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PART I

LITERATURE OF THE KELTS AND ANGLO-SAXONS

1. THE KELTS AND THEIR LITERATURE
2. ANGLO-SAXON LITERATURE

I. The Kelts and their Literature

The first inhabitants of Great Britain and Ireland who left any mark on literature were the Kelts. They were a people who came from Central Asia, spread over much of Europe, and crossed the sea to the island to which they gave the name of Britain, and to Ireland.

Different races of the Keltic family came at intervals to these islands, but here we need only remember the Goidels or Gaels, whose representatives to-day are the Gaels of Ireland and some of the Highlanders of Scotland, and the Brythons or Britons, of whom representatives are found in Wales and Cornwall. Their language is represented by Irish and Gaelic, and by Welsh.

The earliest alphabet used by the Kelts in this country was apparently the so-called Ogam alphabet. It consisted of straight or slanting lines over, under and through a long straight line. We can still see examples of Ogam on old stone monuments in Ireland, Scotland and Wales.

Many of the old legends of the Gaels of Ireland and of Scotland were of the Feinne or Fenian race inhabiting Ireland and Scotland in the first centuries of the Christian era, and the still earlier story of

Cuchulain, " the mightiest hero of the Scots." For we must remember that the Gaels of Ireland and of Scotland were both called Scots in those early days, and the Gaels of Scotland had the same legends as the Gaels of Ireland. One very famous legend is that of another hero, Ossian, and it is remembered in the far highlands of Scotland to this day as well as among the Gaels of Ireland.

And while Gaels in Scotland and Ireland had been telling of Cuchulain or of Ossian, and other heroes of whom we have not space to speak here, the Britons of Wales had had their legends too. Some of these have been translated by Lady Charlotte Guest and published in a book known as *Mabinogion.*[1] Mabinog was the Welsh word for one who was learning the profession of a bard, and the word Mabinogion is used for this collection of bardic stories.

The legend of King Arthur and his knights came from the Britons of Wales. The real Arthur died in the sixth century, and from that century onward his story was popular, and was always being added to and re-told in various forms.

And besides these stories, some histories were written in those early days. Gildas, a Briton who wrote in Latin and flourished in the sixth century, wrote a lament over the state of Britain in his days, with which a little history, carried down to about 550, is mixed. Nennius, a Welsh monk of Bangor with a Latinized name, wrote a Latin history

[1] They were translated from a manuscript of the fourteenth century, but the stories themselves belonged to a far earlier time.

of the Britons about the year 800. Asser, a Welsh monk of St. David's and afterwards Bishop of the English see of Sherborne, wrote a life of his contemporary, King Alfred, and a chronicle of English History.

2. Anglo-Saxon Literature

The Kelts did not long remain undisturbed in Britain. In the year 43 the Roman armies began to occupy it, and brought with them Roman ways and the Latin tongue. The Roman alphabet began to supersede the Ogam alphabet. Latin words crept into the old Keltic language, and it is probable that the more civilized Kelts learnt to speak Latin. But when the Roman armies left Britain in 410 the prevailing language was an "ancient Keltic dialect somewhat tinctured with Latin" and now represented by the Welsh tongue.[1]

The next invaders of Britain were the Jutes, Angles, and Saxons who had long been hovering along the eastern coasts. They now landed with a definite purpose of settling in the land, settling peacefully or winning the country by the sword. The Britons certainly retired before them into Wales and Cornwall, and soon Britain, the land of the Britons, became England, the land of the Angles.

While our Anglo-Saxon forefathers were living in their old home in Northern Europe, and after they settled in Britain, they spoke a language which is indeed a form of our English tongue, but of which

[1] *The Philology of the English Tongue:* J. Earle.

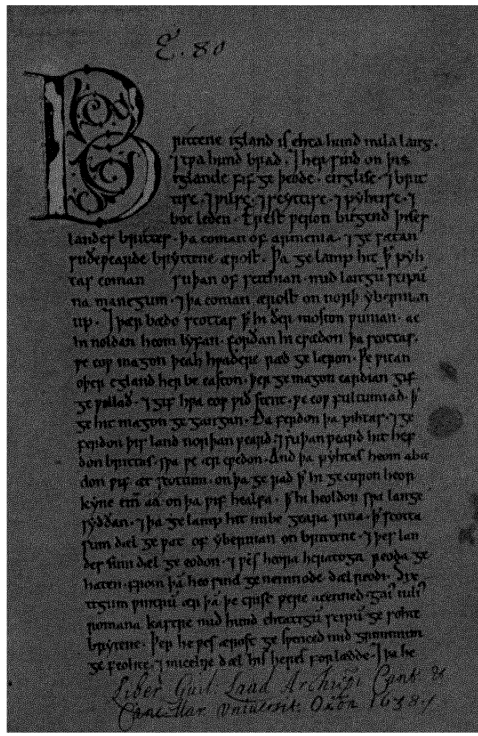
we can understand very little unless we learn it as we learn a foreign language. This language is known by various names. It will suit our present purpose if we simply call it Old English or First English. Speaking roughly, the period during which First English was spoken in England was from the fifth to the twelfth century.

The Anglo-Saxons left poems behind them in which many things besides the language will seem strange to us. Rhyme is almost unknown in Saxon poetry. There was no fixed number of syllables in the lines, but there was a certain number of accented syllables in each line which give rhythm, and are like the accented beats in a bar of music. Much use was made of alliteration, or the repetition of a letter or sound, and parallelism, or the repetition of a thought or fact expressed in different words. In the following lines from a First English poem we notice some of these things, and we shall also notice that the First English was a rough, harsh-sounding language, and that the poetry of the Anglo-Saxons had not the grace and finish of Greek and Latin poetry. But it was a language which was well fitted to describe the wild warfare and the seafaring life of which Saxon poets loved to sing.

"Thær læg secg mænig:	"Here lay warriors many,
Garum ageted.	By javelins pierced.
Guma northerna	Northern men
Ofer scild scoten	Over shield shot.
Swilce Scittisc eac	So Scottish eke
Werig wiges sæd." [1]	Weary war sated."

[1] Text from A.-S. Chron.; trans. from Freeman's *Old English History for Children.*

Of the few First English poems which remain to us *Beowulf* should be remembered. Much of it



REDUCED FACSIMILE OF A PAGE OF THE ANGLO-SAXON CHRONICLE.
(Laud MS.)

must have been composed before the Anglo-Saxons came to Britain, and it gives a good picture of our forefathers in their old home in Northern Europe.

Two Saxon poets of the seventh and eighth centuries whose names are remembered are Cædmon (fl. *c.* 670) and Cynewulf (fl. *c.* 750). Cædmon was herdman of the abbey of Whitby on the Yorkshire coast. Of Cynewulf we know very little except his name, which appears in Runic letters in a poem called the "Crist." Cædmon is supposed to have written the contemporary poem on the Creation, and another known as "The Dream of the Rood," a portion of which is inscribed on a tenth-century cross at Ruthwell near Dumfries, and with it the words "Cædmon me made." But whatever Cædmon and Cynewulf did or did not write, their names are to be remembered for the poetry which is, at least by some, attributed to them and for the literary controversy which rages around their names.

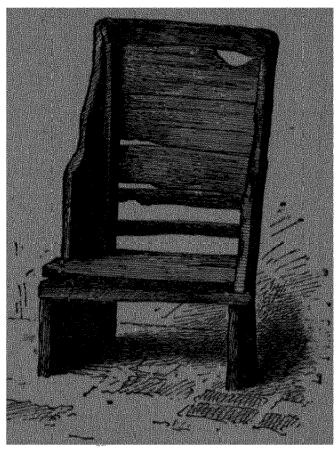
The greatest prose writer in England in Anglo-Saxon times was Bede (673–735), called the Venerable. He was a monk of the Benedictine monastery of Jarrow, where we may still see buildings which he must have looked upon. Bede wrote his ecclesiastical history of the English nation in Latin, but King Alfred caused it to be translated into Anglo-Saxon.

Alcuin (735–804), another prose writer of the period, was educated at the school of the abbey of York. He was considered the greatest scholar of his time, and Charles the Great invited him to France to help in his educational schemes.

The rush of the heathen Danes to England in the eighth and ninth centuries was one of the causes why so little Anglo-Saxon literature has come down

to us. But Alfred the Great (849–901), to whom literature owes so much, made a successful stand against the Danes. He not only restored education to the land, but he wrote himself as an educated man writes.

Although St. Dunstan (925–988), Archbishop of Canterbury, did not leave any writings of his own, he also encouraged learning and literature, as did



BEDE'S CHAIR IN JARROW CHURCH.

Ælfric (*c.* 955–1020), a pupil at Winchester Abbey, and later a teacher at Cerne Abbey in Wiltshire and abbot of Eynsham in Oxfordshire. He wrote some homilies and educational books, and is known as Ælfric Grammaticus from a Latin grammar which he compiled.

The celebrated Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, a chronicle of events in the history of England, was begun about the time of Alfred. More than one manuscript

copy of it exists, some copies beginning their history with the coming of Christianity, others with the landing of Julius Cæsar. It was carried on down to the reign of Stephen, and is very valuable when it describes contemporary events. It is written mostly in prose, but sometimes the authors burst out into poetry, as when the battle of Brunanburh in 937 is described, and the poem is so fine that Lord Tennyson translated it into English.

Before we leave Anglo-Saxon literature we may like to remember the often quoted little verse which has been ascribed to King Canute, who died in 1035. It is indeed unlikely that it was his work, for the language is later than his time; but it has a pleasant ring of early days.

"Merie sungen the munaches binnen Ely
Tha Cnut King rew thereby.
Roweth, cnihtes, near the land
And here we thes munches sang."

"Merry sang the monks of Ely
When Canute King rowed thereby.
Row, lads, near the land,
And hear we these monks song."

The Runic letters, or runes, which were mentioned above, are by some supposed to be a form of the Roman alphabet adapted to the difficult process of cutting letters on stone or wood or metal. Others believe them to have been in use before our Anglo-Saxon ancestors learnt the use of the Roman letters. The inscription on the Ruthwell Cross is in Runic lettering.

PART II

LITERATURE FROM 1066 TO 1400

3. INTRODUCTION
4. EVENTS INFLUENCING LITERATURE
5. LITERATURE FROM 1066 TO 1200
6. LITERATURE OF THE THIRTEENTH CENTURY
7. LITERATURE OF THE FOURTEENTH CENTURY
8. SOME POETS OF THE FOURTEENTH CENTURY
9. MIRACLE PLAYS

3. Introduction

The Normans, who in 1066 conquered England under their leader William the Conqueror, were a Scandinavian race who had settled in Northern France.

The period of literature which followed the Norman Conquest is often called the Middle English Period.

The Norman invaders brought an entirely new language to England, not a Teutonic language as was the First English tongue, but one more akin to Latin than to German.

For many years after the Conquest, Norman-French was the language spoken at Court and by the chief people in England. "All-men of this land who are of Norman blood," wrote Robert of Gloucester, of whom we shall hear later, "hold to French, and low men hold to English." Thus there were two languages spoken in England, and besides these Latin was used for legal documents and for many books, although the great English Chronicle was written in English throughout. But as years went on English reasserted itself and once more became the language of the English people. French died out in England, and what we know as Middle English took its place. But the Irish, the Welsh and the Gaels of Scotland still spoke their Keltic anguage.

This Middle English language, which sprang up on the ruins of the French language in England, was English indeed, but it was a different English to the old Saxon or First English. That First English had been a language of inflections. "An inflected language is one that joins words together, and makes them into sentences, not so much by means of small secondary and auxiliary words, but rather by means of changes made in the main words themselves." [1]

French was only a slightly inflected language, and so when Frenchmen in England began to speak English they dropped the inflections. They also brought in many of their own French words. This modified English, which we call Middle English, was the language spoken by Englishmen from the thirteenth to the fifteenth century. It came into use after a transition period when both French and English were spoken in England.

We may divide the Middle English period of English literature into two portions—the transition period, when the two languages were shaping each other, which, speaking roughly, lasted from 1066 to 1200; and the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, when Middle English was spoken.

Before we begin to read about the English literature of the Middle English period we must remember two things. First we must remember that there was a transition period between First English and Middle English, during which most books were written in French or in Latin. And next we must remember that both before and after the Norman

[1] *Philology of the English Tongue:* J. Earle.

Conquest there were different dialects of English spoken in England, a dialect being some "local variety" of the same language.

4. Events influencing Literature

The Normans had not much literature of their own when they came to England, but yet their coming did much for literature in this country. The Norman monks and clergy were superior to the Anglo-Saxon churchmen as far as learning went. They were better educated and their intellects were more developed. Poor Wulfstan, the Anglo-Saxon Bishop of Worcester, was nearly deprived of his see by Archbishop Lanfranc, the Norman, because he was ignorant of "literature and philosophy."

After the Conquest the monasteries were ruled over by Normans, and they once again became "homes of learning" as they had been before the Danish wars. Each monastery had its writing-room, or scriptorium, where old books were copied and new books written.

The renewed life of the monasteries helped literature, and so also did the Crusades, which began at the close of the eleventh century. Sir Walter Scott's story, *The Talisman*, shows how these foreign lands and foreign men among which the English went to win back the Holy Places of Palestine influenced the mind of England. Stories from the far East and India crept into the literature of the West with the return of the Crusaders. Pilgrimages to Rome and to other sacred spots, such as the famous shrine of

St. James at Compostella in Spain, brought back echoes of Italian poetry and the elaborate verse forms of the troubadours of Southern France.

The Universities were also beginning to be a help to literature. In the twelfth century the University of Paris was already famous as a seat of learning, and by the thirteenth century the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge were becoming famous too.

All these things helped literature, and if the Normans had not much literature to bring to England, they at least brought one famous Chanson de Geste, or song of a hero, and no doubt many others besides. Wace, a writer of whom we shall hear later, says that a Norman, Taillefer, rode before William the Conqueror at the Battle of Hastings "singing of Charlemagne, and of Roland and of Oliver, and of the vassals who died at Roncesvalles." The story of Charlemagne was almost as popular in the Middle Ages as the story of Arthur, and modern poets have not forgotten it. Milton, in *Paradise Lost*, remembers

> "When Charlemain with all his peerage fell
> By Fontarabbia . . ."

and Sir Walter Scott says in *Marmion*—

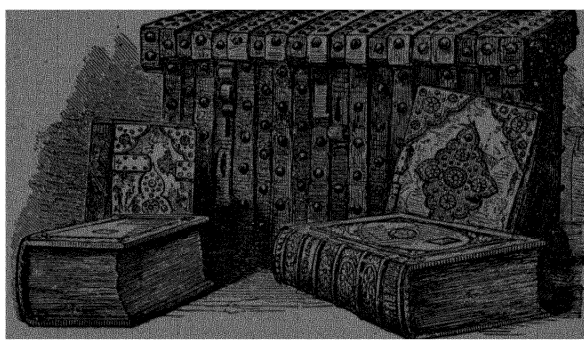
> "Oh, for a blast of that dread horn,
> On Fontarabian echoes borne,
> That to King Charles did come;
> When Roland brave and Oliver,
> And every Paladin and Peer
> On Roncesvalles died."

5. Literature from 1066 to 1200

It will, as we have said, make the Middle English period of literature simpler if we break it up into

two portions—from 1066 to 1200, and the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries.

Of the literature of the first years, from 1066 to 1200, the Conqueror's *Domesday Book* should be mentioned. It was the work of commissioners who visited each county in England, and received from men who had solemnly sworn to speak the truth an exact record of the extent, condition and inhabitants



DOMESDAY BOOKS AND CHEST.

of each estate; and in it we can find the names of places which are still called by the old names.

Next in historical value to the Domesday Book and the English Chronicle, of which we have already spoken, come the many chronicles in which the twelfth-century literature of England is so rich, and from which much of our knowledge of the English history of those days is taken. These chronicles were mostly written in Latin by scholars attached to the household of some bishop or nobleman, or by monks in their monasteries. Perhaps the most valuable of the chroniclers was William

of Malmesbury (?1095–?1142), who is honourably remembered as the foremost literary man of his age.

Geoffrey of Monmouth (?1100–1155), a Benedictine monk of Monmouth, stands apart from the other chroniclers. He wrote what he called a history, *Historia Britonum.* It is really a collection of legends mixed with a little history. He made great use of the old British story of King Arthur, and brought it into fashion after it had been almost forgotten.

Geoffrey wrote in Latin, but Wace (flourished 1170), a writer whose Christian name has been forgotten, reproduced Geoffrey's book in eight-syllabled French verse. Wace was a Norman born in Jersey, but living later in Caen. He called his greatest poem the *Geste des Bretons,* but it came to be known as the *Roman de Brut,* Brut being Brutus, a fictitious hero from whom the name of Britain was said to have come. Wace also wrote the *Roman de Rou,* or Rollo, a metrical history of the Dukes of Normandy.

Another writer who is credited with being the author of much literature in this period is Walter Map or Mapes (? 1137–1200). He was born in the Welsh Marches, or perhaps in Gloucestershire, and became Archdeacon of Oxford. His life was a busy one. He studied in Paris, held a Court appointment under Henry II., was a Justice in Eyre or travelling judge, represented Henry at the Court of Louis VII. of France, and went to Rome to a council. His claim to be remembered in literature is, however, somewhat doubtful, and around his name a literary controversy rages. He is believed to be the author

of satirical Latin rhymes written under the name of Bishop Golias, and of some adaptations of Geoffrey's Arthurian legends. In these Sir Galahad appears, Galahad the "spiritual knight," and his quest of the holy dish in which the Last Supper had been instituted. In his flame-coloured dress he is a type of the Holy Spirit Who came down in flames of fire and Whose grace rested on the knight, and is one of the most beautiful characters in literature. His quest is a "legend of man's spiritual battle, and a lesson on the search, through a pure life alone, for the full revelation of God's glory upon earth." [1] Whoever was the author of this spiritualized version of the Arthurian legend, whether Map or some other, it is of "the purest gold of literature."

Two travellers who wrote during this period were Sæwulf, who died in 1135, and Gerald de Barri (? *c.* 1147–1217). Sæwulf was a monk of Malmesbury Abbey in his later years, and wrote a pleasant account of a voyage to the East with the crusading armies.

The more famous de Barri, known also as Giraldus Cambrensis, Gerald of Wales, was a ceaseless traveller, to Rome, Paris, Ireland, or through his own Wales. He wrote a topography of Ireland, an Itinerary of Wales, a history of the conquest of Ireland, and some lesser works, and all were written in Latin.

And while Gerald the Welshman was hoping for a Welsh archbishopric at St. Davids, Norman kings were trying to make the Welsh English, and the struggle brought out of the heart of the Welsh a

[1] *A First Sketch of English Literature :* H. Morley, LL.D.

new poetry.[1] Patriotic songs were made by Welsh princes, by Owen and Howel, and by lesser men.

To go back to Taillefer and his Song of Roland, there is in the Bodleian Library at Oxford a twelfth-century French *Chanson de Roland*, portions of which may have been sung by Taillefer. It is not without beauty, as when Roland, dying, remembers his "pleasant France," just as, in the far older Latin poem, another dying hero remembers "Sweet Argos."

6. Literature of the Thirteenth Century

The thirteenth and fourteenth centuries were years of growth in England.

As we have seen, language was changing and developing. Parliament had assumed almost its present shape. Trade was growing. There was more travelling. Sculpture, fresco painting, illumination, enamelling, embroidery, architecture, all prospered and caught inspiration from foreign art.

The literature of the thirteenth century is perhaps not as interesting as the art of the century. Among prose writers the most celebrated name is that of Roger Bacon (1214–1294), a Franciscan friar of Oxford. He wrote three books on philosophy: *Opus Majus*, *Opus Minus*, and *Opus Tertium*. Among writers of chronicles Roger of Wendover (died 1237), a monk of St. Albans, is valuable for his *Flores Historiarum* (Flowers of History). Mathew Paris (died 1259) annexed much of Roger's *Flores* for his chronicle, which he called *Historia Major*,

[1] *A First Sketch of English Literature*: H. Morley, LL.D.

but the latter part of his book is a history of his own times, as he saw it, and owes nothing to Roger.

A book written in the thirteenth century and often referred to still is the *Ancren Riwle,* or Anchorites' Rule. It was written for a little community of three ladies who lived together, each with a maid to wait on her, at Tarrant Keynstone in Dorset. The author was possibly Bishop Poore, who died in 1237, and had been Bishop of Salisbury and later Bishop of Durham.

Geoffrey of Monmouth had written of Arthur in Latin. Wace had written of him in French. It remained for Layamon (flourished 1200–1220) to write of him in English. Layamon was priest at Areley, "a noble church," he tells us, "upon Severn's bank" in Worcestershire. "It came to him in mind," he says, "that he would tell the noble deeds of the English," and he travelled far to get books to help him. When he brought them back to his little home, "he turned over the leaves: lovingly he beheld them."

Layamon called his book *The Brut.* It consists of 32,000 short lines, partly in the old unrhymed alliterative verse, partly in rhymed couplets of varying length. The following four lines from *The Brut,* of which the date of the earliest manuscript that remains is about 1205, will show how far we have gone to-day from Middle English speech—

"Theor weoren Saexisce men:
folken alre aermest:
And tha Almainisce men
Geomermest alre leoden."

" There were Saxon men,
Of all folks most poor;
And the Almainish men,
Most miserable of all people."

The lines are from Layamon's account of the battle at Bath between Arthur and the Saxons.

Then we come to Orm, or Ormin, whose Christian name we do not know. We only know that he was an Augustinian canon of some monastery in the Midlands, and that somewhere about 1205 he wrote a poem of about 10,000 long lines in unrhymed metre, known as the *Ormulum*. It consists of a paraphrase of the Gospels for each day and metrical sermons. Orm's method of spelling is an invention of his own.

Among other poems of the period we must mention *The Owl and the Nightingale*, which is somewhat doubtfully ascribed to Nicholas of Guildford, who lived at Portsham in Dorset, and the rhyming chronicle of Robert, a monk of Gloucester, which begins with the siege of Troy and ends in 1272. It reaches the length of 12,000 lines. As poetry it is worthless, but as contemporary history it has its value.

As yet ballads and lyrics have not left much mark on literature, although they were doubtless more numerous than we think. But romances for ladies were popular, and there was much translating of them from French into English as English gained ground. Some of them, as *King Horn* and *Havelok the Dane*, came to France from the North: *King Alexander* came from the East and is full of Oriental legends. At the end of the thirteenth century, a French writer turned the romance of

King Alexander into a poem of about 20,000 lines, each line consisting of twelve syllables, a metre which, from the name of the poem, has ever since been known as Alexandrine. An English version of this, made in the thirteenth century, is interesting, because French words appear among the English words, as if the two languages were equally familiar to the readers of this time.

Another early metrical romance, *Sir Tristrem*, is interesting because Sir Walter Scott believed it was the work of an early Scots poet, Thomas the Rhymer, a native of Ercildon, now known as Earlston, in Berwickshire. He died in the thirteenth century.

7. Literature of the Fourteenth Century

It is not possible to give exact dates for changes in language, but the fourteenth century saw the transition from Middle English to Modern English. With Gower and Chaucer at the end of the century Modern English had come. A new language had been forming, distinct from both French and Anglo-Saxon; its grammar different, its vocabulary enriched by both languages.

Verse had changed too. Anglo-Saxon poetry was a poetry of alliteration and unequal lines; French poetry had rhyme and measures of syllables, and the new English poetry in the main followed the French.

The growing England of the fourteenth century was not very rich in literature until its close. Devotional books were, indeed, always popular. *The Lay Folk's Mass Book*, written in French about

1170, and translated into English in the thirteenth century, was long in use and gives a pleasant idea of the religion of the century. Robert Manning's *Handlynge Synne*, also a translation, was intended to give moral instructions, in the form of stories, at village gatherings. Dan Michel, of Northgate in Kent, translated from the French a book of the like nature which he called the *Ayenbite of Inwit* —the again-bite, or remorse, of Inwit or conscience. Two sermons of Michel's also remain. A very popular book of the century was the *Cursor Mundi*, written about 1320. It gives a metrical version of the Old and New Testament history.

John Wyclif (1329–1382) was born at Hipswell in Yorkshire and died at Lutterworth in Leicestershire. He was one of the first translators of the complete Bible into English, translating, however, not from the original but from a Latin version. He also wrote sermons and tracts, and, like so many in his day, he had a wistful longing to reform much that was amiss in the England around him.

Whoever may have been the author of Sir John Mandeville's *Voyage and Travel*, it was a very popular book in the late fourteenth century. The author tells his readers he "passed throughout" Turkey, Tartary, Arabia, Egypt, India, the country of the Amazons and other countries, and describes such wonders as "folk of little stature, but three span long," giant men and giant ants, griffons, and other marvels.

Romance was as popular as in the thirteenth century. It was chiefly in verse. The stories of Guy of Warwick and Bevis of Hampton were trans-

lated into English from the French. Fables and short stories multiplied. Mediæval wood-carvings, especially those on misericords, or choir seats, are a record of the literature in which the mediæval world delighted. Carved on them we can still see scenes from Æsop's fables, from romances such as Valentine and Orson, stories of giants or fairies, Little Red Riding Hood or Renard the Fox, and travellers' tales of mermaids, pigmies, and fabulous animals. They show us the literature that pleased mediæval England.

Some few lyrics of the early fourteenth century remain to us. When translated from their Middle English they are pleasant reading. The Cuckoo Song is one of the best known—

" Sumer is icumen in.
Lhude sing cuccu !
Groweth sed and bloweth med,
And springth the wude nu.
Sing cuccu ! "

" Summer is coming in.
Loud sing cuckoo !
Grows the seed and blows the mead,
And springs the wood now.
Sing cuckoo ! "

But perhaps the most charming is the following, of which we give only the translation—

" Lent is come with love to town,
With blossom and with birds' song
That all this bliss bringeth :
Daisies in the dales,
Notes sweet of nightingales,
Each fowl song singeth."

And besides lyrics, ballads, of which we shall speak later, and carols or sacred songs, were very popular in the Middle Ages.

8. Some Poets of the Fourteenth Century

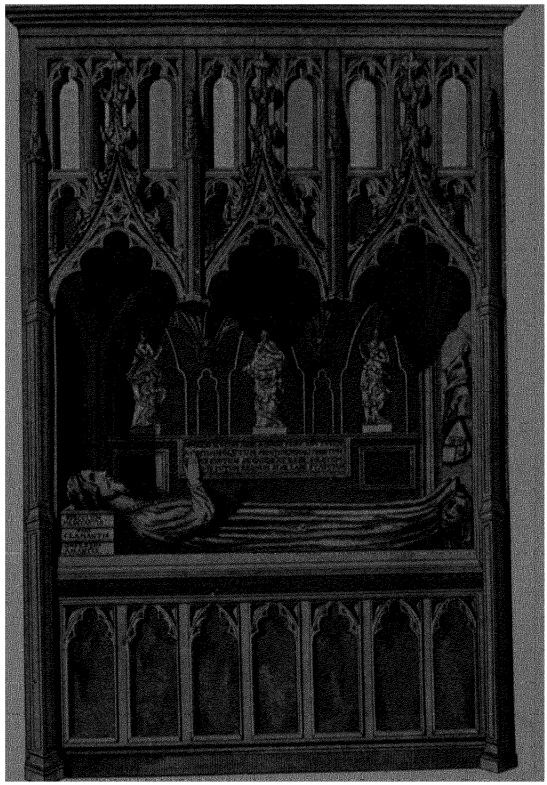
One or two of the fourteenth-century poets whose names remain to us must be mentioned before we end with Chaucer, the greatest of them all.

John Gower (died 1408), who was buried under a fine tomb which still stands in St. Saviour's, Southwark, is a dull writer, but he was a friend of Chaucer, and perhaps Shakespere remembered Gower's *Pyramus and Thisbe* as he wrote *A Midsummer Night's Dream* with its play of that name. Gower wrote in Latin, French and English. His *Vox Clamantis* is more valuable as showing the state of England at the time, than as a poem. In it he spares neither clergy, soldiers, ploughmen, merchants nor lawyers. But he wrote only from a wish "to maintain the right and undo the wrong." His long English poem, *Confessio Amantis* (The Lover's Confession), is in eight-syllabled verse, and the verse is smooth. The poem is full of stories from classical and mediæval stores.

Gower was an author for educated men. William Langland (?1330–1400) sang his *Piers Ploughman* for the poor. He was born probably at Shipton-under-Wychwood in Oxfordshire, although Cleobury Mortimer in Shropshire also claims to be his birthplace. He apparently had some post at the abbey of Great Malvern, but later lived in London.

The *Vision of Piers Ploughman* is a series of allegories in which the moral failings of the day are held up to scorn. Piers is the representative of the Christian, to whom all these failings are a grief. He falls asleep on a May morning on the

Malvern Hills overlooking the plain of Worcester, which seems to him "a fair field full of folk."



JOHN GOWER'S MONUMENT IN SOUTHWARK CATHEDRAL.
(From an old engraving.)

They are the folk of his everyday mediæval world—anchorites, hermits, jongleurs, pilgrims, palmers, pardoners. And all he reproves. Only the an-

chorites and hermits who "held their cells" and "coveted not to roam the countryside and beg" seem to win his approval.

Geoffrey Chaucer died in 1400. When he was born is not so certainly known. He was the son of what was called in his own days a vintner, and now, less poetically, a wine merchant, of London.

Chaucer's experiences were varied. He saw some military service under Edward IV., was taken prisoner by the French, ransomed by Edward for £16, made valet to the King, sent on missions to Genoa, to Florence, to Flanders, to Milan, to France, and he sat in Parliament.

He seems to have been a man of a happy disposition, not unaware of evils which tore the hearts of men like Wyclif and Langland, but good-humoured in his notice of them, probably because he did not much feel them. But his picture of the gentle parish priest makes us feel that all could not be wrong in an England that produced such men.

The Canterbury Tales is Chaucer's great work. It describes thirty pilgrims to the shrine of St. Thomas at Canterbury, who meet at the "Tabard" inn at Southwark, before they set out on the old road, the Pilgrims' Way, which in our own days has been traced out for us by Mr. Belloc.

Each pilgrim—knight, monk, miller, shipman, prioress, and many more—tells some story to enliven the journey. Their tales, the "Canterbury Tales," are valuable not only as poetry but because they show us the world of the fourteenth century.

In his *Canterbury Tales* Chaucer has provided reading for all, gay or grave. But what have his "Tales" and his other poems done for English literature? It has been said of him, as of the



CANTERBURY PILGRIMS, FROM A FIFTEENTH-CENTURY MS.
The Illustration shows the River Wall of the City of London.

Italian poet Dante, that he "embodied all the past elements of the Middle Ages in his work, and he began the literature, the thoughts, and the power of a new age. He was the Evening Star of the Mediæval day, and the Morning Star"[1] of the day

[1] *English Literature:* Stopford A. Brooke.

that was dawning. He was in advance of his age, a forerunner of what we know as the Renaissance (the new birth) of literature.

With Gower and with Chaucer, as we have said, Modern English begins, although traces of Middle English were yet to be found. Thus we have next to consider the Modern English period of our language.

9. Miracle Plays

A few words must be said on the miracle, mystery and morality plays, for they had much effect on literature, as we shall see later.

Miracle plays put into action the life and miracles of some saint, usually the patron saint of the church where they were performed. Mystery plays represented scenes from the Gospels, as the Oberammergau play does still. Morality plays represented virtues and vices as people.

Miracle plays began even in Anglo-Saxon times. They, as well as the other plays, were at first performed in the church as interludes in the service. Then they were performed in the churchyards, and, later, in the streets of the towns or on the village green. The performers, at least in the early days, were the clergy and clerks of the choir.

About the fourteenth century the festival of Corpus Christi began to be kept in honour of the Blessed Sacrament on the Thursday after Trinity Sunday. This became the great summer holiday, and processions of the guilds, and mystery plays

acted by the members of the guilds or by the church clerks, were the great feature of the day. Copies of plays written to be acted at Chester, Wakefield and Coventry still exist, and both mystery and morality plays have been very ably reproduced in our own day.

PART III

FROM CHAUCER TO ELIZABETH

10. INTRODUCTION
11. PROSE OF THE PERIOD
12. POETRY OF THE PERIOD
13. POETRY OF SCOTLAND
14. BALLADS

10. INTRODUCTION

ENGLAND'S literature had, so far, been growing slowly. It has been said that in the mediæval period the only English names of "first importance" to literature are Wyclif and Chaucer, with, perhaps, Roger Bacon, while in the earlier period Bede stands foremost.[1] The years that we are now going to consider, those from 1400 to 1558, have hardly one author above mediocrity, but in those years there were developments of the highest importance to literature—the printing press and the Renaissance in Italy.

This movement, this widening out of men's minds which we know as the Renaissance, or New Birth, was the result of two forces—the revival of classical literature and the discovery of new worlds. It was a revival of things forgotten and a discovery of things until then unknown.

The literary movement of the Renaissance began in Italy, and the names of such great poets as Dante and Petrarch are foremost in it. But whereas the movement came slowly to England and was slowly accepted, Italy adopted it with the rapidity of her own Italian spring, and it was eagerly caught up by scholars on the Continent. At the close of the fifteenth century, however, the century which had

[1] *The History of England:* A. F. Pollard, M.A., Litt.D., Home University Library.

seen this wonderful revival of classical learning in Italy, a little band of men at Oxford, among whom was Sir Thomas More, were good Greek scholars. But yet the movement spread but slowly in England, and for the Renaissance there we shall have to look to our next period.

The art of printing was one of the most important factors in the Renaissance. It probably originated at Mayence with Gutenberg, Fust, and Schœffer, whence it went to Italy and returned by way of the Rhine to Flanders.

William Caxton (? 1422–1491) was born in the Weald of Kent. He drifted to Bruges, where he had the post of governor of the English merchants. He also copied manuscripts for Margaret, Duchess of Burgundy, sister of Edward IV., and his work as copyist taught him the value of printing. He eagerly adopted the printing press, and introduced it into London. There, at the Almonry at Westminster, near the west front of the abbey, he printed books and advertised his wares thus: "If it please any man . . . to buy . . . let him come to Westminster unto the Almonry at the Red Pale" (Caxton's coat of arms was a red pale, or bar, down the centre of the shield) "and he shall have them good cheap."

Up to the date of the invention of printing, all the books about which we have been reading existed only in manuscript.

II. Prose of the Period

Our notice of the prose of the fifteenth century may begin with the *Paston Letters*, which were being

written from 1422 to 1505 by various members of the Paston family who lived in the Norfolk village of Paston. Their letters give us the sayings and doings of a country neighbourhood in the fifteenth century. Those of us, however, who expect pleasure from reading them must be warned that, as with all the English literature of the period, the spelling makes them no easy reading.

If Wyclif was finding much to lament over in the Church of England in the fourteenth century, Reginald Pecock (? 1395–1460), who was at one time Bishop of Chichester, represented a fifteenth-century view of the same matter. He laboured to convince the Lollards, not to burn them as his countrymen were inclined to do; but he nevertheless very narrowly escaped being burnt himself. He was, in fact, as has been said, too much in advance of his age, and in advance of the age of the Reformation which followed it. He was accused of heresy, although he wrote a book with the pleasing title, *The Repressor of Overmuch Blaming of the Clergy*. His arguments, however, in favour of many things which the Lollards attacked—religious orders, pilgrimages, images—gave offence because it was said they were based on human reason, "drowsy reason," and the Church, which he wrote to defend, turned against him. His books were condemned and burnt, and he himself was shut up for the rest of his life at Thorney Abbey in Cambridgeshire. It is a melancholy story of an intellect too bright for its day.

Sir Thomas Malory was one of the great prose authors, not only of the fifteenth century, but of English literature as a whole. We have no certain

date as to his birth, but it is believed that he was born about 1400, that his home was Newbold Revel in Warwickshire, that he died in 1471, and was buried at Greyfriars, Newgate.

He took the old story of Arthur from romances, "in Welsh many, and also in French, and some in English," but he throws over it a new charm. Not only does he spiritualize and refine the story as Map had done, but there is true poetry in his prose. We cannot read his *Morte Darthur* without feeling how much Tennyson's *Idylls of the King* owes to it besides the mere story. When Sir Bedivere comes to the wounded King, he says "he has seen only the waters wap, and the waves wan." It is as beautiful as "the wild water lapping on the crag" of Lord Tennyson's version. Beautiful, too, is the passing of Arthur: "Then Sir Bedivere cried, Ah, my Lord Arthur, what shall become of me now ye go from me, and leave me here alone among mine enemies? Comfort thyself, said the King, and do as well as thou mayest, for in me is no trust for to trust in. For I will unto the vale of Avylyon, to heal me of my grievous wound. And if thou hear never more of me, pray for my soul."

Malory's ending to the *Morte Darthur* is in the same fine English—

"And here is the end of the Death of Arthur. I pray you all, gentlemen and gentlewomen, that read this book of Arthur and his Knights from the beginning to the ending, pray for me while I am on live that God send me good deliverance, and when I am dead I pray you all pray for my soul;

for this book was ended the ninth year of the reign of King Edward the Fourth by Sir Thomas Malore, Knight."

The epilogue of "this noble and joyous book"



SIR THOMAS MORE.
(From the portrait by Holbein.)

was written by Caxton, and by him "emprinted and finished in the Abbey, Westminster, the last day July the year of our Lord MCCCCLXXXV. Caxton me fieri fecit."

Sir Thomas More, who was born in 1478 and beheaded in the Tower in 1535, is one of the fine figures of history as well as a writer of some fame.

His chief work was his *Utopia*, but he also wrote a life of Edward V. and Richard III. in English. The *Utopia* was written in Latin. Utopia was an ideal commonwealth, and from it we get the adjective "utopian," for any scheme beyond man's realization. It was translated into English by Ralph Robinson in 1551.

William Tyndale (? 1484–1536) and Thomas Cranmer (1489–1556) must be remembered. Cranmer wrote or translated many of the Collects in the present Book of Common Prayer. To Tyndale we owe a translation of the Bible which was completed in 1535. It is not the present Authorised Version, but it has been said of it that "the introduction into every English household of the Bible, translated into prose of this fluid, vivid period, is, after all, by far the most important literary fact of the reign of Henry VIII. It . . . set up a kind of typical harmony in the construction and arrangement of sentences."[1]

A new branch of literature began with John Leland's *Itinerary*, written in 1536–1542, but not published until 1715. It was a distinct advance on Gerald's Itineraries. Leland was an enthusiast for all antiquarian lore; "sacrosanct antiquity," as he called it, he loved, and spent his short life in visiting ruins and old buildings and collecting what information he could about them. He is still quoted by writers on archæology. Henry VIII. gave him the post of King's Antiquary. He is believed to have been born about 1506 and died in 1552.

[1] *A Short History of Modern English Literature*: Edmund Gosse.

Among chroniclers of this age we must not forget Edward Hall (died 1548), who wrote a history of "The Union of the Two noble and illustrious families of Lancaster and York," which is now known as Hall's *Chronicle*. From it and from Holinshed's *Chronicles*, of which we shall hear later, Shakespere took most of his English history.

12. Poetry of the Period

The English poets of this period are strangely few.

Perhaps the name at least of John Lydgate (? 1370–1446) may be remembered. Although a dull poet he wrote much—poems of which the best known are the romances, *The Troye Booke*, *The Storie of Thebes* and *Falls of Princes*, ballads, masques, history in verse—and he arranged pageants, mumming plays and May games for the King, the Lord Mayor and the London aldermen. He was a monk of Bury St. Edmunds, where he died, but at one period of his life was prior of Hatfield Broad Oak Priory.

John Skelton (? 1460–1529) was rector of Diss in Norfolk. His fierce satirical poems made him many enemies, and one of these poems, "Why come ye not to Court?" a satire on Cardinal Wolsey, caused that all-powerful man to order Skelton's arrest. He sheltered himself in the Sanctuary at Westminster, and died there seven years later. He is buried in St. Margaret's Church near the abbey.

The "Why come ye not to Court?" gives a brilliant picture of Wolsey's ambition, and perhaps arrogance—

" Why come ye not to Court?—
To which court?
To the King's Court
Or to Hampton Court:
The King's Court
Should have the excellence;
But Hampton Court
Hath the pre-eminence."

Skelton's poetry was mostly " headlong, voluble, breathless doggerel," [1] and has given the adjective " skeltonical " to all similar verse.

Stephen Hawes (died ? 1523), a native of Suffolk, was educated at Oxford, and held an appointment in the household of Henry VII. His chief work, *The Pastime of Pleasure*, is an allegory with combats, monsters, and fair ladies. Hawes is lengthy and dull as a poet, and yet his poetry is often beautiful: an echo, as has been said, of the mediæval world which was passing away. The lines—

" To weep and wail all is for you in waste;
Was never pain but it had joy at last
In the fair morrow "

show what he could do at his best. And if he had written no other lines he would be remembered because he has written two—

" For though the day be never so long,
At last the bell ringeth to evensong."

Before we leave the poetry of the period, we must remember a remarkable little collection of poems, " The Songs and Sonnets " published by Tottel in 1557. It was a collection of Lyrics which showed a wonderful advance on anything yet known in English literature, and was the forerunner of

[1] " The English Poets." Ed. T. H. Ward. *Skelton:* J. Churton Collins.

many such collections. The *thought* contained in the poems is perhaps trifling, but the music of their rhyme and rhythm, their finished brevity, were as yet unequalled in English verse.

13. The Poetry of Scotland

In looking through a list of the poets of this and the preceding period we are struck by the number of Scots names among them. Barbour, James I. of Scotland, Henryson, Gawain Douglas and Lyndesay are all Scots. We may like to remember what has been said on this little group of northern poets. They are claimed as part of a Keltic survival between the Clyde and Solway Firth, where the "Celts were not conquered and not absorbed . . . English literature in the Lowlands of Scotland would then retain more of these Celtic elements than elsewhere; and there are certain peculiarities infused through the whole of the English poetry in Scotland which are especially Celtic." [1] These are that love of wild nature, a love of colour which is so marked a feature of old Irish poetry where the colour of things is often the only characteristic noticed, and the passionate love of their own country and its scenery, which is again common to the Kelts of both Ireland and Scotland. To them, the very sun does not shine in any other country as it does in their own—

> "The sun rises fair in France,
> And fair sets he;
> But he has lost the bonny blink
> He has in my ain country."

[1] *English Literature Primer:* Stopford A. Brooke.

Of these Scots poets, John Barbour (? 1316–1396) belongs to the fourteenth century. He wrote a history of Robert Bruce, in rhyming eight-syllabled lines, and called his poem *The Bruce*. The theme was inspiring. The scenery of the story was also inspiring. Barbour made full use of both, and Sir Walter Scott owed much to his freshly delightful work.

James I. of Scotland, the "Caged Lion" of Miss Yonge's story with that name, was born in 1394. All that we need perhaps remember of him here is that he read Chaucer, fell in love with Lady Jane Beaufort, the niece of Henry IV., and married her, and wrote the poem by which he is best remembered, *The Kingis Quhair*, in her honour; and that he was murdered by Robert Graeme in the Black Friars Monastery at Perth in 1437. He chose a stanza of seven ten-syllabled lines as the measure of his poem, and, although it was known before his time, it is now called Rhyme Royal from his use of it. Different minds form different opinions of *The Kingis Quhair*, but at any rate it shows he had a good ear for measure and for musical words, and a love of nature, as when he described the "little squirel full of business." The King's often very close imitation of Chaucer's verse has been pointed out.

Robert Henryson (? 1430–1506), who was also a student of Chaucer, is believed to have been a teacher at the Benedictine school in Dunfermline. In his pleasantest work, *The Moral Fables of Esope the Phrygian*, he uses the rhyme royal, uses it easily, and sheds over each story the brightness of his own humour, his gaiety, his sympathy. His

Upland Mouse and Burgess Mouse is especially charming. The reader sympathizes with the little mouse of the hills in its every terror, when it is seized by "our jolly cat," or when it is escaping "whiles through the corn, whiles through the plain," and rejoices when—

> "Merrily she linkit o'er the moor,"

and welcomes the news that—

> "To her sister's feast no more she gaed."

With infinite humour, in another fable, Henryson describes the chattering hens, the easily flattered cock, and he is never without sympathy, rare in his age, for the beating hearts of the wild things, or for the human nature which he sees in them as well as in the creatures that man collects around his home.

Our next Scots poet, Gawain Douglas, was the son of Archibald Bell-the-Cat, Earl of Angus, and was born about the year 1475. In his later years he was Bishop of Dunkeld, and died in 1522. His earlier poems are allegories in rhyme, but he is chiefly remembered by his translation of the *Æneid*, one of the earliest translations into English of any of the Classics. He is also remembered because he appears in Sir Walter Scott's *Marmion*—

> "A bishop by the altar stood,
> A noble lord of Douglas' blood.
> . . . . . .
> . . . pleased that in a barbarous age,
> He gave rude Scotland Virgil's page."

That the age was rude we may believe if Bell-the-Cat's words are to be taken literally—

> " Thanks to St. Bothan, son of mine,
> Save Gawain, ne'er could pen a line."

Bishop Douglas was buried in the Savoy Chapel, London, where a brass to his memory may still be seen.

Another Scots poet, who lived through the day of Flodden, was Sir David Lyndesay (1490–1555), who also appears in *Marmion*. His verse is chiefly concerned with contemporary events in Scotland. In Church matters he went with the Reformers. His was one of those unhappy minds that could not see beauty, even where it existed, in anything that was connected with beliefs from which he differed. The solemn cadence of the Latin Services, beautiful to a poet's ear, were coarsely satirized by him—

> "And mekle Latin he did mummil;
> I heerd na thing but hummil bummil."

As has been said, he thought his mission was to " amuse and arouse the people of his time, to affront them with a reflection of their vices, and to set to rough music the thunder and the whirlwind "[1] that was coming with the so-called Reformation.

14. Ballads

We have already referred to ballads. The origin of the word is from the southern Italian, *ballare*, to dance, whence also comes the word *ballet*.

[1] " The English Poets." Ed. T. H. Ward. *Lyndesay:* J. Nichol.

Ballads were at first song-dances. In the modern ballet the dance has survived without the words. In the ballad the words have survived without the dance.

The Carole was still older, a dance in a circle with joined hands accompanied by a song. In most cases a verse of two or more lines was sung by one of the dancers, and the refrain was joined in by all. Children in the country still play at singing dances, which are survivals of these old caroles. The word carole still survives in Carol, which is now used almost exclusively for sacred Christmas songs. The words of some carols, in the latter meaning of the word, are very beautiful.

The study of ballads and carols is pleasant but difficult. As they were at first oral, and not written literature, it is difficult to be certain that any one has come down to us in its original form, and to trace the history of any one means much laborious investigation.

The Scots Border was especially rich in ballads, and many Border names, both of men and places, still known on the Border, occur in them. They mostly tell of Border frays, as that of the Laird Troughen, who was slain by the five Crosiers through the treachery of "the traitors black, the Halls." The ballad of the baron of Brackley is also full of the wild life of Border households. The metre is unusual and spirited. The story tells how a Gordon, Baron of Brackley, is slain outside his castle by the Laird of Inveray—

"Down Deeside came Inveray whistling and playing;
He's lighted at Brackley gates at the day dawing."

Among English ballads, the Robin Hood series are some of the earliest. Piers Ploughman refers to them in his Vision. The *Hunting of the Cheviot* and the *Battle of Otterbourne* are also early, and by their directness and simplicity, their power of saying much in the fewest words, they go far to uphold the belief that the earlier the ballad, the finer it is.

PART IV

THE ELIZABETHAN AGE

15. INTRODUCTION
16. PROSE OF THE PERIOD
17. POETRY OF THE PERIOD
18. SPENSER
19. THE STAGE
20. SHAKESPERE
21. POETRY OF IRELAND

15. Introduction

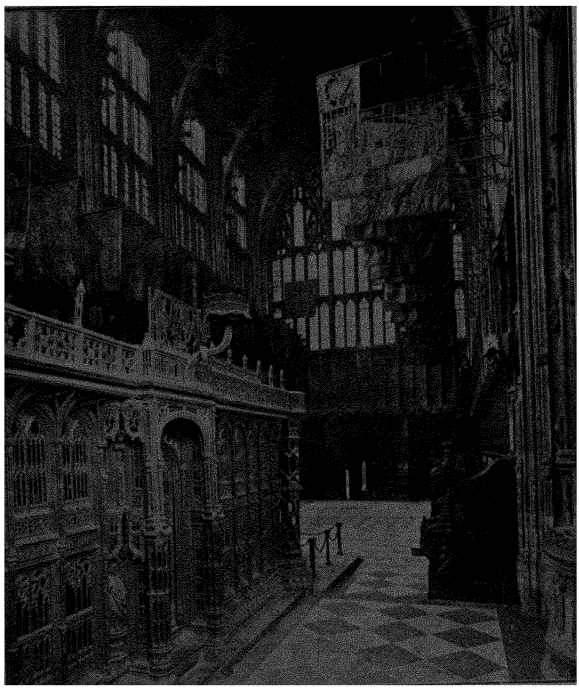
We have briefly reviewed the chief names in English Literature up to the year 1558. The latter years of that period had been years of unrest in England. The widening of men's minds which had come with the Renaissance was showing itself in a desire for reform in the Church itself, and the changes in the Church which followed are known as the Reformation.

The views of the Reformers, and of those who preferred the old form of religion, were alternately forced on the people of England in the reigns of Edward VI. and Mary. In Elizabeth's reign the Church of England assumed almost its present form.

One result of these changes was seen in the new Prayer Books put forth for use in church. Up to the reign of Edward VI. each diocese had had its own Prayer Book, differing slightly from those of other dioceses, and known as its "Use." These books were in Latin. In the reign of Edward VI. an English Prayer Book, compiled from these old missals, or service books, was approved by Parliament and ordered to be used in all churches instead of the Latin Prayer Books. It was followed by the second Prayer Book of Edward VI., which was again superseded by another Book of Common Prayer based on the Prayer Books of Edward VI., and this, with a few changes made in the reign

of James I. and Charles II., is that now in use in the Church of England.

The Renaissance showed itself in England not



HENRY VII'S CHAPEL, WESTMINSTER ABBEY.

only in changes in the Church, it also showed itself in art. Classical art, a revival of Greek and Roman architecture and decoration, was spreading over Europe, and first came to England perhaps with the Italian workmen employed by Wolsey to decorate Hampton Court. The old Gothic style of archi-

tecture began to break up in the reign of Henry VI., and Londoners can see in Henry the Seventh's marvellous chapel at Westminster the beginning of that Tudor art which died away in the art of the Renaissance.

In the country, walled castles began to give way to houses such as Hampton Court or Burghley House near Stamford. Stow, who wrote a survey of London in 1598, tells us that the merchants had "fair houses" in the London streets. We must think of the literature of which we are now going to read as no longer being written in the wonderful old monasteries and castles of the Middle Ages, but in houses which approach more nearly to those of our own day.

But although there was much development in various ways there was also much brutality. In Elizabeth's reign and long after, traitors' heads were displayed on the gates of the city of London, as many as twenty at one time. Stow says there was a scaffold "always ready" on Tower Hill. We cannot read the literature of the first years of the Renaissance in England without remembering how much of it was written with cruelty and persecution ever near at hand. But at the same time there was growth and development which were soon to make such things impossible.

Shakespere was to be the poet of the English Renaissance, and no one has better told wherein the glory of the Renaissance lay—

> "Sure, He that made us with such large discourse,
> Looking before and after, gave us not
> That capability and godlike reason
> To fust in us unused."

16. Prose of the Period

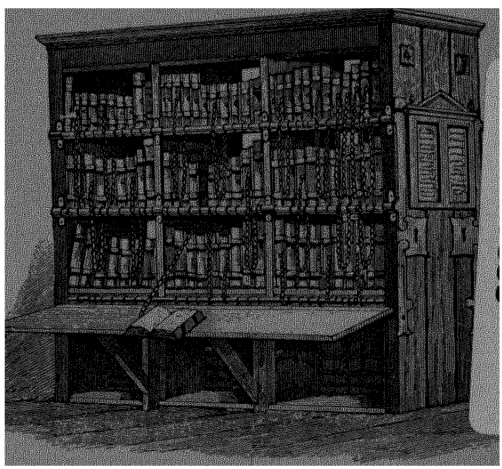
In this, as in every period, there is some overlapping, authors being arranged rather by the spirit of their writings than by their exact dates, and some authors were writing during portions of two periods, which makes them somewhat difficult to place.

The prose work that, after the translation of the Bible and the Prayer Book, took most hold of the people of England was the *Book of Martyrs*, written in 1563 by John Foxe (1516–1587), and giving a history of the recent persecutions for religion. It was written in good simple English, and its horrors were only too well understood by a generation which had known those persecutions. It is essentially an Elizabethan book, and a copy was, by Elizabeth's orders, placed in each parish church. It represented, indeed, only one side of the age, and that a sad one. But it does represent one side, and is therefore of value to the student of history. The language is that of an educated man. Foxe had been a student of Brasenose College, Oxford, and was a Fellow of Magdalen.

Among authors who belong both to this and the following period the name of William Camden (1551–1623) is honourably remembered for his *Britannia*, a laborious description of England. Later he wrote a history of Elizabeth's reign in Latin. It was compiled from original documents, and was one of the first instances of a history written in this careful way.

John Speed (1552–1629) wrote a chronicle of Great Britain during the Roman, Saxon and Danish

invasions, and other works. Sir Walter Raleigh (?1552–1618) was, as we know, a dauntless adventurer in Southern seas, and, when imprisoned by James I. in the Tower, with the same undaunted spirit he began to write a *History of the World* from the Creation. The style of the book has been compared to solemn music, and in portions of it he



CHAINED BOOKS IN HEREFORD CATHEDRAL.

bursts out into prose of such magnificence that it haunts the memory as does music or poetry.

Samuel Daniel (1562–1619) wrote a history of the wars of Lancaster and York in metre, and later a *History of England* from the Roman Invasion to the end of the reign of Edward III. in prose.

Sir Henry Spelman (?1562–1641) wrote on ecclesiastical law and some lesser works, one on tithes being occasioned by a work on the same subject by John Selden (1584–1654). Selden was a laborious

student, and his *Titles of Honour*, a book on the origin of titles, and his *History of Tithes*, show learning and research. After his death his secretary, Richard Milward, published his sayings in a volume of which the title was *The Discourse of John Selden, Esq.* It is now known as Selden's *Table Talk.* "I had the opportunity," says Milward, "to hear his discourses near twenty years together," and like another Boswell, of whom we shall hear later, he had been taking notes in those years.

Among chroniclers of this period we should remember Raphael Holinshed (flourished 1577) and John Stow (1525–1605). Holinshed prefaced his *Chronicles* with a description of England which is useful still as recalling the England of his day. The first folio edition with woodcuts, on which Shakespere may have looked, still exists. The tailor, John Stow, brought out his *Annals of England* in 1580, and *A Survey of London* in 1598. He was buried at St. Andrew's Undershaft, in London, where a terra-cotta tablet marks his tomb.

Voyages and travels are a kind of history, and *The Principal Navigations, Voyages and Discoveries, made by the English Nation,* was as popular as were the chronicles. It was compiled by Richard Hakluyt (? 1552–1616), who was born at Eyton in Herefordshire, and was educated at Westminster and Christ Church, Oxford. He was ordained, and was a prebendary of Bristol. He loved the "tall ships" which he must have seen coming and going from Bristol port, and his book has been justly called the prose epic of the English nation.

Thomas Coryat (? 1577–1617), who was at one

time companion to Prince Henry, son of James I., went a walking tour, then a very unusual proceeding, in France, Germany and Italy, doing nearly 2000 miles in five months, and in the same pair of shoes. His father was rector of Odcombe in Somerset, and thither Thomas repaired on his return, and hung up the "thousand mile shoes" in the church. In 1612 he went abroad again, visiting Greece, Egypt and India, and died at Surat. The names of his works are as original as the man himself: *Crudities hastily gobbled up in Five Months' Travel,* and *Coryat's Crambe, or his Coleworts Twice Sodden*—crambe being a Latin word for cabbage, and, figuratively, a tiresome repetition.

George Sandys (1577–1644) was a son of Archbishop Sandys of York. He travelled in Turkey, Egypt, the Holy Land and Italy. He writes brightly, and gets somewhat nearer to the travel writers of our own day.

John Lyly (? 1554–1606) was a poet, a dramatist and a prose writer. His *Euphues* has given a word to our own language. The book is a romance describing the life of the young Athenian Euphues in Italy and in England, but the story is really only a medium for the expression of Lyly's opinions on men and things. It was very popular in its day, going through five editions in six years. Lyly's style is his own, artificial and affected. But Charles Kingsley, in *Westward Ho,* called *Euphues,* "in spite of occasional tediousness and pedantry, as brave, righteous and pious a book as a man need look into."

It made an affected style of writing and speaking

fashionable, and this affectation was known as "Euphuism." Shakespere satirizes it in *Love's Labour's Lost*, and Sir Walter Scott introduces a Euphuist, Sir Piercie Shafton, into his romance, *The Monastery*.

Sir Philip Sidney (1554–1586) might rank among famous poets as well as prose writers, but he is perhaps best remembered for a prose work, *Arcadia*. He is attractive as an author but still more as a personality, as a representative of all that was good and noble in the English Renaissance. His father, Sir Henry Sidney, was Lord Deputy of Ireland and President of Wales. Philip was born at Penshurst in Kent, and educated at Shrewsbury and at Christ Church, Oxford. He spent several years in travel, and at the beginning of the war with Spain he was made Governor of Flushing. Soon afterwards he took part in the siege of Zutphen, where he was wounded, and died at Arnhem of his injuries.

His chief works are a series of sonnets addressed to Lady Penelope Devereux, daughter of the Earl of Essex, and afterwards Lady Rich, in which he calls himself Astrophel and the lady Stella; and two prose works, *Apologie for Poetry* and *The Countess of Pembroke's Arcadia*. *Arcadia* was a long prose romance written during a summer visit to his sister, Lady Pembroke, on whom, at her death, the elegy was written—

> "Underneath this sable herse
> Lies the subject of all verse,
> Sidney's sister, Pembroke's mother;
> Death, ere thou hast slain another
> Learn'd and fair and good as she,
> Time shall throw a dart at thee."

Another author of the period whose personality attracts as does that of Sidney is Richard Hooker (? 1554–1600), author of *The Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity*. Hooker represents a different aspect of life from that of Sidney. He was Fellow of Corpus Christi College, Oxford, Professor of Hebrew, and for ten years Master of the Temple. But he spent most of his life in his country parsonages, and wrote most of his great work in poverty and domestic unhappiness, which he bore with "a sweet, serene quietness." Two of his pupils, visiting him at Drayton Beauchamp in Buckinghamshire, "found him with a book in his hand (it was the *Odes* of Horace)," says Walton, of whom we shall read later, "tending his small allotment of sheep in a common field, which he told his pupils he was forced to do then, for that his servant was gone home to dine and to assist his wife to do some necessary household business. When his servant returned and released him, then his two pupils attended him to his house, where their best entertainment was his quiet company, which was presently denied them; for Richard was called to rock the cradle. . . . They stayed but till next morning, which was time enough to discover and pity their tutor's condition . . . and were forced to leave him in company of his wife Joan, and to seek themselves a quieter lodging for the night."

The Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity is a temperate defence of the Church of England, and is still a standard work.

Translators were busy in this period of the revival of classical learning. Sir Thomas North (? 1535–? 1601)

translated Plutarch's *Lives*, of which Shakespere made much use in his plays, and the translation itself is fine and stately. John Florio (? 1553–1625) translated Montaigne's *Essays* from the French. George Chapman (? 1559–1634) translated Homer. Chapman was also a poet and a playwright.

17. Poetry of the Period

In considering the literature of the reign of Elizabeth we are struck by three facts: the increased output of prose, the sudden rise of the drama, the few poets, and, with the exception of Spenser, their mediocrity.

Earliest in point of time come two poets who belonged to the reign of Henry VIII., but whose work appeared only the year before Elizabeth began her reign. They are remarkable because they created, or at least were the forerunners of, a new school of English poetry; they created a want for what they gave. The fanciful, sweet little poems of Sir Thomas Wyatt (1503–1542) and the Earl of Surrey (? 1516–1547) were a new thing in English literature, but they found imitators, and pleasant ones. Anthologies such as the *Paradise of Dainty Devices* (1576), *The Gorgeous Gallery of Gallant Inventions* (1578), the *Handful of Pleasant Delights* (1584), and *England's Helicon* (1600), with Tottel's *Miscellany*, which we have already mentioned, showed the popularity of the new school.

Sir Thomas Wyatt was born at Allington in Kent, and had a post in the Court of Henry VIII. He went on missions to Venice, Florence and Rome,

and his poetry owed much to classical as well as to Italian and French contemporary verse. Much that he wrote is poor. He fails in the mechanism of verse, in rhyme and metre. But he has written at least one poem which by almost universal consent finds a place in anthologies and in memory—

> " Forget not yet the tried intent
> Of such a truth as I have meant;
> My great travail so gladly spent,
> Forget not yet ! "

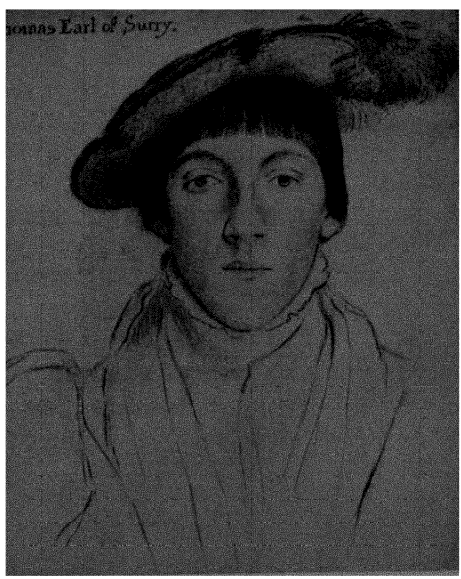
Wyatt is remembered as the first English poet who wrote in sonnet form. A sonnet is a poem of fourteen lines, generally dealing with some one grave thought or feeling. The word came, as did the form of the poem, from Italy.

Henry Howard, son of the Duke of Norfolk, and known as the Earl of Surrey, was younger than Wyatt by twelve or more years. But the two were friends, and Wyatt and Surrey chime together in our minds as naturally, it has been said, as do Bion and Moschus in classical poetry.[1] Surrey was a courtier and a soldier. The story of his accusation and trial is one of " bewildering obscurity," but he was certainly executed on Tower Hill, shortly before Henry's death, on that scaffold which was " always ready."

Surrey wrote much verse and translated part of the *Æneid* into blank verse, the first English example of such verse. The fashion came from Italy, but even there these *versi sciolti*, or free verses, were not yet common.

[1] *History of English Literature :* A. Lang.

To come to poets who were writing in the Elizabethan age, George Gascoigne (died 1577) published a book of short poems, *A Hundred Sundry Flowers Bound up in One Small Posy*, and a long satirical poem in blank verse, *The Steel Glass*, the



THE EARL OF SURREY.
(From the drawing by Holbein.)

glass that could not flatter. He also translated a prose comedy from the Italian, and shared in the production of *Jocasta*, one of the first English tragedies, adapted from a play of Euripides. By setting a fashion for these things, he may be said to have done something for literature.

Thomas Tusser (? 1526–1580) wrote *Five Hundred*

Points of Good Husbandry. This is an example of the poem—

> " Hops hate the land
> With gravel and sand.
> The rotten mould
> For hop is worth gold.
> The sun south-west
> For hop-yard is best."

It is perhaps good advice, but it is not poetry.

Thomas Sackville (1536–1608), afterwards Lord Buckhurst, and still later Earl of Dorset, is remembered for two contributions to a work called *A Mirror for Magistrates.* It was a collection of tragic poems, and Sackville's share in it was the " Induction " and the " Complaint of Buckingham," the Buckingham of Richard III. His work has been admired as musical and as echoing the gloom and horror of Dante's *Inferno.* Sackville also had a share in the tragedy *Gorboduc.*

In contrast to much of the bright poetry of the Renaissance are the poems of Robert Southwell (? 1560–1595), the Jesuit who was executed at Tyburn. Three years of his short life were spent in the Tower, where he thirteen times suffered torture, and where death was " cruel not for coming, but for delaying to come."[1] His poems were written, as has been said, in the very valley of the shadow of death. They are instinct with vivid faith, with imagination, with all the culture of his order. They show sweet fancy too, but fancy shadowed by the hard things that life had

[1] " The English Poets." Ed. T. H. Ward. *Southwell:* J. W. Hales.

brought him. It was indeed to him, in his own words—

> " A vale enwrapt with dreadful shades,
> Where none but heavy notes have any grace."

In contrast again to Southwell comes the long-lived and prosperous Michael Drayton (1563–1631). He was writing in the reign of Elizabeth, but lived on long into the reign of her successor. He wrote much, but is chiefly known as the author of *Poly-olbion*, a description of " this renowned Isle of Britain with intermixture of the most remarkable stories, antiquities, wonders, pleasures and commodities of the same digested into a poem." Here is a long title, and the poem itself reaches the vast length of upwards of a hundred thousand lines. It is not wonderful, therefore, that while every one has heard of Drayton's *Polyolbion*, few have read it. His bright little poem *Agincourt*, in very haunting metre, finds a place in most anthologies—

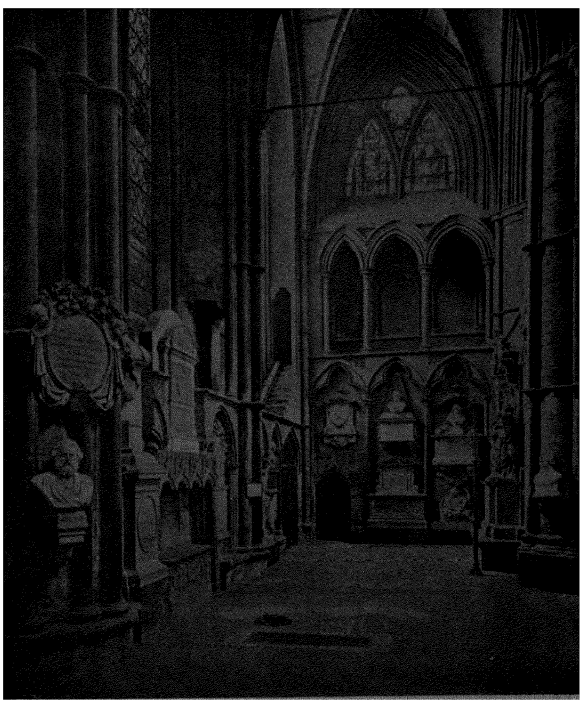
> " Fair stood the wind for France,
> When we our sails advance,
> Nor now to prove our chance
> Longer will tarry;
> But putting to the main,
> At Caux, the mouth of Seine,
> With all his martial train,
> Landed King Harry."

This goes bravely, and the *Nimphidia*, with its Fairy Queen, its Oberon, its Pigwiggin, is in " tripping measure " fit for fairies—

> " Her chariot ready straight is made,
> Each thing therein is fitting laid,
> That she by nothing might be stay'd,
> For naught must be her letting.

Foures of gnats the horses were,
Their harness nimble gossamere,
Fly Cranion, her charioteer,
Upon the coach box getting."

But yet Drayton was dull. Pope called him a



WESTMINSTER ABBEY, POETS' CORNER.

very mediocre poet, and Goldsmith, standing near his tomb in Westminster Abbey, said, "Drayton! I never heard of him." But Fuller wrote in another strain. "Chaucer," he says, "lies buried in the

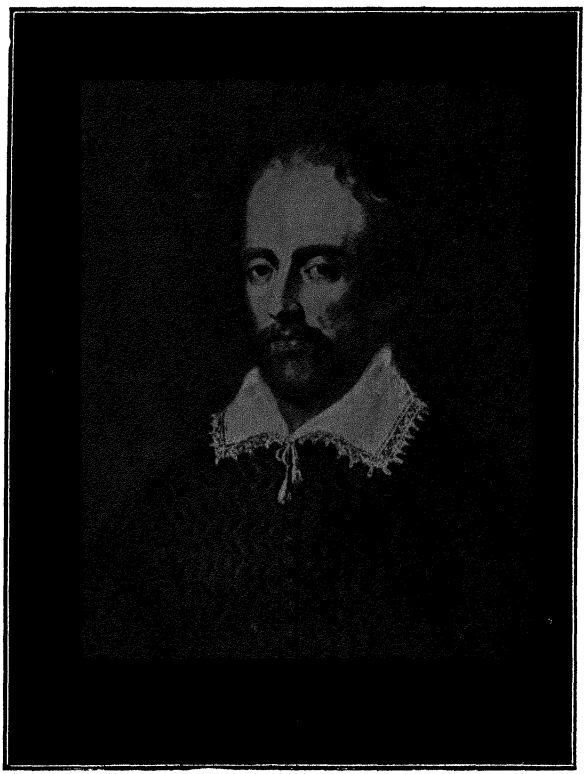
south aisle of St. Peter's, Westminster, and now hath got the company of Spenser and Drayton, a pair royal of poets, enough almost to make passengers' feet to move metrically, who go over the place where so much poetical dust is interred."

Setting aside for the moment Spenser and Shakespere, the charm of Elizabethan poetry came late in Elizabeth's reign, that lyric poetry for which Wyatt and Surrey and Tottel's *Miscellany* had prepared the way. Towards the end of the reign, as has been said, there was an outburst of song. It was an age when every one could play or sing. Books of "airs" began to appear, and were the work of such careful and tuneful musicians as Birde and Morley. Words were wanted for "airs," and "airs" were wanted for words, and both multiplied. Many of the plays of the period contain lyrical gems. Shakespere's plays are full of them. The verse of his lyrics, and those of other writers of his age who in this one department really came near him in charm, "swells with stuff so fine and smooth" that we could give up many longer and more famous poems for some of these bright little snatches of song.

18. Spenser

Edmund Spenser (? 1552–1599) towers above all his literary contemporaries save one. He was educated at Pembroke College, Cambridge, then known as Pembroke Hall. In 1580 he went to Ireland as private secretary to Lord Grey de Wilton, and, with the exception of brief visits to England,

Ireland was henceforth his home. From a worldly point of view he was not at first unsuccessful



EDMUND SPENSER.
(From the oil painting by Benjamin Wilson.)

there. He had a grant of the lease of the abbey and lands of Enniscorthy, County Wexford, held offices under Government, and later received a grant of lands and of Kilcolman Castle in County

Cork, which had been forfeited by the Irish Earl of Desmond.

In 1598, in an insurrection of the Irish, Kilcolman Castle was burnt. Spenser, his wife and children, fled to Cork. This was in October. In December, Spenser was sent to London with a dispatch to the Government. He died January 16, 1599, in King Street, Westminster; died "for lack of bread," said Ben Jonson, refusing "twenty pieces of silver sent him by my Lord Essex, and said he was sure he had no time to spend them." He was buried in Poets' Corner. "His hearse," says Dean Stanley, in *Memorials of Westminster Abbey*, "was attended by poets, and mournful elegies and poems, with the pens that wrote them, were thrown into his tomb. What a funeral was that at which Beaumont, Fletcher, Jonson, and in all probability Shakespeare, attended!—What a grave in which the pen of Shakespeare may be mouldering away!" "Here lyes," says the inscription on his tomb, "expecting the second comminge of our Saviour Christ Jesus, the body of Edmond Spenser, the Prince of Poets in his tyme, whose divine spirit needs no other witness than the works he left behind him."

Spenser has been called the Poets' poet. His first published poem was the *Shepherd's Kalendar*, containing an eclogue for each month in the year. But the *Faery Queen* is his most famous work. It is a poem written throughout in one metre, now known as Spenserian, consisting of a verse of nine lines, the first eight lines of ten syllables, the last an alexandrine of twelve syllables. The metre has disadvantages for a long poem. The last long

line makes too much break between the stanzas; although some critics think that each stanza is a complete little picture and the alexandrine finishes it neatly.[1]

Having said this, there is little but praise to add. The poem is a double allegory, an allegory within an allegory. There is the historical allegory, in which the characters of the day play their parts. Elizabeth is Gloriana, Mary Queen of Scots is Duessa. The spiritual allegory is the old and always new story of the soul of man striving after what is noble and fighting against evil in the world and in himself.

One stanza will suffice to show the stuff of which it is woven—

" And is there care in heaven? And is there love
In heavenly spirits to these creatures base
That may compassion of their evils move?
There is: else much more wretched were the case
Of men than beasts. But O! th' exceeding grace
Of highest God that loves His creatures so
And all His works with mercy doth embrace
That blessed angels He sends to and fro,
To serve to wicked man, to serve his wicked foe."

19. THE STAGE

In the first twenty years of Elizabeth's reign a new development in the drama began. It really seems as if the Queen could not stir without a pageant or a play or a masque being performed

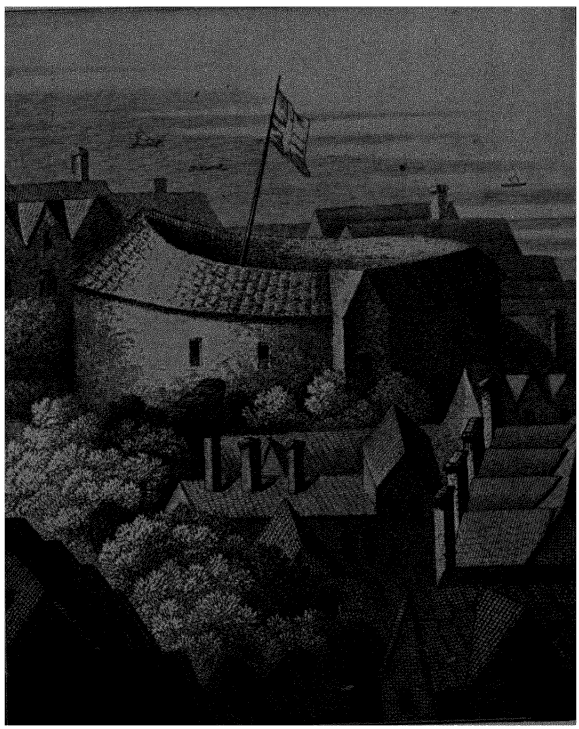
[1] Pope, a poet of whom we shall read later, writes of twelve-syllable lines—

" A needless alexandrine ends the song,
That, like a wounded snake, drags its slow length along."

before her, sometimes in a forest where she was hunting, sometimes in the houses of some of her nobles, sometimes in the halls of the Inns of Court or of the Universities. The boys at the great schools such as Westminster and St. Paul's, the students at the Inns of Court and the Universities, acted plays. Strolling professional players, such as those who arrive so opportunely in *Hamlet*, performed them in inn yards or by invitation in great houses.

Then came a further step. Theatres were built, the first by James Burbage, "in the fields" in Shoreditch. He called it simply the Theatre, and another built near it was called the Curtain, from the name of the plot of ground on which it was built. Companies of actors placed themselves under the patronage of the Queen or of some nobleman, and called themselves "the Queen's servants" or the "Lord Chamberlain's servants." The plays, which now sprang up as rapidly as the songs had done, were of many kinds, and many were very poor. The earliest comedies of which the names have come down to us are *Ralph Roister Doister*, by Nicholas Udall, afterwards head master of Eton, and later of Westminster, and *Gammer Gurton's Needle*, believed to be by John Still, who later became Bishop of Bath and Wells. The earliest tragedy, *Gorboduc*, was performed before Queen Elizabeth in the Inner Temple Hall in 1561. It is "unspeakably dull." Indeed, few of the earlier playwrights need remembering except Christopher Marlowe (1564–1593). His three chief works were *Doctor Faustus*, a tragedy of greed of knowledge

and of pleasure; *Tamburlaine*, a tragedy of greed of empire; *The Jew of Malta*, a tragedy of greed of money. His *Edward II.* is also remembered and compared with Shakespere's *Richard II.*



THE GLOBE THEATRE, SOUTHWARK.
(After an engraving by Hollar.)

Marlowe rises highest among all the playwrights of Elizabethan days, always excepting Shakespere. He wrote his plays in blank verse, and made it a more flexible and beautiful thing than it had been

in the hands of earlier writers. He was, in fact, a true poet and often a great one—



INTERIOR OF THE OLD SWAN THEATRE.
(From a drawing in the University Library, Utrecht.)

" . . . . his raptures were
All air and fire which made his verses clear;
For that fair madness still did he retain
Which rightly should possess a poet's brain,"

wrote his contemporary, Ben Jonson, to whom also we owe the description of Marlowe's blank verse, "Marlowe's mighty line."

Ben Jonson (? 1573–1637) was the son of a non-conforming preacher. His stepfather was a bricklayer, or more probably a builder. Ben went to Westminster School, worked a short time at bricklaying, went soldiering in Flanders, and came back to write plays and poems. He made for himself a high place among the writers of the day, and at the "Mermaid Tavern," where literary men congregated, he occupied somewhat the same place as did Dryden and Dr. Johnson in the London of later years. His plays satirized life as he saw it, the life of his time, and bear such striking titles as *Every Man in His Humour*, *Every Man out of His Humour*, *Cynthia's Rivals*, a bright little satire on the Court, acted by the "Children of the Chapel Royal"—the choristers, that is. In his plays Jonson hits too hard. "You write with a porcupine pen dipped in gall," said a friend to him. But his lyrics are beautiful, "Drink to me only with thine eyes" being the best known, perhaps. In later days he grew less fierce. His *Sad Shepherd* is a graceful pastoral play with some beautiful lines in it, such as—

> "Here she was wont to go, and here, and here,
> Just where these daisies, pinks and violets grow;
> The world may find the spring by following her."

Ben Jonson was writing in Elizabeth's reign, but he died in the reign of Charles I. He was buried in Westminster Abbey, near to which he had lived

and died, "a pavement square of blue marble," with only the simple inscription—

"O rare Ben Johnson!"[1]

to mark his grave.

Among playwrights of the period, the names of Francis Beaumont and John Fletcher, George Chapman, Cyril Tourneur, Thomas Middleton, Thomas Ford, Philip Massinger and Thomas Dekker may be remembered.

20. SHAKESPERE

William Shakespere was born in the pleasant, homely old house which is still standing at Stratford-on-Avon, and which is a place of pilgrimage for the whole cultivated world. We can see the record of his baptism on April 26, 1564, in the register of Stratford Church, and the font in which he was baptized.

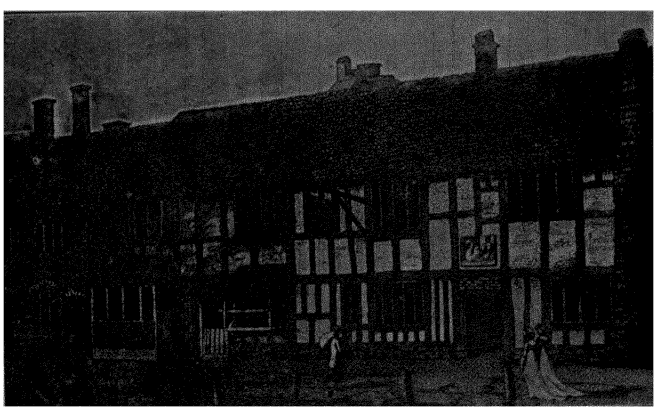
We may believe that he was educated at the Stratford Free Grammar School, and that, too, is still standing. At eighteen he married Anne Hathaway, who lived at the adjoining village of Shottery, and her cottage is still shown. At twenty he went to London and joined the band of actors and playwrights, Marlowe, Ben Jonson and the rest.

We have reason to believe that his first play was written when he was about twenty-six. Many plays followed, a number of sonnets, and some longer poems.

[1] The name is spelt Johnson on this stone, but he is always known as Ben Jonson.

He prospered, made money, and was able at last to return to Stratford and to purchase land, on which he built a house, known as New Place. The foundations of it are still to be seen, but the building is gone. Somewhere about 1611 he came to live in it, and in it, on April 23, 1616, he died.

He is buried in the chancel of Stratford Church.



SHAKESPERE'S BIRTHPLACE IN 1806.
(From Wheler's "Stratford.")

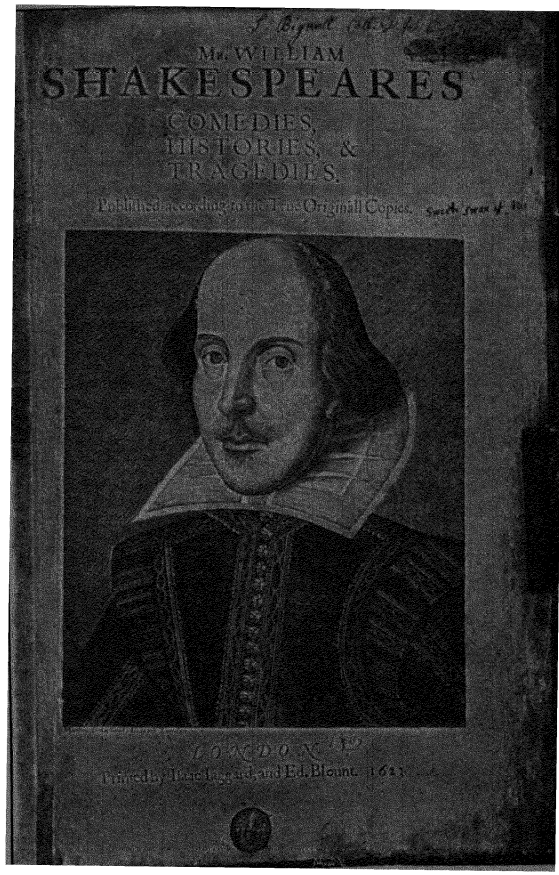
On the wall above the flat stone which covers his grave, a tablet was erected a few years after his death. On it are inscribed the date of his death some Latin lines, and six very poor lines in English. But though the lines are poor, they show what his contemporaries thought of Shakespere; show that his genius was already recognized. And from that day to this his fame has never grown less. He ranks with Homer and Æschylus, Virgil and Dante, as

among the indisputably greatest authors of the world.

No manuscript copies of his plays exist. During his lifetime many of them were printed singly in quarto size with his name on the title-page. These volumes are known in Shakesperean literature as the Quartos. The first Folio edition, which contained all the plays except *Pericles*, was published in 1623. They were apparently printed from his own manuscripts by his "friends and fellows," John Heminge and Henry Condell, who wrote, "we have scarce received from him a blot in all his papers." This is known as the First Folio. A second Folio was published in 1632, a third in 1663 and 1664, and a fourth in 1685. All of these folios are referred to in works on Shakespere. Some few of the plays which are included in his Works he only revised, or wrote in collaboration with some other playwright, Marlowe, or Fletcher. For his plots he was generally indebted to history or legend. Of the plays which are believed to be his work alone, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *As You Like It*, and *Twelfth Night* are the most generally beloved of his romances or comedies. Among his tragedies and historical plays, *Richard II.*, *Richard III.*, *Julius Cæsar* and *Coriolanus* rank high, while *Othello*, *King Lear*, *Macbeth* and *Hamlet* are among the finest tragedies in any language.

Around his plays and poems a literature has grown up. A library of no small size would be needed to contain all that has been written about them, and all the editions of them. These editions, with notes or without them, the volumes on his

mind, his art, his grammar, his heroes, his heroines,



TITLE-PAGE OF THE FIRST FOLIO, 1623.
(British Museum.)

his madmen, his fools, his songs, his knowledge and use of the Bible—these and a hundred other aspects

of his work have been made into books and would fill a spacious library, and this literature is still being added to. The last word on Shakespere seems as if it never could be said.

Before Shakespere's time two great poets had been buried in Westminster Abbey—Chaucer and Spenser—and it was beginning to be recognized that the Abbey was the national shrine for the great men of the nation. But we feel to-day, and Shakespere's contemporaries felt, that he who so towered above his fellows needed no Westminster Abbey to add to his fame. It was more fitting that he should be buried at Stratford with only a somewhat rude contemporary monument and coloured bust—one of the three known portraits of Shakespere—above his grave. In life none came near him as a poet: in death, too, he is apart, alone.

> "Under this carved marble of thine own
> Sleep, brave tragedian, Shakespeare, sleep alone."

His works were his best monument. In them he—

> ". . . sepulchred in such pomp doth lie
> That kings for such a tomb would wish to die."

21. Poetry of Ireland

In spite of the English colony in Ireland there was still a strong vernacular school of Irish poetry in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Spenser, in his prose dialogue, *A View of the Present State of Ireland*, written in 1596, speaks of the Bards, "which are to them instead of poets, whose profession is to set forth the praises and dispraises of men in their poems and rimes: the which are had

in so high request and estimation among them, that none dare to displease them." He also tells us that he had some of the Irish poems translated to him, and that they savoured a "sweet wit and good invention sprinkled with some pretty flowers of their natural device." It does not, indeed, convey much to us of the beauty of the Irish poetry of the time, but Spenser suffered from the fact that he could not read it in the Irish tongue. Scholarly and accurate as translations may be, they cannot reproduce the music of the original. That music must belong to the sound of the words themselves, and that cannot be reproduced in another tongue. The translation may have other music. It may accurately reproduce the measure and the thought of the original. But the original music can only be heard when listening to a poem in the language in which it was written. We must feel this in reading even the best and most learned translations of vernacular Irish verse.

At the time when Spenser was writing his *View*, Irish music was the fashion at the English Court. Elizabeth had Irish airs in her *Virginal Book*, and she even began to learn the Irish tongue. Irish music had indeed its peculiarities, as had Irish verse, and to some tradition of them we owe the wild plaintiveness of the modern "Irish melodies." Of the early Irish music, however, we know very little.

PART V

STUART LITERATURE

22. INTRODUCTION
23. AUTHORISED VERSION OF THE BIBLE
24. PROSE WRITERS, THEOLOGIANS AND HISTORIANS
25. MISCELLANEOUS PROSE OF THE PERIOD
26. POETRY OF THE PERIOD
27. MILTON

22. INTRODUCTION

THE literature of the early part of the reign of James I., with one noble exception, is dull. The king himself was indeed an author, and at nineteen had published a volume of poems and translations, and in his later years wrote on King-craft. But he was not a man of much real cultivation, although he liked to pose as a scholar, and there was little cultivation at his Court.

The reign of Charles I. saw a finer literature arise under a king who was all refinement and cultivation. The spirit of his troubled reign is beautifully reflected in Mr. J. H. Shorthouse's romance, *John Inglesant.*

If literature seemed almost at a standstill in the reign of James I., in other ways there were changes. Architecture settled down for the moment into the English Renaissance style, a style made up of reminiscences of classical and Gothic art, but with its own individuality and attaining very satisfactory results.

The appearance of the country was not yet that of our own days. There was much unenclosed land, grass, heather, fern, marsh and bog, and much woodland. Those English hedgerows which now délight the eyes of visitors from across the Atlantic were by no means as universal as they now are. Roads were

very bad, mere tracks indeed, and there was little attempt at scientific road-making. But the houses were picturesque, and the furniture even of the cottages was of good solid oak and much carved.

When we turn to the education of the late Tudor and early Jacobean days, we find that the free grammar schools were doing much for the education of the children of yeomen and those in trade. There were no restrictions indeed as to social standing, but the children of the poorer classes were too valuable as assistants at home and in the fields to be often allowed to avail themselves of an education which was otherwise within their reach.

These grammar schools taught reading, writing, arithmetic, and Latin. We are told that neighbours " of Shakespeare at Stratford, who were educated with him at the Grammar School and passed their days as grocers or butchers in the town," could correspond " with one another in copious and fluent Latin." [1]

If education was limited to certain classes, music belonged to all. There was much bell-ringing. There were bands of village musicians with violins, bass viols, tabors, pipes, flutes and oboes. The air must have been full of music, ballads in the wide chimney-corners of the cottages in winter or by the open doors in summer. And during the eleven years of the Commonwealth, although theatres were closed, music flourished. A large number of books of songs and of instrumental music were published. Masques were acted too, and it has been pointed out that these masques,

[1] *Great Englishmen of the Sixteenth Century :* Sidney Lee.

with their frequent music and dances, were forerunners of the opera. But the Opera itself had come: Evelyn writes in his Diary, of which we shall hear later, that on May 6, 1659, he went to see a new opera "after the Italian way, in recitative music and scenes, much inferior to the Italian composure and magnificence; but it was prodigious that in a time of such public consternation such a vanity should be kept up or permitted."

23. The Authorised Version of the Bible

No English prose or poetry is easy to read until we come to that of the sixteenth century. Up to, and past, Chaucer's time, it needs translating. The spelling, too, even far into the sixteenth century, is a perplexity.

But when the seventeenth century is reached we begin to be more at home. The language is English, not Middle English. The spelling is more that of our own time, although it had not even yet settled down into the present-day precise dictionary spelling.

It was just at this time, when Modern English was reached, that the Authorised Version of the Bible appeared, the one splendid exception to the dulness of the literature of the reign of James I. It was prepared by command of the king between the years 1607 and 1610. There had, as we know, been other translations. Wyclif in 1380, Tyndale in 1527, Miles Coverdale in 1535, had all published their translations, and in 1540 came what is known as the Great Bible, or Cranmer's Bible, because he wrote a preface to it. The

psalter in the present Book of Common Prayer follows the translation of Cranmer's Bible.

The Authorised Version of 1610, however, being that appointed to be read in churches, superseded every other, and its influence on English life and English literature was enormous. "As a mere literary monument," says the *Short History of the English People*, "the English version of the Bible remains the noblest example of the English tongue, while its perpetual use made it, from the instant of its appearance, the standard of our language."

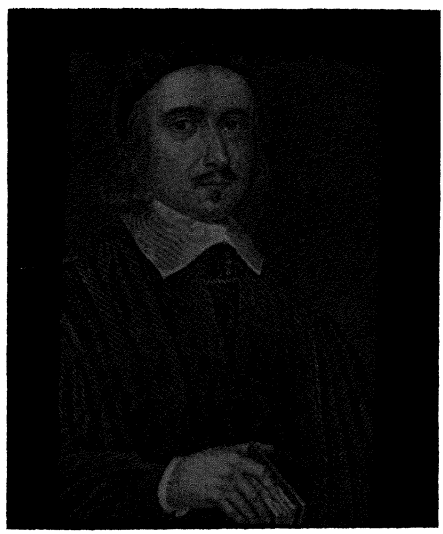
24. Prose Writers, Theologians and Historians

The list of theological writers in this period is headed by John Pearson (1613–1686). He was born at Snoring in Norfolk, educated at Eton and King's College, Cambridge, and later was Master of Trinity College and Bishop of Chester. He wrote a book on the Creed which still finds a place in every theological library.

Jeremy Taylor (1613–1667) represents all that was most cultivated and saintly in the Church of England in the seventeenth century. He was born at Cambridge. His father was a barber, but the boy went to Caius College, and later was Fellow of All Souls, Oxford. Then he became rector of Uppingham in Rutland, and appears to have left it to serve as a military chaplain in the Royal Army during the wars. He was taken prisoner at the defeat of the Royalists at Cardigan. Next he kept a school in remote Wales, and at one time was

given a home by Lord Carbery at Golden Grove in Carmarthenshire. In Wales he wrote his best known works.

After the Restoration, Taylor became Bishop of Down and Connor, and later the bishopric of Dromore was added to the two other sees. He



BISHOP JEREMY TAYLOR.
(From an old engraving.)

died at Lisburn in Ireland, and was buried in the Cathedral of Dromore.

Few prose writers in this or any period equal Bishop Taylor for charm of style and for curious, unexpected learning. But he is equally fond of the sights and sounds of nature, and perhaps one of the most beautiful passages in his works is the description of the flight of a lark—

" For so have I seen," he says, " a lark rising from his bed of grass and soaring upwards, singing as he rises and hopes to get to heaven, and climb above the clouds; but the poor bird was beaten back with the loud sighing of an eastern wind, and his motion made irregular and inconstant, descending more at every breath of the tempest, than it could recover by the libration and frequent weighing of his wings, till the little creature was forced to sit down and pant and stay till the storm was over; and then it made a prosperous flight, and did rise and sing as if it had learned music and motion from an angel as he passed sometimes through the air about his ministries here below."

But Taylor was also full of real and deep spirituality. He was spiritual adviser to many devout Cavaliers in those troublous times, among them John Evelyn, of whom we shall hear later, and though he wrote much, sermons, theological treatises and a Life of Christ, he is best remembered by his two books of devotion, *Holy Living* and *Holy Dying*.

Richard Baxter (1615–1691) was born at High Ercall in Shropshire. He took Orders and lived chiefly at Kidderminster. But as Taylor was sheltered during the war in a Royalist home, so Baxter was sheltered by the Roundhead owner of the beautiful old manor-house of Rouse-Lench among the Worcestershire hills. There, under the shade of a yew avenue which is still standing, and in the house which remains much as it was in the seventeenth century, Baxter wrote some portion

at least of his work, *The Saints' Everlasting Rest.*

It was as popular with many generations of the poor as Taylor's *Holy Living* had been among the rich. Like Taylor's works, it echoes the sorrows of that time of war. " O the sad and heart-rending spectacles," he writes, " that our eyes have seen in this fair year's space. In this fight a dear friend is slain; scarce a week, scarce a month, without the sight or noise of blood; surely there is none of this in heaven. Our eyes shall then be filled no more, nor our hearts pierced with such dreadful sights. Our eyes shall never more behold the earth covered with the carcases of the slain. Our mourning attire shall then be turned into white robes and garments of gladness."

Among theological writers Ralph Cudworth (1617–1688) should be remembered, not so much for his best known book, *The True Intellectual System of the Universe,* but because he represented the so-called Neo-Platonists of England. They were a school of thinkers who followed the Greek philosopher Plato in believing that the world was instinct with the soul of God Himself, and that men could rise by a holy life to a share in that Divine Essence.

Among chroniclers or historians of this period comes Thomas May (1595–1650). He was secretary to Parliament in the reign of Charles I. He wrote a *History of the Parliament of England which began Nov. 3, MDCXL.* That Parliament was the Long Parliament, and May's contemporary history of it is of great value.

Thomas Fuller (1608–1661) writes in a pleasant

style and one peculiar to himself. He was born at Aldwinkle St. Peter's in Northamptonshire, and went to Queens' College and Sidney Sussex, Cambridge. He wrote a *Church History of Britain*, published in 1656, a *History of the Worthies of England*, which was not published until after his death, and other works.[1]

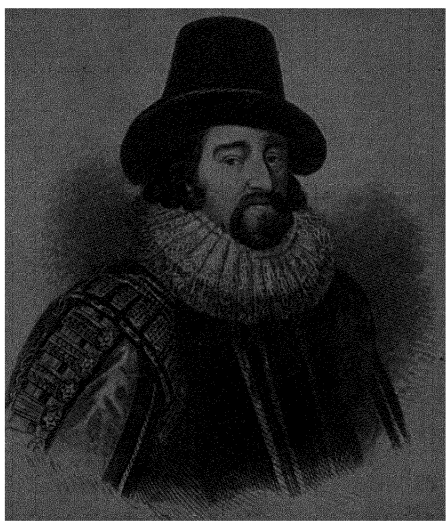
Fuller's information is universal and extensive, and his style bright and unstudied. He cannot resist a joke, and when reading his works we are always expecting the "quip" with which he ends so many of his sentences. He was also fond of aphorism, short pointed sayings of which perhaps the most memorable are, "Is there no way of bringing home a wandering sheep but by worrying it to death?" and "Scoff not at the natural defects of any which are not in their power to amend. Oh, 'tis cruelty to beat a cripple with his own crutches!"

25. Miscellaneous Prose of the Period

In reviewing the prose of this period there is necessarily some overlapping, and some of the first names now to be mentioned belong as much to the former period as to that which we are now considering. This is most true of Francis Bacon (1561–1626), an author who is often erroneously called Lord Bacon. He was first Sir Francis Bacon, and later Baron Verulam, and later again Viscount St. Albans. He was educated at Trinity College, Cambridge, was member for Melcombe, a Queen's

[1] His *Holy and Profane State* contains sketches of historic characters.

Counsel, and in turn Attorney-General, Lord Keeper, and finally Lord High Chancellor. His great works, *The Advancement of Learning*, written in English, and the *Novum organum* and *Historia naturalis et experimentalis*, were really pathetic appeals for the,



LORD CHANCELLOR BACON.
(From an old engraving.)

as yet almost unknown, advance of scientific research. But while pleading for research, he had not advanced beyond the science of his day, and dogmatically asserted that belief in the motion of the earth was false.

His *New Atlantis* is a fable of a nation in the far southern seas, but Christian, civilized, scientific, and with "some degree of flying in the air," and

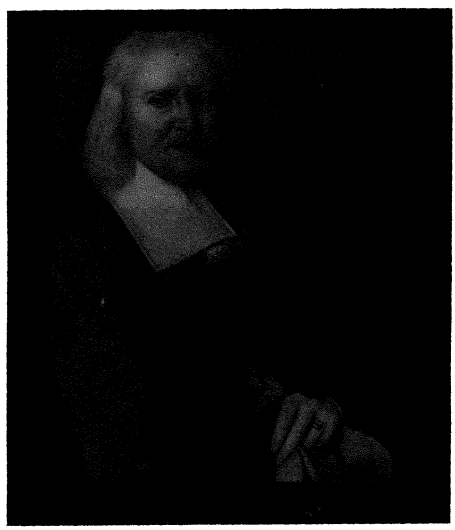
" with Ships and Boats for going under water." But to the general reader the gem of Bacon's writings is his little book of *Essays*. It is full of sayings which are remembered for their felicitous literary style as well as their quaint common sense. And of all the essays perhaps that " Of Gardens " is the most beloved. " God Almighty," it says, " first planted a garden. And indeed it is the purest of human pleasures."

No history of literature would be complete without notice of Robert Burton (1577–1640) and his one great book, *The Anatomy of Melancholy*. He was educated at Nuneaton and Coldfield schools, and at Brasenose College, Oxford, and was a student of Christchurch. He took Holy Orders and held two livings, but lived at Oxford. His book, his one book, is a treatise on every kind of melancholy and the remedies; it is full of learning and anecdote, and wonderfully little dull in spite of its subject. His face, pleasant and not at all melancholy, looks down on us from his picture at Brasenose College.

Thomas Hobbes (1588–1679) was born at Malmesbury and educated at Magdalen Hall, Oxford. He wrote a very long philosophical work, *Leviathan*, against the doctrine of the Divine right of kings. He had been tutor to Charles II. when Prince of Wales, and was granted a pension at the Restoration. Mr. Shorthouse, in *John Inglesant*, describes Hobbes as he describes so many of the great men of the time. He was " tall and very erect, with a square, mallet-shaped head and ample forehead," and with hazel eyes which " shone with lively light."

Another prose writer who was born in 1593 but lived into the Restoration period, dying in 1683, was

Izaak Walton. He was born at Stafford, went to London, lived in Fleet Street "two doors west of Chancery Lane," and was a shopkeeper—a hosier says one authority, an ironmonger says another. He at any rate made money, and was able to live in comfort, ranking among his friends Ben Jonson



IZAAK WALTON.
(From the portrait by Jacob Huysman.)

and the poet Donne, who was vicar of St. Dunstan's, Fleet Street. His remembered works are his *Lives* of George Herbert, Donne, Hooker and other men of his day, and *The Compleat Angler.*

Sir Thomas Browne (1605–1682), a writer as full of unusual learning as Burton or Bishop Taylor, was educated at Winchester and Oxford, and took a doctor's degree at Leyden. He spent nearly all

his life at Norwich, and is buried at St. Peter Mancroft in that city, with a tablet in the Renaissance style of art over his tomb. He is chiefly remembered as the author of *Religio Medici*, the Physician's Religion, but he wrote other works also. His style is his own, and his books are full of rememberable passages. In a time of civil dissension he preserved sweetness and tolerance, and set down his opinions on religion in exquisite sentences, using " exotic " words such as arefaction, exility, incrassated, iterately, supputation, and the like.

The *Religio* has indeed been beloved. Johnson, of whom we shall hear later, speaks of " the novelty of the paradoxes, the dignity of the sentiment, the quick succession of images, the multitude of abstruse allusions, the subtilty of the disquisition and the strength of language." Charles Lamb delighted in its " beautiful obliquities." Coleridge called it " a most delicious book."

26. Poetry of the Period

The years from 1603 to 1660 saw some fine poetry. Taking poets who wrote on religious subjects we begin with George Herbert (1593–1633). His life has been told by Izaak Walton. He was born at Montgomery Castle in Wales, the same year as Walton, and was educated at Westminster and at Trinity College, Cambridge. He at first hesitated as to taking Orders—

> " Whereas my birth and spirit rather took
> The way that takes the Town,
> Thou didst betray me to a lingering look
> And wrap me in a gown."

But it was his vocation to be a priest, and thousands have been attracted to the little village of Bemerton near Salisbury, which was his cure for three years before his death, and many, too, have been attracted to the less well known Layton Ecclesia



GEORGE HERBERT.
(From an old engraving.)

near Huntingdon, the church of which was rebuilt by him in the architecture of the Stuart period.

His poems are his best monument. They are full of his own eager spirituality, full, too, of the refinement of the fine gentleman, who had thrown off " his sword and silk clothes " to " wrap him in a gown." In every page there is something sweet,

sparkling, musical, and haunting the memory. They are full of what his age called "conceits" and "quips," sweet fanciful playing with words and thoughts, as when, with the longing to be holier in his mind, he says—

"I read and sigh and wish I were a tree,
For sure, then, I should grow
To fruit or shade; at least some bird would trust
Her household to me, and I should be just."

In his search for peace he

"did a rainbow note:
Surely, thought I,
This is the lace of Peace's coat;
I will search out the matter.
But while I looked, the clouds immediately
Did break and scatter."

It has been said of Herbert that he finishes a poem "like a cameo," and that some of his poems outdo the elaborated verse of the troubadours. In one of these, of which we give one stanza, each line in each stanza ends with the same word throughout the five stanzas, and the repetition of the sounds chime "like a silver bell" in our ear—

"Holiness on the head;
Light and perfection in the breast;
Harmonious bells below, raising the dead
To lead them unto life and rest:
Thus are true Aarons drest."

Richard Crashaw (? 1613–1649) was educated at Charterhouse and Pembroke Hall, Cambridge, became a Fellow of Peterhouse, refused to sign the Solemn League and Covenant, was expelled, went abroad and joined the Church of Rome. He

died a canon of the Church of Loreto. His book, *Steps to the Temple*, was an imitation of Herbert's *Temple*, but lacks Herbert's charm. As has been said, he does " not burn with a steady fire," but he sometimes flames up into " music and passion" for divine things.

Henry Vaughan (1622–1695) rises higher as a poet than Crashaw : some think he is superior even to Herbert. He was born at Newton by Usk, Brecknockshire, and lived in the neighbourhood all his life. He called himself the " Silurist," from the tribe of the Silures who had once inhabited South Wales. His most famous book was published in 1650, *Silex Scintillans*, the scintillating flint, the flinty heart of man with its capability for spiritual sparks of divine love.

Vaughan is often singularly modern in his thoughts and in his versification. Few poets have so well fulfilled his own words; few can so

> " Transcend our wonted themes
> And into glory peep."

It is difficult to quote where so much is beautiful, but perhaps the favourite poem will always be, " They are all gone into a World of Light "—

> " They are all gone into a world of Light,
> And I alone sit lingering here;
> Their very memory is fair and bright,
> And my sad thoughts doth cheer."

Among lesser poets who wrote chiefly on sacred subjects we must remember the two Fletchers, Francis Quarles, William Habington and George Wither. Phineas (1582–1650) and Giles Fletcher

(? 1588–1623), both in Orders, both poets, were the sons of another Giles Fletcher and cousins of John Fletcher the dramatist. The elder Giles published a collection of sonnets in 1593 under the title, *Licia.* Phineas the son was born at Cranbrook in Kent, and was educated at Eton and Cambridge. His chief work was *The Purple Island,* an allegorical poem on the human body. Of Phineas, Giles wrote—

> " The Kentish lad, that lately taught
> His oaten reed the trumpet's silver sound."

But though there is a certain sweetness about some of his poems, it is the sweetness only of the " oaten reed." Giles was more of a poet. He chose a higher theme. His most important work was written when he was six-and-twenty, and bears the title, *Christ's Victory and Triumph in Heaven and Earth.* Some of it is very sweet and musical.

George Wither (1588–1667) was another poet who wrote on sacred subjects. He was born at Brentworth in Hampshire. He took the side of the Commonwealth, wrote satires on the abuses of the day, was imprisoned in the Marshalsea, and went on writing in the same strain. It is said that no library in England possesses a complete collection of his voluminous works. His *Emblems* were written to illustrate a series of woodcuts. The volume called *Hallelujah* contains some really fine poems.

But Wither was not only a poet. It has been said of him that, like " the Charmides of Plato's dialogues, he has 'what is much more important, a beautiful soul.' Never was there a purer or more

honourable spirit, or one which kept closer to the best it knew . . ." [1]

Although Wither is classed among religious poets, he is also remembered for his brilliant little song—

" Shall I, wasting in despaire,
Die because a woman's fair?
What care I how fair she be,
So she be not fair to me."

Wither was buried in the old-world chapel of the Savoy, London.

Francis Quarles (1592–1644) was born near Romford in Essex, had a post in the household of Elizabeth, Queen of Bohemia, and later was Secretary to Archbishop Ussher in Ireland. Quarles wrote many sacred poems, now forgotten, but his *Emblems Divine and Moral*, a book of pictures with moral interpretations of them somewhat similar to Wither's book of emblems, was long popular. He was a Royalist, and was ruined in the Civil Wars.

William Habington (1605–1654) also lived through troublous times of the wars, and also wrote poems, many of them on sacred subjects. He came of a Worcestershire family whose home was the manor-house of Hindlip, which, he says—

" doth not want extent
Of room (though not magnificent)."

Habington was a devout Romanist, and such of his poems as were not written in praise of his wife, Castara as he called her, were on sacred subjects.

[1] "The English Poets." Ed. T. H. Ward. *Wither:* W. T. Arnold.

They are curiously unequal. " Patches " of beauty such as—

" Where sleeps the north-wind when the south inspires
Life in the spring, and gathers into quires
The scatter'd nightingales,"

occur among many poor lines.

Sir Walter Raleigh, who has been noticed among prose writers in a former period, was a poet as well as a writer of prose. His most beautiful lines are those said to have been composed the night before his execution in 1618—

" E'en such is Time, which takes on trust
Our youth, our joys, our all we have,
And pays us but with earth and dust;
Who in the dark and silent grave,
When we have wandered all our ways,
Shuts up the story of our days :
But from this earth, this grave, this dust,
My God shall raise me up, I trust."

To turn to other poets of the age, first in order of date comes William Browne (1591–1643). He was born at Tavistock, and went to Exeter College, Oxford, and afterwards to the Inner Temple. Among his friends were Ben Jonson, Chapman, Drayton and Wither. He is indeed one of the lesser poets, but in his *Britannia's Pastorals* and his *Shepherd's Pipe* he has pleasantly described country scenes and sounds.

Thomas Carew (? 1598–? 1639) wrote bright little lyrics which were set to music by those famous composers of airs, William and Henry Lawes. Among many the chief favourite, perhaps, will always be—

"Ask me no more where Jove bestows,
When June is past, the fading rose,
For in your beauty's orient deep
These flowers, as in their causes, sleep."

The life of Sir John Suckling (?1609–1642), another of the lyrists, was a romance. He was born at Whitton, was well educated, accomplished and rich. At nineteen he travelled in France, Italy, Germany and Spain, fought for the king of Sweden, returned to London, spent even his enormous fortune, took the side of the king when the war began, and when all was over went to France and Spain, where he was tortured by the Inquisition. He escaped and fled to Paris, where he died. He left but little poetry of any value, but that little shows what he might have done had he lived in less stirring times. He is remembered by some very charming verses, "A Ballad upon a Wedding," in which occur the often-quoted lines—

"Her feet, beneath her petticoat,
Like little mice stole in and out,
As if they feared the light."

Another memorable poet of the time, Samuel Butler (1612–1680), was born at Strensham in Worcestershire. His great poem of *Hudibras*, in eight-syllabled metre, was a fierce satire on the Puritans. There was little story in the poem. The Puritan knight, Sir Hudibras, rides out to fight superstition, or what he thinks to be superstition, as a knight-errant in earlier days would ride out to redress human wrong. The poem is very long, and indeed was never finished. Johnson, of whom we shall read later, says of it, "By the first

paragraph the reader is amused, by the next he is delighted, and by a few more constrained to astonishment. But astonishment is a tiresome pleasure; he is soon weary of wondering and longs to be diverted." In spite of this criticism, however, Butler is sometimes diverting, and many of his lines have become stock quotations.



SAMUEL BUTLER.
(From an engraving.)

The life of Sir Richard Lovelace (1618–1658) was also full of event and action. He was born at Woolwich, and went to Charterhouse and to Oxford. He was a favourite at Court, and a contemporary tells us that his manners were "incomparably graceful," and he "was so handsome as to be known among his friends as Adonis." He went with Charles I. to Scotland in 1639, to the not very successful Bishop's Wars, but he was more honour-

ably distinguished by being chosen in 1642 to present the Kentish Petition to Parliament, and for this he was sent to the Gatehouse Prison, as he no doubt expected to be. Later he joined the French army, was wounded and supposed to be dead, whereupon the lady to whom he was engaged, Lucy Sacheverell, the Lucasta of his poems, married some one else. On his return to England he was soon once more a political prisoner, and is said to have died of want in a "cellar" in "Gunpowder Alley near Shoe Lane" in London.

Very few poets surpass Lovelace in the finish of his best verse. He wrote but little, and some of that little is poor. But such lines as those "To Lucasta, on going to the Wars"—

> "I could not love thee, dear, so much,
> Loved I not honour more,"

or those "To Anthea, in Prison"—

> "Stone walls do not a prison make,
> Nor iron bars a cage;
> Minds innocent and quiet take
> That for an hermitage,"

are as haunting as any lines in the English language.

Abraham Cowley (1618–1667) was born in London, and was educated at Westminster and at Trinity College, Cambridge. He wrote poetry when he was ten, and published a volume of poems when he was fifteen. He was a Royalist, and was Secretary to Charles I. and Henrietta Maria. Charles Lamb, of whom we shall read later, said that Cowley's name was "one of the sweetest" among poets, and carried "a perfume in the mention." But he is now but little read. In his own day he

had a short popularity which soon faded. "Who now reads Cowley?" wrote the poet Pope in the eighteenth century. Samuel Johnson, however, believed that he was the first poet who imparted to English verse "the enthusiasm of the greater ode and the gaiety of the less," and that he "enabled succeeding poets to improve it." If he may indeed be credited with having introduced the Ode into English poetry—an Ode being an elaborated poem on some high subject—then indeed he is to be remembered as at least an influence in English literature, if not himself a great poet.

Andrew Marvell (1621–1678) was so much the poet of Cromwell's time that he must be included among pre-Restoration singers.

He was born at Winstead near Hull, and was educated at Trinity College, Cambridge. For five years he travelled on the Continent, spending some years in Rome. In 1650 he became tutor to the daughter of the Parliamentary General, Fairfax, who was closing his stirring life in the quiet of the country at Nun Appleton in Yorkshire. Here Marvell wrote his country poems, which show an observation of nature that was much in advance of his age. He sees the herons teaching their young to fly by letting them fall—

> "The heron, from the ash's top,
> The eldest of its young lets drop,"

watches the woodpeckers at work, and "through the hazels thick" can see—

> "The hatching throstle's shining eye."

But he is best remembered now by the "Emigrant's

Song," beginning, " Where the remote Bermudas ride," by his Horatian ode on Cromwell's return from his Irish campaign, and by his lines on the execution of Charles I. It was natural that he should pay compliments to Cromwell, but it is surprising to find the Parliamentarian writing of the king as beautifully as he does—

" He nothing common did, or mean,
Upon that memorable scene,
But with his keener eye
The axe's edge did try;

Nor call'd the gods, in vulgar spite,
To vindicate his helpless right;
But bowed his comely head
Down, as upon a bed."

After the Restoration Marvell wrote many satires in prose, but if bitter he was yet honest. Charles II. saw his ability and made more than one attempt to win him and his pen to the Court party, but in vain.

Two poets, Sir William Davenant (1606–1668) and Sir John Denham (1615–1669), might be passed over, but that both wrote some pleasing trifles among many longer works. Davenant was the author of the lovely little song—

" The lark now leaves his wat'ry nest,
And climbing, shakes his dewy wings;
He takes your 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."

Denham wrote four lines addressed to the Thames in his poem, " Cooper's Hill," which have somehow been remembered when everything else he wrote has almost been forgotten—

" O could I flow like thee, and make thy stream
My great example, as it is my theme;
Though deep yet clear, though gentle yet not dull,
Strong without rage, without o'erflowing, full."

27. MILTON

Although Milton lived into the first fourteen years of the Restoration, he, like Marvell, naturally falls into the period of Puritan ascendency.

John Milton was born in Bread Street, Cheapside, in 1608. He went to St. Paul's School at twelve, and at seventeen to Christ's College, Cambridge, where his fair complexion, his " delicate and tunable voice," and his refinement, gained him the title of " The Lady of Christ's." He remained seven years at Cambridge, and then went to live with his father at the little village of Horton in Buckinghamshire, remained there for seven years, and then travelled in Italy. News of the Civil War in England led him to shorten his travels. " The melancholy intelligence," he wrote later in one of his controversial prose works, " which I received of the Civil commotion in England, made me alter my purpose; for I thought it base to be travelling for amusement abroad while my fellow-citizens were fighting for liberty at home."

On his return he joined eagerly in the controversies of the time, writing on the side of the Parliament, and serving as Latin Secretary to Cromwell. In 1654 he became blind. In 1674 he died at his house in Bunhill Fields, and was buried at St. Giles, Cripplegate.

One of Milton's early poems is called " At a

Solemn Music." The word "solemn" describes not only Milton's poetry (with one exception, "L'Allegro"), but it describes Milton himself. He started life with the belief that he was going to write a great poem. He took a solemn view of the preparation which he thought necessary for this—

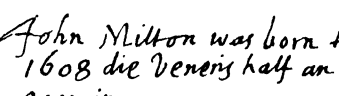


JOHN MILTON.
(From the engraving by Faithorne.)

"devout prayer to that Eternal Spirit who can enrich us with all utterance and knowledge, and sends out His seraphim with the hallowed fire of the altar to touch and purify the lips of whom He pleases." Self-discipline, too, was part of his preparation. "He who would not be frustrate of his hope to write well hereafter in laudable things," he says, "ought himself to be a true poem; that is,

a composition and pattern of the best and honourablest things; not presuming to sing high praises of historic men, or famous cities, unless he have in himself the experience and practice of all which is praiseworthy."

With such high ideals he set out on his work. The theme he ultimately chose for his, as he believed, greatest poem, was chosen late, and was nothing less than the fall and redemption of man—Paradise Lost and Regained—nothing less seemed worthy of his life's preparations. But splendid as are the *Paradise Lost* and the *Paradise*



Record of the birth of John Milton, from the family Bible.

Regained, it is his earlier poems that most live in our recollections. The world would be a poorer place without "At a Solemn Music" or "Lycidas," without such lines as—

> "That undisturbèd song of pure content,
> Aye sung before the sapphire-coloured throne
> To Him that sits thereon,
> With saintly shout and solemn jubilee."

Or—

> "Fame is no plant that grows on mortal soil,
> Nor in the glistering foil
> Set off to the world, nor in broad rumour lies;
> But lives and spreads aloft by those pure eyes
> And perfect witness of all-judging Jove;
> As he pronounces lastly on each deed,
> Of so much fame in heaven expect thy meed."

Of such things Milton's earlier poems are full. His sonnets, too, are very beautiful, the best known, perhaps, being those beginning, "Avenge, O Lord, Thy slaughtered saints," and "When I consider how my light is spent." Of his sonnets a later poet wrote—

> "in his hand
> The thing became a trumpet whence he blew
> Soul-animating strains, alas, too few."

Shakespere stands alone, but Milton ranks next to Shakespere as our greatest English poet.

PART VI

THE AGE OF DRYDEN

28. INTRODUCTION
29. PROSE OF THE PERIOD
30. TWO FAMOUS DIARISTS
31. JOHN BUNYAN
32. POETRY OF THE PERIOD
33. JOHN DRYDEN

28. Introduction

The period of literature which we are now about to consider is a short one, lasting only from 1660 to 1702. But it is well to take these few years separately, because they form an epoch between two epochs, between the last of the writers of the Renaissance and the incoming of the "Augustan" age. They saw the beginnings of the highly finished poetry of that age.

So far it seems as if poets had written as they would, nature, and not art, guiding them. The new school of poetry was to leave "the native wood-notes wild" of the Elizabethan school, to write by rule, and to write of the artificial life of a great city, and not of anything wider or more beautiful.

We are, then, to expect to find in the new poetry finished workmanship, correct versification, an often exquisitely neat and happy turn of expression, and, for subjects, man and his social and political life. But the old gaiety and sweetness of the earlier poetry are gone.

The history of the years from 1660 to 1702 was eventful. They saw the reign of Charles II., of James II., and of William and Mary. They saw the Great Plague and the Fire of London. They saw changes in social manners and in dress. The theatres had been closed by the Puritan Parlia-

ment, although the Puritan Milton wrote one of the most beautiful of "Masques," that of *Comus*, and the opera had come to England from Italy. With the Restoration the theatres reopened, and Pepys says they were "a thousand times better and more glorious than heretofore." The gardens at Vauxhall were popular, and so, too, was St. James's Park when Charles II. or the Duke of York walked in it.

Dress changed very much between the reign of Charles I. and that of William and Mary. The doublet gave way to knee breeches and a form of coat and waistcoat began to be worn. Wigs came into fashion, and "patches" were worn by all ladies who wished to be in the "mode."

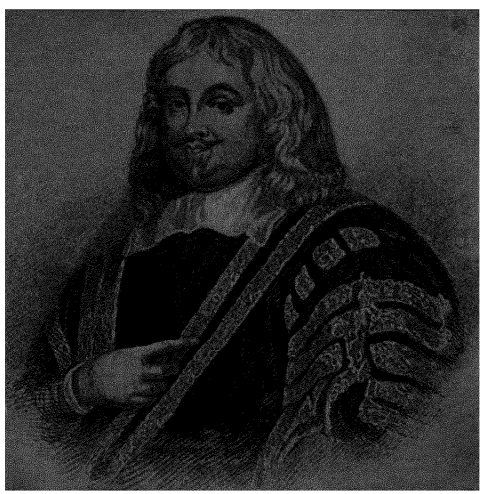
In the architecture of the period, Sir Christopher Wren stands easily first, and the destruction of the City churches in the Fire of London gave him a great opportunity of showing his fertility of design, not one of his many churches being a replica of another, and all of them admirable.

29. Prose of the Period

A number of theological writers appear in this period of whom it is well to know the names: Isaac Barrow, John Tillotson, Edward Stillingfleet, William Sherlock and Robert South. All but the last are to our modern ideas somewhat dull, and certainly very lengthy, preachers: Barrow on one occasion preached for three hours and a half. South (1633–1716) was certainly not dull. Royalist High Churchmen must have smiled at that marvellous sermon

in which South described Cromwell as the man who exchanged his hat, and that, "perhaps, old and greasy," for a crown. South was, indeed, often guilty of bad taste, and he hit hard, but he was never dull.

Among historians of this and the preceding age is



EDWARD HYDE, EARL OF CLARENDON.
(After the portrait by Sir Peter Lely.)

Edward Hyde, Lord Clarendon (1609–1674), father of the first wife of James II., and companion to Charles II. when Prince of Wales. His *History of the Rebellion and Civil Wars in England* was begun in the year 1641, and is valuable because part of it at least was written during the war which it describes, and in which the author was taking part.

Clarendon's character-drawing is clear and good.

We know Hampden, we know Lord Falkland, we know Charles I. the better for Clarendon's description of them. In one sentence he has supplied us with the secret of Charles's misfortunes. "He had," says Clarendon, "an excellent understanding, but was not confident enough of it; which made him oftentimes change his own opinion for a worse, and follow the advice of men that did not judge as well as himself. This made him more irresolute than the conjuncture of his affairs would admit; if he had been of a rougher and more imperious nature, he would have found more respect and duty."

Some writers on antiquities who, like Clarendon, belong both to this and the preceding period, should be noticed. Sir William Dugdale (1605–1686) wrote the first three volumes of a book on monasteries called *Monasticon Anglicanum*. He was assisted by John Aubrey (1626–1697), a man of leisure with estates in many counties, and who also wrote a *History of Surrey* and a book of *Miscellanies* which is full of stories of apparitions and other marvels. Anthony Wood (1632–1695) wrote a book on authors who had been educated at Oxford which he called *Athenæ Oxoniensis*, and a history of the University. The first of these books was considered to have libelled the late Chancellor, Lord Clarendon, and Wood was expelled from the University and his book publicly burnt.

Among philosophical writers of this period John Locke (1632–1704) is honourably remembered for his *Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, and the clear intellect which produced it. But while

he himself is possessed of this clarity of thought, the whole book is a protest against a belief in man's power of universal comprehension of the mysteries around him.

It may be called a treatise insistent on the limitations of the human intellect. He wishes men to " distinguish between what is and what is not comprehensible by us." " I think," he says in one place, " not only that it becomes the modesty of philosophy not to pronounce magisterially where we want that evidence that can produce knowledge; but also that it is of use to us to discern how far our knowledge does reach; for the state we are at present in, not being that of vision, we must in many things content ourselves with faith and probability." Considering the deep matters on which Locke writes, his style is remarkably clear and easy to be understood.

Among miscellaneous prose writers of the period, two diplomatists must be mentioned: Sir William Temple and Lord Halifax.

Sir William Temple (1628–1699) made a name for himself in his own day as a politician, perhaps as an opportunist, and is now chiefly remembered by his essays, published under the name of *Miscellanea*, and some few other works. He ended his days at Moor Park, in Surrey, the garden of which he describes in his essay on " Gardening." One sentence at least of Temple's lives in our remembrance: " 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."

Sir William Temple married Dorothy Osborne, whose letters to him give her a worthy place in literature.

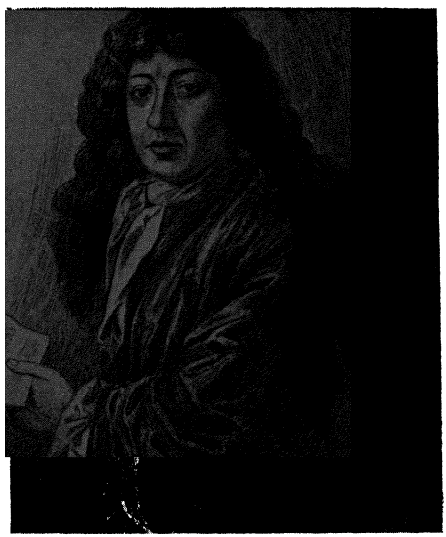
George Savile (1630–1695), Marquis of Halifax, is another author who, like Temple, has a place in English political history as well as in literature. He left behind him some short treatises, of which the best known is the *Character of a Trimmer*.

30. Two Famous Diarists

Among the prose works of this period are the often quoted Diaries of Samuel Pepys (1633–1703) and John Evelyn (1620–1706). Pepys was the son of a retired London tailor who lived at Brampton near Huntingdon, in a house which is still standing. Young Pepys went to Cambridge, and later became Clerk of the Acts of the Navy, the Admiralty as we should now call it. He showed much shrewd, practical ability, and was evidently valued by those equally shrewd men, Charles II. and the Duke of York. The *Diary* was written in cypher, and gives a faithful and detailed account of the life of his day. Pepys himself was a strange mixture of shrewdness and simplicity. He is delighted with his fine clothes, with the place in society that he reaches, with the great people he sees. "Easter Day. Up, and this day put on my close-kneed coloured suit, which, with new stockings of the colour, with belt, and new gilt-handled sword, is very handsome," he writes one day, and another: "Abroad with my wife the first time that I ever

rode in my own coach, which do make my heart rejoice."

In such gossiping strain does Pepys write, but his book at least reflects the time, and the less worthy aspects of the time too often.

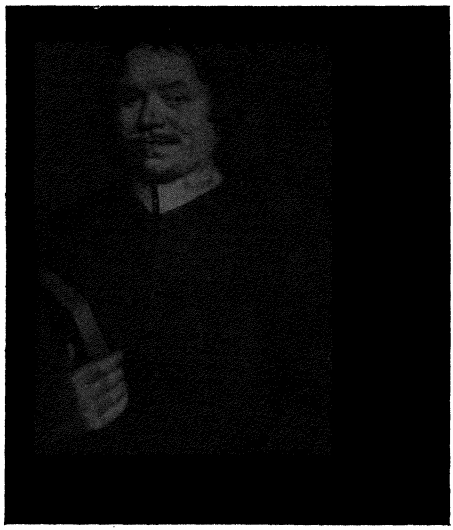


SAMUEL PEPYS.
(From the etching by C. O. Murray, after John Hayls.)

John Evelyn was a man of far higher tone, but he has not Pepys' fresh, simple way of writing. Evelyn was born and lived at Sayes Court near Deptford, where he died. His hobby was gardening and planting trees, and he wrote a book on arboriculture called *Sylva*, and other works on various subjects. But he is best remembered by his *Diary*, the work of an educated, cultivated, and serious-minded man.

31. John Bunyan

Perhaps the most remarkable prose writer of any age in England, certainly the most remarkable in the age of which we are now reading, was the



JOHN BUNYAN.
(From the portrait by T. Sadler.)

Puritan tinker, John Bunyan (1628–1688). He was born at Elstow in Bedfordshire, went to Bedford Grammar School, fought in the Civil War, became a preacher, was sent to Bedford Jail, and there wrote a book of poems for children called *Divine Emblems*, which has been forgotten, and a book called *The Pilgrim's Progress from this World to that which is to Come, delivered under the Similitude of a Dream*, which has been remembered as one of the greatest

works in the English language. Bunyan's genius lies in his extraordinary power of making his characters live. We know them as if they were acquaintances, as if we lived among them. The "very brisk lad whose name was Ignorance," Mr. Despondency and his daughter Miss Much-afraid, who behave themselves "troublesomely in every company," Mr. Inconsiderate, Mrs. Know-nothing, the young woman named Dull, Mr. Talkative who dwelt in Prating Row, and is for "any company and for any talk"— we know them all. The book, too, is full of descriptions which take hold of the imagination: the Chamber "named Peace, whose window opened to the sun rising," the House Beautiful with its sweet restfulness, the Delectable Mountains, the Valley of Humiliation green and beautified with lilies, where the shepherd's boy sings—

"He that is down need fear no fall,
He that is low no pride."

The *Pilgrim's Progress* is indeed a wonderful book, full of humour, often full of poetry, full of human nature. It is beloved by scholars and by cottagers. It has found its way into the heart of English-speaking people. The world would have been poorer if John Bunyan had never "walked through the wilderness of this world," and fashioned his great dream.

32. Poetry of the Period

The poets of this short period are few. Two of them, Robert Herrick (1591–1674) and Edmund

Waller (1605–1687), should have been included in the preceding period if date alone had been considered. But the spirit of their poetry was that of the Restoration rather than that of the period which preceded it. Herrick was born in London and died at Dean Prior in Devonshire at the age of eighty-three. He wrote much, some twelve hundred poems, mostly short lyrics and shorter couplets. They are collected in two volumes, *Hesperides* (so called because it was written in Devonshire, the West of England) and *Noble Numbers*, which contains his sacred poems. In his youth he lived in London among literary men. In his later life he was exiled, as he thought, to a country living in Devonshire. He grumbled, but the country supplied him with all the best themes for his poetry.

> " I sing of Brooks, of Blossoms, Birds and Bowers,
> Of April, May, of June, of July Flowers."

Among his poems are many that are often quoted and always charm: some, too, that are very regrettable, and for which in his *Noble Numbers* he asks absolution—

> " For those my unbaptized rhymes,
> Writ in my wild, unhallow'd times."

Among the oftenest quoted of his poems is the " Daffodils "—

> " Fair Daffodils, we weep to see
> You haste away so soon;
> As yet the early rising sun
> Has not attain'd his noon.

Stay, stay,
Until the hasting day
Has run
But to the Even-song;
And, having pray'd together, we
Will go with you along."

The charming song, " To Anthea, who may command him anything," is another of Herrick's best-known poems.

Edmund Waller was born at Coleshill in Buckinghamshire. He was the poet of the Court and of society. Strangely few of his poems stay in our memories. They were good, but they were chiefly what we know as " topical " poems, " poems inspired by some event of the moment."

He complimented Cromwell, he complimented Charles II. Charles thought he did better in the poem to Cromwell than in that to the king himself. " Poets succeed better in fiction than in truth," said Waller, who above all things was courtier. The side-lights on the life of the age which these society verses supply are useful to students of history, but they have not the charm of his almost matchless lyric with its sad cadence—

" Go, lovely rose!
Tell her that wastes her time, and me,
That now she knows
When I resemble her to thee,
How sweet and fair she seems to be."

That, indeed, is remembered when all the society verses are forgotten.

Waller died at Beaconsfield in Buckinghamshire, and is buried there in the churchyard under a marble altar tomb.

Some lesser poets of the period are now remembered by perhaps one song, one lyric. Charles Sackville, Earl of Dorset (1637–1706), wrote the "society" verses from sea—

> "To all you ladies now on land
> We men at sea indite;
> But first would have you understand
> How hard it is to write!"

Sir Charles Sedley (1639–1701) wrote the brilliant song—

> "Phillis is my only joy,
> Faithless as the winds or seas."

John Wilmot, Earl of Rochester (1647–1680), is remembered for his witty epitaph on Charles II.—

> "Here lies our sovereign lord the king,
> Whose word no man relies on;
> Who never said a foolish thing,
> And never did a wise one."

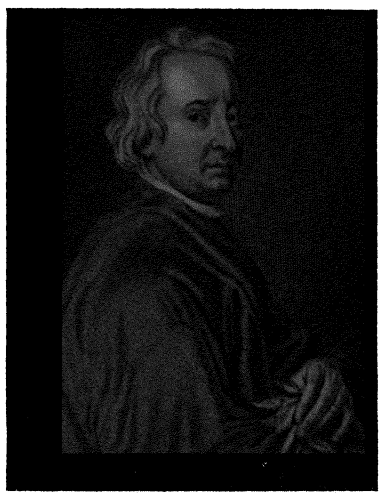
The Court of that king had in it many aspiring poets. "Without his song, no fop is found," wrote Lord Mulgrave, who was of the number of the fops who wrote poetry, and sometimes even good poetry.

Bishop Thomas Ken (1637–1711) has other claims to be remembered than the poets we have been considering. He wrote the well-known morning and evening hymns which are included in most hymnals, "using them himself and singing them to his lute." As a boy he lived with Izaak Walton, first at his shop in Fleet Street, and later on the banks of the Staffordshire Dove. Ken was one of the Seven Bishops who were sent to the Tower in the reign of James, and later was a non-juror. He

ended his days at Longleat House, the honoured guest of Lord Weymouth.

33. John Dryden

We close this period with one poet who stands alone with none near him in these years.



Jon. Dryden.

John Dryden (1631–1700) was born at Aldwinkle All Saints, Northamptonshire. He was educated at Westminster and Trinity College, Cambridge. He married Lady Elizabeth Howard, daughter of the Earl of Berkshire, was made poet laureate, wrote many plays, many "topical" verses, some lyrics of little worth, and some satires. In later

life he, too, like Herrick, regretted much that he had written.

> "How far have we
> Profaned Thy heavenly grace of poesy."

Two of his poems are still read: the *Song for St. Cecilia's Day* and the other ode for the same festival, *Alexander's Feast.*

In these we hear a pleasing poet. His political satire, *Absalom and Achitophel*—Absalom being the Duke of Monmouth, and Achitophel Lord Shaftesbury—is remembered at least by name, and so is "The Hind and the Panther," an allegory of the Roman Church which Dryden joined, and the English Church which he left.

Dryden was very popular in his own day, but when we think of his poetry to-day we feel that, although there are many fine lines in it, he was yet, as has been said, "only the greatest writer of a little age." The old charm of the unstudied Elizabethan poetry is not there.

Dryden died at his house in Gerard Street, Soho, now marked by a medallion, and was buried in Westminster Abbey.

PART VII

THE ENGLISH "AUGUSTAN" AGE

34. INTRODUCTION
35. PROSE OF THE PERIOD
36. POETRY OF THE PERIOD
37. NEWSPAPERS

34. Introduction

In this period again we are considering the literature of a few years only, but these years have a remarkable individuality of their own.

The reign of Queen Anne is known as the "Augustan" age of English literature. The Roman Augustan age, that of the reign of the Emperor Augustus, was indeed a Golden Age, an age of all that was best in classical literature. The writers of Queen Anne's time started with the idea that theirs too was to be an Augustan age, that there must be a return to classical ideals and poetic art.

It was an age in which all literature centred in London. If mankind had interested men in Restoration literature, mankind in an even narrower sense was the only subject with which literature concerned itself in the period we are considering. The man of the town was alone of power to interest. It was a narrow age, narrow in its outlook, narrow in its interests, but this very narrowness produced exquisite finish in literary work. The subject-matter of the verse was insignificant, the handling of it was often perfect.

Looked at from the distance of years, the age of Anne appears to be as artificial as its literature. It was an age of elaborated ceremony, dress, language, manner. Thackeray's *Esmond* is a study of the age, and shows it in all its artificiality, and

shows us, too, that under this artificiality human hearts were still beating.

It was, moreover, a time of fierce party spirit. In the Civil War, faction had worked itself off in good, hard fighting. In the age of Anne it showed itself in literature. Whigs and Tories alike bought the pens of poets and prose writers for their party, and men were not ashamed to sell their opinions and write for the highest bidders.

35. Prose of the Period

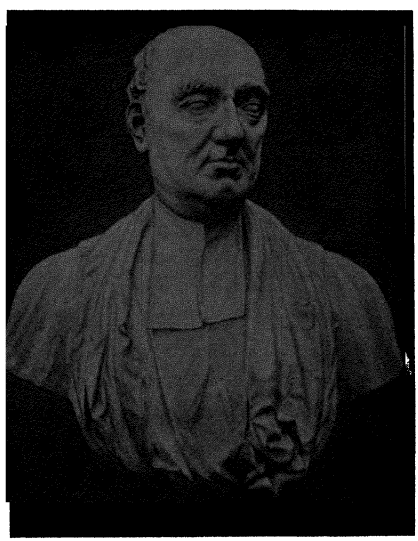
The fiercest of all the political writers of the age was Jonathan Swift (1667–1745). He was not an Irishman, although he was born in Ireland, educated at Kilkenny and Trinity College, Dublin, and was afterwards Dean of St. Patrick's. His life was a sad one, clouded by his own bitter spirit—bitterness with his lot, the world, politics, mankind—that bitterness which is even recorded on his tomb—

> " Ubi sæva indignatio
> Cor ulterius lacerare nequit."

He wrote first for the Tories, afterwards for the Whigs, and bitterly for both, as he always wrote. Little but the names of his books need now be remembered: the *Tale of a Tub*, the *Battle of the Books*, *Drapier's Letters* against Wood's famous Halfpence, and *Gulliver's Travels* to Lilliput, Brobdingnag, Laputa, and the Country of the Houyhnhnms, in which, under the guise of stories for children, he satirizes politics, manners, philosophy and mankind.

Only his letters, known as the *Journal to Stella*, show the better side of his nature, and make us feel with regret that the worst in his character seems to have triumphed, and not the best. He wrote some verse also.

A far pleasanter writer, a far happier man, was



JONATHAN SWIFT.
(From the bust by Cunningham, in St. Patrick's Cathedral, Dublin.)

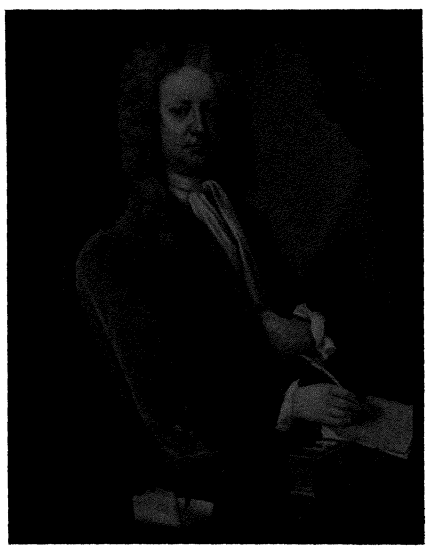
Joseph Addison (1672–1719). He was the son of a Dean of Lichfield. He was educated at Charterhouse and Queen's College and Magdalen, Oxford, of which he was Fellow, and where Addison's Walk still keeps his name in remembrance. He wrote a tragedy, *Cato*, but is best remembered as a writer of essays and of the beautiful hymns beginning—

" The spacious firmament on high,
With all the blue ethereal sky,"

and—

" The Lord my pasture shall prepare,
And feed me with a shepherd's care."

His essays appeared in the papers, published three



JOSEPH ADDISON.
(From the portrait by M. Dahl.)

days a week, the *Tatler* and the *Spectator*. Those essays make the world of Queen Anne live again for us—its Japanese cabinets, its china ornaments, its elaborate toilets, its daily life and interests and conversations, its fine ladies and gentlemen, and, more charming than all, Sir Roger de Coverley,

the guileless, simple, kindly country squire, and the pictures of the country life of his day which surround his portrait. The *Spectator* is full of humour, and although its object was to do people good, and by laughing at their follies to make them give them up, it did not offend and was not dull. Swift had launched out bitterly against abuses in words which were in themselves an abuse of language. Addison also dealt out satire, but with a quiet, humorous sweetness, and men loved him even while they knew he was reproving them. Few names in English literature stand higher than his—

" No whiter page than Addison remains."

Richard Steele (1672–1729) was born in Ireland. He was a schoolfellow of Addison's at Charterhouse, and they were contemporaries at Oxford. Steele was at Christchurch and Merton, and subsequently entered the army. To Steele belongs the honour of having originated the *Tatler* in 1709, the *Spectator*, which succeeded it, in 1711, and still later the less remembered *Guardian*. Both Addison and Steele wished by their writings to " promote noble things," as Steele said, and they are singularly free from the moral defects of too much of the literature of the period. Steele did not, indeed, always live up to his ideal, and when he wrote a Book of Devotions for Soldiers, which he called *The Christian Hero*, men were too ready to remember that he himself was not always a Christian hero. But he yet believed in noble things and wished to follow them. Some of his papers in the *Tatler*, in which

he first wrote under the name of Isaac Bickerstaff, a name also used by Swift, and in the *Spectator*, if possible surpass those of Addison. He also wrote some plays.

Steele left London in his later life and lived for some time at the little village of Llangunnor near Carmarthen. He died at Carmarthen and was buried there in St. Peter's Church.

Daniel Defoe (? 1661–1731) was born in London. He wrote *Robinson Crusoe*, which at once was popular and has never ceased to be popular. It was founded on the story of Alexander Selkirk's shipwreck on the island of Juan Fernandez. Defoe gives a wonderful air of truth to his narrative by minute details, as when he describes his first acquaintance with the wild cat. She sat "very composed and unconcerned," he tells us, "and looked me full in the face." She then went to the biscuit he had tossed to her, "smelled of it, and ate it, and looked, as pleased, for more, but I thanked her and could spare no more; so she marched off." It is by details such as these that *Robinson Crusoe* charms us still.

Defoe also wrote a fictitious *Journal of the Plague Year*, the great plague of 1664, but giving the details of the sad time, and with the same minuteness that charms us in *Robinson Crusoe*.

These four names, Swift, Addison, Steele, and Defoe, sum up the chief prose writers on secular subjects in the age of Anne. But Gilbert Burnet (1643–1715), Bishop of Salisbury, wrote much, and one book of his is still of value, a *History of His Own Times*, which was not published until after his death.

" It seems as if he had just come from the king's closet or from the apartments of the men whom he describes," says Horace Walpole of the book, " and was telling his readers, in plain, honest terms, what he had seen and heard." Charles II., James II., William and Mary, and Anne are the sovereigns of whom he writes. Burnet was by birth a Scotsman, but England was his home.

36. Poetry of the Period

Among the poets of this age the names of Matthew Prior and John Gay chime as naturally together in the history of poetry as do those of Steele and Addison in the history of prose.

Matthew Prior (1664–1721) was born at Wimborne and educated at Westminster School and at St. John's College, Cambridge. He was a diplomatist as well as a poet, and helped to negotiate the Treaty of Utrecht in 1713, which was known in its own days as " Matt's Peace." He wrote the *Carmen seculare* in praise of William of Orange. His social verses are pleasant reading. His lines " To a Child of Quality, five years old," and Letter to Lady Margaret Holles-Harley, " My noble, lovely little Peggy," when a child, are full of charm; but indeed the word charm is just what describes much of Prior's verse, " something to which we cannot give a name, unless, indeed, we take refuge in paradox, and say that it is . . . Matthew Prior."[1]

[1] " The English Poets." Ed. T. H. Ward. *Prior:* Austin Dobson.

More solemn than these lines are those "Written in the beginning of Mézeray's *History of France*"—

> "Yet for the fame of all these deeds . . .
> What beggar in the Invalides,
> With lameness broke, with blindness smitten,
> Wish'd ever decently to die,
> To have been either Mézeray
> Or any monarch he has written?
>
> It's strange, dear author, yet it true is
> That, down from Pharamond to Louis,
> All covet life yet call it pain
> . . . . . .
> And he who played the harlequin,
> After the jest still loads the scene,
> Unwilling to retire, though weary."

Prior died at Wimpole and was buried in Westminster Abbey. Louis XIV. gave the bust which marks his tomb. The epitaph tells us that when he was "writing the History of our Own Times, Death interfered and broke the Thread of his Discourse."

John Gay (1685–1732) was born at Barnstaple. He wrote plays and poems, and is remembered chiefly by his *Beggar's Opera*, his *Fables*, and the song, "Black-ey'd Susan." He possesses one charm that few other writers of the age possessed. He could write of nature, of meadows, of country folk, of fly-fishing, and he wrote as one who loved them. His *Trivia*, however, gives us a picture, and not a pleasant one, of the London streets in his day. Pope wrote of him as—

> "Of manner gentle, of affections mild,
> In wit a man, simplicity a child,"

and he was one of the few who seem to have in-

spired real affection in Swift. His last days were spent with the Duke and Duchess of Queensberry (the "Kitty" of Prior's poems), and he was buried in Westminster Abbey.

Among still lesser poets of these few years we must at least name Ambrose Philips (1675–1749), Thomas Parnell (1679–1718), and Thomas Tickell (1686–1740). All three, indeed, lived into the next period, but all seem to belong to the "Augustan" age. Parnell's poem, *The Hermit*, has been called the "apex and *chef-d'œuvre* of the Augustan age," and it certainly contains some beautiful lines. Tickell chiefly dwells in our minds because he was friend and secretary to Addison, and one of the literary band of the day who tried to write because their friends wrote.

Ambrose Philips' first claim to be remembered lies in the fact that his odes to children and his Christian name have given a word, "namby-pamby," to the language. His second claim is that he has left some charmingly simple and yet finished little poems, such as that to "Miss Charlotte Pulteney in her mother's arms"—

"Sleeping, waking, still at ease,
Pleasing without skill to please;
Little gossip, blithe and hale,
Tattling many a broken tale,
Singing many a tuneless song,
Lavish of a heedless tongue,
Like the linnet in the bush,
. . . . .
Chirping forth thy pretty joys.
. . . . .
Weary then and glad of rest
Like the linnet in the nest."

Ambrose Philips must not be confused with John Philips (1676–1709), who wrote *The Splendid Shilling*, which has been called "perhaps the best piece of burlesque writing in our literature," and the poem of the apple, called *Cyder*.

The greatest poet of the age is Alexander Pope (1681–1744). He was born in Lombard Street, London. He went to no public school, and no university, for his parents were Roman Catholics, and those were the days of the Test Acts. He read poetry, and wrote poetry, when a boy—

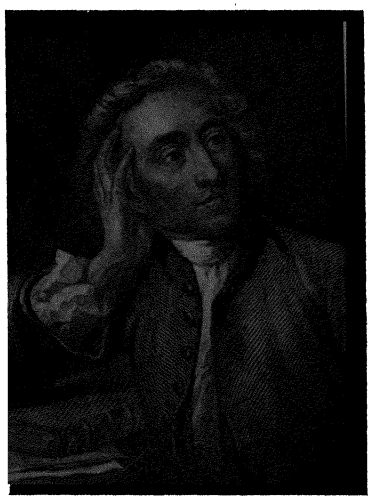
> "As yet a child, and all unknown to fame,
> I lisped in numbers, for the numbers came."

He soon joined the London Coffee House society of literary men and wits. His later years were passed at his villa at Twickenham, where he died.

Nearly all Pope's poems are memorable. His favourite metre was the ten-syllabled heroic couplet. His chief poems are the *Pastorals*, published when he was twenty-one, the *Essay on Criticism*, the *Rape of the Lock*, *Windsor Forest* (a description of scenery, but written, as has been said, with his back to the window), translations of the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*, the *Dunciad*, the *Essay on Man*, *Imitations from Horace*, and *Moral Essays*. All these, from the translation of the *Iliad*, belong to the reign of George I., but Pope never ceased to be the representative and expression of the Augustan age.

Of his poems, the *Rape of the Lock* has been the most extravagantly praised, and the word most often applied to it is "exquisite." "The most exquisite monument of playful fancy that universal

literature affords," says Lord Macaulay. The "most exquisite specimen of filigree work ever invented," says Hazlitt. "No pains are spared, no profusion of ornament, no splendour of poetic diction to set off the meanest things; . . . it is the



ALEXANDER POPE.
(From an old engraving.)

triumph of insignificance, the apotheosis of foppery and folly. It is the perfection of the mock heroic."

Pope had no lyrical gift, but he brought the "heroic couplet"—rhyming verses of ten syllables—to absolute perfection, and his finest poems, such as the *Moral Essays* and the *Imitations from Horace*, combine unrivalled powers of satire with brilliant wit and striking epigram.

37. Newspapers

As early as the fifteenth century the Church began to exercise censorship on books. At the Reformation the State took upon itself the right of censorship, but delegated the carrying out of this right to the Archbishop of Canterbury, the Bishop of London, and their representatives. The Star Chamber endeavoured to make the regulation for the suppression of books more stringent, and when the Star Chamber was abolished, a "Committee of Examinations" was appointed to control the Press, and an ordinance for "the regulating of printing and for suppressing unlicensed pamphlets" was passed by Parliament. Against this Milton, although a Puritan, wrote his *Areopagitica* in 1644, but it was not until 1695 that the censorship of the Press was abolished, and that what we know as newspapers appeared without hindrance. "News-letters" had, indeed, long evaded the Licensing Act. The news-letter writers went from coffee-house to coffee-house, attended public places, picked up news, wrote it down and sent it off to their clients in the country, and there it went the round of a neighbourhood. Andrew Marvell, member for Hull, sent to his constituents two or three times a week an account of the proceedings in Parliament. In the Civil War, papers containing news of the war had been printed and circulated, and Marchmount Needham, one of the first editors of such papers, had been imprisoned and pardoned by Puritans and Royalists in turn. In the reign of Charles II., Roger L'Estrange obtained the "sole privilege of printing and publishing all narratives, advertisements,

Mercuries" (the first newspapers in the Civil War were "Mercuries"), "intelligences, Diurnals, and other books of public intelligence." Then came a Gazette published in 1665, when the Court was at Oxford to escape the Plague, and this continued as the *London Gazette* on the return of the Court to London. It proceeded from the office of the Secretary of State, and told only what the State wished the world to know. There were also some periodicals devoted to commerce or to literature, but no papers with the news of each day.

With the cancelling of the Licensing Act in 1693, newspapers sprang up at once. "At first," says Lord Macaulay, "they were small and mean-looking. Even the *Postboy* and *Postman*, which seem to have been the best conducted and most prosperous, were wretchedly printed, on scraps of dingy paper. . . . Only two numbers came out in a week; and a number contained little more matter than may be found in a single column of a daily paper of our own day."

But all beginnings are small. The newspaper, which was to become such a power in after years, was at least started.

PART VIII

THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY, I

38. INTRODUCTION
39. PROSE OF THE PERIOD
40. SAMUEL JOHNSON
41. NOVELISTS
42. POETRY OF THE PERIOD
43. GRAY AND GOLDSMITH

38. Introduction

The period that we are now about to consider lasts from the accession of the House of Hanover to a period towards the end of the eighteenth century —speaking roughly from 1714 to 1789, but always remembering that literary periods overlap, and that before 1789 a transition period had begun.

We shall see when we read the literature of this new age, that the trifling spirit of the "Augustan" age is passing away. And just as Pope seems to be the representative of the age of Queen Anne, of its urbanity, its littleness, its finish, so Johnson seems to be the representative of the age we are now considering.

Allowing for overlapping, this period may indeed be called the age of Johnson. He not only represented the spirit of the age, it may even be said he made what was best in it. Pope only reflected the world around him in his delicate versification and in his trifling themes. Johnson set the tune of the new age by his sturdy common sense and fearlessness.

Even the architecture of the age reflected the new spirit. The elaboration of classical ornamentation used in later Renaissance architecture gave place to a quieter style. Plain red-brick houses of this date are still seen in country towns, in Smith

Square, Westminster, and other parts of London; the sober rows of Georgian town-houses, with their pleasant ornamented fan-lights and wrought-iron railings, are still a delight and a reflection of the common-sense age which succeeded the "Augustan" age in England.

39. Prose of the Period

Of the theological writers of this age, two should be remembered: George Berkeley, Bishop of Cloyne, and Joseph Butler, Bishop of Durham.

George Berkeley (1685–1753) was born in Ireland and was educated at Kilkenny and at Trinity College, Dublin. He wrote many philosophical works, the pleasantest to read being the *Dialogues of Hylas and Philonous*, after the manner of Plato. It has been said that Bishop Berkeley endeavoured to prove the nothingness of matter. "There is not any other substance than spirit, or that which perceives," he said in one place. But what he did wish to prove was the superiority and more enduring nature of mind, and of the "Omnipresent Eternal Mind, which knows and comprehends all things, and exhibits them to us in such a manner, and according to such rules, as He Himself hath ordained, and are by us termed the Laws of Nature." Berkeley reached the high-water mark of lucidity in his writings in an age remarkable for its lucidity of style.

His character and his work for others gained him the line from Pope—

"To Berkeley every virtue under heaven."

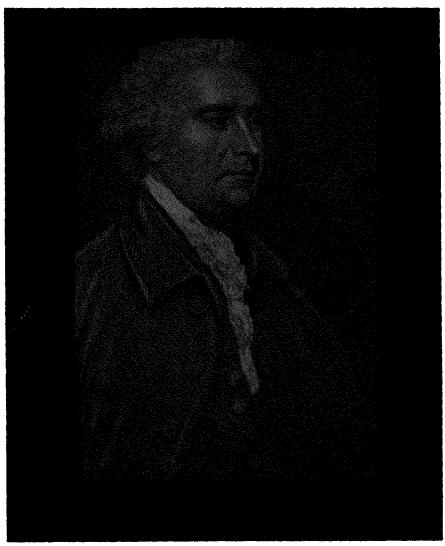
Among other philanthropic schemes he was instrumental in founding a missionary college in the Bermudas.

Joseph Butler (1692–1752) is hardly less clear and concise in style than Berkeley, but he lacks Berkeley's charm. His *Analogy of Religion, Natural and Revealed, in the Constitution and Course of Nature,* which maintains that conscience in man is a reflection of the mind of the Almighty Moral Ruler of the universe, is still a standard work.

The period produced three famous historians: David Hume (1711–1776), William Robertson (1723–1793), and Edward Gibbon (1737–1794). Hume and Robertson were both Scots. Hume wrote many philosophical works and a *History of England,* but while the style is clear, he is not "exact, nor does he care to be exact." Robertson wrote a *History of Scotland,* but he, too, had not access to original documents, and, like Hume, his coldness and want of enthusiasm are chilling. Gibbon's *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* is neither cold nor dull, but it is often unjust. That Gibbon had enthusiasm two quotations from his autobiography will show. "At the distance of twenty years," he writes, "I can neither forget nor express the strong emotions which agitated my mind as I first approached the Eternal City. After a sleepless night I trod with a lofty step the ruins of the Forum. Each memorable spot where Romulus stood, or Tully spoke, or Cæsar fell, were at once present to my eye. . . ." And it was during this visit to Rome that he planned his history. "It was at Rome, on the 19th October, 1764, as I sat musing

amid the ruins of the Capitol, while the barefooted friars were singing vespers in the Temple of Jupiter, that the idea of writing the Decline and Fall of the city first started into my mind."

Edmund Burke (1729–1797) was an Irishman,



EDMUND BURKE.
(After the painting by Sir Joshua Reynolds.)

born in Dublin, and educated at Ballitore school and at Trinity College, Dublin. He went to London, became acquainted with public men, and in 1769 became member for Wendover. Henceforth England was his home, and he died at a house he had bought near Beaconsfield, and was buried at Beaconsfield.

Burke was an orator as well as a writer, and his speeches are still as fine reading as his prose works.

His most famous speeches were on the War in America, on Warren Hastings, and on the French Revolution. His most famous works are an essay on the *Sublime and Beautiful*, or what we know as Æsthetics, *Thoughts on the Present Discontents* (a book, as has been wittily said, "always in season"), and *Reflections on the French Revolution*. Disraeli, in *Sybil*, says of Burke that he effected for the Whigs what Bolingbroke in a preceding age had done for the Tories. "He raised the tone of their public discourse: he breathed a high spirit into their public acts . . . Burke fought the Whig fight with a two-edged weapon: he was a great writer; as an orator he was transcendent."

To two letter-writers, Lady Mary Wortley Montagu (1690–1762) and Horace Walpole (1717–1797), we owe our most intimate knowledge of the world of their day. Walpole was the son of the great Prime Minister. Lady Mary Wortley Montagu was the daughter of the Duke of Kingston, and married Mr. Montagu, with whom she went to Constantinople. There she learnt the use of inoculation for small-pox, and later introduced it into England.

40. Samuel Johnson

Samuel Johnson (1709–1784), not the greatest writer but certainly the greatest personality of his age, was born at Lichfield, and was educated at the Grammar School there, and at Pembroke College, Oxford, where his desk is still treasured. He started life poor. He had a school which failed, he went to

London, wrote an unsuccessful tragedy, *Irene*, and



SAMUEL JOHNSON.

a successful poem, *London*. He struggled on, wrote a life of Savage, a poem, *The Vanity of Human*

Wishes, brought out two periodicals, *The Rambler* and *The Idler*, after the manner of the *Spectator*, compiled his *Dictionary*, wrote *Rasselas*, the *Journey to the Western Isles of Scotland*, and the *Lives of the Poets*. These were his principal contributions to literature, and all are marked by his sonorous style and his vigorous personality. Even the *Dictionary* has many surprising definitions, such as: "*Excise.* A hateful tax levied upon commodities, and adjudged not by the common judges of property, but by wretches hired by those to whom Excise is paid." Here spoke the Tory, to whom Walpole's Excise Act was still a grievance. "*Pension.* In England it is generally understood to mean pay given to a State hireling for treason to his country." "*Oats.* A grain which in England is generally given to horses, but in Scotland supports the people."

The *Journey to the Western Isles* contains the memorable words on Iona, which well illustrate Johnson's sonorous prose. "We were now treading that illustrious island," he says, "which was once the luminary of the Caledonian regions, whence savage clans and roving barbarians derived the benefits of knowledge and the blessings of religion. To abstract the mind from all local emotion would be impossible if it were endeavoured, and would be foolish if it were possible. . . . The man is little to be envied whose patriotism would not gain force on the plains of Marathon, or whose piety would not grow warmer among the ruins of Iona."

But it was not by his writings that Johnson gained the influence which he wielded during his lifetime, nor is it by them he is best remembered. His fame

depends as much on his character as on his intellect, on his kindness of heart, the tenderness underlying his uncouth exterior, his simple piety and love of truth. He was the unchallenged leader of the literary world of his day, and "his influence was so wide and withal so wholesome, that literary life in this country has never been since his day what it was before it." [1]

Johnson excelled in conversation, and he is fortunate in having found an ideal recorder of his table-talk in James Boswell of Auchinleck (1740–1795), whose *Life of Johnson* is one of the most delightful books in any language.

41. Novelists

To find the origin of the novel we must go back to mediæval romances, and trace its slow and rather dull way through Lyly's *Euphues* to the age we are now considering. With Richardson and the eighteenth century, the novel, as we now know it, really began.

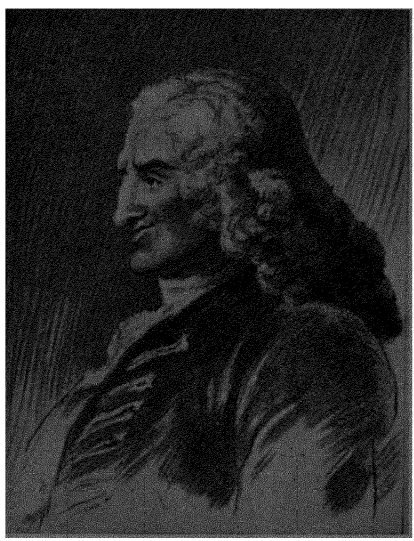
Samuel Richardson (1689–1761) was born in Derbyshire, and became a stationer in Salisbury Court, London. There he published his first novel, *Pamela*, which was followed by *Clarissa Harlowe*, and *Sir Charles Grandison*, the longest novel, and one of the longest books, ever printed. As has been said, "It does not matter where we leave off in it, for whenever we open it again, they are always talking in the Cedar Parlour."

The fault of Richardson's novels is that he endeavoured to describe what was known as "High

[1] *Eighteenth Century Literature:* E. Gosse.

Society," and as he did not live in that society, he could not describe it well. However, there is at least human nature and good character drawing in his work, and in his day he was much read, not only in England, but in France.

Henry Fielding (1707–1754), unlike Richardson,



HENRY FIELDING.
(After a sketch by Hogarth.)

came of an old family and had been at Eton. But he preferred to describe what was known as low life, although Squire Alworthy and Sophia, two of his best-known characters, were good country folk. Fielding's is a great name in literature, though there is much in his works which would have been better left out.

Tobias Smollett (1721–1771), on the contrary,

does not "describe," as Fielding and Richardson do. He only caricatures in his novels.

Laurence Sterne (1713–1768) can hardly be called a novelist, for his *Tristram Shandy* and *The Sentimental Journey* have no plot and very little story; but he created one charming character in My Uncle Toby.

In 1766 appeared Oliver Goldsmith's *Vicar of Wakefield*, with its sweet humour and pathos. Goldsmith will be mentioned later among poets.

Horace Walpole, who has already been mentioned, wrote a novel, *The Castle of Otranto*, full of mysterious sights and sounds, the setting of which is in a Gothic castle.

The first woman novelist to be mentioned here (there had been others, but they are now mostly forgotten) is Frances Burney (1752–1840). She was the daughter of a doctor of music, Charles Burney, who was one of the literary circle that surrounded Johnson. When she was four-and-twenty she wrote *Evelina*, and was at once the fashion in a world that had so few novels. The story is that of a heroine with relations in the city, and relations in the great world of fashionable London. Her next novel, *Cecilia*, was equally pleasant, and pleased the world of her day. "Sir, if you talk of *Cecilia*," said Dr. Johnson, "talk on."

Fanny got a post in Queen Charlotte's household, and the *Diary* of her life at Court is as interesting as her novels. Later she married a French emigrant, Count D'Arblay. Her later stories, *Camilla* and the *Wanderer*, are not so much to be commended as her earlier ones. Although a contemporary of Dr. Johnson's, she lived on into the nineteenth century.

Mrs. Radclyffe and Miss Edgeworth, although both were writing before the eighteenth century closed, belong to the spirit of the next literary epoch, that which followed or coincided with the French Revolution.

42. Poetry of the Period

Edward Young (1681–1765) was born before the poet Pope, but is more fitly included among writers of the Georgian than of the "Augustan" age, for his best-remembered poem was published in 1742. He was the son of a Dean of Salisbury, was author of some tragedies and forgotten poems, and one poem, *Night Thoughts*, which has not been forgotten and which has given some stock quotations to our language. He was born at Upham in Hampshire, and died at Welwyn, Hertfordshire, of which he was rector. He was educated at Winchester and at New College and Corpus Christi College, Oxford, and was Fellow of All Souls.

James Thomson (1700–1748) was born at Ednam on the Scots border, and died at Kew. He wrote *The Seasons* and *The Castle of Indolence*. *The Castle of Indolence* is in the metre of Spenser's *Faery Queen*. The castle is situated in "a listless climate."

"A pleasing land of drowsyhead it was,
Of dreams that wave before the half-shut eye,
And of gay castles in the clouds that pass,
For ever flushing round a summer sky.

. . . . . .

But what e'er smacked of noyance or unrest
Was far, far off expelled from this delicious nest."

The Seasons is the work of a man who knew the country, and could feel the subtle influences of sky and hills. Nothing can be better in its way than the description of the dark winter day when—

> " Scarce
> The bittern knows his time with bill engulfed
> 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."

In Thomson's time very few men knew, or cared to know, that plovers migrate from the sea to the inland wastes and fields; few knew the melody of their wild cry. And perhaps, both in his own day and in ours, Thomson is best known as the author of " Rule, Britannia."

William Collins (1721–1759) who was born at Chichester, is a poet indeed, writing little in his short life, but writing well, and with a new note. He was educated at Winchester and Magdalen College, Oxford. He wrote the very beautiful *Ode to Evening*, the lines " How sleep the brave," and the Dirge for *Cymbeline*.

> " To fair Fidele's grassy tomb
> Soft maids and village hinds shall bring
> Each opening sweet of earliest bloom,
> And rifle all the breathing spring.
>
> The redbreast oft at evening hours
> Shall kindly lend his little aid,
> With hoary moss and gathered flowers
> To deck the ground where thou art laid."

The ode beginning—

> " How sleep the brave who sink to rest
> By all their country's wishes blest,"

was addressed to the soldiers who fell at Fontenoy

and Culloden, and has been said to be as simple and beautiful a twelve lines as any in the English language.

William Shenstone (1714–1763) was born and lived and died at the Leasowes, near Halesowen in Shropshire. He wrote a really charming country poem in Spenserian metre, *The Schoolmistress*, and his *Pastorals* contain the haunting lines—

> " I have found out a gift for my fair,
> I have found where the wood-pigeons breed;
> But let me that plunder forbear,
> She would say 'twas a barbarous deed."

Thomas Chatterton (1752–1770) and St. Mary Redclyffe, Bristol, are inseparably connected. The boy's ancestors had been sextons to that church for many years, and Chatterton when a boy is said to have spent hours in the meadows, gazing at the building from afar. He hoarded the manuscripts which, alas, were thrown away from the vestry, and with their help invented or revived a picturesque world of long-past days. When he was eight he was sent to Colston's Bristol Bluecoat School. At ten he wrote verses. At sixteen he was imposing on the citizens of Bristol with prose and poetry said to have been found among the archives of St. Mary's, but in reality his own composition. Some of these he stated to have been the work of " T. Rowlie," a fifteenth-century priest. At seventeen he went to London, wrote for newspapers and magazines, and was soon in absolute want. Before he was eighteen he was dead.

The Rowley poems are written in what Chatterton called fifteenth-century English, but it bears

no resemblance to any dialect, and was only what he imagined fifteenth-century English might be. When the poems are translated into language of our own day they have some merit, and are at least remarkable as the work of a boy.

John Wesley (1703–1791) and Charles Wesley (1708–1788) are best known as leaders of a great religious movement, but both were writers of hymns which have never ceased to be popular, and those of Charles Wesley rank very high among religious poems.

43. Gray and Goldsmith

And now we come to a poet indeed, and a poet who led the way to the next period of song, to the so-called romantic age of the late eighteenth century and early nineteenth century.

Thomas Gray (1716–1771) was born in Cornhill, and was the son of a "money scrivener," or, as we should now say, a stockbroker. He was at Eton with Horace Walpole, and afterwards went to Peterhouse, Cambridge. He travelled in Italy with Walpole, but they disagreed, and Walpole generously took the blame on himself. Much of Gray's later life was passed at Cambridge, first at Peterhouse and afterwards at Pembroke College, where he died. He was buried at Stoke Poges in Buckinghamshire.

Gray has been called the most learned man of his time in Europe. Natural science, history, classics, antiquities, architecture, heraldry, painting, gardening—all these things interested him. His output

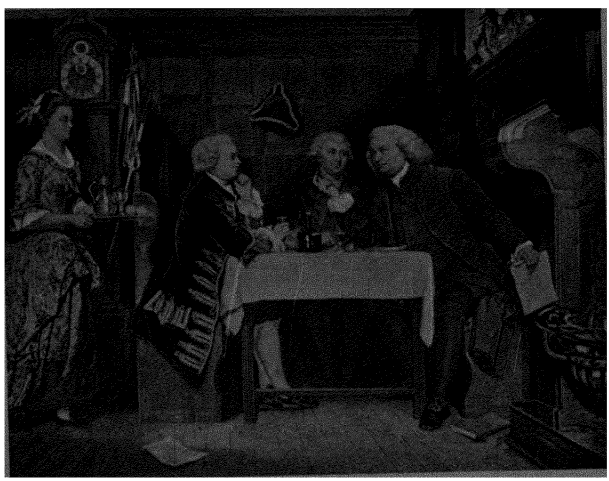
of poetry was small: "so distinguished, so rare, so stunted," says a French critic. "He never spoke out," is the reiterated criticism on his life and work by one who was himself a poet. But both his poetry and his prose are of the best. Cowper called his poems "sublime," while another writer says, "he attained the highest degree of splendour of which poetical style seems capable." Here is praise enough, but it is not unmerited. His poems, his too few poems, cannot be too much read, too much loved. The favourites have always been the bright little verses, *On the Death of Mr. Walpole's Cat*, the *Ode on the Distant Prospect of Eton College*, and the *Elegy written in a Country Churchyard*. His letters, too, with their descriptions of scenery, some of the earliest descriptions of scenery in English literature, are full of charm.

Although Oliver Goldsmith was born and died later than Gray (1728–1774), he seems to belong to an earlier age than Gray. Goldsmith reflects the age of Johnson. Gray was the voice of a new age. He and Collins were the first streaks of a new dawn.

Goldsmith was born at Pallas, County Longford, Ireland, but he is too nearly connected with Johnson and London to be placed among the writers of Ireland. He was entered at Trinity College, Dublin, ran away, but later returned and obtained the degree of B.A., went to study medicine in Edinburgh, wandered about France, Switzerland and Italy, came to London, and joined Johnson's circle.

He attempted many kinds of literature, and in all was successful. "Nullum fere scribendi genus

non tetigit, nullum quod tetigit non ornavit," said Johnson in the epitaph he wrote for Goldsmith's tablet in Westminster Abbey, and the words have become a proverb. Goldsmith did "hack-work" for the booksellers, histories of Rome, of England, of Greece, and a book on Natural History, and all are



JOHNSON, BOSWELL AND GOLDSMITH AT THE MITRE TAVERN.
(From the painting by Eyre Crowe.)

above the average. His play *She Stoops to Conquer* is still acted, still read. His novel *The Vicar of Wakefield* is a classic. The poem *The Deserted Village* has all the charm, all the sweet pensiveness, of the Irish nature. In a few lines in *Retaliation* he sketches the great men who gathered round Johnson: Burke, Garrick, Sir Joshua Reynolds. For delicious, harmless fun the *Elegy on the Death of a Mad Dog* and *Madam Blaise* are unsurpassed. His

prose essays in the periodical *The Citizen of the World*, are good of their kind. And he is said to have been the author of that pleasant children's story, *Goody Two Shoes*.

Goldsmith's versatility and charm are all Irish. "The beginning and end of him," as has been said, "was Irish; every quality he possessed as a man and as a writer belongs to his race. He had the Irish carelessness, the Irish generosity, the Irish quick temper, the Irish humour,"[1] and, we may add, the sweet Irish childlikeness which made men love him, and which he kept to the end. "The wreath of Goldsmith is unsullied," said Sir Walter Scott; "he wrote to exalt virtue and expose vice; and he accomplished his task in a manner which raised him to the highest rank among British authors."

He is buried on the north side of the Temple Church in London. "Here lies Oliver Goldsmith," is the only inscription on his tomb.

[1] *English Literature* (Home University Library): G. H. Mair.

PART IX

THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY, II

44. INTRODUCTION
45. PROSE OF THE PERIOD
46. SOME LITERARY LADIES
47. POETRY OF THE PERIOD

44. Introduction

In the "Augustan" age, literature concerned itself with the little world of society. In the age of Johnson the outlook was wider, but there was still very little thought for the poor, or for social questions. Poverty existed, and the majority seemed to think, if they thought about it at all, that there was no remedy. The hardships of the workers in the factories, and especially of the child workers, were little regarded, and the crusade against them met with very little response. The housing of the poor excited no interest. Many excellent men were quite indifferent to the slave trade or to slavery.

But at the end of the eighteenth century thought was widening. Man occupied the thoughts of men in a wider sense than before. It was not the world of society, not even the world of the scholar. The poor were beginning to be realized. And just as the scholarly sanity in the age of Johnson was in a great measure due to Johnson's mind and influence, so we may believe the consideration of social questions in England which now finds a place in literature was due in a great measure to the two Wesleys and to the so-called Methodist Revival. That revival taught the world that the poor had souls which could be touched, and then men began to realize that the social conditions of these poor were not

such as to make it easy for them to live God-fearing or happy lives.

Nature also was beginning to find a place in prose and poetry, and, with social questions, plays a large part in the new literature. The group of writers whom we are now going to consider mark the transition from the age of Johnson to the so-called Romantic age. "To turn from a poem," it has been said, "of Cowper's to a poem of Pope's, or even of Goldsmith's, is to turn from one sphere of art to quite another, from unconscious to conscious art. 'Formal gardens in comparison with woodland scenery,' as Southey said; and how much that means! It means that the day of critical and so-called classical poetry is over; that the day of spontaneous, natural, romantic poetry has begun. Burns and Wordsworth are not yet, but they are close at hand." [1]

And while the group of writers whom we are now about to consider were leading up to the new age, striking the new note, that new age had already begun. In 1793 Wordsworth had written his *Evening Walk*, Wordsworth, who was the greatest poet of the Romantic age.

45. Prose of the Period

The writers on natural history in this country begin with Gilbert White (1720–1793), and begin with rare charm. He was born at Selborne among the Hampshire lanes, far then from coach roads, far now from railways, and was educated at Basingstoke and at Oriel College, Oxford, of which he became a

[1] "The English Poets." Ed. T. H. Ward. *William Cowper.*

Fellow. But he preferred his garden and his lanes and woods to Oxford, and at his native Selborne he passed his leisured days. His *Natural History of Selborne* is a series of letters addressed to Thomas Pennant and Daines Barrington, both of whom attained some celebrity in their day as naturalists and authors. The first edition was published in 1788, since when it has been republished more than eighty times.

Gilbert White's place as a pioneer of natural science is assured. " He teaches one," it has been said, " how to observe; he shows us by an object-lesson of patience and watchfulness how we ought to proceed in the investigation of Nature. . . . The record of his long years spent in finding out for himself what the beasts and birds really did do makes us feel that books are of little use beside direct eyesight." [1]

If Boswell takes us into the life of eighteenth-century London, White takes us into the country life of that century, an England of many limitations, but with some compensations which we do not now possess. In his day there were " bustards on the wide downs near Brighthelmstone," kites and buzzards could be seen in any day's ride.

Arthur Young (1741–1820) was a pioneer in another branch of science. He travelled through France, England, and Ireland, collecting facts as to agriculture and the state of these countries generally. His *Tours* are still very interesting reading.

In old libraries we come upon pleasant volumes by William Gilpin (1724–1804). He was born at

[1] Grant Allen: White's *Selborne*.

Boldre in Hampshire, of which he was afterwards incumbent. Gilpin wrote lives of the reformers and theological works, but is best remembered by his *Tours*, which he illustrated with water-colour drawings. Among his best-known " colour books " are those on the River Wye, the English Lakes, and Forest Scenery. He, too, was a pioneer. He interested men in scenery, the " Picturesque," as he calls it, and his volumes, with Gray's *Letters* and White's *Selborne*, are another indication of the growing love of Nature.

These, the chief prose authors of the few transitional years between the age of Johnson and the Romantic age, were, as we have seen, all interested in Nature and the country.

46. Some Literary Ladies

We now come to a little group of lady novelists: Anne Ward, afterwards Mrs. Radclyffe (1764–1823), Jane Austen (1775–1817), and Maria Edgeworth (1767–1849), as charming a trio as any in the history of literature, and one of them reaching a very high place in that history.

Mrs. Radclyffe's first novel, *The Castles of Athlin and Dunbayne*, was a very poor one. Next came the *Sicilian Romance*, *The Romance of the Forest*, *The Mysteries of Udolpho*, and *The Italian*, a story of the Inquisition. Mrs. Radclyffe is at her best in her own world of ruined castles, forests, mountains, and storms, wild condottieri, and supernatural sounds and sights which, however, turn out not to be supernatural at all, but which create " pleasing

terror" and interest us still. Her descriptions of natural scenery are really fine.

The most charming of English novelists parodied *The Mysteries of Udolpho* and the school of fiction which it created, in her own sweet way in *Northanger Abbey*.

Jane Austen, the author of *Northanger Abbey* and of five other novels (alas! too few), was born at Steventon in Hampshire, and lived there and at Bath, Southampton and Chawton. She died at Winchester in a house to which, and to her grave in the cathedral, pilgrims still come from both sides of the Atlantic.

We have said she wrote six novels: *Sense and Sensibility*, published in 1811, *Pride and Prejudice*, 1813, *Mansfield Park*, 1814, *Emma*, 1816; *Northanger Abbey* and *Persuasion* appeared after her death. Two unfinished novels, *The Watsons* and *Lady Susan*, only mar the series by their imperfections and the unfinished state in which she left them.

Of the finished novels no new word of praise can be said. They are loved by every cultivated reader: that is praise enough.

Maria Edgeworth was born at Black Bourton in Oxfordshire, but most of her life was passed in Ireland, and there, at the old home of Edgeworthstown, she died. Mrs. Radclyffe and Miss Austen wrote with no object except to please, and they succeeded. Miss Edgeworth wrote—at least as long as her father lived to assist and criticize and perhaps to mar—to instruct, to wake up the world to the need of feminine education, and to the wrongs of Ireland. But she, too, can charm. There is a won-

derful brightness and vivacity about her work, and the conversations are especially lifelike and brilliant.

Belinda and *The Absentee* are among the best of the series, but *Helen* is the finest of all, and we must attribute this to the fact that, when she wrote it, Mr. Edgeworth was no longer at her side.

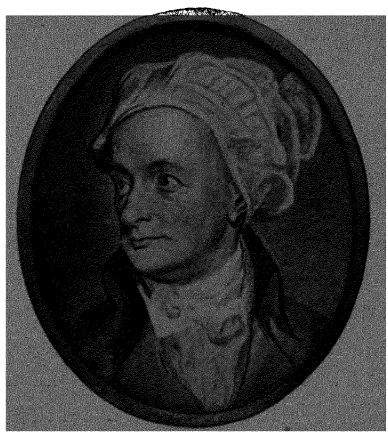
Hannah More (1745–1833) and Mrs. Inchbald (1753–1821) may also be remembered here. Hannah More wrote a play, some educational works and a novel, *Cœlebs in Search of a Wife*, which had some cleverness. She was a friend of the great William Wilberforce, and her life stretched from the days of Johnson almost to Victorian times. Mrs. Inchbald's *A Simple Story* and *Nature and Art* are pathetic novels of real charm.

47. Poetry of the Period

William Cowper (1731–1800) stands foremost among the little group of poets who link the earlier Georgian with the Romantic age. He was born at Berkhampstead Rectory, and died at East Dereham in Norfolk. He lost his mother when he was six. He was educated at Westminster school, and afterwards was articled to a lawyer. But he tells us that instead of working he "giggled and made giggle" with his cousins, one of whom, Lady Hesketh, was one of his best friends in sadder days. At thirty-six he became a victim of melancholia. The rest of his life was spent at Huntingdon, and later at the little Buckinghamshire town of Olney, where his house is now shown to visitors and used as a museum for his relics. Mrs. Unwin, a mother indeed to him, and the Mary of his poetry, was his

constant companion. She induced him to write his graver poetry, while the more lively Lady Austen induced him to write *The Task*, the first subject for which, "The Sofa," she supplied to him. She also told him the story of "John Gilpin," which he retold in verse.

Cowper wrote much, and wrote always with grace. He lived a curiously quiet life, made much of by kind



WILLIAM COWPER.
(From a water-colour sketch by George Romney.)

women, loving quiet, lady-like pleasures, tea-drinking, reading aloud, walks by the Ouse, carpentering, gardening, watching and caring for his tame hares, delightful creatures, Puss, Tiny, and Bess, with their quite distinct and human characters. It seems a very humdrum life, but the quiet man was writing much that was revolutionary in its tendency, and writing it so gracefully that the world did not catch the new note. He was a strange mixture of the religious teaching of the Wesleys and that fierce

sympathy with the poor and the wrongs of social things of which later poets sang, and was a link between the old and the new voices.

Of his poems, perhaps the favourites will always be the shorter ones, "The Retired Cat," "John Gilpin," "Epitaph on a Hare," and "The Poplar Field." He translated the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* and did both tamely, and his translations from the Greek anthology have little to commend them. But his *Letters* have all the charm of his better poetry and are pleasant reading.

One of Cowper's most devoted friends was John Newton (1725–1807), curate of Olney, a hymn writer of well-deserved fame, and, with Cowper, the composer of the celebrated *Olney Hymns*.

William Blake (1757–1827) was born in Bread Street, Golden Square, and died in Fountain Court, Strand. He was by trade an engraver, and used his art to illustrate his books. He made little by either his books or his art, and died in poverty. "My business is not to gather gold," he bravely said, "but to make glorious shapes, expressing divinity."

Blake has been called mad, and certainly his later poems are very unreadable and unintelligible, and his earlier poems were too original to be popular except with the few. His love of animals and his protests against social wrongs chime in with Cowper. It cannot be denied, however, that he wrote with deeper feeling than Cowper wrote. Cowper has no such tremendous lines as—

"A horse misused upon the road,
Calls to Heaven for human blood;

"Each outcry of the hunted hare
A fibre from the brain doth tear;

"A skylark wounded in the wing,
A cherubim does cease to sing."

It is by his earlier poems he lives, thin little volumes with his own strange engravings around the pages, *Songs of Innocence* and *Songs of Experience.* His still earlier poems, *Poetical Sketches,* were written between his twelfth and twentieth years. The lines—

"Little lamb, who made thee?
Dost thou know who made thee?"

illustrate the "childlike beauty of his poems," childlike but never childish. But the gem of his best poetry is *Night*—

"Farewell, green fields and happy grove,
Where flocks have ta'en delight;
Where lambs have nibbled, silent move
The feet of angels bright.

. . . . .

When wolves and tigers howl for prey,
They pitying stand and weep,
Seeking to drive their thirst away
And keep them from the sheep.
But if they rush dreadful,
The angels, most heedful,
Receive each mild spirit
New worlds to inherit."

Blake was before everything else a mystic. To him the things seen were but shadows of the more beautiful things not seen.

We next come to a poet who is tame indeed, compared to Blake, but who better suited his age, and whose poems, now neglected, were more read in their day than were the works of his contemporary, Jane Austen.

George Crabbe (1754–1832) was born at what was then the little fishing village of Aldborough on the

coast of Suffolk. Burke helped him to publish his poem, *The Library*, in 1781, and in the same year he was ordained. He held various curacies and livings, and ended his days as incumbent of Trowbridge in Wiltshire. The subject of his poetry was chiefly the village poor, but, where Blake attacks evils in one line, Crabbe catalogues them in many lines, and seems to find little but wretchedness in the lives around him. His chief works are *The Village*, *The Parish Register*, and the *Tales of the Hall*. Byron called him "Nature's sternest painter, yet her best," and a modern writer says of him that his "intention is simply to paint things as they are." This intention leads him to write much that we should wish away. He has as keen an eye for Nature as for character, but it is Nature on a bleak coast—the heath, the withering brake, the thin harvest waving its withered ears, the wild cry of the sea-birds over the mud flats—

> "There poppies nodding, mock the hope of toil;
> There the blue bugloss paints the sterile soil;
> Hardy and high, above the slender sheaf,
> The shining mallow waves her silky leaf;
> O'er the young shoot the charlock throws a shade,
> And clasping tares cling round the sickly blade;
> With mingled tints the rocky coasts abound,
> And a sad splendour vainly shines around."

Crabbe writes in the ten-syllabled rhyming couplets of Pope, and has, indeed, been called "Pope in worsted stockings." He comes very near to the perfected versification of Pope, but writes of cottages instead of drawing-rooms. But, as has been said, "Pope himself not excepted, he is the best writer of easy dialogue." Here is praise indeed.

PART X

THE ROMANTIC AGE

48. INTRODUCTION
49. PROSE OF THE PERIOD
50. THE LAKE POETS
51. BYRON, SHELLEY AND KEATS
52. SOME LESSER POETS
53. IRISH LITERATURE
54. SCOTS LITERATURE
55. BURNS AND SCOTT
56. CONCLUSION

48. Introduction

The term "romantic" is not a very happy one as applied to the period which we are now about to consider, for there was much besides romance in the literature of the age. What marks the spirit of it is, as has been said, "expansion in every conceivable direction."[1] Love of the open air, renewed delight in mediæval chivalry and art and letters, these all helped to emancipate it from the age which preceded it. The spirit of emancipation is seen in the form of the poetry. There was an escape from the precise verse decreed by the poets of the "Augustan" age. The poets of the Romantic Movement were to "sing but as the linnets sing." Poetry was once again to be as spontaneous as the verse of Elizabethan days.

But there were new and deeper notes in the new poetry and literature and thought of the Romantic age. New conditions of life, machinery, increased population in manufacturing centres without adequate housing accommodation, had produced hardships and wrongs of which the mediæval poor had never known. We think of mediæval days as the "dark ages." It would be more true to say that the eighteenth century saw conditions of life and labour and a poverty among the poor of England

[1] *History of English Literature* : Lang.

which had never yet been seen in history. This was a factor in the new poetry, this dark background to life, this discovery of what Disraeli called the " Two Nations "—the rich and the poor.

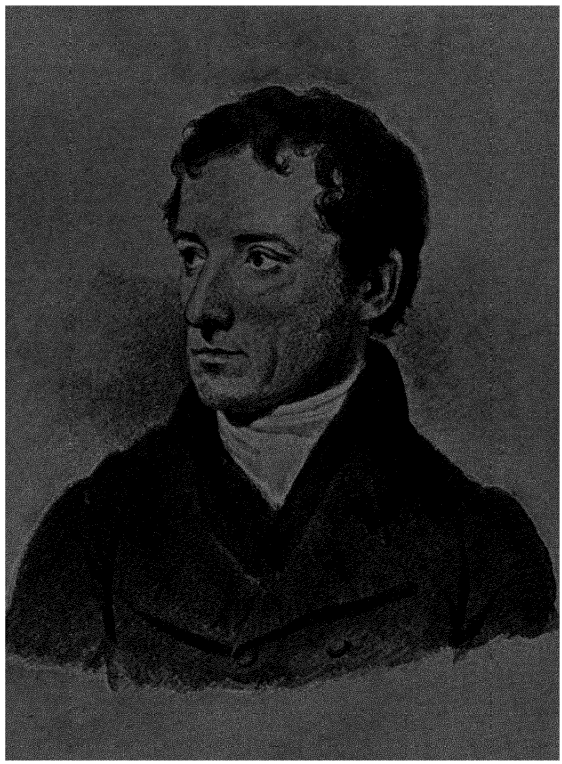
The French Revolution also influenced literature. At first it seemed to promise so much that was good. " Bliss was it in that dawn to be alive," wrote Wordsworth. But then hope faded. Reaction followed in poetry as in politics, and " a great part of our new poetry was impelled, not by the Revolution, but by the indignant revolt against what followed on it." [1]

49. Prose of the Period

First among the prose writers of what has been called the Romantic age, comes Charles Lamb (1775–1834). He was born in Crown Office Row, Inner Temple. At seven he went to Christ's Hospital. At fifteen he left school to share the anxieties and poverty of his home. He obtained a post in the South Sea House, and later in the East India Company's office. His sister Mary suffered from attacks of temporary insanity, in one of which she killed her mother. On her recovery from the attack, she was only released from the asylum in which she had been placed on Charles undertaking to make her his care, and when the malady reappeared, to place her under proper restraint. The brother kept his word. He gave up all thoughts of a home of his own to make one for her. With the exception of this tragedy running

[1] *English Literature Primer :* Stopford A. Brooke.

through their lives, the two were well suited to each



CHARLES LAMB AT THE AGE OF FORTY-FOUR.
(From a sketch by G. F. Joseph, A.R.A.)

other. Both found alleviation for the ills of life in literature.

At Christ's Hospital Lamb had been contemporary with Coleridge, and though his days were spent in

office work, his heart was in literature. He contributed four sonnets to Coleridge's first volume of poems, wrote a very unsuccessful tragedy, *John Woodvil*, and a still more hopelessly unsuccessful farce, *Mr. H.* Then came *Tales from Shakespeare*, of which some were written by Mary Lamb; *Extracts from the Elizabethan Poets*, with some striking criticisms; and, lastly, *The Essays of Elia*, on which his fame rests.

Lamb belonged, by friendship at least, to the new school of Nature poets, to Coleridge and Wordsworth. But his heart was never in the country. "I often shed tears," he wrote, "in motley Strand from fulness of joy at so much life. All these emotions must be strange to you; so are your rural emotions to me."

Lamb's great gift to literature, after his *Essays*, is the fact that he recalled to men's minds the existence and the glories of the writers of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. His Essays are full of quotations from them. As has been said, "he has linked his name for ever with them. When we think of the 'sweetest names, and which carry perfume in the mention—Kit Marlowe, Drayton, Drummond of Hawthornden, and Cowley'—then the thought of Charles Lamb will never be far off. His name, too, has a perfume in the mention." [1]

Other prose writers of the period were William Cobbett (1762–1835), Sydney Smith (1771–1845), Walter Savage Landor (1775–1864), and William Hazlitt (1778–1830). William Cobbett wrote on many subjects, and whatever subject he touched

[1] *Charles Lamb:* A. Ainger.

became interesting from his original handling of it. Even his *English Grammar* is pleasant reading and his *Rural Rides* "give some of the most vivid, if not the most ornate, description in the language."[1] Sydney Smith was a Canon of St. Paul's. His writings were mostly on the politics of the day, his *Peter Plymley's Letters* taking the side of Catholic emancipation. He with two others was instrumental in starting the *Edinburgh Review*, which was the Whig Review, the *Quarterly Review* representing the Tory party. "Known, liked and honoured for his manliness, honesty and exuberant drollery and wit," well sums up the Whig Canon of St. Paul's.

Walter Savage Landor was a man whose faults were few, his mistakes almost numerous enough to justify his own opinion of himself: "I never did a single wise thing in the whole course of my existence." He was educated at Rugby and Trinity College, Oxford, and at both came into collision with the authorities. He went to London on leaving Oxford and published his first volume of poems in 1795. He then lived for a time in South Wales, principally at Tenby, and left it to go to Spain, where the Peninsular War attracted him and where he raised a regiment at his own cost. In 1809 he sold his family estate in Staffordshire and bought Llanthony among the pleasant Black Mountains in Monmouthshire. There the remains of his unfinished house may still be seen and the tower of the ruined abbey in which he stayed and where Southey visited him. Financial difficulties drove

[1] *A Short History of English Literature*: Saintsbury.

him abroad and, with a break of about ten years, when he lived at Bath, the rest of his life was spent at Florence or Fiesole. At Florence he died. His prose work, *Imaginary Conversations with Literary Men and Statesmen*, is still read and deserves to be read. Sir Sidney Colvin says that Landor was " in English prose an artist comparable with the highest in their respective spheres; with Milton in English verse, or with Handel in music." His longer poems, *Gebir* and *Count Julian*, are perhaps unknown to this generation except by name. His shorter poems are more worthy of remembrance, and of them the matchless *Rose Aylmer* will always find a place in anthologies and in hearts.

William Hazlitt was the son of a Nonconformist minister, and was born at Maidstone in Kent. His youth was spent at Wem in Shropshire. He early came to London as a literary adventurer, and wrote for newspapers and for the *Edinburgh Review*, in which he attacked his friend Coleridge. His chief works are the *Characters of Shakespeare's Plays*, *Lectures on the English Poets* and the *Elizabethan Dramatists*, and several volumes of essays. He is admirable as a critic of Elizabethan poetry, but not so successful as a critic of the poets of his own day. The Lake poets and Scott alike came in for his censure. But politics were a passion with him, and he could not be just even to the poetry of those who differed from him.

James Henry Leigh Hunt (1784–1859) was, like Lamb and Hazlitt, an essay writer, and he was also, like Hazlitt, a fierce politician. He edited a journal of advanced Radical views, as they were

then called, which gave "some offence to Whigs and much to Tories." He was in prison for two years for a libel on the Prince Regent.

Hunt was also a poet. His poetry is not much read now, but as has been said it tastes—

> ". . . of Flora and the country green,
> Dance and Provençal song and sunburnt mirth."

Thomas de Quincey (1785–1859), also an essay writer, might have reached a higher place in literature but for his opium-eating habit, his roving, unsettled disposition, and the fact that all through his life "he flew in the face of common sense."[1] His essays are still reprinted and read.

Although it was in poetry that Robert Southey (1774–1843) first made a name for himself, after his marriage he took to prose as more lucrative. He was the son of a Bristol linen-draper, and was educated at Westminster and at Balliol College, Oxford, where he passed for an admirer of the Revolution and "wore his hair long," which seems to have marked the Revolutionary party. With years came other ideas, and in his mature life he was an unbending monarchist and churchman. His life was spent partly in London, partly at Keswick, near Wordsworth.

Southey's prose works are numerous, including contributions to the *Quarterly Review*, *History of Brazil* and of the *Peninsular War*, *The Book of the Church*, the still popular *Life of Nelson*, and the *Life of Wesley*.

It has been said that he is at his best in prose,

[1] *English Literature* : A. Lang.

and it is not derogatory to that best to remember that he was also the author of the best version of that children's classic, "The Three Bears." That is a "triumph for one whose spirit, grave with a man's wisdom, was pure as the spirit of a little child." [1]

The period was rich in historians as compared with the periods that preceded it. Sharon Turner (1768–1847) and Sir Francis Palgrave (1788–1861), are remembered as among the first historians who turned to the origins of history, to records and authorities hitherto neglected. Dr. John Lingard (1771–1851) wrote a valuable History of England up to the year 1688, and Henry Hallam (1777–1859) wrote *A View of the State of Europe during the Middle Ages*, a *Constitutional History of England* from Henry VII. to George II., and an *Introduction to the Literature of Europe.*

Sir William Napier (1785–1860) was the author of a remarkable *History of the Peninsular War*, in which he fought and which he described with fiery eloquence. Henry Hart Milman (1791–1868), Dean of St. Paul's, published his *History of the Jews* in 1829. His more valuable *History of Christianity* belongs to Victorian times. He was a poet as well as a prose writer, and his 1812 Newdigate prize poem on the statue known as the Apollo Belvedere is one of the "Newdigates" which live in men's memories. George Grote (1794–1871) and Connop Thirlwall (1797–1875), Bishop of St. David's, wrote histories of Greece: Thomas Arnold (1795–1842), the memorable head master of Rugby, wrote a

[1] *Southey:* Edward Dowden.

history of Rome. All of these histories are still valued with limitations. Thomas Carlyle (1795–1881) published his *French Revolution* in 1837, a book which "astonished the world"; but he, too, ranks among Victorian writers, and the same must be said of another brilliant historian, Thomas Babington Macaulay (1800–1859). His *History of England from the Accession of James II.* was published in 1848.

Augustus William Hare (1792–1834) and Julius Charles Hare (1795–1855) were the sons of the owner of Hurstmonceaux Place, Sussex, and there they were born. In 1826 they collaborated in a remarkable book, *Guesses at Truth*, which is still printed, still read and valued. Julius made his first appearance in print in 1820, when he published a translation of Fouqué's *Sintram*. In 1832 he travelled with Landor and edited his *Imaginary Conversations*. He was Archdeacon of Lewes, and his volumes of sermons still rank high in theological literature.

Many novelists who had begun to write before this period closes belong rather to the Victorian age in which their chief work was done.

Thomas Love Peacock (1785–1886) wrote novels with such arresting names as *Headlong Hall*, *Nightmare Abbey*, and *Crotchet Castle*. The interest of these now lies in the fact that in them Peacock is often describing his contemporaries and always the thought and society of his day. The idea we gain of them is not a pleasant one.

Frederick Maryat (1792–1848) was the novelist of the navy of Nelson's day; Charles Lever (1806–

1872) was the novelist of the army. His *Charles O'Malley* and *Harry Lorrequer* deserved their contemporary popularity, but are hardly books to attract to-day.

Edward George Earle Lytton (1803–1873), Lord Lytton, had written his *Last Days of Pompeii* and *Rienzi* before 1835. Other novels preceded and others succeeded them, but these were his best work. He was also the author of two plays which are still acted, *The Lady of Lyons* and *Richelieu*. Both were written after 1837.

Benjamin Disraeli (1804–1881), Lord Beaconsfield, published his *Vivian Grey* in 1826, and *The Young Duke*, *Contarini Fleming*, *Venetia*, and other less remarkable novels, were written before 1837. But his best work (and his best is very good) was published in the Victorian period.

George Payne Rainsford James (1801–1860) and William Harrison Ainsworth (1805–1882) were both writing very popular historical novels before 1837, but they also fall into the next period when the bulk of their work was produced.

50. The Lake Poets

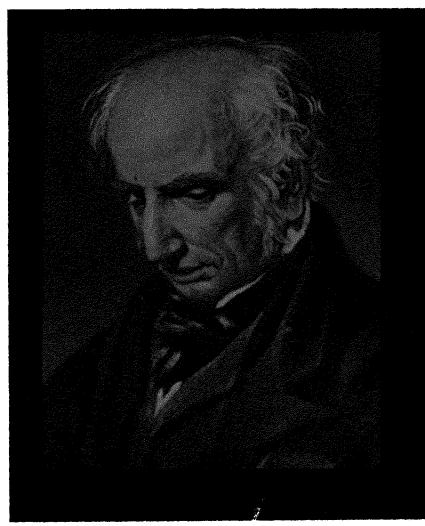
The English Lake Country has beauties all its own, at once calm and rugged, and the dalesmen who inhabited it in the days of the "Lake Poets" had the characteristics of their country. They were in many cases peasant proprietors, and had been so since the Border wars. If Wordsworth knew every mile of the Lake Country, so, too, he knew the

people of that country, and to read his poetry is to find the atmosphere of that whole, the people and the scenery, created around us.

William Wordsworth (1770–1850), the first of the Lake poets — those three, Wordsworth, Coleridge, and Southey, who made the Lakes their home—was born at Cockermouth and went to school at Hawkshead. In 1787 he went to St. John's College, Cambridge, and then travelled in France, and was driven home by the Reign of Terror. He drifted to London, to Dorset, and then he and his sister Dorothy (no history of Wordsworth is complete without a large tribute to that sister "who gave him eyes, who gave him ears") took the lonely and large house of Alfoxden which still stands among the woods of the Somerset Quantocks. Here Coleridge was a frequent visitor, glad, no doubt, to leave his cottage, which is also still standing, in the village street of Nether Stowey, for the shades of Alfoxden.

And here took place that memorable walk when the "Ancient Mariner" was planned. "In the autumn of 1797," says Wordsworth, "Mr. Coleridge, my sister and myself started from Alfoxden pretty late in the afternoon with a view to visit Linton. . . . As our united funds were small, we agreed to defray the expense of the tour by writing a poem. . . . In the course of the walk was planned the poem of the 'Ancient Mariner.'" The plan resulted in a volume, *Lyrical Ballads*, to which Wordsworth contributed such unforgettable poems as "Expostulation and Reply," and the "Lines Written above Tintern Abbey."

After the publication of this volume, Wordsworth and his sister spent a winter at Goslar, and here he wrote, among other things, the gems "Lucy Gray" and "Nutting." Then they settled down in the Lake Country—first at Grasmere, finally at





Rydal Mount. He travelled at intervals in France, Germany, Switzerland, and Italy, and described them. But the Lake Country held his heart, and the heart of that country is enshrined in his poetry.

The Prelude, written in 1805, not published until 1850, is the history of Wordsworth's mind. *The Excursion* and many volumes of poems followed

each other from year to year. His happy, industrious life closed in 1850. He was buried at Grasmere, among the mountains he so much loved, and by the side of Rotha brook.

Of Wordsworth's poetry, we may say, as of Milton, that everything that can be said has been said. It is easy to point out his faults—that he is egotistical, that "the little pronoun 'I' occurs" too often in his poetry, that he had no humour, that he took himself and his poetry too seriously, that he is unequal and sometimes descended to banalities such as those ridiculed by Horace and James Smith in their *Rejected Addresses*, which were parodies on the writers of the day.

But having said this, nothing more of depreciation remains to be said. Wordsworth was a very great poet. He had a great lesson to teach. He taught men not only the loveliness of the colour and expression of natural scenery, of sky and sea and mountain, but he taught also the enduring lesson of the strengthening, uplifting, and refining influence which that scenery should have on the souls of men.

Wordsworth had succeeded Southey as Poet Laureate. From Wordsworth the laurels descended to Tennyson, and, as Tennyson nobly said, they were "greener from the brows of him who uttered nothing base."

Of Wordsworth's longer poems, the "Lines Composed a few miles above Tintern Abbey" and the "Ode on the Intimations of Immortality" stand first. Among the shorter poems are many gems, and perhaps all will include among their

favourites that beginning, "She dwelt among the untrodden ways." The three stanzas contain, perhaps, the most pathetic lines in all poetry—

> "She lived unknown, and few could tell
> When Lucy ceased to be;
> But she is in her grave, and oh,
> The difference to me!"

Samuel Taylor Coleridge (1772–1834) was born at Ottery St. Mary in Devonshire, and was educated at Christ's Hospital and at Jesus College, Cambridge. Then he enlisted in the dragoons as Private Silas Titus Comberbach, was bought out, met Southey and thought of joining him and some other young men in founding a commonwealth at Susquehanna in North America. The scheme was abandoned. Coleridge married, published some poems, and went to live at Nether Stowey, where he met the Wordsworths, brother and sister. Later he followed them to the Lakes.

Coleridge wrote much, but wrote not always well. However, the "Ancient Mariner," "Kubla Khan," and the never-to-be-finished "Christabel" are very fine, a literature apart, unlike any other poetry. The opening stanza of "Christabel" is haunting—

> "'Tis the middle of night by the castle clock,
> And the owls have awaken'd the crowing cock!
> Tu—whit!——Tu—whoo!
> And hark, again! the crowing cock,
> How drowsily it crew."

"Kubla Khan" was the recollection of a dream, and it, too, has haunting lines, but it passes any one's ingenuity to say what the poem means.

Of Southey's prose work we have already heard. His chief poems are "Madoc," "The Curse of Kehama," "Roderic, the Last of the Goths," and 'Thalaba." "Thalaba" is written in an unrhymed and unusual metre. The story is taken from Mohammedan mythology. "Kehama" is an epic from Hindoo mythology. It, too, is in unusual measure, but rhyme is used. "Roderic" and 'Madoc" are in ten-syllabled blank verse. "Madoc" is the story of a fabulous Welsh prince who sailed to America and warred against the Aztecs. "Roderic" is a story of the Christians and the Moors, of sin and of repentance.

There is little of pathos or tenderness in Southey's poems. But when we think of his heroes the 'word *high-souled*," as has been said, "takes possession of the mind."[1]

51. Byron, Shelley and Keats

The names of Byron, Shelley, and Keats go together as naturally in our minds as do the names of Wordsworth, Southey, and Coleridge.

George Gordon Byron (1788–1824), Lord Byron, was born in London and brought up in poverty at Aberdeen by his mother. In 1798 he succeeded to the title, and went to live at Newstead Abbey, Berkshire. His mother took pains to keep before him the fact "that, though only a boy, he was now a lord." She fed his absurd vanity, and was the most unwise mother that ever poet had. Lord Beaconsfield, in *Venetia*, has well described both

[1] *Southey:* Edward Dowden.

the mother and the boy—her unfortunate example, her want of wisdom, his many good qualities, his affectionate generosity, his fitful temper, and his vanity.

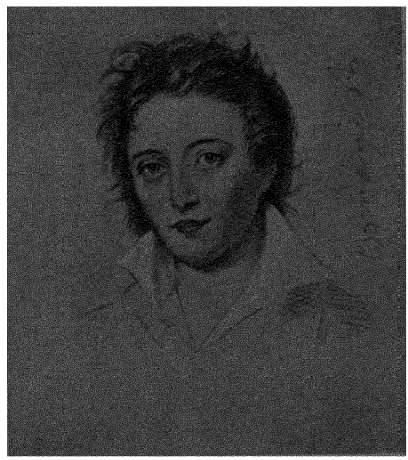
Byron went to Harrow, and afterwards to Trinity College, Cambridge, where he kept bulldogs and a tame bear, and wrote his first poems, *Hours of Idleness*. They showed little talent, and their mediocrity entitled them to no notice. But they were harshly reviewed in the *Edinburgh Review*, and Byron replied by another poem, *English Bards and Scotch Reviewers*, which showed much more talent. His career as a poet was begun.

His life was henceforth divided between London —where his poetry, produced with extraordinary rapidity, and his affectations, well described in *Venetia*, made him a "lion"—and his travels. He married, but his wife was no companion to him, had no influence over him. He ended his life, a volunteer for the cause of Greek freedom, at Missolonghi.

His travels furnished him with the chief merit of his poetry. Much of its charm consists in descriptions of the scenery of the Continent. "Byron is nothing without his descriptions," said one critic. It is indeed an unjust criticism, but there are many scenes on which no educated Englishman can now look without some lines of Byron's rising to his mind.

Percy Bysshe Shelley (1792–1822), as has been well said, had less intellect than Byron and more imagination. He was born near Horsham in Sussex, and was educated at Eton and University College, Oxford, where the "Shelley monument" now attracts many of the admirers of the poet.

He lived chiefly at Naples, Leghorn, and Pisa, and was drowned in a sudden squall in the Gulf of Spezia. His body was washed ashore and was there cremated, and his ashes were laid in the English



P. B. Shelley.

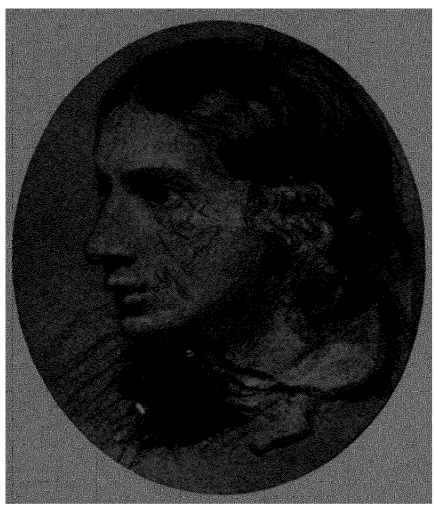
burying-ground at Rome which he had described in his "Adonais"—

> "Where, like an infant's smile over the dead,
> A light of laughing flowers along the grass is spread."

If Byron was unfortunate in his mother, Shelley was unfortunate in his father, and many of the mistakes of his life were due to his early training. But however far Shelley's conduct fell short of his aspirations, there is in his poetry, as has been said,

the "steadfast longing . . . for truth and love, and such a world as this would be if all men lived up to the standard of the Sermon on the Mount. . . . In Shelley's poetry it yearns through every page." [1]

His best remembered poems are "The Cloud," "To a Skylark," the "Ode to the West Wind,"



JOHN KEATS.
(From the pastel by J. Severn.)

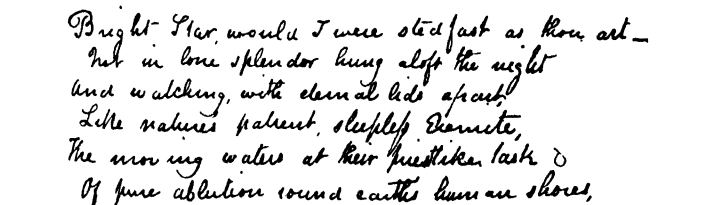
and "Adonais," an elegy on the death of Keats, which ranks with Milton's "Lycidas" as one of the finest elegies in the English language.

Near Shelley's tomb in the English cemetery at Rome is the grave of John Keats (1795–1821). Keats was born in London. His father was a livery-stable keeper, but the boy went to a good

[1] *First Sketch of English Literature*: H. Morley.

school at Enfield. Later he was apprenticed to a surgeon at Edmonton.

His first book of poems, published in 1817, was unnoticed. In 1818 "Endymion" appeared. Keats was a Whig, or at least the friend of the Whig, Leigh Hunt. Therefore, according to the manner of the time, the Tory *Quarterly Review* showed no mercy to a poem which charms the world. In 1820 a third volume of Keats' poems appeared.


Bright Star, would I were stedfast as thou art—
Not in lone splendor hung aloft the night
And watching, with eternal lids apart,
Like nature's patient, sleepless Eremite,
The moving waters at their priestlike task
Of pure ablution round earth's human shores,
Or gazing on the new soft-fallen mask
Of snow upon the mountains and the moors.

Extract from the MS. of Keats' last Sonnet.

After their publication he set out for Italy, and died in Rome in his twenty-fifth year.

A "love of loveliness for its own sake"[1] was characteristic of Keats' poetry, a "non-combatant's delicious sense of all beauty that lies around, above, below the battlefield of life."[2] Of that beauty he sings as if there were no social wrongs for men to fight against. But we must not think he had no lesson to teach mankind. He taught the glory of beauty, and his lesson was caught up and found a

[1] *English Literature :* Stopford A. Brooke.
[2] *A Short Sketch of English Literature :* H. Morley.

voice in a later generation, and especially in the writings of John Ruskin.

The finest poems of Keats are, perhaps, "To a Nightingale," "On a Grecian Urn," and that beginning "Bards of Passion and of Mirth." All are full of lines that dwell in the memory.

52. Some Lesser Poets

The six poets we have considered in this period were all, in their several ways, great poets. But some lesser poets must at least be mentioned.

Ebenezer Elliot (1781–1849), the "Corn Law Rhymer," is interesting. He was born in the midst of the Black Country, at Masborough near Rotherham. It was an unpromising beginning, but he loved to go out on the moors and into the woods, where—

"Flowers peep, trees bud, boughs tremble, rivers run."

From them he got refreshment, but only refreshment. His life was in the blackened town, and much of his poetry is a protest against the social conditions of his day in such towns, and the poverty which he believed the unadjusted corn laws accentuated.

Samuel Rogers (1763–1855) wrote the poems *Italy* and *Pleasures of Memory*, which merit no notice as literature, but they were much read in their day. Their popularity was perhaps owing to the fact that Rogers was a popular man, a man of wealth and leisure. *Italy* was illustrated by J. M. W. Turner with some of his most beautiful line engravings.

Robert Bloomfield (1766–1823) had no wealth or position, but his *Farmer's Boy* was translated into French and Italian, and in England alone it was said that 26,000 copies were sold within three years of its publication. Bloomfield was born at Honington in Suffolk. His father was the village tailor; his mother the keeper of the village dame school. The *Farmer's Boy* is in ten-syllabled rhyming metre. Its versification is remarkably easy, and there is much charm in the descriptions of country life, of lark's songs, of summer dawns and winter days.

John Clare (1793–1864) was also a singer of country things, also a farm labourer, also self taught. His *Poems Descriptive of Rural Life and Scenery* were not without merit, and some of them are still included in modern anthologies.

Henry Cary (1772–1844) translated Dante, the *Birds* of Aristophanes and the Odes of Pindar, and wrote some lives of early French poets. He is buried in Poets' Corner.

Reginald Heber (1783–1826), Bishop of Calcutta, wrote some of the most beloved of English hymns, and the remarkable Newdigate prize poem, on "Palestine," in which occur the often-quoted lines on the building of the temple at Jerusalem—

> "No hammer fell, no ponderous axes rung,
> Like some tall palm the mystic fabric sprung."

He was born at Malpas in Cheshire and died at Trichinopoli in India. The inscription on a tablet to his memory in Hodnet Church, Cheshire, was written by Southey. He was a man of a singularly

winning personality, and his Indian Journal is well worth reading.

Henry Kirke White (1785–1806) died too soon to show what he might have been capable of as a poet. His life was written and his few literary remains were edited by Southey, and the sculptor Chantrey designed one of his most beautiful monuments for his tomb in All Saints' Church, Cambridge.

Bryan Waller Procter (1790–1874), known as Barry Cornwall, was at Harrow with Byron. He wrote much, but is perhaps only remembered by his trifling little poem beginning "The sea! the sea! the open sea!"

John Keble (1792–1866) was the sweet singer of the Oxford Movement in the Church of England. He was born at Fairford in Gloucestershire, entered Corpus Christi College, Oxford, at fifteen, and at nineteen became Fellow of Oriel. His later years were spent at Hursley in Hampshire, where he died, and to which come a ceaseless stream of pilgrims from America and from England. He is known as the author of the *Christian Year* and the less known but equally beautiful *Lyra Innocentium*. They are the work of a true poet and a saintly man, and they reflect both his genius and his saintliness. Probably more editions of the *Christian Year* have been issued than of any other volume of poems in the English language.

Keble and John Henry Newman (1801–1899) were the poets of the movement. Newman also wrote sermons, but in such lucid and delicate language that he has been ranked among prose poets, and was the author of such rememberable poems

as "Lead, Kindly Light," and "They are at rest."

Felicia Dorothea Browne (1793–1835), afterwards Mrs. Hemans, was born at Liverpool. In her day she was a much read and popular poetess. She wrote romantic stories such as the *Forest Sanctuary*, but they were destitute of the genius of Mrs. Radclyffe's romantic stories; and some volumes of poems, of which the best known is *Songs of the Affections*. Among her poems are the well-known "Casabianca," "The Better Land," and "The Pilgrim Fathers," and others which have been learnt by many generations of children.

Perhaps Hartley Coleridge (1796–1849), the son of S. T. Coleridge, is best remembered by Wordsworth's poem to "H. C.: six years old," the child "whose fancies from afar are brought"—

> "Thou art so exquisitely wild,
> I think of thee with many fears
> For what may be thy lot in after years."

That lot was a sad one, and if Coleridge had been a man of stronger character he would have risen higher as a poet, and his life would have been happier. He is buried by the side of Wordsworth in Grasmere churchyard.

Thomas Hood (1799–1845) is remembered for his "Bridge of Sighs," "The Song of the Shirt," the "Dream of Eugene Aram," and "Miss Kilmansegg."

Sir Henry Taylor (1800–1888) had written his *Philip van Artevelde* by 1834. It is a dramatic romance dealing with the stormy life of the Flemish towns in the fourteenth century. Of Taylor, and of Landor, the *Guesses at Truth* say: "Few writers

have kept it before their eyes so distinctly that the great business and office of poetry is to represent human character and feeling, action and passion, the ceaseless warfare and the alternative victories of Life and Death."

Most of the poems of Thomas Lovell Beddoes (1803–1849) were published after his death, in 1851. His work is very unequal. Among much which is unreadable there are sparkling gems such as the lines beginning "If there were dreams to sell." At his best he comes near to the charm of the Elizabethan Lyrics. Beddoes was no doubt mad in "his latter days and eccentric at all times."

53. Irish Literature

We left Irish literature in the sixteenth century. Throughout the seventeenth and much of the eighteenth century the old difficulty with regard to this literature meets the English reader. The poetry is still mostly in the Irish tongue, and the best translations must miss the music of the original.

In the late eighteenth century an English-speaking school of Irish writers arose, among them being two whom we have already noticed, Goldsmith and Maria Edgeworth. With the exception of these, and Richard Brinsley Sheridan (1737–1816), who wrote sparkling plays, no Irish writer of the moment, except Lady Morgan (Sydney Owenson), made much mark in prose. Lady Morgan wrote *The Wild Irish Girl*, a novel which was very popular when it was published in 1806, but both she and another Irish writer, Lady Blessington, belong to the early

Victorian age rather than to the period we are now considering.

Among Irish poets Thomas Moore (1799–1852) stands in a high place. He was born in Aungier Street, Dublin. Although he lived into the middle of the nineteenth century, he did most of the work for which we like to remember him before 1836. His first *Irish Melodies* were published in 1807, and *Lalla Rookh*, stories in verse from Eastern sources, was published in 1817.

Moore's *Irish Melodies* are remembered for something more enduring than what has been called their trivial charm. Moore found Irish poetry almost a thing of the past, and he revived it.

" Dear harp of my country ! in darkness I found thee,
The old chain of silence had hung o'er thee long,
When proudly, my own Island harp, I unbound thee,
And gave all thy chords to light, freedom and song."

A very brilliant band of Irish poets followed Moore, and they are carrying on the old Keltic traditions in our own day.

The *Melodies* were written to be sung in drawing-rooms by their author, and the poorest of them rise very much above the verse of drawing-room songs in our own day, while some of them rank among the best English lyrics. " At the mid hour of night," and " Oh, ye dead " are both fine poems.

Every English child has learnt and loved " Not a drum was heard." It was the work of Charles Wolfe (1791–1823), an Irish clergyman who was born in Dublin and educated at Trinity College, and later was curate of Donoughmore, County Down. He died in Cork. The " Burial of Sir John Moore "

appeared in 1817 in an Irish newspaper, and was quickly copied into the English papers. In spite of its popularity, no one seemed to think of the author, and it was only signed C. W. It took its place at once and for ever as one of " the three or four best martial poems in our language." After Wolfe's death a thin volume was published containing his few poems, not more than a dozen in all.

Samuel Lover (1796–1868) wrote the once well-known novels, *Handy Andy* and *Rory O'More*, and left some charming songs such as the " Low-back'd Car " and " Bold Rory O'More." They have the Irish wit and high spirits, while such of his songs as the " Fairy Boy " show that Keltic sadness was not far away.

54. Scots Literature

We must now return to the literature of Scotland in the sixteenth century. That century saw William Drummond of Hawthornden (1585–1649), who attracts attention by the music of his name and the beauty of the home where he was born and lived and died — the old house of Hawthornden in a wooded ravine above the Esk river, and not far from the famous chapel and castle of the Sinclairs at Roslyn near Edinburgh. There he passed his life in easy circumstances, with a good library of which many volumes may now be seen in Edinburgh University.

But he had his own heartaches. He was betrothed to Mary Cunninghame of Barns, who died the day before that on which they were to have

been married. His poems were published in 1616, and in 1623 he published another volume, *Flowers of Sion, to which is adjoined the Cypress Grove.* He also wrote many pamphlets and other works, perhaps the most interesting being an account of conversations with Ben Jonson. For Jonson visited Drummond in his retreat, and Drummond recorded his opinions on men and literature.

The Marquis of Montrose (1612–1657) has left us the stanzas, "My dear and only love," with the often-quoted lines—

> "He either fears his fate too much,
> Or his deserts are small,
> Who dares not put it to the touch,
> To gain or lose it all."

Three generations of the Sempills of Beltrees, in Renfrewshire, wrote poetry, Robert (1596–1669) being the author of the lament for Habbie the Piper—

> "On bagpipes now nae body blaws
> Sen Habbie's dead."

Somewhere at the end of the seventeenth century Lady Wardlaw (1677–1727) wrote the "Hardyknute" ballad, which Sir Walter Scott said was the first he learnt, the last he should forget. It opens well—

> "Stately stepped he east the wa',
> And stately stepped he west,"

but does not keep to this level throughout its many stanzas.

Then came Allan Ramsay (1686–1758), whose play, *The Gentle Shepherd,* won him much popularity.

He also published volumes of verse, *The Evergreen* and *The Tea-table Miscellany*, of which some of the poems were his own, some contributed, some collected from older works. William Hamilton of Bangour (1704–1754) wrote in the *Miscellany*, and also published independently. His Yarrow poetry is charming, some of the most charming that that magic stream evoked.

Next come three ladies who each wrote memorable little poems. Lady Anne Bernard (1750–1825) was the author of "Auld Robin Gray." Lady Nairne (1766–1845) was the author of "The Land o' the Leal," and the splendid—

> "Wi' a hundred pipers and a' and a',"

which has the wild sound of pipes in it and rouses as do the pipes themselves.

Jean Elliot (1727–1805) was the author of "The Flowers of the Forest," for the haunting refrain of which she was indebted to a fragment of an old lament for Ettrick men who fell at Flodden—

> "I ride single in my saddle,
> For the flowers of the Forest are a' wede awa'."

No notice of the Scots poetry of this period would be complete without a word on Duncan MacIntyre, the Highland poet, Duncan of the Fair Songs, as he was called. He was born in the lonely highlands of Glenorchy, and could only speak Gaelic. He was brought up in the deer forest and by the river, and for mental food he had the "oral literature of the Ossianic minstrelsy of which we have heard. His poems, in his native Gaelic, have been translated, and there is in them the wildness of the forest and

the chase. We hear of one in particular which is 'adapted to a pipe tune,' and follows with wonderful skill all the turns and twists and wild cadences of the pibroch."

MacIntyre died in Edinburgh in 1812, and was buried in Old Gray Friars Churchyard.

James Macpherson brought before men's minds that Ossianic literature on which MacIntyre's mind had been fed. He was born in Inverness-shire in 1736, died there in 1796, and was buried in Westminster Abbey. In 1760 he published a book, *Fragments of Ancient Poetry collected in the Highlands*, and later two epic poems, "Fingal" and "Temora," which he called translations from the Gaelic of Ossian. That there was in the middle of the eighteenth century still much oral Gaelic poetry in the Highlands, and that some of it was Ossianic we know, but how much of Macpherson's Ossian was really old Gaelic still remains a difficult question. A committee appointed to inquire into the matter pronounced that Macpherson had edited what he found and inserted much of his own.

James Beattie (1735–1803) was the author of "The Minstrel," a poem tracing "the progress of a poetical genius." "I have," says Beattie in his preface, "endeavoured to imitate Spenser in the measure of his verse, and in the harmony, simplicity, and variety of his composition." The model was a good one, and Beattie's contemporaries admired his poem.

Thomas Campbell (1777–1844) was born in Glasgow, died at Boulogne, and was buried in Westminster Abbey. With his "Pleasures of Hope" we

need not concern ourselves, but his "Hohenlinden," "The Battle of the Baltic," and "Ye Mariners of England" will always be a delight, and so also will his "Rainbow"—

"Triumphal arch, that fill'st the sky
When storms prepare to part,
I ask not proud philosophy
To tell me what thou art.

Still seem as to my childhood's sight,
A midway station given
For happy spirits to alight,
Betwixt the earth and heaven."

For his "Gertrude of Wyoming" Campbell chose the Spenserian metre, and handles that metre, always difficult, with grace and ease.

James Hogg (1770–1835), the Ettrick Shepherd poet, was "discovered" by Sir Walter Scott in some of his Border rambles. Scott saw his talent and helped him on, and Hogg left his sheep and went to Edinburgh, where he did work for the magazines. His most famous poem, "The Queen's Wake," especially the "Bonny Kilmeny" portion, shows his fancy and his love of old fairy legends. His "A Boy's Song" is one of the most delightful of children's poems, and ought to have a place in every anthology for the young—

"Where the pools are bright and deep,
Where the grey trout lies asleep,
Up the river and over the lea,
That's the way for Billy and me."

There are many more equally pleasant stanzas, all full of the open air and of childlike happiness.

Among prose writers of Scotland, Susan Ferrier (1782–1854) the novelist must be mentioned. Her three novels, *Marriage, Inheritance,* and *Destiny,*

have been most undeservedly forgotten. Scott himself delighted in them, and refers to them at the end of *A Legend of Montrose.* Brightness and humour, especially in the dialogue, are as characteristic of Miss Ferrier's as of Miss Edgeworth's novels.

John Galt (1779–1839) wrote many excellent novels of Scottish life, the best being *The Annals of the Parish.* John Gibson Lockhart (1794–1854) only began his unsurpassed *Life of Sir Walter Scott* in 1837, but he had been editor of the *Quarterly Review* from 1825, and therefore has a claim to be numbered among pre-Victorian literary men.

55. Burns and Scott

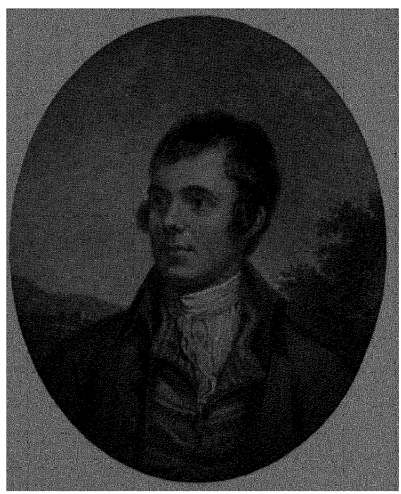
We now come to the two great poets of Scotland, Robert Burns and Walter Scott.

Robert Burns (1759–1796) was the son of a small labouring farmer, and was born in the "auld clay biggin" which is still shown on the road from Ayr to the Bridge of Doon. That and Mount Oliphant, a few miles from the Brig, Lochlea on the banks of the Ayr river, Mossgiel two or three miles away, Ellisland near Dumfries, and Dumfries, where his last years were spent and where he died—these are places connected with Robbie Burns, as his countrymen fondly call him.

Burns's early life was one of hard work on the farm, and often of privation. His later life was one of self-indulgence which left him worn out before he was fifty. If he had been a better man he would have been a happier man. He said of himself that—

> "Thoughtless folly laid him low,
> And stained his name."

But Burns did much for poetry. Scotland was a land of song. The old airs which had come down from some unknown source were sung by ploughmen at the plough, by reapers in the harvest-fields. To these airs there were words, sometimes two sets of words to one air. Allan Ramsay made these old



ROBERT BURNS.
(From an engraving after Alex. Nasmyth.)

words famous. Ladies, such as those we have mentioned, wrote new words and helped to refine what had too often been objectionable. Then came Burns, and, with few exceptions, his poems were songs to be sung to the old melodies. He did for Scotland what Moore had done for Ireland.

His poems reflect all moods, from his wildest mirth to those flashes of remorse which came in the midst of his gaiety. His " Scots, wha hae wi'

Wallace bled" is one of the few martial poems we possess, and one of the finest. His "Cottar's Saturday Night" is a stately picture of a Presbyterian cottage household. "Tam o' Shanter" is unsurpassed for wild comedy, and "Duncan Gray cam' here to woo," when

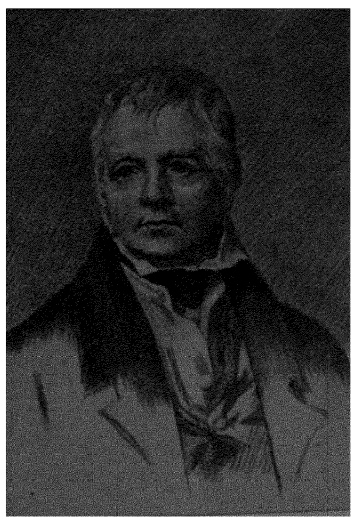
"Meg was deaf as Ailsa Crag,"

is graceful, homely fun. His love of animals comes out in his "Twa Dogs" and in his address to the "Wee, sleekit, cowerin', timorous beastie," which shows all the tender sweetness of a strong man's nature at its best. And for pathos what can surpass—

"Ye banks and braes o' bonnie Doon,
How can ye bloom sae fresh and fair?
How can ye chant, ye little birds,
And I sae weary, fu' o' care?"

When we come to Sir Walter Scott, we have to consider him first as a prose writer, for there he was at his best, and only secondly as a poet. He was born in Edinburgh, which he called his "own romantic town," in 1771, but Edinburgh did not make Scott. It was his grandfather's farm near Sandy Knowe where his childhood was spent, the ruined tower of Smailholme, his days there among the heather—these, and his mother, gave the turn to his genius. "If I have been able," he said, "to do anything in the way of painting the past times, it is very much from the studies which she presented me. She connected a long period of time with the present generation, for she remembered, and had often spoken with, a person who perfectly recollected the battle of Dunbar and Oliver Cromwell's sub-

sequent entry into Edinburgh." To his latest day Scott treasured some little relics of his mother, and what Sandy Knowe had been to him was shown in a no less touching way. The "habit of lying as a child on the turf there among the sheep and



SIR WALTER SCOTT.
(After the portrait by Raeburn.)

the lambs had given his mind a peculiar tenderness for those animals which it had ever since retained."

Scott's literary career began with poetry. His first publication was the *Border Minstrelsy*, a collection of old ballads in which he included some of his own, and some changes, too, of his own in the old ballads. Then came the mystical "Lay of the Last Minstrel," "Marmion, a tale of Flodden," "The Lady of the Lake," "Don Roderick," "Triermain,"

"Rokeby," "The Lord of the Isles" and "Harold the Dauntless."

Scott's poetry is to many as delightful as his prose. For it peoples the now lonely hill-sides and river banks and ruined castles with life, with flashing armour or waving plaids, with the wild voice of the pibroch, all the chivalry, all the mystery, all the romance, of vanished centuries. It is as inspiriting as the sound of a trumpet, as fresh as a morning in May.

Then Scott abandoned poetry and turned to prose. His first novel was *Waverley*, published in 1814. *Guy Mannering* came next, then *The Antiquary*, *The Black Dwarf* and *Old Mortality*. But we must not catalogue the whole of the Waverleys, though their very names are pleasant.

In his own Scotland, and particularly perhaps in his own Border country, Scott had the finest setting in the world for his genius. "From Sandy Knowe," it has been said, "he looked on a district in which every field has its battle and every rivulet a song; on the ruined tower of Smailholme, the scene of the 'Eve of St. John,' Mertoune and Hume Castle, Dryburgh and Melrose, the purple bosks of Eildon, the hill of Faerie, the distant mountain region of the Gala, the Ettrick and the Yarrow. . . ."[1] And his last home by the banks at Abbotsford is as full of inspiration and of song as any portion of the Border. There, in 1832, he died, as he had lived, among his Scots hills. His last words were to Lockhart, who had been as a son to him. "Lockhart, I may have but a minute to speak to you. My

[1] "The English Poets." Ed. T. H. Ward. *Walter Scott:* Goldwin Smith.