

It is impossible to restore a faded popularity, and in a generation which sees at least two dozen new novels bloom every week, the desire to revive the taste for Mrs. Radcliffe's romances is a "vain hope and vision vain". None the less, Mrs. Radcliffe (Ann Ward, born in the birth year of Horace Walpole's "Castle of Otranto," 1764, and married to a Mr. Radcliffe in 1787), was the grandmother, as Horace Walpole was the great-grandfather, of the Romantic school of fiction. Her first tale, "The Castles of Athlin and Dunbayne" (1789) is but a pioneer work: Mrs. Radcliffe knew nothing of the castles and manners of the Mackays, Sinclairs, and Gunns "in the dark ages". In 1790, with "The Sicilian Romance," Mrs. Radcliffe "found herself," and opened the way for all the terrors of Mr. Rochester's house in "Jane Eyre". The remarkable phenomena of the haunted Sicilian castle are not supernormal, but, till you discover that they are caused by the concealed wife of the proprietor (Ferdinand, fifth Marquis of Mazzini), they strike terror; later they move pity. "Northanger Abbey" is the inspired parody of Mrs. Radcliffe's effects in this work, which also contains the germ of a

thrilling scene in R. L. Stevenson's "Kidnapped". In "The Romance of the Forest" (1791) Mrs. Radcliffe struck the keynote of the novels about the Valois Court, which we owe to her spiritual descendants, Alexandre Dumas and Mr. Stanley Weyman. To "local colour" and the historical "atmosphere," Mrs. Radcliffe was indifferent; but she always had a story to tell, a story new and startling; and she managed her chiaroscuro with the touch of genius. She awakened curiosity, she struck terror; she skilfully interwove the many threads of her plots; she was far from being destitute of humour; and her Italian landscapes are designed after Poussin and Salvator Rosa. "Every reader," says Scott, "felt her force, from the sage in his study to the family group in middle life." Her "Mysteries of Udolpho" is hardly worthy of its reputation. But in "The Italian" she anticipates the manner of Hawthorne; her wicked Monk, Schedoni, is (as Scott himself saw and said), the original of Byron's Giaour, and his other darkling lurid heroes; and her comic valet, Paolo, who loyally follows his master into the dungeon of the Inquisition, is the model of Sam Weller, in the Fleet Prison, with Mr. Pickwick. Mrs. Radcliffe's genius is not appreciated merely because she is not read. The student who gives her a fair chance is carried away by the spell of this "great enchantress"; and "The Italian" is by far the best romantic novel that ever was written before Scott. He applauded her with his wonted generosity, but objected to her habit of explaining away her supernormal incidents. But this was done in homage to the stupid "common sense" of her age. After her masterpiece "The Italian," Mrs. Radcliffe deserted fiction; wrote "The Female Advocate" in defence of "Woman's Rights," and suffered from unhappy domestic circumstances for which she was in no way responsible. She died in 1823.

Maria Edgeworth.

A more fortunate and prosperous pioneer than Mrs. Radcliffe in the way of novel-writing was Maria Edgeworth. Born on 1 January, 1767, at Black Bourton, not far from, Oxford, Miss Edgeworth was the daughter of Richard Edgeworth, an Irish landlord and British moralist. In the words of "Hudibras" he

> Married his punctual dose of wives

to the number of four, and had four families. They were wonderfully harmonious, and as Maria Edgeworth was of the first family, and only some twenty-two years younger than her father, she was the constant companion of an energetic and intelligent man, reckoned one of the leading bores of his age, and tinctured with the ideas of his friend, the humourless Mr. Thomas Day, author of "Sandford and Merton". Miss Edgeworth saw much of Irish life, fashionable and rustic, at Edgeworthstown, and very early began to write under the direction of her father, whose Muse was the didactic. She wrote the stories in "The Parents' Assistant" for her own little brothers and sisters, to whom, as to children generally, she was devoted. The self-consciously virtuous Frank is her father, idealized (we cannot believe that she consciously satirized him), and the ever-delightful Rosamond is herself. Modern children may rage against the cruelty of the mother of Rosamond, in the tale of "The Purple Jar," but probably children of an earlier date were too much interested in Rosamond and the jar to grieve over the heroine's lack of shoes. "Lazy Lawrence," "Simple Susan," "Waste Not, Want Not," and the rest, are all dear to persons who read them at the right age, and draw from the last-named tale an undying love of long, sound pieces of string, saved from parcels.

It seems to be a matter of ascertained fact that Mr. Edgeworth too often had his oar in the paper boats of his daughter's novels, that he altered, and transposed, and suggested, and inserted moral sentiments; and could not keep the maxims of Mr. Thomas Day out of the memorial. Miss Edgeworth had abundance of humour, and would not have made Sir James Brook lecture to Lord Colambie, a total stranger, "on all ancient and modern authors on Ireland from Spenser" (why not from Giraldus Cambrensis?) "to Young and Beaufort". In "Castle Rackrent" (1800) Mr. Edgeworth had no hand, and it is reckoned the best of Miss Edgeworth's books on Ireland. It is not a novel: Thady, an ancient peasant, merely tells the tale of four generations of O'Shaughneseys, squires who much resembled the Osbaldistone family as described by Diana Vernon. All were greedy and reckless oppressors of their devoted tenantry, but one was more of a drunkard, another more of a litigant, another more of a cruel debauchee, and the last more of a good-natured fool, as innocent of worldly matters as Leigh Hunt (but not so much to his own advantage), than the rest. Their wives are worthy of them. Poor Thady maintains his "great respect for the family" throughout, and there is a humorous pathos in his topsy-turvy code

of ethics, constructed out of insanely depraved Irish moral conventions of the period. The fairy belief, and the Banshee, peep out in the notes: Miss Edgeworth was the precise reverse of Mrs. Radcliffe in the matter of romance. The book at once became popular, with "Belinda," a very readable story of London society, and "The Absentee," in which the Irish characters are much better when in their own green isle than when abroad. The horrors of an estate ruled by a corrupt and cruel agent are barely credible, and the hero is a wooden if generous puppet, while Lady Colbrony, trying to be more English than the English, in London, is not really so amusing as similar characters in Thackeray. Scott, with his usual generosity, publicly asserted more than once that Miss Edgeworth's example led him to attempt the delineation of his own country-folks; and perhaps the happiest of weeks at Abbotsford was spent during Miss Edgeworth's visit. In Paris, Edinburgh, and London she was a lioness, and enjoyed all the pleasant rewards of friendship and fame which fortune denied to Miss Austen. Her later novels, "Ormonde," "Harrington," and "Helen," were duly appreciated; in May, 1849, she ended a long, happy, and beneficent life.

Charles Brockden Brown.

Charles Brockden Brown (1771-1810) is commonly regarded as the first American novelist. He came at an unfortunate moment, for in the years of his activity as a romancer (1797-1801) English fiction was at a low ebb, and, uninfluenced by Fielding and Sterne, and neglectful of Fanny Burney, he followed Godwin (in "Caleb Williams"), and adopted the mysterious effects of Mrs. Radcliffe. In his "Wieland," the terrific and fatal agency which brings down fate, is akin to that which Monsieur de Saint Luc used to frighten Henri III., and which Chicot exposed, in Dumas's novel. In "Arthur Mervyn," Brown wrote with much vigour a realistic description of a yellow fever hospital. His friendly critics place him above Mrs. Radcliffe in his mastery of the truly horrid; but though his books were republished in England, they do not appear in the list of Miss Catherine Morland in "Northanger Abbey". If Brown were superior to the great enchantress, at least he followed the model which she had created, without the humour which affords relief in "The Italian". He did not deal in Italian castles and abbeys of the Valois period, but cast his romances in his native Philadelphia.

Scott's first novel was finished and published in 1814. His friend, Morritt of Rokeby, said that before "Waverley" appeared, novels were read only by ladies' maids and seamstresses. Yet, eighteen or nineteen years before the birth of "Waverley," novels as great in their own style as Scott's, and as imperishable, had been written by a girl of 21, whose first published works of fiction came earlier than "Waverley" into the world. Before 1803, Jane Austen (born 1775) had written "Northanger Abbey"; before the beginning of the nineteenth century "Pride and Prejudice" and "Sense and Sensibility," were completed by her. But though a speculative publisher bought "Northanger Abbey" in 1803, he never published it, and "Sense and Sensibility" (1811) with "Pride and Prejudice" (1813), lay long neglected, like the poems of Theocritus in their dark chest, before they were given to the world. They were not received, like Miss Burney's "Evelina," with triumphant acclaims; the author was not surrounded and flattered by the wits, as was Miss Burney. Indeed Jane Austen, in her lifetime, was never made a lioness. Slow and all but silent approval of her genius advanced by degrees and deepened into the diapason of her ever-widening renown.

She was the daughter of a country clergyman, the Rector of Steventon in Hampshire, much of her later life (she died at 42, in 1817) was passed at the hamlet of Chawton near Winchester. Bath was her metropolis; she describes its pleasure and society with inimitable charm and humour in "Northanger Abbey," and "Persuasion," published after her death, in 1818. She lived in the heart of a kind and happy family, among her nephews and nieces, brothers and sisters, with such squires, clerics, doctors, solicitors, sportsmen, naval officers, and old maids as clustered round or visited Steventon and Chawton. She watched them with a smiling intense observation; she winced from their mindless gregariousness; they are never out of their neighbours' houses. But she was only a very little cruel, even to the most brainless of baronets, or the stupidest of mothers, or the least well-bred of jolly good-humoured matrons, or the noisiest of children. She does show the trifling defects of spoiled children, but she was the kindest and best-beloved of aunts. Meanness she does brand in the really awful characters of John Dash wood and his wife; stupid pride in Sir Walter Elliot and Lady Catherine de Bourgh (who receives her deserts from Miss Elizabeth Bennet), and clerical sycophancy in the immortal Mr. Collins. But

Mr. Collins is so amusing that we can no more be angry with him than with Mr. Pecksniff. Mr. Woodhouse, in "Emma," is next door to an idiot, and in actual life he would have been insufferable, except to the good and gentle. But the excellence of his heart, and the sweetness of his manners, cause him to be surrounded by patient and silent affection from all who know him; and not less good and fortunate is the most voluble of chatter-boxes, Miss Bates. Only for a single moment is Emma, the heroine, unable to hold her peace when Miss Bates is too intolerable; and this youthful excess is bitterly repented by the beautiful sinner. Emma was extremely young when she was a snob, Miss Austen did not draw an angel in Emma, but a good, human girl. We cannot really call Miss Austen severe, though we cannot but see how much she must have suffered among people so dull that a lady's recollection of the name of her dead son's naval Captain is described as "one of those extraordinary bursts of mind that sometimes do happen".

Less than twenty years divided Miss Burney's "Evelina" (1778) from the composition of "Northanger Abbey" and "Pride and Prejudice". These years had brought an astonishing change. The Smollettian element in Miss Burney's books and the horse-play have vanished; vanished has that amazing style which the fair Fanny evolved. The manners of naval officers have passed from the brutal to the courtly. Miss Burney is antiquated, she is archaic, she belongs to another world than ours, while Miss Austen is perennially fresh, and sparkling with wit; she recaptures, without imitation, the humour and the ease of Addison. Unlike Scott, she is almost never stilted: her people, as a rule, talk like men and women of this world, not like Helen Macgregor. "Northanger Abbey," which is in part meant as a quiet but delightful mockery of Mrs. Radcliffe's haunted abbeys, secret panels, and mysterious sounds, was written but six years after "The Sicilian Romance" sent a shudder through its myriad readers; and is almost of the year of "The Mysteries of Udolpho". The girl of the Steventon rectory was already mocking "The Great Enchantress," and the smile outlives the shriek.

Miss Austen shunned the romantic—like Wordsworth she might have said "the moving accident is not my trade," but her incidents move us (for example, Louisa Musgrove's fall off the Cobb at Lyme Regis); and the mystery of Jane Fairfax's piano in "Emma," is as exciting as the black curtain behind which Catherine Morland expected to discover the skeleton of Laurentina. John Thorpe said of Mrs. Radcliffe's novels (which he had

not read), "there is some fun and nature in *them*" (and there is plenty of fun), Miss Austen found in them much more of fun than of nature.

It is said that she is afraid of the passions, but what can be more passionate than the constancy of Anne Elliot, or more ardent than the first love of Marianne Dashwood? All the family of the Bennets are charming or diverting in their various ways; the humorous father, the foolish mother, the witty and spirited Elizabeth, the gentle, beautiful Jane, the pedantic Mary, the colourless Kitty, and Lydia who might have shone in a comedy by Vanbrugh. It is rather hard to believe that Elizabeth could accept Darcy after he, like the Master of Ravenswood, had told his lady that her father was not a gentleman. But then Elizabeth came to see Darcy's house and place in Derbyshire!

If one novel is not quite so good as the rest, it is "Mansfield Park"; but to name it recalls Mrs. Norris, and the return of the heavy father as his progeny are rehearsing a dubious play from the German; and one has a tenderness for the good little heroine, and for her rather squalid kinsfolk, and for both of the naughty Crawfords. "Mansfield Park" is a masterpiece like the rest. Perhaps Miss Austen's heroes are not so good as her heroines; but Henry Crawford and Frank Churchill, in "Emma" prove that her young men are not mere lay figures.

She never went outside of the life she knew to draw wicked dukes and the virtuous poor; she had no villains, no rebels; if she read Crabbe's lurid and realistic studies of poverty and crime, she did not imitate them in prose. Her characters are perfectly indifferent to public affairs, throughout the struggle with Napoleon; except when the authoress cannot conceal her passionate enthusiasm for the men who fought under Nelson and Collingwood. But the expression is not enthusiastic in terms.

Miss Austen's art has the exquisite balance and limit of Greek art in the best period. She knew what she could do, she did it to perfection; and, naturally, the humourless Charlotte Brontë thought her tame and dull. But from Scott himself to Macaulay and Archbishop Whately, nay, from the Prince Regent (George IV., who had a set of her novels in each of his houses), the best judges recognized the greatness of one of the six greatest English writers of fiction, and, a century after the publication of "Pride and Prejudice," she is a more popular favourite by far than in her own brief day. To judge by a

miniature of Miss Austen, done when she was of the age when Catherine Morland began to give up playing cricket and baseball, her face and figure were as bright and charming as her genius. Like Milton's Eve, Miss Austen is "fairest of her daughters" in art, though among them are Mrs. Gaskell and Miss Thackeray (Lady Ritchie).

Walter Scott.

The Novelist.

When Scott, in 1814, sought for some fly-hooks in a bureau, and found the lost first chapter of "Waverley," a novel begun in 1805, prose fiction seemed to be under general contempt, was only fit for milliners, said his friend Morritt of "Rokeby". Yet, in fact, the good novel was not left without a witness. Miss Edgeworth's tales of Irish life and manners excited, said Scott, his own wish to write of his own people, and Miss Edgeworth's "Castle Rackrent" is of 1800. Jane Austen had written "Northanger Abbey" in 1797; it remained unpublished, but "Sense and Sensibility" is of 1811, "Pride and Prejudice" of 1813; thus both were prior to "Waverley". But neither, great as are their merits, attracted attention then, as Miss Burney's novels had done from the first; and probably the contempt of novels was one of the various causes, the chief being that "it was his humour," which made Scott conceal his authorship of his prose romances.

"Waverley"—in the first and long-lost chapters—is reckoned tame; but the hero's youth in peaceful rural England was deliberately designed as a quiet approach to his richly varied adventures under the White Cockade. From the moment when Waverley enters the village, so strange to English eyes, and the still stranger castle, of Tullyveolan, he passes into the land of romance; all was, to English readers, as novel and unexpected as if Edward had joined a tribe of Central Africa. The ancient feudal manners, Lowland or Highland; the learned, eccentric, brave old baron; the half idiot jester, Davy Gellatley; the Bailie, Balmawhapple; the clansmen, the Celtic chief, Fergus MacIvor; the survivor of the Remnant, gifted Gilfillan, were humorous and masterly creations, while the gallant figure of the doomed Prince and his wonderful adventure, narrated with sympathy, completed the charm. The world was taken by storm, believed in Flora MacIvor, and wept afresh over the shambles of Carlisle.

Written in six weeks, the romance of "Guy Mannering" (1815), with its pell-mell of characters from the Colonel (who was thought like Scott), and his lively dark-eyed daughter Julia, (certainly like Mrs. Scott), to Pleydel, Meg Merrilies, Glossin, the bankrupt Bertram laird, to Dominie Sampson, and Dandie Dinmont with his dogs, was only less popular from the first. "The Antiquary" (1816) added a romance of dark complexion to a study of modern manners of the preceding decade; while "Old Mortality," at the end of the year, did for 1679 and the Covenanters, with even greater skill, what "Waverley" had done for the clans and the Forty-five. "Old Mortality" is probably the greatest of Scott's historical novels. The friends of the persecuted Remnant exclaimed against historical unfairness, but the friends of the "Indulged" of 1679, and of Claverhouse, had as good a right to pick a quarrel.

"The Black Dwarf" was condemned by Blackwood the publisher, and posterity has not differed from his verdict. The story had been written on a larger scale, but was truncated, said Scott, to the proportions of the dwarf. In 1817 "Rob Roy" gave us the best of all Scott's heroines, Diana Vernon, and the deathless Andrew Fairservice, and Bailie Nicol Jarvie, and the Dougal creature, with Rob himself, a tower of strength; but Helen, his wife, is somewhat melodramatic (as probably she actually was) and the plot, with its financial embroilment, is "only good for bringing in fine things".

It is difficult to decide between the rival excellences of "The Heart of Midlothian" (1818) (with another heroine, Jeanie Deans, as good and original in her way as Diana Vernon) and of "Old Mortality". We are apt to prefer the novel which we read last. Written "in torments," and totally forgotten by Scott after he had composed it, "The Bride of Lammermoor" has won tears for generations, though the doomed Master is something of a lay figure, and the pathos of the old Steward is better than his humour, which grows mechanical. The darkening of the omens towards the close is matched only in the "Odyssey" and "Njal's Saga"; for, though the novel is not in the first rank, it contains much of the author's best, and could have been written by no other mortal. With "The Bride" came the brief "Legend of Montrose," in which the great Marquess is half-forgotten, for Dugald Dalgetty, that matchless creation, runs away with Scott's fancy, happily carrying him to meet the rival Marquess of Argyll. Confessedly Scott could adhere to no predetermined plan (he tried to do so, again and again, but was

conscious of failure); his characters were alive and masterful, and led him where they would, but he had never contemplated a romance in a theme above romance, the Action and Passion of Montrose.

Leaving Scotland—lest the field should be overworked—for England and the Middle Ages, Scott, in 1819, won the hearts of most boys and many men, by "Ivanhoe," the crusader who returns disguised, like de Wilton in "Marmion". It is to be believed that Scott disliked Rowena at least as much as Thackeray did, and was no less in love than he with Rebecca. Merely to think of the characters is a pleasure—Gurth, Wamba, Locksley, de Bracy, Friar Tuck, Isaac, the Abbot, while, if Urfried is extremely incoherent in her pagan creed, the Templar is Byronic enough for the taste of that day; Scott, in fact, could draw a dark Byronic dare-devil before Byron came into the field. "The Monastery" (1820) with the White Lady of Avenel, and the Euphuist Knight, was not well received, but Sir Walter boldly carried on the tale in an infinitely better sequel, "The Abbot," with all the charm and horror of Mary Stuart at Loch Leven, with a hero full of spirit, and a heroine worthy of him in Catherine Seyton.

In "Kenilworth" (1821), a most audaciously anachronistic tale, Scott treated Queen Elizabeth with a chivalry amazing in a Scot; his fated heroine, Amy Robsart, has unusual spirit and womanliness, and his villain, Varney, is his Iago, while Michael Lambourne is a perfect sketch of the Elizabethan adventurer of the baser sort.

In "The Pirate" (1821) Scott chose the scene of his tour in the Orkney Islands (1814), and his hero is, like George Staunton in "The Heart of Midlothian," rather a Byronic being. Minna and Brenda, the two fair sisters, were immensely admired, but Norna of the Fitful Head is much inferior to Madge Wildfire and Meg Merrilies as a seeress and a romantically eccentric being; while Claude Halcro and Triptolemus Yellowley are the least entertaining of "Scott's bores".

"The Fortunes of Nigel" (1822) is enriched with all the wealth of Scott's knowledge of Elizabethan and Jacobean plays and pamphlets, and the unsatisfactory hero, much the least sympathetic of Scott's *jeunes premiers*, is redeemed by the delightful humours of gentle King Jamie, by the two grim Trapbois, father and daughter, by the flower of Scottish serving-men,

Richie Moniplies, and by all the life of the Court, of the Ordinary, and of Alsatia.

In "Peveril of the Peak" (1823) Scott is less fortunate in his treatment of English society during the Popish Plot, a theme which seemed "made to his hand". His Charles II. is the least excellent of his kings, and the plot is more than commonly rambling, while Fenella is the feeblest of his romantic and eccentric puppets. "Quentin Durward," on the other hand, with the adventures of a gallant but canny Scot at the perilous Court of Louis XI., is perhaps the best constructed of all his novels. In drawing Louis XI. the author excels himself; we have not too much of Leslie *le Balafré*, the Dugald Dalgetty of the age; the adventures are many and exciting, and the book was welcomed eagerly in France, though at first it was scarcely appreciated at home.

"St. Ronan's Well" was a tale of contemporary manners, but Scott was not skilled in describing the humours of a Tweedside watering-place, interwoven as they are with a dark domestic tragedy, spoiled by an incongruous conclusion which was forced on the author by the prudery of James Ballantyne. In "Redgauntlet," Scott recovered himself: the manners and characters are a little earlier than those of his own boyhood, and mingled with the adventures of the hero on the Border is the last tragic appearance of that Prince who, twenty years earlier, had shaken the three kingdoms with the claymores of the clans.

The brief "Wandering Willie's Tale," in "Redgauntlet," is Sir Walter's masterpiece of humour and terror: this story he worked on very carefully, and his care was rewarded. The Edinburgh lawyers, the eccentrics, Nanty Ewart, and the heroine of the Green Mantle, are worthy of their places in this great romance, made the more moving by many touches of autobiography.

"The Talisman" (1825) is a brilliant tale of Cœur de Lion and Saladin; "The Betrothed" is less appreciated than it ought to be. In 1825-1826 came the ruin of Scott, entailed by that of his publisher, Constable. How he bore it, how he laboured and died to redeem it, by long heavy task work at "The Life of Napoleon,"—by "Woodstock," in which the characters of Cromwell and of Charles II. in youth, are among his best creations; by "The Fair Maid of Perth," with the great character of the timid chief, and the finale of the

Clan Battle of Perth; by "The Chronicles of the Canongate," and by his latest works, written with a half-palsied hand, composed by a brain in ruin, yet again and again inspired,—is a familiar story. The eyes are dimmed as these words are penned; so potent is the spell of that rich, kind genius, of that noble character, over the hearts of those who love and honour the great and good Sir Walter.

He created the historical novel; he opened the way in which no man or woman has followed him with such genius as his: we may say this even while we remember "Esmond" and "The Virginians"; "Kidnapped," "Catriona" and "The Master of Ballantrae"; "Les Trois Mousquetaires" and "La Dame de Monsoreau".

After a voyage to Italy, Sir Walter returned to Abbotsford, where he died in his own house with the murmur of Tweed in his ears as he passed away (September, 1832). "I say," wrote Byron emphatically, "that Walter Scott is as nearly a thoroughly good man as a man can be, because I *know* it by experience to be the case."

James Fenimore Cooper.

James Fenimore Cooper (1789-1851), bearing a name dear to grateful boyhood, is even now, with Hawthorne—an infinitely greater man—the American novelist best known on the Continent of Europe. In France as in England, he was the delight of the youth of men of letters; among the characters of fiction concerning whom Thackeray says *Amo* he places Leather Stocking with Dugald Dalgetty. Many of us, no doubt, at about the age of 10, have made stone heads for our arrows, like the noble neolithic Indian braves of Cooper, and have found (like Scottish savages, when flint was scarce) that slate served our purpose.

Cooper was born in New Jersey, and passed his childhood on his father's new settlement at Otsego Lake. Here were real deer and real Red Indians, and here Cooper's ply was taken. He was sent down from Yale, as inappreciative of the studious habits of the Pale Faces. He went to sea, thus obtaining another string to his bow as a novelist; next saw service in the Navy, by lake and sea; and, after a subsequent life of leisure, was stimulated by a bad English novel to vow that he could write a better,—his tale of English life, "Precaution," has not had the vogue of "Persuasion". Cooper

turned to American topics in "The Spy," a story of the War of Independence; Scott's example may have led him to choose a recent historical topic; his knowledge of the forests and his remarkable hero, Harvey Birch, did the rest, and his success was assured; his work was welcomed both in France and England. Then came "The Pioneers," the first in composition of the five tales where Leather-Stocking, with his peculiar and silent laugh, leads us through forests, haunted by the Mingo and other fearful wild fowl. Then he turned to the sea, to Paul Jones, that renegade of Galloway, and Long Tom Coffin; this was the first of various novels of the Navy which are to American boys what Marryat's were and ought to be to our own. "The Last of the Mohicans," of 1826, marks the culmination of Cooper's talent, and Chingachgook, the Great Serpent, and Uncas, if not the paleface heroine, are imperishable in the memory. Cooper's visit to Europe led him into writings which rather exacerbated the American Eagle and the British Lion. Most of his very numerous later works are more or less polemical. He was no *psychologue*, his heroines are forlorn of admirers; in style he had nothing to touch R. L. Stevenson; he is "Cooper of the wood and wave".

Washington Irving.

The true beginner of accomplished literature in America was Washington Irving, born in New York, 3 April, 1783; his father was of the old Border family of the name, his mother, the daughter of an English clergyman. In his twenty-first year he visited Europe; on his return, with friends named Paulding, wrote light essays in a serial named "Salmagundi," and, later, a burlesque "History of New York," with the humours of "Diedrich Knickerbocker," a book in which Scott recognized gleams of Sterne and Swift. After the war ending in 1815, when he was under canvas, if not under fire much, he revisited England, and stayed with Scott at Abbotsford, of which he has left a pleasant record. In 1819 appeared his "Sketch Book" with the immortal story of Rip Van Winkle, and the "Legend of Sleepy Hollow". He had not quite shared Scott's enthusiasm for the scenery about Abbotsford, mainly resting for its charm on historical and legendary associations unfamiliar to him, but he gave legends to his native Catskill Hills, and the Hudson River. His style has an Addisonian felicity and kind humour; and in his "Bracebridge Hall" he handled old-fashioned England as if he loved it. His "Tales of a Traveller" (he now visited Italy, France, and

Spain) are not, throughout, of his best work. Spain and the Spanish inspired his "Life of Columbus," which in England was deservedly popular, and the picturesque "Conquest of Granada," and "The Alhambra." In 1829, Irving became secretary of the American Legation in London, and, returning, produced "Astoria," to boys, at least, a delightful account of the wilds. In 1842 he went as American Minister to Spain, and, at home, wrote an attractive "Life of Mahomet". He carried into historical work the grace of his essays, and the power of visualizing characters and events. He did not write of Europe as an American, with his eyes very open to the comparative merits of his own country; and he did not write of America as a European. He was at home in the past as in the present, and though in his country's literature he was a pioneer, his performance has none of the roughness of pioneering work. He had the amiability of his favourite Goldsmith, whose biography he wrote. He died in November, 1859. If he were not a great writer, he is a delightful writer; we think of him with Addison and Goldsmith, without the occasional little petulancies of the author of "The Vicar of Wakefield". When he began his work America had no literature, when he died her chief poets and historians had given full assurance of their powers.

Magazines and Essayists.

Magazines, critical, literary, social, and antiquarian magazines, had flourished in the later years of the eighteenth century. With the nineteenth, in 1802, appeared "The Edinburgh Review," critical and political, edited by Francis Jeffrey (born at Edinburgh, 1773, died 1850). Though a man of ability and of a crackling kind of cleverness, Jeffrey was wholly incompetent to criticize the works of the great romantic poets, the chief glories in literature of an age so rich in the renowns of war. Scott aided Jeffrey at first, but partly vexed by the coxcombry of his review of "Marmion," more by the pro-French tone of his Whig review, the Sheriff deserted the "Blue and Buff," and helped to found the Tory "Quarterly Review," published by Murray, and edited by the learned but crabbed and dilatory Gifford. Both magazines had esteemed contributors: the "Edinburgh" was enlivened by the high spirits and wit of Sydney Smith (1771-1845), qualities not always controlled by good taste when he made merry with Nonconformists—Bishops, of course, were reckoned fair game

—and with squires, old familiar butts of every wit. Henry Brougham, later Lord Brougham (1778-1868), was always ready to write the whole magazine, if needful; what Macaulay thought of him, much later, may be read in the letters of the historian. Edinburgh professors and Francis Horner helped. Horner died young; much had been expected of him. The modern reader of the old "Edinburghs" will not find in them much entertainment, except from Sydney Smith's gaiety and Jeffrey's exhibitions of conceited incompetence as a judge of poetry. Both the "Edinburgh" and the "Quarterly," carried political rancour into literary criticism; both dealt in insolent personal bludgeon-work. From such matter the contributions in the "Quarterly" of Southey and Scott were free, and as Scott dealt with topics of permanent literary and historical interest, his essays retain their value: though Canning and other contributors to the "Anti-Jacobin" wrote for the "Quarterly," their buoyant humour of parody and their high spirits did not lighten up its august pages. As the younger poets, Shelley, Byron, and Keats, were either revolutionary or, in Keats's case, supposed to be, at least, Whigs and associates of Whigs, the "Quarterly" was more frequently disgraced by political abuse of poetical works than the "Edinburgh".

"Blackwood's Magazine," after a few months of stagnation, came into the hands of Mr. Blackwood, a bookseller of sound sense and masterful character, who was practically his own editor, though he allowed John Wilson (1785-1854) and John Gibson Lockhart (1794-1854) to play their pranks. Wilson, of Magdalen College, Oxford, was a splendid athlete, and excelled in country sports; Lockhart, of Balliol, very young in 1817, was of remarkable beauty, with a strongly sarcastic pen ("The Scorpion"), and as sardonic as his far-away cousin in the past, Lockhart of Carnwath, the manager of Jacobite affairs under James VIII. and III., and the author of valuable Memoirs. These two, on a night of claret and mirth, composed "The Chaldee Manuscript," a jape written in Scriptural style on all the notables of Scottish literary society. To persons who understand the allusions, it is still full of very mirthful matter, but many grave sufferers were as little amused as John Knox was by a delightful parody of himself and his associates by young Thomas Maitland, brother of Maitland of Lethington, Secretary of State to Queen Mary. Thenceforth, "Blackwood's," was for several years engaged in broils, which culminated in the death of John Scott, then Editor of "The London Magazine" in which Lamb often wrote. In this serial Scott attacked Lockhart, who went to London to fight

him. Scott kept advancing reasons for not meeting Lockhart, who "posted" him and went home. Scott then entangling himself in a dispute with Lockhart's college friend, Christie, put himself in the hands of Horace Smith of "The Rejected Addresses," and of Mr. Patmore. Mr. Patmore's ignorance of the laws of the duello made it necessary for Christie (who had fired once in the air, and thereby legally ended the duel) to shoot in the direction of Scott, who fell mortally wounded. The brawls of "Blackwood's" were detested by Sir Walter Scott, whose daughter Lockhart had married. Wilson, who had no connexion with this tragedy, was an early devotee of Wordsworth's poetry, and himself wrote "The Isle of Palms," "The City of the Plague," and two or three "Kailyard" novels. His memory is best preserved by the high spirits and occasional sentiment and humour of his "Noctes Ambrosianæ," dialogues in which the Ettrick Shepherd is the most conspicuous hero; not always with his own good will or to his own advantage. Wilson was of a most mercurial temperament; his fiery style was apt to be too florid; his caprices of temper were unaccountable; and probably his most permanent work is found in his descriptions of nature and of sport. He was for long Professor of Moral Philosophy in the University of Edinburgh. Lockhart is seen to most advantage in his immortal "Life of Sir Walter Scott," a noble union of perfect candour with passionate affection for the great man of whom he wrote. His social fastidiousness must always have been vexed by Scott's intimacy with the Ballantyne brothers, who, again, had been incapable of controlling Scott's tendency to large expenditure; indeed, the books of the firm were in a state of chaos. The strictures on these Ballantynes were a blemish in a book which, with Boswell's "Johnson," holds the highest place in English literary biography. It is even more in a few pieces of original verse (such as Carlyle's favourite, "It is an Old Belief") than in the best of his "Spanish Ballads" that Lockhart reveals the poetry within him, and the tenderness of a heart on which he laid the fetter lock of his ancient scutcheon. Of his novels, as we have said, "Adam Blair" is by far the best. He became Editor of the "Quarterly Review" in 1825; his death (1854) took him from a world darkened for him by many bereavements and other sorrows. His body sleeps in Dryburgh Abbey, "at the feet of Sir Walter Scott".

We now turn to the great essayists of the early nineteenth century.

Charles Lamb.

He who would write briefly of Charles Lamb is under this disadvantage: to open a volume of Lamb's essays or letters is to remain absorbed in them, and in wondering affectionate admiration. A man is fascinated by the book, however often read before, and cannot take up the pen.

Born in Crown Office Row, in the Temple (10 February, 1775), Lamb was the son of the clerk of a barrister, Samuel Salt, a Lincolnshire man; his maternal grandmother was housekeeper at the ancient house of Blakesware, in Herts. Lamb has described these people and that place in his essays, "Old Benchers of the Inner Temple," "Blakesmoor in H——shire," and his own infantile mental state (much like that of R. L. Stevenson in some ways), in "Witches and Other Night Fears," while his own and Coleridge's school days are commemorated in "Recollections of Christ's Hospital," and (here he assumes the part of Coleridge), in "Christ's Hospital Five and Thirty Years Ago". To begin the study of Lamb with these essays is in part to understand him, and is wholly to fall in love with him. We see his father, with his honesty, courtesy, and courage; with his "merriest quips and conceits" and many little artistic accomplishments, "a brother of the angle, moreover," devoted to the theatre, an enthusiast for Garrick, and, too early, "in the last sad state of human weakness," babbling of his boyhood. Lamb inherited the "merry quips," and was an inveterate punster. The "conceits" derived from constant reading of Burton and Sir Thomas Browne, and the then neglected early dramatists, abound in his style. The love of the stage he also inherited, and constantly expresses; and, he says, "from my childhood I was extremely inquisitive about witches and witch stories," and fond of a picture in a great book on the Bible "of the Witch Raising of Samuel, which I wish I had never seen". (The present writer's childhood was dominated by the same picture.) He never laid his head on the pillow, from his fourth to his eighth year, "without an assurance which realized its own prophecy" of seeing some frightful spectres. He supposed that these imaginations might date from "our ante-mundane condition". They were, in fact, proofs of his imaginative genius in infancy, for any child may have the fears, yet never fancy that it *sees* the phantasms. Conceivably the strain of madness in Lamb's blood, the madness which made his sister Mary slay her own mother, and affected her at frequent intervals, was also for something in his childish terrors. In later life his dreams wandered in great cities never

visited by him, which he saw "with a map-like distinctness of trace, a daylight vividness of vision". He thought that "the degree of the soul's creativeness in sleep might furnish no whimsical criterion of the quantum of poetical faculty resident in the same soul waking". His verses, like "When maidens such as Hester die," though exquisite, give less proof of his poetical faculty than his essay on "Dream Children," and on his lost love, which is perhaps the most beautiful example of his peculiar pathos.

Thus, throughout his essays, Lamb is constantly studying and revealing himself, his sister, his friends, with varying disguises and alterations of circumstance. In his "Character of the Late Elia," (his pseudonym) he is his own critic. "Better it is that a writer should be natural in a self-pleasing quaintness, than to affect a naturalness (so called) that should be strange to him." Unnatural it would have been to him, even in the briefest note to a friend, to write in a plain forthright style, but his quaintnesses and his conceits are never obscure. Elia "gave himself too little concern about what he uttered and in whose presence". That this is too true appears in the famous scene where he desired "to feel the bumps" of a very stupid comptroller of stamps, and was not to be restrained by Wordsworth's mild "My dear Charles!" What pranks, with his confessed "imperfect sympathy" with Scots, he may have played before the avenging Carlyle, no man knows. His friends "were, for the most part, persons of uncertain fortune ... a ragged regiment". "He never greatly cared for the society of what are called good people." "The impressions of infancy had burnt into him, and he resented the impertinence of manhood." Passing all his best hours at a desk in the India Office, he returned to his gambols when free. His essays were part of his playtime; in them he was his real self.

From 1782 to 1789 he was at Christ's Hospital, but did not attain to the high rank of Grecian, nor enter either of the Universities which he loved. He continued to meet Coleridge during vacations at "The Salutation and Cat," and contributed verses to Coleridge's volume of 1796 (Cottle, Bristol). In 1796 befell the tragedy in his family, and henceforth the care of his sister Mary (the Bridget of Elia) dominated his existence of unrepining self-sacrifice. In literature (in addition to the old writers), he admired Burns, and Wordsworth, from the first. It is more curious that Burger's ballad of Lenore (the Death-ride) struck Lamb as potently as it inspired Scott, who appreciated Lamb much more than he was by Lamb appreciated, and in

vain invited this resolute Cockney to visit Abbotsford. In 1797 he contributed more sonnets to a volume by Coleridge and Lloyd, and in 1798 published his tale "Rosamund Gray",

> Friends going up to examine it
> Observe a good deal of Charles Lamb in it

(to parody Browning), it has passages of his style, quotations from his favourite old authors; one chapter is an essay in his own manner, and there is even an anticipation of "Dream Children". Shelley praised the story highly, but Lamb was not enthusiastic about Shelley's poems or Byron's. His "John Woodvil" was intended for the stage, and the tragedy was published in 1802. It contains fine passages of verse, and a great deal of the "local colour" of the Restoration; perhaps the chief merit lies in the restoration of the accents of old poetry. The farce of "Mr. H." was a foredoomed failure. There is room for variety of opinion as to the suitability of the "Tales from Shakespeare" (much of which was executed by Mary Lamb), for children; but the peculiar merits of the style are beyond dispute. The same remark may be made on "The Adventures of Ulysses". On the other hand the notes to the "Specimens of English Dramatic Poets" (1808) reveal Lamb at his best as a critic and a master of language, while the selections are invaluable to readers who have not the time nor the taste for the perusal of the entire works of many most unequal dramatists. The book was a revelation to all but a few readers who, like Scott, had dwelt much with Marlowe, Chapman, Ford, Webster, and the rest.

Lamb "found himself" and found a public, at first small but ever increasing, when he wrote his first essays for "The London Magazine" in 1820, under the name of Elia. (Republished as "Essays of Elia" in 1823.) The very names of the essays are fragrant in the memory, and the characters drawn have become household words, while the personal touches are, with Lamb's delightful and fantastic letters, his best biography. In 1825, Lamb retired, with a liberal pension, from the India Office, and was "a freed man after thirty-three years' slavery" (see his essay "The Superannuated Man"). Lamb's "Last Essays" were published in 1833, and the author did not long survive the death of his life-long friend, Coleridge, in July, 1834; he passed away on 27 December, 1834. His name stands with those of Addison and Steele among English essayists: indeed he is much more read than they, as he was nearer to our own time, while more closely connected than they with

the best literature of the great centuries which preceded the eighteenth. His self-revelations too are more serious than those of his famous predecessors, and the character revealed is more potently attractive.

Leigh Hunt.

Born nine years after Lamb (in 1784) and, like Lamb and Coleridge, educated at Christ's Hospital, Leigh Hunt perhaps holds, after Lamb and Hazlitt, the third place among the English essayists of his age. While love of literature, of wide and very miscellaneous reading in old English and Italian poetry was the chief pleasure of Hunt, he also took, with great vigour, a side in the politics of his age. A "Friend of the People," a contemner of kings, and no sympathizer with his country in the Napoleonic wars, Hunt, with his brother John, started, in 1808, "The Examiner," a Radical weekly journal of politics and literature. In 1812 he published what the law called a libel on the Prince Regent, and for two years occupied prison rooms which he decorated in his own taste (leaning to roses on the wall-paper, and plaster casts), among these he received his friends. Though he had a rapid perception of new poetic excellence, though he was the first to perceive and welcome the star of Keats, and, almost alone, encouraged and applauded Shelley, Hunt was blind to the merits of poets who were not of his own political party. In the text and notes of his "Feast of the Poets" (1814), first published in "The Reflector," he insulted Scott, Coleridge, and Wordsworth,—and made "for" rhyme to "straw". When his "Story of Rimini" appeared (1816), it told Dante's tale of Paolo and Francesca with a Cockney jauntiness, and abounded in such epithets as "perky," "bosomy," "farmy," "winy Hunt's theory was that "the harmonious freedom of our old poets"—"their freedom in continuing the sense of the heroic rhyming couplets," should be "united with the vigour of Dryden". His verse was based on Chaucer's, and on some examples of the seventeenth century, and his metrical example influenced Shelley, while Keats followed him in re-telling Italian stories, and, at first, even in his affectations.

"Rimini" and its author were furiously attacked, for reasons of politics, by the young Tory writers in "Blackwood's Magazine," to whom Hunt's ineradicable vanity and lack of taste lent handles. He was dubbed "King of the Cockneys," and Keats himself shrank from his ways and manners. He

joined Byron and Shelley in Italy in 1822; they were to work together on a journal, "The Liberal," but, from the first, and especially after the death of Shelley, the relations of Byron with the needy and familiar Hunt were intolerably unpleasant. In 1828, after Byron's death, Hunt avenged himself in his "Lord Byron and His Contemporaries," a book which, as he came to see, should never have been written.

The rest of Hunt's life was spent in journalism, mainly literary; his essays, often delightful reading, were republished in "Men, Women, and Books," "Imagination and Fancy," "A Jar of Honey from Mount Hybla," while in his last work, "Autobiography," he forgives all his enemies, among whom he had actually reckoned Sir Walter Scott. He was the friend of Dickens and Carlyle. He wrote concerning Carlyle's style: "How could he exculpate this style, in which he denounces so many 'shams,' of being itself a sham? of being affected, unnecessary, and ostentatious? a jargon got up to confound pretension with performance, and reproduce endless German talk under the guise of novelty?" Here was candour: Leigh Hunt cultivated the virtue described as "the independence of the heart".

William Hazlitt.

Lamb as a man was universally beloved, except by Carlyle, and as a writer he is the friend of the human race. On the other side, Lamb's friend and fellow-essayist, William Hazlitt, in a letter to Leigh Hunt, says, "I want to know why everybody has such a dislike to me". There is much pathos and a plentiful lack of humour in the question. The brief answer is that Hazlitt acted as if he were trying to make himself disliked. In this he was pretty successful; he quarrelled even with Lamb, but never shook Lamb's constant affection. There is so much of Hazlitt's self in his works that, greatly as his good qualities delight us, there are times when we can scarcely forgive his defects, and are apt to conceive a personal grudge against him.

Born at Maidstone on 10 April, 1778, Hazlitt was the son of a distinguished Nonconformist minister. After visiting America, which was not tolerant of his doctrines, the elder Hazlitt returned, to England, where the son resided from 1788 to 1802. In 1798 he met Coleridge preaching in a blue coat and white waistcoat. The great and peculiar merit of Hazlitt's essays is his power of expressing and communicating the zest of his enjoyment of

nature, human nature, preaching, juggling performances, prize-fighting, painting, fiction, sculpture, and the game of fives. In his description of the voice, the manner, the personal magic of Coleridge, then in his glorious youth, Hazlitt outshines himself, as he does in his criticism of Cavanagh's style in the fives-court. Hazlitt visited Coleridge at Stowey, and heard Wordsworth read his "Peter Bell"; heard Coleridge speak with contempt of Gray, and with intolerance of Pope, and express a dislike of Dr. Johnson!

These were divine days; but politics crossed the friendships of Hazlitt. The others had been enthusiasts, like himself, for the French Revolution, but not for Napoleon, as objecting to be emancipated by a hero who subdued hereditary kings, and supplied to conquered nations his own brothers and captains to be their princes. Hazlitt, on the other hand, rejoiced in the superb genius of Napoleon as he did in that of Shakespeare and in the sunlight. Bonaparte he could no more keep out of his essays on Poetry than Mr. Dick could banish "that comely head" of Charles I. from his memorial. To Hazlitt, Wordsworth, Coleridge, and other friends became anathema, as renegades; and it is when we read his odious attack on Coleridge's poetry, in "The Edinburgh Review," that we understand "why everybody has such a dislike of me".

People who have read his "Liber Amoris," still more they who have studied the original letters partly published in that book, perceive other ways in which Hazlitt became antipathetic to human nature. He was, in the Scots phrase, "thrawn," and as he could seldom avoid exhibiting his temper in his writings, he may be and is admired for his generous qualities, and power of interpreting poetry and art, of elevating and enlivening the appreciative powers of his readers; but he can never be liked without reserve. His course of life, after he abandoned the study of metaphysics and the art of painting for the lecture-room and the pen of the ready essayist, put him too much in the way of temptation. He was too free to bring his personal and political animosities into his work, "it is such easy writing". He was also unskilled in the management of his life, and both his marriages (not to mention the unsuccessful passion of his "Liber Amoris") were fountains of bitterness. Living in London (1812-1820), Hazlitt gave his lectures on "English Poetry," and "Comic Writers" (1818-1819). Of 1817 are his "Characters of Shakespeare's Plays," and his "Round Table," essays on all sorts of subjects reprinted from Leigh Hunt's paper "The Examiner". In the work on poetry it

is surprising to find him ranking Ossian with Homer, the Bible, and Dante, but when he gives his reasons it is natural to envy his powers of appreciation and enjoyment. To read him on Chaucer and Spenser is to desire to read Spenser and Chaucer themselves, so nobly does he recommend them, and Shakespeare, and so on, till, over Burns, he falls into a quarrel with Wordsworth, and then lashes "The Lake School," sniffs at Scott, and discovers but "one fine passage" in "Christabel". His politics prevent him from appreciating what is excellent in the Cavalier poets, and even when writing of Milton, Satan suggests to him Bonaparte, and he goes off full-mouthed on that trail. Among the novelists he is as much at home, and as convincingly right in his criticisms, especially of Richardson, as he is lost in a mist when he touches on Racine and Molière. Over Scott's novels he first breaks into a passion of admiration, and then, remembering politics, pelts the author (who never gave a thought to him) in the manner of Gulliver's Yahoos.

Hazlitt, unhappily, lived at a time when both parties in the State carried, with inconceivable rancour and stupidity, their politics into the field of literary criticism. His "Characters of Shakespeare" was slandered by Gifford in "The Quarterly Review," and he keeps telling us the sale of the book was stopped. Why members of his own party did not continue to buy it, he does not ask. In "Blackwood's Magazine" (1817-1818) he was styled "pimply-faced Hazlitt," a leader of "the Cockney School," and he says that Keats died of being called a Cockney. In fact, these stupidities did not affect Keats more than any other man of sense, while Hazlitt never ceased to avenge on people perfectly innocent, and on the guilty Gifford, the insults which he ought to have disregarded. For these reasons, and because he wrote so much, his essays are unequal, though when he is at his best, and he is often at his best, he is in the foremost rank of critics. He died in 1830. "Well, I have had a happy life," was among his latest words, and his finest works are reflections of his happiest hours.

Thomas de Quincey.

An essayist whose works are probably more read than those of Leigh Hunt is Thomas de Quincey, one of the extraordinary men whose boyhood was in the eighteenth, and whose works were produced in the first half of the

nineteenth century. Born in Manchester in 1785, and dying in Edinburgh in 1859, De Quincey was precisely the contemporary of Hunt. His father, dying young, left his children adequately provided for, and, to judge by De Quincey's Autobiography, they were extraordinary children. William, the invincibly amusing, died young, and De Quincey's first great sorrow was the death of Elizabeth, when he himself was 6 and she was not 10 years of age. His description of the vision and the mysterious music which attended his visit to her as she lay dead, is one of the most remarkable and characteristic passages in his writings. Sixty-nine years later, "his very last act was to throw up his arms and utter, as if with a cry of surprised recognition, 'Sister! Sister! Sister!'" He was, indeed, a born seer; and probably other persons, if so ill-advised as to follow his example in taking quantities of laudanum, would not behold the visions which first charmed and then tormented "The English Opium Eater".

De Quincey was a wanderer and a fugitive from his school days, at least such he became after receiving an accidental stroke on the head from a cane, which prostrated him for weeks, and quite conceivably was one cause of his eccentricities. As he has told us he ran away, quite needlessly, from school at 16 or 17, tramped, a sentimental traveller, in North Wales, starved, lurked, and walked the midnight streets of London with Ann, ran away from Oxford (Worcester College) when his papers had astonished and delighted the examiners, and, generally, flew in the face of common sense. He came into his little fortune, behaved to Coleridge with the generosity of Shelley, settled long near Wordsworth at Grasmere, made the acquaintance of John Wilson (Christopher North), married a country girl, and fell into the miseries of the opium eater. Poverty ensued, De Quincey returned to his fugitive life of lurking in London, and, in 1821, astonished the world of readers by "The Confessions of an English Opium Eater," published in "The London Magazine," for which Lamb and Hazlitt used to write. De Quincey was acquainted with Lamb, and Wordsworth and Coleridge he knew well. But he belonged to none of the rival sets of writers, "Cockneys" or Edinburgh wits; and, in his freakish moods of schoolboy-like high spirits, he wrote personal banter of his best friends, deriding Coleridge's corpulence and "large expanse of cheek"; the retort, as to cheek, was obvious. In 1830 De Quincey moved to Edinburgh; and in lodgings there, and at a cottage near Lasswade on the Esk, he mainly passed the rest of his strange, industrious, eccentric life. He wrote alternately for Blackwood's and Tait's

magazines: almost the whole matter of his sixteen volumes appeared originally in magazines, and was written with the wolf and the printer's boy at the door. His vast store of reading, accumulated before 1821, embraced the old English writers and the new German philosophers, magic, political economy, and the records of police trials.

That sketch for a murder with a pair of dumb-bells, by the murderer Thurtell, "the same who was generally censured for murdering the late Mr. Weare," occurs, not only in the essay on "Murder Considered as One of the Fine Arts," but in the long essay on "Style". The story of the very mysterious murder, at noon-day, of Mrs. Ruscombe in Bristol, is very well told in "Autobiographic Sketches" ("The Priory"). Confessedly some essays, such as "Dream-fugue" in "The English Mail Coach," are records of visions inspired by opium: "the Dream knows best; and the Dream, I say again, is the responsible party". These essays on the Mail Coach, then the marvel of rapidity of travel, offer, in miniature, the type of De Quincey's style, with its sonorous poetic cadences, its quaint colloquial familiarities, —with his insatiable intellectual curiosity, and his digressiveness—he discusses the origin of the word "snob". Finally the Dream has its way, after the wonderful description of the laurelled coach bearing news of Wellington's and Blücher's victory to England, and to two lovers the sudden face of death.

De Quincey, with his wide reading, with the songless poet in his nature, and with his strange freakish habits, his following a chance association of ideas far beyond the field of his essay, is, naturally, one of the most unequal of writers. His prose is, on occasion, "aureate" or ornate, in a manner which has, perhaps, had its day; and again he deals in schoolboy slang. Only parts of his famous essay on Jeanne d'Arc are excellent: taste has moved away from, and may return to, the mystic eloquence of "The Three Ladies of Sorrow". But in De Quincey there is variety enough for all tastes, and he is perhaps especially inspiring and delightful to young readers. He died at Edinburgh on 8 December, 1859.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

POETS AFTER WORDSWORTH.

We now turn to the poets of the nineteenth century, after Wordsworth, though the first on the list was his senior in years. He is less important for his work than as the pioneer of the poets who, in the United States, contributed to the poetic literature of the English language.

Philip Freneau.

Philip Freneau (1752-1832) was the first American poet of any note. America, colonial or independent, has scarcely any early literary history, which may be mainly accounted for by the preoccupation of men's minds in taming the waste, in dispossessing the warlike natives, in establishing the Puritan theocracy in New England, and in war, whether colonial, against France and her Indian allies, or against the Old Country. Yet we might have expected lyrics, at least, from the non-Puritan settlers of the very literary age of Elizabeth and James I. and from Cavalier exiles of the period of Charles I. They must have been in love; but that poetic passion, among the colonists, was singularly tuneless. We might have looked for volumes on the new country in addition to the learned volume of William Strachey (who compares the religion, rites, and legends of the Red Tribes with those of Greece and Rome) and the larger and more romantic tome of Captain John Smith. The Anglo-Saxon colonists of this Isle of Britain lived even more hardly than the colonists in America; yet we have seen that, even in its scanty fragments, their poetry has distinction, sentiment, and pathos. But American poetry did not begin at the beginning in poems of personal sentiment and experience and in heroic lays. Religion, theological controversy, colonial history, and witchcraft fully occupied the flowing pen of Cotton Mather (1663-1728). The theocracy, like that of Calvin, Knox, and Andrew Melville, which he supported, was broken by the turn of public opinion in 1692, against the hangings of witches on "spectral evidence" (subjective apparitions of the witches to their victims). On the witches, on religion, on colonial history with a controversial purpose ("Magnalia"), and on many other themes, Cotton Mather wrote at enormous length. He was a Bostonian, a Harvard man, and learned; in fact, he was the counterpart of his correspondent, Wodrow, the author of the "History of the Sufferings of

the Kirk under the Restoration". His style is Jacobean rather than late Caroline, and the curious will find him "full of matter".

Religion inspired Jonathan Edwards; politics, science, and homely Hesiodic advice occupied Benjamin Franklin, but, as for poetry in America, it begins with Freneau, who was born eight years before Prince Charles's last hope of recovering England failed, and who died in the death year of Sir Walter Scott (1832). Freneau was a sailor, a journalist, a writer of patriotic verse during the War of Independence, and his best known poem is "The Indian Cemetery," which displays the same regret for a vanished people as the Anglo-Saxon "The Ruined City".

Thomas Campbell stole, consciously or unconsciously, a line from this piece. Here is Campbell, in "O'Connor's Child"—

> Now on the grass-green turf he sits,
> His tasselled horn beside him laid;
> Now o'er the hills in chase he flits,
> The hunter and the deer—a shade.

Freneau has—

> By midnight moons, o'er moistening dews,
> In habit for the chase arrayed,
> The hunter still the deer pursues,
> The hunter and the deer—a shade.

This plagiarism, by a Scot who ought to have known better, must be taken as a real case of extremely petty larceny. Any mortal who cared for grammar would have written, not "The hunter *and* the deer—a shade"—for arithmetically there were two shades—but

> The hunter *like* the deer, a shade.

Campbell, if not Freneau, must have known that the passage coincides with the scene in Homer ("Odyssey," Book XI.) where the shade of Heracles pursues the shades of the animals which on earth he had slain. The cadences of Freneau are those of Mickle in "Cumnor Hall".

> The dews of summer night did fall,
> The Moon, sweet Regent of the sky,

Silver'd the walls of Cumnor Hall
And many an oak that grew thereby.

As a rule, Freneau's "Muse," like that of Mr. Lothian Dodd when slightly exhilarated, "was the patriotic," inspiriting to the contemporary warrior, but not of imperishable literary value. As senior in years to Tennyson and Browning, Freneau's compatriots, Bryant, Whittier, and Longfellow, may here follow him in chronological order.

William Cullen Bryant.

William Cullen Bryant (1794-1878) was one of those concerning whom Sainte-Beuve says that they carry about in them a poet who died young. His tendency was to write Hymns to Proserpine; among the works which fascinated his boyhood were Blair's "Grave," Bishop Porteous on "Death" (the ghost of Mrs. Veal (1705), a qualified critic, preferred Drelincourt), and the hectic verses of Kirke White. Later came Wordsworth, perhaps too late; for Bryant's "Thanatopsis," written when he was 17, descends from such later works as follow the author of the Anglo-Saxon poem of "The Grave". Not much later came "The Water Fowl," a favourite of the compilers of anthologies. "Thanatopsis" was frequently retouched, and now closes with a passage of the highest ethical dignity, though to be sure there is little of hope in the idea that

each shall take
His chamber in the silent halls of Death.

He was successful as a journalist,

the friend of Freedom's cause
As far away as Paris is,

and also at home, where the negro was concerned. He did not cease when an editor to write poetry, and he translated Homer into blank verse. In reading Bryant's poems we cannot but see that he offered the best wine first, in pieces like "To a Water Fowl" and "The Yellow Violet". The former is full of charm in atmosphere and cadence, though the concluding moral, as in "The Yellow Violet," is inspired by Wordsworth. His best pieces of landscape, pictures of autumn and winter, are somewhat reminiscent of Cooper. "The Ages," a summary of the world's history in the stanza of

Spenser, is more remarkable for the happy patriotism of its conclusion than for originality of thought. It is really amusing to see his inability to escape from the charms of the tomb,—tombs of Red Indians, or of conquerors or of kings, "in dusty darkness hid," all are welcome to him; and in "The Child's Funeral" the reader is happily surprised by the discovery that the infant, prematurely placed in the vault, is alive and enjoying himself.

John Greenleaf Whittier.

Whittier (1807-1892) was born of a rural Quaker family in Massachusetts. He was mainly self-taught; he early commenced journalist, on the side of the party opposed to slavery; and he retained no high esteem for his early flights in verse. He wrote much in the journal, "The New Era," which was fortunate enough to publish Mrs. Beecher Stowe's "Uncle Tom's Cabin," and during the great war he was one of the bards who stimulated the valour of the North; much as another Quaker, by waving his hat, encouraged the Duke of Cumberland's dragoons at Prince Charles's rearguard action at Clifton. But there the side befriended by the English Quaker was not victorious. In "Snow-Bound" (1866) (the name-giving piece is a delightful picture of a happy winter's night in such a cottage as that of Whittier's boyhood) Whittier first met a popular success as a poet, though already some of his poems (probably pirated) were not unpopular in England. He was a good, earnest and amiable man, and, as a poet, copious and wholesome, rather than of curious and exquisite distinction. Many of his verses are religious, moral or political, and, despite his love of nature, his lines are not always, where nature is concerned, on a level with the best of Bryant. His stories in ballad or balladish form were naturally popular; "Maud Muller" is perhaps the best known in England; he had a variety of themes, colonial, Red Indian, and generally historical. He even went to the "Rig-Veda"; and catholicity of taste is shown when an American Quaker sings of Soma, the rather mysterious nectar of Indra and other deities of the Indian Olympus. That his poems of war should be energetic, while he was professedly a man of peace, is not so remote from the practice of the earlier Friends as we are apt to suppose.[1]

His life,—his rustic and laborious youth, his irregular education, his absorption in the politics of his own country, his enthusiasm for Freedom's

cause,—has a resemblance to the life of Burns, and makes him distinctly a national poet. But it is needless to enumerate the points in Bums which are missing in Whittier!

Perhaps an alien may venture to utter an idea which was in his mind before he found that it had been expressed by a fellow-countryman of the poet. Professor Barrett Wendell writes, concerning some of Whittier's pieces, "they belong to that school of verse which perennially flourishes and withers in the poetical columns of country newspapers". The verse of the country newspaper was the wild-stock of Whittier's rose; the wild-stock of Burns was the folk-song of Scotland. Whittier had to educate himself, and his genius often lifted him far above the artless verse of his youth. He was not wholly unimitative. In his famous appeal, "Massachusetts to Virginia," we read—

> And sandy Barnstaple rose up, wet with the salt sea spray;
> And Bristol sent her answering shout down Narraganset Bay,
> Along the broad Connecticut old Hampden felt the thrill,
> And the cheers of Hampshire's woodmen swept down from Holyoke hill,
> . . . . . .
> *And the red glare on Skiddaw roused the burghers of Carlisle!*

It is Macaulay's "Armada"!

There is a mountain peak in America which bears the name of the renowned statesman, Daniel Webster. Whittier, in days before the war, had written against Daniel Webster, more in sorrow than in anger, the poem called "Ichabod".

> So fallen! so lost! the light withdrawn
> Which once he wore!
> The glory from his grey hairs gone
> For ever more.

Much later, in a kind of palinode, he, addressing the shade of Webster, gave a good example of the vigour of his octosyllabics!

> But, where the native mountains bare
> Their foreheads to diviner air,
> Fit emblem of enduring fame,

One lofty summit keeps thy name.
For thee, the cosmic forces did
The rearing of that pyramid,
The prescient ages shaping with
Fire, flood, and frost thy monolith.

The rigorous critic may say that the idea is derived from Byron; and object to

forces did
The rearing of that pyramid,

as a somewhat colloquial idiom, but the lines have very great speed and vigour.

If we insist that a very young literature must produce for inspection her national poet (and Mr. Lowell says that foreign critics made this demand very early indeed) the poet cannot be Poe, and Whitman is hardly eligible. Whittier seems, so far, to be the best candidate for the bays.

Many admirers of Burns will be eager to confess that Whittier's "Snow-bound" has merits superior to those of the Ayrshire ploughman's companion-piece, "The Cottar's Saturday Night".

Henry Wadsworth Longfellow.

Longfellow, by far the most popular, in his own country and in England, of American poets, was born at Portland, Maine, in 1807; he was two years older than Tennyson. He was a contemporary at Bowdoin College of his country's greatest novelist, Nathaniel Hawthorne. In 1826 he began three "travel-years" which prepared him for the Chair of French and Spanish literature, first held by George Ticknor in 1817; he first taught at Bowdoin, and in 1836 succeeded Ticknor at Harvard. American literature now began to be affected by the poets of the European continent, which had, ever since Chaucer, and especially in the Elizabethan age, fostered the poetry of England. Only the morally pure and elevating elements in continental literature affected Longfellow; and this was not precisely the case where Chaucer and the Elizabethans were concerned. Indeed, the greater literature of the United States is not mastered by the Passions; Byron, Shelley, and Burns were never its idols, and Hawthorne did a daring thing when he

wrote "The Scarlet Letter". Longfellow, whom Poe absurdly accuses of plagiarism, was no imitator. He had a note, simple indeed, but his own. As far as any traces in his work of Scott, Wordsworth, Byron, Coleridge, Keats, and Shelley, are apparent, we might suppose that he had never read them. This kind of originality is not always found even in considerable poets. The measure of Scott's "Lay" is borrowed from "Christabel"; Burns usually had a model which he transfigured; Byron's Oriental tales in verse are bad copies from Scott in versification;—but the minor poet is always imitative.

Longfellow, like the enemy of Bonaparte mentioned by Heine, was "still a professor" till 1854, when he was succeeded by Mr. Lowell. While occupying an academic Chair he published perhaps his best-known work, "The Voices of the Night" (1839), his "Evangeline" (pathos in English hexameters) in 1847, and "The Golden Legend" in 1851. In his first book Longfellow "made a bull's-eye" in hitting the public taste. The bull's-eye rang to the anvil strokes of "The Village Blacksmith". Young men shouted "Excelsior" as they walked the streets, like the two Writers to the Signet who met each other shouting lines from Flodden in "Marmion" on the North Bridge of Edinburgh. It is true that

> To the Lords of Convention 'twas Claverhouse spoke,

or

> The stubborn spearmen still made good
> Their dark impenetrable wood,

or

> The laurel, the palms, and the pæan, the breasts of the nymphs in the brake,

are perhaps even more provocative than "Excelsior" to him who shouts "for his personal diversion". But it is much to write verses which provoke this kind of enthusiasm among persons not apt to be stirred by literature. On mature reflection, the maiden in "Excelsior" was rather "in a coming on disposition,"

> He answered as he turned away,
> "What would the Junior Proctor say?"

is a pardonable academic parody. If you analyse the similes in "The Psalm of Life," you meet some shipwrecked brother who, though he has piled up his bark on some reef, is still sailing o'er Time's dreary main, and taking comfort in observing, through his glass, that somebody has left footprints on the sands. *Enfin*, these poems have "*that!*" as Reynolds said, though the metaphors are mixed as if by the master-hand of Sir Boyle Roche. These things are not Longfellow's masterpieces, and they, with the apocryphal viking's "Skeleton in Armour," are best read in happy and uncritical boyhood. At any age we may appreciate such lines as—

> The welcome, the thrice prayed for, the most fair,
> The best beloved Night,

and

> I remember the black wharves and the slips,
> And the sea-tide, tossing free,
> And Spanish sailors with bearded lips,
> And the beauty and the mystery of the ships,
> And the magic of the sea.

Simplicity is dominant in Longfellow's verse; and he *has* "a message" on which he is perhaps too fond of dwelling. In one of his anti-slavery poems the hero, like Aphra Behn's Oroonoko, is a king in his own country, though the slave trade in "black ivory" direct from Africa was no longer extant. In "Hiawatha" he reproduced the measure of the Finnish "Kalewala" with much of the woodland perfume of the original poem. To boys fresh from Cooper's novels the tale is a delight if it has palled on more sophisticated tastes. Theocritus hoped that his verses "would be on men's lips, above all on the lips of the young". If this were Longfellow's ambition he had his reward in full. He wrote for a young people, in the boyhood of its own literature, and opened for it the magical volume of old romance, and his hold on those who read him in youth can never be shaken, being strengthened by all happy and tender memories. His muse

> Sits and gazes at us,
> With those deep and tender eyes.
> Like the stars, so still and saint-like.
> Looking downwards from the skies.

Alfred Tennyson.

Born in 1809, the son of the Rev. George Tennyson, Rector of the parish at Somersby in the Lincolnshire Wolds, Alfred Tennyson was a schoolboy when Keats and Byron died. At the age of 8, he says, "I remember making a line I thought grander than Campbell, or Byron, or Scott..." it was this—

> With slaughterous sons of thunder rolled the flood.

The context is absent, but the line is sonorous, and utterly unlike anything that the child could find in the poems with which he was already acquainted, those of Thomson, Scott, Byron, and Campbell. Even if he had read Milton, the line gave promise of his originality as an "inventor of harmonies" in blank verse. After imitating Pope, and, on a large scale (6000 verses), copying Scott, Tennyson wrote, at 14, a drama in blank verse. Of this a chorus survives in Tennyson's volume of 1830, and in such lines as these about the mountains riven

> By secret fire and midnight storms
> That wander round their windy cones,

we already find his manner, his use of a favourite epithet, and his interest in the forces that

> Draw down the æonian hills and sow
> The dust of continents to be.

At 17 (1826), after being "dominated by Byron," he "put him away altogether," and this was the tendency of his generation at Cambridge, of Thackeray, Monckton Milnes, and others. In 1827 "Poems by Two Brothers," Alfred and his brother Frederick (Charles, too, contributed) were published, but contained none of the verses stamped with his own unmistakable mark which he had already composed. Among these the ballad on a wooing like that of the Bride of Lammermoor is specially original. At 19 (1828) Tennyson wrote "The Lover's Tale" in blank verse,—he had not yet read Shelley, but the Italian scenery, and the rich imagery, are somewhat in Shelley's manner. The book was published fifty years later (1879); only the two first parts were written in youth. Tennyson went up to Trinity College, Cambridge, in 1828, where he met Thackeray, FitzGerald, Milnes (Lord Houghton), and Arthur Hallam, son of the historian, and the foremost of his friends. He contributed to the essays of this set,—"The

Apostles," a paper on "Ghosts," and won the prize poem on "Timbuctoo" by an obscure production in blank verse. Concerning the cause of its success there is an amusing if apocryphal anecdote.

In 1830, when Bulwer Lytton was declaring that novels had killed the taste for poetry, Tennyson's first volume appeared. The obvious fault was the affected diction; babblings as of Leigh Hunt; but in "Mariana in the Moated Grange," Tennyson declared his real self; as in "The Ode to Memory," "The Dying Swan," "Recollections of the Arabian Nights," and "Oriana". Here we discern Tennyson's mastery of original cadences; his close observation of Nature; his opulent language, and his visions of romance. "The Supposed Confessions of a Second-rate Sensitive Mind" displays the doubts that recur in "In Memoriam"; and "The Mystic" reveals a very potent element in his character, that of the visionary with elusive experiences of "dissociation" approaching to "trance". In a beautiful passage of "In Memoriam," these experiences are again cast, as far as possible, "in matter moulded forms of speech". Before 1830 Tennyson had anticipated, in an essay, the modern doctrine of the evolution of man from the lowest rudimentary forms of life, and had also personal psychological experiences like those of Plotinus and other late Platonic philosophers.

In 1832 almost all of the poems of the new volume of 1833 had been composed. This book included the first shape, magical but more or less humorous, and confused in form, of "The Lady of Shalott"; with the first form of "Œnone" (written in the Pyrenees during a tour with Hallam), "The Miller's Daughter," which needed and received much correction, as did "The Palace of Art". Here, too, first appeared the passion of "Fatima," the perfect "Mariana in the South," and "The Lotus Eaters," which has, in brief space, all the languor and all the charm of Spenser; it is a poem never excelled by Tennyson. A very amusing review, by Lockhart in "The Quarterly," mocked at all the many faults, but never alluded to the more numerous and essential beauties of the book. Ten years later Lockhart repented, and handed Tennyson's two volumes of 1842 to his friend Sterling, for criticism which could not be mocking. The poet, though naturally sensitive to criticism, had bowed to censures which, as he saw, were deserved, and had substituted noble lines for the earlier inequalities and eccentricities.

The sudden death at Vienna, of Arthur Hallam, in September, 1833, was a shock and a sorrow which left an indelible mark on the poet's character and genius. He composed, not much later, "The Two Voices," and the resolute and noble "Ulysses"; with "Sir Galahad," that absolute romantic lyric; "Tithonus," perhaps the most perfect of all his poems on classical mythology; "The Morte d'Arthur," the greatest of his idylls on the cycle of Arthur; and he wrote many parts of "In Memoriam". He had chosen Poverty for his mate, with poetry, like Wordsworth.

In 1842 appeared the two volumes which contain the flower and fruit of Tennyson's youth. Much that was new, with more that was re-formed from early immature phases, was offered; and such excellence in so many various styles, including the rural idylls—the light and charming "Day Dream" (The Sleeping Beauty), "The Talking Oak," and again "The Dream of Fair Women," the strange romantic "Vision of Sin"; the classical and Arthurian poems—to mention no others,—was never exhibited by a young English poet. There was little to regret or discard, and even "The May Queen" had this merit or demerit that it at once became extremely popular. Here was a fortunate "alacrity in sinking"! In the opinion of "Old Fitz" (Fitz Gerald), Tennyson never regained the level of these two thin volumes of 1842: perhaps we may say that he never rose above that level.

"The Princess" (1847) contains several of his most perfect lyrics, and all the charm of his blank verse, but it is professedly a fantasy; the poet "is not always wholly serious," he writes somewhat in the vein of "Love's Labour's Lost". In 1850 appeared, anonymously, "In Memoriam," the record of three years of pain, and of strivings with the Giant of Bunyan's Doubting Castle. We cannot discuss the reasonings, the waverings, the reviewings of the then most recent theories of evolution, with their presumed theological consequences; but the lover of poetry who cannot find it in "In Memoriam" may perhaps be regarded as not destitute of prejudices. Tennyson would be more universally appreciated as a great and delightful poet if he had never expressed any of his personal opinions about politics, society, morals, or religion in verse. His two volumes of 1842 contain nothing, or very little, that can annoy the most sensitive up-to-date spirit.

In 1850, Tennyson, by that time married, succeeded Wordsworth in the Laureateship. The first fruits of his office was the magnificent "Ode on the Death of the Duke of Wellington" (1852). In 1855 appeared "Maud," which

is prejudiced by the "topical" allusions to the Crimean War, and by the appearance, as hero and narrator, of a modern Master of Ravenswood, who is, according to the poet himself "a morbid poetic soul... an egotist with the makings of a cynic". The love-poetry is beautiful; and most beautiful are the exquisite lines "O that 'twere possible". But the day for a kind of tale or novel of modern life, in verse, had passed before the death of Crabbe.

In 1859 appeared the first four "Idylls of the King," "Enid," from a mediaeval tale in the Welsh "Mabinogion"; "Elaine," and "Guinevere," from the "Morte d'Arthur," and "Vivien," they beguiler of the wise Merlin, from the same source. All are rich in beauties of style, in visions of Nature, in such characters as Elaine and Lancelot, and in delicate observation; except "Vivien" all the Idylls were eagerly welcomed; though some critics held that Arthur preached too much to his fallen Queen.

Thackeray wrote to his "dear old Alfred" that the Idylls had given him "a splendour of happiness.... Gold and purple and diamonds, I say, gentlemen, and glory and love and honour, and if you haven't given me all these why should I be in such an ardour of gratitude? But I have had out of that dear book the greatest delight that has come to me since I was a young man." Old men who were schoolboys when Thackeray wrote thus, felt, and feel, what Thackeray expresses. The Idylls were continued later, to the number of twelve;—not all are of equal merit; none perhaps is so good as the "Morte d'Arthur" of 1842, but the whole are the poetic rival, in romantic charm, in haunting evasive allegory, and in ethics, of Malory's great old book. In the Idylls, as in Malory, we find, as Caxton had written four hundred years earlier, "the gentle and virtuous deeds that some knights used in these days, noble and renowned acts of humanity, gentleness, and chivalry. For herein may be seen noble chivalry, courtesy, humanity, friendliness, love, cowardice, murder, hate, virtue, and sin." The tragedy of Lancelot and Guinevere, the mystic interlude of the Quest for the Grail, the ruin of that world, and the passing of Arthur, were all given by old romance, and are all beautified by charm of diction, and countless pictures of Nature, and similes worthy of Homer, such as

> So dark a forethought rolled about his brain,
> As on a dull day in an Ocean cave
> The blind wave feeling round his long sea-hall
> In silence.

In "Enoch Arden" (1864) Tennyson again displayed his matchless variety of command over all classes of poetic themes, and added to "In Memoriam" a lyric full of the tranquil tenderness of an immortal love, "In the Valley of Cauteretz". Once more choosing a novel and difficult and sublime topic, he gave us "Lucretius," a study of the magnificent ruin of a supreme heart and soul and intellect.

Of the seven plays published between 1875 and 1892 there is not space to speak; but by common admission the genius of Tennyson was not fitted for the drama of the stage. In 1880 the poet, unconquerable by Time, gave, in "Ballads and Other Poems," the nobly passionate dramatic monologue of "Rizpah"; and his most thrilling war-song, "The Revenge". With 1885 came the Virgilian cadences of the lines to Virgil, written for the poet's townsmen, the Mantuans, on that

> Golden branch amid the shadows,
> Kings and realms that pass to rise no more.

Tennyson's genius was, indeed, akin to that of Virgil in tenderness, in "the sense of tears in mortal things," in elaborate and exquisite art, and in the selecting and polishing and re-setting of jewels from the poetry of ancient Greece. We saw, in the opening of this volume, how from age to age Homer's descriptions of the Elysian land, and of the home of the gods, reached an Anglo-Saxon minstrel; and now Tennyson recasts the thoughts in his picture of "the island valley of Avilion," the Celtic paradise.

At the age of 81, like Sophocles unsubdued by time, and still absolute master of his art, he composed one of his supreme lyrics, "Crossing the Bar": we repeat it and we marvel at the exquisite unison of thought with music. Even in "The Death of Œnone" the aged hand no "uncertain warbling made".

The poet crossed the bar on 6 October, 1892, his Shakespeare by his side, and his open chamber-window flooded by moonlight. It is probable that we live too near Tennyson to appreciate his greatness. "Men hardly know how beautiful fire is," says Shelley; the phenomenon is too familiar; but later generations will know and understand, and through the darkness of time will follow the light of this "Golden Branch among the Shadows".

Robert Browning.

Born three years later than Tennyson, in May, 1812, Robert Browning's first published poem, "Pauline," appeared in the same year as Tennyson's second volume of verse, namely in 1833. Thenceforward the careers of the two poets were, in some respects, curiously similar, as each "flourished" most decisively in 1840-1850. Browning was a native of a London suburb, his father was a man of very active intelligence, a reader of old books; and though Browning, in boyhood, was educated at a private school, his essential instruction was that which he gave himself in his father's library. At an early age, about 16, he read Shelley, and an intense enthusiasm for Shelley, as a man and poet, pervades his "Pauline". The poem is a monologue addressed to Pauline, on "the incidents in the development of a soul: little else is worth study," as Browning wrote in the dedication of "Sordello". The poem is, naturally, more or less autobiographical; like Wordsworth's "The Prelude," it was intended to be but part of a large work, "so many utterances of so many imaginary persons, not mine—poetry always dramatic in principle," so the author wrote in 1867, and the speaker in "Pauline" is really but as one of Browning's "Men and Women," and "Dramatis Personæ". The work contains several passages of great beauty, written in a "regular" style of blank verse without eccentricity, and is full of promise of success in a path which, later, as far as form is concerned, Browning did not follow. The construction of the paragraphs of blank verse is in places difficult, indeed obscure, a fault which haunted the poet's manner.

Of "Pauline" not a single copy was purchased: and it was with reluctance that Browning, much later, permitted it to appear among his works. His "Paracelsus" (1835) is in form a drama with four characters, and is, again, a story of "incidents in the development of a soul," that of a famous chemist, half mystic, half charlatan (1493-1541) who

> determined to become
> The greatest and most glorious man on earth.

For him unattainable Science is "La Belle Dame Sans Merci," and her, dead votaries call to him

> Lost, lost! yet come!
> With our wan troop make thy home.

There are one or two charming lyrics, but there is a weight of prolixity, and almost entire absence of action. The poem, however, obtained for Browning recognition among men of letters and special students of poetry, when he was not yet 24 years of age. He knew Talfourd, whose "Ion" (1835) was a recognized dramatic triumph at the moment; Forster, the friend and biographer of Dickens (with Forster, Browning's relations later were stormy), and Macready, the actor, who (1837) put his "Strafford" on the stage, with but slight success. Browning's dramas intended to be acted have had even less hold on the scenic world than Tennyson's; "A Blot in the Scutcheon," (1843) might have fared better but was thwarted by the internal politics of the stage. "Sordello" (1840), a narrative in heroic verse, though of an original sort that would have puzzled Dry den, was again the study of "a soul," that of a legendary Mantuan mediaeval poet and soldier, mentioned by Dante. The abundance of mediaeval Italian history,—introducing, as familiar to all, matters which were but vaguely known by few,—and the long hurrying sentences, following trains of ideas associated only in the poet's mind, defeated the ordinary reader. As

> Here the Chief immeasurably yawned

in a long passage of exposition, so did the world, and "Sordello" was a stumbling-block in the path of the poet's fame.

On the other hand, in "Pippa Passes" (1841) Browning produced a drama partly lyrical, partly in prose, partly in blank verse, full of variety, humour, strength, and charm, and with that vein of optimism which is never unwelcome. Just as Tennyson "came to his own" with his two volumes of 1842, so the works published by Browning (1841-1846) in cheap numbers, as "Bells and Pomegranates," gave assurance of his originality and his greatness. His dramatic lyrics, when they came, were poetry of a new kind, in measures as various as the moods; here was a "garden of the souls" so rich and strange, so full of novelty of incident, of observation in Italy and in England, as had never before been presented to a world which, for the moment, regarded it not. The strangeness in places might throw a shade on the beauty; the poet did not by any means always choose to make audible, in his verse, the music to which, as an art, he was devoted. In 1855 his "Men and Women" did at last win to the favour first of an enthusiastic few, then of all lovers of poetry. The very names of the poems, from "Bishop Blougram" to "In a Gondola," "Porphyria's Lover," "Fra Lippo Lippi," "The

Last Ride together," "Childe Roland to the Dark Tower Came," "A Grammarian's Funeral," call up a troop of visionary pictures; while "Christmas Eve and Easter Day" (1850) opens Browning's series of meditations on faith and the mysteries of existence. The poet's life, from his marriage to another poet, Miss Barrett (1846), to her death in 1861, was spent, in great part, in Italy, mainly in Florence; and Italian history, literature, art, and politics constantly inspired him.

In 1864 appeared his "Dramatis Personæ," of the same varied character as "Men and Women". Of the new poems the speculations of "Abt Vogler," the musician, of "Rabbi Ben Ezra,"—the faith pronouncing all things very good,—the gallant resolution in face of death of "Prospice," won for Browning the applause of readers who value "thought" in poetry. Of these, many preferred the passages most difficult of comprehension, and found joy in mysteries where the difficulties were really caused by the manner of the poet.

In 1868 a world which had neglected Browning fell with enthusiasm on the four successive volumes of "The Ring and the Book". Here all persons concerned in a peculiarly brutal set of murders of 1698, and many lookers-on, give their own versions and their own views of the characters and events, while the lawyers have their say, and the Pope sums up all in a poem by a fourth part longer than the "Iliad".

The last twenty years of the poet's life were prolific in books very various in character from "Fifine at the Fair" (1872), and "Red Cotton Night-Cap Country" (1873), to "Asolando," in 1889, the year of his death. His "Transcript" from Euripides is not merely rugged, but very quaint. The method is the old method, but a growing wilfulness often mars the results—the defect of Browning's quality. His resolute courage never failed; he was firm on the rock of his belief; but it is probable that he will always be best known by the work of his central period, from "Pippa Passes" to "Dramatis Personæ". He is the poet of love, of life, and of the will to live; here and beyond the grave; and he is the expounder, and, indeed, the creator, of innumerable characters, while, if his poetry lacks "natural magic," and supreme felicity of phrase, his pictures are largely and vigorously designed and coloured. No poet perhaps, save Scott, showed so little of the poet in general society; no man was more kindly and natural in his ways.

Edgar Allan Poe.

Edgar Poe, born in 1809 at Boston, was on the mother's side English, but in genius he was of no nationality. His parents, who were actors, died early, and he was adopted at the age of 2 by a gentleman of Virginia, Mr. Allan, with whom he passed five years in Europe (1815-1820). From the University of Virginia he passed, as poets are apt to do, in the disfavour of his dons, nor did he long abide at West Point, the military school, leaving in 1831 in very unfortunate circumstances. Like Shakespeare in the tradition he "was given to all manner of unluckiness," such as losing more money at cards than he could pay, which estranged his guardian. In 1827, at the age of 18, he had published the now almost indiscoverable volume of verse, "Tamerlane and Other Poems". He betook himself to journalism, writing verses, criticisms (whereby he made many enemies) and short stories. With his genius for these, whether tales of gruesome mystery, or of treasure-hunting, or of a marvellous detective, he would, in the America of to-day, have been rich, as authors count riches. But his pay was infinitesimal, and he lived in dire poverty, always longing for a magazine of his own; but his engagements as an editor were neither permanent nor lucrative. He was, in "The Gold Bug," the founder of all stories of hidden treasure, and all detective stories descend from "The Murders in the Rue Morgue". In composing "crawlers," as R. L. Stevenson called tales of horror, he had no rival. He always avoided the supernatural; his effects were mortuary, and he was too partial to premature burials. His style was that of an artist, clean and sober, in "The Gold Bug," but in such pieces as "The Fall of the House of Usher" he aimed at poetical effects in prose. The doors of the doomed mansion "threw slowly back their ponderous and ebony jaws". Poe appears to have had the wish to be a scholar; he may even, by many allusions to unfamiliar books, give the impression that his reading is very wide, but scholarship was inconsistent with his restless and poverty-stricken life. Yet something of the fastidiousness of the scholar possessed him, and made him a student of style, and a relentless reviewer of the many nobodies who formed the majority of his literary contemporaries. His poetry is the very reverse of "a criticism of life". His heroes, if in love at all, are constant to some *belle morte*, Annabel Lee or the Lost Lenore; and he has no hope of attaining to the love of his most beautiful poem,—

Helen, thy beauty is to me
Like those Nicèan barques of yore,

(where Nicèan seems to mean Phæacian). He combines the maximum of music in his verse with the minimum of human nature, of flesh and blood. His "Ulalume," with its recurrent and re-echoing double rhymes, trembles on the verge between pure nonsense and some realm beyond the bounds of known romanticism:—

Hard by the dim lake of Auber,
In the misty mid region of Weir.

Weir, we surmise, is not far from

the sunset land of Boshen,
In the midmost of the Ocean,

where dwelt the Yonghi Bonghi Bo.

The celebrated "Raven," probably by far his most popular poem, winged his way to Poe's study from the cliffs which frown on the dim lake of Auber. His fancy for ever dwells "out of space, out of time," where it has learned that mysterious music of his which can be parodied, but cannot be recaptured. He has heard the harping of Israfel, and follows it in "a mortal melody".

Thus, in "The Haunted Palace,"

Banners yellow, glorious, golden,
On its roof did float and flow,.
(This—all this—was in the olden
Times long ago.)
And every gentle air that dallied
In that sweet day,
Along the ramparts plumed and pallid
A winged odour went away.

Poe's versification was self-taught, and his verse, so small in volume and so original, was precisely adapted to the dreams of which his poetry is made. He wrote "There is no such thing as a long poem," meaning that no long poem can be uniformly exquisite. Yet he never attained to what is most entirely exquisite, apart from actuality, and dreamlike, Coleridge's "Kubla

Khan". As has been said of Gerard de Nerval, "his urgent spirit leads him over the limit of this earth, and far from human shores, his fancy haunts graveyards, or the fabled harbours of happy stars "; night is light to him, and daytime is darkness. Like Gerard's, his overword is

Où sont nos amoureuses?
Elles sont au tombeau!
Elles sont plus heureuses
Dans un séjour plus beau.

Perhaps because he is so non-American, so decidedly a citizen of no city, Poe has been more admired on the Continent, and translated into more languages than any poet of America. His works were admirably rendered into French by Charles Baudelaire, himself an adorer of

The love whom I shall never meet,
The land where I shall never be.

Poe died in 1849; legends of his life are many and negligible. He is a poet who has not much honour in his own country, or who, at least, has more honour in countries not his own. To call him a great poet is impossible, but he is a haunting poet. His prose stories were dismissed as "Hawthorne and delirium tremens" by a great English critic, but really his horrors are carefully designed and elaborated works, polished *ad unguem*; rather cold than frenzied,—witness "The Cask of Amontillado".

Critics, and many readers, have a passion for "classing" poets, as if they were in an examination. We cannot call Poe great, for poetry deals with life, with action, with passion, with duty, and with the whole of the great spectacle of Nature. To the Muse of Poe these things are indifferent; but to the singing of the dreams with which he dwells he brings such originality of tone and touch as is rare indeed in the poetry of any people. As a critic, too, he is a pioneer of the school of *l'art pour l'art*, of art for art's sake—a school distinctly decadent, and therefore in modern Europe he, rather than Aristotle, is hailed as a prince of critics.

Ralph Waldo Emerson.

Ralph Waldo Emerson (1803) was born at Boston of what the Autocrat of the Breakfast Table liked to call "the Brahmin caste"; that is the educated

clerical class, ministers from father to son. A similar class existed in Scotland after the Reformation.[2] Preaching was in the blood of these gentlemen of Boston. Emerson, after breaking away from Unitarianism in a singular sermon at Boston (1832), continued to preach, when he could find an audience, and then betook himself to lecturing, first on scientific subjects, and next on literature and things in general. In 1837 he delivered to the F B K Society at Harvard a lecture on "The American Scholar". He said: "Mr. President and Gentlemen, This confidence in the unsearched might of man belongs, by all motives, by all prophecy, by all preparation, to the American Scholar. We have listened too long to the courtly Muses of Europe". Indeed Ticknor, Longfellow, and Lowell successively held a Chair founded for the precise purpose of listening to the courtly Muses of mediaeval and modern Europe. But the American scholar, it seems, was to listen neither to them nor to Homer, Virgil, and Horace, nor even to Isaiah, who was much about an Asiatic Court. Walt Whitman must be the typical American scholar, from the point of view of Emerson.

The position of Emerson, as poet and essayist, is matter of controversy among the learned of his own country. In a poem styled "Nature," Emerson writes:—

> She is gamesome and good
> But of mutable mood,—
> No dreary repeater now and again,
> She will be all things to all men,
> She who is old but nowise feeble
> Pours her power into the people.

As to his prose, Prof. Barrett Wendell of Harvard writes: "The Essays are generally composed of materials which he collected for purposes of lecturing.... He would constantly make note of any idea which occurred to him; and when he wished to give a lecture he would huddle together as many of those notes as would fill the assigned time, trusting with all the calm assurance of his unfaltering individualism that the truth inherent in the separate memoranda would give them all together the unity implied in the fact of their common sincerity.... The fact that these essays were so often delivered as lectures should remind us of what they really are.... Emerson's essays, in short, prove to be an obvious development from the endless

sermons with which for generations his ancestors had regaled the New England fathers."

Professor Trent of Columbia University asks: "Shall we not follow Emerson's own lead, and call him frankly a great poet, basing the title on these and similar essays" ("Circles" and "The Oversoul") "and on the somewhat scanty but still important mass of his compositions in authentic poetic form"—of which a poor specimen has just been given. Some of Emerson's fellow-citizens, Professor Trent says, answer his question in the affirmative. Emerson, on the strength of his prose and verse, is "a great poet". "Others equally cultivated maintain that many of his poems are only versified versions of his essays, and declare that save in rare passages he is deficient in passion, in sensuousness, in simplicity ..." while Mr. Trent, speaking for himself, says that Emerson "is prone to jargon, to bathos, to lapses of taste". Mr. Matthew Arnold, and Charles Baudelaire, agreed with the second and less favourable party of American critics. Baudelaire's remarks were intemperate in style, but Mr. Trent thinks that, "it seems as if the time had come for Emerson's countrymen frankly to accept the verdict" of Matthew Arnold, that Emerson's prose "was not of sufficient merit to entitle him to be ranked as a great man of letters".

It does not become an alien to interfere in this unsettled controversy. In literary criticism of modern English poetry Emerson said that Pope "wrote poetry fit to put round frosted cake". Walter Scott "wrote a rhymed traveller's guide to Scotland," Wordsworth had the merit of being "conscientious," Byron was "passional," Tennyson "factitious".

It is, of course, impossible here to discuss Emerson as a philosopher. He is spoken of as an Idealist, but he seems to lean a little to Pragmatism. "The advantage of the ideal theory over the popular theory is this, that it presents the world in precisely that view which is most desirable to the mind." To whose mind? Emerson visited England twice; after the second tour he wrote "English Traits". Dickens had done, regrettably, the same sort of work in "American Notes," and "Martin Chuzzlewit". Authors on each side of the Atlantic took the advice of the elder Mr. Weller, and abused the countries and peoples that they visited, Emerson hitting the darker blots in our society. He had an influence, mainly over young men, in both countries, scarcely inferior to that of Carlyle; but left nothing so massive and concrete as Carlyle's "Frederick," "Cromwell," and "The French Revolution".

Having quoted from Professor Barrett Wendell passages which leave rather a mournful impression, we must add that, in his opinion, Emerson's work "surely seems alive with such unconditioned freedom of temper as makes great literature so inevitably lasting". Professor Trent, while confessing "that true poetic glow and flow are almost entirely absent from Emerson's verses, and that his ever-recurring and often faulty octosyllabic couplets soon become wearisome," declines to rank him with Tennyson, Shelley, or Longfellow, and ends: "But to Americans, at least, Emerson is an important poet, whose best work seems likely to gain rather than to lose value".

James Russell Lowell.

The poetic qualities of Whittier and of James Russell Lowell (1819-1891) are pleasantly indicated in Mr. Lowell's sonnet to Whittier on his seventy-fifth birthday.[3]

Here is deserved praise of Whittier's studies of Nature, and of his anti-slavery Tyrtæan verse, while the poet betrays his own affection for the sonorous, heroic song of early mediaeval France, "The Song of Roland".

The circumstances of Lowell's birth and career were as different as possible from those of the tuneful farm-boy. Lowell, like Holmes, Emerson, and so many others, was of the hereditarily cultivated class of New England, clergymen from generation to generation. He was born at his father's place, Elmwood, near Cambridge, was educated at Harvard, lived there, as Matthew Arnold said of himself at Balliol, "as if it had been a great country house," was sent down, for some frolic, to Concord, where he met the sage Emerson, "chaffed" that philosopher and Carlyle in rhymes, and displayed, generally, the gaiety of the undergraduate. Mr. Lowell, in fact, in manner and personal appearance, was, though an enthusiastic patriot, like anything but a "foreigner". He was called to the bar, but preferred literature to law, and wrote prose and verse for the magazines. In 1846 he began the first set of "The Biglow Papers," very lively studies in American politics as rurally understood by the Rev. Hosea Wilbur and Bird o' Freedom Sawin. In satiric and humorous poetry, in dialect, he was supreme from the first. In 1848, he produced "A Fable for Critics"; the idea may have been suggested by Suckling's rhymed and bantering criticism of contemporary minstrels, in his "Session of the Poets". The rhymes in "The Festival of the Poets" are more

than Hudibrastic; the measure is anapæstic. It is the work of a young man who is amusing himself in a crowd of scribblers, each claiming to be "the American Scott," "the American Dante," and so forth. Hawthorne finds a place and Cooper.

> Here's Cooper, who's written six volumes to show
> He's as good as a lord: well, let's grant that he's so;
> But he need take no pains to convince us he's not
> (As his enemies say) the American Scott.

Of Emerson

> His prose is grand verse, while his verse, the Lord knows,
> Is some of it pr—; no, it's not even prose.
> All admire, and yet scarcely six converts he's got,
> To I don't (nor they either) exactly know what.

As for Bryant, somebody

Calls B. the American Wordsworth; but Wordsworth
May be rated at more than your whole tuneful herd's worth,

cries this patriot.

Whittier's manliness is applauded,

> But his grammar's not always correct, nor his rhymes,
> And he's prone to repeat his own lyrics sometimes.

Concerning Poe,

> Three-fifths of him's genius and two-fifths sheer fudge,

which is perfectly true, but where, except in Poe and Hawthorne, was the man with even two-fifths of genius? That Theocritus, were he living, "would scarce change a line" in the hexameters of Longfellow's "Evangeline," is a criticism dictated by friendship. The mere name of "The Vision of Sir Launfal" suggests the influence of Tennyson. The verse, however, is not imitative; the moral is excellent, and "American children," we learn, have been set to studying "Sir Launfal" in annotated editions, perhaps a pathetic illustration of what may be called "the patriotic fallacy in matters connected with literature".[4]

In 1862-1863, the Civil War gave a motive for new "Biglow Papers," which were deservedly popular in England as well as in America. "The Commemoration Ode" has the same origin, in patriotism and resentment of the European attitude. This Ode is perhaps the seal of Mr. Lowell's diploma as a poet; the third and fifth sections, on the Harvard men who fell in battle, are swift, sonorous, and inspiring. When the poet exclaims, "Tell us not of Plantagenets," the critic can only murmur that he had no notion of telling of persons like Richard Cœur de Lion, "whose thin blood crawls". "'Tis with Lincoln, not with Richard, that the poem has to do," Bret Harte might have said. Indeed the Ode is too long. The ode "Under the Old Elm," practically an ode to Washington, is dignified, and of historic interest; perhaps no other poet has more worthily celebrated "that unblemished gentleman," the national hero; and the last section, addressed to Virginia, has a noble dying fall, like the close of the "Iliad". But not of popular appeal are such lines as these:—

> O for a drop of that Cornelian ink
> Which gave Agricola dateless length of days.

Here the Professor (who held Longfellow's chair at Harvard) interrupts the poet. The reference is to the brief biography by Tacitus of his father-in-law.

In 1877 Mr. Lowell went as American Minister to Spain, a country always of high attraction to American men of letters, historians, or poets. From 1880 to 1885 Mr. Lowell represented his country at the Court of St. James, and won the hearts of all who had the honour of his friendship. As a speaker on many occasions where literature and art were concerned he was without a rival; in conversation his humour, wit, vast knowledge of men and of books, and his simple spontaneous kindness, endeared him to all. With Shenstone his friends might say, "Quanto minus est cum reliquis versari, quam tui meminisse,"—"Memory of him is dearer than life with others".

Concerning the mass of Mr. Lowell's shorter poems, many of them occasional, it may, perhaps, be said that few of them stamp themselves on the memory by any strong individuality of thought and cadence, and that he did not take Keats's advice to Shelley, "load every rift with ore". In a favourite passage opening:—

> And what is so rare as a day in June?
> Then, if ever, come perfect days;

Then Heaven tries the earth if it be in tune,
And over it softly her warm ear lays.

the last line has a certain dissonance. His critical essays are of many various degrees of value. In his essay on "Swinburne's Tragedies" (1866, "Chastelard" and "Atalanta") he never seems to perceive the extraordinary and unprecedented merit of the lyrical measures, which are something better than "graceful, flowing, and generally simple in sentiment and phrase". In quite a different field the long essay on "Witchcraft" is rather antiquated, because we now know so much more about the psychology of the subject than was known when the essay was written. After philosophizing with Mr. E. B. Tylor on the origin of the belief in spirits, the critic honestly exclaims: "I am puzzled, I confess, to explain the appearance of the *first* ghost, especially among men who thought death to be the end-all here below". That *is* the puzzle, and Lucretius, who is quoted, could not solve it, nor had Mr. Lowell heard of "deferred telepathic impressions". This kind of topic allowed the author to bring in countless illustrations from his wide knowledge of all literatures, especially from the early mediaeval French, of which he was a votary before "Aucassin et Nicolete" and the heroic epics and sweet earliest lyrics were appreciated out of France. The essay on Rousseau contains the usual apologies which critics of English blood make for a man of genius whom at heart they do not like, while the criticism of Pope is true and just, but not specially original; and the paper on Milton (a review of a recent biography and edition) would be better if purged of comments on Professor Masson. The comments on Wordsworth are extremely amusing to non-Wordsworthians, for the Wordsworthian draws a decent veil over the poet's incredible treatment of "Helen of Kirkconnel".

And Bruce (as soon as he had slain
The Gordon), sailed away to Spain,
And fought with rage incessant,
Against the Moorish crescent,

using, no doubt, the javelin with which he had pinked Lochinvar. "In 'The Excursion' we are driven to the subterfuge of a French verdict of extenuating circumstances." It is not that Mr. Lowell judged Wordsworth by his feet of clay, but having once observed the absurdities of the bard of Rydal he did not know where to stop in treating a theme so diverting. To

Dunbar he was absolutely ruthless: "whoso is national enough to like thistles may browse there to his heart's content". "I would rather have written that half stanza of Longfellow's in 'The Wreck of the Hesperus,' of 'the billow that swept her crew like icicles from her deck' than all Gawain Douglas's tedious enumeration of meteorological phenomena put together." Mr. Lowell was not a Scot, and was an attached friend of Professor Longfellow, whose half stanza is not of ravishing merit. This raid across the Border is made in an essay on Spenser, wherein Nash is said "to have far better claims than Swift to be called the English Rabelais". This is extremely severe on Rabelais! The undying youth of Mr. Lowell as of Matthew Arnold, may bear the blame of such freaks as theirs in criticism. Shelley's letters are not really of more merit than his lyrics, nor, if we are to call any one an English Rabelais, is Nash more worthy of the compliment than the author of "Gulliver"!

Matthew Arnold.

Matthew Arnold (1822-1888) was the son of the Rev. Thomas Arnold, the famous Head Master of Rugby, and author of a History of Rome. At Rugby and Balliol he gained the prize-poems; he was a Fellow of Oriel, where he did not reside long, marrying and becoming an Inspector of Schools in 1851. Melancholy as much of his poetry seems, he was known to his friends as "Glorious Mat," and, in his own words, he and his brother Thomas lived in Balliol as in a large country house. He was a great walker in Wordsworth's country and a keen trout-fisher. His first verses, signed A, "The Strayed Reveller and Other Poems," appeared in a slim volume in 1849; they have nothing of the amateur, and possess a note of their own, though the influence of Wordsworth is discernible. "He is the man for me," Arnold might have said, as Boileau did of Molière. Arnold did not think Tennyson *un esprit puissant*; indeed Wordsworth was the last of our poets whom he greatly admired, though he placed Byron (for other than Wordsworth's qualities) on the same eminence; and preferred Shelley's letters to his lyrics. Such were what most amateurs think the freaks of Arnold as a critic.

Of the play, or masque, or whatever it should be called, "Empedocles on Etna," his taste later rejected all but a few glorious passages; but again he

relented, and admitted "Empedocles" within the canon of his works. He put forth a new volume of verse in 1855; "Merope," an imitation of the Greek tragedy, not of much merit, in 1858, and "New Poems" in 1867. The prefaces to "Empedocles" and "Merope" are good examples of his more sober style of criticism. Like his own Apollo he is "young but intolerably severe," and, like Milton, he freely used, as in "The Strayed Reveller," verse in short unrhymed measures. Though these are distasteful to some critics, others, in Arnold's and Milton's employment of them, find grace and harmony so delightful that they do not regret the absence of rhyme. Arnold's rhymed verse is in simple old-fashioned forms, in lyrics and in the beautiful stanzas of two of his most beautiful poems, where majesty and sweetness meet, "The Scholar Gipsy," and "Thyrsis," an elegy on A. H. Clough, the friend of his Oxford days.

Never has the scenery around Oxford been so nobly celebrated; he makes classical "the stripling Thames," "Bablock Hythe," "the warm green-muffled Cumnor hills," "the Fyfield tree," all the landscape through which Shelley wandered and left unsung. Thus Arnold has for Oxford men the same charm as Scott for Borderers; he is their own poet; and the pieces called "Switzerland" seem to recall a long vacation in the Alps. They are full of beauty in the descriptions of Nature and of Marguerite, a daughter of France, who seems to have inherited the charm of Manon Lescaut in the famous novel of the Abbé Prévost. For the rest, Arnold did not pen, or did not publish, sonnets to his mistress's eyebrow, and his lyrics reveal no more of his personality than his love of natural beauty, his delight in Nature, and a melancholy not unconnected with instability of religious belief; as in the flux and reflux of the sonorous lines in "Dover Beach," and "Yes, in the sea of life enisled". There are moments in youth (perhaps confined to Oxonians) when the grave charm of Arnold (as in the verses in the conclusion of "Sohrab and Rustum") seems the pearl highest of price in modern poetry. But in narrative, even in "Sohrab and Rustum" with its Homeric similes, still more in the narrative of "Tristram and Iseult," Arnold does not shine, and in "Merope" he certainly does not overstimulate. His "Forsaken Merman" is perhaps most admired by readers who are least delighted with the mass of his best poems, and least appreciative of "Requiescat," which is a worthy mate of the noblest "swallow flights of song" in the Greek Anthology, as hopeless and as beautiful as they. In his

genius there was something Greek; there was nothing of frenzy and false excitement.

Arnold's criticism cannot always be termed "unaffected," and his manner and tone varied with the nature of the subject which he was discussing. It must be admitted that he "was not always wholly serious," and his banter, his "educated insolence" as Aristotle says, was apt rather to provoke than to convert people who differed from him, as to education, politics, social problems, or literature. But he had an unsurpassed skill in provoking discussion, and the public, which for long did not read him, became acquainted with his name, and his views through the newspapers. It is said that a meeting of persons connected with the Income Tax complained to him that his returns of his literary gains did not correspond with his immense literary reputation. He then, with his habitual urbanity, catechized his catechizers. Had any one of them ever bought or read a book of his? Not one could answer in the affirmative; "So there, you see," he remarked.

His "Lectures on Translating Homer," delivered at Oxford when he was Professor of Poetry (1857-1867) are not only admirable expositions of Homeric art, and "the grand style," but rich in his peculiar vein of lofty irony and academic "chaff"—of a translator who did the "Iliad" into the metre of "Yankee Doodle". He advocated the use of English hexameters—which, indeed, would be excellent, if any one could write readable hexameters. His "Essays in Criticism" (1865) pleaded vainly for an Academy on the French model, for "ideas," and for culture, a term caught at and misapplied by feebler folk. His remarks on two unessential French writers illustrated his inability to appreciate the poetry as compared with the prose of France. He conceived, however, "of the whole group of civilized nations as being, for intellectual purposes, one great confederation... whose members have a due knowledge both of the past, out of which they all proceed, and of one another". He had the knowledge, though appreciation did not always accompany it, while the French, he complained, were almost wholly ignorant of his favourite Wordsworth. Yet, much as he rejoiced in Wordsworth's "criticism of life" (a favourite phrase), he admitted that, save in 1798-1808, the poet was devoid of inspiration, though "a great and powerful body of work remains," when the dross is cleared away. Generally, Arnold had a trick of taking a single line or two, perhaps of the worst, from a poet, using this inferior brick as a sample of the building, and

contrasting it with specimens superlatively excellent from poets whom he wanted to extol. Thus he contrasted Théophile Gautier with Wordsworth, taking Théo as an inn on the road, and Wordsworth as a home eternal in the heavens. But surely we may tarry at an inn on our way and enjoy ourselves, though perhaps only one human being has seriously exclaimed: "I place Théophile only after Shakespeare". In this case the trick of setting a verse from Gautier beside a verse from Wordsworth was not played. After the appreciation of Wordsworth it is curious to find Arnold speaking of Molière as "altogether a larger and more splendid luminary in the poetical heaven" than the Bard of Rydal, because the two authors are not in any way comparable with each other. The "high seriousness" in which Wordsworth is pre-eminent was indeed familiar to the comic author called "*le Contemplateur*," but the nature of his art did not permit him to hint at the existence of this quality, except in irony; while Lucretius, not, as in Wordsworth's case, Plato, was his favourite philosopher.

Arnold's eager curiosity led him into fields of which he had no first-hand knowledge, as in his delightful book on "The Study of Celtic Literature". We cannot assign all "natural magic" in poetry to the Celtic strain of blood in the population, and the peculiar wistfulness of old Gaelic and Welsh poetry may be found in Greek, Finnish, and even savage poetry. Though the book led others into much senseless writing, it is in itself full of revelations of beauty. Arnold was no Orientalist, and had no special knowledge of New Testament Greek, nor of the comparative study of religions. These defects, with surprising errors in taste, prevent his "St. Paul and Protestantism," "God and the Bible," and "Literature and Dogma" from reaching a high level in their way. But Arnold wrote beautiful prose, and wrote with that high sense of critical superiority which was his own, as it had been Dryden's. Both occasionally surprise, or even shock, by their idiosyncrasies, as do Dr. Johnson and Hazlitt; but they all delight and excite and instruct.

GENERAL WRITERS.

To the various and voluminous works of Mr. Ruskin, corresponding to every facet of his singular intellect and character, justice cannot possibly be done within our space. The son of a rich wine-merchant of Scottish extraction, he was born and bred among books and works of art, and, without attending any public school, entered Christ Church as a gentleman commoner. He won the Newdigate prize poem, and in 1843 published the

first volume of his "Modern Painters". His primary object was to assert the supremacy of Turner, which involved him in a comparative study of art, modern, mediaeval and classical, and of the intellectual, literary, social, and moral conditions of the societies in which the art, in each case, arose. He had also to observe Nature accurately, from the contour of the Alps to the development of the forms of trees, and, indeed, of "the meanest flower that blows". He drew excellently, and many of the copious and beautiful illustrations are from his own pencil. His own opinions, which, as he confessed, varied greatly at different times, were constantly exhibited, and he wrote in a style as highly pitched and coloured as that of De Quincey. The effect of the whole, at least on young readers, was immensely exciting and inspiriting, whatever the topic might be on which he expressed himself. His was the prose of a man who was almost a poet, but his verses proved to the world, as they must have done to himself, that formal poetry was not his forte. In art his affections were with *les primitifs*, the artists, holy and humble men of heart, before the Revival of learning, before Raphael; and he was actually fierce over Claude and Salvator Rosa. "The Seven Lamps of Architecture" (1849) and "The Stones of Venice" (1852) continued the teaching of "Modern Painters". In his "Academy Notes" his attitude was thus described by a painter in "Punch".

I sits and paints,
Hears no complaints,
    I sells before I'm dry;
Comes savage Ruskin,
Puts his tusk in—
    And nobody will buy.

Ruskin was extolling and defending the work of the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood, including Rossetti—whom he knew well, and bought from gladly—Millais, Holman Hunt, and others less celebrated, with whom were joined William Morris and Edward Burne-Jones. They went back to the art of the Middle Ages, often applying its minute study of detail to incidents in modern life. The value of Ruskin's theories of art is now, and has long been, disputed. Ruskin was not an "impressionist," and the libel action brought against him by Whistler, characteristically appealing to a British jury on a question of art, and receiving one farthing of damages, left the questions open to each impartial mind. Ruskin's socialistic theories, in "Unto This

Last" have had infinitely more permanent and wide-reaching results than his æsthetics. But, be these right or wrong, his early works are of the highest and most varied interest, both in matter and expression. There never was a man more rich in pity, and more open-handed, whether it was his pictures and other objects of art, or his money that he lavishly bestowed. In the sixties and later he produced many small books with pretty symbolical titles, dealing with all things from personal confessions to social problems: he was Slade Professor of Fine Art at Oxford, where his lectures were crowded, and his "Fors Clavigera," an autobiography in numbers, came out in parts. It contains many examples of his style at its best, that is, at its simplest. One glorious passage gives a great Turneresque picture of a scene viewed from a certain bridge over Ettrick, whence, in fact, to mortal eyes no such prospect is visible! In "Fors" Ruskin wrote with great sympathy and affection about Sir Walter Scott.

In his later years and writings, the contradictions of his complicated character, and the effects of over-work, and too keen a vision of "the sad pageant of men's miseries," began to affect his work with eccentricity; and he sought retirement near Coniston Lake with his friends, Mr. and Mrs. Severn.

> Of joy in widest commonalty spread,

of joy in art and Nature, he had made many thousands of people participators, for while others had written on art, none had done so with so much contagious enthusiasm, varied eloquence, and magnificent imagination. The rhythm of his style is almost as often invaded by blank verse, as in Dickens's case, and, according to R. L. Stevenson, an irruption of blank verse into prose is a symptom of great fatigue. In one short sentence of prose in Swinburne's essay on Lamb and Wither we read:—

> Behind him and beneath we see....
> The Hazlitts prattling at his heel,
> The Dyces labouring in his wake.

Two other Oxford critics, Walter Horatio Pater (1839-1894) and John Addington Symonds (1840-1893) are so recently silent that they cannot here be critically estimated. Both were devoted to literature and art, classical, modern, and of the Renaissance. Both had their peculiar styles, that of Symonds very animated, but somewhat Corinthian; that of Pater

remarkable for a kind of hieratic precision, and sedulous daintiness, and a vocabulary in which certain favourite terms occurred but too frequently. Symonds *sufflaminandus erat*; in his "History of the Renaissance in Italy" he is certainly unable to keep the stream of his learning and enthusiasm within its banks; while an impatient reader might demand a more rapid and less obviously self-conscious movement in the style of Pater. His first volume, "Studies in the History of the Renaissance" (1873), brought to young readers the same kind of pleasant surprise as "The Defence of Guenevere" or "Atalanta in Calydon". The essay on Coleridge, and the "little poem in prose" on the Monna Lisa of Leonardo, appeared to be new models of excellence. This book remains the most characteristic of the author, though he seems to have thought that his style verged perilously on that of poetry. He avoided this possible danger, without ceasing "still to be neat, still to be dressed," in his reflective novel of Roman life, "Marius the Epicurean" (1885), in which Marius is far from being an Epicurean in the vulgar sense of the word, but is rather the John Inglesant of the period. The book, like "Clarissa Harlowe," is not to be read so much for the story as for the delicate dreamy succession of the moods, and of the inclinations and half-beliefs of the hero, and for the pictures of the manners of the age. "Plato and Platonism" is a valuable study, and "Imaginary Portraits" shows more imagination in the designing of character than Marius. The reef which he and R. L. Stevenson did not always steer clear of was *préciosité*, over-anxious effort towards novelty and perfection of phrase.

[1] See "English Conspiracy and Dissent, 1660-1674," by Professor Wilbur C. Abbott, "American Historical Review," April, July, 1909.

[2] The Simpsons produced ministers in every generation from 1560 to 1730, when one of them fell into heresy.

[3] Vol. IV, p. 134, "To Whittier".

[4] Professor W. P. Trent.

CHAPTER XXXV.

LATE VICTORIAN POETS.

Edward FitzGerald.

Edward FitzGerald (1809-1883), a contemporary at Trinity College, Cambridge, of Thackeray and Tennyson, was in later life the friend of both. Though he vehemently admired Tennyson's poems up to 1842, he never was quite contented with them later; yet detested all the work of both of the Brownings, as if jealous of the supremacy of his friend. He was, indeed, a humorous person, and a person "of humours," in Ben Jonson's sense of the word. He was a great reader, a delicate and sound critic, where prejudice did not interfere; a most interesting letter-writer; and, for the rest, passed away his life with his books, his garden, his boat, and his pipe. Nothing of the little that he wrote, for example, translations from *Æ*schylus and Calderon, reached the public, nor for long did his very free version of quatrains in the Persian, attributed to Omar Khayyám, an astronomer. It is impossible here to discuss how many of these quatrains are really, by Omar, how many are masterless verses assigned to him by tradition, and how much of the merit of the "Rubáiyàt" is due to FitzGerald. But it is hardly too bold to say that but for the new music and melancholy of FitzGerald's verse, but for FitzGerald's own contribution of a sad and humorous stoicism under an Epicurean wash of colour, Omar and his company would never have been known to the general English reader. The slim pamphlet of the "Rubáiyàt" (1859) was "a drug in the market" till the set of Rossetti and Swinburne discovered it and talked about it. Then a wider circle of young University men made it an idol; to adore it was a sign of grace; and, in the

long run, to admire Omar and the old French tale of "Aucassin et Nicolete" became a substitute for a liberal education. It was no longer necessary to have read anything else. It was not FitzGerald's fault that the saying of the Alexandrian Philistine in Theocritus, "Homer is enough for all," became "Omar is enough for all". But, though idolised by the worst judges, FitzGerald's little masterpiece remains a very original and, in Wordsworth's phrase, "a very pretty piece of paganism". His letters are probably the best and most interesting of any letters much concerned with literature that have been published since those of Byron.

George Meredith.

As a poet, Meredith attained, when he chose (and he often did choose) to a pitch of obscurity no less deserving of admiration, and of interpretative commentaries, than the darkest verses of Browning. He did not begin in this manner; his early verses, such as "Juggling Jerry," "The Old Chartist," "Marian," "Love in the Valley," have the charm of being fresh, natural, and easily readable by him who runs; while, like most of Meredith's verses, they are the poetry of a lover of the Earth, with all that she bears and nourishes. Many poems read like hymns to Earth by an Earth-intoxicated pagan. But "Modern Love"—a long sequence of pieces of sixteen lines, which exceed the sonnet in length without possessing its answering and echoing rhymes—contains a story, and a sad story, of the pangs of two wedded lovers. What that story is, perhaps some commentator has told in prose; if not, the poet needs such a commentary. The preluding sonnet to "Modern Love" may contain the secret, it closes thus:—

> But listen in the thought; so may there come
> Conception of a newly added chord,
> Commanding space beyond where ear has home.
> In labour of the trouble at its fount,
> Leads Life to an intelligible Lord
> The rebel discords up the sacred Mount.

We "listen in the thought," but conception of a newly added chord does not readily arrive, not where ear has home at all events, and nothing leads us to an intelligible Lord, if that means an intelligible poet. Persons cultivated

enough to love English poetry more obscure than an "unseen" piece of Pindar, find much matter in verses like these.

The two lovers, married apparently, in "Modern Love," are "condemned to do the flitting of the bat," but, in the dark, we lose sight of them, and can only admire luminous breaks of two or three lines here and there, glow-worms in the darkness of the grass. The mystery of Byron's "Manfred," reckoned fine in its day, the new poet explains as "an after dinner's indigest". Byron, no doubt, could have said something not less witty about "The Nuptials of Attila".

Meredith's manner, in short, "is not of the centre". Great poets rarely conceal their meaning like hidden wealth; he who does so, values too cheaply the leisure of the reader, or values too highly the reader's industry and ingenuity.

Elizabeth Barrett Browning.

Elizabeth Barrett, later the wife of the poet Robert Browning, was born on 6 March, 1806 (died in 1861). Her father was a man of considerable wealth and eccentricity; at least he appears to have resented almost as much as Queen Elizabeth the idea of any one marrying. His daughter had a good education, some knowledge of Greek, and wrote verse early. In several of her most pleasing verses, such as "Little Ellie," and "Hector in the Garden," we hear echoes of the memories of her childhood. She translated from the Greek, and also wrote a kind of romantic ballads (not in the manner of the Border ballads) which had abundant life and movement. She took up the cause of children overworked in factories at an age when they should not have worked at all. Her health became deplorable, her life that of a valetudinarian, till, in 1846, Robert Browning married her and took her out of her father's sphere of influence. Thenceforth her health improved; at this time her fame and popularity as a poet of great variety and passion far exceeded those of the author of "Men and Women". Her sonnets, really original, though published as "From the Portuguese" were not so popular as her lyrics and romances, but her genius, somewhat too eager and careless, especially in her recklessness of correct rhymes, was in need of the formal restraints of the sonnet. Her "Casa Guidi Windows" (1851) and other poems displayed her enthusiasm for a free and united Italy; her "Aurora Leigh," a

tendenz novel in verse, attracted much attention, if it does not bear the test of time so well as her briefer poems; her "Poems before Congress" were of somewhat temporary interest. Mrs. Browning, with Miss Rossetti, holds the highest place among the women-poets of England, but her Muse is neither trimly girdled nor neatly shod; and her manner not infrequently does injustice to the pity and passion of her sympathies, conceptions, and emotions.

Christina Rossetti.

Christina Rossetti (1830-1894) as a poet resembled her brother as much as a woman who lived a somewhat fugitive and cloistered life, practising the rites of her religion and in the exercise of good works, could resemble an artist so unapt for self-control as Dante Rossetti. Both felt the same half-exotic influences of a family half-Italian; both shared the same early enthusiasm for mediaeval art, and there is a certain sameness in the colour and harmonies of their verse and in their use of words. In 1862 Miss Rossetti published, in brief, irregular rhymed lines, "Goblin Market," a tale of the affection of sisters dwelling in a rural England that marches with a country of fantastic malevolent elves, a species of fairy of her own invention. The whole effect is magical yet moral "which is strange," and the moral is not strained or didactic, but natural, and a great part of the charm of this delightful composition. "The Prince's Progress," in the same way, is suggested by the beautiful tale of "The Black Bull of Norroway," but the suggestion is remote and the bewitched Prince comes too late to his bride. The best lyrics of the author are singularly musical with an anticipation of some of Swinburne's effects, as in "Dreamland".

She left the rosy morn,
She left the fields of corn,
For twilight lone and lorn
    And water springs.

Through sleep as through a veil,
She sees the sky look pale,
And hears the nightingale
    That sadly sings.

"When I am dead, my dearest," is not less musical and melancholy. Many of the sacred poems have great sincerity as well as original beauty of form; and some of these, with some of the sonnets, half reveal the sorrow of a life and its religious consolations,—see the sequence of sonnets styled "Monna Innominata" and "Later Life". She is, indeed, a true poet of the inner life and of nature. To institute comparisons between her and Mrs. Browning is apt to cause injustice to either or to both.

Dante Gabriel Rossetti.

While Tennyson was in the mid-flush of his fame, there arose a school, in poetry and pictorial art, which, like him, turned to the Middle Ages for subjects and inspiration, but also reverted to the ideals of the great Italian painters who were before Raphael. The leader and the eldest of the little Brotherhood was Dante Gabriel Rossetti, son of Gabriel Rossetti, a devout interpreter of Dante, and of his wife, a Miss Polidori, a kinswoman of Byron's strange and ill-fated young Italian physician. Dante was born in 1828, from his earliest days wrote verses and drew, and, after passing through King's College School, became a student of art, and a painter whose colour was undoubtedly excellent, while his subjects were chosen from religion and romance; his portraits being in a high degree romantic, and his mannerisms tending towards the monotonous. They were the paintings of a poet; and his poetry is that of a painter. While some of his poetry, like "The Blessed Damozel," his most characteristic piece, appeared early in "The Oxford and Cambridge Magazine" (1856) and "The Germ," he published no book before 1861, when his translations from the early Italian poets gave evidence that, as a translator, he was unique and unapproached. Bizarre circumstances, connected with his grief for the death of his wife, delayed the appearance of his collected sonnets and other verses till 1870, when the work excited enthusiasm among all who desired some new thing in poetry; while certain mannerisms of slight importance spoiled the pleasure of others, and the choice of themes in two or three cases offended the precise. Indeed, the sonnet has no wide popular appeal, and the sequence styled "The House of Life," with its kind of mysticism proved nearly as puzzling, in another way, as the sonnets of Shakespeare. The pictorial and visionary beauty and the novel harmonies of the verse, could not but be admired. The ballads were too artificial for the ballad farm,

which is nothing if not simple, though the ballads also have Rossetti's special note and impress, his colour, passion, mystery, and romance. Rossetti, after many years, vexed by insomnia and by sleepy drugs, died in 1882. It is not easy to say whether he was fortunate or unfortunate in that the newness of his manner had been to some extent anticipated, through the delay of his own poems, by the not dissimilar newness of his sister Christina, and of Swinburne. Their works made some aspects of his manner seem not so new, and at the same time not so likely to deter by entire unfamiliarity of tone.

William Morris.

A younger associate of Rossetti was William Morris, educated at Marlborough and Exeter College, Oxford. His Muse was "pre-Raphaelite" and mediaeval in his early prose stories in "The Oxford and Cambridge Magazine" (1856), and his later fictions, in the same archaic and fantastic manner (there were seven of them between 1889 and 1898), never could wholly recapture the magic of "The Hollow Land" of his undergraduate days. It is even the author's opinion that Morris never, in his voluminous later poetry, reached the same level of original effect as in several poems in his "Defence of Guenevere," published when his age was 24, in 1858. This opinion can scarcely be the result of "ossification of the intellect," which seldom sets in when the critic is an undergraduate, and is eagerly expecting a new poem from a favourite author. That poem, "The Life and Death of Jason" (1867), was, to some devotees of "The Defence of Guenevere," a disappointment. The vigour and melancholy of "The Haystack in the Floods," and "Sir Peter Harpdon's End," and "The Sailing of the Sword," and the unanalysable magic of "The Blue Closet" and "The Wind," were not in "Jason," and could not be, and never will be anywhere again. In the earlier book the young poet had caught a rare element in mediaeval romance and song, a vague but poignant sense of colour and yearning and mystery, not to be defined in prose, and scarcely, except perhaps in "Sir Galahad," apprehended by Tennyson. We were carried again into such chambers as that wherein—

> Beside the bed there was a stone
> *Corpus Christi* written thereon;

or we were brought face to face with some forgotten tragedy of the Hundred Years' War, and saw the true lovers and the parting that they had beside the haystack in the floods, such dull grey floods in a dull green land as Shelley saw in fact, and recognized with terror that he had seen before—in vision.

The new poem, "Jason," retold, with an approach to Chaucer's manner in versification and in mediaeval tone, the immortal pre-Homeric story of the adventure of the Fleece of Gold. The poem, in rhymed decasyllabic couplets, with songs interspersed, should be compared with the ancient poems on the subject, especially with the "Argonautica" of Apollonius Rhodius. Morris had succeeded in telling of the love of Medea and the adventures of the heroes, in the tone of romance, with "abundant fluency, distinctness, and distinction". He had already in hand many of the tales in "that ocean of the sea of stories," "The Earthly Paradise" in four volumes (1868-1870). Of the twenty-four tales half are from classical, half from romantic sources. To some readers the opening, the adventure of English voyagers of the time of Edward III., who find the Earthly Paradise, is more congenial, the heroes being men of this world, than the languor which seems to hang over the personages in the tales of Lotusland. The tales are more like work in tapestry than in painting; the manner tends to monotony; we need a wind from the wings of the Muse of Homer. Morris called himself "the idle singer of an empty day". No man was more industrious, not only in his great poetic task, but in Icelandic studies,—hence the ringing anapæsts of his "Sigurd the Volsung"—in study of the arts of the Middle Ages; in manufacture and sale of objects of household decoration, and of furniture, in glass for church windows, and in printing. Coming into close touch with artisans and labourers, and being more and more impressed by the hideousness of their modern conditions of life, and by the contrasted mindless luxury of many of the rich, he founded a social democratic league, tersely described as meant "to blow the guts out of everybody". The beauty and happy æsthetic simplicity of the society which is to follow after this initial process he described in "News from Nowhere," and he chanted for the toilers in "Poems by the Way". Not for the people, perhaps, in fact for few, he produced translations of the Volsunga Saga, combining the fragments from Icelandic prose and poetry about that glorious tragic fable; and also rendered the Saga of "Grettir the Strong" and others, into an English of his own, with archaicisms of various ages blended. His verse translation of "Beowulf" is obscure, owing to his effort to find living words

in the form of their Anglo-Saxon equivalents. These things, and even the series of his tales, such as "The Story of the Glittering Plain," and "The Roots of the Mountains," are delightful to the few but "caviare to the general". In things æsthetic, literary, and revolutionary, the idle singer of an empty day has been a most active and enduring influence.[1]

It has been said of Morris that he is "the most Homeric" of English poets. Despite the excellence of his fighting scenes, as in "The Story of Sigurd the Volsung," and the interest in the details of the arts and crafts which he shares with Homer, he has neither the strength nor the simplicity nor the speed of the "Iliad" and "Odyssey," nor the delicate power in the drawing of character, nor the unconscious magic of the Achæan "Father of the Rest". Indeed no English poetry after "Beowulf" is, or in any way could be, Homeric.

Swinburne.

Algernon Charles Swinburne, of an old Northumbrian family, which, according to the poet's verses, had suffered in the cause of Mary Stuart and of the last Stuarts, was born in 1837, the eldest son of Admiral Swinburne and Lady Jane Ashburnham. He was educated at Eton, where, as he tells us, Charles Lamb led him to study the early dramatists. When he was aged 12 he composed a tragedy in imitation of Cyril Tourneur's works ("The Atheist's Tragedy," "The Revenger's Tragedy"), but exceeding greatly their average of rapes and murders. The choice of themes, and of the model, argues unsurpassed precocity—among other things. Many of Swinburne's lyrics

> Sang themselves to him in class time,
> When idle of hand as of tongue.

He went up to Balliol, where he took no part whatever in the sports and amusements of the College, and appears to have lived in the society of Mr. T. H. Green (later the critic of Hume, and exponent of Hegel), and of Mr. John Nichol, later Professor of English Literature in the University of Glasgow. Swinburne obtained the Taylor Scholarship in Modern Languages, open to the whole University, and like Shelley and Landor, but not for the same sort of reasons, left Oxford without entering the Final

Schools. He made the acquaintance at Oxford of Morris' Burne-Jones, and Dante Rossetti, who were painting on the ceiling of the Union the romantic pictures which instantly vanished away owing to some defect in the medium employed. Swinburne must already have had an extensive and peculiar knowledge of literature. In his last year as an undergraduate he began his play of "Chastelard," published in 1865, and he was contributing to "The Spectator" some of his poems including "Faustine". He must already have been the master of his rapid, ringing, and infinitely varied metres; his blank verse, taste, and manner were already themselves in his neglected volume of two plays, "The Queen Mother" (Catherine de Medici) and "Rosamund" (Fair Rosamund) (1860), and he had made an intimate study of the manners and absence of morals at the Court of the Valois. He had the cruelty to poison Chicot, who, in Dumas, survives immortally. In 1865 appeared "Atalanta in Calydon," a small quarto with a decorative white cloth binding. The poem at once swept every young reader off his feet by the wonderfully original and novel metres of the choruses, and by the remarkable beauty of the blank verse, which was entirely independent of the then reigning influence of Tennyson. Swinburne was indeed an "inventor of harmonies," and if his persons were not strictly Greek, the verdict of youth was that they were something much better! The action of the tragedy, the avenging by Althæa of her brothers on their slayer, her son, was more in the Germanic than the Greek taste, so here we had a "Revenger's Tragedy" wholly unlike that of Cyril Tourneur, and dignified by the beautiful figure of the maiden Atalanta.

It is probable that "Atalanta" remains Swinburne's masterpiece in poetry; but, owing to its classical character, it did not achieve the instantaneous popularity of his "Poems and Ballads" of 1866. Here was a nest of singing birds of every note, from the sonorous splendour of "The Triumph of Time," in a new stanza already employed in "Atalanta," to "The Garden of Proserpine" (in the measure, improved, of Keats's "Some drear-nighted December") and "The Hymn to Proserpine" with the surge and reflux of its anapæsts, and "Dolores" in a measure which Mr. Chivers, an American poet, had already used, with a poor ha'porth of sense to a monstrous deal of sound. Some of the subjects ("very curious and disgusting") and some of the sentiments (distinctly anticlerical, to state it mildly) were unfavourably criticized, not unnaturally, and the volume was transferred from Mr. Moxon, long the poets' publisher, to Messrs. Chatto & Windus.[2] But most

of Swinburne's readers, at Oxford at least, were quite-indifferent as to the nature of his opinions and sentiments, which were suspected to be, in Lamb's words, "only his fun". He was staunch to them, however, always, both in prose and poetry; indeed, whatever be the subject of his prose, he usually gets in hits at the clergy of all denominations, "The blood on the hands of the King, and the lie on the lips of the priest". He also attacks Carlyle, in and out of season, and is severe on a race of reptiles unnamed who haunt his imagination. Meanwhile his "Chastelard" had not the attraction of his lyrics. "Bothwell," the second in the trilogy of Queen Mary, was of excessive length, though the natural limit of a play is almost as much defined as that of a sonnet; and the last of the trilogy, "Mary Beaton" was rather too daring in contradiction of historic fact. Mistress Beaton was not in love with Chastelard any more than Queen Mary was. She did not vengefully pursue her mistress to Fotheringay, but married Ogilvy of Boyne, when Lady Jane Gordon (in love with Ogilvy) married the Earl of Bothwell, who was in love with her, never with the Queen.

In his poem of farewell to the Queen of Scots, Swinburne sang of her eyes as "blue," a curious error to make after so many years of study. "Songs before Sunrise" were often of great technical—beauty, abounding in the old political enthusiasms and aversions; while lovers of poetry almost wished, with all respect, that the applause of Victor Hugo could be "taken as read," with the panegyrics of babies, and the abuse of "Bonaparte the Bastard". The tragedy "Erechtheus" more closely conformed to the early Greek model than "Atalanta," but the subject was of inferior interest, and what FitzGerald, speaking of Tennyson's later poems, called "the old champagney flavour" was, in the choruses, less exhilarating. Narrative was not the poet's forte, he was too ebullient, and neither "Tristram" (in rhymed heroic couplets) nor "Balin and Balan" (in the stanza of"The Lady of Shalott") was on a level with the early triumphs. Three or four later volumes of verse were marked by the *tour de force* of using lines of extraordinary length; the skill never failed the poet, what failed more and more was the interest of his readers. The generation which first welcomed him had grown grey, it may be said, and cold to new poetry, but it did not appear that the new generation was warmer. In his delight in the sea, tempest, frost and fire, and all meteoric forces and elemental things, Swinburne resembled Shelley, but Shelley's music is more spontaneous and of a more natural charm than Swinburne's, who relied so much on "apt

alliteration's artful aid," and on double rhymes. His characters, in play and narrative poetry, do not dwell in the memory like the creations of great tragedians and narrators; they are rather sonorous than sympathetic, more "heroic" than human. Queen Mary and her Maries did not speak in Swinburne's tones, but like women of this world. "Before his fortieth year," Mr. Gosse informs us, "there had set in a curious ossification of Swinburne's intellect." But this appears merely to mean that he saw no merit in Ibsen, Stevenson, Dostoieffsky. As to Ibsen, it was not likely that he should see any merit; as to the others, most ageing men rather shun new novelists, there is nothing "curious" in that; while with his "hostility to Zola" it is easy to sympathise. The ossification left him as exuberant as ever in his old tastes, which included all that is best in the literature of the world, and as vehement in the old way on the old themes. But if, by forty, he "had done his do" in Cromwell's phrase, the phenomenon is usual among poets, "the *new* wine is best," with most of them, and perhaps none, save Scott, has ever been able to turn with success to an entirely fresh field.

As a critic, Swinburne had a transcendent knowledge of literature, and a power of appreciation only rivalled by Charles Lamb; but whether he loved or hated an author, his language was certainly too violent in praise or dispraise. His essay on Wordsworth and Byron, and incidentally on Matthew Arnold, contains many things that are true, and needed to be said, but their truth would not be less apparent if the critic did not speak in the tones of a demoniac, and write sentences longer, and less easily to be construed, than those of Clarendon. Of his prose works the "George Chapman," "Essays and Studies," "Note on Charlotte Brontë," "Study of Shakespeare," and "Miscellanies," may all be read with pleasure, instruction, and gratitude, though here and there with surprise and regret. The vehemence and turbulence appear almost incompatible with the possession of humour, of which, none the less, whether in Shakespeare, Scott, Dickens, or the Bab Ballads, Swinburne had a very keen appreciation. Humour was not conspicuous in his book of parodies, "Cap and Bells," and memory recalls no amusing comic relief in his tragedies. But he must have meant to-be amusing when he said that "in all things he desired to preserve the golden mean of scrupulous moderation". There is somewhat lacking to that remarkable genius of almost the last true English poet; we can but say "he was born to be so". As English in heart he was as

Shakespeare, but a patriot need not have insulted the enemies of his country, especially, in one instance, when they were Republicans.

One field in which he worked industriously has yet to be mentioned, his punctual and frequent celebration of the recently dead. Of his many elegies that on Charles Baudelaire is perhaps the best, but it attains not unto "Lycidas," "Adonais," and "Thyrsis".

Poetic Underwoods.

There was, in the age of the great poets of the early nineteenth century, a considerable growth of underwood. Among the more conspicuous plants are Thomas Campbell and Thomas Moore. Campbell (1777-1844) was born and bred at Glasgow. His first verses, "The Pleasures of Hope," in rhyming heroic couplets, appeared in a poetic dearth (1799) and were fair samples of a kind of poetry which was near its death. His "Gertrude of Wyoming" was pathetic (1809), few have even heard of his "Pilgrimage of Glencoe," and Campbell lives by short spirited things, "Hohenlinden," "Ye Mariners of England," "Of Nelson and the North," "Lochiel, Lochiel, Beware of the Day," and the longer piece which displays the resolution and fortitude of "The Last Man" in a very pleasing light. Campbell lived by ordinary writing, critical and editorial. He was a scrupulous, almost a timid corrector of his own verses. A draft for, one of his great naval songs, in the library at Abbotsford, is much longer and not nearly so good as the published version. Samuel Rogers (1763-1855) was a man of wealth, and the friend of men of letters, especially of Byron, through as many generations as Nestor reigned over. His "Italy" (1822) *se sauve sur les planches*, on the plates by Turner.

Thomas Moore (1779-1852) had greater intelligence, vivacity, agility, an endearing if trivial lyric note of his own, and plenty of witty banter. His songs were meant to be sung, and were sung to the accompaniment of the piano, or the Harp of Erin. He was born in Dublin, was barely 20 when he translated Anacreon, or the poems that were attributed to Anacreon, while his "Poems by Thomas Little" were more than Anacreontic. A duel with the editor of the "Edinburgh Review," Jeffrey, would have advertised him better if Byron had not spoken of the pistols as leadless; Byron and he, thereafter, became bosom friends (see Byron's Correspondence, in which he tells whom he has been kissing). As the biographer of the noble poet, Moore's

asterisks are not often successful in wrapping the facts in a mystery. By "Irish Melodies" (1807) Moore chiefly lives; "The Twopenny Postbag," being "topical" and dealing in Whig witticisms, cannot be popular with an age in which few have read "The Rovers," "The Loves of the Triangles," and the other classical drolleries of the "Anti-jacobin" (mainly by Ellis, Frere, and Canning). Not to have read these is to be deficient in liberal education. "Lalla Rookh," Oriental stories in verse, was welcomed almost as eagerly as Byron's "Giaour," "Lara," and similar romances of the land of the cypress and myrtle. The "Life of Byron" (1830) was also, though hampered by disputes and the burning of Byron's Memoirs, a great success, but neither then nor now can a complete view of Byron's life be given. Moore enjoyed his reputation and social opportunities in his own day, but the competition of the great contemporary and of later poets has injured his laurels.

Thomas Lovell Beddoes (1803-1849) was at the opposite pole from Moore as a man and a poet. Educated at Charterhouse and Pembroke, Oxford, he made poetry his main object in a lonely and dissatisfied life, always struggling with a chaotic tragedy in the most sombre Elizabethan manner, "Death's Jest Book, or the Fool's Tragedy". He could not satisfy himself with it; chaotic it remains, but it contains beautiful passages, and, among other admirable lyrics, he produced—

> If there were Dreams to sell,
> What would you buy?

His letters, though frequently morbid, are often interesting. He died abroad, dubiously sane. What is poetic in the mass of Beddoes's writings is true poetry.

It is not possible here to do more than mention Thomas Hood (1799-1845) whose abundant animal spirits and puns were, and if any one cares to look into his facetious works still are, highly entertaining. His "Plea of the Midsummer Fairies" is in a serious vein, and though it has much charm, it never was appreciated. "The Song of the Shirt" and "The Bridge of Sighs" made for him a name by their pathos, while his character, his fortitude, and irrepressible spirits, not to be subdued by hack-work and misfortune, made him an honour to his profession.

Winthrop Mackworth Praed (1802-1839, Eton and Cambridge) is remembered for his lively and adroit occasional verses, more than for his essay in the grotesque and terrible, "The Red Fisherman". Praed was certainly the foremost writer of *vers de société* of his day, though he was not a Gay or a Prior.

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[1] See his Life by Mr. Mackail and the admirable biographical "Introductions" by his daughter, Miss May Morris, to each volume of the new edition of his Collected Works. Longmans & Co.

[2] On the back of my copy of the original edition I found three superimposed paper tickets with three publishers' names, Pickering, Moxon, and Chatto & Windus.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

LATEST GEORGIAN AND VICTORIAN NOVELISTS.

Scott's example and success naturally attracted many writers towards the novel. Byron, Shelley, Mrs. Shelley, and Claire Clairmont, with Polidori, Byron's physician, all amused themselves with writing romances in the "truly horrid" style during a period of rainy weather on the Lake of Geneva. Byron's first chapters of a romance of a vampire, with the opening scene, in the desert near Ephesus, are admirable and tantalizing. Completed as heaven pleased by Polidori, the story was popular on the Continent, was made the theme of more than one opera, and was dramatized by Charles Nodier. Mrs. Shelley's "Frankenstein," highly praised by Scott, really is very satisfactorily horrid; her later novels are forgotten.

So far, and also in the three Scottish novels of Miss Susan Ferrier (1782-1854) there was no imitation of Scott, indeed her tale "Marriage" (1818) was published four years after "Waverley". This work, with "Inheritance," and "Destiny," contained humorous studies of Scottish character—of these Miss Pratt is the best remembered.

John Galt (1779-1839) was a man of affairs and a prolific general writer, an acquaintance of Byron. The best of his books, "The Annals of the Parish," is very good indeed: the old innocent minister records the humours and

sorrows of his flock from year to year, throughout the commercial "awakening of Scotland". Except for the fact that the book deals with Scottish life it is not an imitation of Sir Walter; nor is "The Provost," or "The Ayrshire Legatees," who travel south as Humphry Clinker travelled north of Tweed, and, like Humphry's company, narrate their adventures and record their reflections. Galt's best books are still well worth reading; they, not Scott's romances, are the ancestors of the modern "Kailyard School," as it was called in its day.

Beginning with an imitation of Scott, William Harrison Ainsworth (born 1805) became a literary man very young, published for the first time in "A Christmas Box," Scott's "Bonny Dundee," and, as editor, advertised himself colossally (he was a strikingly handsome person), and poured out historical novels, "The Tower," "Rookwood," "Jack Sheppard," and many others. He "crammed" for the historical details, of which he was too lavish, and, aided by Cruikshank's designs, attained a wide popularity, which has vanished. He continued to write almost till his death in 1882.

G. P. R. James (1799-1860) is only remembered for his famous two horsemen in his opening scenes; long before his death his vogue had passed.

His contemporary, Lord Beaconsfield (Benjamin Disraeli, 1804-1881), for a man so active in politics, wrote a great mass of fiction, from the "Vivian Grey" of his boyhood, to more mature works in which many of the characters were easily recognized by contemporaries. The political novels, such as "Coningsby" abound in satire, "Sybil" in reflections on society; all are full of a fantasy rather Oriental, and "Lothair," in 1870, was as personal in its allusions as "Coningsby". "Ixion" and "The Infernal Marriage" are brief apologues, full of mocking mirth; everywhere there is brilliance; but substance in the way of human character and of "convincing" narrative is rare. The author was amusing himself and his world between the innings of a greater game. Thackeray's burlesque "Codlingsby" may survive "Coningsby".

Perhaps Thackeray's "Phil Fogarty of the Fighting Onety Oneth," may also outlive its originals, the military novels of Charles Lever (1806-1872), tales of the camp, the march and the battle. Yet they lose great pleasure who neglect Major Monsoon, Micky Free, and Baby Blake, in Lever's "Charles

O'Malley"; the major is a jewel of a character. The early scenes at Trinity College, Dublin, and in the Galway of the old days of claret and pistols are admirable; and Lever knew many anecdotes of the Peninsular War to which he does full justice. He was in his early years a most spirited narrator, full of humour, with sometimes a cloud of melancholy crossing the landscape which dwells in the memory. No man could always maintain the high spirits of "Charles O'Malley" and "Harry Lorrequer," and Lever turned to tales of a more subdued and ordinary kind. One of them, "A Day's Ride: a Life's Romance," considerably lowered the circulation of Dickens's "All the Year Round". But it will be in a sad kind of world that "Charles O'Malley" will die.

Edward George Bulwer Lytton (1803-1873) was (perhaps after Robert Chambers, but far more conspicuously) the most versatile man of letters of his age. He entered Parliament very early, before the passing of the Reform Bill, and already he had impressed Scott by his novel "Pelham". Sir Walter wrote to Lockhart, curious about "Pelham" and its author. Lockhart, replied curtly that "Pelham is a puppy," and its author, like Disraeli, certainly aimed at being a dandy, and had a Byronic pose. Perhaps for this reason Thackeray regarded Lytton as a mass of affectations in thought and style, with his pretensions to classical learning and Neo-Platonic lore, and mysticism, and his affection for virtuous criminals as in "Eugene Aram". Thackeray's burlesque of Lytton, "George de Barnwell," was his favourite among his own works, and is a joy for ever with its sham history, sham classics, and sham sentiment. When Lytton, in a satire, attacked Tennyson as "Miss Alfred" the poet finished the fight in a single round. However, Lytton's novels continued to win admiration, whether they were historical romances (of these "The Last Days of Pompeii" is probably the best of all tales which introduce early Christians, and is still very readable) or whether they were stories of modern life. "Zanoni" has several times defeated the present writer; but "The Caxtons" is full of interest. There is no better romance of the supernormal than "A Strange Story"; and perhaps a kind of sketch for it, "The Haunted and the Haunters," is at least as good. The marvels, we may say, are "spread too thick," but Lytton manifestly had in his mind the well-authenticated story of Willington Mill. To the last Lytton kept changing his manner and working, with wonderful freshness, in new fields. He missed being in the first rank of novelists, and the bloom is very early off the rye of novelists who fall short of that rank.

Of Lockhart's novels, though he tried his hand four times (once in the unlucky early Christian period with "Valerius"), only one is read, "Adam Blair," a vigorous and gloomy study of the temptation and fall of a Scottish parish minister. Hogg's "Confessions of a Justified Sinner" is a most astonishing work, when once it gets under way, anticipating R. L. Stevenson's handling o the terrible in a lonely upland parish (see "Thrawn Janet"). But if the story is tardy in its earlier chapters, in the later, it rivals not only Stevenson but Hawthorne, yet few people can be induced to give it a trial.

Captain Frederick Marryat (1792-1848) is a novelist of the days of Nelson's fleet, and nothing is more surprising, nothing in the same field more distressing, than the neglect into which the nautical novels of the creator of "Peter Simple," "Mr. Midshipman Easy," "Masterman Ready" and "Snarley-yow" appear to have fallen. They are full of humour, high spirits, genuine adventures, and sound honest views of life and duty. Carlyle ungratefully called them "nonsense," but he read them when under the blow of the destruction of his manuscript of the French Revolution. They are the best sort of boys' books, but the inexplicable taste of boys leads them to prefer the works of Mr. Henty to those which their grandfathers read, the books of Scott, Dumas, Thackeray, Dickens, and Captain Marryat.

They were not so fond of Michael Scott's "Tom Cringle's Log," and "The Cruise of the Midge," but they did read and shudder over Mrs. Shelley's best novel, "Frankenstein". Of infinitely more merit than these novelists are the glories of the Victorian period, Dickens, Thackeray, and Charlotte Brontë.

Dickens.

"A star danced and under that was he born" might have been the astrological explanation of the genius of Charles Dickens (born at Portsmouth, 1812). Explorers of "heredity" can find no source of the humour and art of Dickens in his father (Mr. Micawber), a dockyard clerk whose fortunes were never so high as his buoyant hopes; and who was in prisons often for debt. As Mrs. Dickens, the mother, confessedly lent traits to Mrs. Nickleby, we need not look for genius on that side. Dickens's early literary education was mainly derived from some old books which he found

in a cupboard. There were "The Arabian Nights," for example, and Fielding's novels (he played at being Tom Jones, a child's Tom Jones, an innocent creature), stories of shipwrecks (he went about in fear of savages and determined to sell his life dearly), in fact there was plenty of good reading. He seems also to have had a nurse who told stories delightfully "frightening". We see many traits of his fantastic childish thoughts and dreams in the early Pip of "Great Expectations"; there are memories, too, in Little Dombey, and in the infancy of David Copperfield. He was, in short, born with an elfish imagination; always he retained the primitive habit of giving souls and characters to lifeless things. His power of minute observation was precocious, and he was a dreamer of day-dreams till the poverty, and negligence, of his family sent him to win his tiny wages and choose his own poor meals, in the service of a warehouse.

All this bitter part of his life made him a close observer of poverty; a schemer of expedients; a little man of a child. The improvement of his family's affairs gave him some rather irregular schooling; it was enough to teach him to draw inimitably well the various kinds of schoolboy, except the cruel bully, whom he would have found rampant and abominable at any public school. Like David Copperfield he learned shorthand, was a reporter in Parliament, and conceived a contempt for Parliamentary institutions. We all know how he felt when his first magazine article was published: in 1836 papers of his appeared as "Sketches by Boz," and in them his peculiar humour, not without debt to Theodore Hook and other well forgotten comic contemporaries, is already conspicuous.

In 1836 he was asked to write papers of the comic and sporting sort, for illustrations of the adventures of a club of citizens. "I thought of Mr. Pickwick," he says, and, though Mr. Pickwick did not often run, he ran away with Dickens's fancy as Dugald Dalgetty ran away with Scott's. The peripatetic Socrates of his younger companions, Messrs. Snodgrass, Winkle, find Tracy Tupman, Mr. Pickwick kept on improving as *vir pietate gravis*, chivalrous as Don Quixote, adventurous as he, benevolent, and innocent as a child, yet dignified, and to be trifled with by no man or cabman. We remember Mr. Pickwick's idea of an attitude of self-defence! The influence of Smollett is on Dickens as on Fanny Burney; "Pickwick" is a sequel of adventures of the road and of the inn, filled full of the highest animal-spirits, witness the adventure of The Lady with Yellow Curl-papers!

Some extraneous stories are placed in the middle of the tale, as by Fielding and Smollett: the book is not a novel, it is something better, it is "Pickwick"!

Already, like Fielding, and with more pertinacity, Dickens was attacking social abuses, imprisonment for debt, the Fleet Prison, the Law, as represented by Messrs. Dodson and Fogg and Mr. Justice Stareleigh. Accidental happy thoughts occurred to him, Mr. Samuel Weller for one, as the tale went on appearing in monthly numbers, and the author was never much ahead of the printer. This mode of publication is responsible for the length and diffuseness of many of the novels both of Dickens and Thackeray. The sheets had to be filled: compression and construction could not be attained; and, in later works, when Dickens did labour hard to construct a plot, we find it, often, as involuted and obscure as the plots of Congreve's comedies.

"Pickwick" was an overwhelming success; Dickens found himself famous and entangled in engagements to produce more concurrent fictions than even Scott could have kept up simultaneously. Yet his high animal spirits and glowing fancy poured themselves out in "Nicholas Nickleby," "Oliver Twist," "The Old Curiosity Shop," "Barnaby Rudge," and "Martin Chuzzlewit" (the American scenes are due to his experiences of the United States), between 1838 and 1843. Consider the immense variety, the humour, the crowd of eternally amusing characters; caricatures, if any one pleases, but the most laughable of caricatures. The Squeerses, the Crummleses, the Dodger, Mrs. Nickleby, Mr. Pecksniff, Bailey junior, Mrs. Gamp, Mr. Richard Swiveller, the Marchioness—he who loves them not knows them not! The melodramatic and pathetic characters and scenes are less universally admired; Ralph Nickleby, Monk, and Jonas Chuzzlewit rather try our belief, and all the world does not weep over Little Nell. To say, with R. L. Stevenson, that Dickens, in delineating Little Dombey, Tiny Tim, Little Nell, and Dora in "David Copperfield," "wallowed naked in the pathetic," is to offend many devout admirers. We can take Chaucer's counsel and "turn the other page".

In "David Copperfield" (1849-1850), with the charm of the infancy of David, the pain of his days in the warehouse, with Mr. and Mrs. Micawber, Spenlow and Jorkins, Peggotty, Mr. Dick, Betsy Trotwood, and the rest, Dickens reached, perhaps, the highest mark of his genius. In "Bleak House"

(1852-1853), despite the Jellybys, and Harold Skimpole, he was too much engaged in the work of reform, and trysted with too difficult a plot, to reach similar success. The plot of "Little Dorrit" (1855-1857) is not readily intelligible; the book was disappointing. In "A Tale of Two Cities" he won the votes of very many readers who do not care for his lighter works: In "Great Expectations" he was himself again, and the plot is the best that he ever constructed, his Pip, from childhood onwards, is a masterpiece; Mr. Wopsle, and Mr. Pumblechook are joys for ever; and Miss Havisham, though severely criticized, is not, perhaps, untrue to nature, or at least to the actual facts of the case on which Dickens worked.

Of "Our Mutual Friend," it must be confessed that the plot is difficult: in "Dombey and Son" (1846-1848) Dickens appears to have deserted his idea, on an important point, as Scott did in "St. Ronan's Well," in deference to the wishes of a friend, and the same change seems to have been made, for a similar reason, in the fortunes of Estella, in "Great Expectations".

In "Edwin Drood," written in the last year of Dickens's life, (1869-1870), when he was outworn by the feverish energy of his nature, and by the fatigues of travel and of giving readings in hospitable America, Dickens at least left an unsolved puzzle to his students. What *was* "the Mystery" of Edwin Drood? Did Jasper murder him, or fail to murder him? Some external and some internal evidence favours the idea that Jasper succeeded, but we have seen that Dickens was very capable of relenting at the last moment. In this novel, as in some of his short stories, Dickens shows that leaning to the "supernormal" which he usually kept well in hand; so much, indeed, that in his "Child's History of England," he treats Jeanne d'Arc as a conceited, hysterical little prig. Dickens had none of the qualities of a historian, and all the contempt of a Liberal of his day for the Middle Ages. He was not a man of much bookish knowledge: he was a unique genius presenting, as in a magic mirror, worlds that appeared to himself alone, but that all were rejoiced to see as he saw them.

He did not see the world of "Society" as others see it who live in it (he avoided it), but then what world did he see as other people do? Other worlds he beheld with more sympathy, indeed, but all things presented a kind of fantastic vividness in that enchanted crystal of his imagination. That some of his mannerisms are vexatious is not to be denied: that there are moments of want of balance, of excitement born of fatigue, of breaking into

unconscious blank verse, in the great mass of his work is too manifest in his letters we see the causes and occasions of these defects. But it is ill work, in so brief a sketch, to find faults in the productions of a genius so unique that it has, in our literature, no parallel, and can never be an example. Dickens had imitators, but he could not found a school: he was "the only Boz". His defects were perfectly visible to the critics of his own day, who did not spare them, but the world did not suffer its pleasure to be darkened by the spots on the sun. We flatter ourselves that Dickens is peculiarly English, and so he is in his idealization of punch and other creature comforts; yet he is remarkably popular, even in translations, among the French, and by the Poles he is, among our authors, the most admired.

Thackeray.

It has been the lot of Thackeray to be constantly pitted against Dickens, like Gray against Collins, and Browning against Tennyson. People have taken sides for one or another, as taste and fancy led, for they were contemporaries, they were novelists, humorists, satirists. But while Dickens, like the minstrel of Odysseus, was "self-taught," and was never a man of books, Thackeray (born at Calcutta in 1811) was educated at Charterhouse, and, with Tennyson, at Trinity College, Cambridge, where his career was not unlike that of his Arthur Pendennis, though he took no degree. To Thackeray, Charterhouse was what Christ's Hospital was to Lamb, a constant rather rueful memory; a memory, in Thackeray's case, of fagging, fights (in one he received an honourable scar), of idleness, story-telling, rhyming, caricaturing, and of the classics, stupidly taught. But, like Fielding, he did not forget his classics. His bent was to the art of design: many of his sketches, though often out of drawing, are very humorous; his Becky Sharp, carrying a coal scuttle, is the actual Becky, and Emmy, in the dance at Pumpernickel, wears the charming face that haunted his pencil. On leaving Cambridge he visited Germany and met Goethe: he lost his patrimony, partly to Mr. Deuceace, partly in the attempt to found a newspaper. In Paris, and in London, after an early marriage (1836), broken by a lifelong sorrow (Mrs. Thackeray survived him), he wrote for the press, continuing the vein of his scribbling in undergraduate papers like "The Snob," and of his comic prize poem, "Timbuctoo," with its dominant note "Africa for the Africans".

I see her sons the hill of glory mount
And sell their sugars on their own account.

His Parisian miscellanies in "The Paris Sketchbook" (1840) are of varied quality, but are all characteristic. He had found his style, with its harmonies, as in the essay on George Sand: and his British scorn of some French vagaries is offensive to many cosmopolitan minds. Unlike Dickens he is unpopular in France; he trod the soil with an air of remembering Agincourt and Waterloo. He wrote for "The Times," and in "Fraser," published the "Yellowplush Papers" of that great menial whose Christian names, Charles James, reveal the Stuart "mistry" in which his "ma" wrapped up his "buth". Jeames was a critic, much too personal, of Bulwer Lytton and Dionysius Lardner, that encyclopædist; and, as a momentary capitalist, as de la Pluche, is a satirist of the age of rapid railway-made fortunes. The simple humours of his spelling recall Smollett's Winifred Jenkins in "Humphry Clinker"; while Thackeray's Major Gahagan is a delightful Irish Captain Bobadil. "Catherine" was a burlesque on the heroes and heroines of novels of virtuous criminals, showing that knowledge of the eighteenth century which was Thackeray's favourite period ("Barry Lyndon," "Esmond," "The English Humorists," "Denis Duval," "The Four Georges").

Thackeray was much inclined to historical studies. "I like History, it is so gentlemanly," he said, but a man, not being a professor, cannot live by history alone, and he never finished, probably never began, his contemplated "Reign of Queen Anne".

Everywhere among his early essays and burlesques, his tenderness peeps out, his pathos, his love of children, and of goodness; and his haunting melancholy. These are especially conspicuous in "The Shabby Genteel Story," written at a time of great sorrow and struggle with poverty. "Barry Lyndon" was overlooked, despite its masterly ironic study of the vain-glorious Irish adventurer of the eighteenth century; its pictures, from the gambler's point of view, of Berlin under Frederick the Great, of the little German duchies, of the wild half-ruined Irish gentry; of the Chevalier de Balibari, so perfect as a Catholic, a disillusioned Jacobite, a gentleman, and a swindler. The later adventures of Barry are drawn from Robertson, and the Dowager Lady Strathmore, and their squalid romance. This book, among Thackeray's, corresponds to Fielding's "Jonathan Wild," though the irony is broken by the author's comments, which are deemed inartistic. There are

moments when Barry's blackguardism breaks down, and he yields to what some may call sentiment, and others, the soul of good in things evil. Nothing so great and nothing more unlike Dickens, had appeared since Fielding's day, but "Barry Lyndon" passed without a welcome.

"The Irish Sketchbook" (1843) was the best Irish sketchbook since that of Giraldus Cambrensis, but neither that, nor "From Cornhill to Cairo" (1846) "caught this great stupid public by the ears". "Mrs. Perkins's Ball" (1847), a Christmas trifle, contains the immortal figure of The Mulligan, to think of whom is to laugh as one writes. He was sketched from a well-known Irishman of the day. The little vignettes of other guests of Mrs. Perkins are worthy of Addison, down to the greengrocer butler.

In "Punch," Thackeray had been writing and drawing things good and things commonplace. His burlesques of novelists include "George de Barnwell" (Lytton) which he is said to have thought his masterpiece, and "Codlingsby" (Disraeli), which is hardly inferior; but Lever was annoyed by his "Phil Fogarty of the Fighting Onety Oneth". Thackeray is the classic parodist; his gift of imitation is as wonderful in the "Burlesques" as in "Esmond". Scott, who was privately on the side of Rebecca, in "Ivanhoe," and who had deliberately made Rowena "very English," would not have been vexed, like Lever, by Thackeray's "Rowena and Rebecca," wherein, on false news of Wilfrid's death, the English princess espouses Athelstane.

It was "The Book of Snobs," with its cruel satire of our British vice, that came home, when republished from "Punch," to men's bosoms. Thackeray avowed that *de me fabula*, that he was a snob himself: and, to some readers, it is matter for regret that he dwelt so long and so intensely on the mean admiration of things mean. He told Motley (1858) that he could not read "The Book of Snobs".

At last, in "Vanity Fair," which appeared, like Dickens's novels, in monthly parts (with yellow covers), Thackeray, after so many vain endeavours, "took this great stupid public by the ears". Here was another epic, like "Tom Jones," of English life, from the year preceding Waterloo: though the Marquis of Steyne was too closely studied from a contemporary wicked Marquis. From the first chapter, the scene of Becky with the Dictionary, to the end where (quite out of character, say Becky's admirers) she appears as a melodramatic Clytæmnestra, the author "never stoops his wing". Never,

surely, did man create, in a single novel, characters so many, so varied, so justly conceived, so immortal. Fielding has not a quarter of Thackeray's variousness, does not see so wide a vision of life. Think of them; all the Crawleys, the two Sir Pitts, Rawdon (*amo* Rawdon), Jim Crawley; Miss Crawley, the old patrician Whig and sceptic; the two Osbornes, the little boys, Osborne III. and little Rawdon; Mrs. O'Dowd; the spunging-house keeper; Mr. Wenham, Ensign Stubble, Lord Steyne, the Misses Pinkerton, Briggs, Waterloo Sedley, the Belgian courier, Glorvina, the Lady Bareacres, —the catalogue is endless. Dobbin is as good as that honest gentleman can be made: we can only say that Thackeray's good women are not at once as human and as angelic as Fielding's Sophia and Amelia. Emmy is not clever; Emmy can be jealous; a vice from which Mrs. Rawdon Crawley is nobly free. The nearest woman to Sophia in Thackeray is Theo in "The Virginians". But Sophia is a paragon.

Thackeray was now, by no fault of his, set up as the rival of Dickens, whose works he constantly praised, in season and out of season, in public and in private. But as every man is born an Aristotelian or a Platonist, a Whig or a Tory, so men are born to take one side or other about the Great Twin Brethren of English fiction, in place of admiring and enjoying both. Each has his masterpieces, Dickens with "Pickwick," "David Copperfield," and "Great Expectations"; Thackeray with "Vanity Fair," "Esmond," "The Newcomes," and "Pendennis". That admirable but lengthy picture of the life of school, of the University, literature, and Society, and of Mr. Henry Foker, bears traces, in discrepancies and fatigue, of a severe illness which affected the author's memory of part of the tale, as a malady swept from Scott's the whole of "The Bride of Lammermoor".

The noble *tour de force* of "Esmond" (1852) was, for the most part, dictated in disturbing conditions, which makes yet greater the marvel of its style of Queen Anne's date; not uniform, to be sure, not all antique (any more than Colonel Esmond's political views are all antique or uniform), but still, a kind of prodigy. Beatrix Esmond is indeed, as her lover said, a "paragon," and it is historically impossible that, in the end, she should have betrayed "the blameless king," King James III., whom Thackeray converted from a melancholy Quietist into a witty and profligate prince. There was no "Queen Oglethorpe". Scott never took *this* kind of liberty with an historical character, in fiction; and Thackeray rivalled Scott's other licences by

making the Duke of Hamilton an unmarried man. But nobody thinks of these things when "Esmond" admits him into the society of the Augustan age, and when Bolingbroke hiccups about Jonathan's readiness to command the fleet.

"The Newcomes" (1855) revived the public taste for Thackeray; the public did not, it is said, quite understand "Esmond". Like all novels published in parts throughout two years, "The Newcomes" is too long, and has its languors, but every one wept over the good Colonel, loathed the Campaigner, delighted in Fred Bayham, wished "to beat Barnes Newcome on the nose," was afraid of Lady Kew; sighed with Clive, was more or less in love with Ethel, and was anxious, vainly anxious, to see no more of Laura Pendennis: an angel perhaps, but a recording angel.

At Rome, in winter, 1853, Thackeray, to amuse some children, wrote "The Rose and the Ring," a classic of the nursery, of the schoolroom, and of the "grown up". He who writes was a child in 1855, and to him Bulbo, Hedzoff, King Valoroso, and the Countess Gruffanuff, with the usual contrasted heroines, Angelica and Rosalba, were not dearer then than they are now. Even then the equation was plain:—

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           {Angelica              Rosalba}
Fair and   {Becky                 Emmy    } Dark
and
false      {Blanche Amory         Laura   } true
and
           {Rowena                Rebecca}
tender.
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Thackeray's naughty women are "fair and false," his good women are "dark, and true, and tender".

The novelist's is a "dreadful trade". He has to raise ever new crops from soil more or less exhausted. Dickens had his "Dombey," his "Little Dorrit," his "Mutual Friend"; and Thackeray had his "Virginians," the grandsons of Colonel Esmond, with their kinswoman, Beatrix Esmond, fallen into an old age of cards, and rouge and powder. Beatrix, for her beauty's sake, should have been translated, like the fairest woman of the ancient world, Helen, to

the plain Elysian. We do not want to see her in old age, or to hear her last wild words, "Mesdames, Je suis la ——" *La Reine*, the Queen.

"The Virginians" is full of excellent things, wonderful studies of the later eighteenth century; and Harry is a deal, brave, stupid lad, and George is a sardonic, melancholy descendant of Colonel Esmond, and ancestor of "Stunner Warrington" in Pendennis; and Will Esmond and Chaplain Sampson are worthy of Fielding, but the author was tired; after "Vanity Fair" he was always tired, and the book has barren expanses and languors. "'The Virginians,'" he said to Motley, "is devilish stupid, but at the same time most admirable." Thackeray's health was worn out; as a change of work he founded, but soon wearied of editing, "The Cornhill Magazine"; was at his lowest level in "Lovel the Widower"; was so weary in "Philip" that he styled the hero "Clive" by inadvertence, though he endowed his clumsy Philip with one of his best women, Charlotte. He ventured into melodrama, which he liked, but could not write well; yet his "Roundabout Papers" show that he was, as an essayist, equal to his younger self.

His "Denis Duval" seemed to promise a return of his genius, but Christmas Day, 1863, was a black Christmas, for the author had died, suddenly and alone, in the night of Christmas Eve.

He had a great faculty of enjoyment, a generous heart sorely tried, a melancholy that was not causeless: immense kindness and love of the young, in short the character, in these respects, of Molière and of Charles Lamb. Let us confess that he was unjust to Becky Sharp and Beatrix Esmond. But he had a Shakespearean tenderness for his rogues, and having conceived the draconic design of hanging Colonel Altamont, he respited that bold adventurer. From boyhood he had his own originality of style.

> In the cultivated town of Highbury
> My father kept a circulating library,

are boyish lines of his, and we recognize him even there, beginning to be what he is in his "Book of Ballads," so various, so merry, so melancholy, so fresh as they are. Though the influences of the prose of Queen Anne and of Fielding helped to form his style, it is entirely his own; with the blended accents of his own humour and pathos, and harmonies before unheard; exquisite passages of verbal music.

The Brontë Sisters.

Concerning the Brontë sisters much, mainly personal, has been written, in proportion to the amount of their works. Their novels, especially those of Charlotte ("Jane Eyre," "Shirley," "Villette," "The Professor"), seem like the extraordinary and almost automatic products of their parentage and surroundings. The father, the Rev. Patrick Prunty or Brontë, was an Irish Protestant of County Down, who, after struggles with circumstances, was educated at St. John's College, Cambridge, and took holy orders. His Protestantism and politics were those of an Orangeman: his hero (who could have a better?) was the Duke of Wellington, and he was addicted to the composition of verse. His wife, a Cornish woman, was of feeble health, and died after giving birth to six children, two of whom, Maria and Elizabeth, died in early youth; the others were Charlotte (1816), Branwell (1817), Emily (1818), and Anne (1820). On the mother's death the father lived a sequestered studious life in a bleak parsonage on the Yorkshire moors, and the children were entirely devoted to drawing, reading books and magazines meant for their elders, to writing, day-dreaming, and to wandering from the grim rectory over the open moors. Their health was blighted by the conditions of the school called Lowood in "Jane Eyre"; their tempers were hardened and sharpened by poverty and the white slave's life of the governess, so much dreaded and so well understood by Miss Austen's Jane Fairfax in "Emma". The unhappy Branwell, in the end, haunted the rectory, an awful presence of intellect degraded, and while Emily wrapped herself up in a kind of Christian stoicism, Charlotte was left to the contrast between the dreams of her fiery genius, and the facts of her narrow life. In 1842 Charlotte and Emily became inmates of the school of Monsieur and Madame Heger at Brussels, which later afforded to Charlotte the scene and two characters in "Villette". In 1846 the three sisters published "Poems, by Currer, Ellis, and Acton Bell". Of this book two copies were sold, of the poems Emily's alone are still admired for their sombre energy and resolute spirit.

The sisters now wrote novels, Emily, "Wuthering Heights," Charlotte, "The Professor"; Anne, "Agnes Grey". In August, 1846, Charlotte began "Jane Eyre," which, when finished, came into the hands of Thackeray's publishers, Messrs. Smith & Elder, and filled them with amazement and enthusiasm. The book appeared in autumn, 1847, pleased Lockhart, then

editor of "The Quarterly Review," no less than it pleased Mr. Smith, and at once became the "daughter of debate," discussed everywhere, praised and reviled, and, in some unintelligible way, most reviled by "The Quarterly". The critic detected in the author an unregenerate, violent rebel against society, and a woman who was a dishonour to her sex! Certainly—

> A wounded human spirit turns
> Here on its bed of pain.

The unparalleled vigour and genius of the early scenes, the cruelties which the lonely child supports with unconquered spirit, were things new in fiction, while the repressed passion of the plain yet seductive governess during the wooing of the too Byronic Mr. Rochester, and in a house as terrible as the castle of Mrs. Radcliffe's "Sicilian Romance," excited a lively romantic interest, accompanied by a tendency to smile at an ignorant imagination. Borrowed romance combined with instinctive realism, bitter experience blended with the day-dreams of a life, a frankness long forgotten by early Victorian fiction, made the novel a strange and triumphantly successful combination. That mentor of young novelists, George Lewes, recommended to the author the study of Miss Austen, whose novels Charlotte Brontë was not happy enough (because she never had been happy) to appreciate. That she had no humour we cannot say, but she had none of the kindly humour of her great predecessor.

Meanwhile "Wuthering Heights," that strange and strenuous study of violent characters, was eclipsed by "Jane Eyre," though it has now come to its own, thanks to the appreciations of Mr. Matthew Arnold and Mr. Swinburne. The author did not live to find herself famous; Anne Brontë also died, leaving their sister in deeper solitude. Charlotte's "Shirley" (1849), with its caricatures of the local curates, caused the discovery of her authorship: the curates were forgiving, and the novel was welcomed. Miss Brontë visited London, a shy and tameless lioness, and met Thackeray, whom she had regarded as a Saul among the prophets, and discovered to be something rather different. Her shyness permitted her to rebuke him in good set terms, but blighted his guests. Her last novel, "Villette" (1852), with romantic situations, is a record of her personal experiences at Brussels; unfortunate for her hosts, and a cause of much gossip and personal discussion. The book is not destitute of the hungry bitterness which Matthew Arnold detected and disliked; and we ask how in the nature of

things it could be otherwise? Her experience had been narrow, atrocious, and on her experience and from her experience she always drew when she did not borrow from her day-dreams. In life she did not find the love of which she dreamed: in 1854 (she had rejected several other suitors) she married the Rev. Mr. Nicholls, her father's curate, and died in the following year. Her life, her character, and her books were one, and were unique. "This little Jeanne d'Arc," as Thackeray called her, this eager rebel and ardent Tory, broke into the placidity of the contemporary novel, and opened a pathway unto many, who had little or none of her genius.

The best estimate of the Brontës, clear of and contemptuous of trivialities and gossip, is in French, "Les Sœurs Brontë," by the Abbé Dimnet.

Nathaniel Hawthorne.

The end of all that Greeks and Trojans suffered for Helen's sake was "that there might be a song in the ears of men of after times". In the view of the interests of art (and in no other) the end of Puritanism in New England was to inspire the novels of Nathaniel Hawthorne (1804-1864). He was more certainly the classical author of American fiction than either Thackeray or Dickens is in England. They were prodigal of their genius, giving "as rich men give who care not for their gifts," or, if you please, as poor men when the printer's devil is at the door, even as did Sir Walter, who never thought about "art". But Hawthorne hoarded his inspirations, and when he used them gave them in the best form which was within his means. The inspiration was always moral, and usually bizarre. In his published note-books we see his method; he conceived some strange situations; over some of these he brooded till the characters disengaged themselves and lived before his eyes, and worked out their *wyrd* under stress of sin and remorse. He thought of the effect of a sudden homicidal act on a character gay, innocent, and faunlike, and we have Donatello in "The Marble Faun" (or "Transformation"). He thought of the amour of a Puritan preacher (like Lockhart in "Adam Blair") and the idea grew into "The Scarlet Letter". He thought of the beautiful poisonous girl (an old legend) and we have "Rappacini's Daughter". The Puritan sense of sin, and the old New England sorrows of the witchcraft trials, and the shadows of the woods, and the fear of the Indians, among whom Meikle John Gibb (a Covenanter who went too

far even for the Rev. Mr. Cargill) was a great medicine-man, dwelt in his imagination. He felt acutely, though not a man of religion, the horrors of the Genevan creed, which did not make the people who believed in it more unhappy than their Episcopalian neighbours. They were accustomed to the doctrines which horrified Hawthorne's contemporaries in America, and, like the Black Laird of Ormistoun, hanged for Darnley's murder, and richly deserving to be hanged for his daily misdeeds, they saw their way out of a doom of eternal fire which Hawthorne supposed them always to anticipate. Nervousness had not set in, the climate had not produced its effect on the sturdy Puritans of New England. By Hawthorne's time the climate had produced its effect, and he brooded blackly over what his ancestors should have felt—but did not feel. The Black Laird of Ormistoun had only to convince himself that he was of the Elect, as he did, and death, to him, meant, as he said, that he should sup that night in Paradise. Not understanding this buoyancy of temperament, Hawthorne dwelt on the horrors which he supposed his ancestors to have fed full of, and, in his stories, expressed his emotions in terms of imperishable art. Though he had no theological basis he remained a Puritan. He, to whom beauty was everything, talked of "the squeamish love of beauty". In Europe he is said (like an excellent Pope who had tin aprons made for the classic nude figures of Graeco-Roman sculpture) to have been horrified by the innocent nudities of ancient art. They had never seen anything so improper at Salem, Massachusetts, a decaying seaport where he was born, and lived for fourteen years after taking his degree at Bowdoin in 1825. Here he wrote short tales with little acceptance; and he did not till 1849-1854, publish his best known novels, "The Scarlet Letter," "The House of the Seven Gables," and (a result of a stay at a peaceful and purely amateur socialist settlement, Brook Farm) "The Blithedale Romance". His "Tanglewood Tales," from Greek myths (in which Hermes is called "Quicksilver") at first repel, for obvious reasons, but, in fact and on reflection, have much charm, and with Kingsley's "The Heroes" ought not to be neglected by parents and guardians, but rather "placed in the hands" of children. Though some amateurs may prefer "The House of the Seven Gables," haunted as it is by the blood which chokes the Justice, and a little enlivened by the dusty humour of Hepzibah, a decayed gentlewoman, and pervaded by the pretty charm of Phoebe, "The Scarlet Letter" is probably Hawthorne's masterpiece. It may be, and has been, denied by specialists that the hectic

and craven Rev. Mr. Dimmesdale could possibly have been the father of the elf-like child Pearl, but these are "oppositions of science, falsely so called". Hester's avenging husband may be, in conception, Dickenslike, but the treatment is far from suggesting Dickens, while the passion of Hester is a masterpiece of poetical fiction. Knots may be sought and found in any reed of fictitious narrative, but "The Scarlet Letter" remains, in its human characters and its dim lights, in its purposeful limitations, and hints at something unrevealed, a masterpiece of romance written under classical conditions. "The Marble Faun" (the plot and mystery were suggested by the murder, by a French duke, of his wife; Miriam is the British governess in that unholy affair) has noble moments and passages, and unconsciously reveals what his Note Books publicly avow, that Hawthorne was terribly ill at ease in Europe, and among monuments of classic and mediaeval art. He had some scruple about enjoying them—they were not at all American, and he was rather bitterly patriotic, one might almost say parochial, in certain moods. But he had lived for most of his life in Salem, Massachusetts; he had, for several years, been American consul at Liverpool; he was a genius of the most exquisite nature, and no more is needed to explain some acerbities and some misappreciations, while we can all sympathize with his criticisms of the adiposity of some British matrons.

Oliver Wendell Holmes.

What has been said about Longfellow may be whispered about Oliver Wendell Holmes, who was at once poet, essayist, and novelist. Both authors should be read first while the reader is young, and can enjoy their books with the freshness of an unsophisticated taste. This is not true of the very great things in literature, in these with advancing experience we ever find new merits, while in studying some early favourites we can scarcely recapture our original delight.

Holmes was born in the same year as Edgar Allan Poe (1809) at Cambridge in New England, where his father was "Orthodox minister of the First Church". This appears to mean that he was a Calvinist, while Harvard, where the son was educated, was devoted to the Unitarian creed, of which the Articles are, to the writer, unknown. Holmes accepted them. Medicine was his profession, he held for some time a Chair of Anatomy; in Boston,

where he lived for the greater part of his life, he practised for some time, but his productions in verse and prose gradually caused him to occupy himself mainly with letters. In 1831 he first produced part of his "Autocrat of the Breakfast Table," monologues with rare interruptions from the fellow guests of a *pension.* In 1857 he returned to this pleasant form of discursive essays, the other guests breaking in occasionally according to their ages and characters. Hitherto Holmes had been best known for "occasional verses," especially verses written for the Phi Beta Kappa Society of his University, and for college anniversaries. The "One Hoss Shay" is, in England, with "The Nautilus," the best known of these social feats. In his discursive essays he frequently breaks a lance with his old enemy, Calvinistic theology. This is not very exhilarating; at least to readers who never learned, or if they learned never attached any meaning to the Shorter Catechism. Holmes, who, to be sure, had a minister as his tutor, and Hawthorne, appear to have understood the doctrines, which were useful to Holmes as a butt, and to Hawthorne as a background in his novels, gloomy and alarming,—"The ghoul-haunted woodland of Weir". Naturally Holmes found the sciences to which he was bred very useful in supplying anecdotes and illustrations to his essays and romances. In "Elsie Venner," the heroine, on good Calvinistic principles, is of the seed of the Serpent, and inherits its nature, owing to some mishap of her mother with a rattlesnake. Whether this be scientifically conceivable or not, Elsie is, by inheritance, a perfectly original young woman in an ordinary environment of New England. We do not expect to meet Melusine so far from Lusignan. In "The Guardian Angel" the heroine has several complex personalities, derived from different ancestors, one of them a Red Indian. These devices are in Hawthorne's manner of fantastic invention, without Hawthorne's grasp and power, but the heroines are surrounded by characters more humorous and natural than Hawthorne's people, and the stories are extremely good reading, as are the discursive essays. There is abundance of knowledge of the world, of wit, of humour, and of kind good-humour. There is plenty of strange lore from old books of mystic medicine, and Holmes confessed to being "a little superstitious". Near the house of his boyhood there were "Devil's Footsteps" in a field, and a house from which a portion of the wall had been carried away "from within outward". The marks were associated with a story of a diabolical apparition at a Hell Fire Club, just as at Brasenose College, Oxford. The terrors of his childhood left their mark on his books. There was the faintest

touch of Cotton Mather in this foe of Cotton's creed, which, out of fashion or not, was the nurse of many virtues inherited by its tireless opponent. His enduring fame rests on his "Autocrat" and other essays. "No man in England," said Thackeray in 1858, "can write with his charming mixture of wit, pathos, and imagination."

Charles Kingsley.

Charles Kingsley (1819-1875) was a novelist "by way of by-work," and had intellect and energy which might have found for themselves other fields; born thirty years earlier he might have distinguished himself under Wellington or Nelson. But in piping times of peace, after living the life of an athlete, sportsman, and reading man at Magdalene, Cambridge, he took holy orders, as Colonel Gardiner might have done, had he been earlier converted. As Rector of Eversley in Hampshire, he was an energetic parish priest, and had opportunities of angling for those uneducated trout which he commemorates in his pleasant "Chalk Stream Studies," for he was a born naturalist and observer of nature. The agitation among the labouring classes in the times of the Chartists awakened him to social questions and "Christian Socialism"; but as the excitement of the populace lulled, his interest slackened. The fruits of it were the novels of "Yeast" and "Alton Locke" (1848, 1850) which well deserve to be read, and repay the reader. It is almost incredible that Cambridge crews, in Kingsley's day, rowed in the May week after wine-parties and much eating of ices; but the sympathy with "sweated" artisans and the delineation of rural scenes and sports, are fiery, forcible, and sincere, whatever the truth may be about Cambridge training at that distant date. In 1853 he produced "Hypatia," a romance of the pagan girl-philosopher, torn to pieces by the Christian mob of Alexandria. The advent of Goths who cut up these beasts is a welcome relief, but the Jew who attempts humorous philosophy is merely a proof of Kingsley's lack of humour and an example of his characteristically strenuous efforts to be humorous. The book is, indeed, a boy's book, and has something in it, Kingsley's preoccupation with sexual ethics, which is not so agreeable to reflective seniors. Somewhat of this, with an aggressive Protestantism, and the sin of "jocking wi' deeficulty," mar the otherwise delightful romance of "Westward Ho!" the adventures of Amyas Leigh on the Spanish Main and in tropical forests in the great days of Elizabethan

adventure. Kingsley hates and execrates the Spaniards. We have ourselves exterminated some savage peoples, and nearly exterminated others, and have no right to throw the first stone at the Spanish conquerors in America, odious beyond words as their dealings with Aztecs and Incas were; while the Privy Council, under Cecil, could give points in cruelty to the Spanish Inquisition of the day. But the boy who reads, or ought to read, "Westward Ho!" has none of these chilling reflections, nor had Kingsley. Taking the facts as Kingsley saw them, in the old English way, the novel is a superlatively excellent romance of English virtue and valour; and there is no doubt as to the valour and the adventurers had no doubts as to their own virtues. The whole is the work of a poet—for a poet Kingsley was,—and of a patriot, sympathizing with Drake's England in the crucial trial whence she emerged a victor. "Where are the galleons of Spain?"

"Two Years Ago," a novel of the Crimean War, must take its chances with the historical facts; and, in "Hereward the Wake," the bloodthirsty hero, despite the glory of his final fight, which rivals that of the brave Bussy or of Grettir the Strong in the Saga, in places awakes the smile even of the reflective schoolboy, to whom however, it may be recommended. "The Water Babies" is not always defective in humour, and would be excellent as a tale for children were it not for satire directed at the parents of the period. "The Heroes" initiate the young into the glories of the romance of Minyans and Minoans, and can only be spoken of by those who read it in early boyhood with entire gratitude and the remembrance of delight. Indeed, no one who has read Kingsley after the age of 16 is a fair critic of an author who, like R. L. Stevenson, was always at heart a boy; to appreciate him we must put away grown-up things; while, as to his verse, his songs and ballads, in "Andromeda" (1858), and even his hexameters, deserve immortality. He was not fitted for the Chair of History at Cambridge.

> Froude thinks that Kingsley's a divine,
> And Kingsley goes to Froude for history,

said the poet. His controversy with Cardinal Newman brought him into contact with a prettier fighter, and he did not come up to time against the author of the "Apologia". His essays, especially that on the Puritan aversion to the Caroline drama, are vigorous, and well worth reading.

The brother of Charles Kingsley, Henry (1830-1876) either wanted leisure or lacked care and constructive faculty, but in his earlier works he displayed high spirits, and kind humour, with a good deal of skill in drawing character, and an engaging reckless manner. His most careful book, "Geoffrey Hamlyn," though promising, is not so dear to its readers as "Ravenshoe," a delightful topsy-turvy romance. The children in Henry Kingsley's books are especially fascinating.

Here we may briefly advert to two writers who with remarkable originality of character and outlook as novelists appeal to but small but devoted audiences. Thomas Love Peacock (1785-1866) was an almost self-made classical scholar, and a friend of Shelley's. His contributions to Shelley's biography are those of a rather candid though intensely admiring friend. His novels, from the early "Headlong Hall" and "Melincourt," and "Nightmare Abbey," to "Gryll Grange," at the end of his career, are not so much romances as discursive and satirical studies of, and dialogues about, contemporary society, opinion, and taste. Some of the characters are drawn, in part, from real personages, for example, from Shelley himself. The wit which Shelley called so keen, occasionally yields place to somewhat florid burlesque. The interest of Peacock is partly that which we feel in his own character and satiric views of life; partly it is historical.

George Borrow (1803-1881), a Norfolk man, who in childhood had followed his father's regiment as Sterne had done, can be best estimated by a study of his "Lavengro," really a sort of autobiography. Here he paints himself as a genius in the study of many languages, a friend of gypsies and their fellow-wanderer; an expert in the art of boxing, and altogether as a character equally vigorous and eccentric, and a sturdy Low Churchman who hates Papists, snobs, and Sir Walter Scott. Whether on the moors with the Viper-catcher; or at horse-fairs with jockeys and thimble-riggers; or as the hack of a niggardly publisher; or fighting the Flaming Tinman under the eyes of the lovely but unconvincing Isopel Berners, Borrow is always the strong, wild, tameless heroic figure. As an agent for the Bible Society in Spain he was in a place which suited his genius, and his "The Bible in Spain" is at least as romantic as evangelical. "The Romany Rye" is of the same fantastically autobiographical form as "Lavengro"; brilliantly capricious and picturesque. Other books are "The Gypsies in Spain," and "Wild Wales". Borrow plumed himself much on his wide range of

philological learning, from Welsh to Manchu, but the strict modern science does not regard him as a very great scholar. There are dull stagnant places in his books, and there are passages aflame with genius.

Mrs. Oliphant (Mary Margaret Wilson (1828-1897)) was a woman of letters who heroically undertook incessant labour for the sake of others who were dependent on her pen. Consequently her gifts were diluted, and she must always be best known for the novels styled "The Chronicles of Carlingford," which are remarkable for their placid unstrained humour. More than once she displayed a very unusual power of dealing with the supernatural, especially in "A Beleaguered City," and "Old Lady Mary". In these pieces her manner is unique for tenderness and sympathy. In her historical biographies, as of Molière and Jeanne d'Arc, she suffered from want of strict training, and if she found a good thing of apocryphal source, inserted it on its literary merits. Her work on the publishing "House of Blackwood" is valuable to the student of literature and literary lives in the days of Wilson and Lockhart. Few who have written so much have written so well.

Wilkie Collins (1824-1889), a close associate of Dickens, was an assiduous professional novelist, who strenuously did his best and achieved two or three immense popular successes. His main strength lay in the construction of plots which powerfully excited curiosity, as in "The Woman in White," "No Name," and "The Moonstone"; the former was apparently suggested by the mystery of a French law suit, which dragged on from before the Revolution to the reign of Louis Philippe. The central puzzle, a question of identity, never was solved. Collins did his best to create characters, as well as to tell stories, but his humour was laboured (Captain Wragge is his chief success), and he shared with Dickens the mannerism of constantly dwelling on the tricks and hobbies of his people. For a long and warm appreciation of Collins, Mr. Swinburne's essay may be consulted. The work of his later years and overtasked fancy, such as "Poor Miss Finch" and "The Haunted Hotel," may be neglected; some of his short stories are good.

Popular novelists were Major Whyte-Melville, best in tales of sport and the affections, but ranging all fields from ancient Assyria to "The Queen's Maries"; George Lawrence, the author of that joy of boyhood, "Guy Livingstone," "Sword and Gown," and other tales military and sporting. He was the intellectual father of "Ouida" (Miss de la Ramée) with her

magnificent guardsmen, and innocent descriptions of racing and of field sports. She was for long very prolific and very popular, she lashed the vices of society, and was the constant friend of animals. Gorgeous is the epithet that may be applied to her style, and humour did not enter into her genius, which may be called "heroic" in the manner of the seventeenth century tragedies.

James Payn, on the other hand, had almost too much humour for the purposes of a novelist, accompanied by the most delightful high spirits. These would have interfered with the success of his novels, from "Lost Sir Massingberd" onwards, in which he provided the public with highly wrought melodramas,—the style of the serious characters being "heroic" in a high degree,—had the public perceived that he was laughing in his sleeve. But his domestic sentiment, and his spirited heroes and heroines, carried the serious reader on, while light-hearted readers were convulsed with laughter. His best novels proper are perhaps "By Proxy" and "Halves". He was one of the best and kindest of men, and most hospitable, as editor of "The Cornhill Magazine," to the work of younger authors, such as Mr. Stanley Weyman and R. L. Stevenson. The "John Inglesant" of Mr. Shorthouse, a dignified and thoughtful novel of the Great Rebellion, which had a resonant success, Mr. Payn declined when it came before him in manuscript; he also took no pleasure in the works of Æschylus.

George Meredith.

George Meredith, novelist and poet, was, in his literary fortunes, a somewhat mysterious power; a somewhat thwarted force. His early novels, the comic Oriental tale of "The Shaving of Shagpat," "The Ordeal of Richard Feverel," "Evan Harrington," "Rhoda Fleming," were full of humour, wit, pathos, the charm of Love's young dream; were peopled by delightful heroines, whose heroes were appropriate, brave, and not too staid. Rose Jocelyn, Lucy, the Countess, the dark Rhoda Fleming, the beautiful hapless Dahlia, certainly very young readers in those old days of the early' sixties were in love with them—thought the aphorisms of "The Pilgrim's Scrip" the acme of witty wisdom; rejoiced in Mrs. Berry as in the Nurse of Julia, delighted in the hypochondriac Hippy, and in Adrian, the Wise Young Man; nearly shed tears over Clare Doria Forey, who let

concealment, like the worm i' the bud, feed on her damask cheek; admired the Glorious Mel; laughed sympathetically over Algernon, the Young Fool, and his Derby day, and generally were a most favourable public. But the general public was unfavourable. Meredith's "Evan Harrington" nearly ruined "Once a Week,"—even aided by Charles Keene's designs it was a failure; and the editor had to call in Shirley Brooks, with "The Silver Cord," which no man remembereth, perhaps, except him who writes. Those early novels were not obscure, even to the reading boy; the wit was net too subtle and alembicated, or too profuse; the humour was English—beer and cricket were provided—there was pathos, comedy, character in abundance, but the novels did not appeal to that happy reading public which had still Thackeray and Dickens; and George Eliot for the thoughtful, and Miss Braddon, in the full flush of her early genius, for all who liked a plain tale well told, a humorous melodrama (such as "The Doctor's Wife"); or while Mrs. Henry Wood poured forth romances that deans and princes and everybody could appreciate. It is said to be a fact that Her Majesty Queen Victoria took pleasure in Mrs. Wood's novels; and it is quite certain that another lady, believed by many to be the great granddaughter of Charles III. (better known as Prince Charlie) shared the royal taste.

Possibly this competition caused Meredith's grace to be hid; possibly, curious as it may seem, he was best appreciated by readers in extreme youth. This is probably the truth, for, in much later years, the writer has seen quite unaffected young girls absorbed in "The Egoist" or "Diana of the Crossways," while he, after gallant efforts, was defeated by both in a very early round, tripped up on every page by the Leg of Sir Wilfrid, the Egoist. Too much seemed to be made of that limb. But with "The Egoist," which is doubtless a triumph in wit and knowledge of human nature (as such it was rapturously hailed by R. L. Stevenson), Meredith's fortunes turned. The enthusiasm of young critics at last communicated itself to the more cultured public, and to the public which wished to seem cultured, a lucrative circle. It was like the success of Mr. Browning, which came so many years after "Men and Women". People then turned back on Meredith's early novels, and discovered the manifold virtues which had been overlooked by contemporaries. They who had been boys in the 'sixties might think that by the 'eighties an over-excessive straining after wit and epigram, and a subtlety which was too near neighbour to obscurity, with a mannerism of style too precious and too easily imitable, had overtaken the Master. The

truth may be that age had dulled the wits of these critics; that they had lost wit and zest. To them the English prose of "One of Our Conquerors" seemed darkling and decadent, and in "The Amazing Marriage" the baby was the most astonishing element. Whether they were in the right or in the wrong, the admiration of Meredith, like the admiration of FitzGerald's "Omar Khayyám," had become, not only a "cult" (it had already, as in Omar's case, been a cult with the few), but a cult with mysteries open to what Coleridge did not love, "the reading public". Be it as it may, the Master came to his own, as a novelist who to wit, fancy, humour, and power of creating characters, added the still rarer qualities of a true though decidedly difficult poet.

Anthony Trollope.

"The pace is too good" in the world of novel-writing and of novel readers to inquire deeply into the characteristics of the genius of Anthony Trollope, who was born in the year of Waterloo, held a place in the Post Office, pursued the fox; knew much of many sides of life in London, and much of a cathedral town, but did not make a great impression on public taste till, in 1855, he began his series of tales of Barchester. The Bishop, Dr. Proudie, his termagant wife, his chaplain, his Archdeacon Grantley, with the loves and marriages of their children, and the ecclesiastical politics of the age, were the *farrago libelli.* Trollope had a good deal of humour, his heroines, Lily Dale and Lucy Robartes and the rest were, in various degrees, "nice girls," his political characters and Dukes were of their date; he was extremely fluent; and he stamped his own ideas of his art and of the true method of composition on his brief life of Thackeray.[1]

People who have read Trollope will probably bear witness that many of his characters live in memory, and are friendly inmates of her cell. This can scarcely be said of the characters of Lytton, for example, and in his power of creating characters Trollope comes before any novelist of his own rank, and of his now neglected age. It would be easy to write a long catalogue of Trollope's memorable people, mainly, but by no means solely, dwellers in Barchester. The Grantleys, the Proudies, Bertie Stanhope and his sister, "the last of the Neros," the Crawleys (not of Queen's Crawley) Adolphus Crosby, Johnny Eames, Amelia Roper, "Planty Pal" (so justly driven back to the

path of virtue by Griselda), Mr. Slope, these are only a few of his creations. With this creative gift, Trollope, though not refined, or "daring," or emancipated, or passionate, has a claim to be remembered; and the right readers will still find in his works abundance of entertainment.

George Eliot.

In 1857 "Blackwood's Magazine," always notable for discovering good new hands, began to publish "Scenes from Clerical Life," which at once attracted notice by their humour, tenderness, and quiet accomplished style. Were they by a man or a woman? Dickens voted that "George Eliot" was a woman; he was right. She was Miss Mary Ann Evans, born in Warwickshire in 1819. Familiar from childhood with the rural characters whom she drew so admirably (perhaps this art was her true *forte*, in other fields her humour was inconspicuous or absent), she went to London, associated with advanced philosophers, such as Mr. Herbert Spencer, changed her theological views and made her home with George Henry Lewes, author of a "Life of Goethe," and of a surprising "History of Philosophy". He was a married man, separated from his wife with no chance of a divorce, and he was the constant mentor of the new novelist, though his own essays in the art of fiction were absolute failures. In 1859 George Eliot made a very great success with "Adam Bede," which, to the merits of her "Scenes from Clerical Life", added a plot and a story of a not heartless seducer who fights and is knocked out of time by a hardy carpenter, his rival, the hero. The little victim, Hetty, is like a more heartless Effie Deans, and her crime, not committed by poor Effie, caused many sympathetic tears. The Jeanie Deans of the story is a female preacher, with considerable strength of character. "The Mill on the Floss," which followed, is excellent in the humorous parts, and the heroine, Maggie Tulliver, is delightful as a child, less interesting when she falls in love with a distasteful admirer. "Silas Marner," a much shorter is perhaps a still better tale, and marks the central period of the author's genius. In "Romola" (1863), a story of the Florentine Renaissance, the author was out of the environment which she knew, and was thought to be too moral and didactic. In "Middlemarch" her heroes were, to men, distasteful, and they preferred her pretty to her noble heroine, while Mr. Casaubon, of the "Key to All Mythologies," was held to be too closely studied from the life. "Daniel Deronda" was very long, and a kind of

scientific jargon had been taking the place of the old rustic humours. Moreover people felt that they were being preached at, and Mr. Swinburne, contrasting Charlotte Brontë with George Eliot, helped to turn the tide from worship of the living to adoration of the dead woman of genius. George Eliot (Mrs. Cross after Lewes's death, and her own marriage to Mr. Cross in 1880) wrote no more than a book of reflections, "The Opinions of Theophrastus Such". She died in 1880. "Culture," which had exaggerated her merits, began unjustly to disparage them. To understand the injustice it is only necessary to read her books written before "Romola". There has been no better novelist since the death of Dickens.

Robert Louis Stevenson.

To Robert Louis Stevenson (1850-1894) no one who found his works were sympathetic will deny the title of a man of genius. It is unnecessary to dwell on the details of his life; the essence of them is to be gathered from his own essays and from his published correspondence. From his earliest childhood his health was so unstable that he appeared to live on his astonishing intellectual and moral energy rather than on his physical basis. His education was casual and frequently interrupted by recurrent maladies; from childhood a dreamer of dreams and teller of tales, he educated himself, by study of great models mainly in old French and English, in the formation of style and the choice of words. His contributions to magazines, essays and short stories, revealed the last successor of the school of Lamb and Hazlitt, a scholar with a philosophy of life of his own, the philosophy of youth: see the Essays collected and published in "Virginibus Puerisque" (1881), and "Familiar Studies of Men and Books" (1882). At the same time such brief tales of his as "A Lodging for the Night," and "The Sire de Malétroit's Door," and "Thrawn Janet," in periodicals, proved him to be a master of romance, and a master with a thorough understanding of historical characters, surroundings, superstition, and the power of communicating the ancestral thrill of superstition. His interest in history was intense and sympathetic, and was even a danger in his path, as he would willingly have engaged himself in that unpopular study. But he was, as Johnson told Boswell that *he* was, "longer a boy than other people," and in 1878 he wrote for an obscure periodical "The New Arabian Nights," a fantasy of humour and of perilous adventure, "in a spirit of mockery" like his own "Young

Man with the Cream Tarts". In 1881, in a boy's paper, he wrote "Treasure Island," a story meant for boys, but delightful to a critic so little apt to notice his juniors as Mr. Matthew Arnold. "Prince Otto" (1885) is a Court romance of the eighteenth century, full of brilliant passages, but confessedly written and rewritten again and again under the influence of George Meredith. In 1886 "The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde," a fantasy not uninfluenced, perhaps, by Edgar Poe, but rich in his own philosophy, humour, and style, at last captured public attention, caused "a new shudder," and was rapturously welcomed, as a moral allegory, from the pulpits "of all denominations". The story, or at least the mechanism of the story, came, like "Kubla Khan," to the author in a dream. What is probably his best novel (without a woman in it), "Kidnapped" was suggested by his studies of Highland history after 1745. It was planned on a much larger scale, but now, as sometimes occurred, the pen simply dropped from the author's hand, in one of his many maladies. Such studies of Highland and Lowland character as he gave in "Kidnapped" (though the evil uncle is, in his own phrase, "too steep") are only equalled or excelled in those of Sir Walter Scott, while the pictures of Highland and Lowland life and society at a period (just after Culloden) untouched by Scott, are historically accurate. The same period is again viewed in that bitter study of almost insane fraternal hatred, "The Master of Ballantrae" (1889), supposed to be narrated by a loyal servitor who is also a constitutional coward. There is little relief in this romance except that which comes from one of Prince Charles's Irish officers, the inimitable Chevalier Bourke. In 1893 appeared "Catriona," the sequel to "Kidnapped," in which (for the first time except in the exotic "Prince Otto," and in a short story, "The Pavilion on the Links") Stevenson introduced "the love-interest," and drew an admirably chivalrous and amiable heroine, Catriona herself; with her even more attractive foil, the daring and dominating Barbara Grant. Alan Breck in this sequel is worthy of himself in "Kidnapped," and James More Macgregor is a masterly historical portrait.

"The Wrong Box" (1889) is a humorous fantasy somewhat in the manner of "The New Arabian Nights," with many scenes which provoke laughter unquenchable. "The Wrecker" (1892) is rich in reminiscences of the author's youth in Paris and of Fontainebleau, and the plot, up to a certain point, strongly excites curiosity, but, despite the brilliance of some oceanic adventures, the story is not well constructed, and is rather disappointing.

"The Ebb Tide" (1894) was spoken of by the author as "his blooming failure," for his colloquial style was not classical.[2] "St. Ives" (1897), left unfinished, and completed by Sir Arthur Quiller Couch, shows signs of fatigue, but the fragment of "Weir of Hermiston," in which his foot is on his native heath, gave all promise of a masterpiece in its many delineations of character. In all his work, in whatever kind, the charm of his style accompanied the reader like the murmur of a burn that runs by the wayside.

Of his verses, "A Child's Garden of Verses" (1885) is the most like himself: a few of his serious poems in English have noble effects, but perhaps the best of his poems in the Lowland vernacular are to be preferred. His plays, written in collaboration with Mr. W. E. Henley, were too literary, or for some other reason were unsuccessful on the stage ("Deacon Brodie," "Beau Austin," "Admiral Guinea").

When we consider the great variety of Stevenson's works, their wide range, their tenderness, their sympathy, their mastery of terror and pity, their gloom and their gaiety; when we remember that his sympathy and knowledge are as conspicuous in his tales of the brown natives of the Pacific ("The Beach of Falesa") as of Highlanders and Lowlanders, and the French of the fifteenth century; we can have little doubt concerning his place in literature.

Minor Novelists.

Among other novelists not hitherto named, the author of Charlotte Brontë's biography, Mrs. Gaskell (*née* Stevenson) was born at Chelsea, but lived and married in Manchester, and in 1848 rendered the life of a manufacturing population, with their strikes and grimy lives, then a new theme for fiction, in her story of "Mary Barton" (1848). Her "Cranford" (1853), in a very different field, pictures the placid existence of maiden ladies in a quiet village. Her "Sylvia's Lovers," "North and South," and her delightful (unfinished) "Wives and Daughters" (1866) (the author died in 1865), all deservedly hold their place among the classics of our fiction.

With them "a little clan" would place novels unjustly forgotten, "The School for Fathers," by Talbot Gwynne, and "The Initials," by the Baroness Tautphœus.

Charles Reade (1814-1884) was a very prominent and emphatic character of his age, a kind of Lawrence Boythorn, engaged in fiction and the drama. He was a Fellow of Magdalen, Oxford, a barrister who did not practise, a philanthropist, some of whose novels had a purpose, a combatant whose lance was ever in rest, and as kind and generous as he was pugnacious. For a thoroughly appreciative study of Reade a characteristic essay by Mr. Swinburne should be read. His "Never too Late to Mend," a study, very painful, of the torture of prisoners in jails, and a much more pleasant picture of adventurous life in Australia (Jacky, the black fellow, is a jewel), was most successful (1856), and some reckon "The Cloister and the Hearth," a moving romance of latest mediaeval life in Germany and Italy, a masterpiece of historical fiction. The tone is perhaps too modern and certainly too "robustious". "Peg Woffington" (1852) is perhaps really better as a historical tale. "Griffith Gaunt" and "A Terrible Temptation," with "Foul Play" and "The Wandering Heir" (the claimant in the great Annesley case of 1743) have but few to praise them, and the last mentioned is too manifestly made up of the materials in the never-decided law case; itself stranger than fiction, but destitute of a single sympathetic character.

Space affords room for no more than a grateful mention of Mr. William Black, whose pictures of Scottish characters, sport, and landscape gave much pleasure to his contemporaries; and of Sir Walter Besant whose gift of humour in character and incident was combined, on occasion, with a singular power of fantasy, while his "Dorothy Forster," a tale of the Rising of 1715, is probably the best historical romance of that period after "Rob Roy".

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[1] "English Men of Letters Series."

[2] In these three books Mr. Stevenson's stepson, Mr. Lloyd Osbourne, collaborated.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

HISTORIANS.

After the appearance of the works of Hume and Robertson, History became, as we have heard Gibbon say, the most popular theme with the reading public. His own monumental work gave new impetus to historical study. Sharon Turner (1768-1847) devoted himself mainly to Anglo-Saxon researches. Sir Francis Palgrave (1788-1861) distinguished himself by research into the institutions and events of England and of English history from the Conquest to the days of the Plantagenets. Dr. Lingard, a Catholic priest (1771-1851), produced a general history of the country up to 1688, which perhaps has not yet been superseded by any book of similar scope, and which is the more valuable as indicating the aspect of events in the eyes of a Catholic. Necessarily the works of these authors lack much information, contained in manuscripts not then accessible to them, but now opened to students by the better arrangement and cataloguing of State Papers. The historians of the end of the eighteenth and the first thirty or forty years of the nineteenth century, were not so heavily laden with documents as historical writers of to-day, and they had leisure enough to assimilate their less ponderous materials and to arrange them with more of reflection and of art than is now common.

The historian who wears best is decidedly Henry Hallam (1777-1859). The son of a Canon of Windsor, he was educated at Eton and Christ Church. He entered the Middle Temple, but obtained a fairly lucrative post in the Civil Service, had property of his own, and devoted himself, in his leisure, to literary and historical study. His "View of the State of Europe during the Middle Ages" holds its ground, despite the absence of materials now made common coin by Stubbs, Maitland, and others. Considering the immensity of the ground which Hallam surveys, his accuracy is remarkable (for example he corrects, all in vain, an important if minute error of detail which still infests the latest works on Jeanne d'Arc), and, though he is compelled to be concise, we see in his pages, for instance on Charlemagne, that he can combine spirit and interest with brevity. The same praise must be given to his "Constitutional History of England" (Henry VII.—George II.). It is commonly said that an impartial historian cannot be interesting. On the other hand, Hallam's conscientious efforts to be impartial lend much interest to his books. He has no flights of impetuous rhetoric; he is the last man to let his imagination transfigure prosaic facts into glittering fancies. We see an honourable, learned, and sober-minded man, who sums up life like a judge and does not plead like an advocate. "Eulogy and invective may be

had for the asking. But for cold rigid justice, the one weight and the one measure, we know not where else to look," says Macaulay in his review of Hallam's book, a review even unusually rich in the unmeasured invective of the more popular historian. If we think Hallam "dull," the dullness is in ourselves. Hallam has not the current delusion that the Protestant reformers, from 1550 to 1688, were friends of freedom of conscience.

His last important book "An Introduction to the Literature of Europe" (fifteenth to seventeenth centuries) is very deficient in taste for the early works of *les primitifs*: "we cannot place the 'Iliad' on a level with the Jerusalem of Tasso," in some essential respects. On the other hand, Hallam speaks thus of Christopher North (Professor Wilson): "A living writer of the most ardent and enthusiastic genius, whose eloquence is as the rush of mighty waters," with more to the same effect. Spenser's stanza "is particularly inconvenient and languid in narration". Hallam has, in fact, very little space for inspiriting literary criticism, on account of the vast scope of his theme. He has to treat of Scioppius, his "Infamia Famiani," and of Ubbo Emmius, of Grævius and Spanheim, Camerarius and Grew. The encyclopædic nature of Hallam's task made it impossible for him to avoid aridity, and to mingle much pleasure with instruction. He is otherwise associated with poetry, as his son Arthur was the friend of Tennyson, and dying early, inspired the long elegy of "In Memoriam," and the beautiful lines on "The Valley of Cauteretz".

Thomas Babington Macaulay.

Thomas Babington Macaulay, born at Rothley Temple in Leicestershire, on 25 October, 1800, is an ideal representative of one mood of the English mind and character during the first half of the nineteenth century. Though the Mac in his patronymic be Gaelic, he and his forefathers had little in them of the typical Celt. The name Macaulay means MacOlaf (Olafson) and the Norseman rather than the Celt predominated in Macaulay. His great grandfather, the Rev. Aulay, and his grandfather the Rev. John, are reported by Bishop Forbes (in "The Lyon in Mourning") to have been personally and peculiarly active in attempting to gain the prize of £30,000 offered by the English Government for Prince Charles. Their enterprise did not suit the Celtic character. Macaulay's father, Zachary, was a deeply religious man, a

member of the so-called "Clapham Sect" of Evangelicals. Though he was at one time prosperous in business, so much of his time and energy were given to negro emancipation that misfortunes came, and Macaulay had to work hard for his livelihood.

There are no more delightful chapters in Biography than those in which Sir George Trevelyan describes Macaulay's childhood. His intelligence was precocious; his memory was a marvel. At the age of 9 he read once through "The Lay of the Last Minstrel," and was able to repeat the whole of the poem. This exceeds even Scott's feat of repeating the whole of a ballad of eighty verses which he had heard read once by the author. Macaulay's memory lasted throughout his life, and gave him, naturally, that amazing readiness and richness in literary and historical allusions which have made his Essays and History popular beyond rivalry. No doubt like Scott he relied on memory too confidently; styling Claverhouse, for example, "James Graham". He read with a rapidity inconceivable; and he read everything, from Plato, Herodotus, and Æschylus to the worst novels, forgetting nothing in them that was accidentally good or exquisitely absurd. Even in childhood he was a copious and accomplished writer, his "Family Epic on Olaf, King and Saint," presents a remarkably successful imitation of Scott's style in "The Lady of the Lake". With these intellectual gifts he combined intense affection, good humour, and a turn for loud and vehement argument. Going from a private school to Trinity College, Cambridge, Macaulay regretted that he had not chosen Oxford; for mathematics were his abomination. He twice gained, as Tennyson did once, the Chancellor's medal for a prize poem, but in the Tripos of 1822 "Macaulay of Trinity was gulfed," by "the cross-grained Muses of the cube and square". They did not prevent him from obtaining a Fellowship at Trinity. He won a prize essay on William III., which is written in the very cadences of style that mark his History; and, at intervals, in the same short sentences. "He knew where to pause. He outraged no national prejudice. He abolished no ancient form. He altered no venerable name." Possibly it is a pity that these sentences do not describe William's conduct in Scottish affairs.

His early pieces, Macaulay contributed to "Knight's Quarterly Magazine". At the age of 25 he wrote in "The Edinburgh Review," that essay on poetry in general and on Milton as poet, man, and politician in particular, which took the world as suddenly and as completely as Byron's "Childe Harold"

had done. "The family breakfast-table was covered with cards of invitation to dinner from every quarter of London." To readers who in our day read the essay this enthusiasm seems creditable to the world, but rather surprising. Of Æschylus, Macaulay wrote: "considered as plays, his works are absurd; considered as choruses, they are above all praise". Milton's admiration of Euripides reminds him of "Titania kissing the long ears of Bottom".

Grateful as every reader is to Macaulay for the vivid and lucid expression of his knowledge and thought in his essays, we must admit that, like Charles Lamb, he was a man of "imperfect sympathies". Miss Edgeworth, delighted to find her own name in a footnote to his "History of England," expressed to him her regret that Scott, who had written with entire impartiality about Macaulay's period, was not once mentioned. In truth, after reading Lockhart's "Life of Scott," with its magnificent and melancholy close in the "Journal" of a man working himself to death for honour's sake, Macaulay wrote thus of Sir Walter: "In politics a bitter and unscrupulous partisan; profuse and ostentatious in expense; agitated by the hopes and fears of a gambler,... sacrificing the perfection of his compositions to his eagerness for money... in order to satisfy wants which were produced by his extravagant waste or rapacious speculations; this is the way in which he appears to me". Scott was a Tory: and from Macaulay's remarks we understand the justice of his studies of historical characters.

The rapacious speculator, in fact, had shown "extravagant waste" in publishing books (not his own) of disinterested research; when he was ruined he gave away his work, because he had not money to give; the "bitter and unscrupulous partisan" as a historian of his country was more than scrupulously fair. Of Brougham's essays Macaulay wrote: "All the characters are either too black or too fair. The passions of the writer do not suffer him even to maintain the decent appearance of impartiality." These are the very charges brought against Macaulay's own "characters" of William Penn the Quaker, and Claverhouse the Cavalier; while no historian, perhaps, can defend his account of Sir Elijah Impey. Had a Stuart King behaved as William III. did in the matter of the Darien enterprise, we can easily imagine the style in which Macaulay would have "dusted the varlet's jacket". But with lapse of time his bias, his prejudices, can be discounted. As early as 1828 he wrote "a perfect historian must possess an imagination

sufficiently powerful to make his narrative affecting and picturesque". That power of imagination he possessed and exercised so delightfully that his History was at once purchased more eagerly than a poem or romance. Both as a collector of materials and as a traveller to the scenes of which he was to write, Macaulay toiled with his own unexampled energy and rapidity. It is well worth while to read his account of his own methods both in study and in composition.[1]

It is not the good fortune of most historians to possess even Macaulay's private means, the savings of five years passed in India as legal member of the Indian Council. Nor can his practical knowledge of politics and of the world be often found among students, while his natural gifts of imagination and of expression are almost unexampled. His intellect had the limits of his class, his age, and his robust and hasty temperament.

His poems, "The Lays of Ancient Rome," have been as popular as his prose. He tried at 40 to write such ballads as he conceived the folk-songs of republican Rome to have been, and nobody can deny that the "Lays" have abundance of spirit and "go". The ballad of the Armada, and of "The Last Buccaneer" possess the same virtues and will always be dear to young people of spirit. Arrived at the age of 50, Macaulay wrote, in the very words of the dying Hazlitt, "Well, I have had a happy life!" It was extended to 1859, he died on 28 December, leaving a name justly honourable and a cherished memory.

Thomas Carlyle.

Carlyle (1795-1881), with Burns, Knox, and Scott, is the chief representative in letters of "the good and the not so good" (in his own words applied to Sir Walter) of the Scottish character. Unlike the other three, Carlyle was "thrawn," a word not easily translated, but implying a certain twist, or perversion, towards the whole nature of things. The apostle of silence was the most voluble of mortals; the peasant stoic felt the pain of the pea beneath a heap of mattresses as keenly as the delicate princess of the fairy tale.

Carlyle was first of all a Scottish humorist; that peculiar humour of which Southrons deny the existence underlay the fateful gloom of the philosopher

and historian who beheld his country "shooting Niagara," who saw that society was rotten and doomed, and who found no remedy except in the arrival of a Cromwell or a Frederick. He "praised the keen unscrupulous force" of such heroes: though he did not use the term "superman," he believed in the idea. It is quite certain that he had great tenderness and friendliness; his affection for Lockhart, so unlike him superficially (though Lockhart, too, was tender, melancholy, and "thrawn") is really touching. Carlyle had "our Scottish kindness," in Knox's phrase, that is attachment to kin and clan. Even in his dourest moods of personal invective his bark was worse than his bite, but there was a great deal of bark. The conclusion of the whole matter in the long dispute as to the relations of Carlyle and Mrs. Carlyle is that, with a deep mutual affection, theirs was a life of cat and dog.

Born in 1795 at Ecclefechan in Dumfriesshire, Carlyle was the son of a stone mason, though his genealogy traces him back behind the Conquest to the Carlyle Lords of Torthorwald. Educated at the Grammar School of Annan, and the University of Edinburgh, Carlyle was for some years a dominie, much at odds with himself and the universe. He found guidance in Goethe and other Germans; wrote in "Fraser's Magazine," and elsewhere, essays often historical; in London met Coleridge and Lamb, who was in one of his wildest moods; wrote a "Life of Schiller" in the style of a man of this world; married in 1826, and for six years was brooding, grumbling, studying, writing, and "making himself," in the bitter solitude of his wife's little lairdship, Craigenputtock. Here he produced, in his own characteristic manner, "Sartor Resartus," a disguised autobiography, a humorous and mournful version of his own struggles to find bottom in a universe apparently bottomless. That most things are shams, and that shams are doomed, was Carlyle's message. The fate of shams was illustrated in the fiery pages of his "French Revolution," written after he went to his life-long home in Cheyne Walk, Chelsea, where it could not be said that, as in Kilmeny's fairy-land, "the cock never crew". When, despite cocks and other disturbances, Carlyle, with heroic efforts of study, had finished the first volume, John Stuart Mill lent it to a lady, and it was never seen again. Her cook may have been a Betty Barnes. Carlyle returned to his task, and in 1837 the book astonished the world. It had all the colour of romance, and despite the discoveries of recent research, it seems substantially accurate in detail.

"Heroes and Hero-Worship," and the "Past (mediaeval) and Present," preluded to his very laborious "Letters and Speeches of Oliver Cromwell" (1845). With many a groan over the confusion of his materials, and with many a shout of applause to the orator of the speeches, Carlyle set Oliver in the light of day, interpreting the studied ambiguities of such speeches of the hero as he makes to the puzzled Wildrake in "Woodstock". Sir Walter's Cromwell is probably as correct a portrait of the Protector as Carlyle's, and Carlyle's must be compared with the less enthusiastic study by Mr. S. R. Gardiner. Carlyle took conscientious pains with the military part of his history, visiting the battlefields, and becoming epic in the fiery spirit of his description of the defeat of his countrymen at Dunbar. A chart-picture of the battle evaded his research, and his account is not absolutely correct. After another prophetic cry of doom in "Latter Day Pamphlets" (1850) Carlyle plunged for many years into the labour of studying "Frederick the Great". The toil outwore his force, and it may be complained that he did not focus his subject. Yet none of his books is of greater interest, and he is the prophet of the modern greatness of Germany. We see how *fortis Etruria crevit*; through discipline, patriotism, self-sacrifice, "enduring hardness," and obedient to her greatest men. No other than Carlyle could have told the story with so much alluring animation; his military history, too, is most conscientiously studied. His native gift of observing and divining, and describing (in his own words on a singularly private scene, witnessed by him) "with perhaps some humorous exaggeration," found ample scope in his work on Frederick, as well as in his "French Revolution". No doubt he overdid the trick of reiterating traits in Dickens's manner;—for a truly candid censure of his style an essay by his obliged friend, Leigh Hunt, may be consulted (see remarks on Leigh Hunt).

Occasionally, as in his essays on "Cagliostro" and "The Diamond Necklace," Carlyle's freedom of style, and his attacks on his authorities, are somewhat infuriating; the reader wants to be told a plain tale without these excursions, exclamations, and imaginations. Carlyle regarded imagination as one of the wings of history, and perhaps encouraged the too freely imaginative narrations of his friend Froude.

To him, unhappily, he bequeathed the autobiographical papers of himself and his wife, which Froude handled, to the best of his power, as he understood that Carlyle had desired that they should be treated. There

followed outcries from the more ferocious admirers of Carlyle, though Froude had done his best to obey his master! That he could not be absolutely accurate is certain; but disloyal he never was. There is no doubt that Carlyle, irritable, absorbed in his work, and taking his wife's exemplary care of him for granted, was "gey ill to live wi'," while "she had a tongue with a tang". These facts have produced a jungle of deplorable writings; but of Carlyle's genuine goodness and kindness no one who saw him could reasonably doubt.

The style of Carlyle was unique, unimaginable except by himself, the worst of models for others, and exquisitely fitted to embody his own idiosyncrasies—in short, it is, in prose, not wholly unlike that of Browning in many of his poems. To address the world in this voice, when he was almost unknown, demanded a courage and confidence in which Carlyle was not deficient. One is occasionally reminded of the methods, illegitimate but effective, of the author of "Tristram Shandy," and, again, of Rabelais.

James Anthony Froude.

In one way, as a historian, Froude (1818-1894) may be called the pupil, as he was the devoted friend, of Carlyle. That sage worshipped force in men, and Froude, failing a Cromwell or a Frederick, made a hero of Henry VIII., "that blot of blood and grease on the pages of English history," as Dickens called the king who found "the gospel light in Boleyn's eyes". It is not from Carlyle that a young historian can learn the unpopular grace of impartiality. To read Froude you would suppose that the Protestant party in the sixteenth century were innocent of the blood shed by political assassins; whereas the godly slayers of Beaton, Riccio, and the Duc de Guise, like Elizabeth when she bade Paulet murder Mary Stuart, were precisely on a level with the would-be murderers of Elizabeth; and Henry VIII. was burning martyrs of all shades in England, while the Beatons were doing the same thing to heretics in Scotland. Henry was perhaps even more treacherous than he was lustful and cruel, but it is in the original sources, not in Froude's History, that you discover the fact.

However, impartial history is notoriously dull, whereas that of Froude is so entertaining that to take up a volume is to go on reading, fascinated by his charm, and delighted by a style remote as the poles from Carlyle's. It is as

simple as Swift's, admirably lucid, excelling in the gift of narrative, without imitable peculiarities, and as entirely spontaneous as if the author were writing an ordinary letter.

Froude, with his brother Richard, was at Oxford when Newman was the great influence among the junior Fellows (Exeter was Froude's College), and Froude went so far with the Movement as to work at the Lives of some early English Saints. But the innocent legends of their miracles were too much for his belief, despite the excellent evidence for some of those of St. Thomas of Canterbury. His scepticism extended, and his short anti-religious novel, "The Nemesis of Faith" (1849), is said to have been thrown into the fire by a don of his own college.

He turned to History—that of England from the reign of Henry VIII. to the defeat of the Armada, and he resolutely attacked the great masses of Spanish contemporary manuscripts at Simancas. It was a knightly deed, when we think of the handwriting of the period, and the sometimes inextricably bad grammar of the writers. Different modern historians, in one case, give diverse translations of one crucial passage, and it seems that all of them are wrong. But Froude committed many errors which were not perceived by his furious assailant, Freeman (who did not know where to have him), but are conspicuous when we compare his work with his authorities. He is quite untrustworthy; he has taken fragments from three letters of three different dates, and printed them, with marks of quotation, as if they occurred in a single letter. He accuses Mary Stuart of a certain action, on the authority of the English ambassador, and when we read his letter we find him saying that rumour charges Mary with the fact, but that he does not believe it.

Froude describes a dramatic scene in which Elizabeth triumphs over the Scottish envoys sent to plead for Mary's life; and when we examine the authorities, to which an erroneous reference is given, we find in them no such matter, no such scene. The impression given is that Froude read his authorities, let what he read simmer in his mind, let his fancy play freely over it, and then wrote in picturesque and alluring fashion, on the dictates of romance, without ever comparing what he wrote with what his authorities recorded. They are uninteresting, Froude is extremely interesting: as a maker of literature he is in the first rank; as a chronicler of the truth he is not always trustworthy. He did not know his subject "all round"; of

Scotland he knew little, and was wedded to the belief that James I. was the first of the Stuart line. He gravely repeats and embellishes Knox's mythical account of the disaster of Solway Moss, but probably the English despatches of the day were not accessible to him. How much of the interest of his book would survive if it were reduced to the sober verities one cannot estimate, but his wonderful power of giving a kind of bird's-eye views of most complicated European situations in politics must remain unmatched.

Froude, against his bias, made it seem almost certain that Elizabeth had guilty foreknowledge of the death of Amy Robsart. He leaned on a letter of the Spanish ambassador, and reading the Spanish for "last month" as "the present month," he left an erroneous impression. At the moment (1856-1869) there seems to have been no English reviewer who had the necessary knowledge; for Freeman merely picked holes in the fringes of Froude's work. Froude wrote "The English in Ireland," wrote books of political observations made in our colonies, and, succeeding Freeman as Professor of Modern History at Oxford, lectured on Erasmus and published his lectures, which were flown upon by the critics. He also wrote a good "Life of Bunyan," and a longer biography of Cæsar. His "Short Studies" are as interesting as his History, which is not likely to be superseded. As a literary view of a great period of history, it has no rival. It is as rich in original research as in portraits of characters. All that it lacks is a final comparison of the results with the authorities.

Edward Augustus Freeman.

Freeman (1823-1892) will always be best known by his long "History of the Norman Conquest," a work which embraces most of our island story before the great event of 1066. The author, a Fellow of Trinity, Oxford, was also a squire in Somerset, and could afford to devote his time to a gentlemanly but usually unremunerative form of literature. His work is protracted, minute, and influenced by a passion for the ideal English in the national character. Prodigiously industrious in his study of the original sources in print; he had a kind of dislike of research in manuscripts. He was well versed in architecture, topography, and local history; he was as much at home in Sicily as in England, with Graeco-Roman as with Norman remains; he was combative, and, in an earlier age, would probably have invited Mr.

Robertson to settle the question of the English overlordship of Scotland in the lists. His great work is more profitable to the serious student than interesting to the general reader. He wrote much in "The Saturday Review" without adding to the popularity of that periodical. He was constantly correcting the errors of others, and died during a controversy with Mr. Horace Round on the existence or non-existence of a palisade at the Battle of Hastings (or Senlac). His friend and pupil, J. R. Green (1837-1883), is celebrated for his "Short History of the English People" (1874), a work written in a style rather acrocorinthian, and in its first edition rich in errors, later corrected. The book is written with so much spirit and sympathy that it may tempt many a reader to go more deeply into books less popular. Green had the power of exciting interest in topics generally deemed arid, and, with Freeman, contributed to the success of the History School at Oxford, though even more was due to the work of Bishop Stubbs on charters and constitutional history, and to the tutorial lectures and influence of the late Bishop of London, Mandell Creighton, author of a history of the Popes.

William Hickling Prescott.

William Hickling Prescott (1796-1859), the celebrated historian of the two greatest adventures of the modern world, was born, like Hawthorne, at Salem, and was educated at Harvard. Here some student threw a piece of bread at him in hall, his eye was struck, and his sight was so much injured that he could only write by aid of a kind of framework with cross lines; while his reading, whether from books or manuscripts, was almost wholly done by proxy. The works were read aloud, he listened; probably had notes made of the passages which he meant to use in his histories, composed his periods and then dictated them to a copyist. His "Ferdinand and Isabella," the history of Spain in her glory, is of 1837. Six years later he published "The Conquest of Mexico" (1843), "The Conquest of Peru" in 1847, and, up till his death in 1859, he was at work on the first decadence of Spain, under Philip II.

In glancing over the list of historical writers in English, from Gibbon downwards, we remark that almost all were men who could afford to deal with a theme so generally unpopular as the past. Hume and Robertson and Gibbon were all, when they worked at history, men in possession of a

competence, or more than a competence. So was Hallam, so was Sir Walter Scott; Grote, Prescott, Freeman, Macaulay, were at least equally fortunate, while Carlyle, by dint of the strictest economy, was at least able to wait for years before reaping the emoluments of his labours. The man of letters who must live by his pen must live by hackwork of various kinds, and cannot afford the time to collect and digest his information, to select the little ore from the quarry of documents, and then present in an artistic form the result of his researches. Professors of history who must employ their days by lecturing to and correcting the essays of pupils, "live from the altar" of history, but are almost never great and are never popular historians.

The chief American and English historical writers of 1840-1890 were fortunate in another way; of which Prescott took full advantage. They might dare to be interesting, to describe striking events with what eloquence they had at command, and venture to dwell on the characters and fortunes of historical persons, famous or obscure. Science, through the lips of a hundred professors, did not then insist that historical writers must be dry, impersonal, impartial weighers of anise and cummin, students of economics. Scores of unread specialists were not lying in wait to pounce upon every slip, and blot out every touch of colour. Indeed, Mr. Froude could, and did, go as he pleased, and his most unfriendly critics did not know the period of which he wrote. Nobody, like Mr. Gardiner later, gave a whole year of study to the documents of a single year. Now accuracy is a precious thing, but historians who live in constant fear of making a slip have not hitherto produced books which stand high as literature, books which are read "for human pleasure". Again, in the last golden age of history which was literature, "the reading public," always a minute minority, was not wholly absorbed in new novels. Thus the historians of that time had many advantages, and they were men who deserved their opportunities.

Once more, when Prescott set to work, the States of Europe at last began to permit men of letters to make free use of their collections of old public documents, letters, despatches, books of accounts, while the Royal Academy of History at Madrid gave the greatest facilities to the assistants of Prescott,—a favour denied, in the eighteenth century, to Dr. Robertson. The President of the Academy placed his own fine collection of documents at the disposal of the American historian, as did Sir Thomas Phillipps in

England, and the archives of Mexico were opened to him, while he read, of course, through the remarkable book composed, after the Conquest, from the evidence of the learned Aztecs, by Sahagun; and the delightful chronicle of one of the conquerors, Bernal Diaz. New materials may since have come to light, but Prescott, rejoicing in the rich mine of true romance; writing with zest and spirit and wide erudition, produced his two books on the two great adventures of Cortes and Pizarro in such a form that his works cannot be superseded. It is said by an American critic that "the Imperial palaces which he saw in an imagination kindled by that of the Spanish conquerors have dwindled to large communal houses inhabited by barbarians," and that "he lived too early to make use of the results of archæological research". But any one who looks at the scanty relics of ancient Anahuac in the British Museum knows what kind of "barbarians" produced such objects of art. Moreover, the Spaniards came from a land of palaces, the land of the Alhambra, and of glorious cathedrals! it is not possible to believe that they were deceived, and described Aztec buildings as palaces, while they were merely "long houses" like those of the Iroquois. This appears to the writer to be a vain imagination, and the works of Prescott, though romantic, are not romances.

John Lothrop Motley.

The chief historical writers of the United States occur in a group, between the years of Macaulay and Froude. One of the most popular, and deservedly popular, is John Lothrop Motley (1814-1877). He chose neither American nor English history for his theme, but, in selecting the Dutch Republic, found a topic exciting to republicans in one country and to Protestants and friends of Freedom's cause in both.

Motley, who was born near Boston, had a father of substantial wealth who liked literature. He went to Harvard, and then studied at Berlin and Göttingen, where he became the friend of the great Bismarck. Like Macaulay, Hallam, and others, he spent his leisure in the most intellectual society, whether abroad or in America, and in constant touch with men of literary genius, Lowell, Holmes, Longfellow, Thackeray; and also with diplomatists occupied with national affairs. He was not a student and recluse, who can scarcely ever be a historian, in the literary sense, however

serviceable he may be as an archivist, a collector and critic of the materials of history.

Motley, returning to America, tried to write novels, without success; then chose his subject, for years toiled at the massive printed books of the Dutch, and for some four years worked at manuscript documents in Holland, Belgium, and elsewhere.

Between 1851 and 1856 he accomplished his task, "The Rise of the Dutch Republic". The firm of Murray declined to embark in it, and might rue their caution, for, once published, the book was received with acclaim, both by critics, including Mr. Froude, and by the purchasing public, who found it "as interesting as a novel". "The Saturday Review," then in the academic and educated arrogance of its youth, was unfriendly; perhaps partly because the author was an American, partly because of his Protestant enthusiasm. Prescott, who was working at the same period, and generously welcomed the enterprise of the younger man, told Motley that he had "whittled away" Philip II., and that he saw the events "through Dutch spectacles". But these were popular spectacles; and few persons know the Spanish and Catholic side of the shield. Dutch critics, while they praised, made their reserves; and an old feud reawoke when, later, Motley wrote on the Arminian, not the Calvinist side of the great party quarrel in Holland, and on the career of John Barneveld.

As a diplomatist (in 1869 American Minister in England) Motley knew the nature of the inmost political councils; he knew European society; he had, in much the same measure as Froude, the art of making the dry bones of the past clothe themselves in flesh and blood, in steel armour, or in satins and velvets. He had access to many despatches, often in cipher, always in the hardest of all handwritings (that of the sixteenth century before the "Roman hand" was adopted), and he laboured at these with iron endurance, turning his results "to favour and to prettiness" by the graces of his pictorial style.

His continuation of his work, "The History of the United Netherlands" (published by Mr. Murray) was completed in 1865; his "Life of John of Barneveld" in 1874. He died in England (1877) and there is buried. His work has not been, and for English readers is never likely to be, superseded, though it would gain by addition of notes from eminent Dutch critical historians. He was of a beautiful presence, and, according to Lady Byron,

had a "most wonderful" likeness to the poet. His letters are full of amusing gossip about the world of Thackeray and Macaulay.

Other Historians.

Sir William Napier (1785-1860) who fought with distinction under Wellington in the Peninsula, combined with his great personal knowledge of the war conscientious research in documents, and a style of the most brilliant eloquence. Impartial he was not, and he had the fiery temper of the Napiers; but modern research, as in Mr. Oman's great work, now corrects him, and now complements his information.

The great work of George Grote (1794-1871), a Radical in politics, a banker by profession, is "The History of Greece". It is too well known to need description. Though Grote's aim was to set Athenian democracy in what he held to be its true light, he laboured not less assiduously among the mythic legends and the heroic poetry of Hellas; he was most erudite in every fragment of Greek records, and his work, though destitute of much new light recently discovered by excavations of Greek sites and from inscriptions, yet holds its place, unsurpassed, as a general history of Hellas.

Henry Hart Milman (1791-1868) was educated at Eton and Brasenose College, Oxford, and began his literary career as a writer of verse.

> The poet-priest Milman
> So ready to kill man,

is thus mentioned by Byron, who thought that Milman had attacked him, or Shelley, or both, in "The Quarterly Review". He later wrote "The History of the Jews," now out of date, and his chief and very meritorious work "The History of Latin Christianity" (1855).

Space, and the nature of his subjects, logical, philosophical, political, and social, forbid more than a mention of a man so prominent and influential as John Stuart Mill (1806-1873). Mill was privately educated and forced into precocity by his father, James Mill, a Liberal *doctrinaire.* In 1843 he gave to the world his "System of Logic," in 1848 his "Political Economy"; the former, at least, was for many years read almost as much as the "Ethics" of Aristotle by competitors for honours at Oxford. His "Liberty" (1859) was an extremely advanced book in its day; as was his "Subjection of Women".

Mill sowed large handfuls of the seed of the dragon's teeth. He was an earnest, precise, and lucid writer; but not successful in Parliament.

Newman.

The bearers of some of the greatest literary names of the nineteenth century produced books which had vast influence on the development of thought, and yet left little work that, as mere literature, is of the highest merit. They were concerned with the religious, theological, social, and political ideas of their own time, which, like all the ideas personal, as it were, to one or two generations, could not remain fixed, but glided into protean forms of change. Thus John Henry Newman (born in London, 1801, educated at Trinity College, Oxford; Fellow of Oriel, 1822) passed through various phases of religious and ecclesiastical belief; was a leader with Pusey, Keble, and many others in the Oxford Anglican Movement; found that his reason led him into the Roman fold (he was made a Cardinal finally) and wrote voluminously, and in a style confessedly of the highest merit. Yet no doubt his most widely and permanently interesting work took the form of a defensive autobiography ("Apologia pro Vita Sua," 1864), which is more read for its vivid study of his own mental vicissitudes, and personal experiences, than for its theological science. It answers, in his generation, to the "Confessions" of St. Augustine.

Newman describes himself as not only religious but superstitious in boyhood; he read Law's "Serious Call," and crossed himself when he went into the dark. His search for truth was earnest, his nature was almost sceptical but hospitable towards the marvellous, and his own party, to whatsoever party he belonged at any period, never knew where or how far his theory of the Development of Doctrine would carry him. As a tutor of Oriel, and Vicar of St. Mary's, he exercised, as much by his personality and sanctity of life as by his intellect, an unprecedented influence over the minds of the young. In 1843-4 he began to publish "Lives of the English Saints" from the earliest period: many of these were done by Newman's disciples. The narratives abound in miracles of all sorts which proved too much for the faith of J. A. Froude. Newman's doctrine developed in a way which puzzled himself and others. His heart and his tastes drew him towards Catholicism; his earlier ideas caused him to preach against the old

faith; at last his reason sided with his "secret longing love of Rome," his "Tract 90" in "Tracts for the Times," alarmed the academic authorities. "I hardly knew where I stood... when I wanted to be in peace and silence I had to speak out, and I incurred the charge of weakness from some men, and of mysteriousness, shuffling, and underhand dealing from the majority". He retired from the University pulpit, and after a period of retreat and reflection, crossed the Rubicon. There was a long and bitter period of trials, of broken friendships, of charges of duplicity and so forth. In reviewing Froude's "History," Charles Kingsley spoke as if more than doubtful of Newman's respect for truth as such; a correspondence followed; Kingsley wrote an offensive pamphlet: "What then does Dr. Newman Mean?" Newman, by this time a man of 63, answered the question in his "Apologia"; first making a terrible display of acute personal irony, and then giving a narrative of the development of his opinions. In later editions he omitted the polemical pages, and when Kingsley died said a Mass for his soul. The book was received with almost universal applause—yet it had not been easy for Kingsley to understand what Newman meant. His "Grammar of Assent" was so many times rewritten as to leave the impression that he himself did not easily ascertain his own meaning. It is curious to find him quoting a writer in "The Penny Cyclopædia" as an authority on the religion of the Australian tribes; the writer was not correctly informed.

Newman's works range from twelve volumes of sermons, through treatises and essays, historical and critical, and polemical works, to novels of which "Callista," a tale of the early Christians in Africa, is the best, and to poetry. In this, "The Dream of Gerontius" displays intense imaginative power; and "Lead, Kindly Light" is the most admired of his religious lyrics. Perhaps this great and good man is most intelligible in his "Life," by Mr. Wilfrid Ward (1912).

In his love of truth, and in his courage and natural independence of mind, Newman was what we call "thoroughly English". "I am as little able to think by any mind but my own as to breathe by another's lungs," he wrote. As much might be said for two authors who differed from him so widely as Charles Darwin (1809-1882) and Thomas Huxley (1825-1895). The nature of their studies was, as a rule, remote from the literary, and must find record and criticism in the History of Science. The greatness of Darwin's character and intellect is among the chief intellectual glories of his country. Huxley,

apart from his own special researches, was the Thangbrand of Evolution, the popular fighting man, of a brisk humorous pugnacity; his mental lungs expanding in an atmosphere which would have asphyxiated Newman. He had very wide general reading; of his more literary works his "Life of David Hume" in the series of "English Men of Letters" is an admirable example. He is not to be accepted as an impeccable authority on the religions of the more backward races. The same caution must be extended to the anthropological works of Herbert Spencer, a single-hearted seeker after truth, with a very peculiar scientific style of his own. Of all men who wrote much, and earnestly, and persuasively, Spencer was the least of a reader; to much good literature he was even antipathetic. His tastes may be studied in his autobiography.

W. E. H. Lecky.

Among historians of the later Victorian age, W. E. H. Lecky (1838-1903) held a position which was all his own. He was not an explorer among difficult and ancient archives like Froude; he had not Froude's imaginative and pictorial genius, and power of bringing dead times and personages vividly before the inner eye. He had neither the wide general historical knowledge of Freeman, nor Green's combination of effective rhetoric with very considerable learning. The minute and laborious accuracy of Gardiner, focused on a space comparatively limited, was not his; it was said of him at the moment when, still very young, he produced his "History of the Rise and Influence of the Spirit of Rationalism in Europe" (1865) that he seemed infinitely more familiar with Latin and French than with Greek and German, and so he continued to be. But he gave, to the general reader, the results of wide reading; he was as lucid as he was fluent; his style was unborrowed, but descended from that of the eighteenth century; and so candid was he, that he spoke of the honesty of "The Old Pretender" (James VIII and III) as "heroic". Few historians have been so precocious; few more popular. Born in 1838, of a landed Irish family of Scottish descent, he was educated at Cheltenham College, and Trinity College, Dublin. In his twenty-third year he was already a published historical writer ("Leaders of Public Opinion in Ireland"). He travelled in Spain, Italy, and France, and in 1865 published his work on the "History of Rationalism," which was warmly welcomed, and remains a justly popular book. But, in accordance

with the nature of historical science, it is such a history of Rationalism, beginning with a study of the belief in witchcraft and the attendant cruelties, as a young man of talent, taking up the subject to-day, could no longer write. Much is adopted from Michelet, Maury, and Guerinet; the psychology of the topic was, in 1865, unknown: and to-day only a very daring youth could aver that the Rev. Mr. Kirk published "A Secret Commonwealth" in 1691 or at any other date. But the work is full of interest for the general reader: the author won a deserved success, and was 31 years of age when he followed it up with his "History of European Morals," a topic that might have taxed the erudition of the maturity of Gibbon. It involved a philosophical dissertation on the origin of morality, Lecky professing a theory of "intuition," which, though opposed to "rationalistic" ideas, is not unsympathetic to some anthropologists; though in knowledge of the ethics of savages, he could not, at the period when he wrote, be accomplished. Again, a study of Neoplatonism was involved, and had to be written without the aid of much psychological inquiry, posterior to the date of the work. The researches of the future antiquate works on such large subjects as the History of Morals with ruthless rapidity. Lecky's works, so far, were in the manner of Montesquieu and other great French *philosophes*, but, while severe enough on the errors of the clergy, he had none of Gibbon's mischievous love of degrading the early Christian ideal.

The central part of Lecky's literary career, till 1890, was engaged with his great work "The History of England in the Eighteenth Century". This vast and important book is the useful successor of Macaulay's History, and is written with much fairness, though, as usual, a considerable mass of information has since accrued from materials not accessible to the author. This work is not only valuable as a political record, but for its close attention to the changes in thought, manners, literature, and society. Lecky was not, as an Irishman, likely to neglect the affairs of his native island where he had access to the Archives in Dublin public offices. He was in politics a Unionist, but did not conceal his dislike of "the manner of the wooing". His other best-known works are "Democracy and Liberty," and "Historical and Political Essays". He sat in Parliament as the representative of his University; was the friend of all the most eminent men of letters of his time; and, thanks to the amiability of his character, he probably never had an enemy.

With the name of Lecky this work must close, leaving in such brief record much excellent work unchronicled, as too recent to have passed into history.

[1] Sir George Trevelyan's "Life of Lord Macaulay," Chapter XI.

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